

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Providing Biblical Knowledge to Women Ages 25–70 to Place Women in Ministry and Leadership Positions In The Church

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this project is to provide biblical knowledge to equip women to assume scriptural roles in church ministry and leadership. The project was conducted at The Word Ministry Church in rural Dallas County, Alabama. The writer reviewed women's challenges and issues in the Christian community dominated by patriarchal theories. This project provides an overview of the study group and the training criteria for preparing women for ministry and leadership. The goal was to educate women not serving in leadership or ministry positions to obtain biblical knowledge to give them the confidence and support to accept their gift of ministry or leadership. The researcher used various tools to assess each participant's biblical knowledge of women in ministry and leadership, including pre- and post-tests, individual interview questionnaires, and a group questionnaire tool. The data collection process included individual and group interviews. The mentoring process was implemented for a month, during which each mentor and mentee shared information to determine the effectiveness of the process. The elective group of mentors, women currently in ministry and leadership positions, were paired with mentees, women not in ministry or leadership positions in the church.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Debates and discussions regarding women's roles in ministry and leadership have been ongoing for many years and continue as women called by God encounter obstacles and struggles that have often been historically solidified in a male-dominant environment. Theologically, Scripture designated by some as God's directive for women to remain silent and submissive in the church is supported by a familiar passage (1 Cor 14:34). Academic studies show that women continue to trail behind their male counterparts in salary and ministerial positions, are unequal in well-established churches, continue to be rejected based on gender and race, and are often placed in smaller churches.¹

This chapter will discuss a local church and the divisions regarding women's ministry and leadership roles. The ministry context will be discussed, detailing the church's demographics, location, and history. The problem and purpose statements will be identified, and the thesis statement will be analyzed and debated.

Ministry Context

The ministry context of The Word Ministry will be discussed because it is critical for understanding the greater scope of this paper's problem and intervention. This ministry context will discuss the descriptive facts of the church's structure and membership, which is essential to understanding the foundational elements embedded within the body of the church. This

¹ Kate Bowler, *The Preacher's Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 43.

information will provide a more excellent perception of the problem exhibited at The Word Ministry.

Demographics

The Word Ministry's congregants are composed of African Americans and Caucasians. The African Americans outnumber the Caucasian members, and there are only a few Caucasian members. However, the church has an outreach program that displays the church as a family in Christ, standing with open arms and receptive to all humankind, and a non-denominational church for all who seek the Lord and want to commit to God's will.

The population within Selma is a mixture of African American, Caucasian, Asian, and Mexican/Hispanic. The church has had Asian and Mexican members in the past, but due to the church's location in rural Dallas County, those members have left and moved to other cities and states. At present, the church's focus is on community and city outreach programs that will aid in accommodating and encouraging all cultures that seek a familial atmosphere filled with the Holy Spirit and are willing to commit and devote themselves to the work of the Lord as disciples of Christ. Jesus instructed His disciples to go out and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18–20).

Chronologically, The Word Ministry has multiple generations, from adults to toddlers. The adults' range in age from the early twenties to the late eighties; the teens range in age from thirteen to nineteen, and the youngest range in age from two to ten. The female congregants outnumber the men in every ministry and department within the church. Also, the women outnumber the men in giving, attendance, and positional functions. The few men in the church are committed, except for some who have not committed to God's service as deemed in the role of disciples. The men that are committed range in age from twenty to sixty. These men are involved in city and community outreach programs to target young men without fathers or male figures. These efforts present an opportunity for teaching biblical principles on becoming men of

God, loving the Lord, and being committed to God's will and His ways. This program is on the rise because of the diligence and determination of the men at The Word Ministry.

The increase in violence and murders among young men, especially the black male population, in this area has presented obstacles within the church concerning outreach programs. Therefore, consistent outreach efforts for collaboration with various city and county individuals and organizations are ongoing to provide the necessary means to capture the root cause of all negative behavior and devise plans to decrease or eradicate violence-induced situations.

The church's agenda is to provide monthly services and activities for all congregants. On Sunday mornings at 8:00, there is a worship and praise service where all congregants, adults, and children worship. Bible study for each class is provided at 9:45 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. The adult class is in the sanctuary, and the youth classes are in the fellowship hall. Bishop Scott, the researcher's husband, was elected in 1992 as pastor/overseer of the church. The pastor teaches the adults, and the youth teacher teaches the youth class. The first Saturday at 11:00 a.m. is the discipleship class for all new members and others who want to attend. Also, the women's Sisterhood class commencing at noon immediately follows the discipleship class. This writer leads the Sisterhood class, where the issue regarding women's roles in ministry and leadership presents debates. As the debates heighten, scriptural discussions reveal a lack of knowledge and understanding of women in the Bible and their positions. Most women attend Sisterhood and women's conferences and events to gain insight and information and visualize women preaching and teaching God's Word. Finally, on the third Saturday at noon, the book club meets, which both men and women can attend after purchasing the current book in the discussion.

The Sisterhood ministry was created initially as a space for women to step away from their daily routines and connect with other women. They find comfort and support in one another

through sharing their everyday struggles and fears. Along with enjoyable activities and refreshments, the atmosphere is welcoming and fosters humility, allowing for open and honest conversations. The group also enjoys occasional cookouts, shopping trips, spiritual conferences, concerts, and other events that promote bonding and sharing. Each encounter is centered around God's will and His plan to uplift, encourage, and empower one another for a strong and purposeful life. The culmination of these gatherings is a spiritual encounter where God leads.

Sunday morning worship and praise services at 8:00 are prepared for members and visitors seeking strength and connections with the Lord Jesus Christ. The pastor or his appointee brings the morning message to this service. In addition, three other ministers are vital to the ministry and preach at the pastor's directive. This writer serves as one of the three ministers within the church who preach and teach God's Word at the pastor's directive during Sunday morning services. At times, guest ministers preach during the Sunday morning services as a means of fellowship.

Location

The church is in a rural area of Dallas County, near the historic town of Selma, Alabama. This rural area, the Sardis community, consists primarily of African Americans and a small percentage of Caucasians. The church is one of many African American churches within a five-mile radius. The church is within two miles of seven African American churches and one Caucasian church. African American churches engage in fellowship at various times yearly. Although the church offers fellowship by invitation to the Caucasian church, there has been no response or attendance.

The rural area has solid spiritual values and profound ministerial positions regarding pulpit etiquette. The area consists primarily of Missionary Baptist churches and one other Methodist church. New Shady Grove Methodist Church, currently The Word Ministry, incurred

a name change ten years ago, which also changed the structure and teachings of the church. This ministry was the first ministry, except the other Methodist church, to license women to preach and teach God's Word. This change challenged some Baptist churches in this rural area and other rural areas of Dallas County, which believe in male leadership-only positions within the church and are strict in their belief that women should not preach or teach God's Word. This Baptist belief is profoundly evident in this area's culture and communities.

The poverty and rurality of this area present challenges regarding resource opportunities secondary to location, and the inadequate opportunity for future enhancement is displayed within the community's culture. Historical and familial connections are essential generational elements embedded within the community and form the basis of the beliefs and norms of this rural area.

The male-dominant churches have been a "leaning post" for the community and have served as the standard for this rural area. This idea of male-dominant leadership is the core value for leadership in this area. This idea has been grounded in establishing the community's Baptist churches and passed down as a generational standard of truth. Also, male dominance in the church, regarding leadership and ministry, is shared with the younger population to mold the idea that male dominance is the right way for God's church to operate. From American slavery to current, this rural area has community members that embark on missions, openly or quietly, denouncing women in leadership and ministry positions. Lederleitner writes that gender stereotypes and restrictions can be detrimental to women who have acknowledged and accepted the call to ministry and leadership but are not permitted to express their spiritual gifts and talents.²

History

² Mary T. Lederleitner, *Women in God's Mission: Accepting the Invitation to Serve and Lead* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 110.

New Shady Grove Methodist Protestant Church was established in the late 1890s with just a few members, and church services were under a brush of trees. Over the years, many transitions in buildings, locations, and pastors have occurred. In 1993, the Annual Methodist Protestant Conference elected the current pastor at the yearly meeting. The church was small and membership and was in a structurally unsafe building. However, the strength and belief of the members persisted in prayer, a new building was erected in 2002, and the building debt was eradicated in 2012. The members' foundational belief in adhering to the church's culture and systematic function of teachings was evident in the church's inner structure. The congregant's internal drive and persistence to accomplish God's will led to purchasing a 12-acre property for the future building six miles from the current church. This inner persistence is evident in some members' mindsets regarding women's roles in ministry and leadership.

This writer was elected as the church's first female minister and was licensed to preach at the Methodist Protestant conference in 2016 by her husband, Bishop Scott. Bishop Scott continues to serve as pastor/overseer of The Word Ministry. Though the church's system did permit women to teach and preach, there had never been a female minister elected as a minister of the gospel to teach and preach God's Word. This milestone had never occurred during the conference, and disdain was evident in the conference's body. However, this milestone allowed for the growth and progression of the body of the church and provided a path for other women to connect with The Word Ministry.

The belief that all men and women are created equal in the eyes of Christ and the discussion of change in the church's structure and beliefs commenced. The pastor presented God's vision regarding women's roles in ministry and the foundational structure of the church's beliefs. As a result of this vision, in 2018, New Shady Grove Methodist Church's name was changed to The Word Ministry. The vision became a reality, and a non-denominational church

sought to teach Jesus Christ's message that all are created equal and the directive to love all humankind as Christ loved (Matt 22:28–39).

As the church's membership expanded, imminent changes in the church and community commenced. Men and women announced their calling to teach and preach God's Word, and others accepted lay positions to empower themselves and others to live as Christ lived to encourage and love others daily. However, opposition to women in roles of ministry and leadership is still an ongoing entity within itself. Older individuals within the church continue to have resolutions regarding women in the pulpit or ministerial roles and, at times, are open in verbalizing their thoughts or emotions concerning women in these roles.

The older individuals in this rural setting directly influence the younger population in the church and the surrounding communities. The deeply embedded beliefs that began in the late 1890s still harbor the mindset of these individuals. The elders in these communities taught and still teach that women should not hold ministry positions, and the woman's place in the church is to keep silent and follow the instructions of the male leadership, the male pastor. This mindset has settled in some younger community members, presenting a difficult task. The Word Ministry's efforts intentionally alter the community's perspective of inequality in leadership and ministry. However, they will persevere and continue teaching God's way that all are created equal in gifts and positions.

Problem Present

As a woman in ministry, encountering obstacles and facing challenges is an ongoing issue that drives the plausibility of continuing in the spiritual circuit. Women from every race, nationality, and leadership platform stand in a non-dominant position but are unwilling to compromise to the innuendos of a male-dominated environment. Historically, the male-gendered domain is enhanced by Scripture, which positions women as mothers and homemakers and

places them in a subservient position to the husband. Graham confirms this notion by saying that historically, men have held more influence and power than women in many religious doctrines, resulting in a gender disparity in the beliefs, texts, and customs that frame them.³

Wathen discusses how the church's narrative is deeply ingrained in patriarchy, which has produced a laborious endeavor to probe each element that routed this environment to a path of systemic inequality.⁴ Mahon emphasizes McCan's description of patriarchy as a system of social structures in which women are painstakingly exploited, dominated, and oppressed by men.⁵ In addition to the male gender, professional and lay women think within these boundaries regarding women in ministry. The belief is that women are created to bear fruit, to be a helpmeet as God so made (Gen 2:18). A varied age range of women believe Eve was to blame for this action because of the fall. As a result, the directive thought is that women are not to take on leadership or ministry positions. Mathews points out that a woman's world was considered her home, nothing more or less, as the husband was the primary provider.⁶ Therefore, to maintain this superior male atmosphere, women must exemplify piety, purity, and submissiveness and always be domestic.⁷ This superior mindset has trickled down through multiple generations, guiding women's ministry positions.

The presupposition within the church and the community's culture is that women are to remain silent in the church, maintain housekeeping, nurse children, and be subservient to their husbands. This mindset regarding women is embedded as an ongoing generational dialogue that

³ Elaine L. Graham, *Making the Difference: Gender, Personhood and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1995), 2.

⁴ Erin Wathen, *Resist and Persist: Faith and the Fight for Equality* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018), 11.

⁵ Michele Mahon, "Sisters with Voices," A Study of the Experiences and Challenges Faced by Black Women in London Baptist Association Church Ministry Settings," *Black Theology*, 13:3, (2015): 277.

⁶ Alice Mathews, *Gender Roles and the People of God: Rethinking What We Were Taught About Men and Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 206.

⁷ Ibid.

continues without alteration. This male-dominant criterion is a constant facet of present-day churches. Therefore, educating individuals is an essential crux for shaping and molding individuals in newness to think and respond with a spiritual directive and to gain insight and understanding of women and their roles in leadership and ministry.

As a result of the abovementioned issue, this problem is incurred at a local church, causing division among women. Scripture reveals that all are created equal in the eyesight of God. Oyewole discusses the creative status of both men and women. Oyewole asserts that both were made in the image of God and for God.⁸ Therefore, men and women are called to minister God's Word to all people, to equip them with knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. The problem at The Word Ministry in rural Sardis, AL, is that women in the 25–70 age group lack biblical knowledge regarding women in ministry.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to develop a process to place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church. Ministering the Word of God is to teach and preach the Word of God to gain spiritual insight, knowledge, and wisdom for guidance in living a life as God so purposed. Education and mentoring bring about a change in mindset, which will commence with developing dialogue within the community. Churches are organizations that need influential leaders. Thus, to be effective leaders, women need good, caring mentors. Therefore, to serve successfully in a ministerial or pastoral position, one must have good role models to be adequately trained and prepared through education and mentoring.⁹ This process

⁸ Nathaniel Oluseyi Oyewole, "Paul's Perspective on the Role of Women in Leadership and Its Relevance to the Church in Africa," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103, 2 (April 2022): 3.

⁹ Deseree Newkirk and Bruce Cooper, "Preparing Women for Baptist Church Leadership: Mentoring Impact on Beliefs and Practices of Female Ministers," *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 22:3, (2013): 324.

will prayerfully produce a change that will evolve into a community of believers with the knowledge that God created all, male and female, equal in status, position, and gifts. This process will benefit the church and the community from a generational perspective.

This writer realizes and understands the essentiality of education in this rural setting, the church, and the community. Lack of knowledge is a critical downfall and negates change when presented; without clarity or insight, failure and continued ignorance prevail on incomprehensible levels. As a minister of the gospel this ministry is factual. Women have an arduous path of ministry when Scripture is ill-represented and omitted for the continuance of a dominant male culture that teaches against women in ministry and leadership.

Ministering the Word of God is to teach and preach the Word of God to gain spiritual insight, knowledge, and wisdom for guidance in living a life as God so purposed. One issue in today's churches is a lack of knowledge regarding women in ministry positions. Inaccurate interpretation and misrepresentation of biblical truth regarding women in spiritual roles have ingrained a hostile, derogatory atmosphere and mindset regarding women in ministry. Lewis offers this point: the power of women in ministry can be used as an operative tool that empowers the church to expand the depth of knowledge and understanding of biblical witness, teaching the absolute of God's vision, even when the opposition is evident.¹⁰ All must understand Rogers's note on women's historical roles: "Church women played roles as apostles and deacons, benefactors, missionaries and evangelists, working hard to spread the gospel and support and build up the community."¹¹ Rogers offers a precedent: "God equips different people in [a] other way, and these gifts are to be used for the good of the whole.

¹⁰ Karoline M. Lewis, *She: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2016), 17.

¹¹ Jessie Rogers, "Women in Church Leadership Roles - Biblical Perspectives," *The Furrow* 69, 7/8 (2018): 407, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45210068>.

Paul stresses that it is not a matter of people choosing their calling or avenues of service, nor about those in authority assigning roles to the members, for “all these are activated by the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses (1 Cor 12:11).”¹² Lack of knowledge about women in ministry leads to ignorance in the biblical community. Churches with unknowledgeable individuals perpetuate devastating information that is damaging and stirs casualty-induced environments with women who pursue the gift of ministry.

Scripture, presented as the tool for educating the church, allows individuals to accept change as they visualize progress through understanding and gaining knowledge for growth within themselves and others within the community. This plan propels an action that commences a productive movement for all involved. As a result, women catapult to ministry and leadership positions, and the male-dominant culture in the church begins to dissipate for the enhancement of all humankind. Evans writes Proverbs emphasizes that the educational aspect of gaining knowledge is for God’s wisdom and not oneself. Proverbs 3 particularly calls attention to attaining God’s wisdom, the Truth of Life, and the objective of all learning.¹³

Basic Assumptions

During any research project, preconceived assumptions of the research process are attractional elements that are recognized and ultimately considered as potentially positive or negative indicators during the research process. The researcher’s careful analysis and perceptions of all involved research participants within the church and other congregants’ views regarding the church’s beliefs and standards are not negated nor disengaged at any time during the research project. The assumption is that the pastor will at any time question the researcher regarding any

¹² Rogers, *Women*, 410.

¹³ Abigail Rian Evans and Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, *Faith of Our Mothers, Living Still: Princeton Seminary Women Redefining Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 43.

issues or circumstances regarding the research project. The researcher assumes that several congregants' attitudes toward the research project will be negative. Therefore, the researcher must maintain an objective view and an atmosphere consistent with respect during the research project.

Given the rural nature of the church and its proximity to the community, the researcher assumes that elders from the community may attempt to input their opinions during the research without approval, secondary to their status in the community. Therefore, the researcher will direct all non-members and non-research participants to the pastor for any concerns regarding the research. In addition, negative feedback from other community churches and leadership regarding the research will be forwarded to the pastor for resolution and discussions with community and church leaders.

Upon expounding upon the expansive nature and depth of the research topic during group discussion, the assumption is that during the meetings with the women ages 25–70, tempers may erupt into debatable arguments where the dialogue will move from a positive exchange of individual belief and expression to an eruption of negative outbursts, which stimulates and provokes an atmosphere encapsulated with dissonance and disdain. At the commencement of each discussion, this researcher will remind everyone of the project's purpose and respect all opinions. Civility will be mandated during group and individual discussions. During the dialogical conveyance of personal beliefs, all participants must realize they will have different perspectives and views about various subjects relating to the research topic. Regardless of opinions, beliefs, and interpretations exchanged, respect will be maintained during any dialogue, irrespective of the innate personal tendency to voice or divulge lewd comments and exemplify that disposition in a disrespectful disposition and tone.

This researcher will remind all participants of 1 Cor 14:40 where Paul reminds all that whatever is done, be sure it is in decency and with honor. As a further note, 1 Pet 2:17 reminds one always to respect all humankind, love the family of believers, and fear God. Encouragement will be a constant reminder to the participants and to inform them that even amid disagreements, all can agree to disagree in knowing that God created the heavens and the earth, and all humankind created them differently and for different purposes. When those purposes unite, foundational elements are solidified for the good of the entire body of Christ. Encouraging all participants to capture the essence of respect displays spiritual values that encapsulate productive and positive communication. Respect is a critical necessity for loving, as God instructs all to love all humankind. So, Paul writes in Rom 8:28 to know and understand that all things work together for the complete good of those who love the Lord God and are called according to His purpose and will.

This research project is written from an egalitarian viewpoint, which advocates for equal rights for all individuals, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status. The researcher's perspective has been derived from various scriptures emphasizing equality's importance. For instance, Gal 3:28 provides substantial evidence that all human beings are equal in the sight of God, as He created everyone without any differentiation based on gender. Many scholars have interpreted this verse as a call for the eradication of social hierarchies and a declaration of the inborn worth and dignity of every human being. Furthermore, the researcher has examined other religious texts and philosophical works that support the idea of equality and expose the fallacies of discrimination and prejudice. In Gal 3:28, Paul asserts that males and females are equal in the eyesight of God and are both entitled to the same spiritual blessings.¹⁴

¹⁴ Lazarus Chilenie, *Paul's Gender Theology and the Ordained Women's Ministry in the CCAP in Zambia* (Luwinga, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2021), 84.

This project's goal is to promote a more just and equitable society where all people can fulfill their potential and have a successful life.

As a woman in leadership and ministry, the imperative nature of equality has jilted a forward movement that will empower women. Providing biblical knowledge to women will catapult them into accepting and employing and will usher them into God's plan for their lives. This is an important and necessary element that beckons a sense of urgency for all to recognize and understand the nature of who and what God calls for all people to fulfill their destiny and the Word of God.

Definitions

Definitions of key terms are essential in capturing the essence of this paper; therefore, it is imperative that some words, which may be unfamiliar to individuals, be defined for clarity. Critical key terms used in this paper are community, congregants, culture, denounce, disciples, education, leadership, male-dominant, minister, ministry, outreach, populace, rural, and women's roles. These terms are critical to the efficacy of this paper; therefore, each definition is beneficial.

Belief. Belief is to believe in, have faith in, and entrust with.¹⁵ Belief is the feat of trusting someone or something based on personal views or acquaintances. It is influenced by things like cultural history, education, and personal experiences and influences a person's ideas, worth, behaviors, and associations.

Calling. Calling is a deep-seated belief or conviction about the direction one's life should take, inspired by a higher power.¹⁶ An individual's calling is a deeply personal and spiritual experience that can profoundly impact that individual and those around him or her.

Church. The church is a compounded, interconnected body of Jesus Christ's followers, that unite to form a living organism.¹⁷ In Matt 16:18, Jesus refers to the foundation of his church, which is built upon the rock of faith that all should have in Him as the Son of the Living God. In faith, one knows that no matter what evil forces may come against the church, the church can triumph over them.

¹⁵Jess Connolly. *Take It Too Far: Abundant Life, Boundless Love, Unending Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 49.

¹⁶Angie Ward, *I Am a Leader: When Women Discover the Joy of Their Calling* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 2020), 20.

¹⁷Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley, *Spiritual Formation Is...: How to Grow in Jesus with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 58.

Community. A community is a place or location where groups of individuals interact with one another and share a sense of identity.¹⁸ The community is affected by group practices, generational narratives, and cultural influences that stimulate community cohesiveness.

Complementarian. Complementarianism is a theological and social belief that men and women have distinct but complementary roles in society, marriage, and family life.¹⁹

Congregant. A congregant is an individual part of a congregation and regularly attends and is spiritually connected to a ministry. Within the body of congregants, mutual fellowship is an essential relationship that congregants share in the presence of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

Culture. A culture is a structure of people, places, and practices designed to achieve a purpose, such as enacting, rationalizing, or combating power.²¹ Causadias writes, “Culture is created, shared, and updated by groups ... culture is social.”²²

Disciple. A disciple is a person who trusts Jesus Christ for salvation and surrenders totally to God’s will. This individual is entrusted to exercising spiritual disciplines in the community and maturing in their complete potential for Jesus and their Christian assignment.²³ When an individual accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, one must be willing to suffer all things for Christ, deny self and all others for Christ, and carry the cross and follow Jesus; then one is called a disciple (Luke 14:26–27).

¹⁸ Cornelia Butler Flora, Jan L. Flora, and Stephen P. Gasteyer, *Rural Communities: Legacy + Change* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2016), 14.

¹⁹ Soba Chetty and Manzoor Malik Mohammad. “The Complementarian Position on the Role of Women in the Bible: A Defense,” *Prajñā Vihāra* 24, no. 1 (2023): 97.

²⁰ Jean Beedoe, *Pastoral Care and Counseling in Large/Mega Congregations: Black Caribbeans’ Perception of Care in Cultural Diversity* (Lanham, MD: UPA, 2016), 27.

²¹ José M. Causadias, “What is Culture? Systems of People, Places, and Practices,” *Applied Developmental Science*, 24:4, (2020): 310.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Earley and Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is*, xxii.

Egalitarian. Egalitarianism is a political and social philosophy that advocates for the belief that all individuals should be treated equally, regardless of race, gender, religion, or social status.²⁴

Elder. An elder manages a church through spiritual and organizational oversight and preaches and teaches the Word of God.²⁵ Elders are individuals selected by the church to act as leaders and serve as role models for others. They embody the same characteristics as pastors, including compassion, empathy, and selflessness. They encompass the characteristics of Jesus Christ, known for His humility, kindness, and love for all. Elders embody the essence of servant leadership, as they put the needs of others before their own. 1 Timothy 3:1–7 lists the following qualifications for elders:

[B]e blameless, husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence, not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil, and moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside (NKJV).

Gender Equality. Gender equality means all individuals, regardless of gender, will be provided the necessary tools for an equal chance to succeed in life.²⁶

Knowledge. Knowledge is acceptable testimony, implying evidence credibility and validity regarding the truthfulness of an established claim or issue.²⁷

²⁴ Chetry, *The Complementarian*, 96.

²⁵ J. R. Briggs, and Bob Hyatt, *Eldership and the Mission of God: Equipping Teams for Faithful Church Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 34.

²⁶ Joshua Turner, *What Is Equality?* (New York, NY: Rosen Publishing Group, 2019), 6.

²⁷ Steven Reynolds, *Knowledge as Acceptable Testimony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017),

Leadership. Leadership in the biblical domain is the ability to impact people spiritually to grow in holiness with an intensity to encourage the expansion of the kingdom of God.²⁸ Benzel writes of leadership as the art of causing others to create a result that otherwise would not have happened deliberately.²⁹ Christian leadership is exemplified and detailed in the book of Mark, as Mark writes of Jesus Christ as the epitome of servant leadership.

Mentoring. Mentoring is an established relationship between two people; an older, more experienced individual guides the growth of a younger, inexperienced individual.³⁰ Mentoring encompasses the exchange of knowledge, skills, and experience between two individuals. The older individual is called the mentor, and the younger, inexperienced individual is called the mentee. Information is shared to promote the younger individual's personal growth and further development.

Minister. A minister is an individual who reveals the good news of God's love and mercy and lives before others a life that can serve as a sign of that good news.³¹ Paul proclaims that God gave him the grace to be a minister of Christ to the gentiles (Rom 15:1). One of the Latin meanings for a minister is a servant. Paul was a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, of whom he patterned his life to serving as Christ Jesus.

Ministry. Ministry is the work or divine calling to live the life of Jesus Christ. It is what one does and how one serves God. Ministry is serving others.³² Jesus exemplified the servant's role in washing His disciple's feet (John 13:1–17).

²⁸ Matt Thomas, "The Indispensable Mark of Christian Leadership: Implications from Christ's Methods of Leadership Development in Mark's Gospel," *Perichoresis* 16, no. 3 (July 2018): 108.

²⁹ E. Benzel, "Leadership," *World Neurosurgery* 152, (2021): xvii.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wneu.2021.06.001>.

³⁰ Dean K., Thompson, and Murchison, D. Cameron, eds., *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 7.

³¹ Sondra Wheeler, *The Minister As Moral Theologian: Ethical Dimensions of Pastoral Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 89.

³² Dave Earley and Ben Gutierrez, *Ministry Is ...* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 11.

Patriarchy. Patriarchy is a system of social forms and practices utilized by men to dominate, oppress, and exploit women.³³

Pastor. A pastor is an individual sent by God to fill a pulpit to teach, preach, and serve as Christ served.³⁴ Pastors are appointed to lead, teach, and serve a congregation in a servant leadership position, just as Jesus Christ served during His time on earth. Pastors are entrusted with the congregation's spiritual well-being, guiding them in their spiritual journey. They are role models of humility, love, and compassion.

Poverty. Indicators of poverty include inadequate accessibility to income and various opportunities in society.³⁵ Poverty is a tool used to measure inequalities in acquiring income and other choices that society provides.

Limitations

Limitations are actions or circumstances out of the researcher's control; therefore, constraints will be encountered during the actual research or any phase of the research project. Preventative measures are attempted and placed to eliminate limitations from occurring during the research process. Certain limitations of this research project include time, group, topic, and the pastor.

Time is a limitation for this research project because this women's group only meets once a month for one hour; therefore, the timing would be short for gathering research information. In addition, any survey information would have to be approved and reviewed by the pastor, which is also a limitation as it can complicate and restrict the timing of other church activities and

³³ E. Kocabicak, *The Political Economy of Patriarchy in the Global South* (London: Routledge, 2022), 47, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003054511>.

³⁴ William H. Willimon, *Pastor: Revised Edition: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2016), 30.

³⁵ Bent Greve, *Poverty The Basics* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 28.

meetings. The group is a limitation because of the small number of attendees, with only a few elders in attendance. Most of the group is verbal, but for the efficacy of the discussions, all participants should voice their views on the subject.

The pastor is a probable limitation that could expurgate the research project. However, the pastor has permitted the research project to proceed. Furthermore, the pastor has adamantly directed the researcher to respect the church's belief that all humankind is equal and will be respected and heard, regardless of their differing opinions. The pastor has further informed that the research project will not disrupt the normalcy of the church's schedule nor interfere with research participants' obligations to other church ministries. The timing limitations, group size, and topic sensitivity could affect the church's beliefs and standards. Suppose the pastor perceives and has definitive knowledge of disharmony, discourse, and dissension because of this research. In that case, the pastor has the authority and the potential to inform the researcher that the church will no longer participate in the study and end the project. This research project is not the researcher's intent to invoke negativity but to stimulate alternative thinking regarding the research topic.

Delimitations

The research project will only be subjective to this ministry. However, findings from this study will provide information that will build a more correct and credible knowledge base for the encouragement and placement of women in ministerial and leadership positions. This researcher and the participants will be respected and asked to provide opinions without opposition. If the researcher is met with opposition regarding responses during the topic discussion, the researcher will be thoughtful and attentive to the objection of the participant and permitted to respond. In addition, the researcher will offer other options for topic discussion to allay any fears of retaliation due to individual and group responses.

Additionally, the diversity of culture is a delimitation. The ages of the participants are divided equally into cultural beliefs and opinions regarding biblical knowledge about women in ministry. Each participant's views and beliefs regarding generational directives, traits, beliefs, behaviors, and actions that an individual has incorporated into their lives will be considered and respected without retaliation, disdain, or disrespect. The researcher will consistently, at intervals, inform all participants to be respectful of everyone's opinions and beliefs, understand and know that all are created equal, yet different, but with one focus, Jesus Christ, and to continue to look to Christ for emotional and spiritual direction and support.

All the women are members of the same church; some are active in other ministries, though not in leadership. As a result, the women of the Sisterhood are the only participants, and no other female congregant or outside female participation is permitted in this research.

Thesis Statement

It is crucial to acknowledge that women face numerous challenges in pursuing leadership and ministry roles, especially when ill-informed or exposed to incorrect information. A lack of adequate, culturally and gender-biased information could exacerbate these challenges, leading to discord and disharmony in their efforts to ascend to leadership positions. It is necessary to provide women with accurate information and resources that enable them to make informed decisions and overcome any obstacles they may encounter on their journey toward leadership and ministry.

Historically, women endure the silent phenomenon in many churches, and biased standards are relegated to men only in leadership positions. Leah's review of Lewis's comments

cautions women that they must agree with one another. This allegiance builds up the community of women in ministry.³⁶

Biblical examples of women in ministry set the course for understanding and gaining clarity on women in ministry and leadership positions in the church. Women who educate the unlearned and teach the unknown cause a cataclysmic wave of empowerment for all who listen willfully and expectantly.

A plan to teach God's truth to the spiritually unlearned, uneducated, and unwilling individuals who focus on the negative aspects of women in ministry will cause a shift in the individual's negative thinking and the unlearned mindset towards women in ministry. This mindset will stir the emotional and mental depth to consider women in ministry and provide another possibility.

Women are allocated to menial positions within the church due to incorrect exegesis of Scripture and misguided directives from historical displays of servitude, which encapsulated the mindset of men that altered the women's positions in ministry and leadership.

The teaching of Scripture, understanding the biblical context, setting an environment of ease that permits women to confess their calling openly, involving women in significant biblical discussions, training environments that promote fellowship with other women in ministry who are active in their positions, changing cultural values and standards as it relates to women in ministry, and providing an educational curriculum regarding women in ministry that will decrease bias, increase the number of women in ministry and church leadership positions, and silence the male-dominated curriculums. If the women's ministry plan is implemented for

³⁶ Leah D. Schade, "She: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry," *Homiletic* (Online) 43, no. 1 (2018): 22–23, EBSCOhost.

women in the 25–70 age group, then women will be equipped for the scriptural roles of women in ministry.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The discussion and debate regarding women in ministry have been ongoing for centuries. This review of scholarly resources focuses on varied environments, mindsets, and standards that either oppose or favor women in church leadership and ministry roles. This part of the research review deals with the diversity of issues surrounding women who strive to walk in their calling and embrace the spiritual journey God purposed for them. This research will provide knowledge and education for encouragement and the necessary resources for women to embrace their calling from God. This review will also lead women to understand their positions regarding ministry and leadership.

Literature Review

Women in ministry have often endured inequality within every race and nationality. A male-dominated culture of negative and derogatory standards has imputed a sense of damaging and fragile mindsets. The circumstances surrounding the historical aspect of women's submissiveness and overt denial from the inclusion of ministry and leadership positions warrant a review due to the increase in the populace of women in ministry.¹ This review covers multiple dimensions of issues that women encounter as they embark on the journey of ministry and leadership.

¹ Elizabeth A. Johnson, "'Your One Wild and Precious Life': Women on the Road of Ministry," *Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (March 2019): 204.

Creative Status

Oyewole points out that men and women are created equally regarding personality, social status, and spiritual position.² In Gen 1:31, God’s creation was perfect and without error. Smythe adds that through Jesus Christ via the Trinity, man and woman are equally related, equally represented, and equally drawn into Christ. As man and woman co-exist equally, both are represented and drawn equally into the life of Jesus.³

Saxton writes, “Women, our identity is formed by our Creator, our heavenly Father. We are made in his image, his likeness— it’s with him that we find the basis of our identity. He defines us and gives both men and women a purpose on earth. Women are not an afterthought in God’s mind; we are a central part of his creative plan for the world.”⁴ Women are part of the initial thought and the resultant component of that thought in equal standing and position in the eyes and heart of the Creator. Saxton adds a conclusive statement from Walter Kaiser that God’s purpose for creating woman is in the source of her strength and power, which is to be equal with man. Saxton also includes Freeman’s conclusive statement that when God made a woman, she possessed power and strength like the man.⁵

In the environment of male ministers and pastors, some thoughts and beliefs of women and their creative status are purely in the genre of submissive and subordinate roles. Weaver discusses W. H. Felix, who writes that women should respect their place, the home, which is her realm, and their purpose to birth and nurture babies, in which no other work is more significant.⁶

² Oyewole, *Paul’s Perspective*, 3.

³ Shannon Smythe, *Women in Ministry: Questions and Answers in the Exploration of a Calling* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 14.

⁴ Jo Saxton, *More Than Enchanting: Breaking Through Barriers to Influence Your World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶ Douglas Weaver, “Baptists, the Holy Spirit, and the Threat of Women Preachers,” *Baptist History & Heritage* 56, no. 3 (Fall 2021): 38, EBSCOhost.

Weaver offers a critical assessment from Felix and Hawthorne, who agree that the main characteristic of all women is submission, which is the result of Eve's transgression.⁷ Therefore, women are rejected from having spiritual authority over the man. Felix asserted that this hierarchical order symbolizes Trinity's ranking, "The order runs thus: Christ is subordinate to God, man subordinate to Christ, and woman subordinate to man."⁸

Mathews writes that the woman's apparent position is by the heart of the home, as "the angel of the home" exalted in glory. In this place, she is to enhance God's belief in the process of bearing, inspiring, teaching, and raising those to whom she is responsible and dedicated.⁹

As Michelle McClain-Walters reiterates, God's creation of men and women with distinct roles and equal value, cherishing both genders, as Gen 1:27 writes of the equality in creation, "God created man and woman in His image" (NKJV).¹⁰ However, regarding biblical roles, some have an ingrained idea that women are inferior to men.¹¹

According to the esteemed Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the pressing issue at hand is not solely centered around a dearth of equal representation in leadership roles. Rather, it is a matter of failing to recognize and honor each other's inherent humanity, specifically regarding women. With this in mind, the question, "Who do you say I am?" carries immense weight, and it is crucial that every individual within the Christian community grapples with it urgently.¹²

Women were privy to negative comments from ministers, pastors, and the sect of individuals who wrote the daily news. The media is also in union with the male-dominated

⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mathews, *Gender*, 205.

¹⁰ Michelle McClain-Walters, *Legendary Woman: Partnering With God to Become the Heroine of Your Own Story* (Chicago, IL: Charisma House, 2021), 105.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Evans, *Faith*, 147.

culture, educating the point that gender difference is God-ordained.¹³ Lee presents the thought that all are related to Christ, which reinstates the fundamental attributes of both males and females as created in God's image.¹⁴ "So God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27 New King James Version). Dixon offers similar comments that women and men share in this image of God and the directive to oversee the world as a unit that rightly shares in stewardship. In realization of this element, the perception of a complete and equal partnership provides entry into the ministry of mix-gender partnership, as it is representative of the initial plan God had to fulfill the mission.¹⁵ God blesses both the male and the female (Gen 1:28). As a result, women and men share equality in essence and roles.¹⁶

Women utilizing the gift of ministry are exposed and are testimonies to the "breadth and depth" of all possibilities given by the grace of God.¹⁷ When women stand before the people of God to provide the Word of God, there is an alteration in the atmosphere. Leach states a point of agreement: when women in ministry speak in any capacity and wear leadership boldly, there is an environmental shift, walls of ignorance come tumbling down, and spiritual shifting in the atmosphere takes precedence.¹⁸ The atmospheric change permeates to other women that draw on the confidence of their predecessors as an urge factor to utilize their gift of ministry. Women

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Dorothy Lee, *The Ministry of Women in the New Testament: Reclaiming the Biblical Vision for Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2021), 102.

¹⁵ Rob Dixon, *Together in Ministry: Women and Men in Flourishing Partnerships* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 14.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Schade, *She*, 18.

¹⁸ Tara Beth Leach, *Emboldened: A Vision for Empowering Women in Ministry* (Toronto, Canada: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 155.

with children, husbands, and careers have the strength and power that stir communities to the point of change as they cry out their gifts to the body of Christ.¹⁹

Egalitarian vs. Complementarian Postions

Chetry and Malik write within the context of biblical teachings. Two contrasting positions regarding women are based on different perceptions of Scripture: egalitarianism and complementarianism. The Egalitarian position argues that women and men are equal in all aspects of life, including leadership roles within the church and family. They believe that the Bible sustains gender equality and that women should be free to utilize their spiritual gifts and talents without any restrictions based on gender.²⁰

Chetry and Malik further discuss the complementarian position, which assumes that men and women are equal in merit and worthiness but have dissimilar roles and responsibilities in life. They believe God designs men and women to complement each other, with men called to lead and women called to assist and foster. They believe that the Bible teaches diverse gender roles that should be sustained in the home and the church.²¹

Although Chetry and Malik discuss both positions and make individual arguments based on biblical verses and interpretations, their debate continues to be a topic of discussion in the Christian environment. These two contrasting groups, egalitarians, and complementarians, view the status of women and are based on biblical verses. The egalitarian position is based on the idea that women and men are equal in all senses. The complementarian position infers that men and women complement one another.²²

¹⁹ Leach, *Embolden*, 155.

²⁰ Chetry, *The Complementarian*, 93.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Chetry, *The Complementarian*, 93.

Egalitarianism aims for complete equality, suggesting everyone has equal rights and opportunities to attain their entire potential and lead a rewarding life. It mounts against all manifestations of discrimination and inequality, advancing a sense of integrity and justice for all members of society. Egalitarianism also aims to eliminate any established barriers that impede individuals from attaining their dreams and inspires the evolution of an all-encompassing and encouraging community.

Egalitarians believe in gender equality and often reference Bible verses opposing the complementarian view, mainly Gal 3:28, which writes, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NKJV). Egalitarians expound on this verse to mean all are equal in the sight of God. Therefore, men and women can occupy leadership positions in the church.

Egalitarians accentuate this verse because it disputes the traditional exposition of gender roles in the church and society. Egalitarians argue that, in Christ, there is no hierarchy regarding gender or any other social assembly. Instead, all individuals are equal and have the same opportunities to serve God in each capacity, whether in the church or the community. This exposition of the Bible has important inferences for gender equality in the church and beyond, as it opposes the idea that men should have complete jurisdiction and control over women.

The theory of an egalitarian position in the text of church ministry entails the affirmation that women should not be excluded from any paths to ministry or roles in ministry on the fundament of gender.²³ This means that women should not be subject to male subordination or any other form of discrimination in the church. Preferably, they should have equal opportunities to participate in all facets of ministry, including leadership roles and decision-making processes. The emphasis is on creating a level playing field where women can exercise their gifts and

²³ Mahon, *Sisters*, 277.

talents without any unnecessary restrictions or limitations based purely on their gender. This approach promotes fairness, equality, and diversity within the church community, and enables women to contribute fully to the life and mission of the church.

Complementarianism is a belief that emphasizes the equal dignity and worth of men and women, while addressing distinctness in their purposes and responsibilities.²⁴ As claimed to this view, men are to be leaders and providers, and women are to be helpers and nurturers. These positions are not constructed on personal proclivity or societal custom, but on the intrinsic variance between men and women, established by God. Saucy and TenElshof write from a complementarian viewpoint of the underlying element embedded in the biblical dogma of the complementary dynamics between males and females. The interdependent nature is inherent in their intrinsic differences and the necessity of coexistence for completeness in their creative design.²⁵

Complementarianism supports the idea that all men and women have physical, emotional, and psychological characteristics that make them well-suited for distinct tasks. For instance, men's propensity towards competition, aggressiveness, and logic makes them the best possible candidates for leadership and decision-making. In contrast, women's sympathetic, compassionate, comforting, and mutual strengths make them perfect for maternal and encouraging roles.

At the nucleus of complementarianism is the credence that men and women are companions who complement each other and subscribe to the advancement of society. By acknowledging and embracing their distinct roles, men and women can coordinate to create a

²⁴ Chetry, *The Complementarian*, 97.

²⁵ Robert Saucy and Judy TenElshof, ed., *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 22.

uniformed and amicable community where all men's and women's gifts and talents are appreciated and employed.

Complementarianism proposes that men and women were created equal in dignity and merit but with different tasks and responsibilities. In this view, men are called lead and provide, while women are called to assist and care. It maintains that these roles are not based on an individual's personality or cultural ethnicity but on the innate variances that differentiate men and women, which God established at the beginning of time.

The origins of this concept stem from the biblical account of the creation of women. God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and took one of his ribs while he slumbered. From that rib, God created a woman, whom he then presented to the man. This man stated the woman was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and called her woman because she was taken from him. The Scripture further writes this is why "a man should leave his parents and cleave unto his wife as they are of one flesh" (Gen 2:21–24 NKJV). The book of Titus illustrates this love between a man as the older women are encouraged to teach younger women to love their husbands and children, among other virtues (Titus 2:3–4 NKJV). By promoting a caring and loving relationship, all can demonstrate God's love for His people and for the church.²⁶

As a result, the opposing view to egalitarianism is known as complementarianism.²⁷ It is a theological position that asserts the inherent differences between men and women and their respective roles in society and the church. Complementarians believe that men have been granted the role of headship and authority while women have been given the role of submission and support. This is based on the belief that men and women were created with different strengths and weaknesses and that these differences are designed to complement each other. While

²⁶ Chetry, *The Complementarian*, 98.

²⁷ Mahon, *Sisters*, 277.

complementarians believe in equal value and worth between men and women, they see this complementarity as necessary for a healthy society and church.

Spiritual Gifts

Women have used the gift of ministry, preaching, and teaching for centuries. When women realize their gift is embedded in God, wisdom and knowledge are showcased to all that enter their presence. Women speaking in the authority of Jesus Christ permit the spiritual aroma to satiate the atmosphere and move the soul to the point of satisfaction, which comes from Christ. They are reminded that the work in the kingdom is an anointed appointment from God. The kingdom work will reflect on practical knowledge from the past and ensuing leadership educational opportunities, teaching and preaching platforms, other spiritual offerings, and abilities.²⁸

Women utilize their gifts in more than the church's ministry but in professional capacities. The gift of ministry is not just within the confines of the church. Jesus instructed the disciples to go out, teaching and preaching everywhere and to the entire nation (Mark 16:15). God is calling women for service, not only in the commission of the church but to other esteemed positions of leadership and other specific roles that entail an advanced level of responsibility.²⁹ The gifts of females in the ministry are broad, encompassing teaching, preaching, evangelizing, shepherding, and leading. Paul writes that God creates men and women in Christ to do profitable work, which was planned for them to perform (Eph 2:10).

Women often encounter rebuke of spiritual gifts in their ministerial duties. Weaver discusses Felix and Porter's views, which rebuke women's spiritual gifts; women not called by

²⁸ Nicole Massie Martin, *Made to Lead: Empowering Women for Ministry* (Ashland, MA: Christian Board of Publication, 2016), 16.

²⁹ Smythe, *Women in*, 2.

God were unwed, had unsuccessful marriages, and lacked reverence and respect for God.³⁰ It is a perilous fight, but in determination and sheer will of grace, women can be empowered by the Holy Spirit through knowledge and wisdom to continue.

Ross informs that God will provide a way for women to move forward in their ministerial calling, and there is nothing that can be done to stop God's plan, and anyone who attempts to halt this process is also "persecuting Jesus."³¹ Johnson writes that one should contemplate the church's hallowed text and symbols, representing God's image, beliefs, constitution, practices, and administrative divisions, which are male-generated and controlled, which women must comply with and respect.³² Johnson further confirms, as a result of the church's structure, by no mishap, that males often depict women in disparaging expressions.³³ As a result, women are often mistreated and endure attitudes from the male-dominated culture, which propels notions of insignificance within the community of ministry. Campbell discusses how many churches still treat women as trinkets instead of educated women studying spiritual and professional skills and how the church disassociates women from other supportive individual advisors.³⁴ An evident and undeniable hurdle women encounter is the immensity directed at their image rather than how they incorporate the entirety of their purpose in the ministry. Campbell notes that even the most promising and productive women in ministry are sometimes released from ministry positions merely because they are women.³⁵

³⁰ Weaver, *Baptist*, 38.

³¹ Kenneth R. Ross, ed. *Faith at the Frontiers of Knowledge* (Mzuzu, Malawi: Luviri Press, 2018), 238.

³² Johnson, *Your*, 205.

³³ Johnson, *Your*, 205.

³⁴ Eileen R. Campbell-Reed. "No Joke! Resisting the 'Culture of Disbelief' That Keeps Clergy Women Pushing Uphill," *Cross Currents* 69, 1 (March 2019): 35–36.

³⁵ Campbell-Reed., *No Joke*, 36.

Leach adds that this mindset of insignificance only sometimes presents opportunities to utilize their spiritual gifts as women in ministry.³⁶ As women encounter biases, these virtual gifts are often pushed to the side or hurdled in closets. Disconnections in the body of Christ become evident in areas of ministry and leadership. Leach adds that men elevate to leadership positions, unlike women, who sometimes become clothed in the silent role.³⁷

Opposing Viewpoints

Many scholars and theologians disagree with women in ministry and leadership positions in the church. This viewpoint stems from Paul's writings in 1 Tim 2:11–15, and 1 Cor 14:34–35 in which women are to learn in silence and are forbidden to teach and have authority over men in the church.³⁸

In 1 Tim 2:11–15, Paul's perspective originates in the biblical chapters of Genesis 2 and 3. The principle behind this directive is rooted in the narrative of creation presented in Genesis 2, which establishes Adam's preeminence over Eve in the order of creation. The second rationale draws from Genesis 3, which speaks of Satan's deceitful influence on Eve leading to the Fall.³⁹

In 1 Cor 14:34–35, Paul's view regarding women remaining silent still permits some scholars to present justifications for restricting women's involvement in church activities, including leadership, preaching, and decision-making.⁴⁰ Despite women's significant contributions to the development and advancement of many religious customs, these oppressive beliefs persist in specific communities.

³⁶ Leach, *Embolden*, 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Abiola I. Mbamalu, 'The Woman Was Deceived and Became a Sinner' - A Literary-Theological Investigation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 70, 3 (2014): 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Osbert Uyovwiyovwe. Isiorhovoja, "Pauline Theology on Gender Issues: a Continuity or Disruption in Africa," *Ubuntu* 8 (2019): 174.

Challenges Women Face

Objections to women in ministry and leadership positions have brought a sense of pause that has incapacitated women for years and led to the dismantling of women who were determined, at one time, to continue in their spiritual calling. The common denominator is a significant increase of women in ministry, which brings an environmental stressor of provocation regarding exclusivity in leadership to authoritative male positions.⁴¹ This increase promotes harsh opposition to women, preventing them from embracing the call to leadership. It promotes the subordinate woman role that often occurs within the male-dominant ministry environment.⁴²

It is intriguing to note that some women tend to hold back from speaking the Word of God in the presence of men, despite their natural inclination to vocalize so powerfully when in a women-only setting.⁴³ This phenomenon may be attributed to the preestablished credence that women should not hold positions of leadership or ministry, causing some to feel restricted in utilizing their gifts.

When women in ministry continue in environments that perpetuate negative language regarding women in ministry, there is a tendency to overlook the obvious and accept the principles taught. Kimberly Johnson writes that women involved in churches that do not support women in ministry or leadership and are traditionally sound with their views against women tend to become content with the church's beliefs, operations, and heritage.⁴⁴ C. Lyons explains that

⁴¹ Kimberly Nelms Smarr, Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, and Amy Cooper Hakim, "Gender and Race in Ministry Leadership: Experiences of Black Clergywomen," *Religions* 9, 12 (2018): 2.

⁴² Smarr, *Gender*, 2.

⁴³ Nancy Lammers Gross and Lillian Daniel, *Women's Voices and the Practice of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017), 12.

⁴⁴ Kimberly P. Johnson, *The Womanist Preacher: Proclaiming Womanist Rhetoric from the Pulpit* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 45.

gender discrimination explains the consistency of negativity surrounding the censure of women in ministry.⁴⁵

Smythe argues that both men and women are equal in the eyesight of God and should be in unity to aid the success of the body of believers of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ Therefore, there is no point in categorizing gender, nor is there a place for “hierarchical distinctions.”⁴⁷ Smythe expounds on equality and the relational status of males and females to the Trinity. As a result, men and women are represented equally in the life of Christ.⁴⁸

Another issue regarding women in ministry is other women, whether lay or professional, who attempt to degrade the process of the female who has professed a call from God in the ministry realm. Lewis discusses a somewhat regretful truth, opposition, and hostility directed towards women in ministry from other women, which is a discouraging and disappointing factor solidified in an atmosphere of covetousness and aggression.⁴⁹

Challenges Women Face in The Black Church

Women in ministry are often scorned critically for their physicality and are analyzed based on appearance. Campbell reveals the alarming injustice of sexism in the church and the barrage of abuse and harassing inflictions that women encounter and are permitted in the church.⁵⁰ As the Black church continued in progress as the central component of the Black

⁴⁵ Courtney Lyons, “Breaking through the Extra-Thick Stained-Glass Ceiling: African American Baptist Women in Ministry,” *Review & Expositor* 110, 1 (Winter 2013): 88.

⁴⁶ Smythe, *Women*, 14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Smythe, *Women*, 14.

⁴⁹ Lewis, *She*, 13.

⁵⁰ Campbell-Reed, *No Joke*, 31.

community, many Black women suffered immensely from the inflictions of sexism.⁵¹ Sexism is a continuum for Black women. All are one in Christ, neither as male nor female, but as new individuals in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:27–28 NKJV). A considerable issue that continues to erode the Black church’s fulfillment of God’s Word, as decreed in Gal 3:27–28 is the continuance in their establishment of “sexism and gender inequality” within the many historical religious groups’ customs.⁵² Schade discusses Lewis’ belief that when women in ministry openly discuss issues regarding their physicality, they are better prepared when encountering sexism and gender inequality.⁵³

Black women congregants are consuming themselves in a profoundly complete state of the church’s movements and are proving essential to the corporality of the Black church’s beliefs.⁵⁴ Johnson discusses James A. Cohn’s observation of Black male ministers and their advocacy of women’s inequality in ministry and the community. Cohn notes that the difficulty emanates slightly from a deficit of understanding the standards of freedom entrenched in the gospel and the current subjugation of blacks.⁵⁵ Cohn also states the shock of knowing that Black male ministers can hear freedom in the gospel preached regarding racism but are unaffected by the message in the circumstances of sexism.⁵⁶ Sexism in the Black church has not entirely halted the advancement of women in ministry and leadership positions. Women’s involvement in the

⁵¹ Juan Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating Black Church History: Making It Plain* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 63.

⁵² Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating*, 91.

⁵³ Schade, *She*, 2.

⁵⁴ Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating*, 63.

⁵⁵ Johnson, *The Womanist*, 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Black church has been limitless in making this entity one of African American culture's most influential and authoritative corporations.⁵⁷

Scars of Women of Ministry

Women who aim to pursue their calling in ministry and leadership often encounter a plethora of obstacles, ranging from mental and emotional to physical challenges. Unfortunately, these difficulties can have detrimental effects on the individual, the church, and the community. The negative impact can be costly and harmful, resulting in a loss of motivation for all involved and causing unsatisfactory impediments in building God's kingdom. In the book *Women Rise Up!: A Fierce Generation Taking Its Place in the World*, Cindy Jacobs shares an encounter she experienced with a male pastor who did not believe women should serve in ministry.⁵⁸ This experience caused emotional and physical issues that impacted her life for many years.⁵⁹

In Amanda Benckhuysen's *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation*, she writes of how women filled with the Spirit of the Lord and gifted in ministry struggled when they encountered male antagonism in the church and were denied pulpit access.⁶⁰ This endeavor ensued in a potentially hurtful disposition for the women to choose between cultural respectability or obedience to God in acknowledging their gift of ministry.⁶¹

Women face a barrage of challenges ranging from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse that stagnates the desire and effort to engage in ministry. This hindrance proposes negativity within the religious realm and negates respect and prosperity for the body of Christ. Gabrielle

⁵⁷ Floyd-Thomas, *Liberating*, 63.

⁵⁸ Cindy Jacobs, *Women, Rise Up!: A Fierce Generation Taking Its Place in the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2019), 37.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 152.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Thomas' research revealed that women attested that male leaders' negative utilization of power was the most frequent emotional wound encountered in ministry.⁶²

In Karoline Lewis' *Preaching the Word: Contemporary Approaches to the Bible for the Pulpit* she discusses how the patriarchal ecclesiastical institutions continue to oppress women and mislead the faithful.⁶³ Some women still encounter various offenses that potentially leave emotional and physical scars that impact their entire lives.

Magda notes that hierarchical structures within the church prevent women from accessing leadership and ministry positions.⁶⁴ It is critical that hierarchical structures and traditional beliefs within the church create barriers for women seeking leadership and ministry opportunities. Despite women's increasing involvement in church activities and their spiritual and intellectual capabilities, they are often excluded from decision-making and leadership positions, limiting their ability to influence the church's policies and practices. This exclusion can lead to a lack of diversity in perspectives and experiences within the church, which can ultimately hinder the church's ability to address the needs and concerns of all its members.

Embolden Women

Encouragement is necessary for all to excel in themselves and others. Mathews references Paul's letter to the Romans as he directs them in utilizing every ministry gift to rebuild the kingdom of God (Rom 12:6–8 NKJV). Paul connects every area of ministry to "giftedness" that only comes through the grace of God, the gift of teaching, prophesying,

⁶² Gabrielle Thomas, "The Gift of Power in Methodism: Learning from Women's Experiences of Working in Diverse Churches in England through Receptive Ecumenism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 57, 4 (Fall, 2022): 472.

⁶³ Karoline M. Lewis, *Preaching the Word: Contemporary Approaches to the Bible for the Pulpit* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2023), 38.

⁶⁴ Ksenija Magda, *Blessing the Curse: A Biblical Approach for Restoring Relationships in the Church* (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2020), 48.

serving, and encouraging.⁶⁵ The Lord gives the word, and in excellence, the women proclaim the good news to everyone (Ps 68:11 NKJV). In this passage of Scripture, direct orders are given to the woman to spread the good news, the Word of God, to the people of God in the cities of Zion, Jerusalem, and Judah.⁶⁶ When women preach and teach the good news of God, encouragement is given to all in the presence of this blessing. Lewis writes that women in ministry can employ the body of Christ, the church, to expand its comprehension and exposition of witnesses to provide and teach the completeness of God's purpose for all humankind.⁶⁷

Leach informs that women must be prepared to assist other women in the body of Christ in guiding, emboldening, developing, supporting, praying with and for, and walking the ministerial journey in faith and trust.⁶⁸ Martin informs that when an individual welcomes the invitation to trust in God and then offers encouragement to others, know that God is steadfast and honors in ways one could never envision.⁶⁹ Women who trust God are hopeful, and with continuance in trusting God and having hope, God is a superior force that works through and in all that trust in God.⁷⁰

Johnson discusses female biblical characters that encouraged women to seek counsel from God about their value and not depend on others to design their perception of protection, pride, and dignity.⁷¹ When women are in deep connections with the Holy Spirit, it is then others

⁶⁵ Mathews, *Gender*, 148.

⁶⁶ Priscilla Pope-Levison, "Five Women in Ministry Articles Transcribed from Tongues of Fire," *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 11, 1 (2019): 89.

⁶⁷ Lewis, *She*, 17.

⁶⁸ Leach, *Embolden*, 91.

⁶⁹ Martin, *Made*, 36.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Johnson, *The Womanist*, 29.

are drawn to Christ as one leads.⁷² Christ communicated a compelling and strong message to His disciples that serving the needs of others is equivalent to serving Him. This paradigm is for the body of Christ, which sets the podium to inspire the disheartened, provide comfort to the suffering, and set the oppressed free.⁷³

Individuals who encourage women incorporate profound benefits to the body of Christ. It is imperative that not only women, but men as well seek opportunities and initiatives that will provide encouragement, growth and spiritual essence in nurturing women in ministry and leadership. Surratt and Catron write the crucial impact and profound difference executive leaders and staff can have when encouraging young women to step into all that God has called them to be as leaders.⁷⁴ Susan Rose confirms as women engage with each other and develop relationships, the essence of spiritual welfare and longevity develops, which aids in strength and tenacity.⁷⁵

Theological Foundations

In a review of the Old and New Testaments, the scriptural perspective illustrates women and men as equals and both genders in positions of leadership and ministry. In the Old Testament, God displays His will for the equality of all humankind in His creation of Adam and Eve; both were created in His image (Gen 1:26–27). Also, in the Old Testament, equal status was given to Moses and Miriam, as both exemplify leadership during the Israelites’ deliverance from Egypt (Exod 14–15). The New Testament provides exemplification to both genders in leadership

⁷² Gospel Publishing House, *A Quick Guide for Ministry to Women* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 83.

⁷³ Bev Hislop, et al., *Shepherding Women in Pain: Real Women, Real Issues, and What You Need to Know to Truly Help* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2020), 230.

⁷⁴ Sherry Surratt and Jenni Catron, *Just Lead!: A No Whining, No Complaining, No Nonsense Practical Guide for Women Leaders in the Church* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013), 179.

⁷⁵ Susan Rose, “The Pain and Joy of Being Women in Ministry,” *Presbyterian Outlook* 204, 11 (Aug 01, 2022): 37.

and ministry roles. Jesus utilized both genders during His presence on earth and with other disciples and followers of Christ. The New Testament enlightens and provides multiple examples of Jesus' exemplifying equality of both genders to illustrate the status of equality for all. Also, the New Testament gives various scriptures regarding Christ's teaching that all humankind is equal in the sight of God, and no standard supersedes this equality domain for women and men.

Foundational elements of biblical equality incorporate servanthood and leadership. Jesus exemplified these essential qualities throughout His earthly ministry as an example for all to follow, men and women. Men and women, throughout the biblical narrative, had exemplified ministry and leadership directives as a basis for the spiritual essence that drives growth, understanding, and an inner uniqueness of power that embodies the core fitness for ministry. Ministry embodies the spirit of service. Song writes that servant-leaders bear the sign of healers essential in making whole by helping others to a more excellent vision and purpose.⁷⁶ An authentic seal of a servant-leader is the healing of others through mature relationships with self, others, and God.⁷⁷ Women throughout the biblical narrative demonstrated servant leadership abilities in various domains. Du Plessis writes of servant leadership, "A person who has a heart for people and serves them whilst leading them practices servant leadership. Servant leaders are not motivated by attaining higher positions but by serving people. Leaders call people to follow a set vision. In the church, that vision ought to be a God vision, premised on the Word of God. Leaders in the church should lead people according to the guidance of the Bible and inspiration from God."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Jiying Song, and Shann Ray Ferch. "Servant-Leadership," *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership* 14, 1 (2020): 9.

⁷⁷ Song, *Servant*, 9.

⁷⁸ Amanda, du Plessis and Nkambule, Carol, "Servant Leadership as Part of Spiritual Formation of Theological Students in Contextualisation of 21st Century Theological Training," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 76 2 (11 August 2020), 1.

Genesis 1:26–27, which describes God’s creative status of equality for humankind, details the quintessence of biblical equality. Gal 5:1–2 explains how God named His creation humankind, and humankind was created in the likeness of God, male and female. God blessed humankind when He created them. The New Testament Scripture that details equality is John 3:16, which provides a connective element when one believes in Jesus Christ, which symbolizes and seals an eternal relationship for all humankind, male and female. Acts 2:17 informs all that God will not discriminate in appropriating His gifts of prophecy to humanity, male and female, equally prevalent and apportioned. Finally, Gal 3:28 states that no differing factors regarding an individual’s race or creed, whether enslaved or free or male or female, are all one in Christ and equal in Christ.

Old and New Testament Scripture provide various women who displayed servanthood and leadership abilities. Deborah, a prophetess and judge, assisted Barak in a war against Sisera’s army (Judg 4). Ruth, a Moabite woman, continued service to her mother-in-law, Naomi, which led to a marriage linked to the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Ruth 4). In Josh 2, the Israelites are encamped and ready to begin their assault on Canaan. Joshua sends two spies to scout the city of Jericho. The two spies went out into the region and lodged in the house of Rahab, a prostitute. The Canaanites discovered the two spies. To save the spies, Rahab served the two spies as she hid them on her rooftop and convinced the king’s men that the spies had left the city (Josh 2). In the New Testament, Acts 16 writes of Lydia, a successful businesswoman who shared her financial wealth with Paul and his disciples as she permitted them to stay in her home and served them.

An individual, whether male or female, is a servant first. When one desires and heart to serve, leadership is entrusted as a function or a role. The desire to serve encourages a servant

leader to lead.⁷⁹ Theologically, scriptures are ingrained with women as servant leaders and have prevailed in various societal environments. Biblical paradigms serve as directives for women to assume their ministry and leadership roles in the church, which will aid in growth, wisdom, and knowledge and provide a foundational element for women as they journey to their rightful purpose and spiritual calling. Acts 2 is utilized as a paradigmatic text that is solid in affirming the co-existence of men and women to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:17, God spoke, “I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (NKJV).⁸⁰

Although there are still some male-dominated environments that hold onto the belief that women should not have leadership positions in ministry, these perspectives are rooted in their interpretation of Scripture. Many male church leaders emphasize Paul’s teachings regarding women in the church, particularly in 1 Tim 2:12–14. This passage states that women should not have teaching authority over men and should occupy a subordinate role due to being created after men. Unfortunately, this passage has often been used to blame women for the fall of humanity, further perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

Grudem references the New Testament to clarify equality for all in God’s image. He notes Acts 2:17–18 in that both men and women gained new membership through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ Grudem further states that through this baptism, all, male and female, are united as one in Christ and reminds everyone of Paul’s stance that men and women have equal status (Gal 3:28); no individual is inferior to the other.⁸² Grudem emphasizes that through

⁷⁹ du Plessis, *Servant*, 6.

⁸⁰ Margaret English de Alminana and Lois E. Olena, *Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministry: Informing a Dialogue on Gender, Church, and Ministry* (Boston, MA: BRILL, 2016), 36–37.

⁸¹ Wayne Grudem, *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 470.

⁸² *Ibid.*

baptism, the Holy Spirit endows one with spiritual gifts as tools for the consistent and constant expansion of the church, which is the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:7, 11; 1 Pet 4:10).⁸³

Pierce quotes Mary Conway's essay discussing Gen 1:27; Conway writes that the creation of both men and women is equal in humanity, and both are created in God's image and His likeness. Therefore, men and women are equally created in the image and likeness of God.⁸⁴ Conway notes the similarity in Gen 1:27 repetitiveness of equality when God created humanity and mentions the pronoun specifics used in Gen 1:27: ". . . him [third-person masculine singular suffix], male [*zakar*] and female [*neqebah*] he created."⁸⁵ Conway points out that some interpret this passage as a generalization of humankind rather than the specificity of humankind.⁸⁶ It is also noted, after the Fall of Humankind, that the writer notes again that God created man, in His likeness, male and female created He them (Gen 5:1–2).

Another biblical view of gender equality is Paul's declaration of equality as all are one in Christ, neither male nor female (Gal 3:28). Paul's assertion of this union and justification with Christ solidifies the Christian identity, which negates distinction based on one's gender. This assertion gives a profound and firm biblical attestation that all men and women are equal in Christ Jesus.⁸⁷ Paul only affirms that this refutation of distinctions is the most integral aspect of the Christian life, and through baptism, one is justified and personified in Christ.⁸⁸

Another view regarding equality is Gal 3:26–27, which states that when one hears and believes the Word of God, they experience a union with Jesus Christ. At that point, they become

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁸⁴ Ronald W. Pierce, and Cynthia Long Westfall, eds. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Biblical, Theological, Cultural, and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 38.

⁸⁵ Pincher, *Discovering*, 38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Cardinal Albert Vanhoye and Peter S Williamson, *Galatians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 120.

⁸⁸ Vanhoye, *Galatians*, 121.

the sons of the living God and in union with Christ.⁸⁹ The union in Christ emphasizes a newness one has and negates the hovering of old distinctions that encourage an atmosphere of inequality and social and cultural barriers that prevent oneness in Jesus Christ.⁹⁰

Branch writes of Paul's introductions of Phoebe in Rom 16:1–2. Phoebe is a church servant, a deaconess, and a prominent church figure. Phoebe's character defines the gracious service, leadership, and generosity she exuded in the Christian community. Phoebe had a remarkable stature and was received graciously by the believers in Rome.⁹¹

George writes that Christians, through the internal transition and freedom obtained from the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit in heart, are freed from the entangling and diabolical powers of "racism, materialism, and sexism."⁹² Platt and Merida discuss Paul's views of Gal 3:26–27; Paul breaks down the gender barriers that separate individuals, male and female, in that one does not lose the dissimilarities when one accepts Christ and unites with Him. Still, these barriers, Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, no longer segregate, as all are one in Jesus Christ.⁹³ People are united in Christ through a new identity and not the identity placed by society, ethnicity, culture, or socioeconomic status.⁹⁴

Chelsea Griffis writes of Scanzoni and Hardley's discussion during the equal rights movement regarding biblical principles of equality and liberation. The inherent equality of men and women promotes a mindset that encourages women to view themselves as Christ sees them,

⁸⁹ Robert W. Yarbrough et al., *Romans–Galatians*, vol 10, ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 801.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Robin Gallaher Branch, "Female Leadership as Demonstrated by Phoebe: An Interpretation of Paul's Words Introducing Phoebe to the Saints in Rome," *In Die Skriflig* 53, 2 (2019): 1.

⁹² Timothy George, *Galatians: The Christian Standard Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 4.

⁹³ David Platt and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Galatians*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 4c.

⁹⁴ Platt, *Exalting*, 4c.

the creature created in His image, to grow, learn, utilize every gift and talent, be free, and be whole as He made, is liberating for all women.⁹⁵

Bedford writes that neither gender is the sole standard for humans created in God's image; God's image is established in the human community, which circumscribes both genders.⁹⁶ When biblical principles are reviewed and critiqued, interpretative changes occur, and movements evolve for clarity and pedagogical rationale. These Christian evolutions tend to eradicate and resolve gender inequalities and other social and cultural injustices when one realizes the Holy Spirit has no respecter of person and the Spirit invalidates all organized hierarchies of class, education, and gender.⁹⁷ David Fitch discusses the resolution to the congregation's split decision on women serving as pastors.⁹⁸ He writes on the role of women in the church; it is clear that God has called women to lead alongside men.

As one accumulates knowledge regarding equality in Jesus Christ, is united, and believes in Him, one must capture the essence of that knowledge to realize they have access to Christ and should utilize their God-given gifts and talents, regardless of other religious stances. By faith, one is clothed in and immersed in Christ; this union is the newness, in both male and female, and a new identity is solidified through a relationship with Christ.⁹⁹

The Great Commission, Matt 28:18–20, provides all-inclusive access to discipleship and access to the body of Christ and His directives. Matthew writes, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make

⁹⁵ Chelsea Griffis. “‘In the Beginning Was the Word’: Evangelical Christian Women, the Equal Rights Amendment, and Competing Definitions of Womanhood,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 38, 2 (2017): 157.

⁹⁶ Nancy Elizabeth Bedford, *Galatians, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 101.

⁹⁷ Bedford, *Galatians*, 109.

⁹⁸ David E. Fitch, *The Church of Us vs. Them: Freedom from a Faith That Feeds on Making Enemies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2019), 54.

⁹⁹ Grant R. Osborne, *Galatians Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 78.

disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age (Matt 28:18–20 NKJV). Jesus utilizes the words “all” and “them,” which both include males and females, as part of His ministry. This intentional directive is a definitive note for all privileged to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and become witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Rodney Reeves emphasizes how two women spread the good news of Jesus’ resurrection and how they evangelized the disciples, and subsequently, the disciples evangelized others.¹⁰⁰ To evangelize is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, if Jesus utilized the women, not His disciples, to evangelize the good news of His resurrection, women should be privy to evangelizing the gospel in today’s churches. Matthew 28 commands all to go out and make disciples of humankind. Therefore, for the efficacy of following Christ’s directive for making disciples, both men and women have been granted this honor to preach and teach the good news in faith, obedience, and truth, as Christ commands.¹⁰¹

Peppiatt writes of Paul’s context in 1 Cor 11–14, which incorporates equality, equity, and love for humankind and imbues his directives regarding public worship. Paul emphasizes that all women and men should utilize their gifts decently and in order, with love and preference for each other.¹⁰²

Worthington writes of Old Testament women’s scriptural roles as a prophetess (e.g., Judg 4:4; 2 Kgs 22:14; 2 Chron 3:22).¹⁰³ Zamfir reports that women were accepted in the city of

¹⁰⁰ Rodney Reeves, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 556.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 569.

¹⁰² Lucy Peppiatt, *Women and Worship at Corinth: Paul’s Rhetorical Arguments in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 11.

¹⁰³ Ben Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus a Study of Jesus’ Attitudes to Women and Their Roles as Reflected in His Earthly Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 9.

Corinth as prophets and were considered teachers of the Word of God. (1 Cor 11:5).¹⁰⁴ Junia was among the apostles; an apostolic task was preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 16).¹⁰⁵ Phoebe assisted in mission and leadership responsibilities (Rom 16).¹⁰⁶ Paul writes of Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persi; they labored in the Lord through community service through teaching the Word of God (Rom 16:12).¹⁰⁷ Exodus 15:20 writes of Miriam as a prophetess, and Mic 6:4 writes of Miriam's leadership ability during the Israelite's exodus.¹⁰⁸

Theoretical Foundations

As previously detailed, the theoretical foundations supporting this research are viewed as foundational and critically analyzed regarding research topic relevancy. In the review of the biblical nature that is attached to the dominion of this research project, the Scripture is viewed as the inerrant Word of God, breathed by God to the prophets and written in context and content as guidance for how all men and women, should conduct themselves, regardless to race, ethnicity or gender. The theoretical foundation of this project is designed for all spiritual establishments regarding women in ministry and leadership positions, with the church as the focal point of inclusion and design regarding women in ministry and leadership roles within the church. Research information inclusive of dissertations and documents regarding women in ministry and leadership is vital and essential to the sustenance and power embedded within the church and the community. Mathews profoundly states that Jesus never negated women as He spoke openly and

¹⁰⁴ Korinna Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God: A Contextual Approach to Roles and Ministries in the Pastoral Epistles* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 340.

¹⁰⁵ Zamfir, *Men and Women*, 341.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Pekka Pitkänen, *A Commentary on Numbers: Narrative, Ritual, and Colonialism* (New York, NY: Routledge 2017), 112–13.

without criticism to them. Also, Jesus was a teacher of women and revealed that women would be partakers in His kingdom work.¹⁰⁹

Various authors have provided clear and concise rationales for research regarding women's educational and knowledge barriers women in the church face regarding women in ministry and leadership positions. Monica Rose's rationale for research encompasses educational endeavors that will empower women to minister effectively and accurately to both women and men and for academic institutions to provide resources that will educate and prepare women for ministry and leadership.¹¹⁰

In *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Schriener informs that ministry is a comprehensive word, originating from the Greek phrase *diakonia*, *diakonos*, and *diakoneō*, and these words often impart the concept of 'service; and 'ministry' in the broadest sense.¹¹¹ Schreiner describes several New Testament and Old Testament women that exemplified ministry work. New Testament examples: Luke 10:40, Martha's meal service to Jesus, *diakoneō*, Luke 8:1-3 writes of women who ministered to Jesus and the apostles, *diakoneō*.¹¹² Schreiner writes that these women did not engross themselves in preaching the gospel but gave financial resources to aid in continuing Jesus' ministry.¹¹³ Old Testament examples: 1 Samuel 25 documents Abigail. She was not an official individual, a prophetess, or of official status. Abigail's humility and kind counsel persuaded David not to kill Nabal.¹¹⁴ Schreiner postulates

¹⁰⁹ Mathews, *Gender*, 77.

¹¹⁰ Monica D. Rose, "Education for Women's Ministries: A Rationale for and Review of Women's Ministries for the Beginning of the 21st Century" (EdD diss., Liberty University School of Education, 2007), 13, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

¹¹¹ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (Revised Edition)* : *A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 283.

¹¹² Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 283.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

and ponders about the plethora of women that, through humility and kindness, influenced men to pursue righteousness.¹¹⁵ This course of persuasion is a representation of humility in provision and humility in the reception of righteousness. there are different types of service, *diakonia*, but only one Lord.¹¹⁶ In totality and equality, any work a Christian performs to aid the church's job is ministry.¹¹⁷

In *Educating for Women's Ministries: A Rationale for and Review of Women's Ministries for the Beginning of the 21st Century*, Melissa Small writes that educating and employing women in ministerial positions encourages other women in the church who have often endured life challenges regarding physical and psychological obstacles.¹¹⁸ Small discusses the benefits of women ministers as an emotional support system to promulgate church growth.¹¹⁹

In "Revitalizing the Women's Ministry: Women Mentoring to the Women a Titus 2 Project," Iva Johnson offers a rationale for research: providing resources through biblical training aids in developing and encouraging younger women through a mentoring program.¹²⁰ Education is a critical and necessary element of this research project. Through education paradigms within the body of the church and other institutions, women attain knowledge that will catapult women into ministerial and leadership positions. Providing women with academic and spiritual resources gives clarity and understanding of Scripture regarding women in ministry and leadership positions. These resources provide a foundation for altering their personal and

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Melissa Jill Small, "Exploring Successful Women's Ministry Employment: A Comparative Case Study of Two Churches in Virginia" (EdD diss., Liberty University School of Education, 2008), 13, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

¹¹⁹ Small, *Exploring*, 20.

¹²⁰ Iva Thomas, "Revitalizing the Women's Ministry: Women Mentoring to the Women a Titus 2 Project." (DMin diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 10, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

communal environments and stimulate a spiritual directive for change. Incorporating new ideals regarding women will catapult the confidence necessary to encourage and embolden other women to utilize their spiritual gifts for kingdom-building.¹²¹

In “*Emboldened: A Vision for Empowering Women in Ministry*,” Tara Beth Leach stresses the importance of empowering women in ministry. Leach declares the power women in ministry possess when they stand boldly in the spiritual arena to teach, preach, and lead God’s people; there is a magnification of the gift that is evident in the church.¹²² Leach describes how the atmosphere changes when women preach; the ground moves, church pews rumble, barriers are broken, and mouths that were shut are now open in celebration of the Word of God.¹²³ Leach also declares that through this boldness in ministry positions, other women are given confidence and assurance in moving forward in their call to use the gifts God endowed upon them.¹²⁴

Leach writes that this issue is often secondary to women not believing in themselves and judging their performance as worse than it is. Multiple studies were conducted in various industries and showed that when women are asked to evaluate themselves, they consistently score less than their male counterparts.¹²⁵ Therefore, women must encourage other women to utilize their gifts and talents as justification of empowerment by God for His purpose.

In “*Revitalizing the Women’s Ministry: Women Mentoring to the Women a Titus 2 Project*,” a dissertation by Iva Thomas, writes of a non-profit ministry she started and the importance of educating women to fulfill their calling in ministry. Thomas writes, “The purpose of the ministry is to meet the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of the younger generation

¹²¹ Tony L. Moyers, *Reading Responsibly: A Basic Guide to Biblical Interpretation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2016), xii.

¹²² Leach, *Embolden*, 155.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Leach, *Embolden*, 36.

of women throughout the community. This ministry design encourages women to grow in their faith in Christ, strengthen relationships with other women, and provide opportunities to serve and reach their communities for Christ.¹²⁶ Thomas writes that this ministry focuses on speaking to edify and build up everyone she encounters. In conjunction with words, love and kindness provide strength in times of trials and tribulations and will bring abundant blessings in return for all righteousness exuded.¹²⁷ This fundamental and often complex directive for Christian exemplification is a path that Jesus always displayed.

Beverly B. Summers's "The Inspire Me to Dream Leadership Development Curriculum: An Online Transformational Renewal Modular Training for Women Aspiring Roles in Ministry Leadership" details a proposal submitted for a Christian education ministry. As a result, the church's women in ministry and leadership experienced exponential growth.¹²⁸ Summers found that this educational training met the goals of the thesis statement in aiding and preparing women aspiring to roles in ministry leadership in a church that is flourishing.¹²⁹

In "Made to Lead: Empowering Women for Ministry," Martin explains that trusting God brings favor and an insurmountable amount of greatness and blessings that one can only attribute to God as women are equipped for ministry and leadership.¹³⁰ Martin provides several recaps of women who overcame their insecurities and challenges in pursuing ministry and leadership. Through the study of women in Scripture and biblical observations of women, Martin ascribes the success of these women in accepting their calling, utilizing the gifts in the ministry of God's

¹²⁶ Thomas, *Revitalizing*, 13–14.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Beverly Brooks Summers, "The Inspire Me to Dream Leadership Development Curriculum: An Online Transformational Renewal Modular Training for Women Aspiring Roles in Ministry Leadership" (DMin thesis, Regent University, 2020), 11, PROQUEST Dissertations & Theses Global.

¹²⁹ Summers, *The Inspire*, 182.

¹³⁰ Martin, *Made*, 11.

Word, and trusting and believing in the Word of God. Martin adheres to this strong evidence of equipping women through Scripture as the basis of strength and increase in women's ministry and leadership and an encouraging path for other women to trod.¹³¹ Martin examines these successes as sound evidence relating to biblical teaching and trust in God, as each woman stressed and exemplified their elevation in ministry and leadership, which captured significant and profound confidence in God, producing prosperity in ministry and leadership.¹³² Martin writes that in 2010, a survey was conducted on *The State of Women in the Baptist Life*. This survey revealed that the number of women graduating from seminary and being ordained had increased and continued to increase over several years.¹³³

In "*Organic Ministry to Women: A Guide to Transformational Ministry with Next Generation Women*," Edwards and Matthews provide a model titled "The Transformation Model." Edwards and Kelly describe how this model can transform women into mature, productive, joyful daughters of the king.¹³⁴ Opportunities should be presented for women to use their spiritual gifts. In understanding spiritual gifts, a woman's belief and faith will exemplify her trust in God to work in, through, and for the ministry. This faith and trust will permeate a passionate, emotional attachment to teach and minister to women. This experience is called joy, and God wants all women to know and experience this joyous endowment. Therefore, leaders must provide multiple opportunities for women to serve, and God expects leaders to provide these opportunities for women to serve.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Ibid., 36.

¹³² Ibid., 11.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Sue Edwards and Kelley Matthews. *Organic Ministry to Women: A Guide to Transformational Ministry with Next Generation Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2019), 65.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Edwards and Kelley write that the success of the Transformation Model is that it has one goal for women, which is to experience a change in life for their joy and God's glory.¹³⁶ The primary and fundamental elements of the Transformation Model are prayer and Bible study. These two elements utilized the transformation tool as the primary instrument in success, the Bible.¹³⁷

Edwards and Kelly's Transformation Model endured obstacles when women in pinnacle positions in the church refused to get involved. The pastor's wives and other women in leadership positions were critical to this model's success.¹³⁸ However, these hindrances should not be a deterrent or encumbrance for ministry success.

A review of the above research projects regarding women in ministry and leadership all relate to the topic of this project in that they all speak to issues that women sometimes encounter. For women to catapult into leadership positions, correctly interpreting biblical knowledge and understanding is essential for all, men and women, to accept women in ministry and leadership positions in religious institutions. The above research projects discuss various techniques and practices that can be applied to the progress of this research project.

In *Women in the Bible: Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church*, Clark-Soles writes of the strategical poise of the wise woman in 2 Samuel 20.¹³⁹ Clark-Soles expounds on this wise woman as she strategizes and plans with all the people to remove a hazard that has embarked within the city gates. This woman's leadership removes the imminent threat, and the city is safe.¹⁴⁰ This woman is filled with wisdom that encapsulates servanthood as she

¹³⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 46.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 57.

¹³⁹ Jaime Clark-Soles, *Women in the Bible : Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2020), 100.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

serves the city's people with directives and a plan of safety for the city. She embodies a leadership role that embodies compassion and love for all her people, as Christ directs all to embody and possess as one embarks on the spiritual journey.

Conclusion

Women have often encountered a plethora of issues when it comes to ministry and leadership and have for centuries. Problematic issues stem from gender equality and inadequate interpretation of Scripture regarding women in ministry and leadership positions. In rural Dallas County, women between the ages of 30 and 60 need more biblical knowledge regarding women in ministry and leadership positions. This project aims to develop a process to place women in scriptural ministry roles within the church through biblical education and encouragement to utilize the gifts and talents that God has endowed. Women are prepared for scriptural roles when education and encouragement are provided continuously and done with compassion. As a result, effective utilization of spiritual gifts will be evident in leadership and ministry positions.

The literature review reveals consistent struggles that women in ministry and leadership have often endured for many years. It also details the various elements that produce obstacles when women attempt to exercise their God-given gifts. In contrast, the literature review reveals scriptural evidence of women in ministry and leadership positions in the Old and New Testaments, encouraging some to continue their spiritual journey.

The theological foundation provides in-depth knowledge and understanding regarding women in ministry and the essentiality and positivity of obeying the Holy Spirit and exercising their gifts. The theoretical foundation provides valuable proof that women in ministry and leadership are instrumental in the progression and success within the body of Christ. The church encounters a multi-altering effect within the physical and spiritual realm, which has the plausibility of community transformation. This alteration ensures blessings and encourages other

women, ministries, churches, and entities ingrained with obstacles to women seeking to elevate to their innate leadership calling.

Educating individuals in the correct interpretation of biblical and scriptural context regarding women in ministry and leadership roles is the foundation for placing women in leadership positions. When the above elements are combined with love, kindness, and compassion, women will stand and be unified and agree that God's call to ministry and teach His Word is solidified within each woman. The strength of God and their belief in God will be evident to all who hear God's voice from the mouths of women. Women are assured they have the authority and power that only comes from God.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Ernest Stringer writes that qualitative research focuses on understanding the how of what is happening and how concerned individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to events related to the investigated issue.¹ This research will be directing its focus on how to place women in scriptural roles in the church with a design to (a) discover the challenges and barriers women face in ministry and leadership, (b) examine the generational teachings and cultural influences regarding women in ministry and leadership in the church, (c) examine women in Scripture and how their roles influence women in today's society, (d) explore methods for placement of women in scriptural roles in the church.

This chapter is engaged in the design of the research project. The rationale for the specific research design is described in detail. A detailed description and criteria for participants in this research project is provided. Information on the research's demographic location and the primary area of research is provided in detail. Research questions, surveys, and interviews are listed as a mode to ascertain information from individual interviews and group discussions for data collection and data analysis. Research flyers and request letters containing detailed information regarding the research topic, purpose, and participant's impact on the research outcome will be dispersed to all members of the Sisterhood ministry as an invitation to participate in the research project.

Participants can voice their opinions, thoughts, and concerns during the research process. Each participant will be respected and encouraged to be honest, truthful, and respectful during

¹ Ernest. T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 4th ed (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 36.

individual and group sessions. Data and information gathered from the questionnaire tool, individual interview questions, and the pretest will provide the researcher with general demographic information, childhood church affiliation, and how the specifics of the church dogma regarding women affected their beliefs regarding women in leadership and ministry positions and knowledge regarding biblical women in ministry or leadership roles. This information will provide the researcher with the tools to pair women capable of mentoring other women to educate them regarding women in leadership and ministry positions in the church.

The researcher will select the mentors based on information ascertained from the questionnaire tool, the pretest, and the individual interview questions. The researcher will provide the mentor with information listing women in the Bible (see Appendix H), Scripture references, and their respective biblical positions to offer educational information to women who lack biblical knowledge. When the mentoring process is complete, a post-test will be given to all to ascertain the success of the mentoring process.

Intervention Design

According to Stringer, the qualitative research model is the foundational element for action research and is the primary design with which one seeks to acquire transparency and comprehension of a question, a problem, or an issue.² Stringer defines three approaches that solidify effective action research: phenomenological, interpretive, and hermeneutic. These approaches assist the participant in focusing on their actual lived experiences, how they interpret those experiences, and how they make meaning of those experiences in their lives. Through this process, the participants will have a path to explore and acquire a sense of clarity and understanding of those experiences and use that information to work productively and devise

² Stringer, *Action Research*, 36.

practical solutions to the problem.³ The intervention design will include the approach utilized for this research and the methodology for instruments and tools for gathering and analyzing that data after it is collected. The study will also detail how participants will be identified and why each participant was selected for this research project. The design will describe interventions and measures to meet the research's purpose and goals. The research design will be completed in eight weeks.

Research Criteria

The criteria for individuals to participate in this research is women active in The Word Ministry's Sisterhood ministry between the ages of 30 and 60. The project will comprise a maximum of not less than 15 and no more than 20 participants. After IRB approval, a meeting will be requested to inform the church's pastor and official staff of the proposed research project. After the climax of this meeting, the pastor and the official church staff must be provided two letters, a permission request letter (see Appendix E) and a permission response letter (see Appendix F) two weeks before the commencing date of the research project. Upon approval from the pastor, the research project will be held at The Word Ministry in the church's fellowship hall.

During the first week, after approval is received for the research project, the researcher will make a verbal request before the commencement of Sunday services to meet with the Sisterhood at the end of Sunday service. At the climax of services, the researcher must give each Sisterhood member a recruitment flyer (see Appendix C) and a recruitment letter (see Appendix D). The recruitment letter will provide information regarding the research topic, the purpose, the

³ Stringer, *Action Research*, 36.

benefits, and the criteria regarding the research project. The flyer is an announcement of the research and an invitation to be a research participant.

After agreeing to participate in the research project, each participant will receive a research packet within one week of accepting the research. The packet includes a consent form (see Appendix A) and a questionnaire tool (see Appendix B). This questionnaire tool will determine critical areas of discussion that may potentially affect placing women in scriptural roles in the church. The researcher must request to meet with the participants the following week to schedule interviews.

The second week will include a meeting with the Sisterhood to schedule individual and group interviews. The researcher must ask all participants to bring consent (see Appendix A) and questionnaire tool (see Appendix B) to their respective discussions. The researcher must ask each participant to give a date and time for an interview for the third week that is agreeable to the researcher and the participant. All interviews will be scheduled and agreed upon. The interview schedule permits flexibility for each participant to voice any research concern, provide information regarding the personal position, whether positive or negative aspects, of women in ministry, and provide the researcher with the individual's perception and knowledge level regarding women, past and present, in ministry and leadership positions.

During the third week, individual interviews must occur at The Word Ministry, each allotted 30–45 minutes. Upon arrival at the interview, each participant must provide the researcher with the consent form and the questionnaire tool. Upon receipt of both documents, the researcher must provide the participant with the pre-test (see Appendix H) and the Participant's Individual Interview Questions (see Appendix G) to complete. At that time, the researcher must review the consent form and questionnaire tool to ensure all areas are complete.

The pre-test titled “Women in Biblical Roles of Ministry and Leadership” must be given to ascertain participants’ beliefs regarding women in scriptural roles in the church, ministry, and leadership positions and their current church’s population of women in ministry or leadership. The Participant’s Individual Interview Questions (see Appendix G) must be given to ascertain everyone’s biblical knowledge of women in scriptural roles in the church, ministry, and leadership position, their childhood church affiliation, and the effects of biblical teachings directed their view of women in ministry. At the end of the interview, the researcher must address any questions or concerns voiced by the participant.

Upon receipt of the participant’s submitted documents, the researcher must review each document for accuracy and any potential concerns that could prevent women from assuming scriptural roles in the church. The researcher must review the pre-test to assess biblical knowledge regarding women in ministry and leadership positions during the past and present. The researcher must ask each question on the pretest to ensure the answers are correct and appropriate. The researcher must ask open-ended questions if possible and avoid leading questions if possible. If further clarity is needed regarding a participant’s response, the researcher must continue with the line of questioning to gain understanding before asking additional questions. The researcher must also be alert and astute in each area of the questionnaire tool. Demographic information can be critical and damaging to an individual’s mental health. After the pretest questions have been answered and the researcher and the participant have no further questions or concerns, the researcher must proceed to the participant’s interview questions.

The researcher must review the participant’s interview questions for omissions or deletions and ask for a rationale for why specific questions were not answered or addressed. After providing the information, the researcher must continue the interview session. The researcher must examine and investigate any areas of unclear or lacking information. The

researcher must attempt to gain clarity, understanding, and truth as to why participants' responses are vague if the participant appears uncertain or unsure and if any emotional behaviors are exhibited during the interview, e.g., crying, change in tone, shifting to nonverbal and refusal to speak or continue the interview. The researcher must be cautious in any action taken when trying to alleviate a potential disruption.

The researcher must review all participant's documents, questionnaire tools, pre-tests, and individual interview questions at the beginning of the fourth week through the end of the fifth week. Data from these documents must be analyzed for participant's lack of knowledge, which participants have adequate knowledge regarding women in biblical roles in the church, ministry, and leadership positions. The researcher must analyze the participant's church affiliation and teachings received and how that information influenced their lives and their belief system regarding women in ministry and leadership positions. The researcher must analyze their knowledge of women in the Bible who held leadership or ministry positions. The researcher must examine whether the participants understood what ministry is.

Participant Screening

After agreeing to participate, the participant must be given a consent form and a questionnaire tool to complete. The researcher must review both documents when presented at everyone's interview for completeness before the commencement of the interview. After the researcher examines the above documents and notes areas of incompleteness, the researcher must request an explanation of the document's incompleteness.

Suppose any participant voices concerns or questions at that moment. In that case, the researcher must note the problems, assist the participant in completing documents, and answer any questions posed by the participant. If a participant requests a more in-depth explanation, the

researcher will inform the participant to remain after the initial meeting to resolve any concerns and answer any questions regarding the document.

Table 1.1 Questionnaire tool values

Participant- Age	Childhood church affiliation	Current ministry/ leadership position
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
#5		
#6		
#7		
#8		
#9		
#10		
#11		
#12		
#13		
#14		
#15		

Research Intervention Implementation

Research intervention will be implemented by providing a training program that will offer biblical support and encouragement for women who lack the necessary information and resources to pursue their ministerial calling. Interventions will be directed and focused on placing women in scriptural roles in the church.

Implementing mentoring as an intervention will aid women in seeking to achieve their purpose in God and place them in scriptural roles in the church, which is fundamental to spiritual growth. This mentoring training program will provide women with women in scriptural positions in the church that will coach and guide them in their understanding of God's will for their lives and develop strong relationships that will enhance both women as they progress in the mentoring relationship. This mentoring program will provide women with the necessary tools, knowledge,

confidence, encouragement, and spiritual growth as relationships solidify. It will promote disruption in cultural, generational, and negative male-dominated directives to position themselves in scriptural roles within the church. Edwards and Nunn write that mature women of God are compelled to lead women back to essential mentoring relationships, which is a valuable tool for women to grow spiritually.⁴

The benefits of mentoring will provide a valuable resource for women desiring scriptural roles in the church, which have often been halted by varied reasons regarding women in ministry and leadership. Mentoring is a process that utilizes knowledge as a preparatory tool for nurturing efficacious new leaders, as it connects knowledge and pedagogical excellence with application and administrative skills. When environmental conditions are encouraging, they improve and promote theoretical and pragmatic knowledge.⁵

Leach writes that a mentoring relationship is established when a wiser individual provides spiritual guidance to a less experienced individual, often younger, through the mentor's advice, training, time, and one-on-one conversations.⁶ This process provides a route for women to move forward in the desire and willingness to serve God in their most total spiritual capacity.

A committee consisting of the pastor and a leader from each ministry, both women and men, will design a list of directives and guidelines for the mentoring training program. These guidelines will establish time frames for women requesting placement in scriptural roles and leadership positions in the church. All guidelines will be contingent upon the position requested, the mentor's responsibilities, the mentee's knowledge of the position requested, and the mentee's

⁴ Sue Edwards and Barbara Neumann, *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women* (Grand Rapids: MI, Kregel Publications, 2014), 23.

⁵ Newkirk, *Preparing Women*, 25.

⁶ Leach, *Embolden*, 164.

spiritual growth. The mentee, who desires to attain a ministry or leadership position in the church, will be paired with a woman in a scriptural position as a mentor.

The mentoring program will last at least one month and no more than three months. This mentoring training program will take place at The Word Ministry. Each week the mentor will observe the mentee in every aspect of the mentor's designated position and interactions with leadership, ministerial, and lay members. The mentor will also keep community interactions during outreach activities. The mentor will provide teaching sessions regarding biblical women in Scripture and their impact on women in the church.

The mentor will provide question-and-answer sessions to assess the mentee's knowledge of the mentor's position and responsibilities, biblical understanding of women in scriptural roles, biblical principles of leadership, and ministering to others in the church. The mentor will make recommendations for the mentor's placement in the scriptural role in the church, and the committee will review and consider the mentor's suggestion. After observing the mentee's performance of responsibilities in the agreed position in the church, the mentor will provide a detailed report on the mentee's progress to the committee. The success of the mentor and mentee relationship will be an asset for the mentee's determination for placement in the scriptural role in the church.

To avoid biases, prejudices, or favoritism regarding the above process, a committee composed of male and female church members, with at least one female and one male clergy, will be selected to aid the review process. This committee will have at least two and, at most, four individuals. Each committee member must be active in leadership and a member of The Word Ministry.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The members of the Sisterhood were the only individuals who were allowed to participate in the research project. The participants met individually and collectively for the next three meetings, as agreed upon by all participants. This researcher is on staff as an associate minister and under the direction and discretion of the pastor/overseer.

On Sunday, August 24, 2023, the permission letter (see Appendix E) and the permission response letter (see Appendix F) were provided to the pastor for review and research approval. On August 27, 2024, before the 8:00 a.m. services, the researcher was given the permission response letter (see Appendix F) signed by the pastor/overseer for the research to be conducted.

The researcher requested to meet with the Sisterhood immediately after services on Sunday, August 27, 2023. The researcher informed the Sisterhood that the pastor and the church had permitted the research project to occur at The Word Ministry. The researcher provided a copy of the recruitment letter (see Appendix D) to the Sisterhood chair for reading, and a flyer was given to each Sisterhood member for review during the meeting. The researcher asked if there were any questions, but members of the Sisterhood voiced none. The researcher gave each member a copy of the recruitment letter (see Appendix D), consent (see Appendix A), and the questionnaire tool (see Appendix B). The researcher requested each member to review all information and notify the researcher by email or phone, as listed on the flyer if they wanted to be a participant in the research. Immediately after the Sisterhood meeting, 16 participants agreed to participate in the study. Four other members stated they would notify the researcher within the upcoming week. Two of the initial 16 declined to participate, and only one of the four contacted the researcher the following week and agreed to participate in the project. The researcher informed the participants that individual and group interviews would be scheduled. The researcher also informed the participants that these meetings would provide research information and any data collected from the research for questions and discussion. The participants requested

that individual interviews be scheduled for the second week of September and the group meeting for the first Saturday in October. The researcher agreed, and personal interviews were scheduled from September 7–9, 2023, according to each participant’s request and schedule availability.

Upon arrival of each participant’s interview, participants presented their consent form and the questionnaire tool for completeness review. Before the commencement of each interview, the Participant’s Individual Interview Questions (see Appendix G) and Women in Biblical Roles of Ministry and Leadership “Past and Current” pre-test (see Appendix H) were given to the participant for completion. The researcher reviewed the consent for signature and the questionnaire tool for incomplete areas. Each participant was given time to complete the pre-test and the Individual Interview questionnaire.

After the researcher received each Participant’s Individual Interview Questions (see Appendix G) and Women in Biblical Roles of Ministry and Leadership “Past and Current” pre-test (see Appendix H), the researcher presented the research’s problem and purpose. The researcher informed each participant that the project’s problem is that women in the 25–70 age group lack biblical knowledge regarding women in ministry. The researcher also informed participants of the historical aspect of why women lack biblical knowledge due to the mindset of a large majority of the male populace and their rationale that men are superior to women because Adam was created first and women second. Women’s inferiority is biblically based, and women are not to be in leadership or ministry positions in the church based on a large number of the male populace. The researcher informed participants that this research aims to develop a process to place women in scriptural ministry roles within the church. This writer believes wholeheartedly that knowledge is power. When one becomes endowed with biblical knowledge and information that erupts a standard of historical gibberish, the atmosphere shifts to engulf the righteousness of God, who employs all, male and female, to embark on a lifelong journey of

spiritual employment as given by God. Paul writes, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:2 KJV).

God spoke that He would pour out His Spirit on all people and that His sons and daughters would prophesy ... (Joel 2:28). David Fitch concurs with this passage of Scripture in that God fulfills the written promise of Joel 2:28–32 and Acts 2; as Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost, God pours out His Holy Spirit on men and women, sons and daughters, prophets, and prophetesses.⁷ For many years, some societies have placed stipulations on individuals regarding leadership and ministry positions in the church. Oppositions to the directives were either unknowingly or unwillingly not engaged for fear of alienation, church elimination, retribution, and familial disposition. The primarily male-dominant philosophy presented a stagnation for some women to occupy leadership and ministry positions while others endured complete obliteration of leadership and ministry positions in the church. This was either a result of ignorance, inadequate knowledge of the Bible, or fear of rejection, which is a result of either insufficient or incorrect interpretation of biblical knowledge. Ferris writes that biblical knowledge is critical to the Christian life and ministry.⁸ This writer believes that educating individuals on biblical knowledge regarding women in leadership and ministry positions is essential in creating a platform that will identify with all, male and female, to know God’s Word is a powerful tool for gaining wisdom, understanding the principles of life that God set in motion for His creation and to pursue the gifts that He has so endowed. Knowing one’s spiritual purpose and position for kingdom building is imperative for others to visualize Christ’s life. The Great

⁷ David E. Fitch, *Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines That Shape the Church for Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 17.

⁸ Robert W. Ferris, John R. Lillis, and Ralph E. Enlow, Jr., *Ministry Education That Transforms: Modeling and Teaching the Transformed Life* (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2018), 5.

Commission invokes all to be like Christ, live as Christ, and love as Christ so others can embody that same Christ. When one becomes Christlike, he becomes a disciple of Christ, and then one can go and make disciples of all men (Matt 28:18–20 KJV).

God's Word reveals that all, male and female, were created equally. God created humankind, both male and female, in His image (cf. Gen 1:27). To understand and capture the creative status of humanity, male, and female, without distinctive gender specificities, one learns that all humankind has equality in God's purpose and plan that He has distinctly embedded in all. This pedagogical evidence is imperative in capturing the reality and the truth of the creation of humankind.

Several members of the Sisterhood notified the researcher that the October 7, 2023, meeting was not conducive for a meeting. The Sisterhood requested to change the meeting to October 28, 2023, at noon. The researcher agreed and honored the Sisterhood's change in meeting request.

The researcher met with the participant on October 28, 2023, at noon. Before the meeting began, the researcher asked the group if there were any questions or concerns regarding the research project. The participants voiced no questions or concerns. The researcher then reviewed the data and information from the questionnaire tool, the pre-test, and the individual interview questions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The anticipated result of this research in implementing the mentoring training program to place women in scriptural roles in the church will be efficacious and offer substantive information for all to ensue. Participant observations, interviews, and subjective and objective data will provide a detailed analysis of their spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical growth as they exemplify women in scriptural roles in the church. Women will voice educational growth as they elucidate Scripture and voice their understanding of women in the Bible who held ministry and leadership positions in the church.

When women focus on equipping individuals for ministry through mentoring and developing relational discipleship, those individuals will mature and unite in faith to glorify God.¹ Mentoring seeks to provide believers and encourage the work of the ministry of Christ.² Through this woman-to-woman mentoring process, women will be catapulted into scriptural roles in the church.

A reasonable goal regarding the research's implementation of the mentoring training program will be to envision women encouraging women to partake in the program and mature women of God mentoring women. As this program progresses, the reasonable goal is to observe women grow in their faith and belief in God and assume scriptural positions in the church. The issue of women not assuming scriptural roles in the church will no longer be evident as women take scriptural roles as ministry directors, Bible study teachers, youth worship leaders, youth

¹ Melissa B. Kruger, *Growing Together: Taking Mentoring Beyond Small Talk and Prayer Requests* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 19.

² *Ibid.*, 20.

ministers, outreach directors, directors of discipleship ministry, and youth development leaders in the church. Women will display positive and productive evidence through their positions and will show an improvement in the initial problem.

This chapter addresses questions regarding the problem at The Word Ministry relating to women in the 25–70 age group who need biblical knowledge regarding women in ministry. The plan consisted of a questionnaire tool to ascertain general background information, a pretest, and individual interview questions to ascertain personal knowledge of women in the Bible who held leadership and ministry positions.

During the group meeting on October 28, 2023, individuals were provided information regarding women in ministry and leadership positions, current and past, Old Testament and New Testament. Women who were adept in knowledge of women in the Bible and held leadership and ministry positions were paired with other participants. If the research is successful, mentoring and educating women regarding women in the Bible will place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church.

The quantitative and qualitative data provided during the research process provided deficient and sufficient results regarding women in the Bible who held leadership and ministry positions. This information directly results from each participant's childhood and community influences regarding church ideals on women in biblical leadership and ministry positions.

Fifteen participants committed to the research project; all women were between the ages of 25–70. Most of the women were between the ages of 50–65. The younger adults were between the ages of 25–35.

Collective Results

Before each participant's interview commences, the researcher reviewed the participant's questionnaire tool (see Appendix B) for incomplete areas. After review, each participant was provided a pre-test (see Appendix H) and a Participant's Individual Interview (see Appendix G). The researcher provided each participant with the necessary time to complete each document.

The questionnaire tool (see Appendix B) was given to each participant to ascertain general background information regarding age, education, leadership position, current church affiliation, and childhood religious affiliation. The tool revealed two participants between the ages of 25–35, two between the ages of 40–49, six between the ages of 50–59, and five between the ages of 60–70. Five participants have been in the church between 20–25 years, three participants have been in the church between 10–19 years, three participants have been in the church for two years, three participants have been in the church for one year, and one participant has been in the church for five months. Twelve of 15 participants are in leadership positions, ranging from one to 20 years in their prospective leadership/ministry positions.

Data: Church Affiliation

The questionnaire tool provided demographic information to ascertain individualistic biblical details regarding age, childhood church affiliation, and current ministry and leadership positions (see table 1.1). During the individual interviews, the questionnaire tool and the participants' individual interview questions were reviewed, and it was revealed that two of the fifteen participants were affiliated with the Methodist church, which did not discriminate against women in leadership and ministry positions. Thirteen of fifteen participants were affiliated with Missionary Baptist Church, which denounced women in church leadership or ministry positions.

Douglas Weaver writes, “J. W. Porter argued that men were superior in intellect and biology, but women were morally superior (though unable to have spiritual leadership!)”³ Also, Weaver writes of how J. B. Hawthorne, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia, elucidated that the limitations on women were concluded from the divine disposition of creation.⁴ The thirteen participants affiliated with the Baptist church were informed by the church’s leadership, the male populace, that women were not allowed to hold leadership or ministry positions. This information was a directive from the pulpit and the official church staff, all males. Some of the church’s women passed this directive to the church congregants as they also believed that women should not be in leadership or ministry positions. The participants were told by other women in the church that women were to be silent in the church.

The male leaders in the church and the community were the driving force that solidified this information in the minds of the congregants and the community. This was instilled in all thirteen participants affiliated with the Baptist church. As a result of this information, the thirteen participants believed in this religious dogma that stigmatized and prevented most women from encompassing their God-given gifts within the confines of the church for centuries. All participants did not attempt to challenge this pre-dominant male philosophy, as the men in their churches, homes, and communities were the prevalent rule setters and providers of everything that encapsulated truth, according to the Bible.

Two of fifteen participants affiliated with the Methodist church observed women serving in leadership and ministry positions. These participants were taught that women had no limitations and could be in any position the men held. These positions were inclusive of pastors, teachers, and officers. These two participants also expressed that the men in the community

³ Weaver, *Baptists, the Holy Spirit*, 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

would teach against women having leadership and ministry positions in the church. The participants were encouraged and strengthened to serve in any capacity in the church and stand for equality for all, whether male or female. As a result of their church's teachings, women were allowed to have leadership and ministry positions in the Methodist church. The Baptist and the Methodist church teachings differed. However, each correlated with how information each participant received as a child in their church and community influenced their belief regarding women in leadership and ministry positions.

The Baptist participants believed women had limitations and were not permitted to have any positions in the church. This information was embedded within their directives regarding women in leadership and ministry. Their belief was altered when they were in the presence of women ministers and leaders in other spiritual environments and churches, which taught God's creative status and how He uses women and men in leadership and ministry.

The Methodist participant's teachings of no limitations regarding women in ministry and leadership positions embedded a strong sense of equality regarding women and men in the church. Though there was some harmful community dogma regarding women in ministry, these two individuals had received an enormous amount of information during their youth that was ingrained in their being and prevented them from waiving their beliefs.

Table 1.2 Questionnaire tool values

Participant-Age	Childhood church affiliation	Current ministry/ leadership position
#1-62	Methodist	Trustee and Finance
#2-56	Baptist	Trustee and Finance
#3-28	Baptist	None
#4-70	Baptist	Usher
#5-50	Baptist	Minister, Steward, Secretary
#6-53	Baptist	Hospitality/Coffee Ministry
#7-60	Baptist	Finance and Trustee
#8-56	Baptist	None
#9-59	Baptist	None

#10–57	Baptist	Finance, Steward, Dietary
#11–33	Baptist	Choir
#12–45	Baptist	Children’s Bible Teacher
#13–68	Baptist	Usher
#14–49	Methodist	Praise Team/Choir
#15–62	Baptist	Finance, Deaconess, Dietary

Table 1.3 Pre-test values

	Pre-Test ?															
I d #		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15
	#1-	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E	Y E
	#2	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
	#3	M 8	M 8	M 9	M 8	M 25	M 8	M 20	M 10	M 6	M 25	M 20	M 15	M 14	M 10	M 7
	#4	P	P	0	P	P	P	P	P	0	P	P	P	P	P	P

QUESTION RESPONSE KEY

1. Y=Yes, N=NO

1b. E-Explanation provided

2. A=Any/All

3. M=Multiple positions listed

3b. HIGHEST RANGE/NUMBER GIVEN FOR WOMEN IN POSITIONS IN THE CHURCH

4. P=Position/positions listed

See Appendix H for the original format.

Pre-Test Questions

1. Do you believe in women in ministry and leadership positions in the church?
Yes ___ No ___. Explain
2. What type of ministry or leadership positions in the church should women have?
3. What positions do the women hold in the church, and how many women are in positions in the church?
4. What ministry or leadership position do you have in the church?

Table 1.2 reveals the following data regarding each Pre-Test question:

Question #1 –15/15 participants believed that women should be in leadership and ministry positions in the church. All 15 provided the following:

- explanations ranging from believing in their calling,
- using the gift of teaching and preaching,
- saying God can use a man or a woman as He chooses and
- listing women in the Bible whom God chose for different reasons.

Question #2 –14/15 participants believed that women should be in any position in the church, regardless of what the position is or entails. 1/15 listed two positions, specifically Reverend and being a part of the Sisterhood ministry.

Question #3 –15/15 participants listed multiple positions women maintain in the church, ranging between three and eight. For part 3b, 15/15 participants responded with the number of women in the church in leadership and ministry positions ranging between six and 25.

Question #4 –13/15 participants are in leadership or ministry positions in the church, with 2/15 not in positions of leadership or ministry.

Participant Interview Questions

The participant's individual interview questions (see Appendix G) revealed the following:

Questions #1 –Three of fifteen women could not list or verbalize women in the Bible who held ministry or leadership positions; eleven of fifteen detailed and verbalized one to three females in the Old Testament and one to two females in the New Testament who held ministry and leadership positions.

Question #2 –One of fifteen listed only two women in the church in leadership or ministry positions. Fourteen of fifteen participants listed at least five to twenty-five women in the church in leadership or ministry positions.

Question #3 –Fifteen of 15 participants responded “Yes” that women should hold ministry or leadership positions in the church; fifteen of fifteen explained their “Yes” response, but only five had a scripture reference in a provision of their response.

Question #4 –One of the fifteen participants was told as a child that women could hold a leadership or ministry position in the church.

Question #5 –Twelve of fifteen women stated that the initial information was confusing, but as they grew older, they began reading and studying God's Word for themselves. One of the fifteen listed that she did not want to be in church but later did not believe in what men said about women in ministry and leadership. One of fifteen stated she did not want to be in church, but she began reading and understanding as she grew. One of fifteen noted that the information she received did not bother her because she did not know the truth. As she got older, she realized from being among women that women were more robust and more determined in their faith.

Question #6 –Fifteen of fifteen women stated they gained strength, continued with God and accepted God's purpose for their lives, were encouraged, read God's word for themselves to gain understanding, speak freely, and accept any opportunities to give God's words to others.

Questions #7 & #8 –Thirteen of fifteen listed “Yes” regarding having a ministry or leadership gift and explained their gift. Two of the fifteen listed were unsure of their gift and explained their answer was due to a fear of the unknown and fear of being in front of others.

On October 28, 2023, one participant informed the researcher that she did not want to participate. The researcher requested an explanation and told the participant how valuable and informative she would be as a participant in the research project. The participant declined and was removed from the participant list. The research continued with fourteen participants. The pastor was made aware of the research progress and the participant’s decision not to participate in the research project.

The group meeting was held on October 28, 2023, at noon. Six of the fourteen women who held leadership and ministry positions were paired with other participants during this meeting. On December 2, 2023, at noon, the group agreed to meet to report and discuss the mentor/mentee relationship. All participants were encouraged to be honest and receptive to any mentor guidance. Participants were also encouraged to contact the researcher for any concerns or issues that may arise during the mentor/mentee relationship. Packets with information referencing women, past and present, Old and New Testament, were provided to the mentors to aid in the teaching platform with the mentees. The mentors were instructed to give their spiritual journey in ministry and leadership positions as encouragement and teaching during the mentoring process.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a necessary collaborative effort between a mentor and a student to advance the student's ministry development and distinctiveness. Mentoring could bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This collaboration requires both individuals to operate together to achieve targeted objectives. Chiroma and Cloete discuss Hillman's definition of mentoring as a "partnership in which the mentor takes on the responsibility of cooperating with the student in the pursuit of ministerial skills, in the development of ministerial identity, and in bringing book knowledge into dialogue with the community."⁵

Tally writes of mentoring as a necessary element in developing and encouraging successful new leaders, as it unites with scholarship and academic excellence within leadership skills.⁶ Tally further explains that a nurturing environment strengthens and makes the conceptual and practical learning environment plausible.⁷

Janet Thompson writes of a mentor as one who provides experience, knowledge, achievements, position, and willingness to share with others.⁸ Working together is a great way for women to overcome biases and barriers to capture the essence of their gifts in ministry....⁹

Joanne Barnes postulates that females accomplish more outstanding achievements when their mentors have a commonality in their cultural settings.¹⁰ Kruger discusses Susan Hunts view on the need for women to share their life journeys as a tool for training and applying the Word to

⁵ Nathan Chiroma and Anita Cloete, "Mentoring as a Supportive Pedagogy in Theological Training," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* line, Volume 71 Number 3 (31 March 2015): 3.

⁶ Newkirk, *Preparing Women*, 325.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 325.

⁸ Janet Thompson, *Mentoring For All Seasons: Women Sharing Life's Experiences and God's Faithfulness* (Abilene: TX, Abilene Christian University Press, 2017), 28.

⁹ Susan Rose, "Mentoring Women in Ministry," *Presbyterian Outlook*, 203, 11 (Aug 02, 2021): 36.

¹⁰ Joanne Barnes, "Climbing the Stairs to Leadership: Reflections on Moving Beyond the Stained-Glass Ceiling," *Journal Leadership Studies*, 10 (2017): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21503>.

their lives.¹¹ This training will teach all how to love each other, impact the community, and embrace God's compassion for all men.¹²

For the female mentee to have a fulfilling and successful mentorship experience, it is critical to be paired with a mentor who shares similar cultural, spiritual, and social beliefs. When both individuals, the mentor and mentee, share a commonality in these areas, the success of building a strong, trusting relationship will lead to optimal personal and professional growth. This paradigm of incorporating values and aspirations produces a supportive environment for the mentee to gain valuable insights, learn new skills, and receive guidance for goal attainment. Ultimately, an evenly balanced mentorship pairing can have an extreme impact on the mentee's life, aiding in achieving a prosperous, strong, and satisfied individual.

Phil Newton writes of Robert Banks's statement on the necessity of mentoring and how mentoring is necessary for the entire social aspect of the church and the community. Banks yields to Paul's trials and tribulations in testing relationships and how Paul continued with the societal aspect, knowing that all will face challenges in this life. Newton writes of Banks' informative view of Paul's circumstances and how he endured steadfastly to set the example to everyone that the gospel is not a personal affair but a social event and a community endeavor.¹³

Jesus instructed His disciples in the Great Commission to go and make disciples. He also reminded them of how they observed Him make disciples through His life and journey. Newton writes of Brock explaining how the disciples learned the basics of what it meant to follow Jesus. This included "... mission, commitment, love for God, love for one's neighbor, devotion to Jesus

¹¹ Kruger, *Growing*, 17.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Phil A. Newtown, *The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids: MI, Kregel Publications, 2020), 54.

and his teaching, and prayer (Luke 9:51–11:13).”¹⁴ Brock informs that truth as it relates to a disciple of Christ, is an individual that is personally devoted to Jesus in shaping their lives. Brock writes that the shaping of disciples incorporates contemporary mentoring, which transforms disciples into learners. Jesus mentored the Twelve as he shaped them for future ministry.¹⁵

Mentoring aims to equip women to encompass and walk in their purpose of leadership and ministry. The provision of mentoring permits individuals to see other women walk in the gift of leadership and ministry and lead others from the unknown, confused status of some male-dominant populace belief that women should not be leaders and hold ministry positions within the church. Through mentoring, leaders are born, and women encapsulate their ministerial positions for others to witness and be encouraged to pursue their spirituality and utilize God’s gifts that He so graciously bestows on all. Bev Murrill references Eph 4:1 in her writing about the necessity of leaders equipping men and women equally for ministry and emphasizing the need for mentoring within the church.¹⁶

Summary of Results

At noon on December 2, 2023, each mentor/mentee discussed their relationship and relational results during the group meeting. All six groups of mentor/mentee relationships yielded positive, encouraging, and transformative results. Each group met weekly to discuss women in leadership and ministry positions, past and current, Old Testament and New Testament. The researcher was also informed that each group conversation entailed the leaders’ journey, struggles, failures, and successes as they embarked on their journeys to the present. Each participant gave a synopsis of what was discussed and what each gained due to the

¹⁴ Newton, *The Mentoring*, 24.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bev Murril, “Womentoring,” *Mutuality* 22, 1 (Spring 2015): 17.

mentor/mentee relationship. After the discussion, the Women in Biblical Roles of Ministry and Leadership Past and Present post-test (see Appendix I) was provided to each participant. The results of the mentor/mentee relationship revealed positive results from the discussion and the post-test, as the test showed the following:

Question #1 revealed that the participants understood women's roles in the Bible and how applicable and essential it is to translate those roles in today's spiritual society, provide encouragement, understanding of women and their purpose, provide a sense of respect, and appreciation of women in leadership and ministry positions.

Question #2 revealed that the participants were influenced to maintain a positive attitude, to be consistent in reading the Word of God to enhance understanding and a willingness to learn about women in the Bible, to have patience, to continue to walk in confidence, to preach, teach, pray, give and obey the Holy Spirit, pray for all humankind, to know and understand that women possess a power that can encourage others and bring them to Christ, to be consistent and dedicated to the ministry of Jesus, study the Word, always be thankful and to keep working in God's purpose, to be committed to God, be more aware of all areas that women can serve in leadership and ministry, and to be consistent and faithful to the commitment of following Jesus.

Question #3 revealed the participant's application of information to encourage other women to teach and speak out as God directs them in their purpose, to stay focused on God and not man, to allow the light of Christ to shine through for others to see the work of God manifested, to teach others that discipleship comes through fellowship, relationship, membership in the body of Christ for ministry growth, to stay positive for others to stay positive regardless of their circumstances, to share individual testimony, share the word, pray for them and with them and be consistent and continuous in the relationship, to stay focus in the Word to encompass obedience, and to stay faithful in ministry for God's glory.

Question #4 revealed the participant's understanding of the church's benefit of women in ministry, which would offer growth and positive role models to the church, as women are the majority in God's house. Also, the church will have faithful leaders, praying and influential women of God; God's glory will be magnified in His fulfillment of His Word; women are willing to work diligently for the Lord, which will offer evidence of God's will for the body of Christ, will provide a teachable atmosphere for women to grow. The church will grow spiritually, financially, and physically.

Question #5 revealed to the participants how they were affected by the process and information received affected women in ministerial and leadership positions in the church in the willingness to take a stance to be leaders and accept their ministry purpose, devote more time to serving in positions of leadership, to disregard others opinion of the Word and to study and ask God and others for understanding, to appreciate the spiritual worth and know that God accepts one to do His Will, to walk in God's will for their life, never rely on others alone to interpret God's Word and will for their lives, but to rely on God and God only to speak through other women who are in leadership and ministerial positions.

During the group meeting, the researcher asked all participants to name the women in leadership positions and women who served in ministerial capacities in the church. All fourteen women listed the seven leaders and the sixteen women serving in ministry positions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Christian women in leadership and ministry positions serve in ineffable environments and against unrealistic obstacles in fulfilling their calling.¹ Women have faced these challenges for decades as they endured negativity regarding women in ministry and leadership positions in the church. The generational and cultural bombardment of derogatory statements regarding women in scriptural roles in the church has led to marginalized environments, especially a percentage of male-dominant environments in religious institutions. This has weakened the society of women to refrain from seeking positions in the church and preventing them from assuming spiritual positions in the church. The initial response of some women to walk in their calling and accept their positions of ministry and leadership is relegated by women and men, who are unlearned and error in their interpretation of the Scripture.

Biblical positions referencing women in ministry and leadership in the church have been an ongoing debate for centuries. Women have been placed in substandard levels and unequally in positions secondary to various interpretations regarding their creative status. Paul writes that are all one, neither male nor female, neither free nor bond, but all in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:27–28). Then, if all are one, created by the One, equality in status, nature, being, and positions are rightfully afforded equally, without bias or prejudice, to all. Paul writes that all are God's handiwork, prepared in advance through Christ, to do good work (Eph 2:10). All have work to do, and one's position is to spread God's Word, teach, and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹ Robyn Wilkerson, *Shattering the Stained Glass Ceiling: A Coaching Strategy for Women Leaders in Ministry* (Springfield, MO: Influence Resources, 2017), 19.

Unfortunately, many individuals are not given the chance to participate in God's mission fully as a part of the apostolic community. Despite the abundance of the harvest, Scripture emphasizes the scarcity of laborers in this apostolic mission (Matt 9:37). Therefore, it is crucial for God's people to unite and utilize their unique talents in the service of the Lord, with the goal of saving all people. As stated in Eph 2:10, God has already prepared good works for both men and women to carry out. Consequently, it is the church's responsibility to encourage and empower its members to fulfill those good works (Heb 10:24–25). The church must create an inclusive environment where everyone is welcomed and valued, regardless of their gender, race, or other differences. Every individual possesses unique talents and abilities that could be used in serving God's mission, and it is the church's duty to identify and nurture those talents for the benefit of all. By doing so, the church can become a mighty force for good and a beacon of hope for all people.²

Throughout the Bible, numerous examples of women held prominent positions in ministry and leadership. These women set a precedent for spirituality by emphasizing the importance of unity, doing good deeds to build God's kingdom, and making disciples of all people. Their stories inspire women today to step up and take on leadership roles in their communities and churches. With their unwavering faith, dedication, and perseverance, these women have left a legacy that continues to impact and inspire people of all genders, races, and backgrounds.

Matthew 28 explains that all individuals, as mandated by Christ through the Great Commission, must teach others how to become disciples. In doing so, they must follow Christ's example and teach others to obey His law, will, and Word. This teaching should be done to help humankind gain a better understanding of God's will and live a life that is more aligned with His

² Smythe, *Women*, 3.

teachings. It is a reminder that all should play a part in spreading Christ's message and helping others grow in their faith. Mentoring involves a one-on-one relationship between a mentor and a mentee, where the mentor provides guidance, advice, and support to the mentee in their personal or professional development. It is a growth process that can significantly aid in the disciplining process, as it allows the mentee to learn from the mentor's experiences and gain valuable insights that can help them in their journey. The mentor acts as a role model, providing encouragement and accountability to the mentee and helping them navigate challenges and achieve their goals.

Mentoring is a powerful tool for personal and professional growth and can positively impact both the mentor and the mentee. Studies on mentoring provide valuable information regarding its efficacy and proliferative value. In a survey by Cowart 2002, 75 percent of participants agreed that mentoring was beneficial.³ Mentoring offers positive benefits for individuals who desire ministerial and leadership positions.⁴ Mentoring provides women with practical methods, teachings, experiences, and wisdom from mature women of God to empower them to take on scriptural roles. As a result, it is essential for women's development to expand their ministry calling and assume their roles in the church.

Upon completion of the research project, the next step would involve assessing the needs of other church ministries and examining any areas of decline before implementing the mentoring program. This initiative would aid in educating and placing individuals in desired ministry positions as requested by the church. Newkirk explains that mentoring individuals has the potential to catapult leaders in developing an elevated level of information while fostering partnerships that may only be achievable with constructive and successful mentors.⁵

³ Theresa Hammond, "Q Methodology as an Evaluation Tool: Evaluating Coaching and Mentoring in the Pastoral Ministry," *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching & Mentoring*, (2016): 186.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Newkirk, *Preparing Women*, 325.

Understanding the Sisterhood ministry and women's empowerment potential, irrespective of gender, race, or cultural background, is crucial for all participants. This study can yield qualitative and quantitative data that may pave the way for further educational opportunities and promote inclusivity. The diverse range of participants can serve as a foundation for fostering solid relationships and enabling individuals to excel in ministry and leadership roles.

Education and mentorship are critical components that can significantly contribute to the success of women in ministry and leadership roles. By providing women with the necessary tools and resources to develop their skills and knowledge, an environment is created which fosters growth and development within the church. It is essential to recognize that women have unique needs, challenges, and perspectives that require attention and support in the church community. As Christians, all are responsible for creating a spiritual support system that empowers women to realize their full potential and contribute to the church's growth. By working together and providing mentorship and education, everyone can help women thrive in ministry and leadership positions, irrespective of gender.

Mentoring has proven to be an effective tool in empowering women to excel in ministry and leadership roles within the church community. Not only does it offer support and guidance to women who are seeking to develop their skills and abilities, but it also helps to create a more inclusive and diverse church environment. By providing women opportunities to connect with mentors who can offer them insights, advice, and encouragement, they are better equipped to navigate their challenges and obstacles. Additionally, mentoring can facilitate the development of solid relationships and networks within the church, leading to greater collaboration, cooperation, and mutual support among community members. Ultimately, mentoring is a powerful tool that can help to create a more vibrant, engaged, and diverse church community

where all members are empowered to contribute their unique talents and perspectives to the collective mission and vision of the church.

To engulf the essentiality of the research, expansion of the mentoring process in the Brotherhood ministry, including all men, would be vital in understanding the totality of the process regardless of gender, race, or cultural environment. This study would provide qualitative and quantitative data that could establish a position for continued educational opportunities for all involved. The collective diversity of participants could provide a relational tenet that would sustain a life emboldened in ministry and leadership positions.

Mentoring through education and teaching are essential tools to encourage, empower, and support women in ministry and leadership. This aspect provides a system of spirituality that ensures a sound and strengthened environment for church growth. One aspect of Christian's responsibilities, whether male or female, is to aid each other in becoming the men and women whom God has purposed each to be. As a supplement to assisting women in catapulting their gifts in ministry roles and excelling in church and community leadership, mentoring is the route that all can embark upon to place women in ministry and leadership roles in the church.

Biblical Affirmations

The Old Testament writes of women in ministry and leadership, saying that God gave them authority and that women accepted His call. Deborah, a leader, was a judge and a prophet (Judg 4:5), Miriam, the worshipper (Exod 15:20–21), and 2 Kgs 22:12–20 writes of Huldah, the prophetess who aided Israel in rekindling their faith. Ps 68:11 writes that God gives the Word, and great are the numbers of the women that preach the Word. Esther was a leader and queen who saved her people (Esth 8). Joel 2:28 writes that God will pour His Spirit upon all humankind, sons and daughters alike.

The New Testament writes of women in ministerial positions and leadership and how God's directives were delegated through women. Phoebe was a leader (Rom 16:1–2), Priscilla was a leader of the early church (Acts 18:26), and Euodia and Syntyche were influential leaders in the early church (Phil 4:2–3). The New Testament accounts for women who were vital in aiding Christ in His ministry and service (Luke 8:1–3; Mark 15:40–41; Matt 27:55–56). These women, both in the Old and New Testament, embodied leadership and ministry and fulfilled their calling with great strength and humility. They walked in their spirit authority, served the people of God for His glory, and assisted Christ in His journey as He preached and taught all humankind. Additionally, they aided Paul in his ministry with various gifts and purposes. Even today, these women continue to inspire women today, as mentors. The Bible captures and disperses evidence of their lives and ministry through the written Word of God. As this research shows, they lived and shared their calling to serve the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Bible mentions numerous women who have played significant roles in God's plan. Despite the patriarchal society in which they lived, these women were fearless in their faith and demonstrated remarkable leadership qualities. From Deborah, the prophetess and judge of Israel, to Mary Magdalene, who was the first to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ, women have been instrumental in spreading the Word of God and building up the church.

The role of women in Jesus' life and teachings is of great importance, as they are regularly highlighted in varying accounts.⁶ Women are consistently depicted as members of Jesus' followers throughout the Gospels, which is an egression from the conventional practices of Judaism during that era.⁷ Jesus' teachings did not expressly separate women but alternatively

⁶ Christin Bosterud, "Women in the Bible: What Can They Teach Us About Gender Equality?" *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 55, 1 (24 August 2021): 5.

⁷ Bosterud, *Women*, 5.

advocated that all women should be perceived as equal people in their own right.⁸ It is clear from these examples that God does not discriminate based on gender and that both men and women are called to serve and lead in their unique ways. The Bible teaches that men and women are equal in the eyes of God and that they are both made in His image. As such, all must recognize and celebrate the contributions of women in the church and encourage them to continue to use their gifts and talents to further God's kingdom. Let all strive to follow in the footsteps of these great women of faith and continue to spread the Word of God to all. Doing so can help create a more inclusive and equitable church where everyone feels valued and empowered to serve.

Research Implications

The research in question delves into the mentoring experiences of six leaders and eight mentees, all of whom were being trained to assume ministry and leadership positions within their church. The research findings revealed that the timing of planned mentoring sessions and the various obstacles and limitations that the mentees faced in their personal and professional lives played a significant role in determining the success or otherwise of the mentoring process. The study yielded three critical implications crucial to the success of individuals seeking to serve in ministry and leadership roles, highlighting the importance of proper timing, overcoming life's obstacles, and a solid mentor-mentee relationship.

The initial research suggests that women in ministry and leadership roles face considerable demands and challenges. Except for mentees #3 and #8, all individuals shared their inherent talents for leading and serving in ministry. While operating in their gifts, most desired to enhance their effectiveness and productivity. Participants #3 and #8 were uncertain about their calling to ministry or leadership in the church yet remained committed to serving God. Except

⁸ Ibid.

for one participant, most struggled with the historical ideology of their male-dominated and elderly female-focused communities, churches, and society regarding women in ministry and leadership within the church. This perpetuated the long-standing stagnation in women seeking, desiring, and preparing themselves and others for leadership roles.

The challenges women face in achieving success in ministry and leadership positions within the church are not only limited to external factors but also deeply rooted in their familial experiences. Information passed down from their parents is often accepted without question or examination, creating an inner hindrance that prevents them from fully embracing the concept of leadership and ministry for women.

To overcome these spiritual obstacles, women must become educated and trained to manage their unique challenges. They need to understand themselves, their strengths, and their limitations deeply. They must also learn to deal with cultural and societal barriers limiting their opportunities.

Mentoring is another critical factor that can help women in ministry and leadership roles. Studies have shown that mentoring is essential in the growth and advancement of women in these positions. Mentoring enables women to receive personal, spiritual, emotional, and mental development that equips them with the strength, empowerment, and encouragement they need to fulfill their calling within the church. Mentors can share their experiences and wisdom, providing guidance and support to help ensure the success of their mentees' journeys. Through this process, mentees can better understand themselves and their roles, overcome obstacles, and achieve their full potential.

Research Applications

Robert Ormord writes a research application describing what, why, and how the project will be conducted.⁹ To ensure a solid understanding of biblical principles and background information, each participant was given a pre-test and questionnaire to complete before their interview. Specifically, the pre-test focused on women in ministry and leadership roles throughout history. Questions or concerns were addressed during the interview to understand each participant's beliefs and knowledge better. Additionally, participants were given an individual interview questionnaire to explore potential environmental influences on their belief system. After all interviews, a group meeting was held to share the results and provide information about the mentor/mentee process. Mentors were selected based on previous discussions with the pastor and researcher, choosing individuals in leadership positions. The six individuals selected as mentors, listed as #1, #2, #5, #7, #10, and #15 in table 1.1, were allowed to share their experiences during a group meeting. Each mentor and mentee discussed the location, duration, topics covered, and overall progress of their sessions. The researcher also administered a post-test (see Appendix J) to all participants before the meetings to assess the mentoring process's educational benefits and determine the knowledge gained.

Research Limitations

Robert P. Ormrod writes that every research project encounters limitations.¹⁰ The sample of women studied for this thesis presented some limitations regarding evidence and context. Specifically, two denominations, Baptist and Methodist, were identified and discussed. Additionally, many of the women interviewed came from environments and communities that did not support women in ministry and leadership positions within the church. While this

⁹ Robert Ormrod, *How to Structure A Thesis, Report or Paper A Guide for Students* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 48.

¹⁰ Ormrod, *How to Structure*, 68.

research was localized to a small area and focused on African American women, it raises interesting questions about how the findings might differ in a larger, more diverse urban area. For example, would there be more women in ministry and leadership positions in a church located in a metropolis? Furthermore, what other denominations hold the belief that women should not be in such roles within the church?

Also, the research title needed to fully capture the diversity and specificity of religious or cultural environments that impact individuals' community upbringing. While the results sparked further inquiry, they only scratched the surface and needed more data on determinants encompassing women from various races, cultures, and denominations. Unfortunately, the group's progress was hindered when one member declined to continue with the research on the scheduled meeting day. This caused a delay in pairing individuals for the mentoring/mentee process and added two additional weeks to the project timeline.

As a result of these limitations, the research needed to provide a comprehensive view of the female population as it pertains to different denominations, cultures, and races. The project aimed to give the women biblical knowledge for placement in ministry and leadership positions, but not all women were included in the study. Towards the end of the research, specific patterns emerged that revealed a biased atmosphere due to the exclusion of certain groups.

In conclusion, the research indicates that it is not an absolute truth that women can view themselves in positions of spiritual elevation in ministry and leadership. Certain cultures, races, and denominations may perceive the study as limited to African American women in the Baptist and Methodist churches aged 25–70. These limitations prevented the researcher from providing a clear directive to empower and encourage women to pursue ministry and leadership roles.

The research study has some limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the research provided no information on the mentor/mentee positions after the initial encounter and teaching

sessions. Knowing the mentor's position and timing for ongoing sessions after the final group session would have been helpful. It is essential to understand how the mentor evaluated the mentee and what position the mentee assumed, if any. Additionally, it would have been beneficial to know whether the mentor and mentee continued to converse even after the sessions were over and, if they did, how often. The research study also needed to establish long-term goals between the mentor and the mentee. It would have been beneficial to understand the pastor's responses to the mentor and mentee relationships and what outcomes were conveyed.

Secondly, the research study is also limited to the current ministry context. It does not include the Caucasians, nor does it account for past denominational affiliations with all the female population in the church. This is a significant limitation because it poses a barrier and prejudice to all other women who are members of the body of Christ. Additionally, only women active in the Sisterhood ministry were included, which further limits the scope of the research study.

Due to these limitations, the research cannot truly represent the mentor/mentee process for all women. The study presents various areas of disregard and neglect, which do not align with the researcher's intent. Therefore, in hindsight, the research needs to broaden its scope to include several denominational elements, races, ages, and cultures. By doing so, the research will provide an opportunity for a diversity of views for individuals to visualize themselves, prayerfully reap the entirety of the project, and grasp the position that God has gifted them with to further their ministry and position of leadership.

The research study has indicated that expanding the scope of the research would result in creating a proposal that would help educate and mentor women in ministry and leadership positions. This proposal would be available to women of all races, ages, cultural backgrounds,

and church denominations, making it a valuable resource for anyone looking to further their professional and personal development.

The benefits of this proposal would be twofold. First, when women are empowered and encouraged to grow, it sets an example for others to follow, encouraging more women to get involved in these areas. This can bring strength, encouragement, and empowerment to both the women involved and the broader community. Second, the proposal would create a platform for women to exchange ideas, share experiences, and collaborate on projects, furthering their growth and productivity in these fields.

Expanding the research focus and developing a comprehensive plan to provide education and mentorship opportunities for women in ministry and leadership roles could be a game-changer. By doing so, the church can create a more gender-inclusive and diverse environment in these fields, which will benefit the women themselves and bring about positive changes in the communities they serve. This effort could empower more women to take up leadership positions, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and just society.

Moreover, new perspectives and ideas brought in by women in leadership could help organizations and communities thrive, leading to better outcomes for everyone involved. By broadening the scope of the research and creating a proposal to educate and mentor women in ministry and leadership positions, the church can pave the way for more women to make a significant impact in their communities. This will benefit the women and create a ripple effect of empowerment and progress that will benefit everyone.

Further Research

In summary, this research project suggests that additional work in various areas could be beneficial for validating the mentor/mentee and educational process for advancing women into ministry and leadership roles. Conducting further research encompassing a diversity of church

denominations and biblical teachings would be advantageous. While many denominations employ women in their churches for menial tasks, they often lack the necessary education and mentoring programs that facilitate growth, empowerment, and encouragement, which are crucial for propelling women into ministry and leadership positions. Consequently, researching the viewpoints and guidelines of Methodist, nondenominational, Protestant, Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Pentecostal, Evangelical, Lutheran, and Apostolic churches would be inclusive in determining their philosophies and directives on women in ministry and leadership.

The study on women in ministry and leadership roles suggests that a deeper exploration of cultural and racial factors is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Although the results from the African American community were included in the study, it is essential to expand research to include all cultural and racial groups within the church. To gain a complete picture of women in the church, it is necessary to delve into their familial backgrounds, historical teachings, individual perspectives, and validation of their unique contributions to positions and etiquette related to ministry and leadership. It is worth noting that the research primarily focused on members of the Sisterhood, but it did not intentionally exclude Caucasian women in the church. This detailed approach will aid in developing a more inclusive and equitable environment for women in ministry and leadership roles.

The research conducted on women in ministry and leadership positions has been insightful, but it is important to note that the study has not included the younger female population aged 18–30. This age group is critical as they are at a stage where they are still exploring their spiritual beliefs and are yet to form a concrete understanding of women's roles in religious leadership. The youngest female participant in the study lacked knowledge regarding women in ministry and leadership positions, which is a cause for concern.

Today, women are crucial as primary providers for their families. Acknowledging this fact and providing them with opportunities for personal and spiritual growth is essential. Mentorship and education programs can play a significant role in helping women develop a positive mindset toward leadership roles and encourage them to become influential spiritual leaders in their communities.

By creating a supportive and inclusive environment for women, the church can empower them to take on leadership positions and contribute meaningfully to their communities. These efforts can lead to a more equitable society with equal thriving opportunities. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize the education and empowerment of women as a step towards building a more just and compassionate world.

The importance of mentoring in empowering women to pursue their ministry and leadership potential cannot be overstated. However, it is equally important to explore the cultural and racial aspects of mentoring relationships to ensure that all women have equal access to the benefits of mentoring. Unfortunately, the current study did not provide evidence of diversity in mentoring relationships and their effects. Therefore, there is a need for further research to understand how cultural and racial factors impact mentoring relationships and how they can be leveraged to promote the advancement of women in all spheres of life. This will help ensure that women from all backgrounds can benefit from mentoring and reach their full potential.

Mentoring relationships requires careful consideration of various aspects, including timing. This research only provided weekly sessions over one month, which was beneficial for imparting spiritual knowledge, insight, and life experience. However, this researcher realizes an essential element of the process: extended time frames can offer even more opportunities for the mentor to share their wisdom and expertise and for the mentee to absorb and apply it. This, in

turn, can help the mentee develop a stronger desire to pursue a journey of ministry and leadership, ultimately leading to personal growth and professional success.

Ongoing research is necessary, as the historically male-dominated genre of ministry and leadership continues to affect women in most churches. By addressing these issues, the church can empower women to reach their full potential and positively impact their communities. The exclusion of women from ministry and leadership roles remains a significant challenge today. Achieving true inclusivity that transcends race and culture is crucial in addressing the persistent issues faced by women in churches that have historically closed their doors to them and stifled their spiritual calling to serve as leaders.

Anderson explains mentor as a spiritual companionship that unites in a journey encompassing an amplified perception of the Holy Ghost, the living existence of God as He promised through His precious son, Jesus.¹¹ Jesus reminds everyone in Matt 28:20 that He is with mankind until the end of times. Jesus, the central figure of Christianity, is widely known for His teachings on love, compassion, and generosity. He exemplified the virtue of sharing by giving his time, resources, and attention to those in need. His primary goal was to benefit others and establish meaningful relationships that would inspire and empower them to pursue their calling in ministry and leadership. Jesus' message was particularly significant for women as He encouraged them to embrace their spiritual destiny and play an active role in their communities. Advancing research on Jesus' teachings could foster a culture of strong, empowered women motivated to fulfill their spiritual calling and lay the groundwork for personal and communal growth. By studying Jesus' example of sharing and giving, the church can learn valuable lessons about how to build meaningful relationships and promote social justice in the community.

¹¹ Keith R. Anderson, *Reading Your Life's Story: An Invitation to Spiritual Mentoring* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 9.

Appendix A

Consent

Title of the Project: Providing Biblical Knowledge to Women Ages 25–70 to Place Women In Ministry and Leadership Positions In The Church

Principal Investigator: Evelyn Scott, Doctoral Candidate at Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University.

The purpose of the study is to develop a process or procedure to place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church.

Invitation to be Part of a Project Study

Participants are invited to engage in a project study. To join, participants must be an active member of the Sisterhood ministry and between 25–70 years of age. Taking part in this project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to develop a process or procedure to place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church.

What will happen when a person takes part in this study?

If there is agreement to be in this study, the researcher will ask each participant to do the following:

1. Complete both documents, consent form, and questionnaire and submit them to the researcher upon arrival at the first meeting. The first task/procedure will be to participate in the project scheduling regarding dates and times. Maintaining respect and displaying non-judgmental attitudes are required from all participants during project study. Participants will be given a test titled “Women in Biblical Roles of Ministry and Leadership” to assess participants’ biblical knowledge of women’s roles in the church. All meetings will be recorded for accuracy and will last two hours maximum.
2. Participate in scheduled group and individual interviews. Exemplify respect and honesty. All interviews will be recorded for accuracy and last for one hour at maximum.
3. Each participant will provide information that shaped and directed their beliefs and spiritual paths regarding women in ministry and leadership in the church.
4. Voluntary participation will be asked to assist the researcher in gathering data and assessing information for review and analysis. This meeting will be two hours maximum and recorded for the accuracy of the data collected.

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include an increase in knowledge and awareness of women in scripture that held significant roles in ministry and leadership in the church. Provide encouragement to embark on a personal and spiritual path of ministry and leadership in the church. Also, a substantial increase in women occupying ministry and leadership positions in religious institutions will be evident.

Society will benefit as it will bring many women into ministry and leadership positions in the church, increasing membership and ministries within the church.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

Expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks one would encounter in everyday life.

The researcher is a mandatory reporter. During this study, if the researcher receives information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm themselves or others, the researcher will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

- The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Project records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.
- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Individual Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with other individuals outside of the group. Data collected from participants may be used in future project studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from participants is reused or shared, any information that could identify participants, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Electronic and hard copy data will be stored on a password-locked computer/in a locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and then deleted and erased. The project members of the doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. A person's decision whether to participate will not affect current or future relations with Liberty University and The Word Ministry. If a person decides to participate, there is freedom not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should a participant do if a decision is made to withdraw from the study?

If a person chooses to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should a person choose to withdraw, data collected from participants, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but specific withdrawing participant's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if a person chooses to withdraw.

Whom does one contact with questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Evelyn Scott. Questions may asked now. If questions arise later, Evelyn may be contacted at [REDACTED] or email, [REDACTED]. The researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Mark Plaza, at email.

Whom does one contact with questions about rights as a project participant?

If a person has any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, one is encouraged to contact the IRB. The physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; phone number is 434-592-5530, and email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Participant Consent

Signing this document indicates the agreement of a person to be in this study. Make sure there is complete understanding of the study prior to signing. A copy of this document will be given for participant's records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. Any questions about the study after the document has been signed may be directed to the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE TOOL

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Age: _____

Employment

Currently employment: Yes ___ No ___

Church/spiritual position

Years at current church: _____

Current ministry or leadership position held: _____

Years in ministry or leadership position? _____

Educational Background

H.S. Graduate: ___ year grad: _____ College Grad: ___ year grad: _____

Graduate: _____ year grad: _____

Personal History

What religious organizations/denominations were you affiliated with as a child?

Appendix C

RECRUITMENT FLYER

Project Participants Needed

Providing Biblical Knowledge to Women Ages 25–70 to Place Women In Ministry and Leadership Positions In The Church

Are you:

- Between the ages of 25–70?
- Member of The Word Ministry?
- Active member of the Sisterhood Ministry?

If you answered **yes** to each of the questions listed above, you may be eligible to participate in a project study.

The purpose of this project study is to develop a process to place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church.

Participants will be asked to complete surveys, individual and group interviews, and questionnaires. Participants will also participate in group discussions and be involved in the project planning.

If you would like to participate, contact the researcher at the phone number or email address provided below.

A consent document will be given one week before the project commences.

Evelyn D. Scott, a doctoral candidate in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Evelyn D. Scott at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] for more information.

The Word Ministry, 7296 Alabama Highway 41 South, Fellowship Hall, Sardis, AL 36775



Appendix D

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Sisterhood,

As a doctoral candidate in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting project study regarding women in ministry and leadership and the challenges encountered as they embark on a journey of positioning themselves in ministry positions within the church, as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my project is to develop a process to place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church. Educating women regarding biblical roles that women encompassed themselves in became the driving force in their positions of ministry. This inner strength was instrumental in a multitude of successes as they accepted and embarked on their spiritual journey. When women understand the importance of accepting their call to utilize their gifts and talents, they will be free to walk in their roles of ministry and leadership. I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be between 25–70 years of age and active members of the Sisterhood ministry at The Word Ministry. Participants will be asked to participate in one-on-one, audio-recorded, in-person interviews and focus group interviews, complete questionnaires and complete surveys, and participate in group discussions. It should take approximately one-two hour to complete each procedure listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please complete the consent form and the questionnaire. Please return both documents to the researcher upon entering the first scheduled research meeting.

A consent document is attached to this letter and will be given to you one week before the start of the research project. The consent document contains additional information about my project. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Evelyn D. Scott
Doctoral student

334-518-0262 / escott91@liberty.edu

Appendix E

PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER

(Date)

Bert A. Scott, Sr.
Bishop/Overseer
The Word Ministry



Dear Bishop Scott:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The title of my project is Providing Biblical Knowledge to Women Ages 25–70 to Place Women In Ministry and Leadership Positions In The Church and the purpose of my project is to develop a process to place women in scriptural roles of ministry within the church.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my project at The Word Ministry.

Participants will be asked to complete the attached surveys and questions, participate in face-to-face individual interviews and group interviews, participate in group discussions, participate in planning project agendas for efficacy, voice any concerns, feedback, or comments regarding and provide feedback regarding resolutions, concerns, and any comments. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.]

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, respond by email to [REDACTED]. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

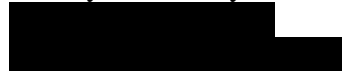
Sincerely,

Evelyn D. Scott
Doctoral Student

Appendix F**PERMISSION RESPONSE LETTER**

(Date)

Evelyn D. Scott
Liberty University



Dear Ms. Scott:

After carefully reviewing your project proposal entitled Providing Biblical Knowledge to Women Ages 25–70 to Place Women in Ministry and Leadership Positions in The Church, we have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at The Word Ministry.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

We will provide our membership list to Evelyn D. Scott, and Evelyn D. Scott may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in her project study.

We grant permission for Evelyn D. Scott to contact the Sisterhood members to invite them to participate in her project study.

Sincerely,

Bishop B.A. Scott, Sr.
Overseer
The Word Ministry

Appendix G

PARTICIPANT'S INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you know any women in the Bible who held ministry or leadership positions? Yes ____ No ____ . If yes, list 1–2 women: _____

2. What women do you know who are currently in ministry or leadership positions in their church?

3. Do you believe that women should hold ministry or leadership positions in the church? Yes ____ No ____ . Explain your answer, and please list a scripture reference:

4. What were you told as a child regarding women having ministry or leadership positions in the church?

5. How did that information influence you regarding women in ministry?

6. How did/has that directed your attitude towards women in ministry and leadership in the church?

7. Do you have a call for ministry or leadership in the church? Yes ____ No ____
If yes, explain your gift.

8. What is your reason for not utilizing your gift?

Appendix H

Women in Biblical Roles of Ministry and Leadership

“Past and Current”

Pre-Test

1. Do you believe in women in ministry and leadership positions in the church?
Yes___ No ____. Explain
2. What type of ministry or leadership positions in the church should women have?
3. What positions do the women hold in the church, and how many women are in positions in the church?
4. What ministry or leadership position do you have in the church?

Appendix I**WOMEN IN BIBLICAL ROLES OF MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP PAST AND PRESENT**

Post-Test

1. What information have you gained regarding women in scriptural roles in the church?
2. How has that information influenced you and your previous positions on women in scriptural roles in the church?
3. How will you apply that information to encourage women to use their ministry to catapult their gift?
4. How will the church benefit from placing women in scriptural roles?
5. How has this project and information affected your position and stance regarding women in ministerial and leadership position in the church?

Appendix J

MENTOR'S EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION FOR MENTEE

Women in Biblical Role of Ministry and Leadership –Past & Present

Ministry: To serve a position of service, Jesus was the ultimate servant, a leader, and a teacher. Matthew 28:18–20 Great Commission reference scripture

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE:

Women leaders in the Bible include Anna, a prophet. (Luke 2:36). Philip had four daughters who were also known to have the gift of prophecy, as mentioned in Acts 21:9. A biblical prophet is a preacher who delivers God's message with impact.

Phoebe was a deacon (Rom 16:1), and Junia was an apostle (Rom 16:7).

Priscilla and her husband worked with Paul to spread the message of Christ. In Acts 18, she taught Apollos. Priscilla's ability to explain the ways of God surpassed Apollos' expertise. Significantly, her name is mentioned before her husband's, suggesting she may have been the couple's leader. Priscilla and her husband worked with Paul to spread the message of Christ. Priscilla was designated as a co-worker in Christ by Paul. In Acts 18, she taught a knowledgeable man named Apollos. Despite Apollos' expertise, Priscilla was able to explain the way of God more comprehensively to him. She may have been the leader of her and her husband, as her name appears before his in several passages.

Luke 24:9

Women were the first Christian preachers and were the first to spread the news of Christ's resurrection.

John 4:39

The woman at the well in John 4 left her water jar behind after speaking with Jesus to tell the people about Him. Her effective evangelism led many Samaritans to believe in Christ. Jesus had a lengthy theological conversation with her, encouraging her spiritual pursuits and welcoming those she led to Him.

Judg 5:7

In addition to the New Testament, there are strong women in the Hebrew scriptures. Deborah is named a prophetess and judge who led and guided the people and even sang after leading them to victory in battle.

2 Kgs 22:11–20; 2 Chron 34:14–33

Huldah, a prophet, is often overlooked by those who say women cannot teach. However, in her time, she was highly regarded. When King Josiah's men found a scroll of the Book of Law given by Moses, they sought Huldah's advice over men. This passage of Scripture shows that women can provide valuable guidance and instruction.

Exod 4:24–26; 15:20

Miriam was the first prophet in Hebrew Scripture and played a significant role in the Israelites' exodus. With the help of Moses' mother, two Hebrew midwives, Pharaoh's daughter, and his wife Zipporah, Moses may not have survived to lead the Hebrew people. All the life-saving accomplishments are attributed to women.

Esther

Queen Esther saved the Jewish people from slaughter by intervening when King Xerxes signed a law ordering their massacre. Her actions challenge stereotypes about women being "too emotional" to be leaders.

Num 11

The story of Eldad and Medad in Numbers 11 is about two men who prophesied outside the approved parameters. Moses' assistant, Joshua, gets worked up and rushes to find Moses. But Moses responds by saying that he wishes all the Lord's people were prophets. This includes his sister Miriam, who was God's first prophet.

Acts 2:4

God's prophet Joel's words were quoted by Peter, stating God will pour out His Spirit on all people. The first chapter of Acts confirms that women were present when they were all together in one place and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:46

Mary, the blessed mother, is an excellent example of a woman minister in all Scripture. She carried God in her belly. This Love she nurtured, fed, raised, sent out into the world, stood vigil as He died, visited His tomb and proclaimed His triumph when He rose from the dead.

PAST:

Old Testament:

Eve. Genesis 2 is the first woman and wife made by God as a helper.

Miriam. Exodus 2 Moses' sister, Miriam, was a prophetess Moses' worship leader. In Exodus 15:20–21, she led the people in worship and praise after the defeat of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea.

Deborah. Judges 4 was the only female judge in Israel who was also a prophet, poet, singer, and songwriter. She commanded Barak to fight against Jabin's army in the Valley of Jezreel.

Esther. Esther 2 - Queen who saved her people from Haman's plot with the help of her cousin Mordecai.

Huldah/wife of Shallum. 2 Chronicles 34: 23–28 A prophetess warned King Josiah of disaster due to idol worship, but Josiah had honored God by getting rid of it in Judah. As a result, the destruction of Judah would not occur during his lifetime.

Ruth. The book of Ruth highlights servant leadership through the simple yet compelling story of how God uses kindness to make the world a better place. It offers examples of putting others' needs first, protecting others, and showing extraordinary kindness.

New Testament:

Mary the Mother of Jesus. Matthew 1–2 Jesus was conceived, nurtured, and born only of a woman, giving him a unique connection with women. The virginal conception is critical to understanding his relationship with them.

Galilean women. Matthew 27:8:2; Mark 10:52; 15:40–41 were in a relationship with Jesus, actively involved in his ministry, and dedicated to his mission.

Mary Magdalene. John 20:11–17; Mark 16:9 A woman who strongly believed in Jesus was the first to witness His resurrection.

Peter's unnamed mother-in-law. Mark 1:29; Matt 8:14–15 Jesus heals a woman of a deadly fever, and she immediately gets up and begins to serve Him.

Mary, the mother of John Mark. Acts 12:12–16 She was the house church's leader.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Luke 5:8; 7:38; 8:35, 41; 17:16; cf. Acts 22:3, and John 11:2. Unconventional role for a woman - anoints Jesus' feet with costly oil.

Anna. Luke 2:36–37 In the temple, a prophetess was devoted to the Lord. She encountered Jesus when Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple for purification. Simeon and Anna also witnessed this and gave thanks to God.

Lydia of Thyatira. Acts 16:11–40 a leading businesswoman in Philippi, worked in dyeing purple cloth. She welcomed two missionaries and offered them hospitality after preaching.

Tabitha/Dorcas. Acts 9:36 She was full of charity and good works.

Phoebe. Romans 16:2 Phoebe was a trusted woman who delivered a letter from Paul to the Romans. She was a servant and helper to many and is unique in the New Testament.

Priscilla. Romans 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19 Aquilla and his wife, Priscilla, established a church in their home where they taught and preached the Word of God. They also worked with Paul in their tentmaking business to fund their travels for teaching and preaching.

Junia. Romans 16:7 Paul refers to a woman who was imprisoned with him and is also called an apostle. This is the only instance in the Bible where a woman is referred to as an apostle, making it a significant and unique piece of Christian history. Her inclusion in the Bible as a leader and follower of Christ is a powerful reminder of women's important role in shaping the Christian faith.

Joanna. Luke 23:55–56; 24:10 Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod Antipas's estate manager, supported Jesus's ministry by providing food and supplies from her wealth. She traveled with Jesus and the disciples, breaking societal barriers and biases.

Susanna. Luke 8:1 She was a follower of Jesus Christ who traveled with Him and His apostles. She was a woman of wealth who provided for their needs and kept them from unnecessary concern. It is believed that Jesus healed her of evil spirits or infirmity.

Present:

Pastors:

Juanita Bynum is an American gospel singer, author, actress, and Pentecostal televangelist known for her work in spreading the teachings of Christianity.

Victoria Osteen was born March 28, 1961, and is an author and the co-pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas.

Shirley Ann Caesar-Williams, Shirley Caesar is a gospel singer, songwriter, and pastor born in Durham, NC, in 1938.

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IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 27, 2023

Evelyn Scott
Mark Plaza

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-1763 Providing Biblical Knowledge to Women Ages 30-60 to Place Women In Ministry and Leadership Positions In The Church

Dear Evelyn Scott and Mark Plaza,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46.102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office