



**University of Fort Hare**  
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**Exclusion of Women in the Church Governance Structures – The Case of the  
Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region**

**BY:**

**NKOSINATI MCGIVEN MBALI**

**Student No: 9609962**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree:**



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*Together in Excellence*

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## DECLARATION

I declare that 'Exclusion of women in the church governance structures – Case of the Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region' is my original work whoever work that has been utilized or cited is appropriately acknowledged by the researcher.



October 2022

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**SIGNATURE (NKOSINATI MCGIVEN MBALI)**

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**DATE**



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## DEDICATION

To my wife and loving son and daughter, without whom this project would be meaningless. And my late mother who died with a car accident on my way back from Graduation Service Diploma in Theology since 1998.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BCSACR</b>	Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region
<b>BUSA</b>	Baptist Union of Southern Africa
<b>BWD</b>	Baptist Women's Department
<b>EPBA</b>	Eastern Province of Baptist Association
<b>BNA</b>	Baptist National Assembly
<b>BCI</b>	Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
<b>BMD</b>	Baptist Missionary Department
<b>ECWA</b>	Evangelical Church Winning All
<b>CAC</b>	Christ Apostolic Church
<b>GC</b>	Gospel Commission
<b>CRC</b>	Christian Reformed Church
<b>GM</b>	Missio Dei
<b>NT</b>	New Testament
<b>OT</b>	Old Testament
<b>DRC</b>	Dutch Reformed Church
<b>RWJF</b>	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
<b>NIV</b>	New International Version
<b>NRSV</b>	New Revised Standard Version
<b>NPO</b>	Non-Profit Organization
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>GN</b>	Good News
<b>MWP</b>	Majority Women Participants
<b>MMP</b>	Majority Men Participant



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## ABSTRACT

In every community there are women. However, they are often marginalized because they are perceived as being unable to make a meaningful contribution to various economic endeavours or society in general. Sometimes they are shunned by their own families, while even church communities have been known to treat women in thoughtless ways. As a result, their spiritual potential cannot be effectively tapped. The research has explored many experiences of women in the mainstream Baptist Churches of Southern Africa in Cradock Region in the Eastern Cape. The study delves into the barriers that prevent the full inclusion of women in church life and what churches are and/or should be doing to remove such barriers so that women can embrace all that a church has to offer and progress on their spiritual journey. The study also looks at the importance of systematic theology in the church and how it should be directed at enabling women to exercise their spiritual gifts.

The study applied the theoretical framework that discussed what is faced by women in the church, providing in-depth literature and Biblical review, and examining selected individuals who contributed to the study on what is faced by women daily in their spiritual growth. It provided important insights into how involved the participants are in church activities and whether they face subtle or more overt discrimination. A few strategies were also considered aimed at improving conditions for excluded women in the church, not only through better physical access but also through greater acceptance by the church leadership and the membership as a whole. The findings from the study will not only help the churches that were the focus of the fieldwork to help their women members embrace church life more fully and exercise their spiritual gifts, but they will also provide important insights for the broader Christian church towards the potential of inclusive community that will contribute richly to the spiritual enhancement of their church, family and community.

For the survey work, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach. The participants' sample consisted of adults with a range of women and men of the church. Supplementary input was solicited from women and men who understand the challenges presented by both parties – particularly when a lack of familiarity with certain physical conditions leads to an unthinking, and sometimes uncaring, attitude. The data has been collected using

informal and semi-structured interviews and observation. Being able to exercise choice and having control over their lives and a sense of independence were singled out as being of great importance to the women participants, as these factors contributed to their well-being and satisfaction with life. Most of the participants reported that they were not warmly embraced by their churches, because of their gender, and they were able to lead a fulfilling life of worship. However, more could be done to enhance their participation in church affairs and to become role models for other church communities that are not as accommodating through a lack of knowledge, training and resources.

The research only focused on the rural, white, Coloured, Indian and African residential areas in Cradock in the Eastern Cape. Therefore, the study will only focus on the Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region and should ideally not be generalized to areas other than those selected for this study. There is much scope for more detailed research to be conducted on disability in other Christian churches to break down both physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit many individuals' spiritual and emotional satisfaction and growth.



Each Chapter has a unique contribution to advancing the central argument of the study with Chapter One introducing and painting a backdrop against which the problem of the marginalisation and exclusion of women in church leadership and structures must be understood. In Chapter Two the researcher reviews the relevant literature, gaining a deeper understanding of what knowledge already exists in the body of knowledge, identifying gaps and using the study to propose solutions for what might be done to mitigate the challenge. In an attempt to guide the study, an appropriate research methodology is suggested and discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter deals with what data needed to be collected and what instrument had to be used to analyse the data. The appropriateness of the research methodology is of the essence in deciding what path the study must follow to realise the objectives of the study and respond to the set research questions. In Chapter Four, the collected data is presented and analysed using the mechanisms proposed in Chapter Three. Finally, a consolidation of the findings is presented in a summary with recommendations of what mechanisms the researcher has distilled from the analysed data.

## **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In part of the study, the researcher introduces all the relevant sections about this study. Hence, the chapter covers the background to the study, literature review, research problem, research questions, aims and objectives, theoretical framework, research methodology, research design, the significance of the study, limitations, ethical considerations, intellectual property, the definition of terms and the structure of the thesis. The chapter has been designed to discuss, step to step and in a concise manner, all the elements in the study to give them a broad understanding of the study's rationale and scope.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The study set out to investigate why women have been excluded from the church governance structures in the Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region (BCSACR). The BCSACR has hindered women's prospects of becoming both ministers of the faith and leaders in the church. The BCSACR has never ordained women and welcomed them into the church governance structures as pastors, elders or deacons. The study, therefore, delves into the theoretical and practical reasons for their exclusion.

To a large extent, the BCSACR has excluded women from church governance structures because of its system of patriarchy. Madlala-Routledge (2009:4) argues that patriarchy is a practice that contributes to exclusion of women because the organizations are still regarding men as the most suitable gender to lead. She believes that women are oppressed because of societal ideology that regards men as the only gender over women who are oppressed.

Madlala-Routledge (2009:4) further discusses that the exercising of this power is a platform where BCSACR allows the marginalisation of women and instils a feeling of inferiority in them. Because of this, women become conditioned to feel inferior, with men often resorting to coercion, intimidation and violence. Feelings of inferiority are not the exclusive preserve of women in the church. For example, for 10 years, a priest who is physically disabled was not appointed to a leadership position in the BCSACR, until a

specific policy was introduced that served to outlaw discrimination against disabled people.

Oduyoye (2007:11) argues that the scripture is used to serve one gender in the church which is not inclusive of women. Oduyoye (2007) adds that cultural traditions that encourage the marginalization of women, irrespective of the alleged reasons, need to be revisited, unlike other denominations that have contributed to the inclusion of women in church structures.

Given this background, the BCSACR needs to address its traditional resistance to women being included in church governance structures. The researcher believes that women's spiritual gifts can and should be nurtured and their leadership skills developed in the church. This will strengthen the church's foundations and ensure its future viability.

### **1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Concerning studies on leadership, Shantz (1995:6–7) makes a vital point about the society that excludes women who are unable to raise their concerns when it comes to leadership, and they are not part of the conversation. Papal Magisterium (Keane, 1988:3) added that “men tend to make unfounded presuppositions.”

It has been observed that in most cases men are afraid to engage women in public towards church governance structures. The reason is what Shantz (1995) says “men enjoy a monopoly of power.” He, therefore, proposes the dismantling of the system of patriarchy so that men and women can share the joys and burdens of responsibility equally.” Baloyi (2010) states that the church has to devise strategies to correct or overturn tactics perpetrated by men to marginalize women.

Bhasera (1994:4) indicates that it is important to mention that God has created man and woman through His love. Bhasera (1994) adds that while the sexes have specific roles in society, the church should address the significance of humanity to both genders. Bhasera (1994) also maintains that a lack of respect for women impedes human development in a broader societal context.



Furthermore, women should involve themselves in decision-making in matters relating to leadership development. Batchelor (2008) refers to the gift of inclusivity (Eph. 4:11). However, he highlights the fact that women face barriers when they have to assume church responsibilities in the church such as deacons, elders and pastors. These barriers need to be investigated both academically and biblically.

Many theologians affirm that men and women are equally deserving of dignified and respectful treatment. There are also numerous biblical references to this effect, including Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:28, that discuss the notion towards gender equality of both man and woman is aligned to the concept of *Imago Dei*, as found in Genesis – that man and woman are created in the image of God and His likeness of God. Doohan (1992:168–177) emphasizes that we are all equal in the church both man and woman to aspire to the baptismal vocation. Olsen (1988:29) has alluded that we are the result of a divine design, with both men and women able to attain righteousness and being worthy of being groomed for the ministry.



Ogato (2013:358–372) notes that the obstacles preventing women from being developed within the church are directly related to their gender. The Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA) addresses women's concerns through the Baptist Women's Department (BWD) whose role is to (i) fulfil the core values of the department, (ii) perform the ministry of God and the church mission without disturbing the men's ministry, (iii) coordinate and facilitate the department's funds.

The question of what is expected from women in the church leadership has been discussed and debated for a long time. Hagberg (2003) has addressed the position of women in leadership in the African context in his book, *Real Power*. Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003) highlighted the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding the contribution of women in leadership, lamenting that their marginalisation is a continental problem and is not limited to Christianity.

Jones (2004:205) suggests that it is time, after "a long wait", for women to take a stand regarding their right to leadership positions in the church. Women's potentially significant spiritual gifts need to be respected and appreciated by the church. Makoro (2007:59–60),

however, has a contrary view: that women should not be allowed to lead because (i) the doctrine says otherwise; (ii) economic and financial constraints prevent them from doing so; (iii) the female gender does not lend itself to leadership.

Osmer (2008:25) asserts that the church needs leaders that represent all designated groups, without any consideration for one gender being superior to or more suitable than another. Hackerman and Jones (1996:12) support the view that the church needs to adopt the mindset that leadership is broader than the duties assigned to the official leaders of an organization or a community.

In summary, the study sets out to reveal, from the academic literature and from the Bible, different views towards the exclusion of women and their potential to assume positions in church governing structures. It also highlights the barriers that often stand in their way and offers some insight into the situation on the African continent.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**



The exclusion of women from the ministry in the BCSACR has the potential to sow division within the church, particularly as women are afforded recognition by other denominations that have embraced gender mainstreaming and policies of inclusion. As women are prevented from engaging in all aspects of church ministry and leadership in the BCSACR, they are unable to contribute to God's sacred ministry.

Many studies from around the world on women and the church show that the two main factors that contribute to women's oppression and negatively impact their leadership prospects in the church are the misguided Biblical interpretation and tradition (Maloney, 1994; Tanzer, 1994; Bassler, 1998; Ringe, 1998; Kanyoro, 2001; Oduyoye, 2001; West, 2004).

The study probes why women in the BCSACR are not able to have meaningful, fulfilling experiences as officers of the church. Women are often denied the opportunity to acquire Biblical knowledge and the resources to develop spiritually. They remain marginalised because, for example, in 1 Tim 2:11–12, it is said that “Let the woman learn in silence

with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be silent.” This verse has become a Biblical principle that prevents women from contributing freely to the church operation in the BCSACR. The ordination of women is not examined at national conferences as it does not feature on the church agenda. The study also looks at how women can bring about positive change in their circumstances (Perera & McIlveen, 2014).

Bosch (1991) says that women should be given the platform to exercise their gifts as it serves the heart of God. He adds that the church should not be able to “limit God in doing His mission in any local context but instead facilitate it” (Bosch, 1991:165–171).

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- i. To what extent are women excluded from the church’s governance structures?
- ii. What are the causes of women being excluded from the church’s governance structures?
- iii. To what extent are women interested in participating in church governance structures?
- iv. What role should the church play in helping women to change the status quo and assume positions in the church’s governance structures?

## **1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- i. To investigate the extent to which women are excluded from the church’s governance structures.
- ii. To identify the factors influencing the exclusion of women from the church’s governance structures.
- iii. To solicit the views of women regarding the challenges of their securing positions in the church’s governance structures.
- iv. To determine what changes must be made within the church to ensure that women become eligible for positions in the church’s governance structures.

## **1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The work of Max-Neef is particularly instructive as far as the research topic is concerned. Max-Neef's Theory of Human Scale Development is concerned with "the satisfaction of fundamental human needs...of growing levels of self-reliance...of the personal with social and of planning with autonomy..." (Max-Neef *et. al.*, 1987:12). The researcher borrowed from this theory, with some of the elements being discussed below.

### **1.7.1 Fundamental human needs**

Max-Neef (1987:12) has fundamentally classified humans to assist the reader in recreating substances, participation and understanding, hence, leisure time should reflect on how freedom, identity and creation to address the needs. Many of these can be applied to women's desire to address the operations of BCSACR and to be supported in their endeavours.

### **1.7.2 Increasing self-reliance**



Max-Neef's (1987:12) believes that human beings should have a sense of belonging, motivation and positive feelings towards those in their communities. Positive human interactions and opportunities for affirmation help to build people's self-esteem – something that women should have much more of in the church. The latter has not done enough to draw on women's expertise and allow them to exercise their talents both in the ministry and in the running of the church's operation.

### **1.7.3 Balancing the interdependence of people with their environment**

According to Max-Neef's (1987:12) Theory, people are dependent on their environment, and vice versa. There should be a clear demonstration of mutual consideration and respect. This theory can be applied in the context of the BCSACR as well. In other words, people should understand and respect the goals of the church and all those who make up the church environment. Therefore, both men and women have individual views on the needs that must be heard and respected, and they should not be unnecessarily subordinated to a church hierarchy or other artificial structure.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher has used the qualitative method, with semi-structured interviews conducted among a selected group of individuals and data collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed in a way that focused specifically on the study so that the risk of bias can be reduced during the research. The purpose of the chosen research method was to elicit participants' views about why women were excluded from the church governance structures in the BCSACR.

Chinyamurindi (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c) notes that the qualitative research approach provides an opportunity to make more sense of phenomena – more so than a quantitative approach. The qualitative approach is considered most appropriate for a study of this nature because it addresses the challenges of women who are in the church and people's opinions about it, cannot be reduced to numbers. A more intuitive approach is needed.

The following sub-heading will discuss the research design in detail.

### **1.8.1 Research design**



Research design is a stage that identifies the information that must be collected from the participants. It is a process which the researcher followed to realise the goals of the study. Research design includes what will be contributed by participants to reach conclusions. The collected information will be incorporated as a case study approach.

Mouton (2001), in Fouché and De Vos (2002:137), adds that this is a strategy that guides a researcher in terms of conducting the research. It guides the study to address the problem of the study towards what has been collected during interviews. Hence, the sampling of the study becomes an important aspect of design. It assists the study as it plays a pivotal role in what has to be achieved to understand the exclusion of women in the church.

### **1.8.2 Significance of the study**

Women have long been excluded from church governance structures in the BCSACR, which have given rise to concern and frustration in many quarters – particularly among

female church members themselves who have been denied the opportunity of making a more well-rounded contribution to the running of the church.

However, the reasons for their side-lining or exclusion have not been formally explored. This study constitutes the first time that the evident bias shown towards women in the BCSACR will be examined systematically, using formal research techniques.

There is a great deal of theory of marginalizing in leadership and taking charge as evident both in the academic literature and in the Bible. This theory is put to the test in this study by using it to structure the interviews and to draw conclusions from the information gathered. The value of the study extends beyond the church governance context, helping also to emphasize the importance of women being visible and included in all aspects of a church's operation – worship, ministry, community support, and so on (Double & Struwig, 2014).

### **1.8.3 Limitations of the study**

The extent of the study is to discuss why women are excluded in the church governance structures of the Baptist Church of South Africa Cradock Region (BCSACR). The study involved the contribution of the scholars and generic study.

- Firstly, the empirical study was localised to Cradock, where the researcher resides. The specific focus of the research was the town itself and the surrounding rural communities. Limited resources prevented the researcher from extending the study into a wider geographical region. Cradock is a small town, with no industrial firms. A fairly large proportion of its inhabitants have excluded women from the church governance.
- Secondly, the empirical study was confined to the Christian community only. Although the experiences of women in the broader community were probed in a general sense, the primary focus was on members of conservative, evangelical churches. This was to ensure that the research was conducted among people with similar religious beliefs and doctrines. Women – married, single and widowed, were interviewed to ascertain how their gender and marital/partnership status might bring ideas and strategies to

embrace their views to contribute to Mission Dei. The literature review, a wide (but not exhaustive) collection of written works by historical and more contemporary authors was consulted to identify common themes and trends. In addition, the Bible was comprehensively surveyed.

The researcher must caution that the study did not visit all the Biblical references about women in the Bible and their significant roles as this would have been an enormous undertaking and beyond the scope of the study.

Rather, the Biblical investigation was aimed at extracting core themes and specific passages to counterbalance the findings in the academic literature and provide a well-informed foundation for the empirical study.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Strydom (1996:63), ethical consideration sets the standard that any individual before he/she conducted the interviews is widely accepted. These are ethical standards that draw the expertise of the institution. It requires an individual or a group to be honest towards any rendered information. Adhering to ethical standards ensures that the human rights of participants and other affected parties are recognized and protected.

The ethical study was conducted after the student had been permitted to conduct the study, and the ethical clearance letter authorised the student to conduct interviews as the most important document that set ethical standards for the study.

Burns and Groove (1993:776) agree with Strydom (1996) that ethics assist the participants to participate freely and contribute positively to the study. Therefore, the participant can decide to withdraw from the proceedings. Burn and Groove (1993) believed that participants must be given an assurance that all that has been discussed will protect their integrity without any regrets about participating in the interviews. Then, the information will be kept in a secured computer that has a password and anonymity will be exercised throughout the study.

According to Burns and Groove (1993:762), the anonymity of participants and their views cannot be linked to the study or its findings. Information about the respondents is not

disclosed. Findings are generalized and are not attributed to individuals. Only the researcher knows the source of the information, which he keeps confidential. Pilot and Hungler (1995:139) said that “confidentiality means that the information that a participant provides is not publicly reported in a way that identifies them.” In this study anonymity and security of participants will not expose their real names instead, coding will be considered. Rather, it will respect the integrity of all participants for academics.

## **1.10 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

The researcher consulted the literature widely and all relevant works are cited and listed in the bibliography in recognition of the author’s intellectual property rights.

## **1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Providing definitions of terms is essential for a study of this nature. It helps to ensure a common understanding of key concepts and terminology between the researcher and his audience, particularly where terms are unusual or not widely known. Defining terminology promotes a greater understanding of the subject matter.

### **1.11.1 Exclusion**



It is when an individual is marginalized from performing various rights and not allowed to exercise his/her ability. Hence, the study focuses on women exclusion from BCSACR who are not part of the church’s integrated programs and governance structures.

Exclusion is a form of discrimination against a social category or class in society. Exclusion involves denying members of one group the opportunities or privileges available or afforded to another group, often for irrational reasons. This happens when there are two different genders in society.

### **1.11.2 Gender inequality/Hierarchy**

Gender inequality is when we are not treated the same while we are under the same roof or institution. It is when men are favoured for tasks and benefits. The BCSACR is facing the same scenario where women are regarded as the second to each project. Gender can be easily defined as individuals’ experiences that acknowledge men instead of



women. Gender inequality is human imbalances that distinguish men as the favoured candidates in a society that is motivated by culture to promote patriarchy and hierarchy. This has been discussed in Chapter Two.

### **1.11.3 Patriarchy**

It is a social organization like the Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region that is marked by the supremacy of one gender over another such as man and woman in the church. It is when one gender depends on the other one for the decisions and implementation of ideas. Patriarchy has an element that marginalizes and contributes to exclusion of women from societal responsibilities. Hence, patriarchy gives power to men who are exercising their rights to oppress other people.

### **1.11.4 Culture**

Since the term culture is central to this study, it deserves attention. Even though the concept of culture has ancient origins, it is used in innumerable different contexts and its precise meaning remains elusive, and sometimes causes confusion. Eliot (1949:100) writes that culture “may be described simply as that which makes life worth living”. Emil Brunner (1948:62), a theologian, states that “culture is the materialization of meaning”.

### **1.11.5 Autonomy**

Autonomy is the prerogative of each local Baptist church to self-government. It is the principle that allows the church to select church leaders and control their funds. It is when the local church directs its local affairs without interference from the mother church. This independence is not only limited to governance, but also the interpretation and execution of the church doctrine. This has significant implications for the issue of the inclusion of women in church governance structures - an issue which is at the core of this study. This autonomy helps to protect the local church from the mother church's domination which tends to hand down orders to the local congregation on what it believes should be the manner of governance and worship. The mother church's view on whether or not women should be included in church governance structures is ostensibly derived from a biblical principle that assumes that only men are to run the affairs of the church. The principle on

which the local church autonomy is founded is that the mother church must not be seen to be interfering with the affairs of the local church. It must not “lord over it” (1 Pet 5:3).

#### **1.11.6 Suppression**

This is an attempt to keep the pain away from one`s very being because the immediate feelings of sorrow make one desperate: I cannot cope; I do not see my way clear through this.

#### **1.11.7 Baptist Church of Southern Africa Cradock Region (BCSACR)**

The Baptist Church of Southern Africa Cradock Region BCSACR is in the sub-region of the Eastern Province Baptist Association EPBA which is an affiliate of the Baptist Union. Interestingly, the membership of EPBA cuts across all socio-economic groupings, including the educated and the illiterate, the rich and the poor. In terms of numbers, women make up the larger proportion of the association’s membership.

#### **1.11.8 Baptist Union of Southern Africa BUSA**

This study would be incomplete without some reference to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and the strategic role it plays.



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#### **1.11.9 Church’s mission**

The primary mission of BUSA is to advance the cause of the kingdom of God in Southern Africa. This involves; (i) promoting unity and brotherly love among its member churches and churches that are working towards becoming members; (ii) disseminating Baptist principles and encouraging religious liberty and (iii) establishing and assisting churches that are upholding Baptist principles.

#### **1.11.10 Baptist Women’s Department (BWD)**

BUSA believes that the priesthood should be accessible to all believers. It is one of the principles that govern their member bodies. Therefore, the Biblical interpretations about women and their lack of status do not serve to undermine God’s will. BUSA (2017) consequently issued ‘A Statement Violence against Women’. The purpose of the Baptist

Women's Department is to empower women who are within the church and support the church financially when necessary.

#### **1.11.11 Baptist National Assembly (BNA)**

In BUSA, the Baptist National Assembly (BNA) takes place once a year. The BNA aims to make sure that BUSA is in a healthy state – operationally and financially – and that the ministry is operating to a high standard. More specifically, the BNA focuses on the following:

- i) each association runs smoothly and fulfils God's mission;
- ii) the Baptist Church is growing in terms of “*ukuzala*” – operating in full capacity almost all the time;
- iii) all recruits for the ministry can attend theological training;
- iv) that the church finances are well managed and secure and responsible financial policies are implemented and adhered to;
- v) the church ministries, departments and other missions are functioning efficiently and in harmony. Resolutions are taken each year at the Assembly. The Baptist National Assembly has a board which has the overarching responsibility for running the affairs of the church. Its role is significant. It also approves the ministers who join the Ministerial Board (MB).

#### **1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The study comprises five chapters which together address the main problem articulated in the research questions. The discussion below is summarizing the chapters of the study:

Chapter One provides the background of the study and how it has addressed the context within which the research questions are addressed.

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive literature review (drawing from both academic works and the Bible) which explores how women have been viewed in the church and society, in different parts of the world and over time, and how perceptions about their status have contributed to their marginalization in the hierarchy of the church.

Chapter Three focuses on the survey conducted among the selected group of participants and presents the data collected during the interviews.

Chapter Four analyses the collected data from the interviews and arrives at preliminary conclusions, noting obvious patterns of response and attitudinal trends.

Chapter Five synthesizes the Chapter Four findings with reference back to the literature and proposes broad strategies for the BCSACR on how to implement the suggestions of men and women to take charge in the governance structures, and it brings the dissertation to a close, offering the final, overarching conclusions about the study as a whole and recommending short- and longer-term actions for the BCSACR.

### **1.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has summarized the rationale approach that has been used in the study, with specific attention given to the research problem and associated questions, the aims and objectives of the research, and many facets of the research methodology. The choice of a qualitative research approach was justified in light of the revealed research gap. The chapter thus provided an important foundation for the other, more in-depth chapters, starting with a comprehensive literature review in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study in this chapter will be looking in-depth at the factors contributing to the exclusion of women from the governance structures of the Baptist Church of South Africa Cradock Region BCSACR. This will be done by investigating what the academic literature and the Scriptures say about women's status in society and the church, and whether women are perceived to be eligible to assume positions of authority in a church's operation. This will help to expose the root causes of gender-based discrimination and offer insights into how this can be tackled – both in the BCSACR and in other churches in South Africa.

The following topics will be probed and discussed in this chapter: gender inequality and women's exclusion from church governance structures, patriarchal attitudes in the church, and women in the church leadership, the proper interpretation and application of the Scriptures, and feminist theory and theology.

Among the theories that underpin this study is Osmer's (2008) Practical Theology theory which Smith (2010) outlines as characterised by borrowing from other disciplines such as Social Sciences and Humanities, the author found himself having to carefully cross disciplinary boundaries to find meaning and gain a deeper understanding of concepts and phenomena. The different disciplines of theology, social sciences and humanities, Müller (1991) argues, converge to represent networks that transverse one another in sharing common epistemological resources. This cross-disciplinary borrowing is necessary to understand the congregants' lives outside the church as some of the challenges dealt with in this study originate from beyond the church boundaries. Cultural influences, for instance, find their way into the church, affecting how women are treated by male fellow congregants.

Consulting business and management literature and borrowing some of their theories and instruments became inevitable as the researcher sought answers and solutions to this study's research questions. Evidence of the cited convergence can be found in the widespread use of leadership programmes that not only focus on the biblical view of leadership but also the modern managerial view. Given this Practical Theology

orientation, placing and discussing the biblical and social sciences material separately would defeat the purpose of presenting the convergence of these disciplines as suggested by Osmer (2008), in a coherent and harmonious collaboration (ChristianLeadershipAlliance, 2019).

## **2.2 GENDER INEQUALITY AND EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM CHURCH GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

Ogato (2013:358-372) notes that the obstacles preventing women from being developed within the church are related to their gender. Indeed, entrenched gender inequality is the contributing factor to how women have been excluded in church governance structures of the BCSACR. This has prevented women from exercising their spiritual gifts and management talents and being allowed to participate fully in the church operation.

Gender inequality has been very much in evidence throughout history. Judging by what the Bible says, it can be traced from the origin when God created Adam and Eve. Hence, Eve was taken from Adam which could be assumed to be her weakness, and her being a lesser person. Over the centuries and to this day, Eve's weakness and her error of judgement in the Garden of Eden have been used as one of the reasons for the exclusion of women from church governance structures. To this day, the BCSACR views women as belonging to a 'lower class' without the necessary skills and emotional strength to be effective in positions of authority, which would require them to be bold and decisive.

The Bible also contains numerous other references to women being inferior or subservient to men, which have been exploited by men throughout the ages, to the disadvantage of women seeking an intervention to be active and play a meaningful role in the church. General societal stereotyping has also resulted in women being disqualified from consideration for high-level or leadership positions in large numbers of churches.

Bachelor (2008) refers to the gift of inclusivity (Eph. 4:11). However, he highlights the fact that women face barriers and prohibitions to assuming leadership positions in the church. These barriers need to be investigated both academically and biblically.

This literature review sets out to establish the causes of this stereotyping, which tends to be passed down from one generation to the next. It includes a probe into why women are often seen to be inferior – a status that many would say they acquire at birth.

Endendijk (2013:1) states “gender stereotypes are widely held beliefs about the characteristics, behaviours, and roles of men and women.” Low (2009:99), in turn, shares that:

Hierarchy is underpinned by four interlocking justifications, namely biological (that male physical strength is part of the intended natural law); cultural (that families and societies are naturally based on aggression, domination, procreation and spouse and children protection); economic (that property, production and distribution of goods are the natural domain of men); and religious (that male superiority, dominance and privilege are part of the received religious revelation).

Therefore, women and girls vs. men and boys are associated with the socially constructed societal attitude of exclusion. This dictates people’s attitudes towards men/boys and women/girls, respectively, and the different opportunities that each group is afforded in life.

According to Low (2009), men are superior to women in many ways – which, in the author’s opinion, is a reflection of a naturally accepted hierarchical order. As one of the pillars of this apparent male superiority is religion, it follows that because of inequality men and women are treated the same in the church. Where such discriminatory attitudes prevail, it is common for women not to be given opportunities to participate in church governance structures.

Women’s exclusion is often justified on the basis that they have family commitments, they are not sufficiently experienced in ‘business’ matters, they are not assertive enough, and the Bible does not provide for their becoming decision-makers/leaders in the church.

Lorber (2010:15) indicates that gender while denoting a particular social status, is a legal designation and an inherent part of someone’s identity. Lorber (2010:100) adds that

gender division and the norms and expectations associated with being a man or a woman permeate the economy and society as a whole – evidenced in state-run and private institutions, the legal system, cultural and religious groups, and the family.

Whether people like it or not, all economic, social, religious and other groups are today characterized by a 'gender-based social order'. How progressive and liberal these groups are when it comes to achieving a fair gender balance will inevitably impact their effectiveness.

The prevalence of gender stereotyping, particularly the dominance of men over women in many areas of life, is reinforced by Njoroge (2009:4) who states:

Historically, gender roles have been ordered hierarchically, with men exercising power and control over women. Male dominance and female subordination have both ideological and material bases. Patriarchy has been entrenched in social, religious and cultural forms, institutionalized in the law and political structures embedded in local and global economies. It has been ingrained in formal ideologies and public discourse.

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Gender inequality has been exercised for marginalization and segregation over others to discourage forces which do not align with God's creation, nor His vision of humanity. Gender inequality stands in opposition to God's work, particularly in making the church a messenger of His word.

What is concerning is that discrimination against women in the church has at times appeared to be the result of deliberate tampering with history. DeConick (2011:147) said, "it is more disturbing that authentic memories of women in the early church were intentionally replaced with misogynist narratives and that misogynist narratives were made sacred or holy".

Shaming the women is vilifying and marginalizing them in the early days of Christianity are among the most dishonourable acts ever committed in the history of Christianity. According to DeConick (2011:182), the "role of women in the church" changes as



Christianity is positioned and repurposed by such figures as Titian and Clement (both discussed by DeConick) about a lengthy philosophical inheritance, which Gaca discuss.

DeConick (2011:147) further notes that recorded stories about women must not be disregarded and undermined since the contribution of men has been noted towards the issue of inequality. The unreliability of the stories stems from the fact that, at that time, male figures in the church had a vested interest in protecting their positions of power. They were not prepared, therefore, to share their status with women and would resort to relegating women to a lowlier status, if need be, to entrench their authority.

Many arguments, concerning the Scriptures, have been put forward by the church in an attempt to convince people of men's superiority over women. Hence, the debate is significant for the study. Regarding the debate about whether women should be ordained as priests, the church BCSACR has often argued why Jesus did not choose women when He chose the twelve. It is the researcher's view that Jesus' had a goal to achieve and men were more suited to His goal.



Furthermore, women were not allowed to preach or teach in the church because of their gender. It has been embraced in that church as a principle that women should accept. (MacDonald, 2010:76). The church also used the Biblical text for marginalization and subordination of women to be excluded from church governance structures.

Remedios (2016:8) observes that in the New Testament, there are references to women acting in the capacities of followers, mothers and leaders who contributed to the development of Christian theology and praxis. Such involvement gave women a sense of identity, both personally and within the Christian community.

One must accept that the church is not a homogeneous entity. Consequently, there is a broad range of opinions about gender (in) equality in the church and whether there is overt discrimination against women, which has hampered their spiritual and professional growth. While the issue of gender inequality in the workplace has been given increasing attention in recent years all over the world, some churches are still resistant to the equality narrative (Pierce & Groothuis, 2004:13).

Men and women are, admittedly, different. However, this does not justify men somehow enjoying a perpetual prerogative to positions of authority and leadership in God's house. Bhasera (1994:4) indicates that men and women are equal to God, though their roles seemed to be different. He says that while the sexes have specific roles in society, the responsibilities should be the same and promotes equality for each other. He also maintains that a lack of respect for women impedes human development in a broader societal context.

The researcher agrees with Klein (2004:49) when she says: "In my view, women's place in the church is today more a male problem than mine". She goes on to ask a very pertinent question: "Why are they (men) not devoting their theology to the ethical issues that are raised by gender discrimination?" (Klein, 2004:49). In a Christian context, men will not know the fullness of the Gospel while they continue to practice the 'sin model' arising from the Fall. "But perhaps in our generation, we will have an opportunity to take a large step back in the right direction" (Wright 2005:12).



In his reference to a passage from the Corinthians, Gorman (2004:264) puts it very aptly:

"Within this exegetical morass, one very important aspect of the text, about which all interpreters should be able to agree, is often overlooked: Paul assumes without hesitation or discussion that women, like men, may pray and prophesy – speak both to God and for God in the gathered church" (11:4–5). Gorman (2004) concludes that men and women should be treated equally and serve in the same manner in God's work.

"In the Lord, however, a woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God" (1 Cor. 11:11–12). It is interesting that the very passages from Scripture that propose a 'male domination' and 'woman subordination' approach to gender and role relationships also often contain verses that counter such a view. These verses (and the accompanying anomalies) are important for a study on the subject of gender.

1 Corinthians 11:3–10 is often seen by traditionalists as the final word on the subject. The position adopted in Ephesians 1:27 is particularly interesting: "So God created man

(Adam) in his image, in the image of God he created him; male (ish) and female (ishah) he created them.” Thus, human identity and gender equality are both emphasized.

In the New International Version NIV of the Bible, some interesting, additional points emerge, emanating from the original language. First of all, the translated word for ‘God’ takes the plural form, ‘*Elohim*’. “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should change his mind” (Num. 23:19). God is God! According to the words in the text, the ‘plural God’ created the single human being to be a complex human being, *Adam*. Following on from this, using Hebrew parallelism, the same point is repeated several times, for clarification. Furthermore, Adam was created in God’s image and His likeness. Importantly, in Genesis 2: “male and female he created them.” In one sense, the text is explaining that Eve is also ‘*Adam*’ and was created equally in the ‘*Imago Dei*’ (image and likeness of God).

The sections that follow will examine how the number of women who do make it to management or leadership positions in the church has been declining, how gender is sometimes an uncomfortable or contentious topic in the Bible, and the status of women in the Jewish, Christian and African traditions.

### **2.2.1 Declining numbers of women in church governance structures**

Given the foregoing discussion on gender stereotyping and the Bible’s role in this regard, there are several factors contributing to the falling number of women in church leadership positions and governance structures (Haloviak, 1990).

The number of women who have responded to the calling and taken up full-time, responsible positions in the church has been declining over the years as very often such positions do not cater to women’s needs. Haloviak (1990) indicates that traditionally only men were considered for ordination and full-time (including management) positions in the church. The church voted to ordain as ministers those who had practical experience in “winning souls”. As a result, women were inadvertently eliminated or dropped from consideration.

Dasher (1992:77) identifies the main factors behind the decline of women in church leadership and governance structures as follows: (i) the growing number of professionally trained male ministers, (ii) the gradual increase of women who are working, is evidenced in some institutions and they run budgets of those and the pressure is upon them for decision-making though the power is still in the hands of men, (iii) renewing of a stable and nurturing home environment, with motherhood promoted as the most fulfilling role for women.

### **2.2.2 Gender: An uncomfortable topic in the Bible**

The BCSACR takes its authority from the Bible and so the likelihood of the BCSACR being influenced by certain Scriptures in the way it views women's eligibility for leadership positions, is very high.

Oduyoye (2004) asserts that different versions of the Bible have been used to serve the interest of a certain gender which is a traditional socio-cultural that oppresses women. Hence, the African church is still using the text (Hebrew Scriptures) as well of Pauline Epistles that enforces traditional model for religion and culture, especially how women are viewed. In his book *Understanding Human Sexuality*, he confirms that "women are afforded a lesser status to men in many parts of Africa" (Oduyoye, 2004).

Izugbara (2004:13) says that the fact that men are given precedence over women effectively silences women and suppresses any potential opposition to men's status. In religious narratives, men are depicted to be created as children of God who were expected to work the earth, whereas women came second, created to provide comfort to the already domineering men.

Cowles (1993), Mwaura (2005), Robinson (2011) and Scott (2001), assert that creation consists of man and woman, each with a specific (and equally important) part to play. There are numerous Biblical references to this effect, including Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:28. The notion of equality of men and women is aligned to the concept of *Imago Dei*, as found in Genesis – that, men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. Olsen (1988:29) has alluded to the point that human beings are the result

of a divine design, with both men and women able to attain righteousness and worthy of being groomed for the ministry.

Yet the interpretation of Genesis 1 has also stirred contrary views about how the male and female genders should be viewed. For example, some scholars use the creation story in Genesis 1 to argue that in some respect women are subordinate to men. The narrative about Adam and Eve and how they disobeyed God conveys the impression that Eve was mostly to blame for the sin that was committed.

Cowles (1993) says that “this has been interpreted as women being the weaker sex and naturally more prone to sin than men.” Cowles (1993) further notes that women should not be treated less because Eve was the first person to sin, instead she deserves an opportunity to participate in any leadership that has been tasked. A woman must not be denied an opportunity to advise or make any decision.

Bacchiocchi (1993) makes a case for equality but also submission on the part of women, which supports the idea of equality and they must not be subordinates of men that oppress them because of gender. Such gender disparity evident in the Bible shows that Jesus lived and taught in a patriarchal society, but he was determined to counteract this cultural norm (Cowles, 1993; Mwaura, 2005; Waweru, 2011). The researcher believes the ministry of Jesus has challenged gender inequality that sought to fail the liberation of women. Hence, He has addressed the barriers with social cultures in society.

Eph. 5:21–25 calls upon women to submit to their husbands who are the head of their families. However, authors such as Cowles (1993) and Prior (1985) argued that the hermeneutical principles of Apostle Paul could have exposed the context broader than this in response to the present challenge that most churches are facing. Regardless, of silencing a woman in the church, Paul specified the role of women in the church.

This study does not dwell too much on the issue of gender discomfort in the Bible because there is scope for misinterpretation, as mentioned above. What is given more attention is how Jesus set out to open people’s minds and provide opportunities for women to learn about and become spiritually well-equipped for service to God. This forms part of the

process of removing the stumbling blocks to women attaining recognition and responsible positions in the church.

### **2.2.3 The status of women in leadership: The need for social change**

Among the challenges faced by women in BCSACR is gaining access to opportunities that offer decision-making and participation in governance structures. This problem is by no means unusual in church circles as discrimination of this nature is evident, to a greater or lesser extent, across all economic sectors.

Several women have shown interest in church positions to add value, but the church refers members to what the Scripture says about women being permitted to preach or teach. Whenever women have tried to get involved in the running of the church, several factors have got in the way, ranging from male-dominated attitudes and traditional socio-cultural norms to 'church politics' which tend to give men the upper hand.

When women have been nominated for decision-making positions in the BCSACR, the reaction from some men confirms what Morgan (2004:42) highlights, i.e., throughout history, religion has been characterized by unjust, exclusivist practices which legitimize male superiority in society. Such discrimination has been legitimized with help from the Scriptures (or, in some cases, the selective interpretation thereof).

Ndute (1998:99–104) highlighted how the situation of women on BCSACR has been perpetuated by tradition that brings oppression of one gender in the church. It has been observed that BCSACR is a male-dominated church that is influenced by patriarchy. Female theologians, such as Kiamba (2012), recognize how an ideology like patriarchy (see section 2.3) has seeped into the Christian church over an extended period and has become part of the church's character. Gaba (1971) believes that women have spiritual abilities which are acknowledged more in African Traditional Religion (ATR) than in Christianity. Yet it does not necessarily advance their cause for a more prominent role in church structures.

Muga (2009) states that in Kenya, women's representation in church governance structures is the result of a significant struggle (on the part of women themselves) to

achieve the recognition and status that are due to them – both within the confines of the church and within the broader socio-political sphere.

In this study, it is revealed that not all women are uncomfortable with how their gender is viewed (Kanyaro, 1999:140). For example, other women are accepted to participate in the church effectively, while others are restricted. They are not even granted a platform to do collective ministry.

Women who resist gender-based stereotypes feel bewildered by passages in the Scripture that insist that women should submit to the authority of men (Keyser, 2011). Women or at least those with leadership aspirations and potential believe that men should pursue ways of making it easier for women to engage in decision-making.

Phiri and Kaunda (2016) assert that the church should accept the fact that equality and self-reliance of women could be to join the ministry and be able to play a valuable role in forging partnerships between men and women.

Gender is an important facet of what God created. It is for this reason that the abilities, gifts, and skills of both men and women should be valued equally. It is an affront to God, churchgoers and society as a whole to hear that, women are not considered suitable to lead and that barriers are erected in the path of those who wish to contribute to God's mission. Gender bias certainly does not boost God's mission or make it easier to deliver His good news (BCSACR, 2013). The church cannot purport to glorify God while a segment of the congregation is excluded from important processes of governance, because of culture, patriarchy or gender.

#### **2.2.4 The status of women in leadership: Jewish Christian traditions**

The status of women is also an important focus area in Jewish and Christian history. In pre-monarchical Israel, the family household was the entity that served the needs of all family members. Women were the household managers. Masenya, (2013:138), however, believes that society should respect women because most of them are given opportunities or assuming leadership positions. In this regard, Olajubu (1991:75) highlights the leadership roles played by Miriam (Ex 15:1–21), Deborah (Jdg. 5) and Esther (Es 4:14,

16). Similarly, Odendal (1994:256) points out noteworthy instances in the Old Testament when women (Deborah, Esther and Ruth) took personal responsibility as well as broader responsibility for the nation, although the stories were told from a male perspective (Odendal, 1994:256).

Masenya, (2013:141) notes that though men were introduced to take responsibility in an institution such as a monarchy, women were explained, why they were excluded. With the advent of the monarchy, women's role in the church and household were downplayed and devalued compared to men's activities which were performed in the public sphere. Thus, it was amazing for a woman to take that stance and perform such ministry moreover, in the Israelite culture. This helps to explain the pre-eminence of male priests throughout the ages (Masenya, 2013:143).

Borrows (1982:135) affirms that women were rated rather low, in the eyes of the law that was dominated by men in the Old Testament times. Generally, the position of women was not high as today where women are given offices and huge responsibilities, unlike in Hebrew society. Collins (1972:796) states that "women were regarded as an inferior species to be owned like cattle, incapable of participating in the mysteries of the worship of Yahweh".

Classens (2013:607) discusses the story of how the daughter of Jephthah (Jdg. 11:20-40) had been dehumanized by patriarchal practices against women. The argument here is the grace that this had while she was young and had no recognition. This has been amazing because one had to surround herself with males to be honoured. It was even through the exercising of patriarchal power that Jephthah's daughter lost her life.

Masenya (2013:144) notes the post-exilic situation that has the significance of showing the role of women during those days. Hence, it is mentioned that during post-exilic the autonomy and decision-making were exercised when the families collapsed and had fallen back of the central power of community structures that favoured the authority of women allowing them to flourish in households as managers. This is the evidence from the Jewish women's lives in the Elephantine documents, that women have inherited property and assumed property rights (Masenya, 2013:148).



However, relying on the Hebrew term 'sopheret' in Ezra 2:55 and Nehemiah 6:57, Masenya (2013) observes that there were females who were scribes while returning from exile from Babylonian. Amongst them, were males and females who played the role of singing. (Ez. 2:65; Neh. 6:67). Masenya (2013) added that though returning from exile women were not regarded as secondary but rather, as men's property (Masenya, 2013:146). The status of women from exile onwards was really low and women's participation in synagogue worship was largely passive.

### **2.2.5 The status of women in leadership: African ministries**

Several African scholars have exegeted the passage 1 Corinthians 14, which throws light on the focus of this study. Ademiluka (2007:76-96) notes that attitudes vary from one denomination to the next. The earliest church was mission-oriented that has established and adhered to doctrines and practices that have contributed to stereotyping the church. It has been introduced by early missionaries in Africa. Hence, women were not included in God's mission because leadership was more denominational style or practice, which has been a reference in the 1 Corinthians text. The other group of churches is the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

Therefore, the Pentecostal churches began to introduce the inclusion of women in church affairs and it was a natural progression in some cases. The ministries such as Cherubim and Seraphim Church, have embraced the participation of women. Hence women were given the title of Mother in Israel (denoting a high rank in the leadership hierarchy) in local branches of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (Ademiluka, 2007:79-80).

Women are very involved in churches on the African continent. Not only are they appointed as deaconesses, but they also founded many churches in their own right (Olajubu, 1991:79, 1993:142). For example, women have founded numerous churches throughout Nigeria. When the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) was established, it did not envisage the participation of women in leadership structures, but with time, the female began to exhibit their gifts of prophecy, get more involved and earned experience for acceptance. Yet, there are African countries such as Nigeria, where the churches are still divided over the concept of whether women can form the ministry governance

The very same African churches excluded women based on non-inclusion practices from biblical 1 Corinthians. In contrast, churches that support the inclusion of women believe that this text must not impede women who are playing more active and senior roles in the church. Hagberg (2003) tackles the issue of women in leadership positions in the African church in his book, *Real Power*. According to Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003), the ambiguity or uncertainty surrounding women's place and leadership potential in the church is a continental problem and is evident in several faiths other than Christianity.

## **2.3 PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES IN THE CHURCH**

### **2.3.1 How patriarchy manifests in the church**

Patriarchy has exerted power over women, dominance, oppression and/or exploitation of women (Laurien, 2004:1). Laurien (2004:1) adds that patriarchy has been inherited by our forefathers, having been passed on to the present generation of BCSACR. It extends well behind the household and has taken root in many corners of society (Laurien, 2004:1).

Masenko and Kilonzo (2001:45) report that patriarchy, as a discriminatory force, cuts the cultural boundaries and women's constraints through the exercising and tolerance of male dominance. Njoroge (2009:4) believes that "patriarchy has been entrenched in social, religious and cultural norms, institutionalized in the law and political structures".

Wood (2012:1) states that "history teaches us what people before us did, what their intentions were and where they failed or went wrong. If historical viewpoints about women reflect women's subordination and oppression, they force women to discover their roots and their past." In the eyes of its promoters and supporters, patriarchy has long been – and continues to be - a cornerstone of life, something that is eternal and endorsed by God.

Patriarchy, which is the root cause of exclusion, overlaps the subject of inclusion within the society that has adopted it as a lifestyle. This is because it is so closely intertwined with male identity, centrism, dominance and control.

Shantz (1995) says “men enjoy a monopoly of power. He proposes a dismantling of the system of patriarchy so that men and women can share the joys and burdens of responsibility equally. This needs to happen without each having to aggressively compete with and in the process diminish the other.”

The book of Deuteronomy 20:19 refers to man as a tree in the field. In his book, *The Gender Knot*, Johnson (2014:18-20) uses the metaphor of a tree (with its solid trunk and complex root and branch system) to explain the concept of patriarchy. Johnson (2014:28), discusses how patriarchy has contributed to membership segregation that symbolizing ideologies, beliefs, and values represent the core of the problem as this is where centrism and controls are located for male dominance.

Patriarchy has an element of male-dominated in the church and becomes hard to address it. Hence, branches, in turn, resemble the many social institutions that shape and support patriarchy. Johnson (2014:7) also asserts that society as a whole tends to support and perpetuate a system of patriarchy, from school principals and religious leaders to government officials and business professionals. Men are also traditionally seen as the head of the household.



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French (1985:16) argues that women have been segregated throughout history and that has caused them to be dependent. Hence, women have become victims of patriarchy, limiting their rights and decision-making. Women were unable to make means of production. The movement of women and freedom of speech has been restricted.

Kumbi (2007:113) simply defines patriarchy and says that “in the African socio-cultural context, there is much suppression and domination of women by men who look to culture and religious tradition to justify their behaviour. Very often, the roles assigned to women have cultural and historical roots and involve women primarily operating in the household as homemakers and nurturers of the family.”

Makoro (2007:59–60) further suggests that women should not be allowed to lead because (1) the doctrine says otherwise, (2) economic and financial constraints prevent them from doing so, and (3) the female gender does not lend itself to leadership. Makoro (2007) added that women are suited to working in the household, not adopting leadership roles.

Isichei (1993:209) adds that Christianity seems to reinforce traditional patriarchal values. Many western feminists, in turn, would question the widely held belief that Christianity empowers, with some concluding that Christianity is irredeemably patriarchal because the church has throughout the ages (and to this day) marginalized, oppressed and silenced women.

Robert (2002:212) argues that European governors and missionaries, in spreading Christianity in Africa, were not meant for women to have political and socio-economic power and therefore overlooked the leadership roles that women held in traditional institutions. Robert (2002) adds that the colonialists stripped women of their economic roles and relegated them to the home environment (away from the public domain), upsetting the delicate gender balance that had once prevailed. This gave rise to the differential, unfair treatment of men and women.

Hence, the African women who became Christians were encouraged to become household wives and assist their husbands with tea. They have been encouraged to take care of children and be responsible for their gardens. In modern times, women in the church have often been delegated the roles of cleaning, arranging flowers and performing various caring duties (Getui & Obeng 2003:110–111).

Classical orthodoxy has subjugated the church to Christianity. Hence, patriarchy denies that women are created by God in His image, therefore, women are not the bearers of sin and becoming spiritually poor. The exclusion of women from church governance structures is caused by the perpetuation of patriarchy which, as has been noted, is a remnant from ancient times but is still prevalent today. It can be argued that, instead of it being a liberator of women's rights, the church has contributed to the endorsement of the ancient view of women being inferior.

The marginalization, oppression and exclusion of women are evident in the Bible and have been very pronounced throughout history, notwithstanding the responsibility of the church to protect women from oppression. The church cannot pretend to be ignorant about inequality in their ranks, either blind to the need that had to be eradicated. This is part of the supremacy ideology in which the BCSACR has practised patriarchy that

promotes male supremacy in both aspects of physical and spiritual domains. Landman (2009:40) has listed the spheres that are problematic at BCSACR such, as household, church leadership, desire, family, religious discourse, marriage and intimacy. Landman (2009) added the dominance of man in marriage and lamented how patriarchy is believed and allowed people to exercise their rights. Hence, women became the subordinates of men.

The church which is the body of Christ is a male-dominated institution. Because of this male dominance women are excluded from taking up leadership positions. Women are only considered fit to play a reproduction role in society. Men, on the other hand, are considered the only gender that must take the responsibility of heading households and automatically societal roles.

Patriarchy dominates all ideologies – economic, political, social and religious which is why the effects are felt so broadly (Johnson, 2000:77). It even influences the nature and trajectory of scientific endeavour (Johnson, 2014:17). It is not surprising, therefore, that within the faith communities, the prevalence of equality will take time to serve its goal because patriarchy prohibits women from becoming influential in ministry. Rather, men become the dominant gender in the church issues.

Patriarchy is conditioned to secure men who are regarded as oppressors in any institution that believes in the hierarchy as a powerful ideology. In other cases, the church approves the principles that lead to segregation. Then, women become inferior to men who expect women to be submissive (Madlala-Routledge, 2009:4).

Karan-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (2003:8) assert that today's churches such as Catholics and Protestants are still wrestling with the concepts of social and spiritual equality between men and women. Ana (2001:21–23) states that it has been directed by God through the Bible the notion of women becoming second-class citizens when compared to men. Makhene (1997) points out that the early church's view of women being misbegotten men and devil's doorway was misogynistic and evil, which the Scriptures then manipulated to humiliate, silence, and marginalize women. This led to their being undermined and devalued in the eyes of churches all over the world and to being denied

access to decision-making and leadership roles (Carim *et al.*, 2014:167). This is the reason the following sub-heading develops on how the cultural patriarchy has impacted the exclusion of women in the church governance structures.

### **2.3.2 Cultural patriarchy**

As the patriarchy that has become so well entrenched lacks any divine or Biblical validity, it can be concluded that it has a cultural foundation. The prevalence of ‘cultural patriarchy’ (which is directly or indirectly supported by the leaders of the church) explains why so many women have been sucked into subordinate roles and still face inequality (and at times violence). Gender-based violence has been an issue that is trending in South Africa that needs the institution's attention. Therefore, women and children are the most vulnerable groups in this conduct. Hence the government working with churches is protected under the Constitution (DWCPD, 2014), while gender-based violence against women affects deep-seated cultural patriarchy, race, religion, socio-economic status, age and religion,



Culture is a socially perceived set of characteristics that distinguishes men from women and determines how each gender should behave and be treated. Gender roles are learned through socialization and are linked to people’s educational background, culture and tradition (Ajay & Omoyibo, 2011:37–43). Livermore (2009:80–81) defines it more simply, as a feeling of reacting to various ways and patterns of thinking.

Owanikin (2006:209) asserts that culture is rooted in and affects the status of women in the church. Theron (2015:55) adds that:

There can also be little doubt that the culture in which a church finds itself is exerting influence on it. Some cultural norms and practices may have entered a church and shaped consciously or unconsciously its actions and decisions, causing suffering to those who usually form the largest part of its membership, the women.

Jeffreys (2002:2000), in turn, argues that in a patriarchal environment, religious arguments are used to justify culture-based injustices toward women. For example, in

some societies, women are prohibited to participate in private and public spheres. Therefore, the issue of seeing themselves taking charge in the church becomes impossible daily. At a more fundamental level, women are often denied the right to education, to work outside the home, to choose their marriage partner, to choose whether or not to have children, to institute divorce proceedings, to explore their sexual nature, and even to what they can and cannot wear.

Shonayin (2012:98) states that Africa should protect women and address the existing gaps that were there before, instead of repeating the same conduct towards women and the same challenges committed against women and justified based on long-held traditional beliefs. When taken to their extreme, culture and traditional attitudes have resulted in African women falling victim to early marriages, polygamy, spouse-induced mistreatment and violence, genital mutilation and honour killings – with no consequences for the instigators and perpetrators of such treatment.

#### **2.4 WOMEN IN THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

Osmer (2008:25) says that the church needs leaders who represent all designated groups, without any consideration for one gender being superior to or more suitable than another. Hackerman and Jones (1996:12), in turn, stress that the church needs to adopt the mindset that leadership is broader than the duties assigned to the official leaders of an organization or a community.

Regarding studies on leadership, Shantz (1995:6–7) points out that when men talk about the role of women in leadership positions, but women are not part of the conversation, men tend to make unfounded presuppositions. The Shona adage, *Kuye ranega viiyoiripo (measure a snake with a bark string when it is present)*, is relevant in this regard. The church indeed must support women and address the problem of their exclusion from management and leadership positions and governance structures, but they need to be part of the discussions and solutions.

Charlton (1997:533-613) has a different view that women should consider responsibilities instead of pursuing joining the clergy. Charlton (1997) further highlighted that, women must work with other women so that they share and find solutions for themselves Miller

(1976:53-83) adds that “foundational work pointed out the importance that women attribute to emotional connectedness, cooperation with others and creativity”. Miller (1976:54) goes on to say that women, more easily than men, can believe that any activity is more satisfying when it takes in the context of a relationship with other human beings when it leads to enhancing others.

Miller (1976:73) further highlighted that cooperation and creativity as being among women’s particular strengths because serving others goes to the heart of how women are mentally and emotionally ‘wired’. These attributes are also valuable because they help women to develop and further their attachment to and affiliation with others (Miller, 1976:83). Charlton (1997) suggests that women should establish support groups that could be a useful vehicle for women to address common concerns, which could include a range of issues affecting women in or close to the ministry (including limited access to high-level positions in the church).

Notwithstanding the value of women-centred support groups, the church leadership itself (which is typically male-dominated) should actively promote and welcome women’s participation in governance structures. Not only would a more even spread of women in leadership positions provide personal satisfaction to the individuals concerned, but it would also ensure that the church becomes more attuned to women’s issues and challenges as members of the church and broader society.

The book, *Women in Ministry*, edited by Nancy Vhymeister (1998:378), is dedicated to promoting the significance of inclusiveness to all members of the body of Christ. Davidson (1998:157-179) asserts that women featured in the Scriptures constitute the sole evidence of the fact that deliberately excluding women from church governance or leadership positions have no valid foundation. There is plenty of evidence in the Bible that women were assigned various roles and elevated to responsible positions.

Some of the women in the Bible were judges and teachers in the sanctuary and even pastors, such as Phoebe and Junia, as reported in the New Testament. Bernoi (1998:220) believed that there are women who have responded to the calling and they became



preachers of the Good News. Then, the researcher believed that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is for man and woman, hence, the church should allow all those who are called.

From the very outset, Jesus demonstrated that man and woman are recipients of the Gospel. “Even so, the prominence of women among Jesus’ followers and his closeness to several, notably the two Marys, of Magdala and Bethany, must have raised a few eyebrows in ‘polite society’ at the time” (Dunn, 2003:537). Mary Magdalene was delivered from seven demons and she became a disciple. Such deliverance was a radical act on the part of a Jewish rabbi since it involved his reaching ‘down’ to a woman possessed by demons to free her and restore her rightful human dignity.

Dunn (2003:536) said that “the presence of women among Jesus’ disciples and followers should not be doubted, and several seem to have been closer to him than even some of the twelve.” Women played a vital role in the wider circle: “Jesus and his team were able to rely on village hospitality (Mark 6:10), and there is a firm tradition that several women acted as a support team, following him (Mark 15:40-41) and providing for him from their means (Luke 8:2-3)” (Dunn, 2003:322).

Many agree that Mary Magdalene was the ‘woman’ who came to Jesus while He was being entertained in the home of Simon, the Pharisee, after breaking her jar of perfume, she embraced a dignity that she had never known before. Jesus uttered a very significant statement on this occasion. “She has done a beautiful thing to me. I tell you the truth, wherever this Gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her” (Matt. 26:13). If Jesus had mentioned the name of Mary to His disciples, it would be wise that BCSACR does the same ministry towards women. Mary had been liberated to experience her full human dignity and thankfulness in a way that the men in the room could not have appreciated.

## **2.5 PROPER INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURES**

The Bible has many texts from the Scriptures that bring people’s understanding of the status of women among members of the body of Christ. The interpretation and application of Paul’s letter are problematic, especially about women. In 2 Peter 3:16, Peter admits and warns that some of Paul’s writings “contain some things that are hard to understand,

which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do to other Scriptures, to their destruction”.

However, if one reads Paul’s writings properly and his positive attitude towards the involvement of women who had to be instrumental in the church one would see the real meaning of the writings. The fact that the texts are claimed to paint a negative, critical picture of women’s role and participation in the church is due to their being misconstrued by men because of selective interpretation or a lack of attention. For example, in the opening of Rom. 16, Paul commends “Phoebe, a servant of the church” (v.1). There is no indication in this chapter that Paul despised women.

In the closing chapter of Romans, Paul in his greeting demonstrates that he had a soft spot for women. In chapter 16, of those people who are acknowledged as co-labourers and greeted by name, seven are women. Paul not only greeted these women as believers but also as women who “worked hard among” them. Moreover, Paul included women in the Gospel Commission (GC) and viewed them as co-workers in the Gospel (Phil. 4:3). Some of Paul’s most misunderstood texts are discussed below.

### **2.5.1 Covering of the head**



Paul acknowledges the value of women’s participation in prayer and their prophetic teaching or preaching gifts. When he said, “but if any man seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the church of God”, he was not conveying a doctrine that forbade women to preach – rather he was issuing a correction regarding women covering their heads at a local level (v.5). In 1 Cor. 11:11, 12, Paul asserts that head covering was not a universal rule that applies to women but a cultural aspect that represents respect during worship. In v.12, Paul has been challenging the view that a woman was made from a man, hence, a man came from a woman as means of reproduction. Since both came from each other, neither can be proudly claimed to be the source of another, rather “all things are from God”.

Then, Paul’s references towards head covering were to show the usual distinction between man and woman must be eliminated through the realization that both are one in Christ and created in the image of God. Over time, the church has misinterpreted some

texts in the Scriptures to exclude women from active involvement in church affairs and church governance structures.

The teaching towards the short hair was to segregate women and see them as less than human, adulterers and prostitutes. This was the symbol of disrespect according to the Corinthian church even though Paul's point was valid. Hence, Paul was allegedly making, what is contestable, that she was unfit to approach God who gave her long hair as, through praying and prophesying, as she would represent herself indecently to God. The argument here is when a woman uncovered her head while performing Godly duties and cuts her hair to look like any man in the church, becomes disrespectful to the church as per the culture (Naylor, 1996:206).

Blazen (1977:82–83), highlights a point that is a challenge at a rural conference where women have been oppressed because according to the church of Corinth it was an offence to pray and prophesy while a woman's head is uncovered, hence, Paul was rebuking the conduct to the church because it was quick to spread as false teachers were very strong. During Paul's time, it was a requirement for women in Corinth to cover their heads when praying or prophesying in the church (Richards, 1985:328). A head covering was a way of identifying the genders who were in the church. It was the practice in Corinth to differentiate between good and bad men and women.

Richards (1985) says that “a woman must live within her culture rather than deny her womanhood by dressing like a man. A woman in the Corinthian church would have prayed and prophesied wearing a head veil while a man would have performed those functions without a veil.” Both should have been proud of their particular place in the social norms prevailing at the time. Therefore, all women who were in the church with their heads uncovered were labelled and segregated as the most disrespectful. In some pagan religions, women worshipped while allowing their long hair to remain uncovered. By covering her head, a woman also signalled that she was married (Nichol, 1980) and accepted a man as the head of her household.

Notwithstanding the above, nothing can detract from God's glory – irrespective of whether women's heads are covered or uncovered. Hence, Paul suggests that women should be

subordinate in the church. Rather, he asserts that what is created equal remains equal through Christ (Gal. 3:26–28).

### **2.5.2 Ways in which women are silenced**

An examination of 1 Corinthians chapter 14 reveals that this part of the Scriptures was concerned with using the gift of tongues and that man and woman should remain silent if the church is without an interpreter (vv. 27, 28). Therefore, divorced women, widows and single women would not have an opportunity to contribute to God's ministry, because the text had been literally taken (14:33-35). They do not have husbands to support them and this isolates them. This led to these women being overlooked in the church. Significantly, Paul is suggesting that a church cannot be extrapolated to the whole of Christianity – just as one cannot impose an isolated cultural requirement on a specific incident at a particular point in time on successive waves of people in subsequent eras. The most skewed interpretation of the text would be that no woman can be ordained for a leadership position in the church. Even something as simple as singing during service would not be tolerated.

Robins (2011) urges women to develop their various God-given gifts for the development of the Body of Christ, saying:



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Experience has proved that many females possess the natural qualifications for speaking in public, the range of thought, the faculty of communicating their ideas in an appropriate language, the sympathy for suffering humanity, a deep and lively sense of gratitude to God, and the beauty of holiness, a zeal for the honour of God, and the happiness of his rational creatures. All these are found among the female part of the human family, as frequent and as eminently as among the men. Then let no stumbling block be thrown in their way, but let the place that God calls them to fill, let them not be bound down to silence by church rules.

As with 1 Cor 14:27, 28, 33-35, a literal interpretation of 1 Tim 2:11-15 is segregating because all women in the church shall be unable to exercise their spiritual gifts or voice a word towards religious instructions because of their gender and how the scripture is understood. Women would show their appreciation for being members of the church

through preaching, talking, and singing. Vyhmeister (1998:350) discusses “the primary intention of 1 Tim 2:8-15 is not to specify the relationship that should exist between men and women. Rather, it contains advice directed to a specific situation in Ephesus”. The emphasis in this passage is to add that women are not part of God’s ministry for any church leadership, rather, women should remain in the household of their husbands. Hence, it takes the eternal normative that prohibits them from any form of teaching (v. 12). While other passages that give the authority for women to teach, prophesy and pray contravenes the hermeneutical principle of the unity of Scripture.

It should also be noted that the text alludes to the fact that women will be saved through childbearing, with the underlying implication that women are continually being punished because of their original sin. Interpreting the text literally in this way could lead to a misunderstanding about the status core of our Christianity. The Scriptures say, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). The church of God is therefore inclusive, without any gender-based cultural patriarchy.

In 1 Tim it is not suggested that women should alone carry the burden of what happened in Eden where Eve sinned first. But men are not saved from sin differently, as everyone is saved through Jesus Christ who died for all. Furthermore, the statements, “women should not have authority over men” and “she must keep silent” do not mean that women should not use Scripture as an authority to command changes in the lives of men.

Looking at the broader context of 1Tim 2, one can see that Paul was addressing false teachings (1:3, 4, 18, 20, 6:3-5) and it appears women were implicated. Barron (2003:635) observes that Gnostics had “tendencies to elevate women as favoured instruments of revelation”. Barron believes Paul “refutes” that women should be developed and elevated for better positions so that they become the best leaders according to the Gnostic arguments. The authority that Paul referred to is a negative one, which leads to sinful conduct, and it excludes women from church positions.

Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC, 2005) argues the understanding of leadership in the church, that needs to be stressed that the church is the Body of Christ in the sense that Christ occupied a body when he was on earth but was also the

embodiment of virtue and spiritual enlightenment (1 Cor. 12:27). It follows, therefore, that women are part of this body. The church is a living organism as it grows constantly and is not a self-sufficient or closed system. It is not only answerable to itself but also to the wider community, which is well represented by women.

### **2.5.3 Submission in the face of hierarchy**

The sequence of how God created man and woman is the basis for Paul's view that women should be denied access to church leadership. Paul's concern was the heresy of the false teachers who were teaching and bringing wrong doctrines (1 Tim 1:3-7). Since some women were not versed in the Law, they were susceptible to being led astray by those "promulgating doctrines of demons", silly myths and old wives' tales (4:1, 7). Thus, Paul asked that they learn in silence and not teach in church. This is because of their vulnerability to deception. Paul uses Genesis as an illustration, which was not to be taken as normative for eternity.

There are misconceptions about Paul's saying in 1 Cor. 11:11, 12, where he says, "In the Lord, a woman is not independent of man or man of woman, for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman". This seems to be a reminder of men's derivation from women and vice versa as a testament to their equality. There is no submission where there is no mutual submission. In Eph. 5:18-32, Paul instructs couples to be mutually submissive.

Paul compares the husband-wife relationship to the God–Christ relationship and the Christ husband and man relationship (1 Cor. 11:3). Paul brings an understanding of how hierarchy operates among equals, for Christ is equal with God (John 5:18; Phil 2:6) yet subordinate to God (John 14:28).

Paul commands both men and women to be "filled with the Spirit", overflowing with joy, making melodies, and giving thanks, and to "be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ. Christ subjected Himself to humanity, though equal with God emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:5–7). While asking believers to submit to one another, Paul also asks them to "honour one another above yourselves" (Rom 12:10), and in humility to put others above themselves (Phil 2:3).

In upholding the principle of equality, Christ declared that to rule is to serve and to be over is to be under (Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:24–27). Unfortunately, the preoccupation with women’s sinful nature evolved into a natural order in which men ruled over women (Gen 3), which then degenerated into male oppression and female degradation.

The article by Derald Wing Sue ‘Liberated from Prejudice’ (n.d., p. 30) indicates that the role of the church is to address inequality and save women from an environment of exclusion such as BCSACR. It must approach the cultural practices that prohibit women from church governance. The author adds that “women today deserve to be liberated from the doctrinal prejudice that bans them from the share in the ministries that are theirs in God’s true plan”. In this context, submission becomes a vital ingredient in the process of becoming a loving family that lives harmony and peace in God’s grace. Submission is not a weakness, but rather a means to seek clear, mutual understanding.

#### **2.5.4 Scripture and humanity**

In this chapter, we have seen that the church’s role is to make sure that women are recognized and empowered. This section examines how the Scriptures support this notion of humanity. Marumo (2016:30) notes that the biblical principles highlight that, spiritual benefits are for men and women who are created in God’s image. Then, both men and women are equal before God. The book of Genesis 1:26 made a clear description of creation “Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures.” Then, Gen 1:26 highlights that God created both man and woman to have dominion on earth but not the ownership, which is denoted by the word ‘rule’.

Hoekema (1994:37) and Loader (1987:18) note that humans are God’s representatives that are the caretakers who have been given responsibilities: humanity can be called God’s representative on earth. Then, the paradigm is demonstrated in Gen 2. They were tasked to work with the universe. This is confirmed by Strivers (2004:81) explains “that all creatures are good”. Strivers (2004:81) explains:

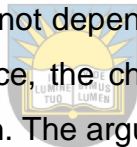
Mankind is created in the image of God with a special dignity bestowed upon them. This special dignity conveys not moral superiority and servanthood to

the rest of creation. This dignity, furthermore, has its intrinsic value as part of God's created order. Mankind has dominion, not mankind's absolute ruler but a caretaker.

This gives them the mandate to keep and cultivate the earth as conscientious stewards, enjoying God and His creation forever. Strivers (2014:81) explains:

It means to restore, protect, and preserve both human and natural communities. It means connecting to the earth, appreciating God's spirit in nature – including humanity as his creation and awe at the wonder of it all. It also means redemption from sin to respond with love and justice to the neighbour and to be a good steward for other species, free from exploitation.

The issue of stewardship is a Biblical subject that is based on a creative narrative. It is the responsibility that has been given to man and woman in Eden. The book of Genesis 2:18 sets out that stewardship does not depend on economic or political changes but is a command from God himself, hence, the churches should approach the essence of equality in the society and the church. The argument is man and woman are stewards.



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God created men and women equally. He created them to demonstrate the principle of equality among all of humanity, manifesting also in the sharing of stewardship. At the core of stewardship is its pastoral function, which avers that all things must be done in the glory of God when the creatures while the human beings had a responsibility of looking of taking care. This applies to all facets of life, including the ministry. The ministry has a critical role to play because of the Fall of humanity. Hence, Horell (2009:138) explains:

God manifests a multiplicity of affections – all as a moral, purposeful being. Just as Scripture establishes that each member of the Godhead reasons, exercises volition and manifests a plurality of feelings, so finite persons evince similar characteristics. Other aspects of the divine image include creativity, aesthetic appreciation, moral conscience, aptitude for dominion, a sense of immortality as well as the desire and capacity for an I-thou relationship.



Indeed, man and woman may have fallen into sin and suffered the results thereof; moreover, the *Imago Dei* may be disfigured, but it is not beyond recognition and human beings have eternal value because God, as the created the universe, also has a personal touch. Jesus Christ came to humanity in the express image and manifestation of God. Horell (2009:139) adds that:

Manifestation of God gives Christians a new life, which is prepared for them by God Himself. Because God owns and loves His creation, God is grateful for that. That is why in Christianity the doctrine of God as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is the structure and ontological ground for the realities of personhood, self-consciousness, rationality, self-determinative choices, a plethora of affections and emotions, a sense of the afterlife, moral sensibilities of right and wrong, and the capacity for a relationship with God and with other human beings. In the Trinitarian faith, humanity has found its home.

Ruether (1993:75) asserts that often the treatment that women receive in the church runs contrary to what God envisaged for humanity and instead clearly speaks of patriarchalism. Chitando (2012:75) argues the role of African women was to be in the house and the subject of education was not for them, hence, they enrolled very late on the academic field. The practice of women being answerable to men is still evident in many countries.

Korten (1990) and Swartz (2006) suggest that they should be the driving force in support of women and encourage them to act in ways that eventually empower and unite them. Hendriks (2004:203) states that church “leaders need not be myopic for their ecclesial horizons”. Then, BCSACR will realize the significance of inclusion in the church, and the necessity of involving women as one of the greatest changes ever introduced.

The Triune model encourages partnership as one of the tools that should be used so that the language that challenges the cultural bias that favours men can be addressed. According to Ruether (1996:53), maleness is “synonymous with ‘power’ (economic, political and cultural power) to ask theological questions and suggest the answers, power to define the holy in one’s image and likeness.”

Gouws, 2012:17 highlights the fact of inequality between men and women exacerbates “women’s lived experience of poverty.” Then, Nussbaum (2000:201) asserts that “When poverty combines with gender inequality, the result is the acute failure of central human capabilities.”

Bosch (2011:11) states that evangelism is “a life of service to others” and is one of the “essential dimensions” of the ministry that transmit the Gospel. Both evangelism and stewardship acknowledge the proposition by Migliore (2004:1) that “Faith is a performative and as an embodied act which arises from freedom and responsibility of the people as they try to define God” through (according to Rossler, 2005:315) “church activities.”

Stewardship and evangelism are very important to a church that seeks strategies to address women’s exclusion (particularly when influenced by the Scriptures). Using a theatrical analogy, women have become nameless and dependent on men’s support in a play that is dominated by men. Grant (1989:68) complains: “Women are always relegated to secondary, subordinate roles.” Nussbaum’s (2000:5) is concerned that the church and social hierarchies, “women have all too often been treated as supporters of the ends of others, rather than the ends in their own right.”

Though hierarchical and cultural challenges within the church contribute to women's exclusion to exercise their talents, they are still the key role players when it comes to church fundraising (Ruether 1975:3-4). Yet Gaitskell (2000:5) emphasizes that “there is much more work for women to do in the church than collecting funds”. Phiri (2001:87) argues that church, culture and religion have “assigned women to some of the lowest and most unenviable positions in society”.

Oduyoye (1992:115) advises that “Christ challenged culture and denounced whatever enslaved people and rejected anything that kept people from appreciating their basic human dignity”. Mayoux (2002) adds scriptures were not applied effectively in some instances, hence, find themselves being victims of violence when they seek clarities. The church should guard against any form of dehumanising treatment of women.

The concept of humanity – or, more precisely, the lack of it – is linked to the exclusion of women from church governance structures. The next two sections delve more deeply into the role of women and their perceived contribution to God’s mission in both the Old and the New Testaments.

### **2.5.5 The role of women in the Old Testament**

The Old Testament portrays the quality when man and woman have shared the sacred meal and performed the feasts (Deut. 16:11-114). There were several women mentioned in the Bible, like Miriam, who had the gift of being a prophetess, poet and singer. It was used not to favour women but to embrace them as part of the ministry (Ex. 15:20), and Deborah, who had done tremendously well as a judge and the ruler. They were used in the church to address *Mission Dei* (God’s mission).

Although God called these women to positions of leadership, Deborah faced one man Barak, who had difficulties working with women and struggled to receive God’s Word. Hence, he was afraid of the role played by Deborah who was the prophetic voice that instructed him to face the Canaanite general, Sisera. Then, she informed him that credibility will go to a woman. This is the reason why Jael is recorded in the Scripture as one of the women who became strategic and drove a tent peg through the head of a sleeping Sisera.

Integral to this argument is an attempt to elucidate the phenomenon of equality without favour. This is illustrated when Barak ended up singing with Deborah beautiful lyrics that were praised by both Jael and Deborah (Judges 4). The story ended with Barak singing a duet with Deborah, with the lyrics full of praise for both Deborah and Jael (Judges 5). Therefore, Barak became a believer in women’s ministry and supported them throughout. Blackaby and Blackaby (2004:97) assert that “God bestowed such wisdom on Deborah that people would come from far away to the hill country of Ephraim to seek her judgment.”

Mtshiselwa (2015:7-8) speaks about another woman in the Old Testament, Athaliah. She manages to act accordingly to change the lifestyle as a woman between Israel and Judah. Instead of acting wrongly, she intended to act wisely as a brave woman. She led the nation and demonstrated leadership as the only woman with ability. Mtshiselwa (2015:7)

is supported by Masenya (2016:7) who asserts that, although Athaliah was portrayed in a negative light due to the part she played in eliminating all royal heirs (2 Kings 11:1), the significant role she played in ancient Israel should nevertheless be acknowledged. She acts against all forms of patriarchy without feeling inferior because of the male-dominated environment. She has used God's wisdom and knowledge as the queen in the situation.

The patriarchal practices and cultural tendencies have prohibited women from leadership, and they remain marginalized. Hence, the church should consider the inclusion of women in church governance structures so that, they get opportunities to contribute positively. Women's development in the church has the potential to assist in preventing situations like Athaliah's.

The Old Testament considers a third woman, her name was Huldah, and she was a well-respected prophetess, hence, she gave reliable prophetic insights and instructed men. It is likely that Huldah continually served God in kind and dignity to render a non-competitive ministry that was not segregating; otherwise, Josiah would not have had much faith in her words to him. Of some concern, though, is why God called Miriam, Deborah and Huldah to be prophetesses. Could He not have called men instead?

One Indian conference participant (ITP) said that "it is important that the BCSACR takes into account and recognizes all people in the church, irrespective of their gender." The participant advised that BCSACR should take note of how women were used practically without theorizing the expected ministry. And it should acknowledge the act properly as the ministry has been conducted efficiently. The church (and its leadership) should therefore address all the spiritual injustices levelled at church members which prevent women from being ordained and/or taking up positions of authority.

God had considered what He created not a gender; hence, the three women were used. The lesson to be learned here is that we cannot presume to know whom God will call to His ministry. In the Old Testament, God normally singled out men for leadership roles and people left it to Him to call whoever He felt was fit for such roles.

### **2.5.6 The role of women in the New Testament**

The pivotal role played by women in the Scriptures assists the study, hence the word “woman” has, according to Greek been used 214 times highlighting the necessity of women in the ministry. This has been confirmed in the book of Acts and the Epistles by 104 times (New International Version). With this level of acknowledgement, the Scriptures are for a study like this a rich source of insights into the role of women. Church congregations, in turn, who want to find Scriptural evidence of the pivotal role played by women in the church, will be blessed upon reading the relevant passages in the New Testament. Many different traditions have arisen in various church groups that highlight the active participation of women in church life, from singing and praying to testifying and teaching, among others.

The New Testament has two principles which underpin the role of women. Firstly, each time a woman stands before God there is equality. Paul supports the principle in the book of (Gal. 3:28b) that “There is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28b). Therefore, the subject of equality supports the truth that weighs us before when it comes to salvation through the grace and love of God. “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet.1: 18, 19).

The second principle is that the man is the head of the woman. “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor.11:3). A woman is equal to a man just as Christ is equal to God, but she must be submissive to a man, as Christ submits to the Father – the willing submission of an equal.

Having established from the two principles that a woman is equal to a man before God and that a woman is subject to a man, it is important to explore the general role of women in the New Testament church, looking for specific commands and examples which illustrate accepted precepts. The role of a Christian woman, wife and mother is more important than is generally realized. A mother's teaching, for example, may influence the direction of a person's life, as it did in the case of Timothy (1 Tim.1:5).

Ericson (1987:338) discusses that the Old Testament law and the rules were fulfilled in the New Testament. The New Testament has inherited the Scripture, liturgy and beliefs from the Old Testament, which were dispensed through Jesus' birth and death with all patriarchal culture that has been restored because of patriarchal culture and inequality. He restored that as High Priest. He reinforced the notion that everyone is a child of God (John 1:12). Paul added that even Jews, Greeks, slaves, male or female, are all children of God in one big family created in the image of God and to serve God alone (Galatians 3:27-28).

As implied in the Scriptures, women have a God-given role and should not be restricted in pursuing that role; they may engage in any good work which is in harmony with the two principles outlined above. "Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather using good works, as befits women's claim to godliness" (1 Tim.2:9,10). Mary Magdalene's character and her past did not block her from taking charge as one of Christ's Apostles (Ruturo 2012:163).

In the New Testament Paul is very clear when it comes to women's participation in church activities. Paul prohibited women from speaking and teaching in the church, as described in 1 Tim 2:11-14 because they were not properly trained and not because they were inferior or supposed to defer to men. Miller (2013) notes that women did not receive the requisite training because they were prohibited, for cultural reasons, from participating in church leadership structures.

The angel had managed to manifest Christ's resurrection so that they proclaim the gospel to the society who were men. Women were instructed to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen and that He would appear to them in Galilee. A short time later, Jesus, Himself appeared to the same women and commanded them to instruct the disciples to go to Galilee (Mark 16:1-7). The church ministry has a pastoral function to fulfil among all its followers.

From various examples drawn from the Scriptures, it is clear that neither God nor Jesus intended women to be excluded from the ministry. In so many ways, God looks for ways

to use women for His glory and He has been doing so for thousands of years. The Scriptures relate many positive contributions that women have made to God's kingdom, some of which have already been discussed. Some of Jesus' closest friends were women (John 11:5) who also supported His ministry financially (Luke 8:1, 2-3); something that could not be said of any of his male followers.

The woman at the well of Samaria testified about Christ to the men of her village and many came to believe in Him (John 4:28-30). Wilson (1995:182) states that this may be the strongest and clearest affirmation that women have to be real participants in the life of the community and the church. Both men and women are to learn of Jesus. Women, just as men, are to get their priorities straight, like the Samaritan woman. Davidson (2006:226) describes the woman as one with "a different mind and goes immediately to invite the people of her town to come and meet Jesus". This well woman "proved herself a more effective missionary than Christ's disciples" (Davidson, 2006:227).

Wilson (1995:181) affirms the role of woman in the Bible, saying that Mary of Magdala "may have been one of the leaders of that group of women who followed Jesus from the outset of His ministry to His death and afterwards" (Luke 8:1-3). There were many female disciples who not only associated with Jesus but also travelled with Him and His other disciples. Jesus encouraged women to establish their own identities and relationships with God. He also taught them that, as His followers, they were just as responsible for growing in grace and knowledge as men.

The female disciple, Tabitha, is said to have been very generous in performing deeds of kindness and charity (Acts 9:36). She anointed Jesus for burial, for which He commended her in the face of protests from several men (Mark 14:3-9). The Bible records how women wept for Jesus as He carried His cross through the streets of Jerusalem, something that no man did.

There are several other women mentioned in the Bible, such as Lydia, Joana and Susanna, who made similar contributions but because of the limitations of this study (outlined in Chapter One), they cannot all be referred to here. Suffice to say that many (including the above-mentioned) women played a pivotal role in advancing the cause of

the church's ministry. Wijngaard (2011:1) affirms that God called all those who heard the Word to fulfil the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18,19). The call to priesthood covers everyone in all nations. Gender is not specified.

Given the foregoing, BCSACR must build a strong, spiritual relationship with all its members. Firstly, the significance of Jesus first appearing to women, and thereafter to men, must not be overlooked. Secondly, he regarded women as part of the church as he gave them instructions to inform the congregation including men. Hence, there was nothing wrong with sharing the news with women. Good leaders understood that women could still participate in leadership without undermining the authority of men but focusing on inclusion in the church. The piece was not trivial rather, He decided to share the information with human beings. No one can dispute the fact that the Lord Jesus instructed women to teach a vital truth and give spiritual instruction to others.

However, although men and women have identical standing before God and both serve the Lord in significant ways, we should not conclude that God intended men and women to function in the same capacity in the church. There are many examples of people who are equal in essence but subordinate in their function similar to the 'hierarchy' embodied in the Trinity. Other examples of men and women occupying different functions are seen within the family, the government, the workplace and even the church, among elders and church members.

## **2.6 USING THEORIES TO PROPOSE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CHURCH GOVERNANCE**

A few theories have been postulated which have a bearing on how church governance is viewed in the literature and what it would take to ensure strong leadership in the church. Some of these theories have been selected and discussed below.

### **2.6.1 Max-Neef's Theory**

The Chilean economist, Manfred Max-Neef, formulated Max-Neef's Theory of Needs with a view to conceptualizing the following aspects desires, wants and needs. Max-Neef's characterization has considered bio-psycho-social as one of the basic needs.



#	NEED	BEING (QUALITIES)	HAVING(THINGS)	DOING (ACTIONS)	INTERACTING (SETTINGS)
1.	Substance	Physical and mental health	Food, clothes, work	Rest, prepare food	Social life
2.	Protection	Care, autonomy	Social security	Co-operate and plan	Social life
3.	Affection	Respect, sense of humour	Family, relationships	Share, take care	Privacy, intimacy
4.	Understanding	Critical capacity	Policies	Study, analyse	Universities
5.	Participation	Receptiveness	Responsibilities	Express opinions	Churches
6.	Identity	Sense of belonging	Religion, customs	Attend to personal growth	Life settings
7.	Freedom	Autonomy, passion	Equal rights	Disagree, choose	Anywhere

Source: Adapted from Max-Neef (1992)

Importantly, Max-Neef differentiates between needs and satisfiers, which helps us to think holistically about how to cater to the needs of others. The theory has discussed things such as food and shelter “must not be seen as needs, but as satisfiers of the human need for subsistence” (Max-Neef, 1992:196). Max-Neef states that “in much the same way, education (either formal or informal), study, investigation and mediation are satisfiers of the need for understanding” (Max-Neef, 1992:213).

The theory differentiates what is discussed by Max-Neef regarding the fundamental needs as against the non-fundamental needs using the satisfier to meet the needs. Furthermore, Max-Neef classified satisfiers inhabiting satisfiers, pseudo-satisfier and violators as one thing. From these differentiations, we can better understand what needs to be done to meet fundamental human needs. The model, therefore, provides us with novel ways in which to rethink the notions of satisfying needs, wants and desires (Max-Neef, 1992:197-213).

The sections below will be dealing with balancing people’s interdependency, increasing self-reliance and human needs. Hence, fundamentals discuss in detail how Max-Need’s Theory can contribute to the study.

### **a) Fundamental human needs**

This can be understood as a system that informs all fundamental human needs that are interrelated and interactive, except the livelihoods need, which enable people to stay alive. There is no hierarchy in the system. Instead, this process of satisfying needs is characterized by simultaneities, complementarities and trade-offs. Moreover, the theory is clear that there is no one-to-one correspondence between satisfiers and needs.

A satisfier can simultaneously contribute to the satisfaction of different needs or, conversely, in this scenario a need may require different satisfiers so that its requirement can be met. In addition, needs have to be satisfied within three contexts:

- Concerning the social group (Mitwelt);
- Concerning oneself (Eigenwelt);
- Concerning the environment (Umwelt).

The quality and intensity of the level of needs are contextual, i.e., it will depend on the time, the location and the circumstances. What also needs to be borne in mind is that every fundamental human need that is not sufficiently satisfied leads to human poverty. Poverty generates pathologies, both individual and collective. Some examples are:

- of protection (due to poor health);
- of participation (due to marginalisation of women, children and minorities);
- of understanding (due to poor quality of education);
- of affection (due to authority systems);
- of identity (due to forced migration).
- of exposure (due to insufficient shelter);

Understanding these collective pathologies requires transdisciplinary research.

### **b) Increasing self-reliance**

Max-Neef (1987:12) believes that human beings should have a sense of belonging, motivation, and positive feelings towards all the groups making up communities. In the

same way, regarding this study, women should be free to share and express their opinions in their families, in the church and society.

### **c) Balancing the interdependence of people with their environment**

According to Max-Neef's (1987:12) Theory, people need to strike the correct balance between behaving properly in and being respectful of their environments, with the knowledge that they have the same rights and autonomy as anyone else to participate in society.

This theory should extend to the BCSACR as well – i.e., people should be respectful of the church environment and all those in it, but at the same time they should remember and claim their right to be respected as individuals with their views and needs (and not part of an established or antiquated hierarchy).

### **2.6.2 Grudem's Theory**

Ayers (2006:12) assists the reader with the theory and how the theories merged historically leading to the development of the leadership that turned problematic, especially concerning governance. One theory relating specifically to church governance is that of Grudem, aspects of which are discussed below.

Grudem (2004) undertook a systematic study of Scripture to help develop doctrine and an understanding of the paradigm of church governance. He defines the theory and focus of his approach in light of understanding the nature of the church according to the Scripture. Such understanding can be elucidated from the following core elements.

#### **a) Grudem's theory in church governance**

Grudem's (2004) theory of the nature of the church is based on the different metaphors appearing in Scripture, which he divides into two groups. One group uses metaphors that describe the church as the family of God and the other group uses abstract metaphors pertaining mostly to inanimate objects. Together, these groups of metaphors support his theory and understanding of the governance paradigm.

Concerning the first group of metaphors, which describe the church as the family of God, Grudem (2004:856) provides several passages on how Paul writes in this scenario:

- That the collective should be treated as a family 1 Tim 5:1-2.
- God is our heavenly Father (Eph. 3:14).
- We are sons and daughters before God (2 Cor 6:18).
- We are brothers and sisters in Christ (Matt 12:49-50; 1 John 3:14-18).

The second group of metaphors, which relate mostly to inanimate objects, comprise the following (Grudem 2004:856):

- An olive tree (Rom 11:17-24).
- A field of crops (1 Cor 3:6-9).
- A building (1 Cor 3:9).
- A harvest (Matt 13:1-30).
- A temple built with stones of living people (1 Pet 2:5) whose cornerstone is
- Christ Jesus (1 Pet 2:4-8).



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Grudem (2004) then summarises three shared features of these metaphors. Firstly, the metaphors of the church being the family of God help us to appreciate the richness and privilege that God has given to the church and the emphasis He has placed on love of and fellowship with one another.

Secondly, the church as the bride of Christ suggests a striving for greater purity, holiness and love for Christ.

Thirdly, the image of the branch and the agricultural crop is connected to what Scripture teaches us about our implanting in Christ, our receiving spiritual nutrition from Him and our offering spiritual sacrifices of praise and good deeds as we carry out our role as spiritual priests in God's temple.

In short, Grudem's view of the nature of today's church towards the fundamental understanding of this theory on church governance becomes the paradigm for leadership and governance.

## **b) The focus of Grudem's governance theory**

Grudem's governance theory also focuses on the purpose of church governance. Grudem divides the purpose into three sections which serve as a framework for understanding the phenomenon: ministry to God, ministry to believers, and ministry to the world. Together, they form the basis of his description of his approach as a ministry application governance approach (Grudem 2004:866).

Grudem stipulates that ministry to God refers to the worship that the church directs towards God (Col 3:16) and to the people living in God's glory (Eph. 1:12). The role of ministry to God is to build the church for becoming mature in faith, hence, that will be possible on how the believers are nurtured. (Col 1:28; Eph. 4:12-13). By contrast, ministry to the world is defined as the discipleship of all nations (Matt 28:19), accompanied by works of mercy through the church and its care for the poor and needy in the name of the Lord (Act 11:29; 2 Cor 8:4; 1 John 3:17).

### **2.6.3 Osmer's Theory**

Osmer's (2008) theory examines and reflects on how religious practices must be understood. Osmer's theory seeks to respond to questions that are perceiving disconnection between academic everyday life, practices in the church and theology as an academic discipline. Hence, it analyses the supernatural with religious epistemology. Osmer (2008) assists the study by asking questions about practical theology, such as:

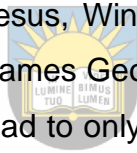
- What is going on? (Descriptive – empirical task) Gathering information that helps us to discern patterns and dynamics in episodes, situations or contexts.
- Why is this going on? (Interpretive task) Drawing on theories of arts and sciences to better understand and explain these patterns and dynamics that are occurring.
- What ought to be going on? (Normative task) Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations or contexts, while constructing ethical norms to guide our responses and learning from 'good practice'.

- How might we respond? (Pragmatic task) Determining strategies and courses of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted (Osmer, 2008:4).

Osmer's tasks are discussing the framework of congregational leadership epilogue dealing with higher education. Osmer embraces Gerkins' (1997) model that develops the pastoral interpretive guide and pastoral leadership. Hence, the congregation must focus on the primary objective that guides the church in engaging in practical theological interpretation to equip the leadership.

#### **2.6.4 Maxwell's Theory**

John Maxwell (1993), in his book *Becoming the Leader You Want to Be*, defines leadership as the ability to obtain followers. It is for this reason that he describes Jim Jones, Martin Luther King, Hitler, Jesus, Winston Churchill, and John F. Kennedy as leaders. Maxwell (1993:2) refers to James George who taught that the removal of moral issues related to leadership would lead to only one definition of leadership, namely, the ability of someone to obtain followers.



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##### **a) Maxwell's influence-based approach to church governance**

This theory is based on the ability of a leader that must gain influence over members so that people can be led and follow the leader. Compared with other models and approaches, Maxwell's approach looks solely at the impact that leaders' influence has on their followers. The theory is to assist other leaders to be developed so that their abilities can be used in the church as a teaching tool. Then, that strategy of church governance can produce other leaders who can influence to increase their levels (Maxwell 1993:5).

Maxwell's model has been developed over several years for empirical research and studying the literature on leadership led him to identify and conceptualize five levels of leadership.

The first of these levels, which Maxwell calls 'positional leadership', is the lowest level in the hierarchy of leadership influence. He writes that the only influence a leader may have

at this level is that which comes from a title and positional appointment Maxwell (1993:5). People who get stuck on this level of development invariably get entangled in territorial rights, protocol, tradition, and organizational charts, which typify the managerial approach to leadership.

A person may ostensibly be in control and given the position of the leader because he has been appointed in a particular position (hence the notion of positional power). Therefore, real leadership is more than seeing the flow of confidence within the church, having positional authority, and being the person of the congregation Maxwell.

Maxwell provides an example of these two leadership mentalities: the manager who is dependent on positional leadership, on the one hand, and the mature leader or a 'true leader', on the other hand. The word 'boss' appropriately describes the former mentality. Some of the characteristics of the 'boss' are:

- The boss depends on authority; the leader on goodwill.
- The boss drives his workers; the leader coaches them.
- The boss fixes the blame for the breakdown; the leader fixes the breakdown.
- The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm.
- The boss knows how it is done; the leader demonstrates how.
- The boss says 'GO'; the leader says 'let's go' (Maxwell, 1993:5).
- The boss says 'I'; the leader 'we'.

In Maxwell's (1993:7) opinion, the security of a boss is based on title and not talent. A person with a 'boss mentality' or 'character' often gets to this level merely by appointment, which does not necessarily coincide with the criteria for other levels in a leadership hierarchy.

The second level of leadership is called the 'permission' level, the aim of which is to get people to cooperate with the leader when they are not obligated to do so. The third level of leadership, the 'production' level, is the level where momentum is gained, and leading people becomes fun. Moreover, problem-solving becomes less of an effort.

The major difference between the second and third levels is that the relationship between leader and follower has grown to such a degree that they get together just for the sake of getting together. The fourth level of leadership is described as the 'people development' level.

It is at this level that the leader is viewed as abnormally successful because of his or her ability to empower others. The last and final level is known as the leader's achievement of 'personhood'. Maxwell, however, shares little of his understanding of what this level of leadership implies or entails. In his opinion, very few people get to this level.

#### **b) The focus of Maxwell's leadership approach**

Maxwell's (1993:2) definition of leadership is "the leader's ability" to get followers. It forms the foundation of his leadership position and many subscribe to this definition or something similar. Most leadership theories and models seem aimed at building the leader's ability to influence others. Ayer (2006:5) calls this social influence, which is exerted on individuals and/or groups to achieve certain goals.

#### **2.6.5 Feminist Theories and Theology: A Hermeneutical Analysis**

Feminist theory and theology focus on the origins of hermeneutical suspicions and the patriarchal marriage. The theory articulates the gaps in the past and present experiences of women from theological and hermeneutical perspectives.

Oduyoye (1986:121) asserts that feminism has become a platform to address the experiences of women that are regarded as essential, so that, their value and significance as humans can be understood. Oduyoye (1986) adds that feminism is not only for or about women. Feminist theory and theology contribute to the whole movement geared at liberating men from their deep-rooted mindset that perpetuates the unhealthy attitude towards women. Therefore, men and women should form part of programs that promotes equality and collaborates as partners. They had to liberate men and women from different communities which had preconceived ideas about oppressing one another. This must be done through churches, personal interaction and women who are well suited.



On the topic of feminism, King (2005:195) says, “I simply mean the modern women’s movement in its different phases; it aims to establish women’s freedom from all kinds of oppression and bondage”. King (2005:205) goes on to explain why Christianity and feminism need each other: “The vision of feminism empowers many women today, and Christians must recognize that the great feminist themes of liberation, celebration and community are also the central themes at the heart of the Christian Gospel.”

Fuchs (2008:205–226) explains that feminists of today are searching for theories that inform and support their movement, particularly those relating to how gender bias has arisen and gained momentum in many parts of the world. Historical analysis helps to explain changing patterns in attitudes towards women – evident, for example, in the progression from the colonial to the post-colonial period (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2009). Long before post-colonial studies came into point of discussion because many feminist scholars have conducted studies on power relations, that will help to inform the developed research (Dube, 2000; Kwok Pui-lan, 2005 (ed.); Van der Stichele & Penner, 2005). These and other studies highlight the interconnectedness of knowing the world, experiencing the world and tapping into the spiritual realm. The foundation of feminist thinking and theology is explored in more detail in the following sections.

### **a) Women’s experiences**

It is important in this study that BCSACR has to do some introspection to locate themselves and their doctrine in the world milieu. This would probably help the church examine and possibly redefine the role of man and woman in the church and life (Kiesling *et al.*, 2006:1269-1277). Spirituality is a key component of life orientation and therefore a core feature of someone’s identity. Hence, spirituality covers every aspect of life and the entire human existence as an authentic person in the presence of God.

Some may ask how this applies to women, given their alleged weaknesses, vulnerabilities and diminished roles in life (Enzner-Probst, 1995; Wagner-Rau, 1992). Those with the necessary maturity in the church will see that it does and will also see that women should not be denied the opportunity of joining the ministry in a full-time capacity and contributing to the running of the church in a practical sense.

Maturity, though, is considered to be a step beyond conformity and the acceptance of the usual gender-based roles that people take for granted. It involves recognizing that women, for example, may be able to deliver value in different, less conventional, ways while still upholding Christian principles and working in the interests of the church. This would not have been tolerated in the more patriarchal (male-dominated) world of years gone by (Chopp & Greeve Davaney 1997:198-214; Schulenburg, 1993:84).

Today, more doors and opportunities are open to women, though women are prohibited to progress and are still under a plethora of restrictions impeding the transition towards the equal societies that feminists fight for.

A restricted role towards certain gender is reducing personal identity of which Christianity has often been complicit in narrowing the field of opportunities for women, both spiritually and professionally. Instead of stepping up and being bold in their convictions and actions, they have been introduced to conduct of isolation so that exclusion becomes a habit in their lives. Hence, most women disappear in the early stages and male-dominated societies are evident in some parts of the universe, especially in Africa. Women are socialized to internalize the attributes that are negative such as evil, submissive, weak, and passive. This internalization process can gnaw away at women's self-image and deprive them of a potentially full(er) life.

## **b) Hermeneutical approaches**

The following approaches to feminism in their way make a feminist movement that contributes to the life of women while revealing some flaws.

### **(i) Liberal feminism**

Liberal feminism conceives what liberates women as their rights and it gives them a right to live the choice of their lives without any hindrances so that they can enjoy all general rights including unencumbered political rights. Liberal feminists exercise personal rights that depend on certain conditions which are not sufficient for evidence of the basic conditions of women.

Furthermore, there is a need for addressing the inadequate nourishment by society and by the church. Okin (1989:89) says that a deficit in rights like these is due to an entrenched women's movement, the patriarchal nature of inherited traditions and the gender system that seeks to reveal the causes of these problems and remedy them.

Liberal feminists are of the view that women's rights can be guaranteed and upheld by the state. However, there is disagreement among liberal feminists regarding what constitutes an appropriate level of rights, the state-specific role in liberal feminism can be justified if some additional considerations are explored below.

- ***Personal autonomy***

According to Mackenzie and Stoljar (1999:130-19), liberal feminists hold the view that women should enjoy autonomy and should be allowed an opportunity to live the life of their choice. Some feminists suggest that women should be given entitlement to a broad range of autonomy-enabling conditions. Such a view avoids any direct judgment of the substance of women's choices or the lifestyles that are the manifestation of such choices.

Brinson (1997) asserts that in some cases violence fractures women's sense of self and deprives them of their self-respect. Cudd (2006:85-118) adds that the literature of feminists on gender-based violence has to influence the lifestyle so that women could form part of society. It will help to address the threats of violence faced by women because of disempowerment and limitation of their abilities.

- ***Fairness in a personal relationship***

Another tenet of liberal feminism is that women's personal life should not only be freely chosen but also characterized by fairness or justice. Hampton (1993:240) describes how heterosexual, intimate relationships often fall short of being fair or just.

**(ii) Socialist or Marxist feminism**

This focuses on gender equality in the workplace; however, women are becoming most double-loaded when it comes to responsibilities that segregate them. Although many

women have achieved equal status and responsibility in the workplace, they have remained solely or mostly responsible for the household and child-rearing tasks.

### **(iii) Romantic feminism**

The differences between man and woman are emphasized in terms of seeing a woman inheriting what is traits of creativity, intuition, purity, and sensitivity. The vision of feminism transforms men to aspire to higher female ideals and emphasized the differences between men and women, with women being seen as inherently good because of traits such as sensitivity, creativity, intuition, and purity. Attractive as these traits may be, they would never become mainstream, and so adherents would be left on the margins of society. Romantic feminism falls short because the solution to the problem of women's marginalization cannot be found in promoting a female utopia to which all should aspire.

### **(iv) Liberated through hermeneutical feminism**

Some categories are discussed by New Testament scholar Carolyn Osiek (1997), that brings the best of feminism together, and brings the best of the three categories of feminism together, i.e., the social criticism, the liberal ideal of equality, and the social criticism and ideal of a more just society. Hence, liberating feminism needs to focus on the experiences of women and expose how patriarchy, power discrepancies and other societal distortions have negatively impacted them.

The church needs to recognize that many Scriptures have been interpreted in a very narrow sense, to the detriment of women's standing in the church, their communities and society as a whole. Far from being a source of enlightenment, the Bible has sometimes (wittingly or unwittingly) been used as an instrument of male domination or power.

In this regard, Osiek (1997:955-967) indicates that the Bible represents a critical part of human history and is a source of wisdom and inspiration; yet it also has the potential to be taken too literally and some of its teachings and principles interpreted from a male perspective. Unfortunately, many societies have not been able to shed their patriarchal tendencies, with churches, in particular, using Biblical references to justify a male-dominated church leadership.

While feminism has an important place in modern-day thinking and discourse, it is not always welcomed. Cosh (2006:1) argues that “the mere mention of feminism evokes rolled eyes or an indulgent chuckle”. Feminists themselves tend to be stereotyped as man-haters, lesbians, bra-burners, and so on. Although Jones (2004:205) appropriately says that “after a long wait”, women should take a stand regarding their right to leadership positions (especially in the church, which is a traditionally male stronghold), this should – for best results – be in a spirit of partnership and mutual benefit.

## **2.6.6 Bass’ theory**

### **2.6.6.1 Bass’ theory of transformation leadership as an approach to church governance**

Bass’ theory consists of transactional leadership approach that holds someone who leads through a social exchange such as politicians, that give jobs for votes or subsidies for campaign contributions. People are benefiting from the business of rewards so that the company can produce effective results. Then, the other theory is to bring life as well towards inclusivity by developing people for effective leadership. It is on the theory that members grow and become independent so that they respond to any challenge. The focus of the first transformational leader is to help followers to grow and develop into leaders by responding to their followers’ needs while the other one empowers women and aligns their objectives and goals with those of the organization Bass (2006:3).

Bass (2006:4) refers to Levinson (1980) who found that if a leader equates leadership rewards for compliance with carrots and punishment for failure with a stick, the result would leave followers with feelings of failure. It is because their sense of self-worth has not been acknowledged. Instead, followers require genuine commitment and involvement from their leaders to engage in their activities. It is, accordingly, assumed that the transformational leadership theory provides insight into the transactional exchange between leader and followers.

Bass (2006) adds that a closer look, however, reveals that the transformational leadership approach often applies the transactional paradigm and methodology while the motivation of transformational leaders is to set more what women should expect as a challenge for

them as followers and typically achieve higher performances. Bass (2006) further adds that a transformational leader is committed to what satisfied the followers because it empowers them and pays attention to their needs as well. Hence, personal developments are very helpful to transform their potential. Bass (2006) agrees with Max-Neef about satisfying the needs of an individual.

Bass (2006) in this regard is addressing and approaching what is faced by BCSACR when it comes to membership inspiration. Hence, two theories serve the purpose of the study. The focus of transactional and transformational leadership is on the exchange that takes place between the leaders and followers. While transformational leadership focuses on challenges and designs, what inspires the followers is the leaders' willingness to share their vision and goals and be innovative problem-solvers. At the same time, they develop the abilities of followers through mentoring, the provision of both challenges, support and coaching.

Bass (2006:5) refers to early social science perspectives on leadership that focused on the dichotomy of directive task-orientated with participative leadership. The significance of the theory of transformational leadership is the giving of space and freedom to all people to exercise their talents and allow full participation of the followers on matters that affect them.

#### **2.6.6.2 The focus of the Bass theory of leadership**

Transformational leadership is aimed at the establishment of four concepts that embody the transformational leadership approach. Bass (2006:5) describes these as:

- idealised influence;
- individualised consideration.
- inspirational motivation;
- intellectual stimulation;

The first concept of transformational leadership is idealised influence. Bass (2006) captures the idea of a transformational leader behaving in a way that will draw the attention of followers for the benefit of the institution. Members feel admired, respected,

and trusted in the process. The result of being a role model to your followers is that of having extraordinary capabilities, persistence and determination.

It is, therefore, evident that there are two aspects to the idealized influence concept and that both are embodied in leader behaviour and follower attributions. In addition to these factors, leaders should consider a great deal that is improvised to influence the willingness that regards an institution to take risks and are consistent in character and values, rather than being arbitrary. It follows that leaders with these qualities are trustworthy. They do what is right, and in the process, demonstrate high moral conduct and ethical behaviour.

The second concept of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. A leader must provide resources that are developing the followers for any governance. It is to address followers' challenges so that everyone shows an attitude of willingness. This points to the ability of the transformational leader the behavioural aspect has to provide the meaning that challenges the tasks of the followers who must be motivated (Bass 2006:6).



The transformational leadership approach stands to motivate and bring enthusiasm that inspires the followers. This involves envisioning attractive future states, which create clear communication expectations that bring a willingness to meet the needs of the followers. Therefore, the goals and vision should be shared and demonstrated. The concept of transformational leadership, together with inspirational motivation, forms a combination factor that is known as charismatic-inspirational leadership.

The third concept of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. Bass (2006:7) describes charismatic leadership as leadership that can create and stimulate follower motivation and create challenges that bring opportunities for their followers who must be innovative and creative in various ways such as reframing problems, challenging the *status quo* and raising pertinent questions.

In other words, Bass (2006) suggests that followers had to be helped so that new ideas can be created and generated. Hence, the individuals do not publicly criticise individuals' mistakes, instead, new ideas and solutions are devised to deal with the problems. The

followers must participate in this process so that they remain enthusiastic about their roles.

The third concept of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. This concept pertains to leaders who respect the needs of everyone and act as coaches and mentors' followers during their efforts to accomplish their goals. It follows that the leader-follower relationship is very personal, hence, the followers and the colleagues are developing what brings success up to higher levels of potential. Then, individualized consideration is valuable when opportunities are created because the supportive role of the leader is required.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

During the literature review perusal of the Scriptures, this chapter evaluated the question of women's eligibility for inclusion in leadership positions, both within society and more specifically within the church.

Scholars are divided on gender equality in the home, communities, the workplace and places of worship. However, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the labelling of women primarily as homemakers and carers is misguided and out of place in today's modern society. Male church leaders need to recognize women's multi-faceted nature and talents and do much more to accommodate women in church governance structures.

Not only will this bring about a more productive and creative church environment, but it will also send an important message to the broader society about the importance of achieving an equitable balance of skills and temperaments in the management of a business operation. To this end, authority figures in the church should regularly interact with members of different faith communities, listening to concerns and problems surrounding discrimination and sharing their insights and endeavours to put things right.

The next chapter will delve into how the exclusion of women in the church governance has impacted their lives towards the involvement and decision-making in governance in the church, and what impact this has had on their spiritual path and motivation.

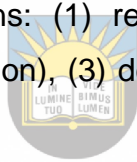


## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented key findings from an academic literature review and Biblical analysis. It revealed important insight into how scholars and the Scriptures view the role of women in society and the church. It also cast light on why women often face obstacles to being fully accepted in society, which would enable them to partake of the full range of opportunities available to men, and why women tend to be excluded from church governance structures. The latter means that women are not able to effectively exercise their spiritual gifts.

Chapter three outlines the context of the study and research methodology used which was specifically selected to address the research problem. It deals not only with the nature of the problem but also its impact on affected parties and the church as a whole. The chapter contains five main sections: (1) research site, (2) research methodology (including sampling and data collection), (3) delimitation of the study, (4) ethical issues and (5) conclusion.



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### **3.2 RESEARCH SITE**

The research took place in the Cradock Region of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The geographical composition of the town and the characteristics of the population are discussed below.

#### **3.2.1 The geographical composition of Cradock**

The Cradock Baptist Church is in Cradock, a town of historical significance situated in the valley of the Great Fish River approximately 250 km from Port Elizabeth. Cradock, which is surrounded by farmland, is one of the province's main centres for wool production. It, therefore, makes an important contribution to economic development in the province. Cradock has several historical buildings and museums,

including the Dutch Reformed Church DRC and the Olive Schreiner House Museum, which are important tourist attractions for visitors to the town. Cradock is a popular 'getaway' destination for those looking for a quiet break.

The photos below provide some snapshot images of Cradock and the surrounding area. Most of the photos were taken by the researcher during the data collection of the study. Photo 1 depicts a rural scene near Cradock; Photo 2 is that part of the town which is mostly inhabited by white people; Photo 3 shows the main street of Cradock; Photo 4 shows the entrance to Michausdal, where the Coloured and Indian participants in the study largely reside; and Photo 5 is of Lingelihle, which is the home of most of the African/black participants.



**Photo 3.1: Rural farmland surrounding Cradock**



Photo 3.2: The municipal building on J.A. Calata Street, Cradock



Photo 3.3: Michausdal where Coloured and Indian people reside



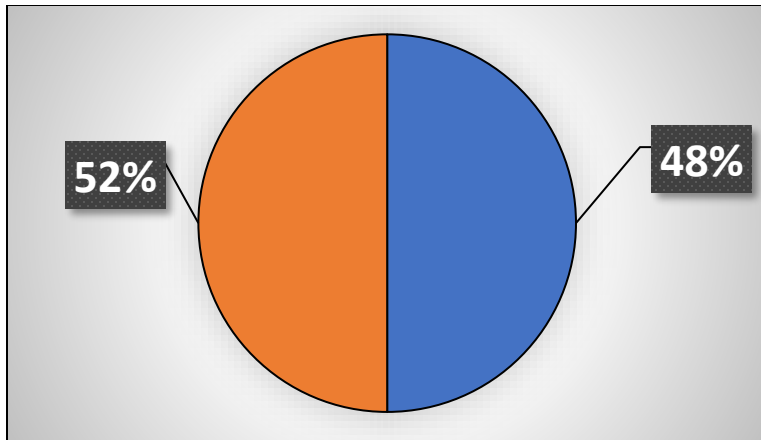
**Photo 3.4: Lingelihle where African/black people reside**

### **3.2.2 Population/the size of the study**

The main participants in the study were women who had been excluded from church governance structures and had been denied an opportunity to explore the ministry of the BCSACR. These women resided in South Africa and were part of recognised local conferences of the Baptist church. These include: (i) the African/black conference; (ii) the Coloured/Indian conferences; (iii) the white conference; and iv) the rural conference, composed of those in farming areas.

### **3.2.3 Statistics on Cradock**

Statistics South Africa (2007), points out that Cradock is a growing town which is also becoming increasingly faith-based with a strong concentration of churches. At the moment, women represent 52% of the population and men 48%. Although women are in the majority and are also well represented in churches, they are the most disadvantaged group when it comes to their inclusion in church structures and the furthering of God's mission.

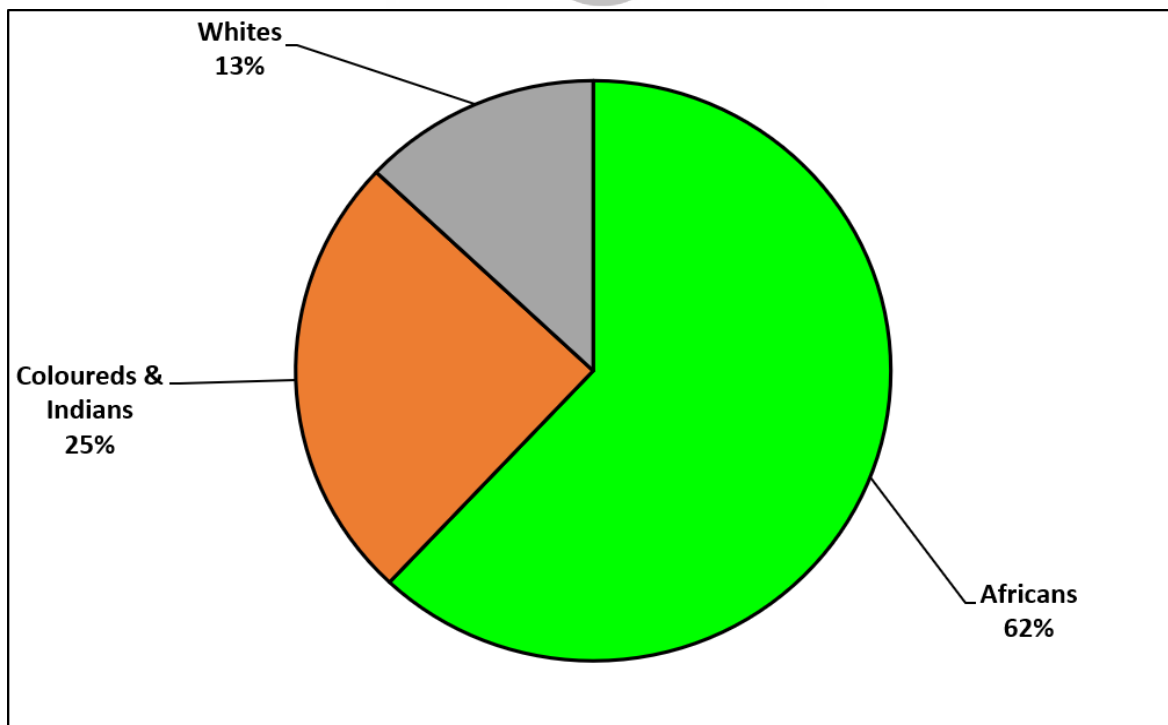


GENDER	PERCENTAGE
MALES	48%
FEMALES	52%

**Figure 3.1: Gender split in the Cradock population**

### Census information in Cradock

Figures from the 2001 Census show that men in the Cradock area total 17,442 and women 19,229. The majority of participants who are women served to reinforce the unfairness or poor reasoning behind the exclusion of women in church governance structures, which is the focus of this study.



**Figure 3.2: Percentage breakdown of ethnic groups in Cradock**

### **3.3 THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

This section discusses how the church's belief system has contributed to women's exclusion from church governance structures. It highlights why women are not part of the ordination process when it comes to official positions in the church. In discussing the church's establishment and collection of beliefs, this section goes a long way toward addressing the study's aims.

#### **3.3.1 The priesthood of all believers**

The priesthood is a principle that runs through the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The Levites were appointed to perform priestly sacrificial duties on behalf of the nation in the Old Testament. Then, Christ who was prophesied in Old Testament as Messiah, brought the olden system to redeem the nation as it has been written in New Testament and discussed in Hebrews 10: 1:18. Jesus, as the ultimate High Priest, rendered Himself as the ransom which covered all sins from the past till now.

The old system had come to an end and a new era had arrived. In this new covenant, every believer is a priest and, together with all other believers, constitutes the church which is, among other things, referred to as a Holy Priest and Royal Priesthood (1 Peter 2: 5, 9). The conceptual framework for this topic was established by reviewing the literature, of which the Scriptures were the starting point.

The ensuing paragraphs focus on the priesthood of the Old Testament and the New Testament as well as the purpose and function of the priesthood. What is specifically reported on is whether the New Testament allows for any distinction in the priesthood, as was the case in the Old Testament when God appointed the Levites to perform priestly duties. Therefore, attention towards key moments such as the development of doctrine and priesthood throughout the church history must be noted. Hence, it is important how the implementation of the doctrine and the offered insight must be interpreted. (Kramer, 1958; Muttiah, 2009; Voss, 2016).

Eastwood (1963) undertook an extensive study of the principle of the priesthood of all believers from Biblical times until after the Reformation. Kraemer's findings on the

theology of the laity have been significant to rediscovering the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It, therefore, warrants a place in this study.

The priesthood of all believers is an essential principle in the Baptist tradition, in the context of which the empirical part of this study was conducted. Together with the principles of religious liberty and soul competency, the priesthood of all believers forms the foundation of Baptist ecclesiology (Young, 1993:131).

The works by Anizor, Muthiah and Voss (2016) are more recent and approach the priesthood of all believers from the perspectives of the Trinity, the *Missio Dei*, *ecclesiology*, *postmodern culture* and *congregational practices*. Hence, the Old Testament priesthood was for men only, by God's choice, and the birth of Jesus in the New Testament presented the priesthood for all those who believe (men and women). The study has noted that the priesthood of believers became the tunnel for everyone who believes hence, the church opens the door to all including women as members of the church to be authorized for eldership and pastorate. The New Testament's view of the priesthood of all believers opened doors for the church, as a corporate body, to authorize women to be pastors and elders.



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The data also shows that the pastorate and eldership of all churches are predominantly male. In all churches, women have been excluded from being pastors, elders and deacons. None of these churches has an equal number of men and women. At this stage of the research, it is not clear whether this is caused by the conscious exclusion of women from governance structures.

The role of women in the BCSACR needs to be explored within the context of the priesthood of all believers, something that was also identified by the Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA) itself. In 1988 and 1989, the BUSA appointed a subcommittee to investigate the role of women in the ministry. In their report, the subcommittee concluded, among other things, that the role of women cannot be separated from the principle of the priesthood of all believers (2007).

### 3.3.2 Baptist Union of Southern Africa (BUSA): Church Principles

The BUSA subcommittee further concluded that many Baptists had unwittingly held on to a view of ordination that was not in line with the principle of congregationalism and church autonomy. According to the subcommittee, Baptists had come to accept an unbiblical distinction between clergy and laity (Baptist Union of South Africa, 1989).

Bosch (2012:478) describes the movement from vertical church models to (more) horizontal models as follows: “The movement away from ministry as the monopoly of ordained men to ministry as the responsibility of the whole people of God, ordained as well as non-ordained.” Hence, he regards this as the most sensitive change in the church today and writes: “Laypersons are no longer just the scouts who, returning from the ‘outside world’ with eyewitness accounts and perhaps some bunches of grapes, report to the ‘operational basis’; they *are* the operational basis from which the *Missio Dei* proceeds.” (Bosch, 2012:483).

The topic of the ordination of women was again tabled at the BUSA 2016 Assembly, where a theological committee presented and proposed a revised statement of belief for the BUSA. Compared to the (then) current statement of belief, which had been passed at the Assembly held in Durban in September 1924 in which there was no mention of any gender restrictions (Baptist Union of Southern Africa 2015:257), the statement of belief took a clear complementarian stance on what is expected from the church towards women taking charge for church leadership.

The views of church membership were different; hence the church did not decide on the matter of women's ordination in church governance. The divisions that emerged were so great that there was real fear within the BUSA that this would lead to a split within the denomination.

At the 2017 Assembly, the BUSA postponed the debate by proposing that the adoption of the proposed statement of faith would be voted on at the 2018 Assembly. The issue that the ad hoc committee raised in 1989 is in line with a key question that is asked in this study: How can a church uphold the priesthood of all believers and yet, at the same time,



make a gender distinction within this priesthood when it comes to eligibility for church leadership? Is this Biblical?

It has been noted further that the significance of this principle is that it guides and liberates its members. It aims to find out how this principle is interpreted at the local level of the church and influences the church to address the role of women within its ranks.

Much has been written about the entitlement (or otherwise) of women to equal treatment in the church and society. It is not possible, in this study, to do justice to it all. Among the main works consulted were Pierce and Groothuis (eds.) (2005), Piper and Grudem (eds.) (2006b), Sumner (2003) and Payne (2009). Payne provides a thorough exegetical and theological study of the key Scriptures that draws the debate on women's ordination of women in the church. The work of Pierce and Groothuis (2005) and Piper and Grudem (2006) provide a solid overview of the arguments that are typically used to defend either an egalitarian view or a complementarian view on the role of women in the church.

The work by Sumner approaches the view of women who must take charge in the church from various and often refreshing perspectives. The material provided by the World Council of Churches was also useful in gaining insight into ecumenical aspects of the ordination of women. Where possible, opinions were sought from the literature on how the ordination of women is viewed in a South African context.

### **3.3.3 Significance of the Priesthood of all believers in Baptism**

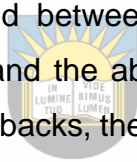
Felton (2000:373–374) believes that baptism is the ordination into the priesthood, a view that emanated from the early church father, Tertullian, around AD 220. The idea of baptism constituting the ordination of the laity can still be found in the orthodox tradition and it is for that reason that the term 'priesthood of the baptised' is preferred in this tradition (Voss, 2016:4–5). The strength of using this term lies in the fact that it does not allow for any distinction between ordained and non-ordained believers: every believer who has been baptised is ordained for the ministry.

### **3.3.4 Establishment of the Baptist Church in South Africa**

#### **3.3.4.1 British formation**

The missionaries have been in South Africa from England since 1819 and 1820. There were between 4000 to 5000 immigrants that were involved in that. The British government also voluntarily showed support by aiding approximately 100 families who had gathered to form a church. Although it is reported in church history that the Wesleyans fell short, the Baptists were not even near what the Wesleyans achieved in the first place. They, therefore, joined the Wesleyans to achieve their missionary goals. It was in 1820 that they arrived at Algoa Bay. The cottage in Salem near Grahamstown was used for worship.

It was 1832 when William Davies was sent to South Africa from England, because of the settlers who were without an ordained pastor. His arrival aimed to strengthen the church and hence, it was moved to Grahamstown so that they had an effective ministry to begin the work. The tension was aroused between the Calvinistic and Arminian factions resulting in the Grahamstown split and the abandonment of the building of Kariega in 1834. Despite the challenges and setbacks, the Baptist churches emerged in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.



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#### **3.3.4.2 German formation**

The Reformation theology has its origins when the British settlers and German settlers arrived in South Africa. It was in 1850 when they included several Baptists to plant a church. The Frankfort Baptist in Germany was founded by Carsten Langhein in late 1850 and other Baptists were also formed such as Berlin and Hanover. The meeting that took place in Hamburg supported the South African Baptists with pastors. The German Baptist Assembly meeting was held in Hamburg where Oncken's assistant, Carl Hugo Gutsche, was appointed to take up a pastor's position.

Gutsche was a man of God and outstanding in many ways. Over 25 years, he built 25 churches in the Border area, following the approach of a planned program towards giving, and he opened a debt-free church. "Although thwarted by internal quarrels and dissensions, and characterized by puritanical strictness which over-emphasized the unimportant, the German Baptists demonstrated a persevering faith and hope, and a

loyalty to the church which made for growth and progress second to none in the annals of our history” (Hudson-Reed, nd:23). The Baptist Union of Southern Africa was established in 1877 when the German-speaking Baptists outnumbered the English-speaking. The Border Association is still strong and reformed to this day in the region of the Eastern Cape.

### **3.3.4.3 South African formation**

South Africa has a rich history when it comes to the Baptist establishment in Cape Town since 1876. Hence, it is important in this study to mention the name of the church's early father who contributed many Baptist teachings, Charles Spurgeon. In 1888 the gold was discovered at Witwatersrand and a Baptist church was established there as well.

Therefore, the Baptist Union introduced charismatic teachings in the church which brought social theology and liberation theology that brought theological diversity which was difficult to be accepted in the church Baptist Union. One of the reasons for this has been the push towards involving women in church structures. The issue of congregationalism is one aspect that divides the churches and leaves leaders being the victims of the local churches because of their authority. There is no clear indication of the role of a leader and laity which contributes to the rise of many disputes in the church. Therefore, BCASCR sticks to this principle towards the exclusion of women in church governance. The Baptist church continues to struggle to grow because the laity is somewhat not taken seriously, and women are excluded from ordination as ministers.

### **3.3.5 The Church's Statement of faith**

To date, the ad hoc Committee, and the Baptist National Assembly (2019) have not entertained the idea of women being ordained. There are no plans to promote the idea of gender-based mainstreaming and it has been a while since the church has even spoken about spiritual inclusion.

## **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative approach was used in the empirical study with questionnaires administered to several individuals selected to participate in face-to-face interviews.

According to Chinyamurindi (2012, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c), qualitative research provides the opportunity – more so than quantitative research – to make sense of the phenomena being investigated and analysed. The research problem in this study is influenced by, among others, human attitudes and values; the qualitative approach was considered the best method to use.

The questionnaire was designed to reduce the risk of bias on the part of the researcher. The collective responses to the questionnaire helped to provide insights as to why women are excluded from the church governance structures of the BCSACR. The different aspects of the research methodology are discussed below.

### **3.4.1 Qualitative Research Approach**

A qualitative study involves the use of speaking or written accounts of views, impressions, and events to describe situations (Drew, 2008:19). In other words, the qualitative approach is a situational activity that positions the researcher in the world (Lincoln, 2011:3). The qualitative approach ensures ‘thick descriptions’ of participants’ opinions and understanding of various phenomena (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Corbin and Strauss (2008:12) state that the qualitative approach enables the researcher to discover how participants derive meaning from the different contexts in which they operate.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:4) further discuss that a qualitative approach consists of a set of material practices that make the world visible, distinctive and interpretive. Such material practices include taking field notes, conducting interviews, engaging in conversations, and taking photographs, recordings and notes (for later retrieval).

Qualitative research, Babbie and Mouton (2005) argue, is characterised by descriptive and rich data which helps the researcher to understand the participants’ particular frames of reference, types and level of knowledge and social reality. The data, in turn, must be written up in the form of in-depth descriptions and deductive analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). This contrasts with quantitative research which focuses on and analyses numbers. In qualitative research, as opposed to the quantitative approach, a more intuitive, reasoned approach is required. The researcher becomes the main instrument and an active player in the research process.

Qualitative research sets out to establish the underlying causes of phenomena and to understand why people act and react in the ways that they do, in the face of certain stimuli (Bryman, 2004:20). The emphasis is on the social nature of reality. According to Kalof (2008:78), the goal of qualitative research is to uncover the meaning that people give to things and what drives human-centred actions and sentiments. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:4) assert that in a qualitative approach the study responds to natural settings.

King and Horrocks (2010) say that qualitative research is idiographic as it calls for detailed descriptions of people's characteristics, feelings and experiences in their regular, natural surroundings. The rationale for using a qualitative research approach in this study was to properly understand (and not only observe and surmise) attitudes and behaviours that have given rise to the exclusion of women in church governance structures.

### **3.4.2 Quantitative Research Approach**

Glesne and Peshkin (1992), state that “quantitative methods are supported by the positivist or scientific paradigm”. The authors assert that “the scientific paradigm leads us to regard the world as made up of observable and measurable facts”. In this section, the researcher draws some comparisons between quantitative and qualitative research methods and assumptions and provides justifications for their respective uses.

Verhoef (2002) points out that “quantitative research is usually linked to the notion of science, as an objective truth or fact, whereas qualitative research is more often identified with the view that science is lived experience and therefore subjectively determined.”

### **3.4.3 Study Sample**

The sections below detail different aspects of the approach adopted to arrive at a study sample.

#### **3.4.3.1 Sample frame**

The number in the sample was not large. For various personal reasons, few women and men made themselves available to participate in this study. Another constraint was that

the churches falling under the jurisdiction of the BCSACR are in rural areas surrounded by farms.

The total number of people from all four conferences was 40. However, the survey focused only on twenty (20) women and eight (8) men to meet the required number for the study. The researcher has been sponsored by the churches to use those individuals who had availed themselves. The churches together sponsored seven (7) members from each conference, i.e., Cradock/white conference, Coloured/Indian conference, African/black conference and farm/rural conference. Therefore, twenty-eight (28) were used to make up the sample frame.

#### **3.4.3.2 Sampling strategy**

The study used the instrument to extract information from checklists, interviews and surveys. The sampling allowed the researcher to obtain information from a much broader population (Smith, 2008:237). Vyhmeister (2001:130–131) notes that a sample should serve the scope of the study so that the participants that are selected from the group reflect the different categories of participants' proportion and the total population. Similarly, Leedy (1993:200) asserts that a researcher must choose the sample carefully so that the characteristics of the total population are displayed.

The sampling strategy used in the study was to identify all those people and entities that could offer reliable views on the status of women in the BCSACR, what they contribute and whether, in their view, women should have ascended to managerial or leadership in the church. From this broad population, then, set out to select a viable and representative sample of participants.

Sampling according to carefully selected criteria helps researchers to home in on people who have experience (personal or through association) of women being denied the moment to exercise their managerial/leadership skills and spiritual gifts in the church environment (Tongco, 2007).

### 3.4.4 The Data-gathering process

The data-collection process was geared towards obtaining the information. The results, in turn, were intended to create a better understanding of how the church engages with women in God's mission and helps (or does not help, as the case may be) each female member to exercise their spiritual gifts and develop their leadership potential in church structures.

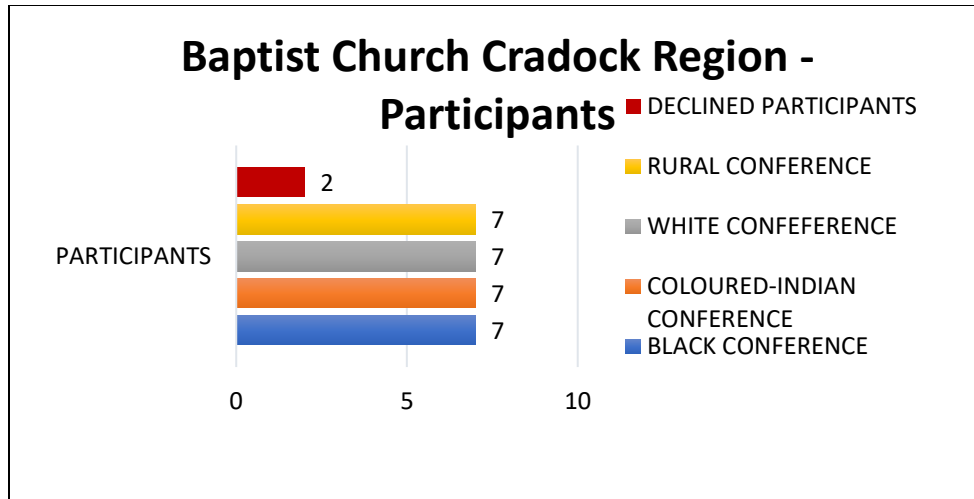
The sections below discuss that:

- i. The interviews were conducted, including the characteristics of the participants;
- ii. The observation process included examining the behaviour and reactions of participants' family members and members of surrounding communities who played a passive role during the interviews; and
- iii. Data analysis was designed to extract meaning and identify trends from the participants' responses.



**Photo 3.5: The locations in and around Cradock where the data was collected**

The data was gathered based on previous studies on women who had not been involved in the ministry (Wagner-Ferreira, 2011). The researcher used the basic structure of questions in practical theology, as discussed by Osmer (2008:4).



**Figure 3.3: Number of participants in each conference**

#### 3.4.4.1 Interviews

Attempting to arrive at a fuller understanding of the views of women about patriarchy and hierarchy in the church and how their exclusion from church governance structures impacts church communities was the point of departure in the interview process. The interviews provided a platform for affected individuals in the church to tell their stories and be heard – both by other members of the church and society which could help to undo some societal norms that have prevailed for many years.

The interview is a “two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, perceptions, opinions and behaviours of the participant” (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). The study has used a semi-structured interview, which was followed by a short interview schedule, and open-ended questions to guide the interview process.

This required the researcher to be skilled in soliciting information from participants and checking understanding from time to time. The fact that the participants could communicate in their language helped to make them comfortable with sharing their beliefs and opinions (Fouche & Delport, 2005:74).

There are semi-structured interviews that consist of a predetermined set up of questions directed to each participant, which gives him/her a further probing clarification of answers. The schedule consisted of a list of questions that were used to obtain the required data.



Using open-ended questions allows participants to contribute ideas freely. Hence, their perspectives are respected. However, it is significant that the process is managed carefully so that the researcher could not be led by emotions and become side-tracked. Then, all that is not related to the study should be avoided (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87).

Individual interviews were conducted until all the necessary data had been obtained. The ultimate goal of the interview process was to explore the perceptions and experiences of women themselves and other church members regarding the church's treatment of women in the ministry, as well as to solicit suggestions on how the church environment could be made more accommodating of women in church governance structures.

In an interview situation, probing techniques are helpful, namely:

- Clarification to check the understanding, such as: Did I hear you correctly?
- Detail-oriented probes, such as Who? Where? What?
- Elaboration probes, such as: Will you tell me more?

“Empathetic responses to evoke further exploration may be appropriate at times as participants may share painful feelings” (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:88).

Moreover, when interviewees provide emphatic responses, it could be a sign of deep-seated, painful feelings and it might be therapeutic (and thus advisable) for interviewees to share them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:88).

To initiate the interviews, letters of invitation were sent to the potential participants explaining the rationale for, and background to, the research and requesting their involvement in the interview process. They were given the choice to participate or not. The invitations were faxed, emailed, or delivered by hand in advance of the scheduled interview sessions. The participants' letters were all written in English, although Xhosa and Afrikaans are the dominant languages in the survey area.

### 3.4.4.2 The questionnaire

The data-collection instrument (the questionnaire) was prepared as planned. During the interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to share the relevant Scripture and testify to His goodness. All the participants shared three main characteristics.

- Firstly, they all displayed a strong sense of self-acceptance and cooperated fully in the interview process, providing frank answers. As a result, interviewing them was straightforward and efficient. They also took the trouble to take the time to participate and arrived early for their interviews.
- Secondly, they were evangelical, spiritual, and committed church members and believers. To them, the church was important, not just for personal gain but also because in many cases it gave them self-esteem and self-confidence and provided opportunities to develop their spiritual gifts and talents, which contributed to their own and others' quality of life. This evangelical spiritual commitment provided the foundation for growth within the church community as well as in the Lord Jesus.
- Thirdly, the participants all attended church regularly, of their own free will.

Smith (2008) states that “a questionnaire is a series of written questions a researcher supplies to subjects, requesting their response”. Smith goes on to assert that “in this process, different kinds of questions solicit different types of data (for example, open or closed questions, qualitative or quantitative questions)”.

Questionnaires, however, are not foolproof. Babbie (1998), cited in Mouton (2005), highlights some errors that are usually encountered when data is collected manually (utilizing questionnaires). The author suggests that “when data is captured manually from questionnaires, transcripts and psychological tests, allowance must be made for human error”.

Clark (1992) and Newton and Rudest (1999), cited in Mouton (2005), suggest that “incomplete questionnaires or tests that contain many missing responses might introduce errors during data gathering”. To curb these errors, the authors give the following advice: “Once quantitative data have been collected, validation checks must be carried out and

supplied. Such checks involve reliability analysis of questionnaire responses, item analyses, psychological test scores, factor analyses and the simple inspection of marginal frequencies or percentages” (Clark, 1992; Newton & Rudest an, 1999, cited in Mouton, 2005).

#### **3.4.4.3 Focus groups**

“A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging” (Temkin, 2016). This definition of a focus group emphasises where the attention in the research method is; it is on a select group of people, based on what is related to the research topic of study.

A Focus group usually comprises one to seven participants. It is thus a small group guided by an able leader which is designed to solicit opinions about a designated topic, which then guides future action (Temkin, 2016). Heary (2000) outlines some of the features of a focus group, including:

- The focus group addresses a series of topics. More specifically, it is designed to elicit participants’ perceptions, feelings, ideas, and attitudes.
- The group is small (1–7 participants) and is composed of men and women.
- The process is guided and conducted effectively so that it addresses the research objectives.

#### **a) The advantages of focus groups**

Focus groups have many advantages, some of which are discussed below.

First, the focus group method promotes interaction among the participants as opposed to, for example, individual questionnaires. “Interaction between group participants is considered the distinct advantage and hallmark of focus group research” (Gronkjaer, Curtis, De Crespigny & Delmar, 2011). The participants in each focus group interact actively and openly, enriching the whole research process.

Second, it adds a human dimension to impersonal data. The research process is not simply a dry, impersonal gathering of information, as other qualitative research methods tend to be. The focus group method adds the human element through group dynamics. “Focus group discussions allow the researcher to probe both the cognitive and emotional responses of participants while observing the underlying group dynamic” (Heary, 2000).

Third, the focus group deepens understanding where required; also, clarification can be sought by asking follow-up questions. Morgan (1996:12) observes that the strength of the focus groups is the positive contribution of participants when they query and provide an explanation to one another. This question-and-clarification approach was demonstrated in the focus group discussions conducted for the study. Since follow-up questions have the potential to distract people from the main research question, the group leaders were told to guard against any follow-up questions derailing or diverting people’s attention away from the main discussion.

Fourth, the focus group is very economical, if properly planned and executed. “The focus group method of research saves time and money in comparison to individual interviews. The focus group also provides a broader range of information” (Temkin, 2016).

Fifth, the researcher has an opportunity to interact with participants and ask for clarity when issues are not clear. Morgan (1996:12) asserts that “a further strength comes from the researcher’s ability to ask the participants themselves for comparisons among their experiences and views, rather than aggregate individual data to speculate about whether or why the interviews differ.”

Sixth, the focus group, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, can give an account of several issues that accommodates a large amount of data. Hence, the process ensures that questions are directly tailored to the research topic and allow them to compare their experiences. The insights into the topic remain unobserved.

## **b) The disadvantages of focus groups**

Whilst the choice of focus groups may have disadvantages, its advantages far outweighed the weaknesses. In this study, for instance, the disadvantages are easily mitigated, as is demonstrated below.

If not controlled and moderated, disagreements and irrelevant discussion can detract from the main purpose of the focus group. This can be mitigated through efficient moderation and attention being drawn to the goals of the group. The guided discussion for producing results and the facilitation of the discussion are critical for the study.

“The quality of the discussion depends on the skill of the moderator, who should be well trained and preferably from the target population” (Fok-Han & Ratnapalan, 2009:10). If not well planned and executed, a focus group session can be a challenge, particularly in terms of the data that is produced.

This can be mitigated by adequate preparation, for example, by having two or more people compile the data and then compress the information as accurately as possible. The data should be interpreted and represent directly what the participants have said, then, if data is not attended it will be difficult to analyse what has been collected (Fok-Han & Ratnapalan, 2009).

Fok-Han & Ratnapalan (2009) reports the weakness when the participants are becoming self-selected, then the results should be harder to make a generic analysis to a large population. Therefore, the composition and number of focus groups should be sufficiently extensive to reflect the representative views of the group members.

Temkin (2016) adds that a weakness of a focus group as a research method is that “respondents can feel peer pressure to give similar answers to the moderators’ questions”. The moderator must have the skill of phrasing the question so that the response adds value to the study outcomes.

### 3.4.5 Data analysis

Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive (Creswell, 2003:182). It allows new information and previously researched studies to be revealed, which can be deduced from people's multiple experiences in life. Depending on the novelty of qualitative research findings, a new theory might even be produced (Creswell, 2003:181).

Indeed, this study revealed previously unknown and/or more textured insights about women in the church. These will be particularly valuable in the development of guidelines to encourage and facilitate the inclusion of women in church leadership and governance structures in faith communities.

In the study, the data analysis focused on the information obtained from the interviews – both from the responses provided in the interviews and through more general observation. It involved arriving at deductions from participants' responses regarding their experiences, behaviours, and interactions (Fossey et al., 2002:717).

This contrasts with (in quantitative research) relying on statistical procedures or quantification methods to discern existing patterns, relationships and trends, which can aid decision-making. Responses were transcribed and summarized, main themes were identified, and commonalities and contradictions were detected. The latter required careful identification and interpretation because any evidence of contrary views was particularly pertinent to the research problem.

The responses provided by the participants to the semi-structured interview questions were similar in several respects, but there were also some variations.

Tables 1- 6 provide summaries of some of the participants' characteristics, which help reveal the broad composition of the BCSACR, including how well aligned (or otherwise) the different conferences (rural, white, African/black, Coloured/Indian) are, which might have influenced participants' responses.

TABLE 3.1: SUMMARY PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS: RURAL

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of participants per interview</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Church</b>
Female	45	1	Married	Rural	BCSACR
Female	50	1	Single	Rural	BCSACR
Female	39	1	Married	Rural	BCSACR
Female	60	1	Single	Rural	BCSACR
Female	56	1	Married	Rural	BCSACR
Male	47	1	Married	Rural	BCSACR
Male	38	1	Widower	Rural	BCSACR

TABLE 3.2: SUMMARY PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS: WHITE

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of participants per interview</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Church</b>
Female	50	1	Married	White	BCSACR
Female	52	1	Widower	White	BCSACR
Female	60	1	Married	White	BCSACR
Female	50	1	Married	White	BCSACR
Female	49	1	Married	White	BCSACR
Male	50	1	Married	White	BCSACR
Male	54	1	Married	White	BCSACR

TABLE 3.3: SUMMARY PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS: COLOURED/INDIAN

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of participants per interview</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Church</b>
Female	45	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR
Female	50	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR
Female	39	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR
Female	46	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR
Female	50	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR
Male	60	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR
Male	40	1	Married	Coloured	BCSACR



TABLE 3.4: SUMMARY PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS: AFRICAN/BLACK

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of participants per interview</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Church</b>
Female	60	1	Married	Blacks	BCSACR
Female	54	1	Widower	Blacks	BCSACR
Female	62	1	Singe	Blacks	BCSACR
Female	49	1	Married	Blacks	BCSACR
Female	59	1	Single	Blacks	BCSACR
Male	51	1	Married	Blacks	BCSACR
Male	55	1	Married	Blacks	BCSACR



TABLE 3.5: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS PER CONFERENCE

No.	Details	Sex	Duty in the church	Type of work/Education level	Area
<b>RURAL CONFERENCE: BCSACR</b>					
1.	XDC	Female	Church member	Domestic worker	Farms
2.	BNS	Female	Church member	Grade 2	Farms
3.	TPDS	Female	Chairlady	Level 4 ABET	Farms
4.	OZA	Female	Church member	None	Farms
5.	ZFB	Female	Church member	Level 4 ABET	Farms
6.	GYH	Male	Elder in the church	Gardener	Farms
7.	EWA	Male	Church deacon	Farm foreman	Farms
<b>WHITE CONFERENCE: BCSACR</b>					
8.	SDE	Female	Church member	Educator	White
9.	RDP	Female	Church member	Accountant	White
10.	GFT	Female	Chairlady	School principal	White
11.	NDP	Female	Church member	Level 4 ABET	White
12.	IPO	Female	Church member	Own company	White
13.	SAP	Male	Church elder	Ward councillor	White
14.	DCS	Male	Church chairperson	Municipal worker	White
<b>COLOURED CONFERENCE: BCSACR</b>					
15.	DBE	Female	Church member	None	Coloured

16.	DSR	Female	Church member	Ward councillor	Coloured
17.	EML	Female	Chairlady	Educator	Coloured
18.	IYM	Female	Church member	None	Coloured
19.	ITP	Female	Church member	Nurse	Coloured
20.	DRDA	Male	Church member	School principal	Coloured
21.	AWZ	Male	Church secretary	Accountant	Coloured

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**BLACK AFRICAN CONFERENCE: BCSACR**

22.	UPL	Female	Church member	Educator	Black
23.	MLO	Female	Chairlady	Businesswoman	Black
24.	PIW	Female	Church member	Principal	Black
25.	KWZ	Female	Church member	School HoD	Black
26.	ECI	Female	Church member	None	Black
27.	WPE	Male	Evangelist	Cert in Theology	Black
28.	KZNE	Male	Elder	Taxi owner	Black

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Through the participants' candid responses, the researcher was able to compile Table 6.

A recurring theme revealed through the analytical process was that God decides, from the beginning, what form women's spiritual lives should take. In this regard, some of the responses revealed that women, while being seen as spiritual beings with an important contribution to make to the church, were not always considered suitable for church leadership positions.

Five (5) of the interviewed participants from the white conference shared their honest and candid views on how the church addresses the exclusion of women in the church governance structures.

Participants' responses provided important insights into the validity of some people's interpretation of the Scriptures – that a woman is the result or embodiment of sin and represents inadequacy and imperfection. However, Jesus' consistent message is that God has infinite mercy and that everyone should be brought into His presence and experiences His love. Women are not born sinners and they should be treated no differently from any other human beings.

However, history has shown that Scripture sometimes appears to deliver mixed messages, while it speaks the language of inclusiveness, it somewhat suggests exclusion in some areas, that women constitute a focus group of people who require different treatment. Bachelor (2008) refers to the gift of inclusivity (Eph. 4:11). However, he highlights the fact that women face barriers when it comes to assuming leadership positions in the church. These barriers need to be investigated both academically and biblically.

Entrenched cultural and religious beliefs have had a lasting impact on the relationships that have developed between the two genders, both in the church and in society. For example, Klingorova (2015:2) states that “the status of women in society is an outcome of the interpretation of religious texts and the cultural and institutional set-up of religious communities. Thus, the role of religion is complex, and it varies across space and time but at the same time, gender as a social construct remains universal across space and across time.”

The understanding of gender and sex are interchangeable while the meaning is not the same. Dijk and Athalya (1994:12) define gender as “the social construction and representation of differences between the sexes”. Bradley (2007:15) asserts that “gender refers to the socio-cultural aspects of being a man or woman that is how society sets the rules for masculinity and femininity while sex refers to the base of biological sex differences (male and female).” Franklin (2012:1) asserts that “sex is biologically given and is universal in nature, while gender is historically and culturally variable”.

The researcher believes that it is not only women's more basic needs and desires that should be recognized but also their insights and their potential and actual contribution. In

other words, the church should view women as special agents of the church, capable of carrying out the church's mission in their own right. Their gender should not be a limiting factor; rather, they should be seen in terms of the spiritual gifts that they naturally bring to the church community.

What was revealed in the data analysis was that there was not a clear consensus that everyone is made in God's image – despite Christ praying for unity and St Paul indicating that, like the parts of the human body, all members of the church need one another. Ogato (2013:358–372) puts it bluntly: that the obstacles preventing women from being developed within the church are related to their gender.

The five (5) participants from the Coloured/Indian conference agreed that the church is a place that is supposed to ease or remove life's challenges. They noted that Christ is at the centre of their lives and is the main source of their faith. Remedios (2016:8) observes that the New Testament has stories of women who played a pivotal role as leaders, preachers and followers that contributed immensely to Christian theology.

The two (2) male participants from the rural conference felt that women should not be given opportunities in church leadership. Makoro (2007:59-60) concurs that women should not be allowed to lead because:

- the doctrine says otherwise in terms of the statement of faith;
- economic and financial constraints prevent them from doing so;
- the female gender does not lend itself to leadership.

One (1) participant from the rural conference advised that BCSACR should devise strategies for giving women the opportunity to exercise their spiritual gifts, and to be recognized for this. According to the same participant, Christians must display a sense of social justice toward women as well as in society. Therefore, women are the beneficiaries of segregation from our communities which violates their rights to exercise their ideas freely. The participant asked: "How can we still say that they are all members when we are the ones who pick out a few to discriminate against?"

Grenz (1997) cites the Scripture on how Jesus provided the basis for moral behaviour (Col 1:10, 2:6, 3:23-24). Paul is clear about the responsibility of the church that God loves everyone unconditionally, hence, Christians should love other people irrespective of who the person is. Christian ethics has the Biblical imperative to serve one another without exception and prejudice (Grenz, 1997); hence, the church should understand that “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal 5:13).

It is one of the primary duties of the church to develop programmes that help transform the mindsets of those victimized by society. In this regard, one (1) male participant from the white conference told the researcher: “If it does not challenge you, it won’t change you.” This means that both the church and all parties involved (men and women) have a responsibility to challenge and change typical stereotypes in society.

A female participant went on to say: “It might be possible that a church does not know the needs of the vulnerable group, and if the group does not involve themselves in the church, then no one can blame the church.” The researcher viewed this as a positive comment as it revealed the participants’ grasp of the reality of bias in the church governance structures and why it is important for the church to reach out to all its members equally.

The five (5) participants from the African/black conference raised the idea that women in many organizations, including the church, should work together to resist their exclusion. Women should embrace one another towards the aspects of leadership that empower and develop their fraternity in the church so that their stand can be firm. For example, Hagberg (2003:254) highlights the stages that affect women’s development for leadership, so that they can be productive in their leadership. Hagberg (2003) further notes that this would encourage women to discover their power.

The researcher supported what has been captured from white participants that women’s relatively low social status of a woman is contributed by the act of tradition and cultural conduct that makes a woman under male domination. It has been noted that they become subordinates of male protection in terms external world and the management of property, unlike the rural conferences.

Both black and white conference participants agreed that they need to work together as members of the BCSACR to address the overt or subtle discrimination against women in the church. Gaitskell (2009:259) explains that black and white women have to organize themselves and their lives, not only in addressing the gender-based leadership gap in their local churches but also, in the case of rural communities, in keeping economically active to sustain their families while the men are away.

This study has helped to clarify the role of, and perceptions about, women in the church, using the case study of the BCSACR. About the theoretical framework, it is clear that the inclusion of women in church governance is hindered by traditional attitudes and bias, which assert that women lack the inherent capabilities of taking up responsible church positions regardless of the resources at their disposal. Women's inability to serve meaningfully in the church means that they are denied the opportunity of ministering to other church members and helping them to get closer to Christ and participate fully in Christian living.

Although most of the participants from all four conferences indicated that they had a rich and fulfilling life in the church, there is still much scope for all church members to take responsibility for making the lives of the disadvantaged better.

While the conclusions drawn in the data analysis were illuminating, the study nevertheless had several limitations. These are discussed in Chapter Four.

### **3.5 ETHICAL ISSUES**

The researcher should ensure that he meets the ethical standards set in the University of Fort Hare ethical clearance certificate. The Dean of Research permits any student who meets the requirement and represents the institution to the public. Strydom (1996:63) discuss that ethics are the set of formal principles that guides and governs the behaviour of an individual or a group that is subsequently widely accepted.

### **3.5.1 Authority of the University of Fort Hare – clearance**

The ethical clearance certificate serves to guide and give the researcher permission to proceed with the research subject to the conditions set. The integrity of the researcher is guided by ethical clearance so that his/her conduct protects participants.

### **3.5.2 The rights of participants**

The participants have the right to withdraw whenever they feel uncomfortable proceeding. The participants were not coerced to participate; rather, they participated willingly and voluntarily. Burns and Groove (1993:776) hold that informed consent becomes the entitlement of a participant to partake in the study voluntarily once a prospective participant has assimilated essential information about the study. The prospective participant must be aware of their right whether or not to participate. The rationale for seeking consent is to assure the participant that they will not be subject to any risks or liable for any costs.



### **3.5.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

The researcher has informed the participants that anonymity and confidentiality are applied. Burns and Groove (1993:762) define anonymity as conduct in which participants and their responses are not revealed in the study; nor are they connected to the research in any way. The researcher upheld the principle of anonymity by not disclosing any information that could be traced to specific participants.

The data was also kept confidential. Then, Pilot and Hungler (1995:139) define the meaning of confidentiality as the information provided by a participant will not be disclosed in a manner of discrediting the integrity of the participant. The researcher assured the participants that the data will be kept safe and their real names will not be used during data analysis and the discussion of findings.

## **3.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided a comprehensive discussion on the research methodology used in the study – from the rationale for using a qualitative approach to the format and

importance of the data-collection technique and some of the key findings from the interviews.

The interviews, though relatively few, have reinforced many of the views and opinions appearing in the academic literature and the Biblical references to women and their perceived role in society and the church. In this regard, the qualitative research approach was appropriate and has provided the foundation for an expanded study in future.

The next chapter considers the collected data in more detail, with a more in-depth discussion of the responses of the participants and a more nuanced analysis of these responses in the context of what appears in a range of scholarly works.



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## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This is one of the most important chapters in the study as it discusses the process of analysing the data and arriving at the main findings. This analytical process, using the information gathered during the interviews, focused on identifying key themes in the participants' responses which served to lend order to the acquired information and helped to frame the main findings. In this regard, the researcher was guided by Braun and Clarke (2009) who state that: "A theme captures something important about data concerning the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data."

One of the challenges associated with the study, and specifically the data collection process, was that the different conferences, i.e., Cradock/white conference, Coloured/Indian conference, African/black conference, and farm/rural conference, were very geographically removed from one another and also had very different socio-economic characters. Although the questionnaire was designed to introduce as much standardization as possible in the data-collection process, the participants' varying backgrounds added a layer of complexity to the analysis of the collective responses. Another hurdle was that in early 2020, South Africa was besieged by Covid-19, which added to the difficulty of collecting and analysing information.

### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

#### **4.2.1 Farm/Rural Conference**

The area making up the farm/rural conference surrounding Cradock is very large. Hence, the researcher not only had to travel long distances but also navigate rough, gravel roads. In addition, he had to adopt a spiritual strategy to reach the participants because farm owners were reluctant to allow him access due to the Coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic. Through God's grace, though, the researcher succeeded in his mission.

At the farm/rural conference, there are no shops, restaurants, schools, garages or supermarkets. The shops and spaza shops are in town (i.e., Cradock). For church

members to gather for church services, they have to use farm buildings. Some farms have better facilities than others. There was a total of seven (7) participants drawn at this conference. The researcher asked the respondents the same questions while allowing them to respond freely and as they thought appropriate.

All the participants were aware of or had experienced the exclusion of women from church governance structures and therefore, had opinions on the matter.

Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the farm/rural conference. Their names have been distinguished to protect participants' anonymity. Instead, the researcher has used a coding system.

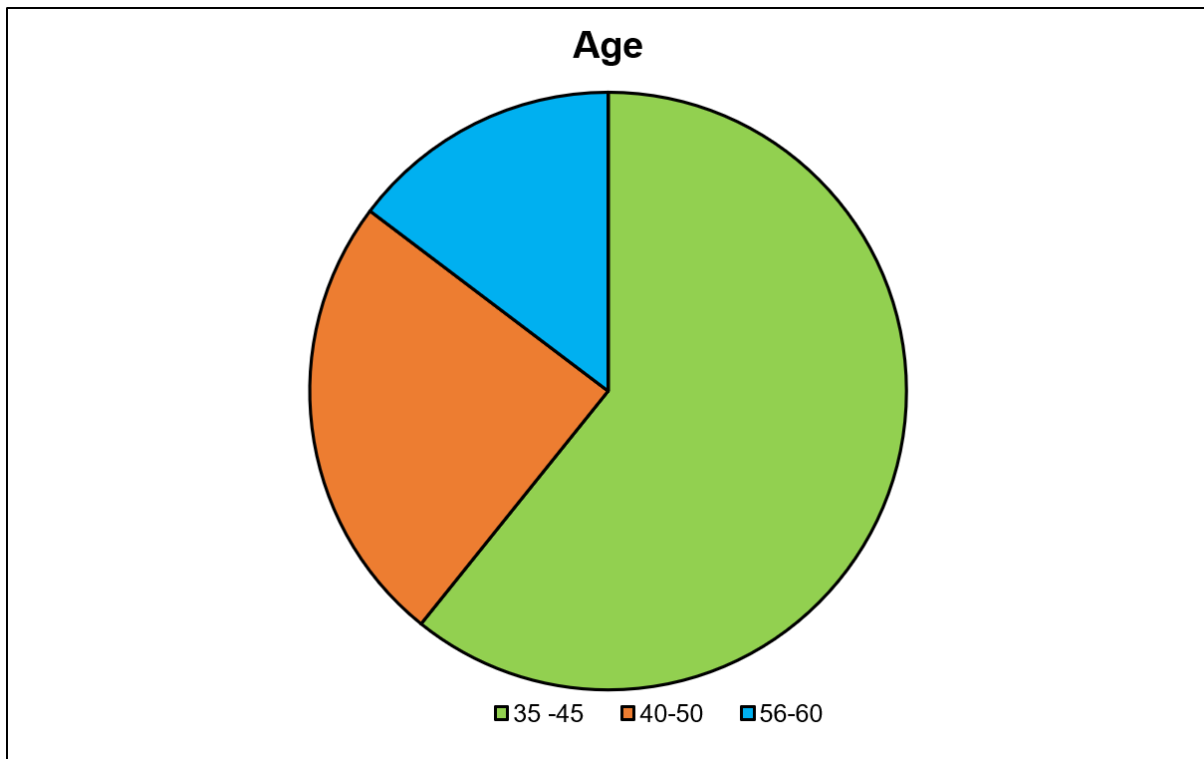
TABLE 4.1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS: RURAL CONFERENCE

Participants	Age	Gender	Education	Socio-economic	Marital Status
XDS	45	Female	Grade 1	Employed	Married
BNS	50	Female	Grade 2	Employed	Single
TPDS	39	Female	Level 4 ABET	Self-employed	Married
OZA	60	Female	None	Unemployed	Single
ZFB	56	Female	Level 4 ABET	Self-employed	Married
GYH	47	Male	Grade 3	Employed	Married
EWA	38	Male	Grade R	Employed	Single

In the interviews, the seven participants were asked and willingly spoke about their experiences of women (including themselves, where relevant) being marginalized in the church. The questionnaire was a useful instrument for gathering this information as it systematically asked various questions.

Mouton (2005:243) speaks of the right of participants to anonymity and confidentiality: “This right should be respected both where it has been promised explicitly and where no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached.” The researcher presents the following table that deals with what is regarded as the true reflection on what has been captured to show how the demographics of the rural conference have been analysed.

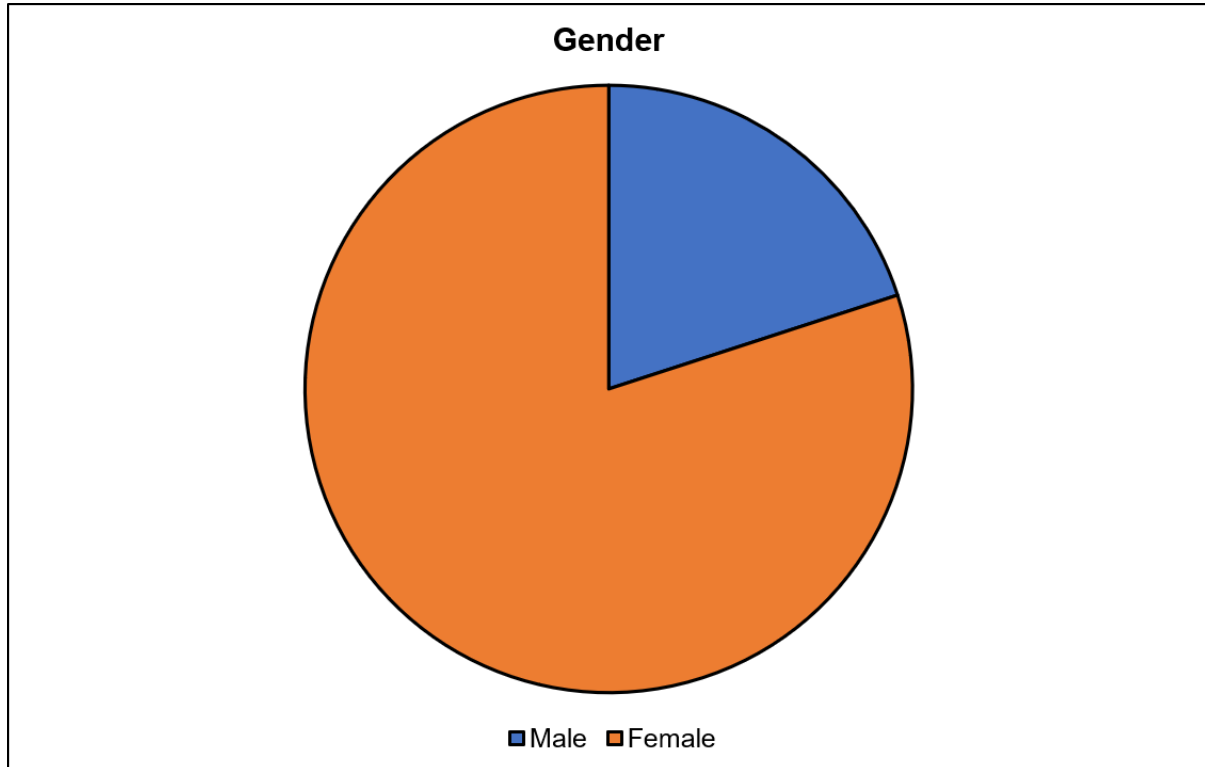
#### 4.2.1.1 Age



**Figure 4.1: Age breakdown of participants from farm/rural conference**

The age analysis revealed three age groups: 38-45, 46-50 and 56-60. The first age brackets (38-45) comprised younger participants, representing sixty 60% of the total participants. The second age group (40-50) comprised middle-aged participants, representing 25% of the total participants. The third age group (56-60) comprised the more senior participants, representing 15% of the participants.

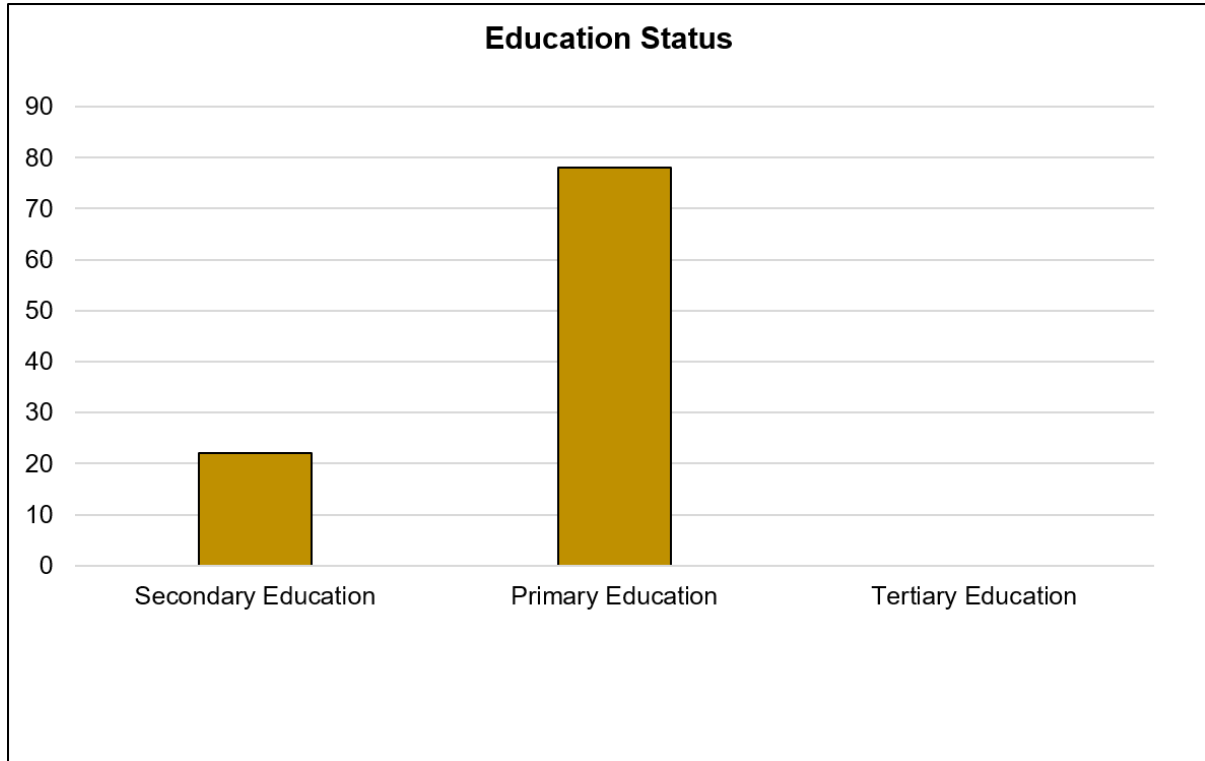
#### 4.2.1.2 Gender



**Figure 4.2: Gender split of participants from Farm/rural conference**

In terms of gender split, there were two male participants, representing 20% of the participants, and five female participants, representing 80% of the total participants. Although women far exceeded men in the study, the 80:20 ratio was considered appropriate to analyse the data, particularly as the female participants had first-hand knowledge of discrimination in the church and society as a whole and were able to offer insightful responses. All participants were enthusiastic about discussing the issue of gender-based inequality, particularly on how it has been a longstanding tradition of the church to suppress women's participation.

### 4.2.1.3 Education Status



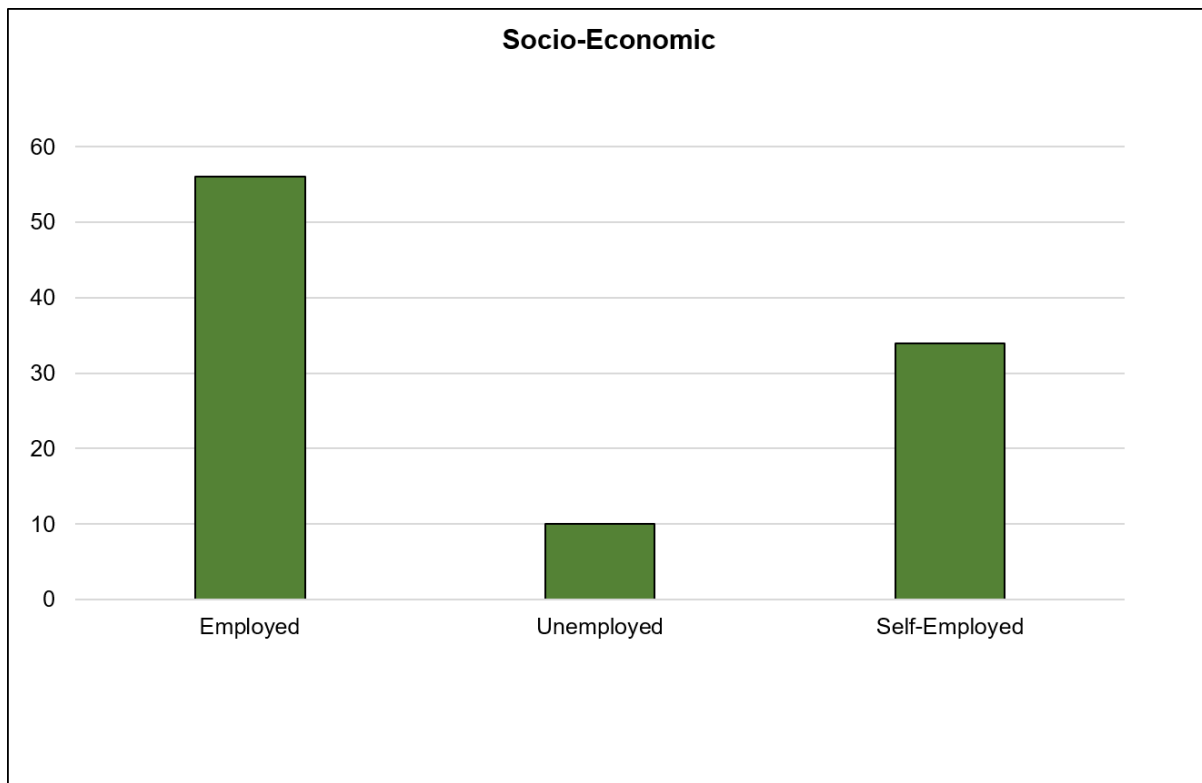
**Figure 4.3: Education level of participants from farm/rural conference**

Education is very important in people's lives as it holds the key to more economic opportunities. The female participants said that inadequate education had hindered their progress in the church because they lacked the worldliness and skills to play an active role, particularly in the church's formal management structures. Such exclusion was a source of great disappointment and even trauma for some participants. The researcher had to adapt his style and deductions according to the education level of the different participants because they had different worldviews and sensitivities.

As many as 78% of participants had only primary education, while 22% had secondary education. None of the participants in the farm/rural conference had any tertiary education. This does not necessarily suggest that no farm/rural conference inhabitants have acquired a tertiary education, but for this particular sample, tertiary level education did not feature.

#### 4.2.1.4 Employment status

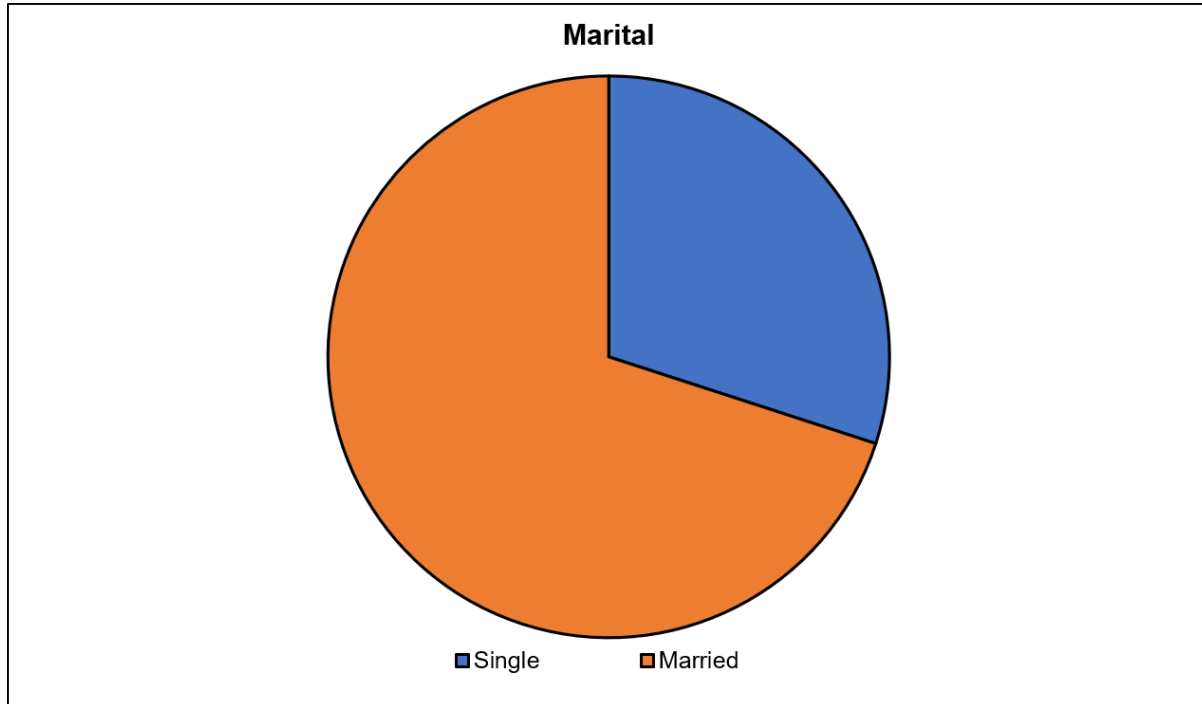
##### a) Socio-economic Status



**Figure 4.4: Employment status of participants from farm/rural conference**

Regarding the employment status, 56% of participants were formally employed, 34% were self-employed and 10% were unemployed. Participants had different types of jobs: foremen, farm security or working in the kitchen. Those in the self-employed category made a living by, for example, driving people between farms and selling food on a part-time basis. The female participants mentioned the issue of skills development if they can get formal or informal training so that they can improve their literacy.

## b) Marital status



**Figure 4.5: Marital status of participants from farm/rural conference**

None of the participants in the farm/rural conference was divorced or widowed. The majority of 60% were married. Single participants constituted 30% of the total participants.

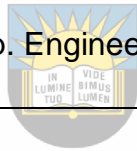
### 4.2.2 Cradock/White Conference

The white conference covers the town of Cradock. Although its culture is predominantly white, some blacks stay in town and worship at churches (including the Baptist church) in the vicinity. Because residents of Cradock, who are predominantly White, have access to chain stores such as Shoprite, their standard of living was different from that of the participants from the farm/rural conference.

There was a total of seven (7) participants drawn from this conference. Although the conference is characterized by many married couples, it was married individuals who agreed to participate (i.e., not their spouses). All the participants in this group responded well and clearly to the questions posed to them.

TABLE 4.2: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:  
CRADOCK/WHITE CONFERENCE

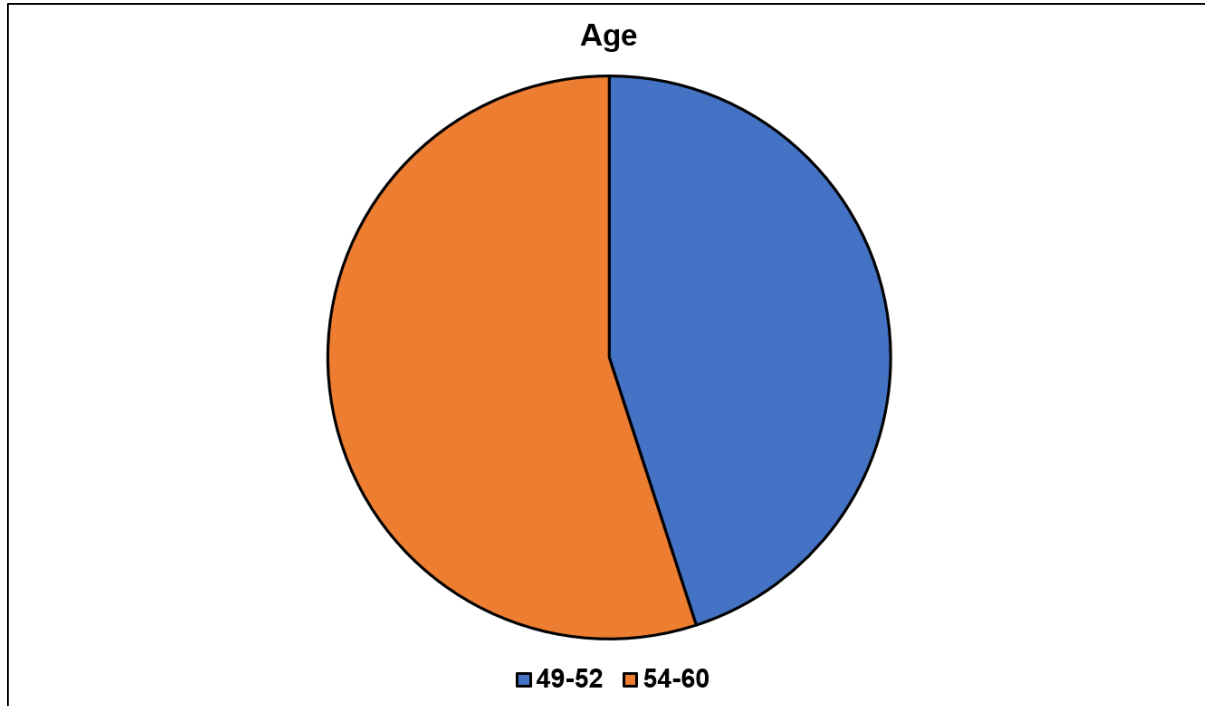
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio-economic</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>
SDE	50	Female	BEd	Employed	Married
RDP	52	Female	BCom	Self-employed	Married
GFT	60	Female	Bachelor of Ed.	Employed	Married
NDP	50	Female	Level 4 ABET	Self-employed	Married
IPO	49	Female	Std 10	Self-employed	Married
SAP	50	Male	Bachelor Soc Sc.	Employed	Married
DCS	54	Male	Dip. Engineering	Employed	Married



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#### 4.2.2.1 Age

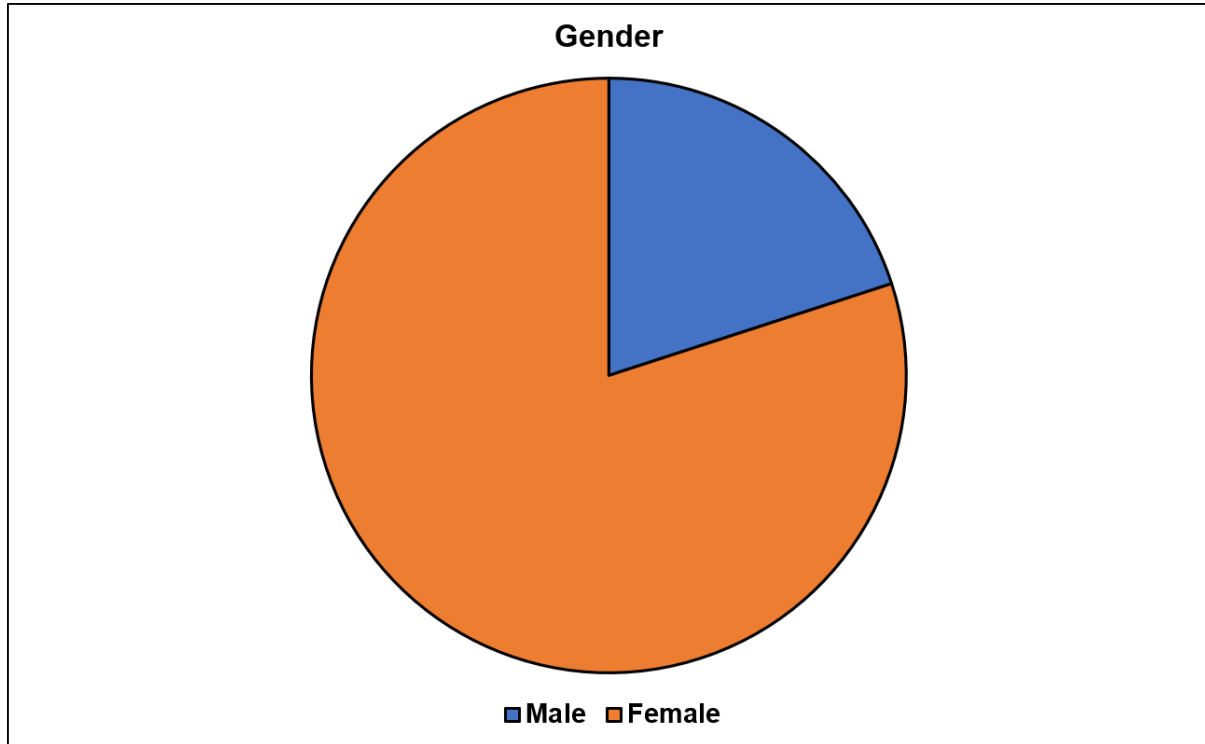


**Figure 4.6: Age breakdown of participants from Cradock/white conference**

Two age groups were identified: 49–52 and 54–60. The first age group (49–52) comprised younger members, representing 45% of the total participants. They were particularly vocal about marginalization as an issue in the church and the importance of respecting women and recognizing their talents and worth.

The second age group (54–60) comprised older members, representing 55% of the total participants. They were very knowledgeable about church governance responsibilities and structures.

#### 4.2.2.2 Gender

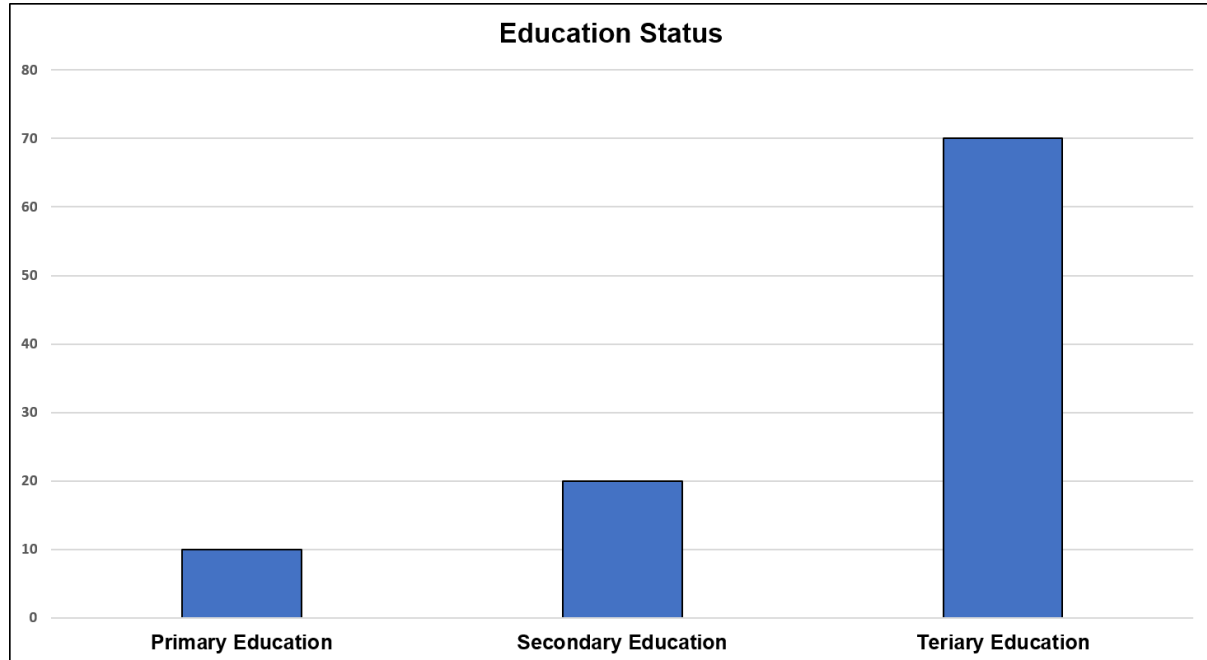


**Figure 4.7: Gender split of participants from Cradock/white conference**

In terms of the gender split, there were five female participants, representing 80% of the total participants, and two male participants, representing 20% of the total participants. Again, the 80:20 ratio was considered appropriate for analysing the data.

All the participants shared the view that white culture has helped to deny women the opportunity of assuming leadership roles in the church. Although they said they loved God and enjoyed their engagement in church activities, they admitted that women were mainly considered to be housewives and carers of children, instead of people with professional skills and the potential to assume management roles in the church.

### 4.2.2.3 Education Status

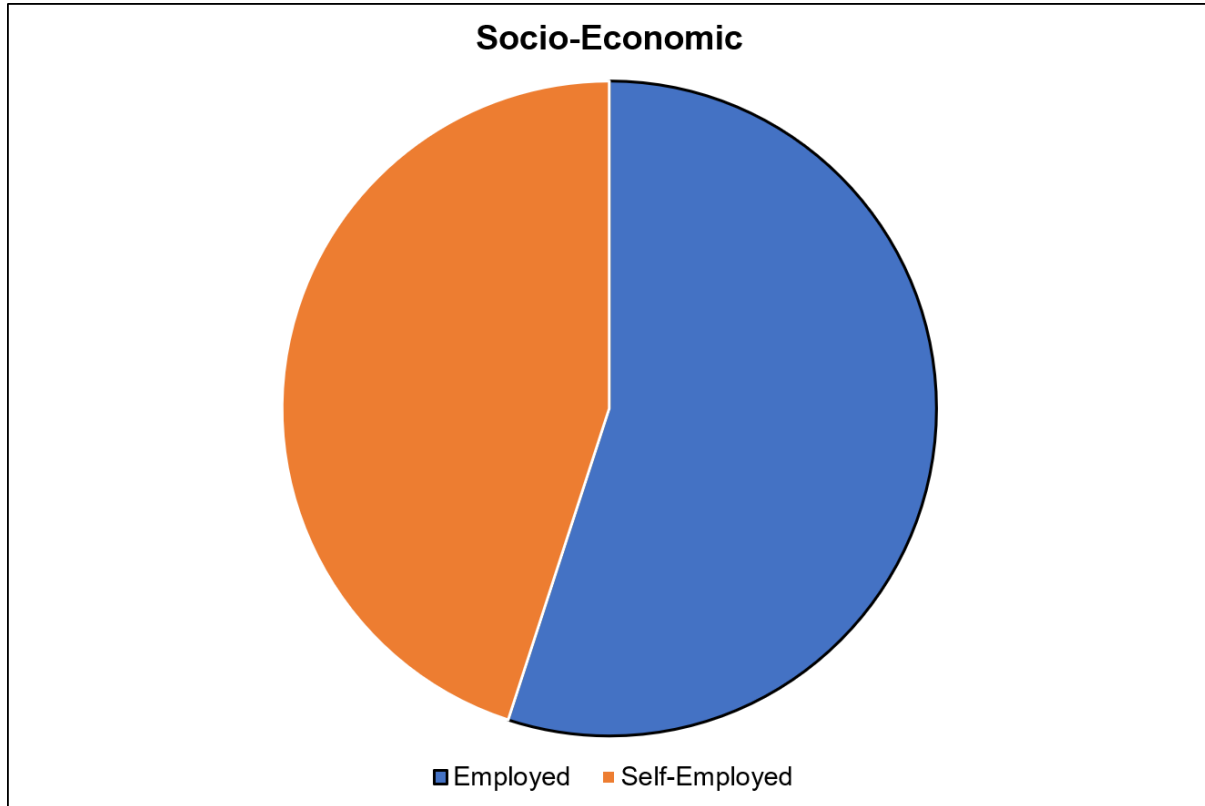


**Figure 4.8: Education level of participants from Cradock/white conference**

The participants from the Cradock/white conference displayed a very different educational profile from that of the farm/rural participants. The participants were very eloquent and had strong opinions about the issue of gender and education. They emphasized that God gives everyone their spiritual gifts, which they should be free to exercise in the world without fear or favour.

A small proportion (10%) of participants had primary school education only. A similarly low proportion (20%) of participants reported that they had received only a secondary school education. By far the majority (70%) had had the benefit of some form of tertiary education. There are three categories in this section: primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. Primary education was rated at ten percent (10%), secondary education was rated at twenty percent (20%) and tertiary education at seventy percent (70%). This had a bearing on their employability and their actual employment status.

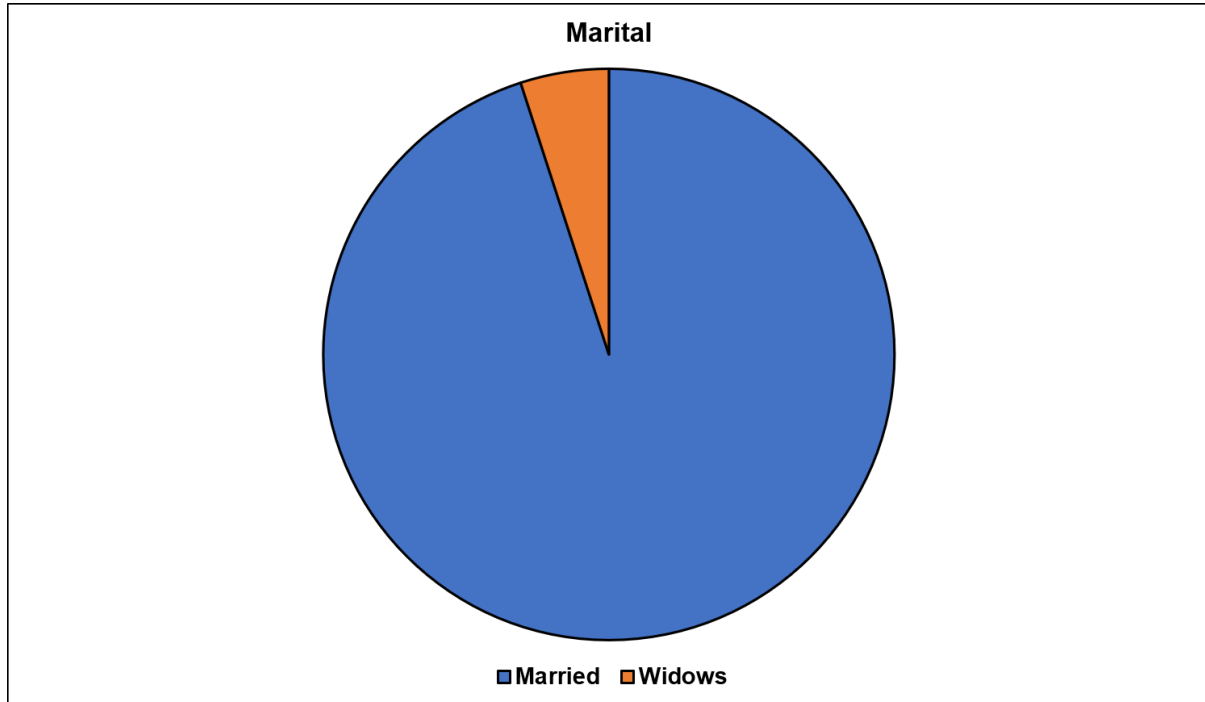
#### 4.2.2.4 Employment status



**Figure 4.9: Employment status of participants from Cradock/white conference**

Regarding employment, 55% of the participants were formally employed and 45% were self-employed. Interestingly, no one was unemployed, which suggests that the self-employed all had sufficient skills to create work for themselves, which was revenue-generating, although conducted on a small scale. The places of work for the participants included schools, the municipality and private companies. The unemployed church members from this conference did not take part in the study.

#### 4.2.2.5 Marital status



**Figure 4.10: Marital status of participants from Cradock/white conference**

Regarding marital status, none of the participants was single or divorced. By far the majority 95% were married, while one participant 5% was widowed. Their contribution was positive in this regard.

### 4.2.3 Coloured/Indian Conference

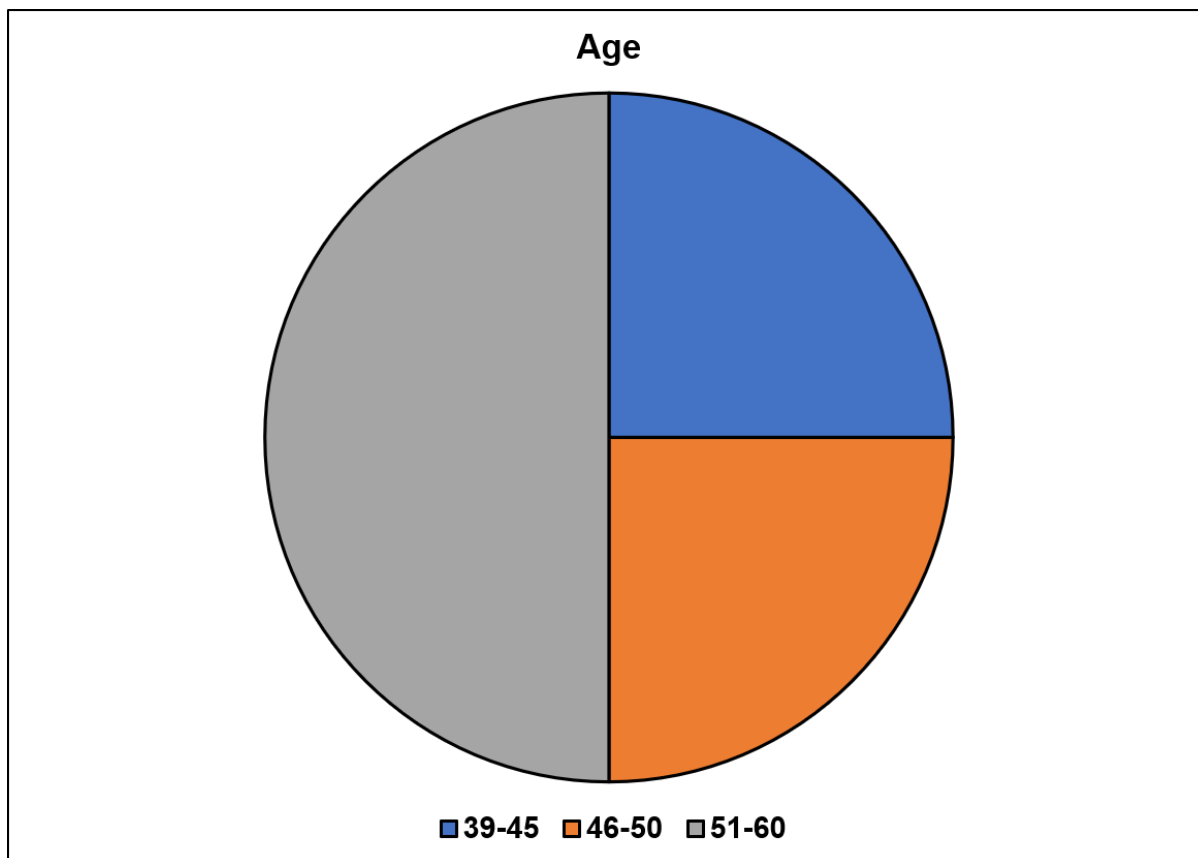
The Coloured/Indian conference covers the area of Michuasdol in Cradock. It is an Afrikaans-speaking area, although English was used as the medium language for all the participants and they were all mature and committed Christians and had been members of the Baptist church since birth.

There was a total of seven (7) participants drawn from this conference.

TABLE 4.3: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:  
COLOURED/INDIAN CONFERENCE

Participants	Age	Gender	Education	Socio-economic	Marital Status
DBE	45	Female	None	Unemployed	Married
DSR	50	Female	Ward Cllr	Employed	Married
EML	39	Female	Dip. Educ.	Employed	Married
IYM	46	Female	None	Unemployed	Married
ITP	50	Female	Nurse	Employed	Married
DRDA	60	Male	B.Ed.	Employed	Married
AWZ	40	Male	Accountant	Self-employed	Married

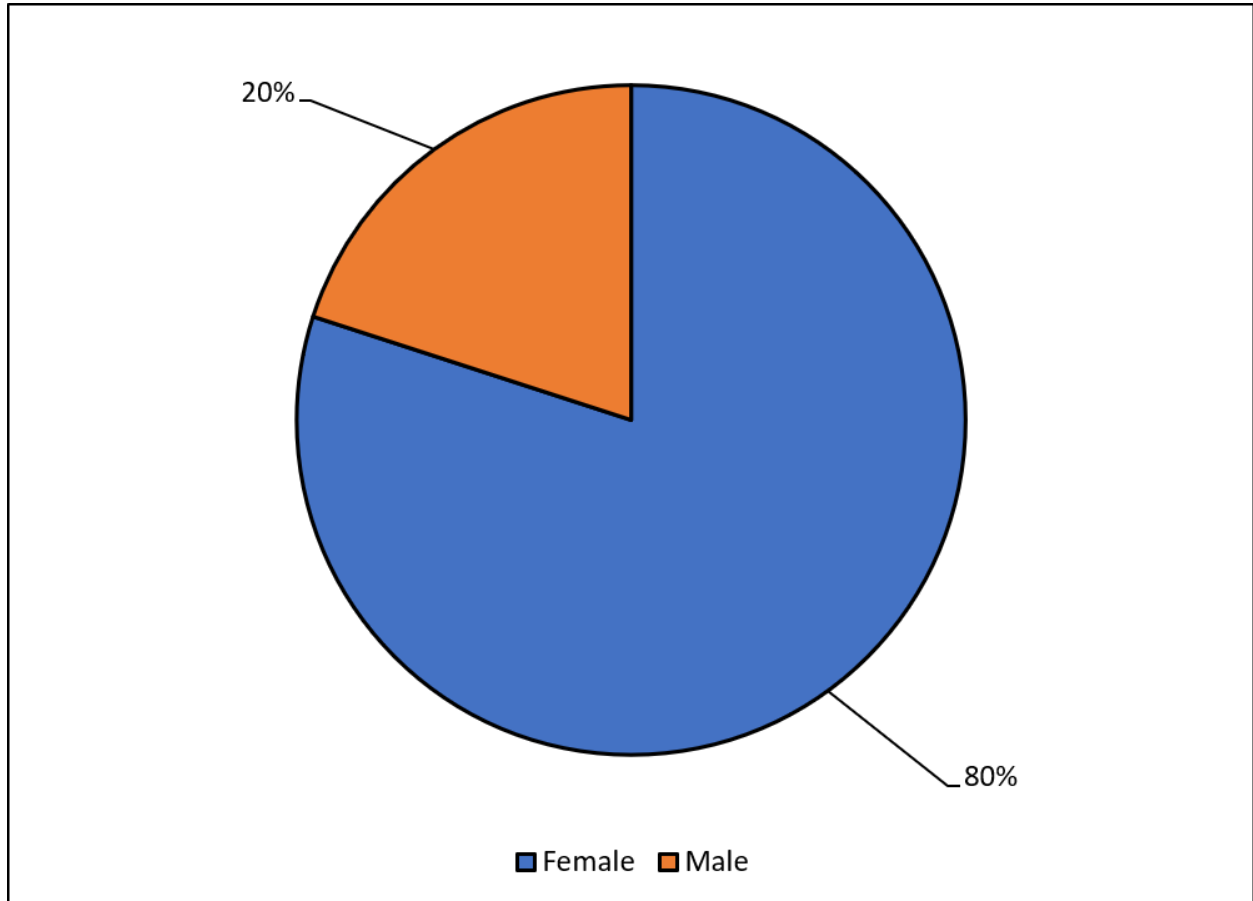
#### 4.2.3.1 Age



**Figure 4.11: Age breakdown of Coloured/Indian conference participants**

Three different age groups were identified: 39–45 (the younger), representing 25% of the total participants; 46–50 (the middle-aged), representing 25% of the total participants; and 51–60 (the senior group), representing 50% of the total participants.

#### 4.2.3.2 Gender

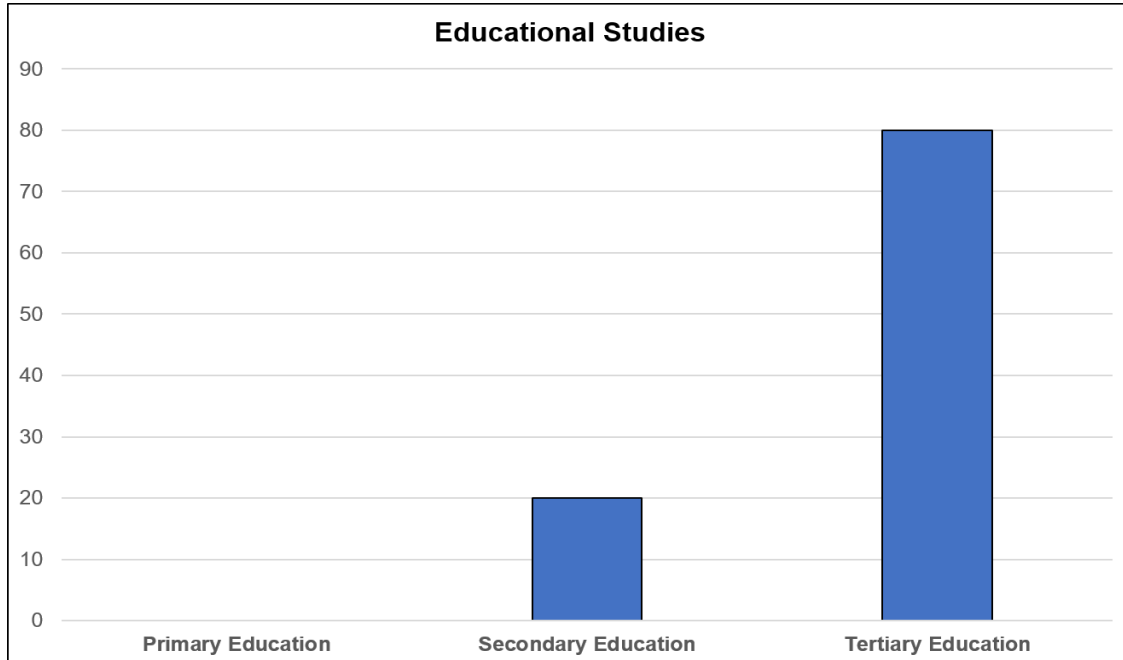


**Figure 4.12: Gender split of participants from Coloured/Indian conference**

In terms of the gender split, there were five female participants, representing 80% of the total participants, and two male participants, representing 20% of the total participants, which was considered to be a suitable ratio for a study of this nature. All the participants gave their full attention to the interviews and provided valuable comments on the discernible inequality that prevails in the Baptist church.



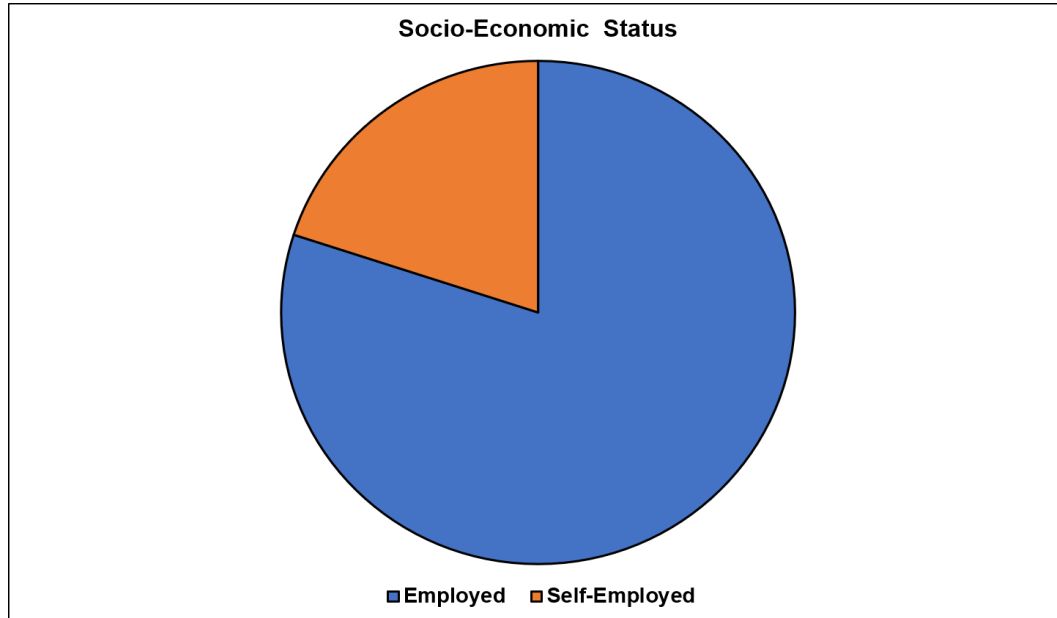
### 4.2.3.3 Education Status



**Figure 4.13: Educational level of participants from Coloured/Indian conference**

The researcher observed that educational attainment among the Coloured/Indian participants was similar to that of the white participants, with 80% of participants having had tertiary education and 20% having had secondary education. None of the participants at this conference had primary education only.

#### 4.2.3.4 Socio-economic



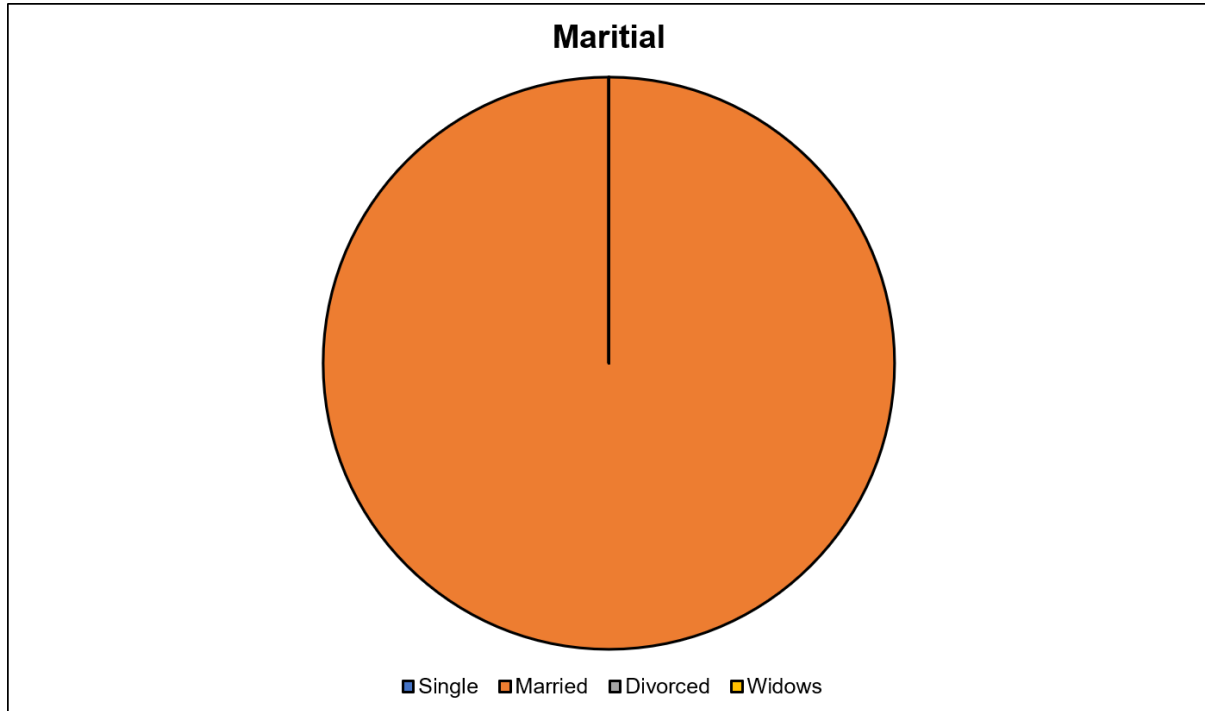
**Figure 4.14: Employment status of participants from Coloured/Indian conference**

Eighty percent (80%) of the participants in this category are employed and 20% are self-employed.



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#### 4.2.3.5 Marital status



**Figure 4.15: Marital status of participants from Coloured/Indian conference**

Regarding marital status, all the participants were married.

#### 4.2.4 African/Black Conference

There was a total of seven (7) participants drawn from this conference.

TABLE 4.4: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:  
AFRICAN/BLACK CONFERENCE

Participants	Age	Gender	Education	Socio-economic	Marital Status
UPL	60	Female	Educator	Employed	Married
MLO	54	Female	Diploma in Bus.	Self-employed	Widower
PIW	62	Female	M. Ed	Employed	Single
KWZ	49	Female	B. Ed (Hons)	Employed	Married
ECI	59	Female	None	Unemployed	Single
WPE	51	Male	Cert. Theology	Unemployed	Married
KZNE	55	Male	Grade 11	Self-employed	Married



#### 4.2.4.1 Age

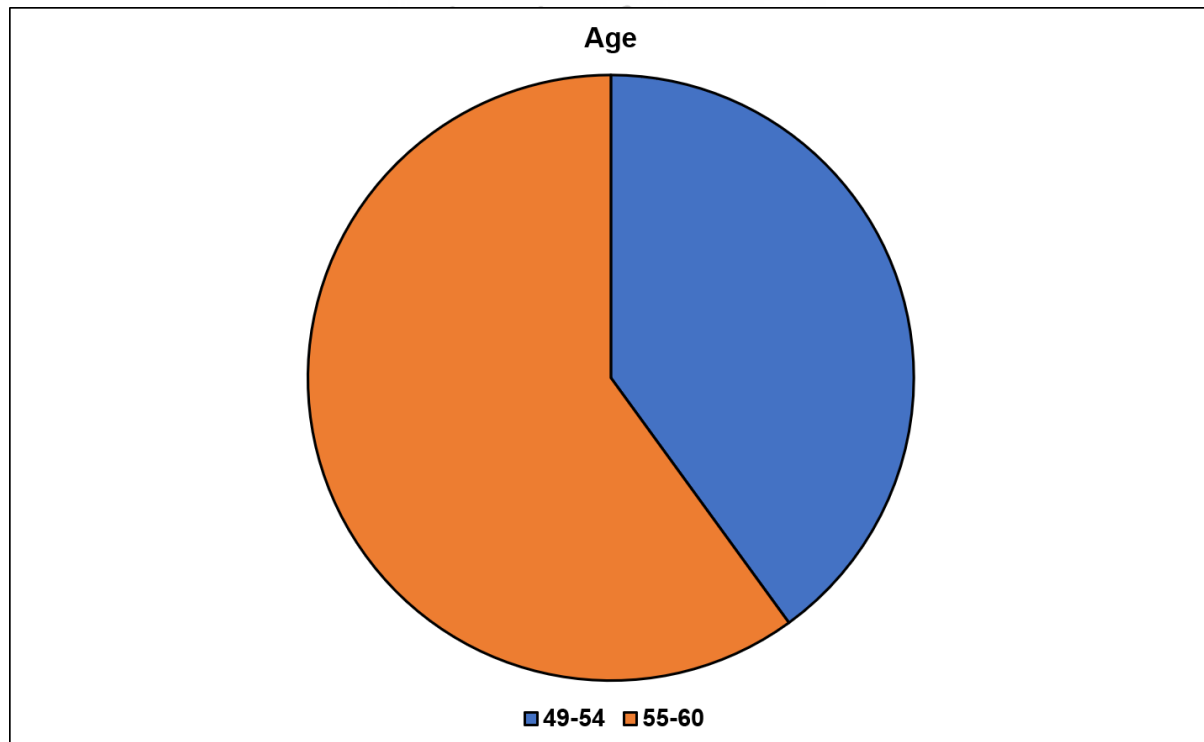
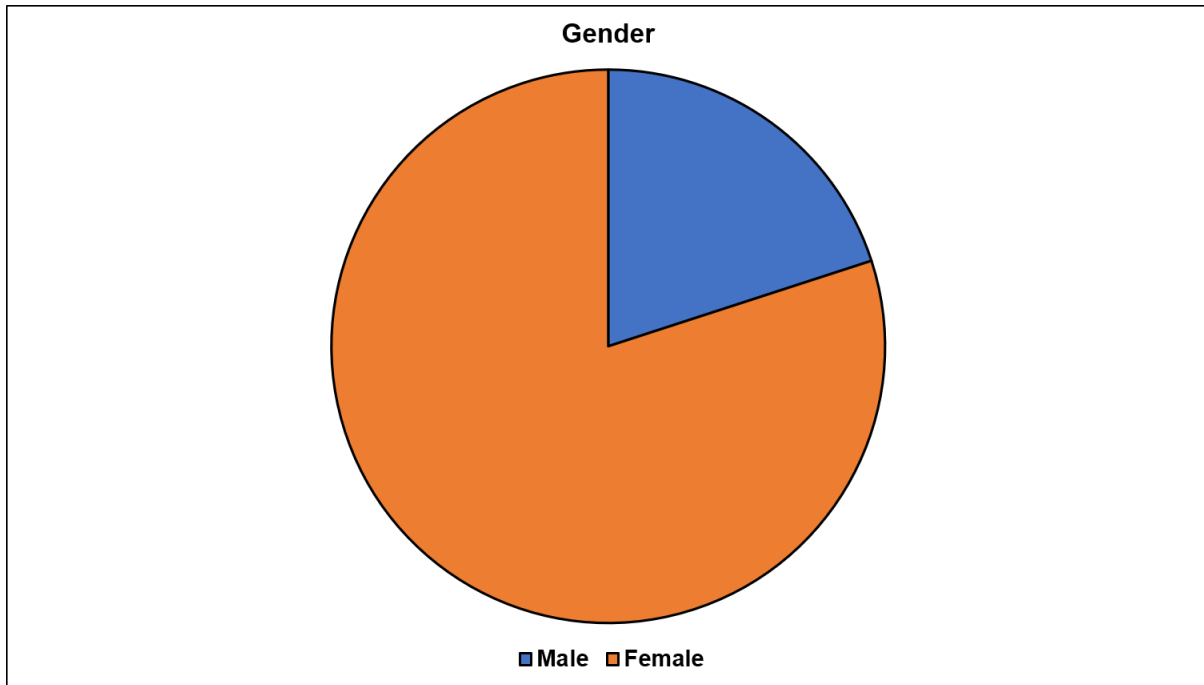


Figure 4.16: Age breakdown of participants from African/black conference

Of the two groups identified, the first one constituted 60% and the second 40%. The ages of the groups were close to each other as pie in the diagram shows.

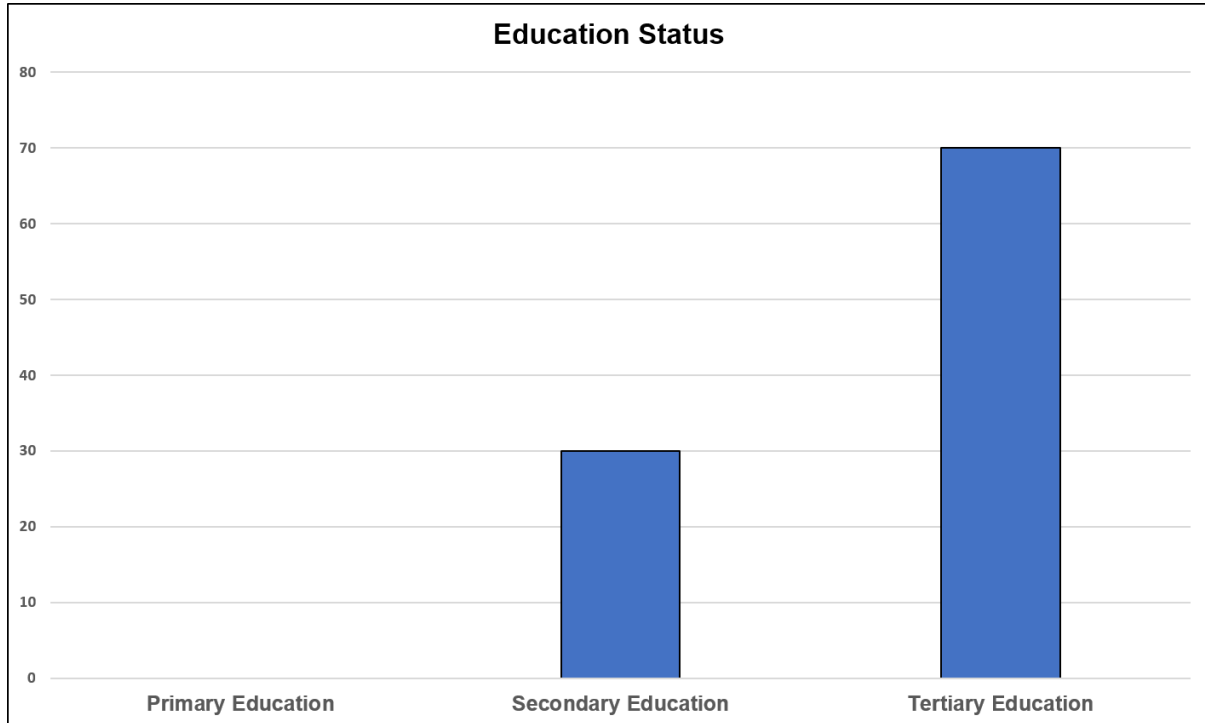
#### 4.2.4.2 Gender



**Figure 4.17: Gender split of participants from African/black conference**

Concerning gender, there were five female participants, representing 80% of the total participants, and two male participants, representing 20% of the total participants.

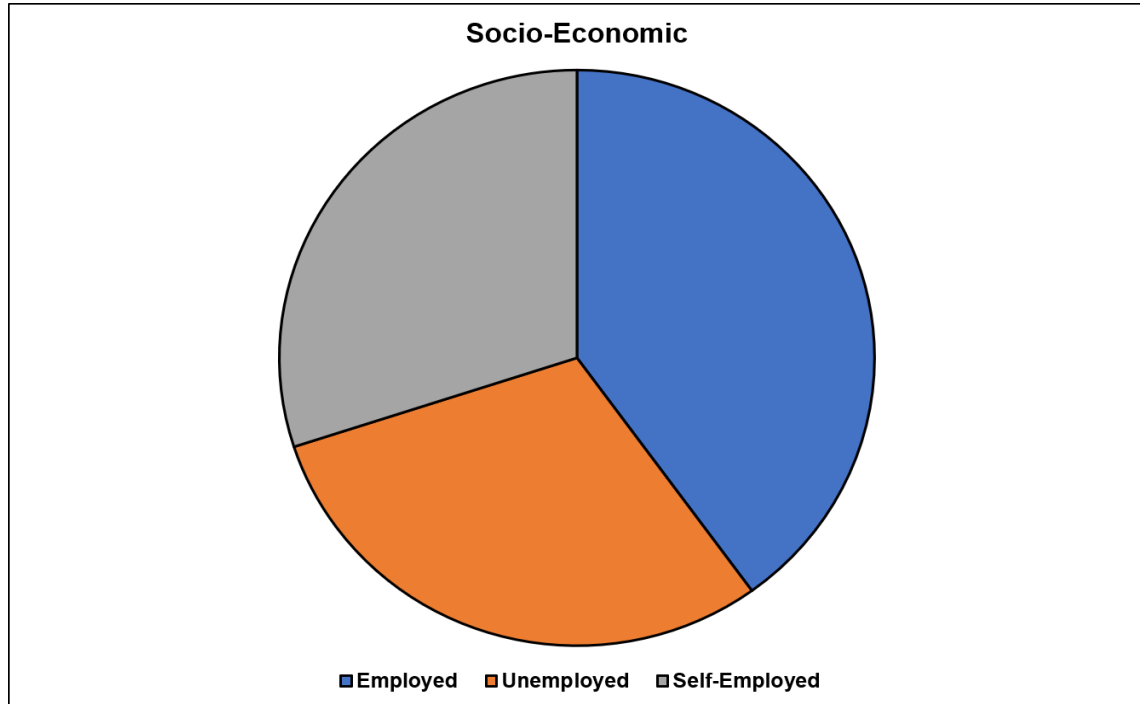
#### 4.2.4.3 Education Status



**Figure 4.18: Education level of participants from African/black conference**

The African/Black conference has good achievements when it comes to education. Of those who contributed during the collection of data, 70% have tertiary education while 30% have secondary.

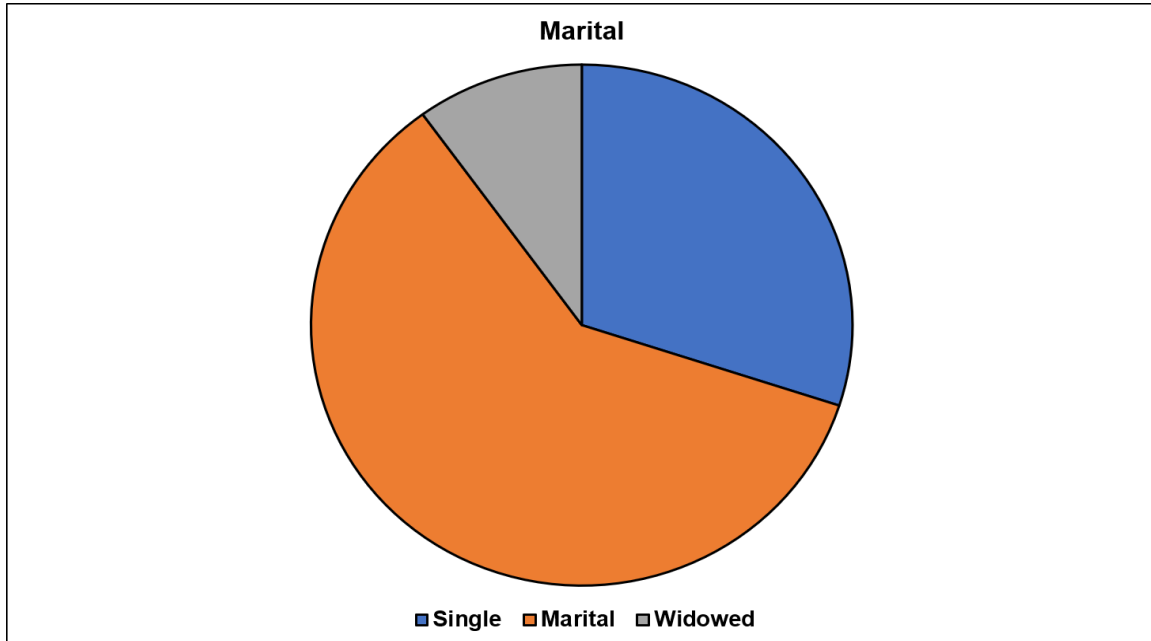
#### 4.2.4.4 Employment status



**Figure 4.19: Employment status of participants from African/black conference**

Forty percent (40%) of the participants were employed, 30% were unemployed and 30% were self-employed.

#### 4.2.4.5 Marital status



**Figure 4.19: Employment status of participants from African/black conference**

Regarding marital status, most participants (60%) were married, while 30% were single and 10% were widowed.

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### 4.3 CODING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The coding is assisting the researcher to capture the responses of the participants and that has been done on how the church has excluded women from the church. The themes were developed to use participants' responses for thematic analysis. This assists the study to address what has been recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) when it comes to coding.

The researcher believed that a coding system had to be used to protect the integrity of the analysis and what has been contributed by the participants. This has been observed by the researcher for compliance with the Ethical clearance conditions from the UFH.

The arrangement below shows how the coding was used in the following sub-headings.



**MWP – stands for (Majority Women Participants) from all the conferences and represents the majority of women participants.**

WFP > stands for (White Female Participants) that represents demographics from the collected data of participating women.

AFP > stands for (African Female Participant) which represents the demographics from the collected data.

C/IFP > stands for (Coloured/Indian Female Participant) which represents the demographics from the collected data.

RFP > stands for (Rural Female Participant) which represents the demographics from the collected data.

MMP > stands for (Majority Men Participants) from all the conferences and represents the majority men participants.

WMP > stands for (White Male Participants) that represents demographics from the collected data of participating men.

AMP > stands for (African Male Participant) that represents the demographics from the collected data.

C/IMP > stands for (Coloured/Indian Male Participant) which represents the demographics from the collected data.

RMP > stands for (Rural Male Participant) and represents the demographics from the collected data.

The questionnaires were numbered and coded so that thematic analysis can be used to assist the reader with the participant's response:

- All the questionnaires have been answered during the interviews and the researcher managed to do the work under the lockdown of Covid19 regulations all the questionnaires have been answered and further coded as follows: WFP (5) and WMP (2)

- All the questionnaires have been answered during the interviews and the researcher managed to do the work under the lockdown of Covid19 regulations all the questionnaires have been answered and further coded as follows: RFP (5) and RMP (2)
- All the questionnaires have been answered during the interviews and the researcher managed to do the work under the lockdown of Covid19 regulations all the questionnaires have been answered and further coded as follows: AFP (5) and AMP (2)
- All the questionnaires have been answered during the interviews and the researcher managed to do the work under the lockdown of Covid19 regulations all the questionnaires have been answered and further coded as follows: C/IFP (5) and C/IMP (2)

The thematic analysis is important to this study. It responds to what has been discussed previously when it comes to data analysis. Thematic analysis contributed to the initial codes from the list of data and then, coding was done manually.

#### **4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS FINDINGS**

It is a method where the qualitative data is analysed, usually, it is applied the set of text is arranged so that the transcript can assist to interpret the data. The data is examined to identify the common themes, topics, ideas and the meaning that comes repeatedly in the data. This is where the trail of evidence is analysed for the credibility of the study.

Thematic analysis is a method that unravels the surface of reality. It makes the work of the researcher easy so that research questions can be answered and allow the study to flow when it comes to aims and objectives.

Therefore, the researcher has analysed the findings, according to the collected data. And the data were collected from all the Baptist Churches in Cradock Region that exclude women in church governance structures. There were areas such as African conference, Coloured/Indian conference, Rural conference and White conference. Participants covered what was asked in 1.5 of the study.

## **4.5 FINDINGS FROM THE PRESENTED THEMES**

This researcher discusses what has been identified from different themes. The responses from participants have been captured during the interviews and monitored. Braun and Clarke (2006:10) state that “A theme captures something important about data in relation to the research questions and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data.” The researcher has used the aspect of coding so that the qualitative approach can be served. Hence, the thematic analysis has been used for the identified themes.

Therefore, the researcher has used: documents, journals, artefacts, and interviews for the identified themes. This section has identified the theory of Max-Neef (1987) who mentioned several aspects such as fundamental issues, self-reliance and independence that are in line with identified themes for research findings.

## **4.6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE COLLECTED DATA**

The research discusses what has been identified from focus groups and individuals. The researcher managed to capture each, and every contribution made by the participants to analyse the data. The study has used the scholarly view from the identified themes to address the challenges that were raised. Some challenges became solutions to the research findings' themes. Hence, the next section discusses to what extent women are excluded in the church governance structures.

### **4.6.1 Absence of Women in decision-making**

The researcher has recorded the three aspects on which participants focused. The following aspects have assisted the researcher to report what has been said during the interviews and data analysis: organizational stereotypes, hierarchical conduct and church administration. These aspects have been contributed by the participants.

MWP said, *“The church must make sure that God’s mission has been addressed which is the – mission Dei.”*

MWP expressed their feelings the church is under the hands of stereotypes. There is a prejudice and assumption about stereotypes. The culture contributes to stereotypes. The other participants who supported the feeling of being absent in decision-making were TPDS, OZA, RDP, NDP, DSR, EML, MLO, and KWZ.

#### **4.6.2 Organizational Stereotypes**

SDE revealed that the church is under the hands of stereotypes.

She believes, like EML, that it is hard for women to exercise and respond to God's mission because of a stereotype that dominates God's idea.

SAP and PIW added that stereotypes are over-generalizing the beliefs about a particular individual or group.

KWZ explained that types of expectation can be the group's personality and the ability that is caused by one group, which are men who dominate the church.

SAP believed that stereotype contributes to their non-existence in the church.

She, then, supported her comment that racial and gender stereotypes are the cause of their non-existence.

OZA and GFT observed that women do not always attend church services because of their race, nationality, race, gender and sexual orientation which contributes to them being excluded from decision-making in the church.

ZFB supported the view that stereotypes in the church promote the culture that women are incompetent.

IOP stated that women are not effective in church decision-making.

She also wished that the stereotypical attitude toward women in the church could change so that women can participate in decision-making.

IYM believed that women are disadvantaged in advancing their spiritual needs and engaging with one another because gender stereotyping plays a huge role in interpersonal engagement in the BCSACR.

OZA said that women must be featured in meaningful programs that need collectivity, to address gender imbalances.

According to GFT, both men and women long to find their rightful and acceptable place in this world.

XDS and RDP supported the view that men are dominant over women. They added that the unique value and dignity of their lives as human beings, both (women and men), comes from our Creator and God alone has fashioned us and made us.

MWP responded that no one can honestly assess the Gospel without noticing the radical impact it has on people's lives that is caused by stereotypes in the church.

MWP firmly believed that Jesus brings them into conformity with the Father's plans and purposes, and Jesus has never come to conform to the establishment, nor the patterns of any single culture, denomination of churches, or human creed.

They have agreed that rather, Christ is not always against their various human efforts, but points out the problems, sinful practices, and injustices in any and every pattern of life.

#### **4.6.3 Hierarchical Conduct towards women**

ITP said that the church hierarchy hinders them from participating fully, and common gender-stereotypical qualities of women are submissive, quiet, neat, weak, clean, clumsy, incompetent and motherly. This was supported by other participants UPL, DBE, SDE and TPDS.

MWP mentioned that the BCSACR pressurized women and impose unreasonable expectations on women leaders.

MWP further said that the church hierarchy caused them to be unable to think and involve themselves in matters that matter in the church.

According to GFT the church hierarchy perpetuates inequality and undermines the talents and abilities of women.

This reflects men who are often considered for leadership positions in the church, such as deacons, elders and pastors.

EML said that the hierarchy discriminates against women and closes all opportunities where women could challenge the status quo and change the situation.

EML further highlighted that since the establishment of the church women have never been ordained or become Coordinators of the church. They have never been allowed to lead.

#### **4.6.4 Church Administration**

ZFB expressed her feelings that men's authority is imposed on them and that they are not allowed to contribute to God's mission.

IPO said that women are prohibited from speaking their minds, becoming active only in matters that have no significance to church business.

IYM lamented that women do not progress in the church, especially because of insecurity and the blocked opportunities to become leaders of the church.

PIW also observed that the male stereotypical qualities of loudness, strength, dominance and being in complete control of emotions everything, become one of the factors that favour them for leadership positions in church administration.

SDE argued that stereotypes have affected their dignity as members of the church and God's creation as well.

According to RDP, stereotypes have caused women to be marginalized and unable to contribute positively to church administration.

She further explains that it brought an inequitable and unfairness.

This reflects that gender is dominating the ideology of spirituality in the church and the progress. Hence, gender has brought inequality to the church.

WFP, IPO and GFT proposed for the church to transform its leadership style. They further argued that the church has become more bureaucratic and insensitive around the issue of gender. This culture disadvantages women and excludes them from decision-making. The researcher asked the women participants a follow-up question on why they seemingly were not included in the church's decision-making structures and what effect this exclusion had on the attendance of the church's main services, meetings and other congregational gatherings? The question was asked to understand whether having a female pastor or elder would impact the members' decisions on whether or not they will attend the service. The question also focussed on whether shared leadership at the pastoral and eldership level would impact attendance at different levels of the church meetings and gatherings. MWP felt that this would have a negative effect and likely result in men being reluctant to come to church. This would also result in women who do not believe that women should lead in the church, equally not attending church services or meetings that are led by women; or even worse changing their denomination altogether.

This would be an inspiration to them in that they would also be aiming high if there was such a thing as women pastors, and they would participate in decision-making.

Hence, all women participants believed that if the number increased, it would favour the next topic that women deserve to be ordained and if it decreases it would show how the exclusion of women in the church governance structures implicates the BCSACR progress.

The researcher, therefore, believes and understands what the Xhosa is saying: inyati ibuzwa kwabaphambili; which means one learns from those who have experience and who have undertaken the journey before him/her. The researcher observed the contribution made by Rashe (2007) in his unpublished Doctoral thesis titled "Family Violence in African Communities in the Western Cape: A Theoretical-Ethical Assessment" as he defines the role of unity in society.

Rashe (2007) cited what Mouton (1995) suggested, that ethical decision-making together with creative thinking will reduce violence against women. The author added that the church had a responsibility to take a stand and contribute to the efforts that are aimed at addressing the abuse of women. Rashe (2007) further discusses that the church should devise strategies that are theological informed and that propose solutions to cope with the pandemic.

This will assist the study because some stereotype attitudes emanate from family violence and blow in the church. Hence, the church is too stereotyped to address these challenges. Rashe (2007) is spot on to highlight and bring a solution to these aspects.

#### **4.6.5 Ordination considered to be for men**

According to XDS, women are not part of the church ordination. Because DSR and ECI supported the view that women should not be ordained, the church decided to delegate the authority to decide whether or not women should be ordained, to the local BCSACR churches.

AFP (KWZ) said that BCSACR does not ordain women as pastors and elders because of the Biblical teachings.



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According to WPE, only men can lead in the church and the Bible teaches that. She further explains women are only for the household.

GFT observed that the Baptist doctrine or belief and BCSACR tradition forbids women to become elders or deacons.

ECI went further to state that, essentially, tradition hinders them to be ordained and given the responsibilities of leadership.

ZFB believed that the ordination of women in the church cannot be answered as it raises the issue of traditional beliefs.

EML also supported the conservative reasons for refusing to support ordinations that they believed were not universally accepted.



ITP said that the problems relating to the doctrine of God, of the Incarnation and Redemption are at least indirectly involved in its solution so that any decision whether for or against the ordination of women, will require the church's explanation.

MWP added that the ordination has raised concerns and requires that an inclusive strategy be developed.

Hence, PIW has highlighted that BCSACR does not give any indication that women deserved to be ordained.

UPL firmly expressed the view that “fundamental equality of men and women is indicated in several key biblical passages and should have been developed in the teaching of the church” (Gal 3:28).

ZFB mentioned that BCSACR must implement its theology so that women form part fulfilment of Christ's victory over sin and death.

TPDS and NDP supported the view that the church does not do justice by including only men, instead, they continue to segregate women from leadership status.

RDP said that the exclusion a priori of a large class of persons from ministry must be justified by cogent arguments since women participants are not recognized for ordination.

MWP firmly expressed the concerns that BCASCR must recognise women in God's work without considering any person's calling, rather, *kungenjalo mabathethe ngezinto ezijongene noomama* – the church must engage with women's problems.

DSR said that controverted issues of church life may represent different ways of manifesting God's grace, as the Spirit is guiding the church.

BNS said that faith and hope should be the instruments that a church focuses on, and the ordination for all people in the church must be considered.

She further explains the process of choosing church leaders should not undermine any gifts that God has given members in the book of Eph. 4.

ECl said, that the entire body of the faithful is in Baptism anointed with the Spirit, and this same Spirit distributes diverse gifts in the church.

According to ECl, the church should address its expectations to encourage participants to take charge in the ministry. The church should promote the discernment of the Spirit within its membership, equally.

TPDS mentioned that the church fails to address the marginalization that leads to the lack of women's development. Hence, men are all over the church positions because of hierarchy.

MFP felt that the purpose of the church should be to define and discuss with all members. The members are not in the church to become leaders, but the issue of tradition has to be dealt with so that patriarchy and gender inequality can be eradicated.

MFP added that humility and repentance should be exercised in the church so that, any disunity in mankind can be shared. Men and women must be motivated to have hope in the church for the fulfilment of their destiny. Then, oppression and suffering would not exist because of certain genders that expressed themselves as chosen ones.

The research findings from the majority of women participants revealed that the church should address the ministry of the Cross, which brings the following:

- towards oneness;
- to the oppressed, liberation;
- to the sick, healing;
- to the dying, life;
- to all persons, eternal salvation.

MFP believed that the church should follow the issue of ordination considering all church members rather than one gender. Hence, the two primary principles that hinder the opportunity for the ordination of women were mentioned during the data collection such as:

#### 4.6.6 Congregational Principle

WPE said that the principles do not allow women to lead or take charge of any church structures.

The following church principle has been sponsored by the participant.

This principle is authorizing men to take charge and become responsible for the local church. It is addressing gender inequality, as it focuses on deacons, elders and pastors who are only men. It is the belief of the church, supposedly based on the Scripture, that only deacons, elders and pastors had the responsibility to see to the smooth running and functionality of the church.

The church has vested power in men, for all the church sacraments. The principle specifies clearly that we recognise that God gifts His Church with overseers who are called Pastors or Elders, whose primary function is to lead in a spirit of servanthood, to equip and provide spiritual oversight, and deacons whose primary function is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Church.



According to AWZ, women should remain at home and cook as the principle forbids them to participate.

Also, KZNE supported the principle and believed that women were the first to sin in Eden.

PIW said that male and female students complete the same courses majoring in pastoral theology, but women are not ordained.

She believes, like WPE, that the position on women's ordination in the BCSACR is in practice a settled issue; the general trend is that women shall not be ordained for the offices of pastoring and eldership.

MWP unanimously and emphatically stated that, unless women are empowered and their role institutionalised, men will continue to dictate what they feel is suitable for them, regardless of what the Scripture teaches.

#### 4.6.7 The Baptism of church members

DCS said that no woman can baptise and exercise authority over men in the church. He further explains that baptism represents the doctrine of the church and its implementation is through immersion, and the one who had to do that is an elder or pastor of the church and are men.

According to EWA, no men would be allowed to be baptized by a woman in the church as the church Baptist principles do not allow a woman to do immersion as this is reserved for men according to the Bible teachings.

Also, GYH said that spiritual gifts are not for everybody, but are reserved only for those who have been accorded such responsibility by Christ.

GYH firmly expressed that Paul has never mentioned women when he was giving instruction but only men.

WPE said that it is unbiblical for the church to ordain women who are considered the incarnation of sin from Eden.



According to AWZ women are for the household and not for leadership. Christ also did not ordain women among His twelve disciples; rather, He endorsed them for other roles in the ministry. This view was supported by the respondents GYH, EWZ, SAP, DCS, DRDA, AWZ, WPE and KZNE.

In addition, the MWP highlighted that apart from the issue of including women in the leadership, there are burning issues where the solution will not be found soon. The inclusive ministry for women to take charge is part of that.

The African context (and its inherent challenges) needs to be taken seriously. MWP reported the difficulties encountered and the differences of opinion between churches, which prompted some churches to leave BUSA.

The other fellow participants mostly said despite all the challenges and a high level of inter-congregational diversity, the work goes on. What is particularly noteworthy is that there are churches that have been planted even though women are part of the program.

Though Baptists believed that each local church is ruled by Jesus Christ, and governed by its members, who are deacons, elders with pastors who are men.

This is the reason why women do not form part of the church governance structures and are not considered for the ministry (Reinard 2009:12). The Baptist church subscribes to the principle of local church autonomy.

The executive committee does not have oversight authority or responsibility for the local churches. “Local churches in the Baptist church are autonomous and therefore, the executive has only an advisory function and no power to direct any local church” (Reinard, 2009:12)

#### **4.6.8 Lack of comprehension of the significance of women in the church**

SDE said that their significance in the church and ministry in the church is not comprehended.

She believes, like TPDS, that women do not appreciate the unequal treatment to that of men. The Scripture notes that women and men are both created in the image of God and the likeness of God; therefore, participants suggested that women have the right to participate fully in the ministry of the church.

Also, XDS, OZA, NDP, IPO, IYM and ITP supported the view that women are hindered to participate in the ministry of the church and for them, this is contrary to the biblical teachings.

UPL said that women suffer from low self-esteem.

DSR said that lack of dignity is the outcome of human rights violations.

BNS, highlighted how in the book of Psalms (8:1-4) David defined the significance of a human being, when he wrote, “What is the man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visited him? For thou have made him little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of my hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.”

According to SAP, respecting a woman cannot be a rule, but surely it can be a responsibility. She further says that stronger people do not put others down, rather they lift them. MWP firmly expressed that the strength and power of men are endorsed and always carry society's stamp of approval.

The research findings from the majority of women participants expressed the concern that the church's disregard of their role and views is a recipe for disaster, given that women constitute the majority in the church membership. This recommendation is equally supported by UPL, IYM, and PIW.

RDP supported the statement that women sometimes lack courage and strength, citing their gender as the obstacle to their participation and growth. TPDS said that women often feel insecure and allow men to dominate them. This leads to men taking up all leadership positions.

KWZ highlighted that, women many a time suffer from an inferiority complex which leads to them defaulting to following rather than taking the lead.

She further said, that if women were seen as significant in the church, BCSACR would have named one of their church buildings or halls after a woman. NDP supported what KWZ had said, that the church must practise gender equality as a fundamental tenet of human dignity, justice, unity and diversity. She then, further, said that the unity of God's people is also a unity between men and women.

According to XDS, EML and ZFB unity in diversity is argued for opting for the essential strategic positions, with any hassles that will result in a lack of respect for them, as women.

RDP said that dignity does not reside in autonomy and independence that hinders them and becomes a challenge for their respect but upon God the Creator.

She further mentioned that dignity is inalienable because it is given by the Creator and their respect is inalienable because it is not dependent upon the recognition of the church, the frail, and human minds but upon God. ITP suggested that the church needed to embrace freedom and justice.

PIW agreed that BCSACR should address injustices within its administration to cleanse itself from cultural imperialism, exploitation, marginalisation, disempowerment and violence against women. GFT also added that they embrace freedom and have full access to justice for women. According to WMP and DCS, it was considered imperative for the church that men and women participate fully in the quest for justice for all. DCS further expressed that BCSACR should seek justice as one of the necessities. Another participant, IPO, believed that the recognition of women in the church needed partnership of both genders.

DSR noted that the BCSACR should act against the form of segregation and oppression towards one gender. She added that BCSACR should construct an understanding of inclusivity in the church, build a mutual partnership for gender justice, as part of peace in the church and address the attitude of undermining and letting down one another.

The church, she argued, is obligated to respect human dignity that transcends any human policies, conventions, charters, acts or church principles that God has brought into being. IYM said that Jesus reached out to women who were rejected, despite the laws that labelled them as unclean.



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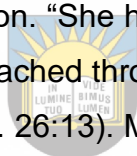
BNS highlighted that Jesus met with a woman who was excluded by the community for twelve years, and He allowed her to touch His garment after which He commended the woman as a symbol of love through her faith in Jesus (Mark 5:25–34).

OZA supported the view of Jesus who permitted a sinful woman to anoint and kiss his feet (Luke 7:36–50) and challenged the religious leaders by saying: “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you” (Matthew 21:31).

She further listed the other aspects of how Jesus has engaged women in different ways of life:

Activity	The Bible Reference
He also offered salvation directly to women who were known as adulteresses	John 4:4–42 and John 8:1–11
He taught Mary of Bethany and commended her learning to her sister who was carrying out the traditional tasks	Luke 10:38– 42
He travelled with many women in His band	Luke 23:49, 55–56; 24:1
The same women were present at the crucifixion and burial and on resurrection morning	Luke 23:49, 55–56; 24:1

Martin Pohlmann (2014:37) discusses the contribution made by a ‘woman’ who came to Jesus while He was being entertained in the home of Simon the Pharisee. After breaking her jar of perfume, she embraced a dignity she never knew before. Jesus makes two very significant statements on this occasion. “She has done a beautiful thing to me. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her” (Matt. 26:13). Mary had been liberated to human dignity, feeling and thankfulness at a level that men in the room could not appreciate.



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Dunn (2003:537) noted that Jesus accommodated both men and women in His ministry so that all people can hear the Gospel irrespective of gender. Then, they were recipients of the Gospel. Dunn (2003) further notes “Even so the prominence of women among Jesus’ followers, and his closeness to several, notably the two Marys, of Magdala and Bethany, must have raised a few eyebrows in polite societies at the time” (Dunn, 2003:537).

Dunn (2003) added that Mary Magdalene (or Mary from the city of Magdala) was delivered from seven demons and she became a disciple. The Jewish rabbi did not like what was done by Jesus to reach ‘down’ to the woman involved in the demonic order to release her to rightful human dignity. The significance of women and men in the church is very important. In support of this paragraph:

Commenting on this passage, Milne (2006:106) explains that:



These women explained how Jesus managed to live as a travelling teacher without a regular income. Some of them were sufficiently well off to provide from their private means for Jesus and his disciples. The material supports these women gave to Jesus illustrates the practical ministry that women can excel at services that are indispensable to the work of the kingdom of God. Feminist writers often accuse the bible of neglecting women, but Luke makes them visible in the life and work of Jesus and the early churches.

The involvement of women in the establishment of the Philippian church is noteworthy (Acts 16:11–40). Paul initiated the church in Philippi - the leading city of its district, with a group of women gathered for prayer outside the city gate (Acts 16:13–15). The church must recognise the role these women played in the church and society. The women participants assert that this study demonstrates the significance of women in the BCSACR, the same way it did with the women of Philippi who worked with Paul in the gospel ministry (Philippians 4:2–3).



Rashe (2007) observes that it is important for the church to work with other existing structures that have the same objective of encompassing challenges of gender-based violence. The researcher agrees with Rashe's sentiments that the church must respond and take a stand where women's rights are violated. Rashe (2007) further asserts that this would afford the only opportunity to address the marginalisation and exclusion of women from church governance structures. Rashe (2007) continues that integrating programs must be a collective approach, to capture other views for implementation purposes.

Hence, the church must envisage opinions from other people to reach the goal of inclusivity, that will address the violence issue against women. Then, in the case of family violence Rashe (2007) should get a remedy on how family violence can be eliminated that segregates and undermines the humanity of women in society.

#### **4.6.9 Autonomy of Baptist local Churches**

The sub-headings will support the idea of autonomy towards ministry, hence, the researcher believed that the reader would follow how the participants' feelings were

recorded. PIW describes autonomy as when a church governs itself. According to KWZ, church autonomy is God's safeguard that prevents the church from digressing or apostasy. MLO defined autonomy as a church's self-rule, independence or self-government. She further explained that the local church could run its affairs without disturbance of the Association and National Body. According to WPE, when autonomous, the local church is exempted from the decisions taken by the national church leadership. This principle gives the prerogative to the local church to decide on all matters that affect them – inclusive of spiritual affairs.

#### **4.6.10 Participants' understanding of autonomy**

The Majority of women participants expressed their feelings that autonomy talks of 'self-rule' of the local church and are dominantly ruled by men who have been invested rights to run the church. Women participants mention that only men who are deacons or elders have the right to choose church leadership. Women participants highlighted that it would be impossible for a woman to be ordained at the BCSACR because this was not the challenge of only the BCSACR but all the Baptist churches, hence, men of the BCSACR are enjoying their rights to exercise patriarchy in the church.

The women participants have revealed that autonomy becomes cancerous when it comes to the rights of women in the church. It has an element of exclusion and the BCSACR alone, cannot intervene in the matter. Women participants believe that administration, governance, management, and the pastorate are for everyone in the church who believes in Christ.

IPO expressed that autonomy has been a stumbling block for them to take charge and participate in the church.

She further explains that through autonomy there are no women who would hold a position of authority over men and that means they shouldn't preach, teach men or serve as pastors either.

Hence, the participant IPO, believed that the Baptist principle does not speak directly to everyone, and each person's conscience, under the local church that directs their belief and behaviour.

ZFB defined the segregation act towards women as unbiblical. She raised the concern of whether salvation was available for those whom God had predestined. She added that there may be those who preach but are not ordained and those who are ordained but not called.

#### **4.6.11 Autonomy as the fundamental principle: Men's Belief**

DCS revealed that fundamentally, the autonomy is Bible-based and that the church principle is biblical. SAP said that if the BCASCR can ordain women, this would be theological liberation. GYH suggested that excluding women from pastoral leadership could be based on the misguided assumption that man was first in creation and the woman was first in the Edenic fall. AWZ said that, while both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by the Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-9).



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According to KZNE, all the churches are democratic and theoretically, each member has an equal voice in the congregation. He further expressed that BCASCR's embracing of pastoral authority for men was ordained by God. This seems to be the basis for the church's culture for the non-ordination of women (1 Timothy 3:1-8). This thinking was largely supported by other participants DRDA, KZNE and SAP.

#### **4.6.12 The implication of autonomy for women**

According to the Baptist church, women are for the household. They have to prepare for their families. This principle supports the view of the church that it would be unbiblical for women to be allowed to lead in the church and other domains of life. RDP criticised Church autonomy. In her view, the local church would only account for herself. She further expressed that autonomy becomes a rule for people who are financially based and do not support the inclusion ministry. ECI suggested that autonomy is not good because in most cases it causes leaders and local churches to mistreat pastors. XDS

was of the view that pastors should support the exclusion ministry to stay in the local church. She believed, like NDP, that pastors are not protected by anyone other than the local church leadership. This belief is consistent with the view that only men should be ordained and was supported by the majority of women participants.

The Baptist (2007) church believes that the Bible is inerrant, and is without error. The autonomy responds to key questions that what causes the exclusion of women. Autonomy as the principle governs the affairs of the church and contributes to the exclusion of women.

SAP has firmly expressed that liberty of worship is good, but it should not be without control, because it has the potential of introducing alien practices in the church as is happening in Christian circles. Autonomy, if not checked and understood properly, causes churches to lose track of their worship and belief system. Church autonomy many times promotes isolationism and inequality.

UPL believed that Church autonomy and liberty of worship hinder collective efforts and resources; consequently, slowing down the spreading of the gospel. These convictions, the women participants indicated, restrict cooperative utilization of resources and personnel and therefore hinder the lord's work.

GFT suggested that we should operate like Seventh Adventists, with a Governing Body that can overrule local church decisions. Church autonomy instead of hindering the establishment of a central governing system must promote it.

She further, said we should be learning from Pentecostals, they said that "where the Bishop or Overseer is the final authority. This accelerates decision-making and one vision for the whole denomination. This proves the point that women must be appointed as the deacons, elders and pastors of the church.

The researcher believes that autonomy could be a mitigating factor to the marginalisation and the undermining of the rights of women in the church. The researcher agrees with Rashe's (2007) bringing in tradition and culture. Rashe (2007) further refers to Sakala (1998:37) who argues that the negative behaviour in the church is caused by traditional

and cultural practices that place men superior to women, he further discusses that men being superior leaves women powerless and voiceless.

The BCSACR exercises that, women are the culprits of the church's rule because of patriarchy that is motivated by tradition and culture. The researcher agrees with the author because it involves the rights of a human being and a mentality of engaging.

#### **4.6.13 The lack of recognition of spiritual gifts**

##### **4.6.13.1 Because of Patriarchal influence in the church**

The research findings have revealed that the lack of spiritual recognition emanated from patriarchy, inequality, tradition and stereotypes.

MLO said, BCSACR failed to exercise and apply this text.

This reflects men who failed to do God's mission when it comes to what Paul said, "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you" (1 Timothy 4:14).

OZA said that it has been taken as a norm that men are the most people to do God's work.

BNS said that the Church should work together, complementing each other.

IYM said that the church must motivate the individual or feed an immature desire for attention.

The church understands the subject of spiritual gifts and its teachings in the church but lacks recognition of women to work, preach, teach and lead. Hence, the following participants reported what hinders them not to use their gifts:

DSR said that ignorance of the church towards spiritual gifts and God's design for the Body has excluded women to take part in church leadership.

ZFB said that disobedience towards the excessiveness' of spiritual gifts has excluded women.

IPO said that the development of spiritual gifts is failing in the church.

AWZ said, there is a lack of love which exhibits itself in self-centeredness.

PIW firmly expressed that they are unable to examine their hearts and take appropriate steps which could include learning more, repenting, equipping, or growing spiritually. The spiritual gifts are not taught or emphasized much throughout Christendom these days in the church but lack utilization of spiritual gifts.

She further mentioned that spiritual gifts become critical in the church when it comes to involving all (women and men). Therefore, its biblical functionality is not properly used so that all people become the ambassadors of the Gospel through what has been given to them.

ITP said that congregations are spiritually impotent when the members do not freely and responsibly allow the Holy Spirit to manifest God's ministry and power through the gifts, He has given the church.

She further highlighted that the meaning of the spiritual gifts is needed as such and to be understood that it is a gift from God that is given to each individual in the church, not gender-based or patriarchal domination.



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#### **4.6.13.2 Misrepresentation of the Scripture towards Gifts**

GFT has mentioned that the church ministry towards the spiritual gifts has been the failure of not unpacking the gifts and talents in the church. She further discussed that women who are in the church are forced to subject themselves to men's authority.

KWZ believed that spiritual gifts are meant for men and women such as worship, preaching, administration, apostleship etc. She further added that evangelism is a spiritual gift that involves everyone and has been given directly to all members (Matthew 28:18-20).

MLO said that spiritual gifts are not enabling them to grow in the knowledge of Christ, rather, they get side-tracked in the church and become more obsessed with the gifts than with Jesus.

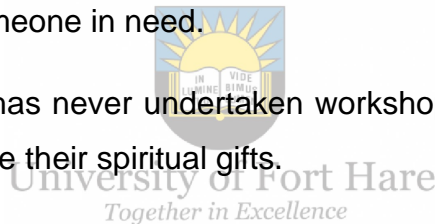
She believes, like RDP, that the church began to believe more in hierarchy and culture than what the Holy Spirit requires. The spiritual gifts then become just goals instead of the gateway in the church and are treated as a hobby. The dominance of one gender in the church causes that.

According to IYM and PIW spiritual gifts are not used as a special church instrument to develop members; instead, the church enjoys the interpretation and use of the text that hinders participants in preaching, teaching and prophesying.

IYM and PIW further explained that these gifts have not been recognized in the church's involvement, instead, it undermines the participants or is taken lightly.

Almost all the MWP referred the researcher to Ephesians 4:5-7 which outlines the gifts to all. It has been defining the role of each member in the church (not men). Hence, the church has to manifest itself by providing compassion and encouragement, and love for giving practical help to someone in need.

MWP believed BCSACR has never undertaken workshops or seminars that included a drive for women to exercise their spiritual gifts.



#### **4.6.13.3 Inferior of Men over Women**

PIW said that, once we determine which gift or gifts we have, we can become a little pigeonholed within the church.

RDP said that women are perceived as second-class members in the church and are not allowed to speak freely.

DSR said that women are more educated than men and are multi-skilled.

According to ECI, there is a lack of recognition of spiritual gifts, which causes them to lack confidence. TPDS supported by referring to what Mary and Marta did to Jesus as the anointing from above. Hence, the disciples rebuked the woman who donated perfume to Jesus during his ministry.

TPDS further expressed that Mary has shown her love for Jesus' ministry with care hence, she did not ask for authorisation from the church but just explore her gift for what is good. The gender inequality in men's hearts hinders women from exploring their gifts. But Jesus Christ rebuked the disciple for hindering what is good and motivated the woman to exercise her spiritual gifts without waiting for authorisation from men or the church.

In her article, Schreiber argues, "Deprivation of personal was necessary to maintain the oppressive system" ("Shared" 33). This describes the limited ability to practice women's cultural rights and identities to rule more effectively in any African institution that requires women's services.

Rashe (2007) notes that human dignity emanated from God's love for His people. The author further highlights that today's church should be vigilant about the issues that involve women. It must not entertain the problem and fold hands while people are suffering, rather it has to work with other community stakeholders such as *White Door Centre*, *Imbumba yoo Mama* and *Mama baka Zwelonke* that are having the same objective. Rashe (2007) is correct in interacting and combining the programs to root out the stigma and marginalization of women.

But this is not a simple matter and ordained clergy cannot achieve this alone. The researcher agrees with Rashe (2007) that not everyone in the church has an interest in changing the situation but those who receive the Holy Spirit use their gifts effectively.

#### **4.6.14 The use and application of the text**

The research findings from women participants revealed that the use and application of the text is contributing to segregating women and do not address the challenge based on gender inequality. The researcher managed to interview both genders in the region (women and men). Men and women both participated positively in responding to the questionnaire used to collect data in this study.

##### **4.6.14.1 The view of Male Participants**

The first view is from male participants who have revealed that 'there is nothing wrong with the Scripture.' The Bible is inerrant and authoritative.



WPE has expressed that according to biblical principles women are not permitted to preach and teach men. The instructions from Paul are not his, but God himself. There is a reason that women cannot teach men who are the heads of their wives, as Christ becomes the head of the church. WPE expressed that man was created first, then a woman. This shows clearly that Paul understood the issue of the hierarchy of the church.

KZNE highlighted that Paul has instructed the woman to 'remain silent' in the church which means are not entitled to question the integrity of men. Women should not share the pulpit of the church with men as Paul addresses the issue 'they must ask at home' if they do not know.'

KNZE further highlighted that the Bible says 'husband of one wife' then, women participants are the wives of the men in the church.

WPE further noted Paul used the word *elder* that refers to men in the church, not the women. Hence, WPE noted that hermeneutically, Paul is right and applied the text correctly. This is what the church believes, without discriminating against women.

GYH highlighted that, women have been given a special honourable position:

- women are associated with the role of deacon (1 Timothy 3:11).
- mothers and grandmothers (2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 5:2),
- "real" widows (1 Timothy 5:3),
- old widows (1 Timothy 5:9),
- a woman who "has widows" (1 Timothy 5:16),
- older women who instruct younger ones (Titus 2:3-5),

GYH added that the historical and cultural context sharpens the church's perception of what they understand scripturally. It then develops a relationship between older and younger women and thus contributes to Christian communities. This helps the church to reflect on how these observations (and prescriptions) might bear on the present.

DCS said, "The issue of culture did not start from Paul but is an ancient concept."

This phrase reflects on what has been said by DCS as to why Paul admonished Titus to “speak what is fitting for healthy teaching”. Paul then gives Titus that let an older man exhort the younger ones and the older woman exhort the younger ones. There is no segregation; instead, each must sit in his/her corner. This means that everyone has a role in the church, this is the reason the church believes strongly that their patriarchal practice is based on the Scripture’s clarification of the role of each person.

Male participants SAP, DCS, GYH, EWA, DRDA, AWZ, WPE and KZNE believed that women are honoured in the church, based on the text, hence, the children were given direction that they have to respect their parents and the parents to love their children. The same, they suggested, should apply to women in the church. This meant that women would not be permitted to preach and teach in front of men.

They have firmly expressed that the church believed women are expected to embody what Paul has instructed the elders of both churches to do. The participants supported their view by quoting Ephesians 5:21 and Colossians 3:18.



#### **4.6.14.2 The view of Female Participants**

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EML said that the Scripture is the Word of God and is inspired.

She believes, like PIW that women participants have expressed their feeling about Paul’s teachings and directives to the church of the Ephesians.

PIW said that the text is irrelevant for this century and it was used for that period. Women had been perceived differently in the church at the time.

DBE believed that Scripture is inspired and authoritative, but Paul was dealing with pagan and false teachers that were arising in the church.

She further highlighted the questions which address their concerns as to why Paul had to rebuke the women by himself. The trouble, she argued, was about women in the church who were disturbing their husbands during worship and the inability of the husbands to convince their wives biblically.

PW raised a question as to whether or not it was not because the husbands were weak spiritually and in the handling of Heavenly business. She posed a follow-up question that clarified the text to the reader. The question was why the BCSACR did not use the inclusive approach when dealing with God's spiritual affairs instead, allowed culture, tradition and patriarchy to dominate God's business.

OZA and GFT supported the view that the misguided use of the text was responsible for the inequality in the church. They further explained that the text should address what is aspired to by the membership - inclusivity. The church has to address the conduct of all its members to refrain from gender-based leadership styles such as the silencing and marginalisation of women.

ECl argued, using biblical text that, "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23) including the men. Hence, women participants believe that God has never singled out women but included everybody in His Grace.

According to AWZ, the church must remove the distinction in the role between men and women within its structures. He further highlighted that the Scripture presents numerous female leaders. These women leaders functioned competently, contrary to Paul's prohibition in (1 Timothy 2). The women participants believe that the Bible is the main source for understanding God's Word.

UPL said that Jesus' positive view of women is consistently evident throughout all four of the Gospels.

IYM said that Jesus treated women as equal and not as sex objects or possessions. BNS said that Jesus considered women worthy of being a part of His circle. GFT said that Jesus inspired all by providing and responding to all life challenges.

The researcher believes that a) women followed Christ and provided hospitality b) women demonstrated their love and respect towards Jesus and His ministry, and c) The Samaritan woman willingly accepted Jesus and went back to the village to proclaim the Gospel.

Jesus permitted women to proclaim the Good News and it was recorded in the Bible. Then, Mary Magdalene is now called the first evangelist, because Jesus sent her to go and share the Good News with the disciples (John 20:17). The participants' highlighted the church does not use these texts for inclusive ministry.

Martin Pohlmann (2014:35) citing (Gorman 2004:559) noted the point that the Church should be a safe place of worship, ministry and love. It should not be a place of seduction and distraction between the sexes: "The context, however, suggests that husbands and wives are each being given particular guidelines for their behaviour at prayer in the context of public worship: males without aggression (2:8), females without sensuality" (Gorman, 2004:559). It does not mean that women/wives should not care for their hair, wear jewellery or wear good quality clothing. There is a very specific message here given for a very specific reason.

#### **4.6.15 The lack of empowerment of women in the church for teaching, preaching**

The research findings from women and men participants revealed that women are not empowered in the church for preaching, teaching and ordination. The aspects of recognition resulted in women being less-empowered in the church because they had to depend on men for spirituality. The women participants protested that the church denied them recognition and empowerment.

##### **4.6.15.1 Lack of capacity and disempowerment**

KWZ argued that the empowerment of women had become a frequent challenge and the most contentious issue in the church, especially when it came to their training and development. Different people used the word 'empowerment' to mean different things, which all boiled down to the oppression of women.

Empowerment has been discussed in the reviewed literature on what the church has to do for effective women's ministry.

ITP said that the church claims to be empowering women, but shows little if any, evidence of women empowerment. Women participants express that it is not clear what is added by using the word empowerment, because to be empowered one must have been

disempowered. The subject of empowerment in the church is not an easy thing to talk about, because of the patriarchal attitude towards women, hence, the church fails to create a conducive environment in which women can empower themselves.

DSR expressed that the church cannot be forced to include women in preaching. He further highlighted the old saying that one can take a horse to the water but cannot force it to drink. The participants added that if the church can empower them, many would play a productive role and contribute to the growth of the church. This, they add, would liberate women.

#### **4.6.15.2 The Impact of a lack of empowerment**

DSR believed that the participation and mobilization of women are not addressed in the church – that, women needed to be empowered with more information.

Lack of empowerment has caused inequalities, oppression and marginalisation that has developed into the exclusion of women. This has led to women internalising these feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness.

TPDS said, *“Umdla wabo use zantsi, abakwazi nokuzethemba, kwaye abaziboni bengabantu abazizixhobo Bandleni”*: this means that in such conditions they regard themselves as people who have low self-esteem, low self-confidence and lack assertiveness.

The female participant DSR added that the new approach is needed for them to be preachers and teachers of the church.

NDP believed that transformation ministry should be established, and transformation for inclusiveness is needed for their ministry, they hear slogans in the church of unity but without change. Transformation is the most missionary program that changes the situation of segregation, discrimination, marginalization, and oppression towards all the members of the church.

NDP reported that the church lacks radical change to transform women. Teaching was identified as one practical thing that should improve the role women played at BCSACR, hence, they must be taught. They should be taught all that the Bible teaches.

NDP noted that there is a tendency in the church of treating women like they are not capable of grasping the deep theological and doctrinal things. Part of the confusion we have is because women are not taught. And it is often said that *Xa ufundisa umama ufundisa ihlabathi lonke*, "if you educate a woman, you educate the whole world"; the same principle must inspire us to teach women the Bible.

The research findings revealed that they cannot participate positively, having self-reliance, solidarity, equality and human dignity because their role in the church is not important. Women participants firmly expressed empowerment is for those who are men and they are controlling the church administration.

Almost all the women highlighted that, empowering women and men in the church will restore the full humanity of church members. Women participants have noted that in the participatory program of the church, both (women and men) are equal and self-reliant as their contribution is equal. The teachings specifically address the roles of men and women in the local church. They stated that the BCSACR's church leadership should provide relevant materials for instruction.

TPDS said that hierarchy is one of the elements that brings division to both genders disempowers and leads to the dehumanization of women in the church. Women's skills and gifts are devalued. TPDS highlighted that disempowerment is restricting and discriminating against them. Therefore, gender inequality and hierarchy do not enhance the program and the mission of God which is Mission Dei.

Hence, disempowerment hinders women to participate in God's program. It is the program that becomes a stumbling block towards the enjoyment of spiritual gifts, as it informs the interest of men. Women participants have agreed that empowerment goes to the heart of God. The women participants raised the recommendation that equality should play a pivotal role to overcome all obstacles that isolate women.

ZFB mentioned that Christ has empowered women and given them a platform to preach and teach and He has publicly allowed them to explore. The woman at the well met with Jesus and she benefited from:

- Christ conversation;
- Christ enlightens the Word
- Conversion later became the herald of Good News. The community has accepted the woman and beliefs as well. This is what is lacking in the church.

Women participants have unanimously and emphatically stated that they needed financial empowerment. The women participants at the individual level and local church needed to be empowered financially and materially to liberate themselves from unhealthy traditional suppressions which have also crept into the church. Women participants firmly expressed that “Unless women are empowered, their roles may not be emphasized, because men, even Christian men, unfortunately, will continue to dictate what they feel is suitable for them not necessarily what the Bible teaches,” several respondents observed.

The researcher observes the contribution made by Rashe (2007) when he discussed the role and the duty of the church. The author stated that education and religious guidance is the responsibility of the families to nurture one another. Today, many of the family tasks have been taken over by other societal relationships, such as factories, schools, churches and the state.

The families lack comprehensive guidance about community responsibility, which is a task that is shrinking and limited to the upbringing and protection of women. The empowerment process starts at home, so violence cannot produce bad results such as hatred, revenge, and other means of violence. The researcher believes and supports what Rashe (2007) discussed inclusion should start from the church for the readiness of society.

#### **4.6.16 The use of derogative language by men in the church**

The research findings from women participants revealed that women feel that men are using derogative language to discourage them from participating in activities like

preaching. They use a word like ABAFAZI in a very negative way, in a manner that is undermining them (*Abafazi*) when they have to preach and teach the Word of God. Women participants are not supposed to stand in front of their husbands and it is only men who have to preach in the church.

The article by Christine Cozien, December 2014, "*IsiHlonipho Sabafazi – Language of Respect or Language of Oppression*" defines and discusses this as one of the discriminatory conduct toward women. It segregates if it is not used for its purpose, such as favouring one gender. She defines the rights of women and the preservation of traditional customs in the face of modernization (Bongela 2001, Dawling 1988, Makoni 2014, Thetela 2002, Zungu, 1007).

Cozien defines "*IsiHlonipho Sabafazi*" that it can be conceptualized as a subcategory of respect of culture towards the African communities that specifically includes isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, and Basotho.

The word "*ukuHlonipha Abafazi*" overlaps several cultural customs such as male and female initiation, marriage, divorce, mourning, birth and respect for ancestors. It overlaps with African customs that adhered to "*Ukuhlonipha Abafazi*" has an element of avoidance and replacement of certain phonemes occurring in the names of women's male relatives who have an honorary male status, such as mother-in-law.

It has been observed that the non-linguistic approach has extended to the style of dress, posture and other customs such as those relating to "*umakofi*" and "*ukuhota*" Bongela (2001:88). Cozien (2014) believes that women are marginalized because of the derogative language which hinders them to be empowered and occupying the church governance structures. Hence, she highlighted that the word "*abafazi*" has the implications of a lack of respect towards women while tradition and culture praise what dictates women.

The research findings from women participants revealed that derogative language, such as "*abafazi*" is often used during the cultural service and traditional exercises. Therefore, culture should not be used in the church to isolate participants in spiritual affairs. TPDS believed that the challenge towards the use of vocabulary is with patriarchy and is giving



more privileges to men over women. It gives men an opportunity to dominate in the church towards spiritual affairs.

ZFB have expressed that the word “*Abafazi*” ridicules them and promotes independence when it comes to thinking and ideological understanding. They have highlighted that most men would re-evaluate and support of traditional order that gives power and dominance that becomes a threat to women.

GFT believed that without being feminist ‘inclusive language’ is very significant in the church as involving the approach becomes standard for all. They firmly express that inclusive language is equivalent, and it draws the image of God.

She further stated, “*inclusive language is a gender-neutral language and imaging.*” GFT added that though inclusive language has been acknowledged by most fundamental Christians in the Baptist Church, it has not often been met with a positive response. Rather, the church opted to use the word “*Abafazi*” which is derogative and serves to legitimize the obsolete patriarchal language which is used in the Christian liturgy today.

The White conference participant NDP expressed that inclusive language drives the mission and objective of the church, and it becomes accomplishable when all parties are respecting one another in the church. She further expresses that the use of the language should be inclusive of males and females, instead of becoming a matter of a particular gender. The inclusive language that uses the word “*Abafazi*” in the church marginalises women and relegates them to a lower level. Hence, the interviews have assisted the study to address the research topic. Female participant NDP mentioned that one can be respected by all people in the church.

The rural participants XDS, BNS, TPDS, OZA and ZFB believed that the Word of God has freed everybody to contribute fully irrespective of culture and gender while the church is still attesting to the words such as “*Abafazi*” that recognize the division in the church. The church has to avoid the derogative language that exploits and excludes them in the church for the benefit of affirming and liberating women in all forms of society.

They have highlighted that it would serve everyone when the inclusive language is used so that all those who believe in God can benefit instead of focusing on one thing which derogative language. They further explain that an inclusive language gives the church the attitude of adequate toward the understanding of God. The Scripture itself spoke of God who is astonishingly rich.

The women participants have highlighted the rich hymn that is found in the BCSACR 117 *“Abantsundu naba Mhlophe mababulele kunye, mabavakalise bonke, baculele i’ Nkosi”*: this means black and white should pray together and shout praises together. This hymn is very inclusive, in such a way it builds the doctrine of discovery towards us (male and female) who are in the church.

The Coloured/Indian conference female participants have revealed that derogative language such as *“Vrou”* is marginalizing for ordination. They further explain that inclusivity would be deemed by the attitude of stereotyping that restricts and prevents from realizing the equivalent of personhood (equality): that is possessed by males and females.

Women participants highlighted that *‘we may not feel the presence of God if we do not have something common, such as children of God (male and female) than “Abafazi.”*

Women participants expressed that the church should recognize the power of words that are used to discriminate against them. They firmly express that during worship services preachers often went off the theme and casually joked about gender. Women participants believe that the church in this regard, quips and jabs like these illustrate the subtle sexism rising in the participants' midst.

Women participants highlighted that *‘what we say matters and even things said in jest have the power to heal or destroy.’* Women participants have mentioned that the church has to be reminded about the spark that can be a wildfire, an untamed beast, and a deadly poison (James 3:5) and Paul reminded the church to let its speech *“always be gracious, seasoned with salt”* (Ephesians 4:6). Then, Jesus taught the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart (Luke 6:45).

The White female participants firmly expressed that Phoebe's role was not discouraged because she was a woman, and even if the church single her out because of “*Umfazi*” she continued doing good for the Gospel. They further said Phoebe, usually assumed to have been the one to deliver Paul’s letter to Rome, is warmly commended by Paul to the Roman church (Romans 16:1–2).

Phoebe is designated as “a servant of the church in Cenchrea.” Although some have thought the word “servant” here means “deacon” (or “deaconess”), that is most unlikely since the other New Testament texts that refer to the office of deacon mention the office of bishop in immediate conjunction with it in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8, 12. Paul regularly used the term “servant” to refer to persons clearly understood to be ministers of the gospel:

- i. Phoebe should be understood as well as the minister (leader/preacher/teacher) of the church in Cenchrea
- ii. Epaphras (Colossians 1:7),
- iii. himself (1 Corinthians 3:5; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23, 25),
- iv. Apollos (1 Corinthians 3:5),
- v. Timothy (1 Timothy 4:6),
- vi. Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7),
- vii. And generally (2 Corinthians 3:6; 6:4; 11:15, 23). Thus,
- viii. Christ (Romans 15:8),

#### **4.6.17 African sayings on the dominated Woman**

PIW said, “*The church needs to understand that language also plays an important role in our daily lives, and it can be oppressive.*”

Also, GFT said, “*Our hopes, belief and lifestyles are shaped by what we say.*”

ITP agreed with PIW that, *they believed African languages have sayings or idioms in the wisdom literature.*

According to UPL, some call them riddles while others call them proverbs.

She believes, like KWZ that these sayings emphasize the unconditional subordination of women under their husbands.

This reflects how the languages segregate women as a form of oppression through these idiomatic expressions.

PIW quoted a Xhosa phrase that says that “*Ingcwaba lomfazi lise Mzini*” (meaning the grave of a woman is in her marriage or her in-law) (Kriel, 1991:27).

PIW has emphasized that a woman must stay in her marriage unto death.

In other words, the expression of “*Abafazi*” would not be heard unless her husband speaks on her behalf.

TPDS believed that the inferiority complex of a woman in this situation enforces her even to death, while it remains very quiet about men or husbands.

OZA said that this is another way of pushing women into a far corner of life.

She further expressed that, women are dying in pain even in the church, because of the language used to oppress them. She said that this saying was influenced by the tradition that allowed men to oppress women.

XDS said that it would be fair if both men and women were expected to remain in the marriage unto death.

ZFB said that they both are not to remain in the marriage for life, especially when the marriage becomes toxic to at least one of them.

According to ZFB, if men and women could raise concerns and advise one another, then, derogative language could be reduced and not used to make the other gender feel inferior. This recommendation was equally supported by NDP, BNS and IYM.

KWZ firmly expressed that this is another way of saying that a woman is useless in society. Pastoral care needs to address therapeutically the culture as well as the domination by men.

The majority of women participants have added value to the study without comparing themselves with men. They strongly believed no one should feel like a lesser person or stupid because they were referred to as “*Abafazi*.”

EML believed that derogative language must be addressed because of church councils who are dominant men, hence, their effectiveness in the church is acknowledged as agents of change in society.

IPO supported the view that derogative language contributes to how societies are regarding women towards their expectations, instead of being marginalized.

She further said that the fact that it is God who gives the gifts of leadership to the people. Our people should learn to see the difference between gender and cultural issues.

DSR said that we still have in our communities, even in the church, such men who are the boss of their wives to such an extent that she cannot even ask anything, about the use of the language.

She continued by saying that to such an extent where he was when coming home late is problematic.



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Also, TPDS stressed that some are beaten or expelled from the home if they do so. It becomes very difficult for her to detect the difference between headship and lordship.

PIW said that men are placed in the public domain while women are placed in the home in language textbooks stereotypes.

She believes, like EML that the language issue towards men and women must be developed. Women should not see themselves becoming the victims of any cultural activities or ideologies that undermine their performances.

DSR said that on the other to allows students to analyse how dominant discourses of gender function to subordinate individuals.

According to ZFB and DSR, the use of derogative language should devise means for equality for all people, especially in a church environment.

The researcher believes that the church should go beyond the existing challenge of women being called “*Abafazi*” which affects linguistic education towards gender. Rather, the church must pay close attention to changes in gender ideologies and relationships to the use of derogative language. Rashe (2007) articulates the danger of abuse and why it must be eliminated. The author discusses that women are victims of violence in many ways from different communities.

He further mentioned that derogative language includes verbal abuse, lack of access for women to contribute to the economy and being degraded that seeks to undermine their integrity. Hence, the church must address the existing gaps that emanated from patriarchy, hierarchy, gender inequality and the use of Scripture that marginalized women. Women have regarded themselves as deprived of their rights to freedom of movement. The language has been restricted or withheld from access to their children. The researcher agrees with Rashe (2007) that this is what the church faces today hence, women are called “*Abafazi*” in the church.



#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to consider and interpret the research results regarding the role of women in the Baptist Church of Southern Africa in Cradock Region. It became clear that the roles of women in BCSACR are not uniform and standardised across associations and local churches. There is a need to standardise the roles of women in the BCSACR and the local churches as much as possible and in line with the scriptures. This chapter also considered the results of the operative theology of the BCSACR about women in ministry. The focus was to describe the practices and beliefs that influence the attitude of the church leadership about women in the ministry. The chapter drew conclusions, patterns and contradicting principles of the beliefs that are in operation and the functioning theology that gives rise to the practices in the BCSACR. An attempt is made to describe what is happening and why it is happening. The study attempted to paint an accurate picture of the present practices of the BCSACR, drawn from the results. While this may not be common across associations and the local churches of the BCSACR, it does reflect the practices and attitudes of the church in the area demarcated for the study.

The themes identified from the data collected and analysed, helped to cluster the general inclinations of the responses and elucidate the general feeling of the respondents. The themes further assisted in identifying problem areas in the church administration and how women are treated at the BCSACR. Among the problem areas, are that there is evident absence of women in the church's decision-making structures. The existence of such church stereotypes that women are incompetent and that ordination is considered to be only for men became evident in the identified themes. Foundational to the identified stereotypes, the study found through the themes, was the misrepresentation and selective reading of the scripture to support the existing men's stereotypes. All of these informed how the church policies are developed and implemented and subsequently how women are treated in the BCSACR. It informed how the resources are distributed in a manner that only favours men.



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## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter adopts an integrative consolidation of the varied aspects of this study. The researcher may seem, at times, as if he is repeating himself, only to emphasise a point. The researcher's observations are presented, fully cognisant of the danger of not becoming too involved and thus compromising objectivity. The researcher also outlines the key contributions of the study to the body of knowledge, the study's methodological and theoretical limitations and implications for the BCSACR on the exclusion of women in the church leadership and governance structures.

In an attempt not to present a jumbled summary, the researcher commences with the key finding and dovetail recommendations so that there is an intentional linkage and flow from each finding. While it is not the intention of the researcher to separate findings from the literature review from those of the empirical study, he considered it important to present these separately for clarity before consolidating them into a harmonious closure. Should there still be perceived gaps in the study's response to the problem statement, research objectives and questions, these will be addressed in the researcher's recommendations for future research.

### **5.2 KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS**

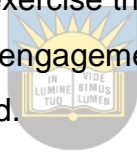
The literature review presented several key findings. It revealed important insight into how scholars and the Scripture view women's role in the church and society. It also casts some light on why women often face obstacles to being fully accepted in church and society, which would enable them to partake of the full range of opportunities which are currently available only to men. One of the key findings was gender inequality which effectively blocks women from participating in activities that lead to spiritual growth. It was noted that the obstacles preventing women from being developed within the church are related to their gender. Gender inequality is the main factor for the exclusion of women in church governance. Patriarchy, it was found, is in the form of social organization whereby men exert power over women. It is the root cause of exclusion; hence, we see a lot of women being forced to support and promote men-only leadership. The researcher must



agree with the scholars that patriarchy is an isolative, repressive and oppressive system that marginalizes women in the church and other avenues of life.

The researcher also observed that improper interpretation and application of the biblical text is at the heart of women's isolation. Some biblical writings are also problematic, such as 1 Corinthians 14:1-12 where women are expected to cover their heads, keep silent and be submissive to men.

The key findings from the study were informed by both the secondary research – literature review, Biblical analyses and systematic fieldwork. The findings are summarized below. Throughout history, the Church has played an important role in providing a warm and nurturing environment to believers and has been a source of active Christian ministry to all who seek it, irrespective of their status in society. Women in the BCSACR have, like all others in the society, experienced segregation of some sort and have been among the most vulnerable groups - unable to exercise their spiritual gifts in a fulfilling mission Dei. Others have faced obstacles in their engagement with the Church – to the point of being discriminated against and stigmatized.



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The research findings revealed the reasons for this, some overt and some more subtle, but often with the root being ignorance on the part of the church leaders and members. The research findings revealed that sometimes the greatest hardship that women experienced is neglect – not necessarily wilful neglect, but a lack of understanding or reluctance on the part of women of BCSACR to raise questions about their expectations from the church and how they believe they should be treated in the church. The research findings revealed that from a theological and/or historical perspective, the Bible's frequent references to women being linked to sinful behaviour helped to entrench bias against women – even though this is challenged by many modern views and authors. In the literature reviewed it was revealed that the confusing messages wrongly sent through Biblical misinterpretation and application made women believe that they are sinners and therefore unworthy of a fulfilling life and a proud place in the Church. This was even though; the Church has a special place and a role to be played by women and has a right to exercise their unique spiritual gifts.

The research findings revealed that the exclusion of women in the church governance often evokes feelings of fear, embarrassment and pity on the part of others, which leads to inappropriate reactions toward those who are afflicted. Ultimately, women participants of BCSACR do not wish to be put in a special category and treated differently but to be treated equally. They want, as far as possible, to be independent members of their communities and to make as valuable a contribution as their men peers. The research findings revealed that there is no denying that, like any other person, women do have their limitations but these, they argue, should be accommodated in innovative ways. Because women, like everyone else, are varied in their nature, require varied responses that talk to their uniqueness.

At a practical level, women often find it difficult to participate in church services or other activities because the church lacks the necessary facilities to empower them to teach and preach. This has the potential to deter them from coming to church at all and could dampen their enthusiasm to participate freely in church activities, especially those that are currently dominated by men. Although some churches may wish to do more for women in their midst, they often lack the financial and other resources to make this happen. As a result, women feel less important and excluded from their church's worship, community and social activities.

The research findings also revealed that women church members provided one another with the support they do not get from the wider church community. This allows them to stay on their spiritual paths and exercise their talents in the best way possible. However, it is incumbent upon the church leadership to proactively look for ways to provide a more accommodating environment for women to participate freely in leadership and church governance structures. It was also found in the literature reviewed that leadership are obliged to ensure that communities understand the nature of gender better so that church and community activities and structures include women just like Christ would have done. It is the responsibility of the church to create inclusive structures that allow both genders to interact seamlessly within God's house. Everyone should enjoy physical, emotional and spiritual access to the church.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's findings discussed in the foregoing section provide from which the researcher springs recommendations to assist in resolving the problem of women's marginalisation and exclusion.

Given the foregoing key findings, it is also recommended that the Church works closely with Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) that pursue a similar ministry. This could spawn awareness seminars about women and special initiatives aimed at building confidence among excluded women in the church governance structures. These would help to create a more inclusive atmosphere and teach church communities as a whole about the needs, gifts and talents of all people who are in the church as discussed in the book of Ephesians 4. There are innumerable mechanisms available to forge stronger links between women within and outside the church, thus helping to reduce prejudice and even stimulating collaboration on matters of women's empowerment. Strategies are proposed under the following headings on how women can be emancipated and empowered. The proposed strategies are not exhaustive but are an attempt to alleviate the women's marginalisation and exclusion in the BCSACR.



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### 5.3.1.1 Establishing a Gender Action Plan

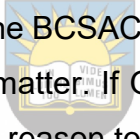
It is recommended that a Gender Action Plan (GAP) be implemented as a programme to assist the church to transform and set up deliberate plans to include women in the church governance structures. The GAP must be aimed specifically at improving, engaging and integrating women in all church activities and for a conducive environment created wherein they feel free to use their spiritual gifts. It must provide a platform which women can use to express their needs and challenges without fear of reprisal. The GAP must seek to identify and eradicate obstacles that lead to the exclusion of women, especially in such areas as culture, gender inequality and the patriarchy.

As God created both man and woman in His image and likeness and endowed them with equal authority for stewardship (Genesis 1:27), the GAP must assist the church in emancipating women so that the abilities and skills of both males and females are valued. The GAP must make sure that both men and women are exposed to deep spiritual

formation and effective vocational readiness to allow them to fully understand the theological doctrines that underpin Biblical principles, culture and all forms of marginalisation. A mechanism must be included in the GAP that requires the Church to account for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and governance structures.

### **5.3.1.2 Relying on the more inclusive Scriptures to facilitate the acceptance of women in the Church**

The church must use and rely on the more inclusive Scriptures for the inclusion and engagement of women in leadership and governance structures. Such Scriptures, among others, are Acts 11:17), wherein the Apostle Peter makes it clear that if God endowed both the Jews and Gentiles with like gifts, how could the ordinary people like him have reasons to marginalise or even exclude the Gentiles. He wrote, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" The BCSACR, it is suggested, should take a cue from the Apostle Peter's teaching on the matter. If God endowed both men and women with like Gifts, why must the church find a reason to marginalise and exclude women from its leadership and governance structures?



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The Apostle Paul Hence also cautioned against discriminatory practices such as circumcision (Rom 2:29) wherein he argued that whether or not one was circumcised, such practices should not be used as a gateway to God's privilege. Only spiritual maturity and the acceptance of Christ as the Lord and Saviour should count for salvation. According to Saint Paul, it did not matter if one was a Jew or Gentile, male or female (Gal 3:28). It is recommended, therefore, the BCSACR applies the principles enshrined in these Scriptures where God granted inheritance as a gift to all under His Promise, that the Good News was for everyone in the church regardless of whether or not they were Jews or Gentiles, male or female and irrespective of their skin colour.

### **5.3.1.3 The Church to play a healing role**

The church must play the role of healing society. The church must in its programmes be cognisant of the fact that Black people and especially women have been excluded from

societal and church structures. The church must affirm the need and its responsibility to lift the spirits of the church members and society as a whole. This would empower persons who have received Christ as a personal saviour to minister to all those who are excluded from the church leadership and governance structures. What is required is the establishment of personal affirming relationships with those whom the world devalues or rejects. Women who serve in an environment of love and acceptance are blessed and provide service of love and voluntary commitment.

The study recommends that leadership encourages women's ministry and removes all obstacles that hinder them from exercising their spiritual gifts. Their acceptance shall in turn strengthen their self-esteem and self-image and thus propel them to do more for society. Women need not act like men to get status, position or control. All, regardless of gender, must be accepted based on their baptism in Christ (Gal 3:27).

#### **5.3.1.4 Mentoring in the Church**

Mentoring has the potential to assist the church to produce powerful and strong disciples of God. The church must identify successful leaders who carry out God's mission. Mentorship programmes that promote spiritual growth and bring change in people's lives must be introduced and implemented. The introduction and implementation of a ministry of mentoring will help impart skills and knowledge from those who are competent to those who still need to be developed. This shall inculcate a spirit of care and support and further improve the relationship between men and women in the church. That mentors have to slow down to accommodate their proteges does not only boost the learners' self-esteem but creates a culture of care and family.

This shall ensure that the need for the ordination of women into the ministry is given a boost. A mentoring program is a necessity to grow spiritually among women. Needless to say, other than their gender, there cannot be any other reason why women are not allowed to explore their spirituality and participate in the building of the church as part of God's family (Gen 1:27; Gal 3). They must always be encouraged so that they can realize their role in the church and take part in decision-making in the ministry.

### **5.3.1.5 Implementation of motivational programmes**

Progressive churches realise motivation through seminars, workshops and Bible studies. The church must refrain from using and quoting text wrongly as this demotivates women who want to participate in church governance. Motivation must be included as part of leadership responsibility and this must be regardless of gender. This would then develop the women's trust in the church systems.

### **5.3.1.6 Partnership with other churches and organisations**

A partnership is when two people share the platform or resources to achieve one goal. It is when organizations collaborate to realise greater output. Because churches are not at the same level of women's emancipation and engagement, it would help the BCSACR to seek collaborations with other churches or institutions to share ideas and benefit from pooled resources which might not be possible had it not been for the partnership. The collaboration space is also created for diversity and tolerance which will in turn build an atmosphere of trust which is one of the conditions for the development of the empowered partnership. The research participants largely recommended that BCSACR does not look for a particular gender for preaching the Good News in the church, the focus should be on the candidates' potential. They argued that the Gospel initiates a new pattern of gender relationships among Christians.

In summary, the researcher thinks that BCSACR needs to do something to remedy the exclusion of women from church governance. The dignity of women should be reinstated and addressed in the church. The study should promote the involvement of women according to their inborn potential – not their gender. The research findings revealed that many different strategies can be adopted to ensure that women are integrated more fully into church life, which would then have positive spin-offs for their treatment in society as a whole. Initiatives such as awareness and training programs, the 'buddy system' and investing in better facilities for women can all go a long way towards helping them feel more at home and play a more active role in church activities.

The Church can also change attitudes by preaching more positive messages, given that the Bible can be misinterpreted to reinforce the inferior perception of women - be they

church members or non-church members. Through its actions, too (that is, leading by example), the Church can send a very strong signal about the value of all people to society. Such behaviour will hopefully be replicated by others.

#### **5.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

More intensive research should be conducted among women church members, while also extending the geographical reach of the research to acquire a richer understanding of problems facing women in their spiritual quest. Though only touching on a small sample, this study represents an important foundation in a process of identifying the major pressure points in women's engagements with the Church. It can be used as the launching pad for further research, paving the way for a broader study and possibly using a larger population sample. A more quantitative approach might also be contemplated if the numbers involved in future surveys warrant more structured comparisons and analyses. Moreover, different types of studies using different methodologies could be designed to cover other spheres of life where women are also suffering the same fate as in the church. Collectively, these efforts will go a long way toward helping the Church to fulfil its ministry in a practical and valuable way and bring the women's community out of the shadows into the bright light of acceptance and spiritual self-actualization.

#### **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The marginalisation and exclusion from key church and societal structures continue to affect women of all races and geographical locations. The number of women in key decision-making positions is inconsistent with the representation of women in the world population. While society boasts of having programmes to address women's emancipation, these programmes do not seem to be doing enough to address the challenges. Whether or not women also contribute to the problem is a matter which has not yielded any solution. This study sought to identify the causes of women's marginalisation and exclusion in the BCSACR leadership and governance structures. While the study revealed that the basis for this exclusion originates from Biblical Scriptures, it was also found that these Scriptures are often misrepresented or misinterpreted.

While recommendations are made in this study for various interventions, the researcher must concede firstly that the recommendations are not exhaustive and that some of these challenges originate from society. While the church is implored to take a lead in eradicating these obstacles, the church may not have the necessary resources for such a mammoth task. Because the study was conducted in a small and specific area, using a qualitative methodology, there may still be scope for further probing into the matter as extending the findings in this study may be limited. While the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the concomitant restriction on travelling and personal contact imposed, this did not in any way compromise the quality of the research outcome as the telephonic interviews that substituted face-to-face interviews used the same structure as would have been the case had the interviews been conducted face-to-face.



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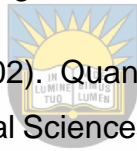
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