

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

**Understanding and Equipping Female Leadership at Prosperous Temple
Church of God in Christ**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

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Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Debates on whether women qualify to take up church leadership have persisted over the years. In 2016, there was an instance in Alabama where a woman was appointed as the assistant pastor of a church. Within three months of her service, the number of congregants dropped. Efforts by the church management to unravel the cause of the decline revealed that a majority of the people, particularly women, who canceled their church attendance were uncomfortable with women taking up leadership positions. The case informed this research, which will use the case study of Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ. The study will explore perceptions of whether women should take up church leadership positions or not.

Ministry Context

Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ is located in Northport, Alabama. Prosperous Temple is “A Place Where Everybody Is Somebody And Christ is Lord.” The mission of the church is to communicate to the people of Northport, Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and the surrounding areas the life-changing power of Jesus Christ and to reach those that are lost by any means necessary. Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ was established on March 1, 2009, under the leadership of Pastor Jonathan Hackett and Elect Lady Tasha Hackett.

At the tender age of thirteen, the Lord began setting the tone or preparation for the future of Pastor Hackett through the special noonday prayer under the leadership of the late Evangelist Mattie Parker. Pastor Hackett was called into the ministry during this time. Churches are change agents in society.¹ In that regard, they should be structured to benefit the larger society. Besides, the decision to start a church should be to advance good works and

¹ Jerry Pillay, "The Church As A Transformation And Change Agent," *HTS Theological Studies* 73, No. 3 (2017), 4352.

good deeds in society.² Pastor Hackett maintains that God called him to preach the gospel and bring change into society.

After settling down from the world and getting married, the Lord relocated Pastor Hackett to Alabama in 2005. In 2008, the Lord began to speak to Pastor Jonathan Hackett regarding leading His people. Pastor Hackett attended a revival, and the Lord spoke to the evangelist that evening and stated, “The Lord has called you to lead His people.” In 2009, the Lord confirmed the conversation and prophecy that had been spoken over Pastor Jonathan Hackett’s life. On March 1, 2009, the doors of Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ (COGIC) were opened under the leadership and guidance of Pastor Hackett, which was located at 742 McFarland Blvd Northport, Alabama. Past researchers and theologians have argued that churches should not be a business nor a personal endeavor. Starting a church should be a decision by a group of people that believe they could change the world and entrench Christianity through their actions.³

Churches should result from and grow through team collaboration.⁴ The prosperous church adopted the collaborative approach, considering that it started with 14 members. The pastor and the members served faithfully and diligently for two years at this location until the passing of the landlord Mr. Danny Jones which caused them to relocate. Prosperous Temple continued seeking the Lord for direction on a new building. There were numerous choices, and of course, disappointments. In this regard, starting and growing a church is a challenging undertaking. The founding team must brave the challenges in housing, minimal resources, and meeting the requirements of the law.⁵ Every building that was discovered came with

² Ronald Sider, Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make A Difference: Reaching Your Community With Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 67.

³ Robert Crosby, *The Teaming Church: Ministry In The Age of Collaboration* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵ Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 43.

much red tape. Becoming deeply discouraged, giving up was a thought; however, giving up was not an option. The pastor decided to call for 21 days of consecration, seeking God for direction for a place of worship.

Later, the Lord led one of the members to a storefront that once was a laundromat. It became the next location that would be used as the place of worship for the church. So, in July 2013, Prosperous Temple began to worship at this location. The church was at this location for approximately one year. At the time, it was unclear as to why, but later, God revealed a bigger plan. At this point, the ministry began to flourish, and the church membership had become increasingly more significant; they grew from a group of 14 to have a membership of 35.

Whenever the founding team experienced challenges in the early stages of the ministry, they should concentrate on solutions provided in the Bible – prayer.⁶ Pastor Hackett always sought the Lord on leading His people without error. He would always consult the church regarding any new thoughts or plans. He asked the church to start a building fund that would be used towards the house the Lord had shown him. The founding members again began to work hard, faithfully, and diligently. On October 1, 2013, Prosperous Temple moved, yet again. With this move, the church truly began to see the mighty hand of the Lord, considering that its membership grew to sixty people. The constant movements caused Pastor Hackett and the members to place total trust in God.

Although this became difficult to understand, God knew what He was doing, and it was our responsibility to continue to trust Him and to take Him on His word. Prosperous Temple is yet working towards greater heights, remaining confident about what God will do for the church. In 2015, during a meeting between Pastor Hackett, Elect Lady Hackett, the trustees, and the church members, it was agreed upon that the church would move into a

⁶ Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts*, 61.

temporary location as they wait on the anticipated construction of the new church home to be completed.

The general health of the church is going well, as the church has been moving forward ever since its inception. While one most certainly understands that it is not an easy task, God has most certainly kept His promise, and He has given the church a sure foundation to build upon, and the Lord is adding to the church. When the founding teams brave the challenges in the initial stages, God manifests himself, and the church prospers. However, a majority of modern-day churches have entrepreneurial and social justice agendas alongside preaching the gospel.⁷ The founder teams invest their resources to build structures and create an impression that they are a triumphant church. They then focus on public relations to market themselves.⁸ In such cases, the essence of a church is achieved. The founding and growth journey of Prosperous Church does not appear to have any ill intentions; hence, its success today as a true church.

A prolific writer once said that "Not all dreamers are winners, but all winners are dreamers. Dreaming is the key to your future. The Bible tells us, without a vision or (dream), a people perish."⁹ After receiving a vision on March 1, 2009, the doors of Prosperous Temple Church were opened in Northport, Alabama, to speak a word to God's people of deliverance, power, a changed heart, and mind. The Lord is yet adding to the church, a generation that yearns to seek him.

Other leaders of the Prosperous Temple Church consist of Elder George Lee, assistant pastor, and three Deacons (Deacon Ronnie Murray, Deacon Clarence Hackett, and Deacon James Hackett). Prosperous Temple also has three Missionaries: Felicia Hackett, Rosie

⁷ Victor Shumba, "The Role of Christian Churches in Entrepreneurial Stimulation," *The International Journal of Business & Management* 3, No. 7 (2015): 153.

⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁹ Mark Gorman, www.goodreads.com/markgormanlive (accessed August 20, 2019).

Murray, and Mary Primm. Other leadership consists of our Elect Lady Tasha Hackett, who is an evangelist and a preacher by right. Prosperous also has a host of different leadership positions, teachers, superintendents of Sunday school, pastor's aide, and financial officers.

Pastor Hackett will use this research to understand the role of leadership and the lack of female leadership roles at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ located in Northport, Alabama. There is much research that has to be done to understand the lack of female leadership. One comes to understand the debate about whether a woman is permitted to be a pastor continues to intensify. The argument according to Lin, is that women in many Christian cultures are told that men are strong and should lead the church.¹⁰

Problem Presented

The problem this project will address is the lack of female leadership in modern-day churches. Church leadership is gender-informed. The project will explore the problem by focusing on the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ, located in Northport, Alabama. Traditional values magnify the problem significantly, as one comes to understand this problem. Gender is a social, spatial construction perceived as “a matrix of identities, behaviors, and power relationships that are constructed by the culture of the society by sex.”¹¹

Consequently, some women rationalize that they should not assume top leadership roles in the church.¹² Many evangelicals believe there are passages in the Bible that prohibit women from taking up the primary leadership roles in the church. From a theological perspective, this can be interpreted as the norm at the time the Bible was written. However, it poses a moral dilemma as the Bible remains unclear on the particular roles that women should take up in the church. Such religious texts and the social status of women in the

¹⁰ Yu-Fen Lin, Chi-Sing Li, Beverly J. Irby, and Genevieve Brown. *"Exploring Asian Female Pastors' Leadership Roles in the Church: Using Deborah's Story."* The Qualitative Report 15, no. 6 (2010), 1431.

¹¹ Afeosemine Adogame. "I Am Married to Jesus"! the Feminization of New African Diasporic Religiosity." *Archives De Sciences Sociales des Religions* 53, no. 143 (2008), 133.

¹² *Ibid.*, 134.

secular world makes it noteworthy to understand the role of women in leadership at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ.

The traditional perception of women and their role in society, modern concepts of women empowerment, and religious teachings affect the modern indulgence of women in church leadership. The poor female representation in the leadership of the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ is an embodiment of a widespread problem affecting many institutions in the world. Women find it difficult to rise to leadership positions despite the steps made in addressing gender equality. In many churches, companies, and the political sphere, female representations in leadership positions remain low. It is hence necessary to understand the underlying cause of the phenomenon and devise a means that will provide a long-term solution to the problem.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to demonstrate the value and need for women in church leadership. This research paper will consider the theological and perceived factors informing women leadership at Prosperous Temple Church. The study will focus on church members (men and women), above eighteen years of age, in Prosperous Temple Church to obtain their views on church leadership. The congregants at Prosperous Temple Church will benefit from the study because they operate from an environment where leadership is not gendered. They will, thus, understand their roles and capabilities in church leadership and actively advocate for change. The firm stance and constant clamor against hundreds of thousands of women within its ranks are one of the significant issues that they have to contend with as they seek to use their strengths to advance their service and participation in a church.¹³ Women within the church ministry are no longer willing to accept

¹³ Mary Bernadette Little. "The Role of Women in the Church and Society." *Caribbean Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1991), 68.

the customary “standard approach” toward their leadership role.¹⁴ They have been sidelined for the long term, yet they can provide efficient leadership in whichever capacity. It is now time to accept the role of women in leadership and to offer them positions to showcase their leadership ability.

Basic Assumptions

One of the premises which this study makes is that men and women in the church will be honest in responding to the research questions. The debate about women in church leadership is related to that which is outside the church. Most of the people in the church might be having their perception about women's leadership borrowed from the discussions outside the church, but they shy away from raising their views and perceptions. This study seeks to ensure honesty through the confidentiality of the responses provided. The researcher will be the only one handling the responses, and no names will appear on the surveys.

Assurance of confidentiality through anonymity, consent, and the withdrawal process will increase the chances of the respondents being honest since they will perceive the researcher as having good intentions.¹⁵ Additionally, the researcher is a church pastor, and, therefore, the respondents might be compelled to be truthful in their responses.

Another assumption is that the respondents, especially women, will be willing to share and express their authentic experience on women's leadership in the church, especially with the researcher being a male. The researcher's position affects the research, especially accessing the field and respondents when there is a perception of sympathy to the situation. Respondents are unwilling to open up when they feel the researcher is not sympathetic and

¹⁴ Ibid., 69.

¹⁵ Fisher, St John, Brockington Daniel, Bunnefeld Nils, Duffy Rosaleen, Homewood Katherine, Jones PG Julia, Keane A., Milner-Gulland J. Eleanor, Nuno Ana, and Razafimanahaka J. "Research Ethics: Assuring Anonymity at the Individual Level May not be Sufficient to Protect Research Participants from Harm." *Biological Conservation* 196 (2016): 2.

will not help them get out of the situation.¹⁶ In this study, women need sympathy for not getting equality in the church through a leadership position. The researcher assumes that women respondents will perceive the pastor as sympathetic to their situation to provide authentic experiences and views. The survey will have a stage of convincing participants that the report will ensure equality in the church to make women perceive sympathy. Sympathy will, in turn, make the women supportive in giving reliable information.

This study also assumes that women in the Prosperous Temple Church of God are willing to lead. Willingness to lead is essential, especially to women who will serve as respondents in the study. If no qualified women are willing to lead, then the discourse about the lack of women in leadership positions becomes irrelevant. A lack of desire to lead means that the women cannot see anything wrong in the lack of leadership and will assume the few women servants in the church are enough. People, in general, have the push to grow in their life according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. About the fourth level, esteem needs, people have the urge for social status, and in the fifth level, there is the pressure to become what people are capable of in their life.¹⁷ In line with the theory, this study assumes that women in the Prosperous Temple Church of God are capable and willing to become leaders in the church.

In addition to willingness, the study assumes that there is a significant number of women in the church who have qualifications as leaders apart from just showing interest in leading. Leadership qualifications are different from academic ones, and highly educated people, as well as those with little or no education, can qualify for leadership, unlike in management. Qualifications involve having the pressure to serve first before being a leader

¹⁶ Roni, Berger. "Now I see it; now I don't: Researcher's Position and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative research*, 15, no. 2 (2015): 220.

¹⁷ Aishwarya Shahrawat and Renu Shahrawat. "Application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in a Historical Context: Case Studies of Four Prominent Figures." *Psychology* 8, no. 07 (2017): 939

and possessing characteristics that can influence others. Most of the women in the church have the internal pressure to serve the following teachings in the church, especially on Jesus, who was a servant. Every church member is supposed to emulate the life of Jesus Christ, including being servants. The position makes this study assume that women in the church have characteristics, which qualify them as leaders.

As one comes to understand the leadership perspective of women and the lack thereof, one understands the pressure one places on themselves to serve in a leadership position. Every church leader should emulate Jesus Christ. When women take up a church leadership position, they are pressured to deliver on the set objectives and projects. Women face more scrutiny from other church members compared to men, considering the perceptions held by societies towards women that they are men's helpers.

Definitions

To understand the various roles at play in the Prosperous Temple Church and within its denomination, it is essential to define some keywords for this study.

Archdeacon - One of the significant assistants to the church leader or priest in the administration of the church or a section of the church.¹⁸

Christian Egalitarianism - Equality in responsibility and authority between men and women in the church, where either gender can practice spiritual authority in the position of a clergy.¹⁹ Egalitarianism is the opposite of complementarianism, which views the roles and responsibilities in Christian leadership as categorized by gender.²⁰

¹⁸ Christopher, Irvine. "Canterbury Cathedral: Pilgrims and cathedrals as places of pilgrimage." *Theology* 118, no. 6 (2015): 425.

¹⁹ Peter, Jankowski J., Sandage J. Steven, Cornell Whitney Miriam, Bissonette Cheryl, Johnson J. Andy, Crabtree A. Sarah, and Jensen L. Mary. "Religious Beliefs and Domestic Violence Myths." *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (2018): 3.

²⁰ Jankowski, *Religious Beliefs and Domestic*, 4.

Christian feminism - An ideology that advances equality of men and women in leadership, socially, morally, and spiritually in a Christian perspective.²¹ Christian feminist exists in places where individual church members and leaders recognize women's values.

Church leadership - Church leadership can be defined as the process of influencing other people to work together to accomplish the desired purpose. Leadership is a process. Leadership does not just happen without effort. Leaders are not just people in positions of authority, leaders are people who do something.²²

Complementarianism - A theological view in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, that men and women have different but **complementary** roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, and religious leadership. The word "**complementary**" and its cognates are currently used to denote this view.²³

Deacon – A layman elected by a church with congregational polity to serve in worship, in pastoral care, and on administrative committees.

Evangelist – An individual who carries out mission work in teaching and preaching the word of God in and outside the church.²⁴

Gender hierarchy – The expression of men's power to lead and become the priority due to their perceived physical strength and the assumption that men are in control and possession of the family and societal wealth.²⁵

²¹ Magdalena, Świerczek. "The Dilemmas of Christian Feminism." *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law, and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II* 7, no. 2 (2017): 2.

²² www.christianitytoday.com

²³ www.definitions.net

²⁴ Timothy, Van Aarde A. "The Missional Church Structure and the Priesthood of all Believers (Ephesians 4: 7-16) in The Light of the Inward and Outward Function of the Church." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017): 8.

²⁵ Hannelie, Wood J. "Gender inequality: The Problem of Harmful, Patriarchal, Traditional, and Cultural Gender Practices in the Church." *HTS Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 2.

Leader - A senior member in the church first by volunteering and second by appointment to influence followers towards church objectives, which are different from management.²⁶

Leadership – A high position in an organization or group where the holder socially influences all or some of the members to voluntary participation in activities with a common objective.²⁷ In the church, the leadership position affects members towards knowing and following Jesus Christ.

Ministry - A Christian practice to show the glory of and faith in God through praying, worship, and also preaching the Word.²⁸ The prototype of ministry is the great commission and its purpose.

Missionary – A person sent on a religious mission, especially one sent to promote Christianity in a foreign country.

Ordination - A church practice through which an individual gets the power to carry out different ministerial ceremonies, functions, and rites, for example, officiating a marriage, after going through some training and commissioning by the head of the church.²⁹

Pastor – A shepherd: one that has the care of flocks and herds. A minister of the gospel who has the charge of a church and congregation, whose duty is to watch over the people of his charge, and instructs them in the sacred doctrines of the Christian religion. A senior pastor is the overall church leader. Notably, a church can have numerous leaders in various departments, for instance, children or youth pastor. The pastoring

²⁶ T. S., Nanjundeswaraswamy, and Swamy D. R. "Leadership Styles." *Advances in Management* 7, no. 2 (2014): 58.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Wood, *Gender Inequality*, 3.

²⁹ Jankowski, *Religious Beliefs and Domestic*, 4.

roles that do not amount to senior church leadership are synonymous with the words director and leader.

Patriarchy – This is a societal view that men are more superior to women, and everything else, including wealth, is under their protection and care.³⁰ In such a system, men dominate women in different roles related to social privilege, political and social leadership, property control, and moral authority.

Prophet – A person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God. A person who speaks for God or a deity, or by divine inspiration. The whole Word of God may, in this general sense, be spoken of as prophetic, inasmuch as it was written by men who received the revelation they communicated from God, no matter what its nature might be. The foretelling of future events was not necessary but only an incidental part of the prophetic office. Any one being a spokesman for God to man might thus be called a prophet.

Prophetess – A woman who speaks for God or a deity, or by divine inspiration. A woman who foretells future events. A woman who is a spokesperson of some doctrine, cause, or movement. The wife or female companion of a prophet. A female prophet, a woman who foretells future events, as Miriam, Huldah, Anna, in Exodus 15:20. Judges 4:4. Luke 2:36.³¹

Teacher – A Christian who guides others by enlightening them on biblical principles. For instance, a person in charge of children's ministry is a teacher.

Limitations and Delimitations

One of the study limitations is an overestimation of women leadership positions where the church members might count the number of women in the positions as compared to

³⁰ Wood, *Gender Inequality*, 2.

³¹ Wood, *Gender Inequality*, 2.

their influence. Some women hold leadership positions but do not have the power to make significant decisions. The push to have equality in society has caused men to place women in leadership positions with limited power, such that they cannot initiate negotiations or request anything from those they lead or their seniors.³² Societal expectations about women are that they should behave in particular ways; for example, talking less before men also limit their leadership exercises, which make men, their juniors to have more power despite their positions. The church has only a few women leaders in the church; however, their roles are just formalities that come without the ability to exercise full leadership roles due to society's perception and definition of the leadership style women should practice. Women are also subjected to prejudice and other unfair comparisons to men. They face harsher criticism when they make mistakes and are also scrutinized more. For example, when a woman makes a wrong decision in a leadership position, the reason for the bad decision is likely to be attributed to her gender rather than her position and role. As a result, the study is limited in that respondents might fail to recognize women in leadership positions as formalities and, therefore, overestimate the extent to which the church lacks women's leadership.

Another study limitation is that the church is young, which makes it have little push and procedures of elections that might see women get leadership positions. As a result, the church might not be lacking women's leadership to the extent respondents might think, but it is only a matter of time for the church to build structures of attaining leadership positions. A church like us will need time to grow to be fully effective. Young organizations have challenges in their structures, especially procedures of carrying out different activities, for example, the election in leadership positions. Leaders who get a position for the first time take longer before they leave for another position. Also, in most cases, people tend to make

³² Asha, Gipson N., Pfaff L. Danielle, Mendelsohn B. David, Catenacci T. Lauren, and Burke W. Warner. "Women and Leadership: Selection, Development, Leadership Style, and Performance." *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 53, no. 1 (2017): 35.

friends they know well when starting a project like an organization, business, or a church to help in leading various positions. For example, whenever a new president takes office, they go about hiring people they choose. These are usually people who have or have had a relationship with them. Later, they can select other people after the interaction. As a result, the study is limited in estimation to the extent the church lacks women's leadership positions due to the time it has been in existence that makes it hard to assume that members have failed to elect women.

The study is also limited in the quality of data collected and consequential findings because the researcher is the pastor in the church, which will provide respondents. Members might be shy to claim that the church lacks women leadership to avoid defaming or showing the pastor that they do not like the church leadership. Organization members are expected to be loyal to their leaders and support them in whatever decisions and actions they take. In the church, that loyalty is more because members believe that God elected pastors and their leadership decisions to have women or not is God directed. The respondents will be shy to paint the real picture on surveys, which will be required to state the extent to which they feel that women do not have a chance to be leaders in Prosperous Temple Church. As a result, some surveys which might appear to show that respondents are not loyal will not receive very accurate responses.

This study is also limited by the unconscious gender biases of the respondents. Most people, as a result of the long patriarchy in the society and some confusing Bible verses about women's leadership, have accepted women's subordination as the accepted tradition. Women are also predisposed to be subordinate due to their physiological differences from men. For example, the issue of the menstrual cycle is a natural physiological process. However, there is a traditional belief that a woman experiencing her menstrual flow is unclean. It affects the respondents' judgment concerning the issue and elicits a bias against women. As a result, they

are having deficient levels of consciousness to women's humiliation and men's domination.³³ The unconsciousness works hand in hand with gender stereotypes that women should not hold leadership positions. In this study, most of the Prosperous Temple Church members are unconscious about women's equality in leadership. However, those who are conscious accept the lack of women in leadership as a way of life due to passed down stereotypes. They take it as usual that men should be leading. In that case, their perception is that the few women leaders are many and privileged. They will not define the few or none as lacking.

Gender unconsciousness will affect responses to the surveys by assuming that there is no lack. Perceptions and attitudes of both men and women can play a significant role in the culture of an organization. Women face monumental challenges in their quest to take part in church leadership. In that regard, women can get to the middle management level but then get bottlenecked there where men have a clear advantage in getting promoted.³⁴ A 2015 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center suggests that while many people may say that women are equally qualified, there is still a gap in women attaining top leadership positions.³⁵

The research will not be generalizable to other societies and churches. The debate on women's leadership in the church takes different shapes depending on the society and the church. There are those churches that have interpreted the Bible to believe that women should not lead while others believe that they should lead.

On the other hand, churches operate in different societies, including those about women's equality. The societies impact churches' views about women's leadership. Perceptions of gendered leadership are influenced by a person's geographical location, which means that people have a different perception of women's leadership in the church, depending

³³ Susan C. Herring, and Marken A. James. "Implications of Gender Consciousness for Students in Information Technology." *Women's studies*, 37, no. 3 (2010): 230.

³⁴ Angelina Kiser I. T. "Workplace and Leadership Perceptions between Men and Women." *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 30, no. 8 (2015): 599.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 601.

on their locations.³⁶ As a result, the surveys collected will only reflect Alabama society's state and perception in which the Prosperous Temple Church of God is located and its interpretation of the Bible. The findings will apply within Alabama society and, to an extent, some churches which might be having similar denominational views and biblical interpretation about women leadership with the Prosperous Temple Church of God.

The selected population, one church, further limits the generalization of the data to Prosperous Temple Church because of the teachings which the members receive from the pastor. Pastors influence members to think in a particular direction, especially those who belong to that particular church. Members conform to the pastor's ideologies and argue according to the teachings, including interpreting the Bible. The Prosperous Temple Church is not an exception whereby members follow instructions from the pastor. As a result, surveys reflect specific teachings from the pastor as compared to the average view of several churches spread in more extensive regions.

The purpose of this research is to show that women are just as important in leadership, and their ministry contributions are much appreciated. They can provide effective leadership when presented with an opportunity and given a conducive atmosphere to apply their leadership skills. Another objective is to get a better understanding of the role of women in the church. The study does not address the reasons why there is a lack of women leadership in the church. The study is not, therefore, enough to address the problem of women leadership in the church part from showing their importance since it does not give reasons why there are none or few. It is only applicable when related to other studies that provide reasons why churches do not support women's leadership. The reasons are usually biblical or traditional and can be determined by a survey of adults in the church.

³⁶ Wood, *Gender Inequality*, 1.

The scope of this study is limited to church members. It does not seek views from those women who stopped going to church. As a result, it is not generalizable to the whole society, especially women who might not be going to church because of the failure of men to recognize their ability to lead. Some women whom I know have left the church they attended due to the feeling that men are not giving them a chance to lead and want to dominate everything. They developed the perception that the church does not worship God in truth due to the failure to allow gender equality as God wants through the interpretation of the Bible verses related to women's leadership. As a result, this study does not apply to them because it does not collect information from those people outside and not invested in the church.

This study will focus on women who have academic qualifications and want to become leaders. The qualifications should not be necessary for leadership but at least higher education, which provides them with exposure to leadership. Those are women who, in addition to having the drive to become leaders, qualify for the positions. The study leaves out those women who have the urge to serve as leaders but are limited by their academic qualifications. The researcher will be analyzing why there are no women in church leadership about their available qualified women who are also willing. It follows that results are only generalizable on women with qualifications as leaders in the church.

Thesis Statement

Women are foundationally part of the church. Women are just as important to the ministry as the men of God are. Their role has been established before the foundation of the earth. Women are foundational to the spreading of the message of Jesus. Paul recognized their contributions in Romans 16:1-5 as he commended Phebe, Priscilla, and Aquila Paul called them his helpers in Christ Jesus. The apostle also gave greetings to the church that was in their house. Women play crucial roles in the church. They participate in auxiliary roles to the church leadership with a significant emphasis on prophesying and teaching, but should

not become church pastors. This study will research biblical and cultural data to increase the level of female leadership in the Prosperous Temple Church in Alabama. The researcher will fulfill the objective by analyzing the opinions of church members (men and women) in Prosperous Temple Church alongside biblical and theological foundations.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

Modernity has resulted in increased advocacy for gender equality. Women in society have equal rights to men, and they can hold positions that were held by males during the colonial period. However, Bible passages position gender as a limiting factor for women's participation in church and societal aspects. The Bible presents a man as the leader and a woman as a follower. However, some theologians have argued that the Bible was written within the context of the societies at the time of its publication. In that case, the societies that have come after the Bible was written possess differing views on women's participation in ministry leadership. In that light, previous studies have zeroed on the inclusion of women in church leadership, with some researchers exploring the highest position that a woman can rise to in a church. Modern-day churches, particularly in the United States of America, have attempted to balance biblical principles on the composition of church leadership and the aspects of gender equality. An analysis of the previous studies on the issue – women's participation in church leadership – is crucial in structuring and streamlining the focus of this study.

Literature Review

Institutional Structures

The lack of female leadership at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ in Alabama is occasioned by institutional barriers like in a majority of other churches in the country and across the world. Modern-day church is churches that promote liberal Christian theology and defends liberal positions on a wide range of issues. Modern-day churches adopt women's leadership from biblical perspectives. Women leadership functions as a role model for their subordinates. Notably, 1 Timothy 2: 8-15 is used as a reference point by most churches when deciding on whether to accept or denounce women's leadership within their

institutions.¹ The verse implies that women should be excluded from pastoral roles and other senior positions in a church. In that regard, churches that base their decisions on 1 Timothy 2:1-15 feel compelled by the Bible not to accept women to take up leadership positions.

Petties undertook an investigative study on the biblical perspective of inclusion of women in church leadership by arguing that little progress had been made to bridge the knowledge gap between the scholarly community and central truths.² Petties pointed out that all types of churches (Protestant, Catholic, orthodox, conservative, and liberal) should have an agreement on the truths in women's inclusion in leadership.³ Paul's purpose when writing the text to Timothy was to encourage and clarify issues. However, modern-day churches and theologians had misinterpreted the verse, thus, creating differing understanding as witnessed to the restrictions that women face in church leadership.

Importantly, the Bible shares stories and experiences of people that lived within specific cultural setups. All the ideas written in the Bible are not meant to instruct Christians on what to do; instead, some ideas are to guide them on what not to do. In that regard, Petties explored the views presented by scholars on the verse and the conflict that arises in literature, considering that some scholars support the exclusion of women, while others argue that women should be included in church leadership.⁴ Petties, therefore, concluded the investigative study by arguing that the cultures that are described at the time Paul was writing to Timothy did not entrench gender equality.⁵ As such, it was the prevailing cultural context that dictated that men should take the leading position while women would-be followers.

¹ Vivian A. Petties, "A Biblical Perspective On Women In Leadership: A Fresh Look at 1 Timothy 2: 8 -15," *Biblical Perspectives* (2008): 2.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

Churches should, therefore, avoid creating institutional barriers to women seeking leadership positions in churches by referring them to 1 Timothy 2.

Audette, Kwakwa, and Weaver also point out the discussion on institutional structures that hinder women's leadership in churches in their research paper. Previous studies have found that women are more religious and liberal than men. Audette, Kwakwa, and Weaver conducted an explorative study to determine the causes of underlying gender gaps in church leadership.⁶ They used data from a national database on American congregants and adherents to answer their research questions. The American church influences the political and social aspects of society. Importantly, the political and social worlds are conservative and have allowed women the opportunity to rise to higher leadership positions. This statement is true because it is seen in practice daily. There are one hundred and six women that will be serving in congress.

Additionally, churchgoing women are less liberal than women who do not go to churches but more liberal than churchgoing men. However, a majority of American churches are conservative, and they argue that they exclude women in leadership positions so that they can abide by the biblical principles.⁷ The researchers found that institutional structures adopted by American churches are the most significant impediment for women's ideological influence and contribution to church leadership.⁸ Women are excluded (formally and informally) from church leadership. In the events where women are allowed to take up partial leadership positions, the congregants remain conservative. In that case, the study found that the large number of women attending American churches and the few that get to leadership

⁶ Andre P. Audette, Maryann Kwakwa, and Christopher L. Weaver, "Reconciling The God and Gender Gaps: The Influence of Women In Church Politics," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6, No. 4 (2018): 683.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 684.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 691.

positions have not succeeded in instituting a liberal approach because of the institutional limitations.

Women face monumental challenges in society and within their religion. The Southern Hemisphere – Africa, Asia, and Latin America – houses two-thirds of the world's Christians.⁹ In her study, Ma referred to the Christians in the Southern part of the world as the 'church of the global south.' She sought to understand the role that women in the global south could contribute to within the local and global settings. Ma's study was motivated by gendered practices in local churches that saw an increased number of women not participating in church leadership and the development of Christianity. Ma found that the global south had consistently disregarded the positive impacts that women could have on Christianity and church development.¹⁰ As a result, women took a back seat in church growth. Ma's study used a phenomenological approach, where she reflected on her personal experiences in her intellectual journey. However, she was quick to point out that her journey was not a model for Christian women in the global south, considering that she was still in the making. Importantly, Ma felt that the impact she had on Christianity could offer numerous lessons for other women in the region.¹¹ Ma had engaged in numerous missions in diverse areas in academics. The study was prompted by the structural barriers that Christianity institutions had erected for women. Ma, therefore, encouraged women to understand their uniqueness and use diverse approaches that would shape global Christianity without necessarily taking up the leading role of a pastor or church elders.¹² The study indicates that women have had to contend with institutional barriers that limit their impact on church

⁹ Julie Ma, "The Role of Christian Women in the Global South," *Transformation*, 31, No. 3 (2014): 195.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹² *Ibid.*, 204.

leadership. However, they could take up other seemingly insignificant roles that have a widespread impact on church growth.

The institutional hindrances are reducing women's participation in church leadership, as explained by Ma, Audette, and his colleagues, and Petties are compounded by state and national governments' policies on church leadership. Ly conducted a qualitative study in Vietnam to investigate the impact of state policies on women's leadership in evangelical churches in the country.¹³ Ly obtained secondary and primary data from thirty-eight Vietnamese male and female church leaders between February and May 2016. The study participants had served in church leadership between 2014 and 2016. Ly conducted in-depth interviews with the participants. The study obtained perceptions of church leaders on the impacts of slate laws and policies on gender qualities.¹⁴

Vietnam has gender laws that require equal opportunities for all people within the labor market. However, the government controls religious groups and their activities. In that case, religious policies cause a reduction of women's participation in leadership by more than half.¹⁵ The church has failed in upholding gender policies. The government is insincere in its quest for achieving gender equality in society, considering that it requires restrictions in certain parts of the society, such as the churches. Ly also argued that the church had not played its role in seeking equality because it ought to have structured strategic activism that would compel the government to recognize both genders in all spheres of life.¹⁶

Ly's study reflects the challenges that Christian women face because of challenges that are beyond their control. The churches they serve occasion institutional challenges while

¹³ Le Ngoc Bich Ly, "The Impact Of State Religious Policies on Christian Women's Leadership Status In Vietnam: The Case of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam Since 1975," *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20, No. 2 (2019): 111.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

the governments create restrictive policies. In that regard, women live in liberal societies, but when they go to churches, they are forced to confine and observe conservative policies. It, therefore, means that the church and the government of the day have not collaborated in achieving a balance and seamless observance of policies.

Challenges Faced by Women in Church Leadership

The post-biblical era continues to be characterized by a constant disregard of women's participation in church leadership. The ignorance of the impact that women can have on church leadership experienced in the twenty-first-century churches is informed by the patriarchal society in the Old Testament. Though the situation – lack of female leadership – is pronounced in the United States, it is exhibited highly in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁷ The research found that women played significant roles in the church.

Rugwiji and Masoga's study explored the church's position on women's leadership by focusing on the Baptist Church, Catholic Church, and the Anglican church.¹⁸ The three churches are dominant in Sub-Saharan Africa and are perceived to have stable institutional structures, unlike the evangelical churches. Importantly, women may be willing to participate in church leadership, but the church may not offer a conducive environment. Rugwiji and Masoga's study is, therefore, crucial in determining the causes of women not taking up leadership positions.

Furthermore, the study found that churches did not value women's participation in leadership. More than 80% of the pastors and senior church leaders were male.¹⁹ Besides, society did not also support women's leadership in the churches. In that case, women faced

¹⁷ T T Rugwiji and M. A. Masoga, "The Quest for Gender Equality In The Bible: Indegenous Knowledge Perspectives On The Church's Position Towards Women And Leadrship In Africa," *African Journals Online*, 15, No. 2 (2017): 3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

restrictions due to cultural differences from the church and the society, thus, causing them to remain as followers.

In the United States, gender issues that limit women's participation in church leadership could be compounded by race. The United States has a multicultural population, and diversity could also impact church leadership. Smarr, Disbennett-Lee, and Hakim conducted a qualitative study to investigate black clergywomen's experiences in ministry leadership and the meanings they developed from their experiences.²⁰ The study pointed out that enrollment to theological schools has increased with gender and race; education is not a significant barrier. However, black clergywomen experience humiliation and subjugation due to their race and gender. An example would be that of Dr. Mattie Moss-Clarck. She was penalized for allowing her daughters to participate in the Grammy's. With this decision, she was summoned to the board of directors and was ridiculed. In as much, she did not participate with her daughters to keep the integrity of another man.

Smarr and his colleagues interviewed black clergywomen on the obstacles they faced in ministry leadership and how they developed meaning from their experiences.²¹ Black clergywomen faced more gender and race discrimination when seeking and serving in ministry leadership in the seminary and theology schools. Unlike other races, black clergywomen learned from their experiences and did not perceive anything offensive.²² They were used to gender and race discrimination and, therefore, only focused on the lessons from each experience. The church and its ministries align their doctrines to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

²⁰ Kimberly Neims Smarr, Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, and Amy Cooper Hakim, "Gender And Race In Ministry Leadership: Experiences Of Black Clergywomen," *Religions*, 9, No. 12 (2018): 379.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 380.

The study concluded that education in the seminary and theology schools guided a majority of black clergywomen in responding to the challenges that they faced. The researchers concluded that theology schools should equip their students with conflict management skills so that they can address the challenges that they face in practice.²³ Besides, churches should appreciate the unique contributions that women from different races can have on church growth. The study pointed out that leadership could take diverse forms, and not only pastoring is conceptualized by a majority of believers.

Bunnett explored the evolution of women pastors in mainstream protestant churches. According to Bunnett, women serving in pastoral departments in protestant denominations are motivated by their ‘call’ to service.²⁴ They argue that they have a call for serving in the pastoral department, but despite their increase, they face challenges compared to men. Bennett's study investigated the challenges that female pastors in protestant churches faced and the counteractive measures they applied to address the challenges.²⁵ The study used the Presbyterian Church, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, American Baptist Church, and Christian Church Disciples of Christ.²⁶

Bunnett applied purposive sampling to identify one female pastor from the seven churches and sought their opinion using a semi-structured interview. The study also sampled eight additional church leaders – two professors, two male leaders, two lay leaders, and two female leaders.²⁷ The data collected indicated that female leaders in Protestant churches faced challenges from peers, the congregation, and the public. Rising to the leadership position was

²³ Smarr, Disbennett-Lee, and Hakim, "Gender And Race," 381.

²⁴ Rita G. Burnett, "The Evolution of Women Pastors in Mainline Protestant Denominations," *Western Kentucky University Dissertations* (2017): 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

also a challenging undertaking. In that case, the women may have the call to service in church leadership, complete theological education but face challenges of acceptance by their congregants and peers.

The protestant churches are not as restrictive as the traditional churches. However, the gendered church leadership is also entrenched in the institutions. Bunnett recommended that the churches could ease the challenges faced by women leaders through consistent mentorship.²⁸ However, the mentorship would address the problem from one perspective. The source of the challenge – congregants and the public – would remain unchanged and, therefore, they (challenges) would persist.

Churches in the United States have established community organizations, including schools, to serve disadvantaged locals. Previous studies indicate that men dominate church-related organizations. Scott undertook a study to investigate the perceptions of Christian women leaders in church-related organizations.²⁹ The limitations that women face in church leadership is not only in pastoring and senior church roles but in all aspects of leadership. In that case, gender discrimination against women's leadership is entrenched in society. However, in the recent past, women are taking up leadership positions, but men still dominate the area.

Scott investigated whether role incongruity was an obstacle for women leaders in church-based non-governmental organizations.³⁰ He applied causal-comparative methodology in examining role incongruity within the Protestant non-profit organizations. Participants in the study completed a descriptive index and provided additional demographic information. Importantly, role congruity posits that a more substantial overlap of a person's

²⁸ Burnett, "Evolution of Women Pastors," 72.

²⁹ Halee Scott, "Perceptions of Christian Women Leaders In Church-Related Organizations," *Research On Educational Ministry*, 11, Vol. 1 (2014): 53.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

perceived characteristics and a job role results in increased perceived competence in that role. Therefore, role incongruity results in negative perceptions and discrimination in a given role. Scott felt that the perception of role congruity for the women serving in various leadership positions in non-profit organizations affiliated to the church would inform the society's response towards them.³¹

Importantly, Scott's study reported that role congruity was one of the primary obstacles women faced in their leadership.³² However, the challenge (role congruity) was also identified among male leaders, but it was not as pronounced as female leaders. In that case, American society perceived women negatively because they perceived that their characteristics did not align with the group's social roles. Women faced role incongruity, thus, receiving adverse reactions from their peers and the public. The role incongruity impacted women's perception of their capability. As a result, a reduced number of women sought to serve in leadership positions because of the hostilities they received.

Women Ordination

Ordination entails the process of consecrating an individual to elevate them to the position of a clergy. An ordained person can perform various religious rites and ceremonies. Ordination, therefore, happens after a search and determination that a person possesses the desired qualities to serve in church leadership. Dei and Osei-Bonsu conducted a study reflecting on the theological reflections of the female ordination debate.³³ Dei and Osei-Bonsu's focused on a literature review to determine the appropriate approach that women's ordination should follow.

³¹ Scott, "Women Leaders In Church-Related Organizations," 56.

³² Ibid., 58.

³³ Daniel Dei and Osei-Bonsu, Robert, "The Female Ordination Debate: Theological Reflections," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry*, 11 (2015): 34.

Dei and colleague's study discussed the complementarian and egalitarian approaches. Egalitarians argue that Christianity should be based on equality. In that case, both genders should have equal opportunities for ordination. Ordained women should, therefore, perform authorities and responsibilities that are similar to those of ordained men. Egalitarians recommend that churches should adopt biblical equality. Complementarianism posits that men and women have differing roles in Christianity.³⁴ Importantly, the view indicates that men and women have complementary roles in religious leadership, family life, and society. In that regard, complementarians recommend that ordinations only happen for men because women will serve in other complementary service positions. The differing views presented by egalitarians and complementarians have created varied structures in the twenty-first-century churches and increased the challenges women face.

Dei and Osei-Bonsu's study concluded that no theological, biblical, or traditional approaches should exclude women from ministry.³⁵ In that case, the focus in women's ordination should not be on egalitarian or complementarianism but the unique capabilities exhibited by a church leader. Churches should, therefore, develop structures for ordaining their leaders. The structures should not curtail gender equality but should focus on interrogating the leadership skills, evangelism, and willingness in service. Women experience challenges in ordination because a majority of churches use the complementarianism approach.

The ordination of women debate has persisted for centuries in the United States. In a majority of the instances, the ordination debate has caused differences among the congregants and church leaders and resulted in the splitting of churches. The ease of establishing new churches in the United States has offered a lifeline for people with opposing views to

³⁴ Dei and Osei-Bonsu, "Female Ordination Debate," 37.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

women's ordination to women leaders. In his study, Miller argued that women's ordination was an emotive issue that has risked church growth in the Americas.³⁶

Importantly, the egalitarian and complementarian views have dominated the debate. However, Miller argued that the decision to ordain a woman should be informed by biblical teaching, but not the cultural grounds.³⁷ However, culture should serve to offer lessons in the process and inform the ultimate process. The Reformed churches, Restoration churches, Pentecostal, and Sacramental churches have experienced challenges in their position on women's ordination.³⁸ Notably, the churches have limited women's participation in church leadership activities and relied on complementarianism when a significant portion of their congregations advocated for egalitarianism. In the long run, church leadership divisions have persisted for centuries as women accuse men of dominating the positions.

Miller analyzed the history of the American church as derived lessons from the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) church. He recommended that the approach to women ordination policies adopted in American churches should follow the principles applied by the SDA churches.³⁹ He argued that the SDA church had differentiated itself by maintaining an unwavering approach since its formation. Importantly, the approach appreciates biblical guidelines while appreciating cultural aspects. Besides, the SDA's women ordination position appreciates the unique capabilities of women and the diverse roles that they can play in the church. In that regard, women can serve as pastors in the SDA church, but a majority of them serve in complementary roles. Importantly, the women are not forced to those positions, but they choose the position to serve based on their spirituality, capability, and calling.

³⁶ Nicholas Miller, "The Ordination of Women in the American Church," *Andrews University - Faculty Publications*, 150 (2019): 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

Women Experiences in Church Leadership

Though women face significant challenges when rising to leadership positions, a significant number have maintained their focus and struggled to the point of securing the position of a bishop. Gundry and Beck presented two views of the women's experiences in church leadership. While a majority of the women in modern-day churches appreciate participation in church service and leadership, a section of others believes that men should dominate leadership positions.⁴⁰ The women who perceive that they are capable of leading pointed that they experience despise and ignorance from men⁴¹. Whenever they raise ideas or vie for a position, their views are not considered. As a result, women who attempt to join church leadership experience psychological problems, which could progress to depression. A majority of such women end up leaving the church⁴². Tunheim and DuChene explored the experiences of women bishops serving in the Evangelical Lutheran churches.⁴³ The research allowed women to reflect on their professional journeys and share experiences. Lutherans account for approximately 70.5 million Christians globally, with their numbers experiencing an upsurge in Africa and Asia.⁴⁴ However, only 14% of the Lutheran bishops are female. Importantly, the number has only grown by 4% since 2010.⁴⁵ However, the increase points to a changing trend with the church, where it is accepting female leadership in the top positions.

Tunheim and DuChene pointed out that the position of a bishop is complex, considering that it requires the position holder to oversee more than one hundred and fifty

⁴⁰ Stanley N. Gundry and James R. Beck. *Two Views On Women In Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 72.

⁴¹ Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Westmont: InterVersity Press, 2009) 106.

⁴² Gundry and Beck. *Two Views*. 77.

⁴³ Katherine A. Tunheim and Mary Kay DuChene, "The Professional Journeys And Experiences In Leadership Of Evangelical Lutheran Church In America Women Bishops," *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 18, No. 2 (2016): 213.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

churches and pastors. However, more than 50% of the congregant in evangelical Lutheran churches are female. In that case, the 14% female bishop does not represent gender composition.⁴⁶ An increasing number of women have entered the labor market; hence, an increase in representation in church leadership should appreciate the changing trends. However, leadership in Christianity should not be pegged to activism and searching for an equal position for male and female followers. Instead, the assignment of leadership roles should appreciate the capabilities of an individual while recognizing the composition of the congregation.

The study explored the journeys that women had undergone before they became bishops. More than 70% of the women interviewed received spouse support, had mentors, and possessed leadership competencies.⁴⁷ The women underwent leadership development through theology and higher education institutions. Importantly, they were mentored through the process, with a majority of them receiving mentorship from females. The church presents marriage and family as essential institutions. The study indicates that family union also plays a role in women's success in leadership, considering that most women received support from their spouses throughout their leadership journey.

Evangelical churches have informed the political dialogues in the United States. However, the organizational structure of the evangelical churches is informed by the patriarchal model. A patriarchal model is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in political leadership roles, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property. In that case, the model occasions internal and structural challenges for women seeking leadership. Besides, every person in the church plays a unique role in the unity and progress of the institution. Christopher Bishop investigated gender equality in evangelical

⁴⁶ Tunheim and DuChene, "Lutheran Church In America Women Bishops," 206

⁴⁷ Ibid., 207.

churches in the United States to determine the experiences of women in church leadership.⁴⁸ Though women dominate in service, executive leadership positions are held by men. The evangelical churches have departments where women serve as leaders. They influence the decisions in those departments and advocate for their adoption at the overall church leadership. Besides, when males are the leaders in the evangelical churches, their wives also become leaders by default. The study found that wives of pastors lead the evangelical churches in numerous spheres of their choice.⁴⁹ While some women view the pastors' wives' participation in leadership as a crucial aspect in women's leadership, others feel that they lack the designated mandate that characterizes leadership.

Bishop's study found that gender influences the roles that women play in evangelical churches.⁵⁰ Women in these churches participate in auxiliary positions such as music, ushering, and planning. In instances where leaders are elected, women do not gather enough support from congregants. Despite having the desired qualifications for leadership and the zeal to lead the church, women in evangelical churches face challenges because of the patriarchal model applied in the churches.

Women Leadership Potential

Women, just like men, possess leadership potential. In contemporary society, women have taken up executive positions in companies. Importantly, they (women) have steered the companies to high levels of performance. In the church, the challenge for most women with leadership potential has been capturing the leadership position. Davis conducted a biographical analysis to determine the perspectives of male and female leaders from the

⁴⁸ Christopher Bishop, "Exploring Gender Roles and Gender Equality Within The Evangelical Church," *Chapman University Digital Commons - Dissertations and Theses* (2019): 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

moral, social, and religious perspectives.⁵¹ Davis intended to identify the ideologies and identities that women leaders experienced in church ministry. The study involved twelve church leaders (six males and six females) who served in various leadership positions in different churches.

The study found that organizational culture informed the approaches that churches used towards female leadership. However, the women in the study pointed out that they challenged the patriarchal power and approaches in the churches. The women advocated for their inclusion in the leadership and caused disruptions and interpersonal conflicts. In certain instances, Davis reported that the women were accused of dividing the churches. Davis reported that the inclusion of women in church leadership follows a struggle for gender equality.⁵² Modern-day churches are torn between gender and competence, with a majority of them focusing on gender more than on competence when making leadership decisions. Besides, the organizational cultures adopted in the churches represented in the study are informed and propelled by males. In that case, they do not appreciate the inclusion of women in leadership. The twenty-first-century church is characterized by gender bias, with most members, including women, perceiving that men are better church leaders. Importantly, women are an enemy to themselves in their quest for taking up church leadership.⁵³ The debates on God's kingdom culture and the significance of the 'voice/call' occasioned the challenges women faced in church leadership. Many Christians liked the kingdom culture to the patriarchal model, thus, not considering women in leadership. They also questioned whether women could have a call to church service; thus, they doubted the significance of the 'voice' that informed women's leadership.

⁵¹ Nicole L. Davis, "Women In Ministry: How Conflicts Between God's Purpose And Church Doctrine Impact The Efficacy Of Female Church Leaders," *Nova Southeastern University Theses and Dissertations* (2019): 16.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 65.

A study conducted by Player, Moura, Leite, Abrams, and Tresh investigated the differences in leadership potential and leadership performance among men and women who sought and took up leadership positions.⁵⁴ The study included two hundred and ninety-seven participants and examined the value that Christians attached to leadership potential and leadership performance among male and female candidates for church leadership. The study used a case study approach and focused on understanding the perceptions of study participants on the issue of investigation.

Leadership was valued more by the study participants than leadership performance. However, the esteem for leadership potential only applied to male candidates. Female church leaders were preferred only when they demonstrated leadership performance, but not leadership potential. In that case, the player and his colleagues concluded that women faced an overlooked potential effect because it benefited men and hindered women from participating in leadership positions.⁵⁵ A person can only show their performance if they are offered an opportunity. In that case, when women are denied an opportunity to show their leadership skills, yet their potential is overlooked, they are left out for positions that they could fill. The system favors men because their potential is preferred to their performance.⁵⁶ In that regard, the differing standards when considering male and female leaders for church leadership explains the low number of women serving in leadership.

Maxton undertook an analytical study to offer a differing opinion on women's leadership.⁵⁷ Many researchers viewed women's leadership to mean pastoring, bishops,

⁵⁴ Abigail Player, Georgina Randsley de Moura, Ana C. Leite, Dominic Abrams, and Fatima Tresh, "Overlooked Leadership Potential: The Preferences for Leadership Potential In Job Candidates Who Are Men Versus Women," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10 (2019): 755.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Esther Maxton, "The Contributions of British Female Missionaries and Japanese Bible Women To The Ministry Of The Japan Evangelistic Band In The Early 20th Century," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, 35, No. 1 (2018): 45.

executive leaders in a church organization. However, Maxton explored other aspects of leadership that could cause change. In that case, Maxton's study analyzed the roles played by Japanese evangelistic bands in the early twentieth century in overseas missions. Women could serve in diverse areas within the ministry because they have the potential to change society.

The British Holiness Movement in the early twentieth century prioritized evangelism to social change.⁵⁸ During the time, the world was undergoing social reform, and it moved towards industrialization. The holiness movement felt that societies needed evangelism so that they could understand God and embrace His ways. Female missionaries guided their target populations through social reforms. Though the female missionaries actively participated in mission activities, males dominated the leadership positions.⁵⁹ The Japan Evangelistic Band (JEB) was motivated by the British Holiness Movement. In their case (JEB), it did not include female leaders. They adopted the cultures that were prevailing at the time in Christianity.

In the study, Maxton reported that JEB engaged in social initiatives that allowed the band to contribute to spiritual and social transformation. The women appreciated the roles they were playing in the band by driving social and spiritual transformation. The active participation of females in the band and mission created a foundation for Japanese female leadership.⁶⁰ Importantly, the participation of women in Japanese industries resulted in success in the global arena. Maxton, therefore, argued that women could serve in diverse positions within the ministry, where they would cause the change they desired.⁶¹ She felt that

⁵⁸ Maxton, "The Contributions of British Female Missionaries," 45.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶¹ Maxton, "Contributions of British Female Missionaries," 54.

women should also not be limited to specific roles because they have the potential of driving change.

Perspectives on Female Church Leadership

Women seeking leadership in churches should possess a positive social identity about themselves and their followers. Nell conducted a study on the perspectives of potential female church leaders on their social identity.⁶² The study recruited female students in a postgraduate theology program in South Africa, where church leadership has been patriarchal.

Nell's study concluded that women seeking church leadership must form new identities and appreciate the environment in which the church operates.⁶³ In that regard, female leaders should respect and be respected by the communities. Nell argued that leadership and respect work offer a supporting role to each other.⁶⁴ In that case, the aspiring female leaders should distinguish themselves through respect for self and others. The study also found out that women must find a sense of belonging. In that case, their relationships should appreciate the needs of society while reinforcing their sense of belonging. They should identify with the people through their distinguished service. Besides, their relationships should exhibit leadership qualities so that church members and leaders can consistently assign them leadership roles.

Furthermore, Nell's study indicated that women should identify with servant leadership. The women who have a calling for service should dedicate their time and efforts to serving others. Importantly, they might not receive recognition from the first instance, but over time, they will cause change and receive acceptance in roles previously held by men.

⁶² I. A. Nell, "Women On Leadership? Perspectives From Postgraduate Theology Students Through The Lenses Of Social Identity," *Acta Theologica*, 35, No. 1 (2015): 117.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

Besides, their service should be in their talented areas. In this case, a woman could lead in evangelism, music, the teaching of children, or even discipleship. They should identify an area and perfect their service in that particular area. Nell recommended that women should perceive themselves as equal leaders to men.⁶⁵ They should, therefore, use appropriate and democratic means of seeking leadership as opposed to challenging the existing leadership and causing conflicts.

The minimal or lack of female leadership in churches have occasioned challenges in the preparation of aspiring leaders. Newkirk and Cooper investigated the preparation of female leaders in the Baptist church. The study was motivated by an understanding that effective spiritual leaders could cause positive changes in institutions and church members.⁶⁶ Newkirk and colleagues found that an increased number of African Americans were heeding their call to service in the Baptist church. However, the training and mentorship they went through were insufficient, thus, reducing their challenges of succeeding in church leadership.

The researchers recruited ten African Americans and interviewed them on their education and social backgrounds and the support they had received in their quest to become preachers, counselors, teachers, and leaders in the church. The study's focus was to determine the preparation that they underwent before appointment to leadership. Newkirk and Cooper reported that most church ministers at the Baptist church did not desire to serve as mentors.⁶⁷ They appreciated that mentorship improved the effectiveness of leadership, but they did not perceive their capability to serve as mentors.

The study participants reported that they took up leadership positions following their self-motivation and inspiration. The women served as teachers, preachers, and counselors,

⁶⁵ Nell, "Women On Leadership?" 128.

⁶⁶ Desiree Newkirk and Bruce S. Cooper, "Preparing Women For Baptist Church Leadership: Mentoring Impact on Beliefs and Practices Of Female Ministers," *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 22, No. 3 (2013): 325.

⁶⁷ Newkirk and Cooper, "Women For Baptist Church Leadership," 339.

and few accepted that they would take up mentorship duties. A section of women did not support their colleagues to take up leadership positions.⁶⁸ In that regard, Newkirk's study aligned to other studies that had found women being enemies of their progress in their leadership as a significant challenge.⁶⁹ Women, therefore, fail to ascend to leadership positions because they do not receive the necessary guidance. Modern-day churches could improve women's success in leadership by creating mentorship and nurturing programs to aid them in leadership development.

Research Gaps

Previous studies have focused on the challenges women face in church leadership. They have explored the experiences and perspectives of women and society on leadership. They have analyzed the structural and institutional barriers that have hindered women from ascending to power in religious organizations. Besides, they have explored the potential that women show in church service and the patriarchal model applied in most churches, which does not appreciate their unique capabilities.

However, past studies in the area have not considered the initiatives that women take towards taking up leadership positions. The literature has also not explored the men's perspective on female church leadership. The studies reviewed above have proved that some women hold to patriarchal beliefs and do not support other women in leadership positions. However, considering that men hold more than half of the leadership positions in American churches, it would be essential to understand the views men have towards female leadership. Besides, women have risen to policy-making levels in governments and could influence the

⁶⁸ Newkirk and Cooper, "Women For Baptist Church Leadership," 341.

⁶⁹ Nicole L. Davis, "Women In Ministry: How Conflicts Between God's Purpose And Church Doctrine Impact The Efficacy Of Female Church Leaders. 19.

change in limiting policies. In that case, previous research has not considered the effect that women in contemporary society have had on church leadership.

Theological Foundations

The lack of female leadership in the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ is a local church issue, and the local church is built on God's word. Thus, it is pertinent to observe some pertinent passages related to female leadership in the Scriptures. The study will, therefore, consider Exodus 15:20-21, Judges 4:1-9, 1 Corinthians 11:3, 14:33-35, 1 Timothy 2:8-14, Philippians 4:2-3, and Jude 1:3.

Exodus 15:20-21

Though the church started in the New Testament, and Old Testament offers valuable lessons for church leadership. Notably, the women who participated in leadership in the Old Testament focused on improving their societies and not the church. That notwithstanding, they offer valuable lessons for women's participation in church leadership in the twenty-first century, considering that they focus on aspects that entail leadership and not just holding the top position as is perceived by a majority of women.

In Exodus 15:20-21, Miriam led the Israelites in singing praises to their God when they crossed the Red Sea.⁷⁰ When Mosel led the Israelites out of Egypt, and they reached the Red Sea, they almost gave up because they thought that the sea was a barrier and the Egyptians would recapture them. However, God led Moses to use a rod so that a path was created splitting the sea. Miriam's role is seen as bringing the Israelites back to God, considering that they had already questioned His powers. Before God instructed Moses on creating a path through the sea, the Israelites had started comparing God to their false gods.

⁷⁰ *New International Version Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2014) Exodus 15:20-21. Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures used in this dissertation come from the *New International Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

Miriam composed songs of praise that the Israelites sang, thus, enabling them to appreciate that God was the provider, protector, and creator.

Miriam's participation in leadership is evident in her music. She was talented in singing, and she used that talent to ensure that God was glorified. Hunt argues that Miriam's singing amounts to leadership because it caused all the Israelites to shift their attention to God's deeds.⁷¹ Importantly, the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea juxtaposes male and female leadership in society. Many theologians focus on Moses because he was receiving instructions from God and had led the Israelites from Egypt. They (theologians) forget the crucial role that other people in the crowd, such as Miriam, played in ensuring that the Israelites appreciated God as their provider.⁷² Importantly, singing is a gift (talent) given by God. In that case, using one's talent to glorify God creates leadership opportunities. In that regard, women can lead in numerous positions, other than just in the executive positions like pastoring and bishops; they can use their talents to lead the congregation to serve God.

According to Brill, Miriam offers numerous lessons for women in modern-day churches struggling with gender equality.⁷³ She did not struggle for a position in society and was never appointed to any position, but she used her God-given talent to help the Israelites appreciate God. Importantly, when Miriam used her talent (singing), the Israelites appreciated her presence and her role. Eventually, Miriam made history as an effective female leader who guided the Israelites into praising and worshiping God.⁷⁴ Women can, therefore, contribute to the church and society, even when they are not at the top leadership of a church – a woman

⁷¹ Gladys Hunt, *Women Of The Old Testament* (Westport: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 46.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷³ Koninklijke Brill, *Women In Pentecostal And Charismatic Ministry: Informing A Dialogue on Gender, Church, and Ministry*, (Leiden: Brill Eodopi and Hotei Publishing, 2016), 63.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

can lead in music or other departments without being a senior pastor.⁷⁵ They have unique capabilities that can prompt the rest of society to appreciate their presence.

Judges 4:1-9

Judges 4:1-9 discusses Deborah's role in the Israelites' triumph in the battle. The verse is enough testament to refute the people who argue that women cannot become leaders and do not naturally possess leadership skills, which would direct them to perform auxiliary roles other than becoming a senior pastor in a church. In that case, even in the church, women can rise to the highest positions. According to McClain-Walters, Deborah was a unique woman of her time, considering that she performed numerous roles that resulted in success.⁷⁶ She was a judge, thus, indicating that she had the intellectual capability to rule and make important kingdom decisions. She had the necessary education, thus, enabling her to beat the odds of her times to become a judge. McClain-Walter pointed out that judges were influential and high-ranking persons among the Israelites.⁷⁷ Their appointment was rigorous, and they had to possess the desired education capability.

Deborah was appointed as a judge because she was a perceptive woman who would make informed decisions in the heat of the moment.⁷⁸ Besides serving as a judge, Deborah served as a prophetess, intercessor, and she succeeded as a military strategist.⁷⁹ Importantly, she broke her culture because of her obedience to God's voice, but not rebellion. The people and authorities in her society did not punish her for acting contrary to culture because God convinced them to appreciate the role that Deborah was playing.

⁷⁵ Hunt, *Women Of The Old Testament*, 38.

⁷⁶ Michelle McClain-Walters, *The Deborah Anointing: Embracing the Call To Be A Woman of Wisdom and Discernment* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House Book Group, 2015), 71.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁷⁸ Rachel Spier Weaver and Anna Haggard, *A Fearless Leader: A Bible Story of Deborah* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2018), 25.

⁷⁹ McClain-Walters, *The Deborah Anointing*, 34.

In Judges 4:1-9, Deborah realized that her people were about to be attacked by King Jabin and his military general, Sisera. She used her position and strengths to inform her people, the Israelites, and warn them of the impending danger. When King Jabin attacked the Israelites, she accompanied Israel's military commander, Barak, to attack Jabin. She used her military strategies and revelation from God to guide Barak into overpowering King Jabin and Sisera.⁸⁰ Other people in the society who lacked military training could probably have declined to join Barak. However, Deborah is depicted as a courageous woman who applied her decision-making capabilities to inform military strategies.

Furthermore, Deborah succeeded as a leader because she exhibited natural capabilities to lead and took a proactive approach to solve leadership problems. The Israelites' culture did not esteem women, yet Deborah went ahead to inform them of the impending danger, and they listened. Deborah was successful as a female judge, considering that she decided cases reasonably; she was never accused of siding with one side of the conflict.⁸¹ Her unique leadership is evident when she joined Barak in the battlefield and aided his strategizing. In the same light, women should take up leadership roles even when they are not appointed to positions; they should support those holding the positioning by offering their expertise. They should also seek the position by presenting themselves for election or appointment, considering that Deborah served as a judge.

1 Corinthians 11:3, 14:33-25

Although some evidence exists in the Old Testament for women leading the people of God, the New Testament presents some evidence. When one considers 1 Corinthians 11:3, he reads, "But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the women is man, and the head of Christ is God." The verse creates the impression that women

⁸⁰ Rachel Spier Weaver and Anna Haggard, *A Fearless Leader*, 41.

⁸¹ Michelle McClain-Walters, *The Deborah Anointing*, 39.

should not take up leadership positions in churches because the man is the ‘head’ in the context of a husband and wife, considering that Paul compared the husband-wife relationship to Christ and the church. In that verse, Paul equated the relationship of father and son in society to God and Christ. In the Holy Trinity, God is presented as the father and Jesus Christ as the son. In that case, God holds a higher hierarchy compared to Christ in function and not in substance. In that light, man is presented as the head, thus, a leader of a woman.

Burton explored verse three of 1 Corinthians 11 and established the authoritative approach that Paul used when referring to the Corinthians.⁸² The Corinthians were negating God’s will, and Paul was keen to have them abide by the rules that God had indicated. In that regard, he was authoritative in verse three because he intended to have the group identity of Corinthians align to specific standards that God had set. Burton argues that Paul’s authoritative voice is evident in saying, “But I want you to ...”⁸³ In that case, the verse focuses on restoring order in the Corinthian church, hence, the focus on the relationship between God and Christ and comparison with man and woman so that they would understand the message.

Additionally, Burton believes that most theologians are deluded into thinking that the word ‘head’ in this verse represents a hierarchy.⁸⁴ He contends to holding the same view previously before reading widely. The word ‘head’ as used in the text is a translation from ‘kephale,’ a Greek word meaning ‘source.’⁸⁵ Walker also presents a similar argument by indicating that theologians have misled Christians by presenting the word ‘head’ in the verse to posit hierarchy. Walker insists that the verse refers to the human origin with a view of

⁸² Keith A. Burton, "1 Corinthians 11 and 14: How Does A Woman Prophesy and Keep Silence At The Same Time?" *Journal of Adventist Theological Society*, 10, No. 1 (1999): 273.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Burton, "1 Corinthians 11 and 14," 274.

instilling orderliness in the church⁸⁶. In that case, Paul intended to have the Corinthians appreciate the level of human-divine order, where Christ originated from God, and women originated from men.⁸⁷ That notwithstanding, women should appreciate men and take up leadership positions in the church whenever a position arises.

Some evangelical churches in North America have interpreted the verse to mean that women should not participate in leadership. The theologians informing the approach used by these evangelical churches believe that Paul was discouraging women's leadership and that his words apply to the twenty-first-century church.⁸⁸ They liken the husband-wife relationship to the Christ-church relationship and argue that women should maintain consistency at the family and church levels. In that case, they believe men should take up leadership positions at home and in the church. However, Grenz and Kjesbo clarifies the issue and argues that changes in culture cannot supersede biblical principles.⁸⁹ In that case, the tradition implied in the Bible verses (1 Corinthians 11: 3, 1 Corinthians 14: 33-35, and 1 Timothy 2: 11-14) should not be dictated to the twenty-first-century church without considering the context.⁹⁰ Therefore, the culture adopted outside the church should not influence the biblical view and the role of women.

Women are gifted in the same way as men. The biblical references above indicate that Paul worked with women in his ministry. His words refer to the culture that was adopted at the time. In that case, women should participate in areas where they have talents (gifts) but avoid taking senior roles. They should also remain orderly and ensure that church progress is

⁸⁶ Wm O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2-6 and Paul's Views Regarding Women," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 94, No. 1 (1975): 97.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁸⁸ Rosemary S. Keller, Rosemary R. Ruether, and Marie Cantlon, *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 460.

⁸⁹ Stanley J. Grenz and Denise M. Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 56.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

not disrupted. It is difficult to agree with the view that women should not participate in church leadership, as indicated by Keller, Ruether, and Cantlon, because they did not consider the context of Paul's words and the changes in times. Church service and leadership should be based on agreed-upon principles that are inspired by the Bible. Biblical reference of church leadership should consider the context and the examples of apostles like Paul, who served the church and community with aides from both genders.

Walker argues that theologians had blamed Paul for being chauvinistic because of his ideas in 1 Corinthians 11:3.⁹¹ However, Walker indicates that the verse could only be read alongside Galatians 3:28 because they were written by the same person (Paul), but to different audiences.⁹² In that case, it is unlikely that Paul would recommend one thing to the Corinthians and require a completely different thing for the Galatians. Paul was an intellectual writer, and he understood God's message and rules. In that regard, Galatians 3: 28 points out that all persons are equal before God; hence, the reason Jesus Christ came to save all people. In that case, Walker concludes that God has offered salvation to all people, and they should, thus, work towards evangelizing so that more people in the world are reached.⁹³ In that case, the argument that women should not participate in church leadership negates the idea of equality and inclusion of all humanity regardless of their gender, as presented in Galatians 3: 28, which discusses salvation for all.⁹⁴ In that case, all Christians should enjoy equal opportunities in the same way that God has saved them without considering their gender. Besides, Paul worked alongside certain women in his service to God, and, therefore, he viewed women as co-workers in his pastoral and evangelical works. Indicatively, women accessed salvation before the cross in a similar way to men. 1 Corinthians 11: 3, therefore,

⁹¹ Wm O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2-6 and Paul's Views Regarding Women." 94.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

indicates that women should respect their men and serve God in the capacities they deem appropriate.

For God is not a God of disorder, but peace – as in all the congregations of the lord’s people. Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. (1 Cor 14:33-35)

The Bible verse indicates that women should remain cautious in their church activities to avoid disrupting their husbands and the rest of the worshipers.

In his analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 and comparison with 1 Corinthians 11:3, Burton questions, “How a woman would be expected to prophesy and yet remain quiet in the church?”⁹⁵ Prophesying would mean that a woman would speak up, yet Paul insisted on her silence. Verses 33-35 are based on the previous verses of 1 Corinthians 14, which focus on Paul’s urge for decency in the church. Importantly, in the verses, Paul was referring to the ecclesiastical tradition – *gunaikes* (women silence).⁹⁶ Paul understands that women could easily create a church distraction through their garments and type of hair.⁹⁷ In that case, Paul was compelling the Corinthians to ensure that women remained silent so that they could ensure the continuity of their culture. The culture observed by Corinthians gave men more powers than women. Paul believed that the church’s orderliness would be achieved if women remained silent as their culture had prescribed. Therefore, Paul’s focus was decency and order in the church, but not whether women should participate in church leadership or not. Paul’s reference to women’s silence indicates that church administrators should remain strategic so that worship is not disrupted. Importantly, they should include women in church service based on their potentials and talents.

⁹⁵ Burton, "1 Corinthians 11 and 14." 280.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 281.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 has caused the exclusion of women in mainline denominations not only in the 21st-century churches but “up to” the 21st-century from the beginning of the church age. However, Ademiluka indicates that the verse should only be interpreted in the context of the Greek ekklesia (a local assembly of believers) because it followed strict Greek cultures.⁹⁸ Believers in the time of Paul would meet and worship together, but their meetings were characterized by cultural influence. Paul intended to have his audience observe the Greek culture so that the church would not be viewed as an odd place, considering that women were not allowed to speak in the contemporary world. In that case, Ademiluka argues that Paul supported women’s church leadership participation because he had women as co-preachers.⁹⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 should only be used to show the approaches of creating decency in a church and exemplifying the aspects of the Greek culture, but not implying that women should not participate in church leadership. Besides, the application of the verse on church leadership should be made alongside Romans 12:1-2, which urges Christians to observe the renewal of their minds. In that case, modern-day Christians should not only seek to copy Paul’s instructions but should seek God for guidance on the best way they can achieve order and harmony in the church. The strict Greek culture succeeded in the Corinthians but may not work for the twenty-first century. The New Testament teaches on the need for Christians to rely on the Holy Spirit; hence, the need to use ideas informed by the renewal of their mind.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 14: 33-35 creates the impression that Christians operate within a cultural set-up, where some of their cultural beliefs could aid their worship and service in the church, while others could be impediments. The culture referred to in the verse implies that women are expected to be submissive so that the church can minimize

⁹⁸ Solomon O. Ademiluka, "1 Corinthians 14:33-36 In Light Of Women And Church Leadership In Nigeria," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017): 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

disruptions and conflicts. The Corinthians were known to be loyal to their culture, but the church was experiencing disruptions and giving church leaders a tough operating environment. Paul's message in the verse is motivated by the disruptions and conflicts that had characterized the church. Church pastors and leaders had been nurtured by Paul, and therefore, they looked up to him for advice. At this particular time, they had informed Paul of the challenges they had faced, and this prompted him (Paul) to believe that the continuity of the church was at risk. In that case, Paul's response, as evidenced in the verse, is a measure to control the congregation, reduce conflicts, and ensure obedience to the directives presented by church leaders. In that regard, Paul's tone in verses 33-35 is harsh and commanding, thus, showing his authority. He used culture because it had succeeded in creating order in society.

Theologians and church leaders must acknowledge that order is paramount in churches and Christianity. 1 Corinthians 14:33 indicates that God loves orderliness". In that case, when implementing Sumner's ideas on gender equality in the church, Christians should acknowledge the limits set by God's law¹⁰⁰. Therefore, equality should be exercised in office roles so that men and women serve based on their gifts. In the long run, the order will be realized in church, and every member will perceive that they are playing an important role in supporting the spreading of the gospel.

1 Timothy 2:8-14

Not only does Paul address women in the church in 1 Corinthians, but he also deals with it in his instructions for church leadership in 1 Timothy 2: 11-14,

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume the authority of a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was first formed, then Eve and Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner, but women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.

¹⁰⁰ Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church*. 69.

The verses point to male dominance in church leadership. Importantly, verses 11-14 follows verses 8-10, which guide women on maintaining modesty and decency in their service. In that regard, the Bible verse seeks to bring women to order by ensuring that they can support church business.

The passage (1 Timothy 2:11-14) attempts to create relevance of his teaching by referring to the activities at the Garden of Eden. By saying that Adam was formed first after a statement that women should be submissive, Paul encouraged women to respect their husbands and avoid competing with them within the church environment. Harrison argues that the Bible verse is presented because the society that lived at the time Paul was writing the text had become unruly.¹⁰¹ In that case, women were hindering the church's success by disrupting the services through the questioning of processes and procedures. Verses 8-10 indicates that Paul was concentrating on ensuring women aligned their church activities to their cultural practices so that the church would be orderly.

Besides, Harrison indicates that Paul focused on people who were causing disorder in the church, thus, creating a hard time for the preachers of the time like Timothy.¹⁰² Women who participated and supported church activities and growth existed when Paul was writing the letter to Timothy. The women supported church activities by exercising their gifts without taking up senior leadership roles.¹⁰³ Therefore, Paul only concentrated on the women who were causing disorder and used the cultural norms of the time – women's silence – to ensure order in churches. Therefore, women in modern-day churches should avoid causing disorder and concentrate on emulating the numerous examples of the ladies who contributed to church growth and prosperity, through their service, at the time of Paul.

¹⁰¹ Janelle L. Harrison, "Female Roles in Leadership And The Ideological Texture Of 1 Timothy 2: 9 – 15," *Inner Resources for Leaders*, 3, no. 1 (2011): 6.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Harrison, "Female Roles in Leadership," 7.

Women are talented in unique ways, just like men, and that explains why they have served in notable positions in organizations. The twenty-first century Christians should not use 1 Timothy 2:11-14 as a guide for women's exclusion in leadership but as a warning for church members' behaviors within and without the church.¹⁰⁴ Women should view the verse as a warning so that they can ensure that their participation in churches does not cause the disorder. In that regard, Paul intended to show that women are vulnerable to causing indecency in the church if they disregard the set rules. Instead, women should appreciate that all church members are part of the 'body of Christ.' In that case, they possess spiritual gifts that are meant to support the progress of the church. In that regard, women could participate in church leadership as teachers and servants in the church. In that regard, Pricilla in Acts 18:26 is depicted as the first female teacher in church history. However, there is no clear difference whether a woman leading in the church alongside her husband and a single woman serving in the church is different, considering that Pricilla served along with her husband, Aquila. Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2 was a deacon in the church of Cenchreae. Notably, a deacon is a church leader. However, Inyamah argues that church leaders should remain cautious to avoid assigning leadership roles to women before ascertaining their commitment and gifts.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, 1 Timothy 2:8-14 has caused a debate on the application of egalitarianism versus complementarianism in modern-day churches. While some theologians and scholars argue that the verses emphasize complementarianism, others perceive that it was entrenched egalitarianism. Gundry and Beck argue that verses 11-14 should only be interpreted while considering verses 8-10, which indicates that Paul was referring to

¹⁰⁴ Inyamah, Deborah C. Inyamah, "Contrasting Perspectives On The Roles Of The Feminine In Ministry And Leadership Roles In John 4 And 1 Timothy 2:11-15," *Journal of Religious Thought*, 60, No. 63 (2010): 88.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

egalitarianism.¹⁰⁶ Verse 8-10 shows that men and women serving God in the church are appreciated equally, considering that Paul points to men worshiping through prayer and women worshiping through good deeds. The theologians (Gundry and Beck) believe that Paul referred to authority and the need for respect among husband and wife to avoid escalating conflicts within the church. A majority of theologians view the verses as emphasizing complementarianism because of the focus of Adam coming before Eve and the directions that women should remain submissive. Gundry and Beck, therefore, view Paul's words to only be demanding order in the church, but not dictating church leadership hierarchies based on gender. In that case, men and women can serve in similar roles as long as one of the genders is not causing disharmony within the church.

Verses 11-14 appears, at face value, to be advocating for complementarianism. However, Gundry and Beck argued that Christians and theologians should interpret the verse from the context in which it is written.¹⁰⁷ In that case, the women who were under Timothy's leadership were disorderly, thus, forcing Paul to advocate for complementarianism that was adopted by contemporary society. The context mirrored by Paul also applies to all cultures, including the twenty-first American society, because the characteristics of women have not changed.¹⁰⁸ In that case, women can lead in various roles within the church without taking up the senior leadership so that their leadership will amount to serving as opposed to directing.

Kostenberger and his colleagues analyzed 1 Timothy 2:9-15 and concluded that humans have unique capabilities that the church should reap.¹⁰⁹ They argued that a woman could perform the same function completed by a man other than pastoring. In that case, office

¹⁰⁶ Gundry and Beck. *Two Views*, 93.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁰⁹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, S. M. Baugh, Denny Burk, Albert Wolters, Robert W. Yarbrough, and Thomas Bowen et al., *Women in The Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 (3rd Ed.)* (Wheaton: Crossway Publishing, 2016), 82.

functions are a rich ground for women, considering that they support the overall goal of spreading the gospel. When concluding women's position in church leadership, Kostenberger and colleagues referred to verse 12 of 1 Timothy verse 2, where Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority, she must be quiet."¹¹⁰ The role of teaching and managing a church should be reserved for Christians with a pastoral gift. The Bible verse implies that women should remain patient in church and listen to the teaching presented to them by the pastors. They should follow the rules set by the people in authority in that church, all of whom will be men.

Kostenberger and colleagues explore the various office functions that women can perform within a church.¹¹¹ They found that women can beautify, clean, and serve as organizers. Kostenberger et al., the view is complemented by Sumner, who argued that church leadership should entail the building of consensus.¹¹² In that case, men and women should be viewed as equal yet distinct. In that case, no gender should be left out in church leadership for claims that they are inferior or inadequate. Sumner explains that all people are God's creation and regardless of their gender.¹¹³ That way, every church member, regardless of whether they are a man or woman, has unique features and talents that they can use to contribute to the church's growth.

In more than three-quarters of the Bible, the word man denotes humanity (both genders), but in 1 Timothy verse 2, Paul is categorical on differentiating man and woman. In verse 8, he says that men should pray without anger and disputing. The verse points to Christian egalitarianism because it appreciates men have dominated church leadership but

¹¹⁰Kostenberger et al., *Women in The Church*, 85.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 86.

¹¹² Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 61.

¹¹³ Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church*, 63.

encourages them not to discriminate against any other person. The inclusion of the word ‘disputing’ points to following procedures and appreciating each person’s views. The mention of women in verses 9 and 10 indicates that men in the church should serve alongside women. Importantly, verse 10 indicates that women should serve through good deeds. The association of men with prayer and women with good deeds implies that every church member is talented differently. In verse 9 and 10, Paul warns women against show off, "I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold, or pearl or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God." Kostenberger and colleagues explain that in the old testament, women were viewed as a symbol of beauty, but in the new testament, they are expected to remain modest and offer a supportive role.¹¹⁴ From the passage, church ordinariness and decency are realized through individual responsibility. The tone in Paul’s words is not authoritative; instead, it encourages women to do the right thing. Notably, expensive dressing and showoff could shift the attention of church members from worship to earthly things. Importantly, men and women have worship and serve God through their deeds and prayers.

Paul is emphatic in verse 11 when he says, "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission." The verse reminds church leaders that humanity originated from the Garden of Eden, where Man came first. The verse also points to family relationships (husband-wife) that are likened to the Christ-Church relationship. Paul intended to remind women that they should maintain modesty and submit to their husbands. Besides, the verse related to verses 8-10 on women serving through good deeds. The New Testament teaches women to submit to their husbands and, therefore, they should embrace the same spirit even in the church. That

¹¹⁴ Kostenberger et al., *Women in The Church*, 109.

way, men will not experience the anger and dispute that are mentioned in verse 8. Verse 11 is, therefore, an explanation and reinforcement of previous verses.

Additionally, verse 12 distinguishes the roles that women should perform in the church. Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man." In that case, women can teach in the church as long as they are not teaching the men. Women can serve as children's director, women's ministry leader, music director, youth director, or church trustee. The women will participate in leadership in a way that they will not assume authority over men. In the case of a music director, women should lead songs without explaining the scriptures that inspired the song. Paul is keen to align his teachings with the rest of the verse and the Bible that calls for women to respect men and submit to their husbands. In that case, women should teach church members below 18 years and continue their service through good deeds. That way, they will submit to their men while furthering the church's work.

Paul guides church administrators to recognize that women are vulnerable to temptations, and their beauty could easily deceive men. In verses 13 and 14, Paul says, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." The two verses emphasize the message presented in verses 11 and 12, that a woman should remain submissive and not assume authority over a man. Verses 13-14 are an effort by Paul to show the consequences that would likely arise if the church ignored his teachings. The example of Adam and Eve indicates that the devil easily deceives women. In that case, if they take up executive roles in the church, they would likely face increased temptation, and the growth of the church would be at risk. However, women should take up office functions within the church to complement men in family

leadership¹¹⁵. Kostenberger and colleagues emphasized that women should take up office functions that support the primary goals of a church but do not place them in the limelight.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, Paul explained that women are saved when they abide by the commandments. In verse 15, Paul says, "But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety." In that case, when women follow God's word and maximize the good deeds mentioned in verse 10, they are saved in a way that they can contribute to church service. Women appointed to perform a distinctive function in the church should not develop an illusion of inclusion; instead, they should enjoy participating in the church and perceive that they are a valuable component of the church's progress.¹¹⁷ Importantly, women should be encouraged to maintain their faith, love, and holiness and spread it to their family members. That way, they will not be feared to disrupt prayer and will enjoy their worship.

Philippians 4:2-3 and Jude verse 3

Women are a noble aspect of the growth and progress of a church. Their inclusion in leadership is vital but should be in all other aspects other than pastoring. In that regard, women should take up various leadership positions in a church but avoid being a senior/lead pastor. Importantly, women can become children's pastors because that would entail teaching children. Christians are co-workers with Christ, and women are co-workers in a church alongside men. In Philippians 4, the writer recognizes both genders in the church and encourages the Christians to stand firm in the lord. Verse 2 and 3 says, "I plead with Euodia, and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the

¹¹⁵ Kostenberger, et al., *Women in The Church*, 91.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 114.

gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose name are in the book of life." The passage begins with a call to church members to abide by the law by emphasizing that they should agree with the Lord. In that case, the church and its members should be a symbol of truth and reflect the will of God. Women are co-workers in the church, and therefore, they play an equal role to that of their male counterparts. The verse urges church leaders to help women in their work within the church to support the gospel. Women are, thus, allowed to perform roles similar to those performed by men.

Helping women is an outstanding call in Philippians 4:2-3, which implies that churches should develop measures to improve women's functioning. The writer of the verse appears to appreciate that women have shortcomings that can limit their co-working. The verse cites Euodia and Syntyche, who, in this case, represent other church members and informs that helping women should be one of their focus areas. The help discussed in the verse relates to counsel and teaching so that the women appointed to church leadership will not distract the other church leaders when seeking God. The assistance should also be in role performance so that women will perform the roles assigned to them effectively and support the church's growth.

Additionally, co-workers in the church of Christ must work alongside each other for them to succeed. Lederleitner argues that effective ministry requires that church members should partner when performing their duties in the church institution.¹¹⁸ Women's position in the church should follow a revelation and a call from God. Lederleitner urges the church leader to understand that they are never working alone; therefore, they should serve and lead alongside other people.¹¹⁹ Importantly, the help discussed in Philippians 4 is put into context when Lederleitner argues that Christian organizations, particularly a church, should assist

¹¹⁸ Mary T. Lederleitner, *Women in God's Mission: Accepting the Invitation to Serve and Lead* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 61.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

women to flourish in their various roles through mentorship, advocacy, and developing structural aids.¹²⁰ Churches should focus on empowerment to ensure that women appointed as leaders can perform their assigned functions accordingly.

God's servants, modern-day Christians, have a duty of abiding by the truth. Philippians 4:2-3 and Jude 1:3 discuss salvation and abiding by the laws of God. Jude 3 says, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people." The clarion call in the verse appears similar to that in Philippians 4, where the Bible urges church members to be of 'same mind in the lord.' Abiding to the rule of God, as presented in both verses, relates to having women serve as co-workers in the church. However, for a church to maintain truth and progress, its members must have faith and avoid being swayed by doctrines advocated in the modern world.

The 21st-century church has sinned by slipping into secularism. Jude verse 3 indicates the author's change of topic upon realizing that the church is not keen on maintaining faith. The author explains that he intended to write to them on salvation but is compelled to urge them to maintain the faith. However, in Philippians 4:2-3, the writer is not judgmental; instead encourages church members to help each other grow their faith and perform their roles as co-workers. From a church leadership perspective, Jude verse 3 implies that churches have failed to appreciate the role that women can perform in a church, yet in Philippians 4, they are expected to remain as co-workers. Women should serve in the church while submitting to men; therefore, they cannot take up senior pastoral roles. Therefore, failing to appreciate women's capabilities can lead a church to be labeled as ungodly, as postulated in verse 3 of Jude.

¹²⁰ Lederleitner, *Women in God's Mission*, 61.

Gundry and Beck opined that an egalitarian approach ensures that every gender has an opportunity to serve in the church.¹²¹ In that case, women would not experience any limitations when seeking church leadership. The discussion in Philippians 4:3 on church members as co-workers implies that an egalitarian approach is appropriate in a church leadership position at the junior and middle management level. The complementarian view of church leadership requires that church leadership positions are distributed based on gender.¹²² When the complementarian view is adopted, women will only perform selected leadership functions, such as limited pastoring and teaching. Women are talented and should, therefore, not be denied opportunities of serving in the church. The leadership approach adopted in a church should balance between egalitarianism and complementarianism so that biblical principles are reflected.

Summary of Theological Foundations

The office and its functions are separate entities but enjoy a mutually inclusive relationship. Kostenberger and colleagues argued that participating in office functions and leading in the office are distinct.¹²³ Women could take up functions in the church (office), but not its leadership. Importantly, the functioning of a church requires numerous functions to be completed. A majority of people will view the operations of a church from the leadership that is offered by the pastor and the sermons that are delivered. However, activities that create a conducive environment for effective leadership are instrumental in the progress of the church. For example, a church requires evangelists, intercessors, singers, cleaners, administrators, music trainers, children teachers, counseling psychologists, designers, and technicians, among others. A church pastor or the men in a church cannot fill all the functions.

¹²¹ Gundry and Beck, *Two Views*, 129.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 136.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 129.

The analogy of an office and the functions that must be completed within it illuminates the church in Kostenberger's works.¹²⁴ Blomberg argues that women are prohibited from the office but not necessarily the function.¹²⁵ Blomberg's view is appropriate, considering that women observe the functions that leaders of the church accomplish. The modern-day church is operating at a time when society is advocating for gender inclusivity. Women are exposed to similar opportunities as their male counterparts. In the workplace, women take up management positions and guide men in the organizations towards realizing the set company goals. While the church should appreciate the occurrences in society, it should not conform to things that are contrary to Christianity.¹²⁶

Blomberg acknowledges that women are outgoing and could offer guidance in aspects of running the church.¹²⁷ Blomberg recommends that women should be allowed the opportunity to offer the services they feel comfortable with as long as they do not take over the helm of the leadership.¹²⁸ Women should take a proactive approach to church leadership while conceptualizing Paul's teachings that they should not assume authority over men. When performing their activities in the office, as discussed by Blomberg, women should complement the roles executed by senior leaders.¹²⁹ Women's presence in church offices creates an opportunity for them to inform the rationale behind decision making.

However, though women can participate in leadership, they should remain calm and not exhort themselves. Women are effective in service compared to men. Companies that have hired more women end up succeeding because they (women) are compassionate and

¹²⁴ Gundry and Beck, *Two Views*, 148.

¹²⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos: An Introduction to Acts Through Revelation* (Nashville: B& H Publishing Group, 2006), 47.

¹²⁶ Grenz and Kjesbo, *Women in The Church*. 72.

¹²⁷ Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos*, 105.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

understanding. The same traits can be realized in the church if women are allowed to participate. However, the arrangement for women to fit in the church leadership should follow the tenets discussed by Kostenberger¹³⁰ and colleagues and supported by Blomberg.¹³¹ Importantly, they should reflect 1 Timothy 2:11 that a woman should remain quiet and in full submission. Women who understand their worth and value in society are calm and submit to the authorities. However, they understand the approach that they can use to influence society. Every woman in the church should, therefore, understand her strength and remain diligent in her service.

When in the office and offering background functions such as praise and worship and intercessory, women should guide the men who are leaders and encourage them. However, women must maintain their faith and holiness and endeavor to show love. The supportive role that women play entails encouraging the men, avoiding distracting them, and enlightening them with ideas on leadership and management.¹³² When modern-day women understand their role as conceptualized by Paul, they will lead without necessarily becoming senior pastors.

Women's role in a church has a higher impact than leading in an office. Kostenberger creates an impression that the supportive role surpasses the leadership.¹³³ When women are allowed to perform the various functions in the office, they will advance church growth and ensure that the gospel spreads to more people. Women can perform the various functions in the church as long as they will not assume authority over men. Importantly, women should not take up senior pastor roles in the church because Paul is emphatic across his texts that women should not lead in that area. However, as Blomberg and Kostenberger et al. indicate,

¹³⁰ Gundry and Beck, *Two Views*, 130.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 67.

¹³³ Kostenberger, et al., *Women in The Church*. 173.

the office is prohibited, but not necessarily the functions. In that case, women should lead in the various areas in the church, ranging from children's ministry, music to women's ministry, so long as it does not place them in an authoritative position over men.

Theoretical Foundations

The study will be based on role congruity theory, considering that it has offered numerous approaches to explaining women's leadership. The study's focus is to determine the lack of female leadership in Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ, and role congruity theory offers an approach for explaining the church administrations' failure to include women in the leadership. Role congruity theory indicates that a person or group will be positively evaluated if they are perceived to align with the requirements of the group's typical social roles. Importantly, social roles could inform the norms that underlie the valued behavior for a particular gender.¹³⁴ In that case, a female leader in a church will be considered effective if the congregants can identify alignment between the woman's characteristics and the requirements of her group's (women) typical social roles.

Members of a society will determine the valued social roles based on beliefs and culture.¹³⁵ They will consider their societies and the roles played by women before considering the positions that women can take up. Importantly, stereotyping is entrenched in society as children are introduced to particular perspectives about certain societies and genders. Stereotyping informs the social roles and, ultimately, the role congruity.

The incongruity between female gender roles and their leadership roles causes the perception that women are less favorable than men as potential parties for filling leadership roles. Incongruity also creates a perception that a leadership role is less effective when

¹³⁴ Amanda B. Diekman and Wind Goodfriend, "Rolling With The Changes: A Role Congruity Perspectives on Gender Norms," *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30 (2006): 374.

¹³⁵ Diekman and Goodfriend, "Rolling With The Changes," 375.

women perform it.¹³⁶ When society perceives role incongruity, it is challenging for women to rise to leadership positions and succeed in various roles. In that case, role congruity theory could help explain the lack of female leadership. Importantly, the theory is viewed in the context of social identity, where women perceive themselves as equal players in society.

¹³⁶ Alice H. Eagly and Steven J. Karau, "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders," *Psychological Review*, 109, No. 3 (2002): 579.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Understanding the lack of female leadership at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ requires that an in-depth study is conducted. The study focused on revealing the underlying problem at the particular church, Prosperous Temple Church so that solutions could be identified going into the future. The issue of the lack of female leaders in twenty-first-century churches is pronounced and spread-out across the world. While women have made significant strides in other spheres of life, they have not succeeded in the Christian ministry. That notwithstanding, women comprise the highest proportion of the congregation. Besides, women who are executive officers in their organizations and those who have studied theologies possess leadership quality but cannot participate in church leadership in the same magnitude as men. A study that followed a scientific methodology was, thus, required to identify the particular problem.

Intervention Design

Ministry Context

The Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ was started in 2009 and has grown to its current state. The church has a primary goal of spreading the gospel through its evangelistic and non-evangelistic activities. The institution targets people living in Northport, Alabama, and will likely expand to other areas based on the growth it will experience. Prosperous Temple Church teaches a doctrine that is biblically informed. The church's leadership, particularly the pastor, has, in the past, indicated that he received a revelation from God to start the church in Northport. In that regard, Prosperous Temple Church aligns its activities with God's word and commandments.

However, the issue of women participating in the leadership at Prosperous Temple Church has remained a challenge. Though women in the church perform significant activities,

such as prayers and supporting the pastor, they do not hold senior evangelical positions.¹ The women attending Prosperous Temple Church have widespread knowledge and understanding of biblical principles, with some of them having pursued theological courses.

The United States has made significant strides in entrenching gender equality, but the women at Prosperous Temple Church and other churches in the country have not benefited from the efforts. A majority of the churches in the United States have omitted women in their leadership hierarchies. Besides, some women feel that they should not take up top leadership positions for fear that they would be negating the biblical teachings.² However, the interpretation of the Bible verses points to a biased theological view that has necessitated discrimination of women based on gender. Biblical interpretations should take a critical and in-depth approach, where the context should be investigated and the preceding and following passages analyzed. That way, biblical interpretations of the verses discouraging women's participation in leadership should have identified the role that culture played. Therefore, the cultural differences of the people living when Paul wrote the books of Corinthians and Timothy should be considered before an interpretation is made.

This study investigated the lack of female leaders at the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ. The research intended to show that women are valuable leaders, just like men. Exploring and revealing the existing problem in women's leadership will enable women to identify their roles and potential. They will advocate for change and will ensure that gender stereotypes or limitations do not hinder those that have the calling to serve as leaders.

¹ Nicholas Miller, "The Ordination of Women in the American Church." 29.

² Ibid., 37.

Study Setting

The study will take place within the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ's environment. Besides, it will involve men and women serving in various positions within the church. Prosperous Temple Church is progressive and has witnessed significant growth over the last decade. Though it has changed its locations several times before settling in its current place, it is a significant worship destination in Northport, Alabama.

The Prosperous Temple Church's congregants identify with the church's growth journey and perceive that they own and relate to the institutions. Many of the members have been in the church for more than two years, with the founding teams still serving in various positions. The choice of Prosperous Temple Church was informed by its embracing of modernity and the goal of growing to reach more people. The choice was also informed by the strong association that members have with the institution. Besides, the church has had a strong women membership since its inception, thus, indicating that it appreciates the roles played by women in the ministry. However, women at the church have not taken up a significant leadership position.

The study will happen within the church compound and target the men and women congregants. The study had an option of being conducted in other settings, such as in the participants' home, office, or a general public area. However, the study settled on the temple at Northport, Alabama, because it evokes memories and reinforces their understanding of the topic. In that case, the study participants will identify with the issue discussed in the study better when they are within the church environment, and they will explain their perspectives through demonstrations.³ The study will, therefore, evoke emotions and prompt the participants to share extensive data on the issue of investigation.⁴ Men and women at

³ Pertti Alasuutari, "The Rise And Relevance of Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 13, no. 2 (2010): 142.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

Prosperous Temple Church hold periodical departmental meetings discussing their welfare and contribution to church growth. The church setting was, therefore, the most appropriate because the church members could relate to the issue in a better way.

Participant Demographic

The study on the lack of female leadership at Prosperous church recruited men and women who were church members. Though the study questioned the lack of women in leadership positions, it would be inappropriate to only have women as the study participants. The church in Northport comprises male and female congregants and, therefore, including both genders increased the trustworthiness of the investigation. Men are involved in the decision-making process in most churches, including at Prosperous Temple Church. A majority of the women at the church do not hold a position, but some of them are teachers, serve in the praise and worship teams, and lead specific departments. In that case, including both genders increased the study's reliability because women would air their perception of exclusion in leadership. Men would explain their feelings on the topic and the reason they have held on the male-dominated leadership.

Additionally, the research included congregants of eighteen years and above. The essence of the study was to question the policies (implied or explicit) that have consistently barred women from taking up a leadership position at Prosperous Temple Church. In that case, the participants were expected to apply their critical thinking skills to analyze the church's approach to women's leadership, despite claiming that it is founded on biblical principles.⁵ The research assumes that participants aged eighteen years and above were likely to understand biblical teachings on churches and would apply the same to determine the effectiveness of the Prosperous Temple Church's decision. Besides, at eighteen years, the

⁵ Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, *SAGE Qualitative Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2010), 46.

participants were adults, and they could analyze the issues around them to make informed decisions. In that case, they would analyze the processes and procedures followed at the Prosperous Temple Church and determine whether they were appropriate in light of the biblical teachings.

Sampling

The conclusion made in the study was informed by the data collected from the participants. In that case, the sampling process ensured that appropriate participants were identified. This study employed the snowball sampling technique because it entails identifying further study participants from the initial known prospects. A researcher only identifies one or two potential participants and requests them to recommend appropriate individuals who fit the inclusion criteria.⁶ The method is appropriate, particularly in instances where the researcher does not understand the study environment. Snowball sampling is also useful in instances where the potential study participants would not willingly disclose their identities.⁷ The method is appropriate when the researcher is part of the study environment and desires to identify a suitable number of individuals for the study. In the case of this study, the researcher (myself) knew notable individuals who would participate in the study, but their number would not get to the required sample size. Snowball sampling ensured that the required sample size was achieved, considering that the researcher initially identified only two participants, and they subsequently recommended other potential participants.

Altogether, twenty-five participants provided inputs in the study. Twenty-five out of forty-five members was selected as the appropriate number owing to the time and resource restrictions. Besides, the study followed a qualitative approach, thus, creating a need for a

⁶ Alberto Crescentini and Giuditta Mainardi, "Qualitative Research Articles: Guidelines, Suggestions, and Needs," *Journal of Workplace Learning* 21, no. 5 (2009): 433.

structured analysis of descriptive information.⁸ In that case, the number was appropriate as it ensured that insights were identified while maintaining the study within its budget. The twenty-five participants included seventeen women and eight men. Women comprised a higher proportion of the study participants because the research discussed issues relating to participation in leadership. In that case, their perspective of the issue explained the cause of the problem and the likely solutions. The inclusion of men aided the investigation of the structural and institutional problems and helped answer whether men supported women's leadership.

Location of Study

The study was commissioned in Northport, Alabama. More than three-quarters of the congregants at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ live in the Northport area. They either have lived in the area or relocated to the area in the last decade. In that regard, they understand the other churches in the region and the leadership structures they can observe. The church has had an impact on the Northport society through its community activities. The evangelism department of the church has, in the past, embarked on preaching which targeted unreached people in the region. Settling on Northport was, therefore, appropriate for the study because it ensured a streamlined focus of the research. Besides, the location enhanced the case study approach, where only one church was used in the research. That way, the study embarked on an in-depth investigation of the problem to identify representative insights. Settling on the study population was not a daunting task for the researcher, considering that the case study selected (Prosperous Temple Church) was located in the area.

⁸ Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, *SAGE Qualitative Research Methods*. 53.

Data Collection

Data for the study was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The tools were developed and pre-tested before the data collection process was commissioned. The researcher sought clearance from Institutional Review Board (Refer to IRB Approval letter in Appendix C) [A1] and from the board of trustees in the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ. Data collection was spaced over three months to entrench data triangulation. In this case, a questionnaire was conducted first before an interview was conducted three months later.

Data collection in the study will take the form of questionnaire completion and participation in the interview. In the questionnaires, the study participants appointed will complete them without assistance, considering that they are literate and autonomous.⁹ They will only receive instructions from the research assistants. In the interviews, the research assistants will ask the questions, and the participants will respond. If the participant wanders away from the question, the research assistant will redirect them to the question. However, the research assistant will not propose answers to the question to the participants. Interviewing faces a data collection challenge where the researcher asks suggestive questions to increase a participant's understanding.¹⁰ In this case, the research assistant will explain the questions without suggesting answers.

Additionally, the interviewing process will entail an audio recording of the conversation between the research assistant and the study participant. The recording will happen alongside note-taking by the research assistant. Importantly, the recording will be done using tape recorders. The participants will receive prior information that their

⁹ Sigmund Gronmo, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2019), 92.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

conversation during the interview would be recorded to aid in data collection.¹¹ In that case, their informed consent will entail an agreement to the recording. After the data collection, the recorded conversations will be transcribed in readiness for analysis.

The completed questionnaires, transcribed interviews, and the recorded interviews were stored in safes by the researcher. In the case of recorded interviews, they were transferred from the tape recorders to compact disks. Only the researcher and the data analysis assistant accessed the materials. They were stored for three years for reference purposes. At the lapse of three years, the data would be discarded through failsafe methods. In that case, the questionnaires and the transcribed interviews would be shredded into pieces that cannot reveal their content, while the compact disks would be broken.¹² That way, the data would not be accessed by any other party other than the researcher.

Research Schedule

Studies are pegged to time. The researcher and the parties involved in the exercise operate in the context of a busy environment. In that case, developing a schedule ensures that every process is planned and conducted at the appropriate time. Scheduling also ensures that resources are distributed based on their availability.¹³ Financial resources are a challenge for a majority of studies, and therefore, part of the required resources may be available at certain times within the study.¹⁴ Scheduling ensures that the finances are available before an activity is conducted to avoid delays.

The study took ten months. The first three months were dedicated to the writing of a research proposal and its acceptance. Usually, scientific studies are based on proposals.

¹¹ Crescentini and Mainardi, "Qualitative Research Articles," 434.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Greg Guest, Emily E. Namey, and Mriyn L Mitchell, *Collective Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013), 71.

¹⁴ Pertti Alasuutari, "The Rise And Relevance of Qualitative Research," 143.

Importantly, a proposal could be accepted or rejected based on its ease of addressing the research problem. In that case, developing a research proposal is a crucial stage that entails analyzing the problem and examining the previous studies in the field. In this case, the first two months were divided into three portions of three weeks each, where the first chapters of the thesis were developed. In this case, the first three weeks resulted in chapter one, while chapters two and three were written by the end of the sixth and ninth weeks, respectively. The third month was dedicated to reviewing the research proposal (chapter one – three) based on the research supervisors' instructions.

Additionally, the third month also involved sending a letter to the IRB and Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ's board of trustees. During the same month, the research proposal was presented to a panel of researchers for evaluation. The panel recommended changes that were made within the month. The response from the IRB and the church management would likely spill over to the fourth month. In that case, during the third and fourth months, research participants were sampled and engaged. When the response from the IRB and church management was received, data collection was scheduled.

Data collection happened between the fifth and seventh months. The process was spread to three months to allow for the use of different methods (questionnaire and interviews). The last three months (eighth to tenth) entailed data analysis and composition of the research report. The purpose of the research is only achieved when the data collected in a study is analyzed to identify insights.¹⁵ The analysis process and reporting require time; hence, the allocation of three months. Importantly, reporting encompassed writing the results, discussion, and conclusion parts of the thesis. During the same time, the research was

¹⁵ Bruce Johnson, Eloise Dunlap, and Ellen Benoit, "Structured Qualitative Research: Organizing "Mountain of Words" for Data Analysis, Both Qualitative and Quantitative," *Substance Use and Misuse* 45, no. 5 (2010): 654.

presented to a panel of authoritative scholars for review in readiness for publication. The review suggested corrections that were made within weeks.

Table 1. Research schedule

Month	Activity
1	Structuring a research proposal (chapter one and chapter two)
2	Structuring a research proposal (chapter two and three)
3	Presentation and review of research proposal Seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board Seeking permission from Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ
4	Scheduling data collection
5	Data collection (questionnaire)
6	Data collection
7	Data collection (interview)
8	Data analysis
9	Writing a research report (chapter four, five, and six)
10	Presentation of the research report Publication

Resources

Completion of the study will require investment in resources (financial and otherwise). Budgeting is a crucial process in research as it allows for the allocation of resources to facilitate the research process. Budgeting ensures that the available resources are spread across the research activities.¹⁶ The study hired research assistants on a part-time basis for the data collection. They attracted a compensation of \$100 for each of the days they offered their services. In that case, hiring research assistants cost \$1,000. Printing the

¹⁶ Howard Lune, Enrique S. Pumar, and Ross Koppel, *Perspectives in Social Research Methods And Analysis: A Reader for Sociology* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2010), 128.

research materials (questionnaires and semi-structured interview protocols) also required financial expenditure.

The study was conducted within a church environment. It benefited from the availability of participants and resources. The Prosperous Temple Church provided a room with chairs and tables, where the participants sat as they completed the questionnaires and responded to the interview questions. The resources would have cost the researcher, but they were offered free the researcher was a member of the church. Moving the study participants from their area to the study environment would also have been an expense. However, in this case, the study only invested in moving the research assistants from their location to Northport, Alabama. The study only required twenty-five questionnaires and interview protocols. The research assistants transported them easily.

The data collection process entailed recording and note-taking, particularly for the case of interviews. In that case, the study incurred costs in hiring five tape recorders, considering that it had contracted five research assistants. Importantly, each of the research assistants interviewed five participants and recorded the interview. The recorded interviews were stored on compact disks; twenty-five compact disks were purchased. The participants did not receive any compensation for their participation; instead, participation was voluntary. Data collection happened when the participants had attended the Sunday church service and, therefore, it did not inconvenience their schedules. However, transcribing the data was an expense for the study. The research assistants received additional compensation for the transcriptions, considering that each participant transcribed the interviews they conducted.

Furthermore, the study invested in notebooks and stationery to enhance data collection. In this case, each study participant was issued a pencil and an eraser alongside the questionnaire during the first data collection exercise. That way, they would correct any mistake they made when completing the questionnaire. That way, twenty-five pencils, and

erasers were purchased for the study. The research assistants received a pen and notebook to aid in their interviewing. Besides, a computer installed with data analysis software, particularly Microsoft Excel and SPSS, was needed for the study and writing the proposal and report. The overall resource requirements for the study were minimal because the researcher conducted a majority of the functions.

Ethical Issues

The study was structured on research ethics. The research was guided by a deliberate attempt to achieve trustworthiness. In that case, it ensured that the processes of engaging study participants were free and fair as prescribed by research ethics principles.¹⁷ The twenty-five research participants engaged in the study were considered autonomous; they would decide what to do and how to respond to the questions. In that case, the study only recruited church members who were eighteen years and above. They did not require permission to participate in the study or compelling to bring out their views on any given matter.

Research ethics dictate that a study should maximize the benefits and minimize risks to participants.¹⁸ If research increases harm to the participant, a researcher should implement measures to reduce the harm.¹⁹ Besides, researchers should ensure the participants derive maximum benefits from the study. In this case, the study did not cause harm to the participants. Importantly, their opinions would aid in improving church policies on women's inclusion in leadership. The study participants were informed that they would receive a report at the end of the exercise. Besides, the research findings would be shared with the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ to guide their administration processes and procedures.

¹⁷ Laura Maruster and Maarteen J. Gijzenberg, *Qualitative Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2013), 89.

¹⁸ Peter Stoles, and Tony Wall, *Research Methods* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 113.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

Scientific studies should obtain informed consent from the study participants.²⁰ In that case, a researcher should explain to the potential participant about the study and enumerate the benefits that it will bring to them and society. They (researchers) should also explain the study objectives and the data collection process so that the potential participants can determine their capability to participate.²¹ The consent should be in writing so that the participant will sign against it to show that they have read it and accepted to participate.²² While some researchers choose to separate the consent from the research tool, others include it on the first page of the research tool. Regardless of when it is made, the informed consent participant can only engage with the research tool after signing consent. (For details refer to Participant Consent Form in Appendix B)^[A2]

Research ethics dictate that scientific studies should observe the principle of beneficence (not harm).²³ In that case, a study should not expose the participants or their communities to harm. In this case, the study focuses on female leadership in the church and follows a qualitative approach. It, therefore, does not pose harm to participants.

A researcher should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.²⁴ It is unethical for the researcher to use the data presented by particular participants in a way that reveals their identity.²⁵ Research studies should, therefore, guarantee their commitment to confidentiality and reveal the measures they have put in place to ensure anonymity. A research's focus should be to unravel issues relating to a phenomenon but not to attribute them to a particular person. That way, the data that is collected should be protected from

²⁰ Maruster and Gijzenberg, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 92.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

²² *Ibid.*, 95.

²³ Stoles and Wall, *Research Methods*, 114.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

access by unauthorized persons and recorded in ways that are not revealing the identities of participants.²⁶ In this case, data collected in the study was only accessed by the research assistants, researcher, and data analysis assistant.

Data collected in research should not entail descriptive information about the participant.²⁷ Demographic information entailing the name, phone numbers, contacts, next of kin, and residence, among others, is descriptive. The information should be avoided because it causes the people accessing the data to trace it to the person that provided it.²⁸ In that regard, victimization can likely occur if such data is provided in the research tools. The study did not include any descriptive information about the participants. Instead, the research assistants used numbers as unique identifiers to ease in data analysis.

Furthermore, research ethics require that scientific studies should exercise justice.²⁹ In that case, the participants should enjoy the right to participate and exit the study at will. Studies should identify potential participants through sampling and never compel or influence their participation.³⁰ A potential participant should read the informed consent form and determine his or her willingness to participate. If the participant perceives that his or her participation is not necessary, he or she can quit at will without attracting any repercussions.³¹ In this case, the researcher only encouraged the church members to participate but did not compel any of them to participate. Besides, thirty potential participants were identified through snowball sampling, while only twenty-five were included in the study. They were also informed that participation was voluntary, but none of them exited before the end.

²⁶ Stoles and Wall, *Research Methods*, 115.

²⁷ Maruster and Gijzenberg, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 94.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Stoles, and Wall, *Research Methods*, 115

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Maruster and Gijzenberg, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 95.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher is a member of the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ and understands the processes and procedures observed in the church. Besides, the researcher has participated in various church activities and interacted with the leaders in various positions. The position of the researcher as a church member helped in the sampling process. Identifying the initial participants who started the snowball sampling was easier because they understood the issue within Prosperous Temple Church.

However, the researcher's position likely affected the data collection process. The participants likely avoided sharing pertinent information on women's leadership because they felt that the researcher was acting for the church administration or may use the information to their disadvantage. Although it was disclosed that the study is entrenched in ethical research and academic inclination, participants feared to the point of not disclosing information. However, the use of research assistants who were not members of the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ reduced the fears that the participants may have and encouraged them to share information.³²

Furthermore, it was assumed that women at Prosperous Temple Church did not support the exclusion of women in leadership; hence, more females than males in the study were included in the study. The researcher's position may also introduce sampling bias, considering the study will use snowball sampling.

Implementation of Intervention Design

Data Triangulation

Researchers are expected to take measures (formal and informal) to ensure that their findings are accurate and consistent. The measures that improve the research process and

³² Haradhan Kumar Mohajan, "Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects," *Journal of Economic Development, Environment, and People* 7, no. 1 (2018): 24.

guarantee research validity. Importantly, validity entails the accuracy of a study in measuring the issues it was destined to measure.³³ It (validity) could be exercised in the study design and methods. In that case, the study design adopted will improve accuracy by ensuring it explores the study's purpose. The validity of the methods is achieved by applying scientific methods that enhance the realization of the research objectives. In this case, the study investigates the lack of female leadership in churches utilizing a phenomenological approach, where the participants share their views on their experiences in a church. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews to ensure that the participants could express their opinions.

Additionally, validity is achieved through data triangulation. It entails applying more than one data collection method to enhance the accuracy of the data collection method. Data triangulation serves as a way of validating data through cross-verification.³⁴ The study follows a qualitative approach where the participants explain their opinions on the research topics. In that case, the researchers could explain diverse data, some of which may not support answering the research question. The researcher would end up making the wrong conclusions. Data triangulation ensures that the consistency of findings is ensured and control exercised to limit the data that is used in the analysis.³⁵

Data triangulation in the study was achieved through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The two tools entailed almost similar questions. The questionnaire allowed the researcher to respond to both closed-ended and open-ended questions on women's participation in church leadership. The interview guided the participants into explaining their perception of women's participation in church leadership. However, the data collection process was spread out over three months to allow for data triangulation. In this case, the

³³ Carsten Schwemmer and Oliver Wieczorek, "The Methodological Divide of Sociology: Evidence From Two Decades of Journal Publications," *Sage Journals - Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2019): 5.

³⁴ Rebecca S. Natow, "The Use of Triangulation In Qualitative Studies Employing Elite Interviews," *Qualitative Research* 20, no. 2 (2019): 162.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

interview was conducted three months after the questionnaire was administered. Using more than one data collection method ensures that the required is eventually collected even if it may take time. Besides, it ensures that the participants explain the issue of investigation from various perspectives.

The application of a questionnaire and interviews ensured that the researcher could identify the convergence of the study's data. The data collected in the study was essential in answering the research question and determining the cause of the problem. In that case, data triangulation ensured that the study participants explained their opinions on the same subject through different questions.³⁶ In that case, when one research tool is used in qualitative studies, a researcher may end up with diverging views on the topic. However, when data triangulation is used, it ensures that convergence is identified and insights are reliable. The spacing requirement in data triangulation ensures that the participants respond to questions in a research tool from new perspectives.³⁷ That way, a researcher can identify their consistency and identify the truths in the information they provide.

Data Collection Sequence

Data collection in the study followed a step-by-step guide. First, study participants were identified through sampling. The twenty-five participants were guided into participating by receiving information on the study and its purpose. They were encouraged to provide their honest opinions on each of the questions. Importantly, they were informed that the study was part of a doctoral degree requirement and was, thus, not commissioned by the church or any affiliated institution. That way, they would disclose their perspectives on women's leadership without fearing any victimization.

³⁶ Natow, "The Use of Triangulation," 193.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 192.

The study then progressed to the development and pre-testing of research tools. Data collection in the research happened through a questionnaire and interview guide. In that case, the tools were developed to address the research question and capture the study's purpose. They (tools) were developed by the researcher in collaboration with authorities in theology to ensure that they focused on the investigation. The two tools were then pretested with three participants to identify any errors. Pre-testing of research instruments is crucial in ensuring that the research tools are effective.³⁸ In instances where the tools are not tested, their shortcomings will be identified at data collection. That way, the study will generate inappropriate data and will not support the answering of the research question.

The questionnaire used in the study was the primary tool, and it contained eighteen questions. Importantly, in both tools, descriptive information about the researcher was omitted. The responses were marked with numbers as their unique identifiers. Omitting the participants' information ensured that they were confident in sharing their information because it would not be traced back³⁹. The study focused on identifying appropriate data on the study question, but not personal information. In that case, the participants trusted the process when they realized that they would not include their names and demographic information.

The questionnaire focused on the participants' perceptions of the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ's processes and procedures. For instance, it had questions on the participant's likelihood of recommending the church to their colleagues and the number of years they had been attending the Prosperous Temple Church. Besides, the questionnaire rates the study participants' satisfaction on various parameters relating to the church

³⁸ Haradhan Kumar Mohajan, "Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects, 25.

³⁹ Jane Sutton and Zubin Austin, "Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, And Management," *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy* 68, no. 3 (2015): 227.

operations, such as fellowships, Bible studies, preaching, and cleanliness, among others. Importantly, the questionnaire included a question on the participants' area of service in the church and another on comparing the Prosperous Temple Church with previous churches that they had attended. Seven questions in the questionnaire were on the participants' perceptions of women's leadership in the church. The questions went to the depth of asking the participants' satisfaction with women serving in particular leadership roles, such as pastor, worship, and trustee. Towards the end, the questionnaire allowed the participants to explain the Bible verse that informed their views on women in ministry leadership. Only four of the questions in the questionnaire were open-ended.

Furthermore, data in the study was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. Unlike the questionnaire, the interview asked critical questions on women's participation in church leadership and the solutions. It entailed six questions on the reasons the modern-day churches were not including women in their leadership. The interview sought to identify the views that participants had on the effectiveness of women in church leadership. It included a question of the barriers that women faced when seeking leadership positions. The interview also included a question on whether participation in leadership meant that women had to be at the helm of a church or participating in other positions would count as leadership. The interview guide also included two questions on the perceived solutions; the role that modern churches should play in increasing women's leadership and any changes that women should make to place themselves in a better position of appointment to leadership.

After developing the research tools, a letter explaining the study proposal and seeking permission for data collection was sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The board was expected to review the research proposal and grant permission to conduct the study following the adherence to research ethics. The board ascertains that the study was appropriate and consented to its performance.

Subsequently, five research assistants were recruited to aid in data collection. Research assistants aid in eliminating bias and subjectivity in the study because they act as independent parties.⁴⁰ The researcher (myself) was known to the study participants and, therefore, they could likely have withheld certain information or tilted it to my favor. Besides, research assistants ensure that data collection happens within a shorter time than if the researcher was undertaking it alone.

Data collection was then moved to the planning stage, where all the participants were emailed and requested to participate. During snowball sampling, the study participants were identified, and their contact information was provided. Importantly, thirty potential participants were identified, though only twenty-five were required. Sampling a higher number of participants ensures that the study accounts for the possibility of some participants declining. If additional participants were not included in the sample, a study might end up with a lower than the anticipated number. In that case, the study's trustworthiness will be in question because the participants will not be deemed to be representative.

Communication is crucial in data collection planning. The researcher will disrupt the participants' schedule and, therefore, informing them in advance will enable them to plan and set aside time for participation. In this case, the participants were contacted through e-mail and encouraged to participate. The communication was stored, and those that accepted the call to participate were included in a database. The researcher scheduled the data collection date on a Sunday, considering that congregants attend the weekly service. In that regard, after the service, the participants would spare several hours to participate in the interview. The participants were, therefore, called and informed on the data collection date. The essence of calling them was to guarantee their availability and prepare them for the activity. The call

⁴⁰ Sigmund Gronmo, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach*, 153.

elicited discussions with some participants proposing alternative dates for the exercise. The deliberations resulted in the identification of a suitable date for all the participants.

Additionally, data collection was spread over three months. In that case, a questionnaire was administered on a Sunday afternoon after the participants left the weekly church service. It (questionnaire) availed crucial information on the topic. An interview was then scheduled three months later on a similar date (a Sunday afternoon). Importantly, the same sample would be engaged in the study. Using two data collection methods for the same exercise ensured the identification of data saturation and access to reliable and representative information.

The study informed the church management of the intention to conduct the study for academic purposes. Through the letter, the study sought permission to research the premises and using its congregants. The Prosperous Temple Church management accepted the request and granted a room for the data collection process. A week before the first data collection day, the five research assistants underwent a two-hour training, where they were guided on the data collection process. The training of research assistants ensures uniformity in the data collection process. It (training) ensures that the data collection process remains professional. On the data collection day, the research assistants availed themselves in the room offered by the church with printed questionnaires. They assigned them to the twenty-five participants and supervised them as they responded to the questions. Importantly, completing the questionnaire took between thirty to forty-five minutes. During the second data collection day, the research assistants grouped the participants into five groups. Each of the groups had five members, and each research assistant dealt with one of them at a time. The interview took between thirty and forty minutes.

Completed questionnaires were stored in safes to increase their safety. Data analysis was scheduled to take place at one instance when all the data would be available. In that case,

filled questionnaires were stored awaiting the interviews. During the interviewing process, the research assistants had notebooks and tape recorders. They wrote notes alongside each question as the participants responded to the questions. After the interviews, the research assistants transcribed the recorded responses and availed them for data analysis. They (research assistants) swore to protect the privacy of the information they interacted with during the data collection processes and transcription.

The full detailed questionnaire is in Appendix A

Data Analysis

Though the researcher is qualitative, the data obtained support analysis through quantitative approaches. In this regard, data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed through a combination of thematic coding and statistical analysis. Thematic coding applied to open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the interview. It (thematic coding) entails the identification of themes from a study participant's explanation.⁴¹ The themes must be evident in the responses for them to be considered appropriate. Importantly, themes represent topics and ideas manifested in qualitative data even when their reference is not direct.

Data analysis of the interview responses entailed scanning of the transcribed responses for the identification of the themes. The process (coding) entailed a procedural approach, where underlying codes were identified from the transcripts. The data analyst then focused on the merging and elimination process, where thematic codes that appear to relate were merged, and those that did not reflect the research purpose were excluded. Merging is essential in ensuring that the study results reflect the purpose and the issues sought in the research tool.⁴² It also ensures that data obtained from the study are discussed in

⁴¹ Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, *SAGE Qualitative Research Methods*, 97.

⁴² Sigmund Gronmo, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach*, 135.

representative themes instead of fragmented ideas. Elimination allows for subjective assessment of the thematic codes to determine their capability of answering the research question and subsequent deleting if they do not discuss the issues related to the research.⁴³ At that point, only the representative thematic codes are left. They are then discussed through the support of the phrases and quotations from the participant responses.

Additionally, data analysis in the study followed a statistical approach for the closed-ended questions. The questions allowed a participant to choose one or more answers from a variety provided. In this case, the data analyst tallied the responses to each of the options and determined the percentage of participants answering a question in a given way. Data on the responses were keyed into the statistical software, and computerized analysis was conducted.⁴⁴

Furthermore, a combination of the two data analysis methods ensured that insights were derived from the collected data. Trends and opinions were identifiable from the process, considering that each participant's response was keyed into the statistical software. Besides, the perceptions held by the participants were evident through the themes and accompanying phrases. Therefore, the data analysis process was useful in identifying the issues underlying the lack of female leadership at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ.

Intervention Implementation

Data obtained from the study served as a guide for the implementation of intervention at the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ. The early development stage of the intervention involved the introduction of the idea to the congregation through regular church programs, including church announcements, divine service, and church seminars. It ensured that the concept of women in church leadership was systematically introduced to the

⁴³ Gronmo, *Social Research Methods*, 135.

⁴⁴ Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, *SAGE Qualitative Research Methods*, 151.

congregation to ensure a smooth transition. Because the church members play a significant role in the adoption of the new ideas, it is vital to involve them throughout the process from the preliminary research.⁴⁵ Also, it is crucial to cultivate a collaborative relationship with the church stakeholders, who include the church members and current leaders, before proceeding with the experimental stage of implementation. Stakeholders should be consulted to generate support and consensus on study design, measures, and procedure, since sharing control over the design and implementation reduces the probability of barriers during implementation.

Throughout the implementation stage, the research looked into the intervention fidelity. Intervention fidelity is comprised of integrity and differentiation. Intervention integrity is the extent to which the intervention agent delivers an intervention as per the plan to the intended target; in this case, the church members.⁴⁶ Differentiation, on the other hand, is the extent to which the participant's exposure to an intervention differs as intended. Intervention fidelity is key to maximizing the research's credibility and the reliability of the conclusion about the impact of the intervention's outcome. Even if the evaluation yields a significant result, the study's inference will be weakened if the intervention fidelity is not measured.⁴⁷ Throughout the intervention implementation process, the research will consider several factors to ensure that the study's fidelity is maintained. The measures include conducting multiple training to individuals responsible for disseminating the proposed idea, monitoring the progress of the intervention agents, and the analysis considerations to compare the effect of the outcome of the intervention to that of the current state.

⁴⁵ Debbie Bonetti, Martin Eccles, Marie Johnston, Nick Steen, Jeremy Grimshaw, Rachel Baker, Anne Walker, and Nigel Pitts, "Guiding the design and selection of interventions to influence the implementation of evidence-based practice: an experimental simulation of a complex intervention trial," *Social Science & Medicine* 60, no. 9 (2005): 2136.

⁴⁶ Lourdes G. Planes, "Intervention design, implementation, and evaluation," *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy* 65, no. 19 (2008): 1856.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1859

Chapter 4

Results

The twenty-five people (seventeen women and eight men) who participated in this study were members of Prosperous Temple Church in Northport, Alabama. The inclusion criteria – all study participants had to be above 18 years of age – was observed. All the participants were active members of the church and staunch Christians. They filled a consent form for participation and received a recruitment letter. They were guided on participating, and none of them was compensated for participating. Through the consent form, they (participants) were informed that they would be allowed to exit the study at will. However, they were encouraged to participate in the study until the end. They were encouraged to present honest opinions on the topic and assured that their views on the various questionnaires would not be used against them.

Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using statistical software for the case of closed-ended questions. In the case of open-ended questions, the analysis was done through thematic coding. The conclusion derived from the data analysis will inform the intervention plan on including women in church leadership. The intervention will be executed in phases, where the congregants will first be introduced to women in church leadership as a significant step. The intervention will then progress to the early development stage before embarking on full implementation. The intervention results are as follows.

Satisfaction Levels

The study participants were asked their likelihood of recommending Prosperous Temple Church to a friend or a colleague to determine their contentment with the church's activities and conduct. The question was based on the assumption that satisfied church members would be willing to recommend the church to their friends. If they perceived that

Prosperous Temple Church conducted its business appropriately as they benefited, they would be willing to have the people in their social circles benefit from attending the church.

The responses for the likelihood to recommend were categorized on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 represented the highest likelihood, while 0 indicated the lowest likelihood. Three (3) of the respondents ticked 10, indicating that they were very likely to recommend the church to their colleagues. Twelve (12) respondents ticked 9, 5 ticked 8, 3, ticked 7, and two others ticked six and five each. Where 6-10 represented a high likelihood of the participants recommending the church to their friends, it is evident that most of the respondents (24 out of 25) were “satisfied” with the church and would be likely to recommend it highly to other people. Taking 0-5 and low likelihood, minimal (1 out of 25 participants) were “not satisfied” with the church and would less likely recommend it to people around them.

Table 2. Likelihood of the participant recommending (not recommending) the church.

Number of Participants	Likely (Unlikely) to Recommend
3	10
12	9
5	8
3	7
1	6
1	5

The researcher also sought to establish the time that a majority of members had been attending Prosperous Temple Church. Their understanding would inform a person’s satisfaction level with the processes and activities undertaken by the organization. A person who has spent more time in an organization is likely to understand its operations better and make an informed decision on satisfaction levels. Spending more time in a church implies

that the person is contented with the overall conduct and principles observed in that institution.

The participants were asked to indicate the period they had been attending the Prosperous Temple Church. Out of the 25 respondents, seven (two men, five women) had been attending the church for less than three years, eight (two men, six women) had been members for between 3 and 5 years, while ten (four men, six women) had attended the church for more than five years. A majority of the respondents (18) had been members of the church for more than two years. Prosperous Temple Church was started in 2009. However, before settling on its current location, it moved several times. Its membership has grown significantly over the period. The data that most of the study participants had spent more than two years at the church implies that the turnover rate is low. People who join the church are likely to remain members for a longer period. Indicatively, the church members who participated in the study enjoy high satisfaction levels and will likely not be considering exiting the temple in preference for other worship centers.

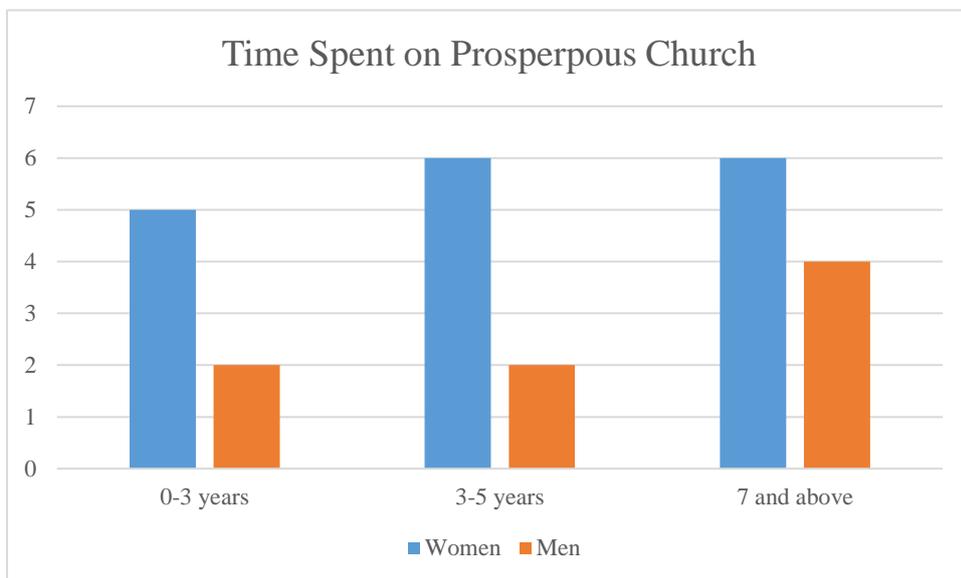


Figure 1. Time the Participants have been Attending Church.

The satisfaction level of a church member could also be based on the subjective opinions about the activities conducted in the church. In this regard, the study questioned whether the participants were “satisfied” with the church’s ability to confess. The communication between the leaders and church members could inform a Christian’s perspective of the church. The environment, physical or otherwise, the signage within the church and the church cleanliness are crucial determining factors of the perceptions that a church member will have on the church.

The responses on the satisfaction levels indicate the diversity of opinions at Prosperous Temple Church. When the study participants were asked to rate the ability of the church to confess, 20 responded that they were “satisfied,” three were “very satisfied,” and two were neutral about their satisfaction. In that regard, a majority of the participants (23 out of 25) felt that the church created an environment where its members would confess their sins, and they were “satisfied” with that arrangement. On the communication on church events, 12 participants pointed out that they were “very satisfied,” 11 were “satisfied,” and two were “not satisfied.” When asked to rate the general environment at the church, 18 respondents said they were “satisfied,” six were “very satisfied,” and 1 has neutral on her satisfaction.

Table 3. Additional Sources of Satisfaction for Church Members.

Source of Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Ability to confess	0	0	2	20	3
Communication on church events	0	2	0	11	12
Environment	0	0	1	18	6

Women’s reception at the church could inform satisfaction levels among church members. In this case, church members have appointed people to take up a leadership

position and expected they would be served accordingly. They were asked to rate their agreement with particular statements. The participants were asked whether they were “satisfied” as members of Prosperous Temple Church, and 14 of them indicated that they were strongly agreed while 11 agreed with the statement. Fifteen of the respondents strongly agreed that the church cared about its members, while ten agreed. Church finances and their management proved to be a divisive factor as Prosperous Temple. When participants were asked whether they received timely updates on the money collected in the church, ten strongly agreed that they received the communication, 8 agreed, 5 took neutral positions, and two disagreed. On the question of whether they received a timely update on church spending, nine strongly agreed, seven were agreed, 5 took neutral positions, and four disagreed with the statement.

Additionally, 13 of the study participants strongly agreed while 12 agreed with the statement that they received timely updates on church events. On understanding the process of volunteering in the church, 12 strongly agreed that they understood, 11 agreed, but two were neutral on their agreement, thus, indicating that they either did not know or were not concerned. Fifteen participants strongly agreed that the church took an active role in ensuring that the church services were lively, nine agreed with the statement, while 1 took a neutral position. On the statement on the handling of visitors, 23 participants strongly agreed that the church valued and appreciated visitors, while two respondents agreed with the statement. Fourteen participants agreed with the argument that they would receive all the seven sacraments from Prosperous Temple Church, nine were agreed with the statement, and 2 took neutral positions on the issue.

Table 4. Participant’s Agreement (Disagreement) with Particular Statements.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, I am satisfied with being a member of this church	0	0	0	11	14
The church cares about its members	0	0	0	10	15
I receive timely updates about events in the church	0	0	0	12	13
I receive timely updates about money collected in the church	0	2	5	8	10
I receive timely updates on money being spent in the church	0	4	5	7	9
I understand the process of becoming a volunteer	0	0	2	11	12
The management takes a special interest in making the services lively	0	0	1	9	15
The church is welcoming to new members	0	0	0	2	23

Church members participate in numerous activities in the church that are legally binding. When they participate, they anticipate that they will receive the accompanying documents without any restrictions. Particularly, child dedication and baptism have accompanying legal documents, and church members will rate their satisfaction based on the ease of accessing the documentation. Prosperous Temple church has the laity, where women can fit in concerning church leadership. Their perspective on the pastors’ concern for the wellbeing of the laity will inform their satisfaction with the church.

When the study participants were asked to rate their experiences on getting legal documents for the seven Sacraments, 11 strongly agreed with the statement that it was easy to access the documents, ten agreed, and four disagreed with the statement. On the handling of the laity in the church, 12 of the respondents strongly agreed that Prosperous Temple church had pastors who valued the wellbeing of the laity, 11 agreed, while one member neither

agreed nor disagreed. Importantly, women will only participate in church activities if they perceive that the structures and processes in the church are appropriate for them in their service to God. They will also participate in leadership if they perceive that they will be considered a valuable asset in the church ministry.

Table 5. Participants' Agreement (Disagreement) with Additional Statements.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Easy to get legal documentation	0	4	0	10	11
Pastors concerned with laity's wellbeing	0	0	1	11	12

Participation in Church

The study participants indicated that women took up different roles in the church. Importantly, a majority of them selected more than one choice indicating that they were performing more than one role. The questionnaire listed nine key roles (choir, management, finance, operations, events, festivals, teaching, and charity) and combined the rest as others. From the responses, ushering and cleaning were featured as the main activities. Notably, Prosperous Temple Church does not restrict women in any area of service. Instead, service in various departments is voluntary for all members. However, leaders in the departments are appointed.

Teaching attracted the most responses, with 14 out of the 25 participants showing that they perform varied teaching roles. Indicatively, most women desire to participate in church leadership by teaching other women, children, and young people below 18 years. Operations and charity attracted nine responses each. In that case, women are aiding in church operations while others take up community activities. Seven of the 25 study participants indicated that they participate in festivals. Women are keen on ensuring that the church maintains its

traditions and members grow their social lives. Six out of 25 participants performed the ‘other’ activities (particularly ushering and cleaning). Four of the respondents sang in the choir while another four handled finance activities. Three of the participants facilitated events, while two were in management. The responses to the question proved that women have varying talents and could perform multiple roles in a church.

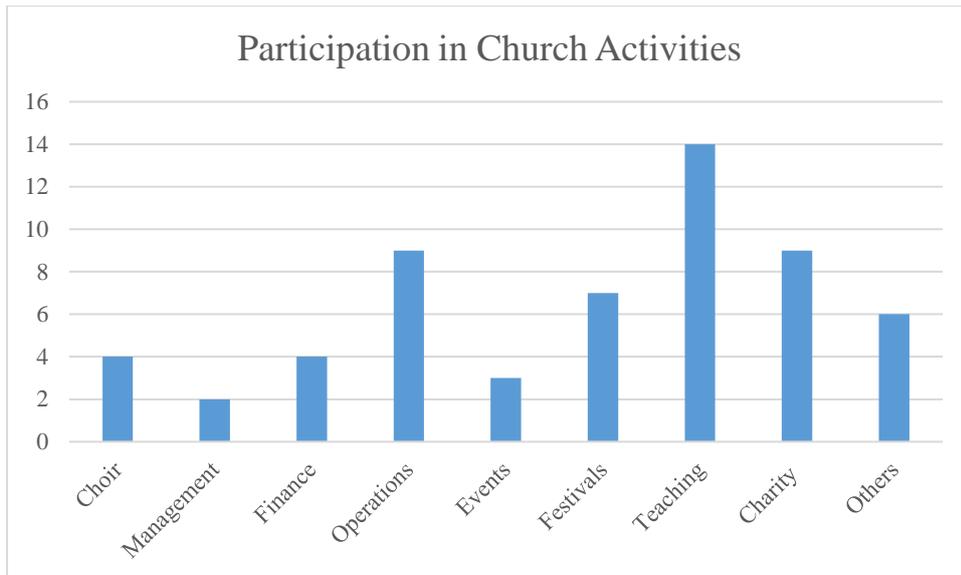


Figure 2. Church Members’ Participation in Church Activities.

Experience in Other Churches

The study participants were also asked whether they had attended another church within the past two years. They were expected to accompany their answer with a view on the aspects they found outstanding in that church. The question tested the respondents’ views on women’s roles in other churches. In that case, they would understand the trends of women and church leadership and make informed decisions. Out of the 25 participants, only 16 indicated that they had visited another church.

Attending another church enlightened the participants because they found that the participants in other churches were undertaking self-development initiatives and were actively taking up leadership roles in the churches. However, four of the participants reported that they did not find anything different from the events at the Precious Temple Church. Two

of the participants reported that they found a robust women's department with team fellowships. They commented that the fellowships met weekly and were regional. They ensured that the women were guided on understanding the Bible, and it served as an opportunity for them to share the issues affecting them. Eight participants indicated that they found churches with ladies' mentorship programs where older ones would guide young ladies. The events were also aimed at preventing women from slipping into depression and mental health. One of the participants reported an incident where women in a church had organized a health promotion initiative to sensitive people on healthy behaviors to help them avoid preventable chronic health conditions.

Table 6. Participants' Findings after Attending Another Church.

Participants	Findings after attending another church
4	Nothing different from Precious Temple Church
2	Robust women departments with team fellowships
8	Ladies mentorship programs
1	Women had organized a health promotion initiative.

Hearing About Prosperous Temple Church

The researcher sought to know how the participants ended up at Prosperous Temple Church. The respondents were above 18 years old, yet the church was started in 2009. It means, therefore, that they all joined the church within its ten years of existence. The responses to the question could prove their motives when participating in a church. It could also uncover their motivation and perception of the inclusion of women in church leadership.

Respondents were given eight choices in the questionnaire on how they joined the church. Specifically, they were expected to select one or more of the options. The essence of the question was to determine whether the participants joined the Prosperous Temple Church

because of its policies of inclusion (exclusion) of women in leadership and service.

Importantly, members of the society who advocate for gender equality are likely to choose a church that entrenches gender equality in its processes and vice versa. The ninth option was ‘others,’ and they were expected to disclose the particular reason. Most of the respondents (14 out of 25) learned about the church through the internet, where they read of its history and philosophy. They either accessed its page, posts or saw someone mentioning it.

However, none of the 14 respondents indicated that they read about the inclusion of women in leadership before they decided to join the church. From the internet, they learned that it was located in their locality and visited. Eventually, they became members. Nine of the participants heard about the church on the radio, while seven watched it on television. In this case, some of the nine members sensed gender equality when they heard or saw male pastors accompanied by female members to the radio and television shows. Four participants reported that they heard about the church through other sources. They described “others” as evangelism, where someone from the church preached to them, and they ended up joining the church. In this case, they were attracted by the church's structure and the coordination of activities where both genders appeared to be involved. Another four came to Prosperous Temple Church because their family members were worshiping there. Three of them joined the church because of their friends, while one joined because of her neighbor. No participant attended Prosperous Church since her childhood or was influenced by the community.

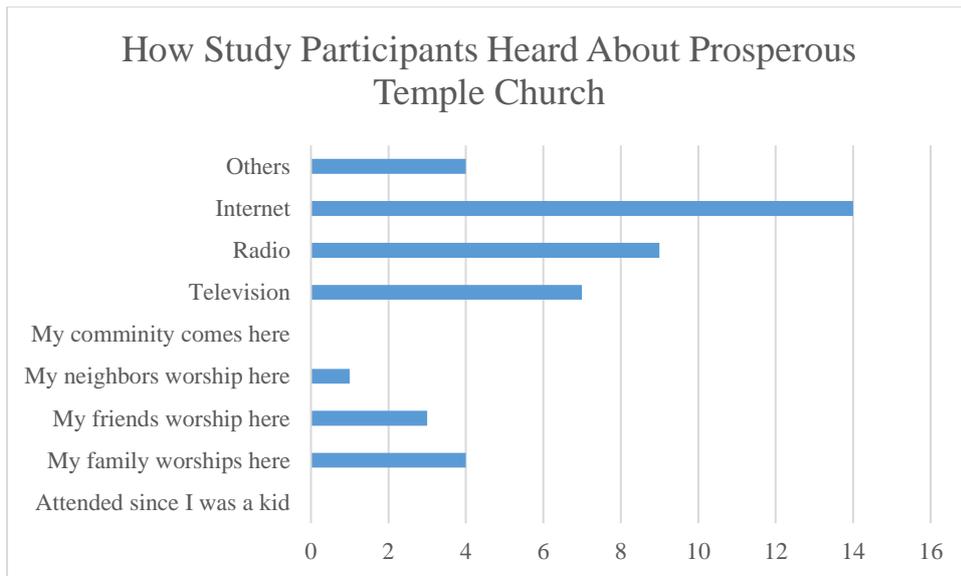


Figure 3. Various Ways the Study Participants Heard about Prosperous Temple Church.

The study was keen to encourage disclosure and expression. Data obtained from the study is crucial in informing the conclusion. The intervention on women's participation in church leadership will be informed by the insights obtained from the analysis of data. In that regard, the research included a question on any other feedback that the study participant felt was important in the study. However, more than half (23) indicated that they did not have any other issues. One of the respondents indicated that its participation in enhancing her Christianity informed her satisfaction with the church. In that case, the participant felt that the view that a person will develop about a church is based on the impacts it has on them. Another respondent felt that a church member would feel satisfied with their church if the members actively help her during tough times, for instance, the death of family members. She also opined that fairness in church leadership would influence women's willingness to take up leadership positions.

Perceptions of Women Participation in Leadership

The primary focus of the study was to create an intervention on an inclusive approach to church leadership. A question on the perceptions that participants held about participating in leadership or having their colleagues take up the position was included. The question

measured their verdict after exploring the approaches taken by other churches, their church, and reading the Bible.

The participants in this study were presented with five choices for the question. Notably, two-thirds of the participants were female, while a third were male. A majority of the respondents, 84%, reported that women's leadership is appropriate for the church. Notably, 84% represented 21 of the 25 respondents, where 14 were women, while 7 were men. They felt that allowing women to take leadership positions would benefit the church and women. However, 12% of the participants felt that breaking the traditions was not necessary. Importantly, 12% represented 3 participants, where 2 were women, while 1 was a man. In that case, they felt that men should continue filling leadership positions, and women should remain as followers. Four percent of the respondents disliked female leaders and felt that they should not be allowed to take up leadership positions. Four percent accounted for one respondent, who was female. None of the participants said that they did not have feelings for women leaders or that women's leadership was only appropriate for particular churches.

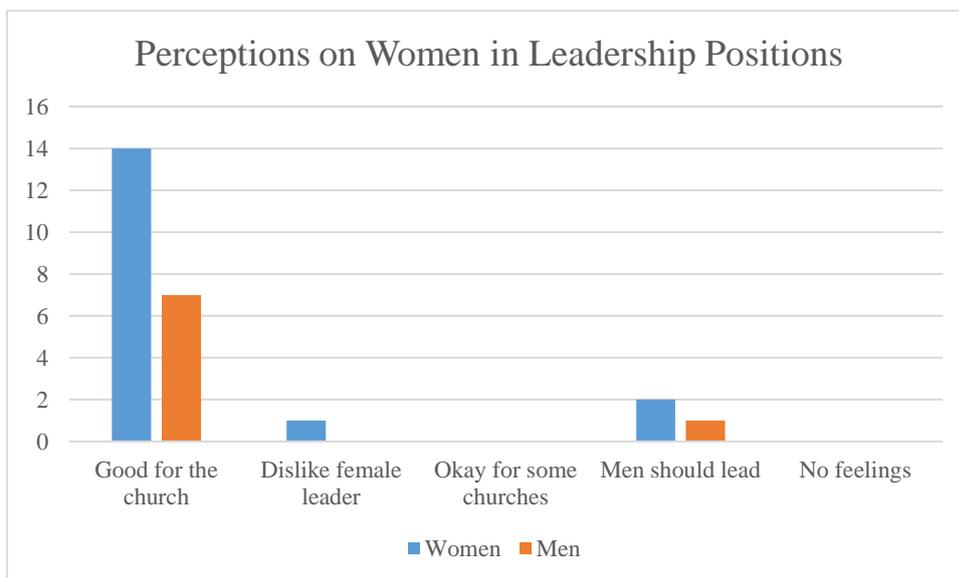


Figure 4. Perceptions of Women in Leadership Positions.

Though women are making significant strides in leading in their churches, they face hindrances from other women who feel that the status quo should be observed. Women

contend that times are changing and that they should be allowed to prove their capabilities. They feel that they have succeeded in their workplaces, where they have taken up leadership positions and steered the organizations to higher levels. By responding that women's leadership would be good for the church, women are implying that they are seeking equal treatment in all aspects of life.

Considering that a majority of the participants supported the option of having women in church leadership positions, it was paramount for the research to pose specific questions on particular leadership roles that are open to women. In that case, the researcher included a question on the satisfaction level with a female serving as a senior pastor. The participants could indicate whether they were “very unsatisfied,” “unsatisfied,” “satisfied,” “very satisfied,” or “neutral” about their satisfaction.

A majority of the study respondents were “not satisfied” with a church selecting a woman as the pastor. The data is contradictory, considering that more than 84% of the participants had indicated, in the previous question, that they would support women taking up leadership roles and positions. In this question, 11 participants were unsatisfied, while eight were female, and three were male. Also, 32% of the participants were “very unsatisfied” with a woman as a senior pastor. 32% (8 participants) comprised of 6 females and 2 males. In that case, most women did not support their colleagues or themselves to take up pastoral duties in the church. Another 16% of them did not have any problem with women taking up senior pastor roles. Specifically, four (16%) respondents said that they were “satisfied,” while one was “very satisfied.” Out of the 4, 3 were men, while 1 was a woman. A female respondent took a “neutral” position, thus, indicating that they were not sure whether a female pastor was okay or not. Another female respondent indicated that she was “very satisfied” with women serving as lead pastors.

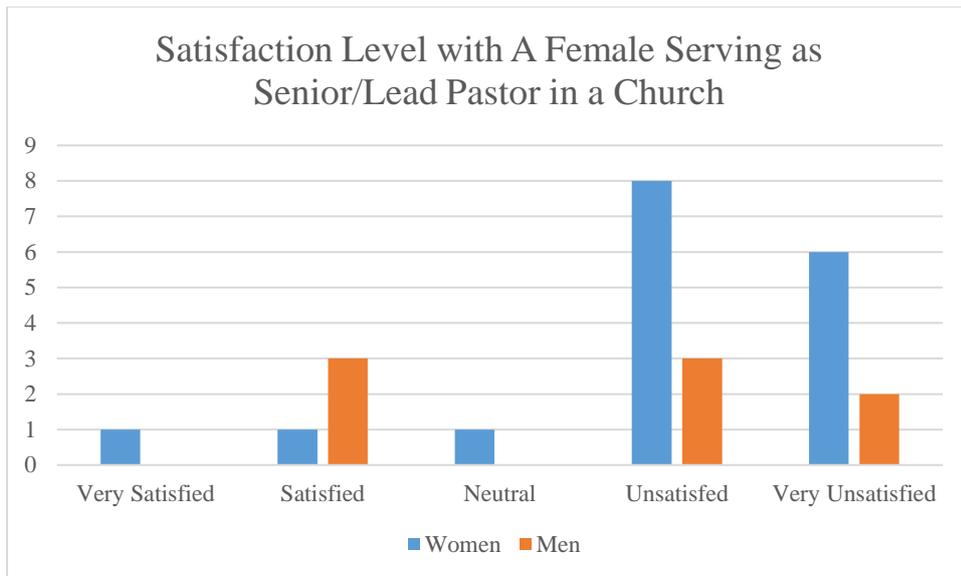


Figure 5. Participants' Satisfaction with Women Pastors.

The question of whether the participants supported women becoming pastors was followed with a question on the particular leadership positions that they would want women to take up. The question was pertinent, considering that 84% had already indicated that they support women's leadership. The participants had a choice among leadership ways in music, teaching, prophesy, intercessory, prayers, Bible study, and church departments. The participants could choose more than one option in the question. Notably, 20 participants opined that women should lead in music, 23 indicated that women should lead in teaching, 11 selected prophesy, 16 selected intercessory, 21 selected prayers, eight selected Bible study, and 6 selected leading church departments. Indicatively, a majority of the respondents supported women's leadership in music, teaching, and prayers.

An overwhelming majority, particularly women, are not content with female pastors. Church leaders should apply this data to inform position allocation within their institutions. Considering 76% reported dissatisfaction, the appointment of a female pastor would likely contribute to a higher turnover of women in that church. They would exit because of the feeling that the lady appointed to the pastoral ministry is performing roles inappropriate for women. However, the perception that women are not appropriate to serve as pastors should

not hinder them (women) from supporting their spouses who take up the position. In this case, pastors' wives should support their husbands even without preaching on the podium. Other women in the church should also support the pastoral department by facilitating its functioning. In that regard, taking up the position should not be considered synonymous with performing the functions within that docket.

The researcher also sought to determine the willingness of women to serve in other positions that amounted to leadership. In this case, the researcher started by asking the participants whether they would be "satisfied" with a female as the worship leader. The question was crucial in determining the value that church members attached to various leadership positions. The Bible requires that women serve as co-workers. In that case, serving in the various positions in the church other than pastoring would be desirable.

The research proved that women advocate for the other church leadership positions being filled by themselves or their colleagues. Seventy-six (76%) of the respondents reported that they were "very satisfied" with their female counterparts serving as worship leaders. Notably, 76% represented 19 participants, where 15 were women, and 4 were men. Another 16% indicated they were "satisfied." Out of the 16% (4 participants), one was female, while 3 were male. In that case, 92% of the study participants support the move to have the church appoint female worship leaders. Notably, 92% represented 23 participants, where 16 were female, and 7 were male. However, 4% were unsatisfied, while another 4% took a neutral position. Four percent represented 1 participant, and, in that case, one female participant was unsatisfied, while one male participant took a neutral position. None of the respondents cited being unsatisfied with the approach.

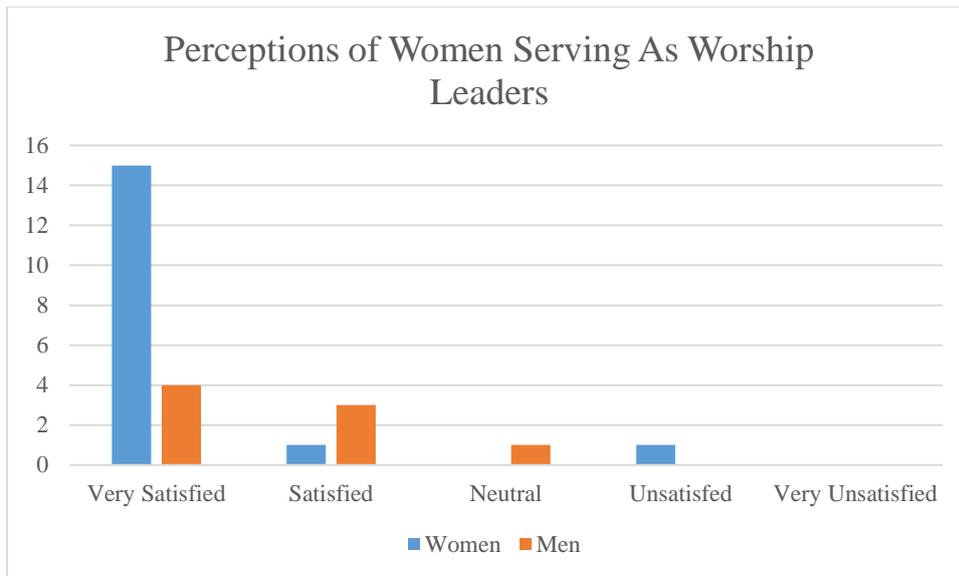


Figure 6. Perceptions of Women Serving as Worship Leaders.

The gift of singing cannot be claimed on a particular gender. Women are good singers, just like men. However, a leader in the worship team will require more than just a gift. They will manage the people in the team and their activities. Women can serve in the position and deliver desirable results. They should be accorded the opportunity, considering that a majority of women also support the move.

Furthermore, trustees hold critical positions in a church. They serve as the liaison between the church management and the congregation. They ensure that both parties are on good terms and advocate for the congregation's interests within the church board. In a majority of churches, church boards are elected by the members. They also oversee financial activities by ensuring that all the money is spent in beneficial ways. In that regard, a trustee is an influential position, and the researcher intended to determine whether women would appreciate taking up significant leadership tasks.

Unlike the other two positions (pastor and worship leader), opinions on a trustee were divided. Fifty-six (56%) of the respondents supported the decision of a church electing a female trustee. Notably, 10 of the 56% (14 participants) were female, while 4 were male. In that case, 36% were "satisfied," while 20% were "very satisfied." Forty (40%) did not

support women taking up a trustee role (32% were “unsatisfied,” and 8% were “very unsatisfied”). In that case, 6 of the 40% (10 participants) were female, while 4 were male. Only 4% of the participants were not sure whether women should become trustees. Four percent (1 participant) was a female respondent. Though a slight majority (56%) would support female trustees in churches, a significant number (40%) of other women still believe it is a role reserved for men. From the data, a majority of women support their colleagues (females) taking up a church trustee role. However, opinion among men on the issue was divided, considering that 50% supported it while the other 50% did not support it. In this case, women should vie for trustee positions in their churches, and if they are voted, they should serve without any hindrances. In churches that appoint trustees, women should be considered for the position because they have equal capabilities like the men who have filled the positions throughout church history.

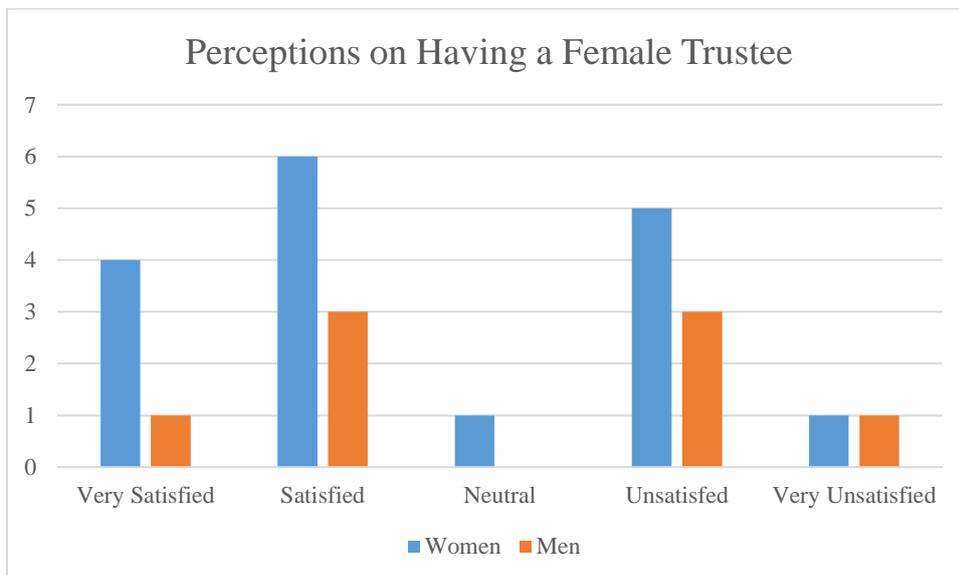


Figure 7. Perceptions of Female Trustees in Church.

Women can serve in different roles within the church as long as they are not taking up senior pastoring duties. 1 Timothy 2:8-11 creates the impression that men and women should serve in the church without one gender given priority over the other. In that light, the participants were asked whether they would be “satisfied” with a female serving as a youth

leader. Twelve of the participants (eight females and four males) indicated that they were “satisfied” with a female being a youth leader. Five of the 25 participants selected the “very satisfied” option – three were female, while 2 were male. Five participants took a neutral position – Four were female while one was male. Three participants said that they were “unsatisfied” with women become youth leaders – two were female, and one was male. No participant selected the “very unsatisfied” option.

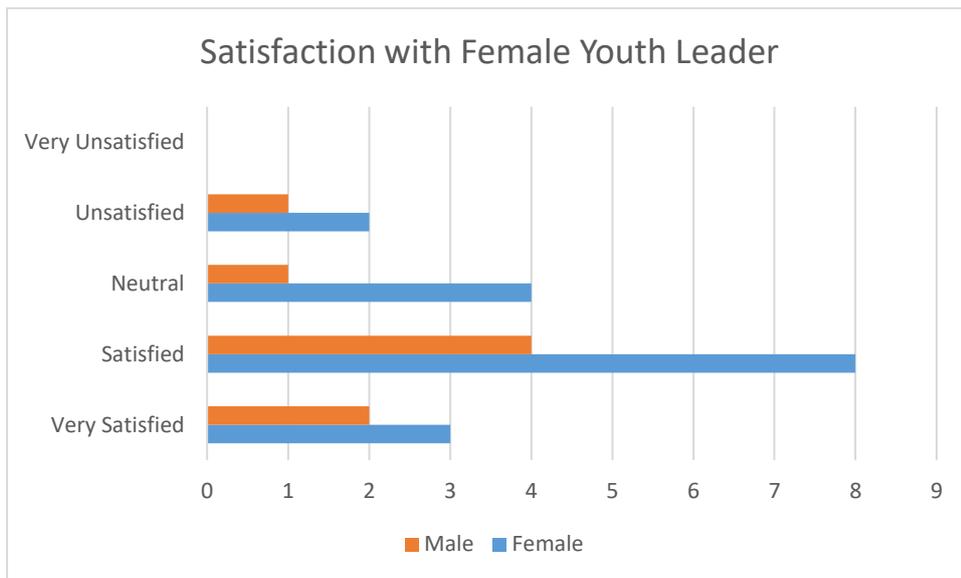


Figure 8. Perceptions of Female Youth Leader.

The literature review and the exegesis revealed that women could take up teaching roles as long as they are not teaching adults. In that light, the questionnaire included a question on whether the participants would be satisfied with women serving as children’s director. Fifteen (10 females and five males) said they were “satisfied.” Five participants – three females and two males – took a neutral position. Three participants (two females and a male) indicated that they were “very satisfied” with women becoming children directors. Only one female indicated that she was “unsatisfied” with the female children’s director, while another woman indicated she was “very unsatisfied.”

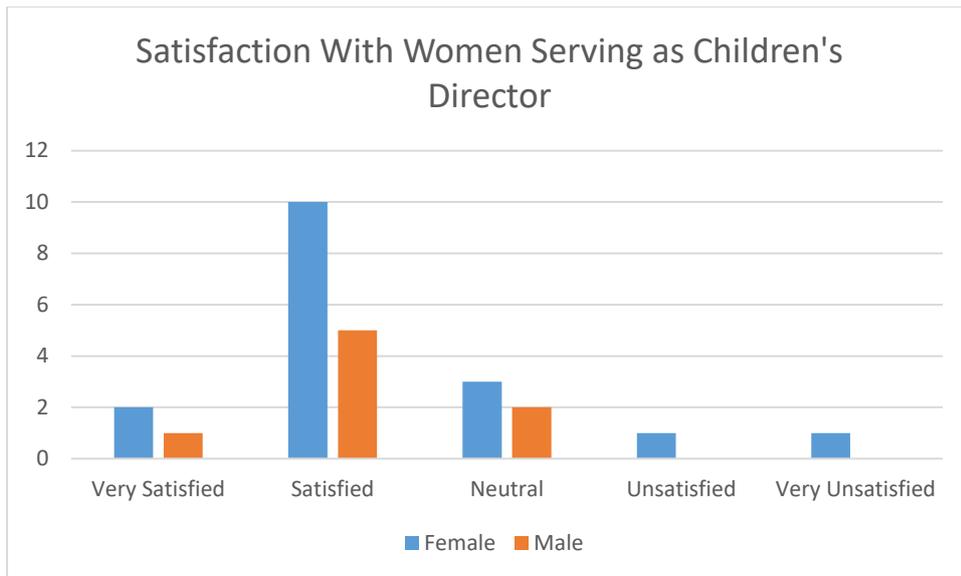


Figure 9. Perceptions of Female Children’s Director.

Miriam of the Old Testament led Israelites into worshiping God through music. In that light, women can serve in the church through Music, though Miriam’s scenario was not in a church setting. The participants were, thus, presented with a question on whether they would advocate for women taking up music/choir director roles. Eleven participants (seven females and four males) indicated that they were “satisfied” with women becoming music directors in the church. Eight participants (six females and two males) took a neutral position on the issue. Four participants pointed out that they were unsatisfied (three females and one male). Two of the participants – one female and one male – indicated they were “very satisfied” with a woman becoming a choir director.

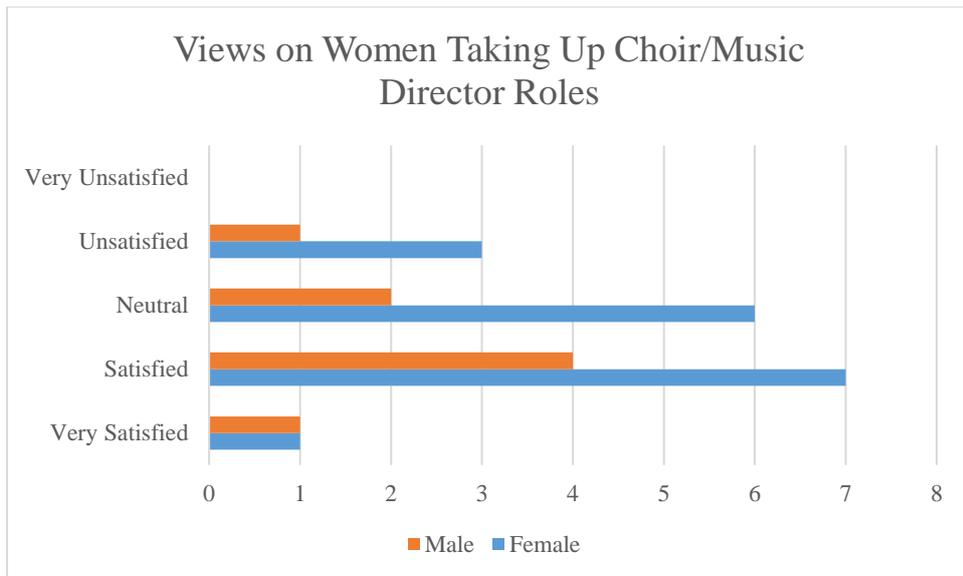


Figure 10. Perceptions of Female Music/Choir Director.

A church contains numerous departments and committees that oversee issues ranging from development, community activities to evangelism. The committees require a leader for them to succeed in their undertakings. In that light, the participants were asked whether they would be “satisfied” with a woman becoming a leader of a committee. A majority of the respondents (16) indicated that they were “satisfied” with women becoming chairpersons of committees. Out of the 16, 12 were female, and four were male. Three participants (two females and one male) took a neutral position. Another three (all females) indicated that they were “unsatisfied” with female committee chairpersons. Two participants (all male) were “very satisfied” with women becoming chairperson of committees. One male was “very unsatisfied” with women becoming chairpersons of committees.

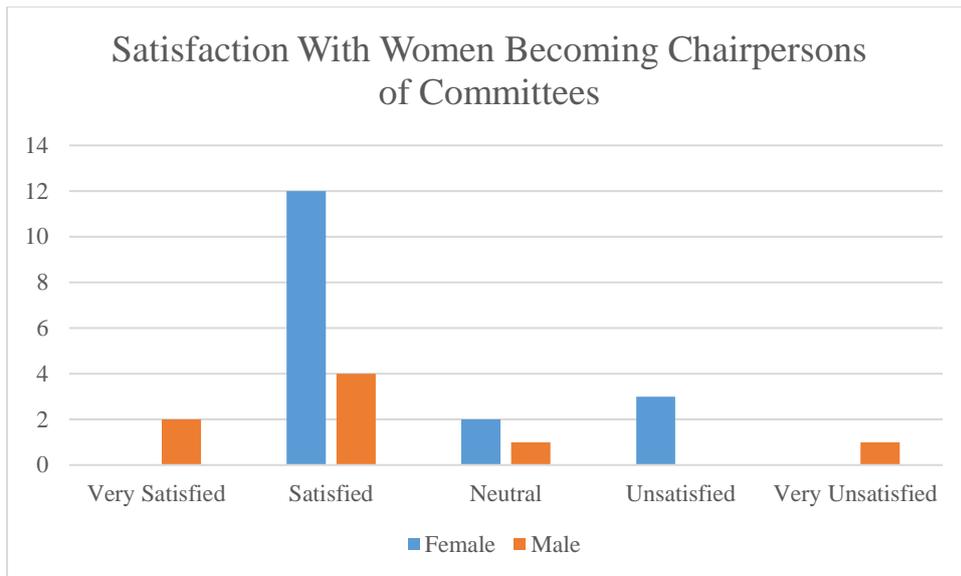


Figure 11. Perceptions of Women as Chairpersons of Committees.

Leadership Roles

The researcher had included seven questions on particular roles – pastor, trustee, worship leaders, youth leader, children’s director, choir director, and chairperson of committees. An almost similar question was included in the questionnaire to achieve data saturation. The question sought to obtain the participants’ views on church members’ satisfaction with women taking up various leadership roles. Twenty-two of the participants (16 females and six males) supported women becoming directors of women's ministry. Three participants (one female and two males) objected to women becoming directors of women's ministry. Seventeen participants (12 females and five males) supported the idea of women becoming chairpersons of committees. Eight participants (five females and three males) objected to women becoming chairpersons of committees. Another seventeen participants (13 females and four males) said they would support women becoming catering directors. Eight participants (four females and four males) objected to the idea. Sixteen participants (12 females and four men) support women becoming children’s ministry directors. However, nine participants (five females and four men) objected to the idea. Fifteen participants (10 females and five males) think women should become youth directors. However, ten

participants (seven females and three males) objected to female youth directors. Fourteen participants (nine females and five males) supported the idea of women becoming choir leaders. However, eleven (eight females and three males) did not support women becoming choir leaders.

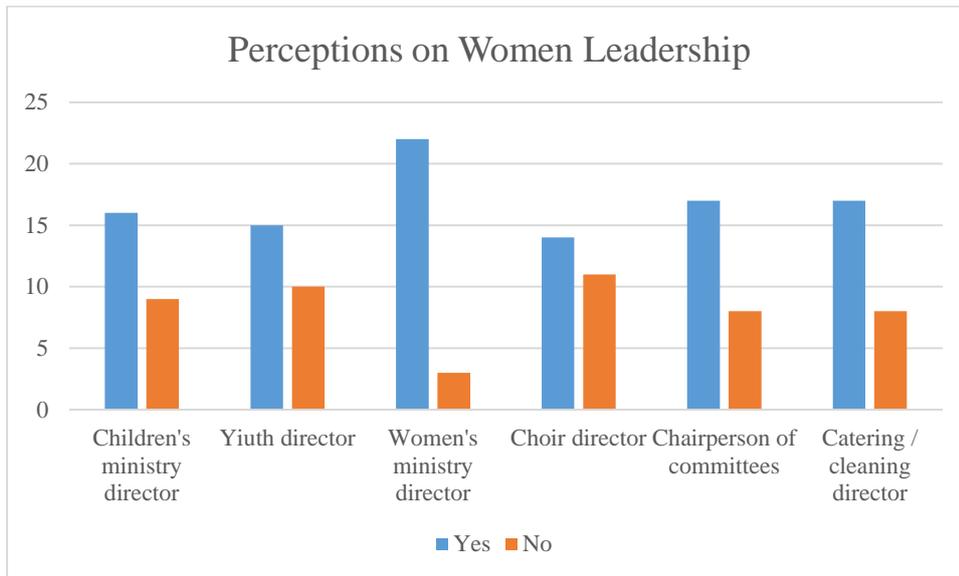


Figure 12. Views on Women Participating in Various Church Leadership Posts.

The study participants were questioned on the leadership roles they think women should take up in churches. The question offered an opportunity for the participants, even those that did not value female leadership, to explain the areas they thought women would fit. The questions' responses were varied, and they were categorized into executive, middle, and low-level positions. Six (24%) of the participants reported that they would support women taking up executive positions. Out of the 6, 4 were men, while 2 were women. In this case, executive positions mean trustees, board members, and managers of development projects. Fifteen (60%) said that they would aspire to see women fill middle-level positions. The positions (middle-level) entail department leaders. Out of the 15, 13 were female, while 2 were male. Four (16%) thought that women were effective in low-level positions, such as ushering, catering, cleaning, and teaching in the various departments. Out of the 4, 2 were male, while the other two were female.

After asking the respondents their views on the various leadership roles that women should take up in the church, the researcher asked them to evaluate women's position in the modern-day church. The question investigated the perceived progress that churches have made in entrenching female leadership. In that regard, the respondents were expected to indicate whether they loved or hated modern-day churches' progress. Fourteen (56%) of the respondents said that they hated the progress that the church had made in female leadership in the church. Out of the 14 (56%) of the participants, eight were female, while 6 were male. Eleven (44%) participants said they loved the progress. The 11 included nine females and two males. Indicatively, a majority of the respondents believed that the modern-day churches, particularly Prosperous Temple Church, could do more to include women in leadership. They felt that the church leaders had not invested in women and were constantly allocating women's positions to men. However, 44% that loved the progress believed that the church had made significant progress in women's leadership. In that case, they felt that continuous advocacy efforts would help see more women taking up leadership roles.

Biblical Source of Motivation for Women in Leadership and Ministry

The perceptions and positions taken by stakeholders in the church on women in leadership are influenced by their interpretation of the various Bible verses. The respondents were expected to indicate the Bible verse that motivated their view. The choices included 1 Corinthians 11: 3, "But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35, which implies that women should remain silent in church, and if they desire to consult something, they should only do that from their husbands while at home was also included in the options. The study participants could also choose 1 Timothy 2: 11-15, which indicates that women should not be allowed to teach or take positions of authority in the church. Besides, the

researcher could choose any other Bible verse that they deemed appropriate for them. The respondents were allowed to choose more than one Bible verse.

Nineteen of the study participants indicated that they drew inspiration from 1 Timothy 2: 11-15. Out of the 19, 15 were female, while 4 were male. In that case, they felt that men have a higher call than women and that men should spearhead teaching and pastoral duties. They interpreted the verse 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 to mean that women should not take up leadership positions. Eight participants said that they were motivated by 1 Corinthians 11: 3 that men should take up pastoral duties in a church. Six of the 8 participants were female, while 2 were male. The Bible verse also implies that women can take up any other duties as long as they are not those assigning overall authority. Only three of the study participants were inspired by 1 Corinthians 14: 34-25, implying that they did not want women to take up leadership positions in the church. Importantly, the three comprised of 2 females and one male participant.

Furthermore, Ephesians 5: 21 and Philippians 4: 2-3 were the most mentioned verses in the other category. Ephesians 5: 21 says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." In that case, they supported both genders, becoming leaders in a church. However, the verses that follow verse 21 discuss a submission relationship between husband and wives. Philippians 4: 2-3 views Christians as co-workers. In that case, men and women have similar opportunities in church leadership.

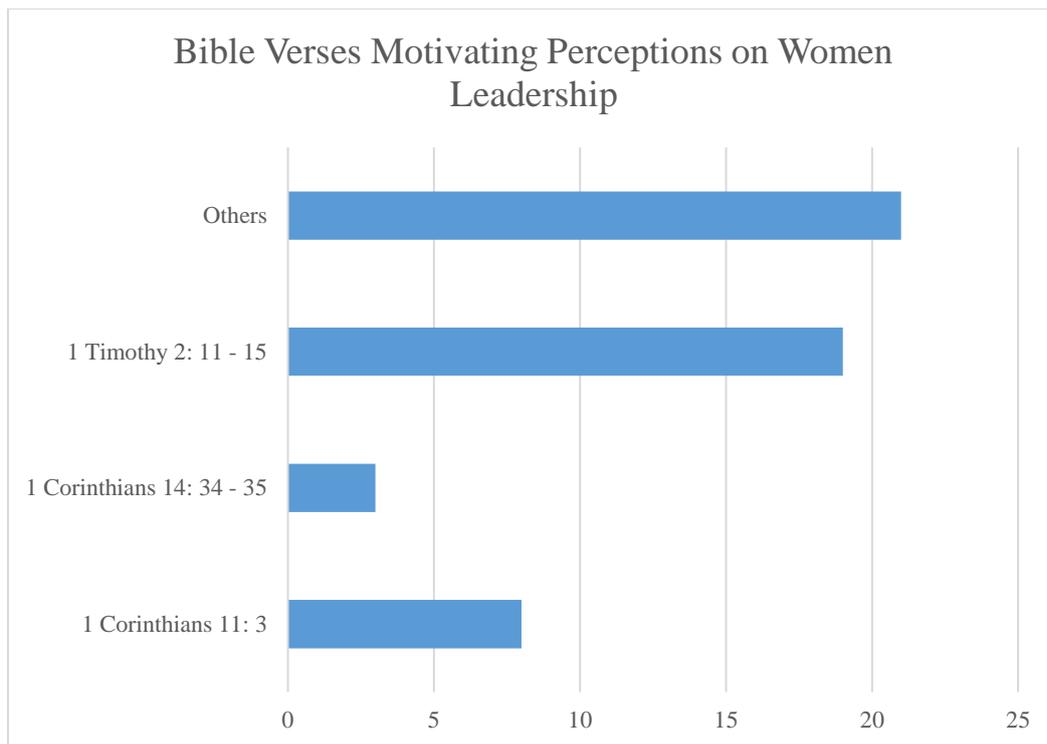


Figure 13. Bible verses that Motivated the Perceptions of Women in Leadership.

The participants also responded to a question on how they understood 1 Timothy 2: 11-15. The participants selected the options of women must not be pastors, women must not teach men in the church, women must not teach at all, women should remain silent, and the Bible verse does not apply to women leadership in modern churches because it reflects the culture practiced at the time of Timothy. Twelve of the participants indicated that women should not become pastors. Five participants felt that women should not teach men. Two participants felt that women should not teach at all. One of the participants felt that women should remain silent. Five respondents felt that 1 Timothy 2: 11-15 reflected the culture of the time and should, thus, not be relied upon when deciding whether women should be leaders in the church or not.

Furthermore, the participants cited restrictive church policies, lack of mentorship for aspiring women leaders, and misleading biblical interpretation as the significant challenges women face when seeking leadership positions. A majority of the men felt that women were enemies because they did not support women's leadership.

Finally, the respondents were requested to make suggestions on the leadership role of women within the church. The responses can be categorized into three groups, teaching, prophesying, and supporting. Though certain Bible verses have warned women from teaching in the church, a majority of the participants felt that women could teach children and adolescents. Through teaching, women will disciple children to adopt Godly ways. They felt that women could become prophets where they would encourage church members and contribute to the preaching of the gospel. Besides, most of the respondents felt that women could offer a supporting role in church leadership; they would perform roles in the office of leadership. They could serve as missionaries, where they will support those in leadership. By supporting, women will perform various roles in leadership offices without taking up authority.

Conclusion

The data analysis indicates that women are just as important as men in leadership. Their contribution to the church's progress and the primary focus of spreading the gospel is necessary, considering that men alone cannot manage the roles. The changes in the modern-day world have prompted women to question their role in the church. They are no longer willing to back seat in church leadership. However, women are keen to remain within limits presented in the Bible, not taking authority. It is appropriate for women to perform other leadership functions within the church as long as they are not pastoring. They should serve in various capacities. Shockingly, a section of women is still held back by the cultural norms and societal beliefs; they feel that the traditions where men take the lead should continue. In that case, these women would hate seeing another woman take up leadership roles. Notably, these kinds of women are few. The study participants made their decisions based on their understanding of the various Bible verses. The changing times in the world, coupled with an in-depth understanding of the Bible, informed the views that were analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Churches in the modern-day world have adopted a convenient approach to leadership, where they include (or exclude) women in a way that will not disenfranchise them. The existence of numerous Bible verses that discuss women's participation in leadership and the diverse image they create has resulted in confusion among theologians and church leaders. In that case, the churches that exclude women from leadership argue that they are abiding by biblical teachings. They go ahead to cite verses, such as 1 Timothy 2: 8-14 and 1 Corinthians 14. In the same light, the churches that include women in church leadership argue that the Bible verses encourage an egalitarian approach by creating an impression that every church member is gifted differently. In that case, they argue that women can serve in the church as long as they are passionate and gifted in that area. The differing views on biblical concepts have created an environment where theological schools teach the doctrine and interpretation that they believe. That notwithstanding, most churches, particularly in North America, have taken a conservative approach despite society taking an egalitarian approach to leadership.

The study focused on showing the value of women's leadership in the church using the case of Prosperous Church of God in Christ. The blanket argument that women should not participate in church leadership is wrong and misleading because women have the potential in a similar magnitude as men. Besides, women are gifted and can, thus, serve in the church in numerous positions. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to show that women have the potential to serve in diverse areas in the church.

American churches are conservative, and they take an approach to leadership that is convenient and does not put them at loggerheads with other Christians. The conservative approach is evident in women accepting to take the lower position in church leadership while

they are executives in contemporary organizations.¹ Audette's views were reflected in the results, considering that a majority of the participants (24 out of 25) indicated that they would recommend Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ to their colleagues. Notably, 18 out of the 25 participants had been attending the church for more than two years. Besides, the Prosperous Temple Church is reflective of the American churches in women's participation in leadership. In that regard, when most participants responded that they were contented with the church and its structure to the extent that they would recommend it to their colleagues, it was evident that modern-day churches intend to maintain the status quo.² Contemporary society has advanced by entrenching gender equality, but the church and its members are keen on maintaining the status quo on men's domination in churches.

Additionally, Audette's argument Christian women are less liberal than the other women in the society is reflected in the results.³ Women feel comfortable without taking up church leadership positions, yet they are vocal in society and advocate for gender equality. Besides, as Rugwiji argued, society does not support women's participation in church leadership because rules and policies are developed in a way that restricts women from taking up leadership positions.⁴ In that case, most study participants derived their satisfaction with the Prosperous Temple Church from other factors, such as the quality of the fellowships, sermons, and communication on church activity instead of inclusivity. The restrictive church policies create an impression among women that taking a non-liberal approach is safe because they are in the church environment. The teachings they receive, coupled with the

¹ Andre P. Audette, Maryann Kwakwa, and Christopher L. Weaver, "Reconciling The God and Gender Gaps: The Influence of Women In Church Politics," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 6, No. 4 (2018): 683.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 685.

⁴ T T Rugwiji and M. A. Masoga, "The Quest for Gender Equality In The Bible: Indegenous Knowledge Perspectives On The Church's Position Towards Women And Leadrship In Africa," *African Journals Online*, 15, No. 2 (2017): 4.

historical male dominance in church leadership, make women and other church members perceive that church leadership exclusion is appropriate.

The study revealed that the Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ did not restrict women in church service. Church members would take up any service position that they deemed appropriate for them. In instances where the leadership position followed an election, a person had to convince as many people to win the position. However, senior leadership in the church was dominated by men. In light of Player's discussion, male and female Christians have similar leadership potential, and, therefore, churches should give them equal opportunities.⁵ Besides, a church offers numerous service opportunities that cannot be filled by men alone.⁶

The service opportunities differ from one church to another. When the participants were asked to enumerate the church activities that attracted women, teaching emerged as the first one, while management was the least preferred. The participants indicated that women should serve as a teacher, in operations, and charity. Finances and management attracted minimal responses, thus, indicating that women were not considered an appropriate choice for the positions. The results reflect 1 Timothy 2:11-14, which points out that women should not teach or assume authority over men in the church. In that case, women are not prohibited from teaching, considering Blomberg's argument that women are prohibited from the office, but not the function.⁷ Blomberg gives the impression that women should not become officeholders, for instance, senior pastors, but can take up office functions like teaching.

⁵ Abigail Player, Georgina Randsley de Moura, Ana C. Leite, Dominic Abrams, and Fatima Tresh, "Overlooked Leadership Potential: The Preferences for Leadership Potential In Job Candidates Who Are Men Versus Women," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10 (2019): 755.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 756.

⁷ Craig L. Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos: An Introduction to Acts Through Revelation* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 51.

Besides, the church has diverse congregants who require discipleship and teaching.⁸ Women can, therefore, teach in the church as long as they teach congregants below 18 years. That way, they will not appear to assume authority over men, as indicated in 1 Timothy 2.

Additionally, women can serve in other church positions without taking over the helm of church management. The approach used at Prosperous Temple Church is that women can serve in diverse positions because they are all co-workers within the institution. The contexts of 1 Corinthians 14: 33-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 imply that women are a valuable asset in the church and family but could be a source of institution failure if their actions are not regulated.⁹ Paul indicated that a woman, Eve, was the first to be tempted by the devil at the Garden of Eden.¹⁰ He (Paul) also encourages women to practice good deeds by avoiding extravagant items that could disrupt the peace and decency in a church.¹¹ In that case, women are vulnerable to temptations and pride and should, therefore, not take up senior church leadership roles.¹² The participants' responses indicate that a majority of them did not support women's participation in management aligns with the arguments that women should not take up senior pastoring roles but should participate in serving at various positions in the church.

Furthermore, the distribution of the choices presented by the study participants for the question of the various positions where women can serve shows that women are gifted differently. The responses on women's participation in the church ranged from teaching, choir, operations, management, finances, festivals, to charity work, with every category

⁸ Janelle L. Harrison, "Female Roles in Leadership And The Ideological Texture Of 1 Timothy 2: 9 – 15," *Inner Resources for Leaders*, 3, no. 1 (2011): 6.

⁹ Inyamah, Deborah C. Inyamah, "Contrasting Perspectives On The Roles Of The Feminine In Ministry And Leadership Roles In John 4 And 1 Timothy 2:11-15," *Journal of Religious Thought*, 60, No. 63 (2010): 92.

¹⁰ Janelle L. Harrison, "Female Roles in Leadership And The Ideological Texture Of 1 Timothy 2: 9 – 15. 5.

¹¹ Inyamah, Deborah C. Inyamah, "Contrasting Perspectives On The Roles Of The Feminine In Ministry And Leadership Roles In John 4 And 1 Timothy 2:11-15. 95.

¹² Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, S. M. Baugh, Denny Burk, Albert Wolters, Robert W. Yarbrough, and Thomas Bowen et al., *Women in The Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 (3rd Ed.)* (Wheaton: Crossway Publishing, 2016), 78.

attracting participants. In that case, churches should follow the concept of individual responsibility conceptualized in 1 Timothy 2: 9-10. Women should consider their gifts, talents, and passions before taking up any service position in the church.¹³ They should use the diverse approaches available to them to access the positions instead of taking a back seat and waiting that they are offered the position.¹⁴ For instance, they should serve in opportunities that arise so that their unique capabilities are appreciated. That way, they will be appointed to various service positions because they will have demonstrated their capabilities. The distribution of the responses across the various tasks indicates that church members believe that women should not be restricted in their service. Women can serve as teachers and prophets in the church if they entrench the faith, love, and holiness presented in 1 Timothy 2:15.¹⁵

Women's participation in church leadership experiences significant challenges and uncertainties. For instance, while 84% (14 women and seven men) of the participants opined that women's leadership is appropriate for the church, 60% felt that they (women) should take up middle-level positions. It would have been expected that if a majority of the respondents supported women's participation in church leadership, they would also consider them fit for the senior-level roles. The differing perceptions of women's participation in church leadership, as indicated in the results, is traceable to Scott's role congruity argument.¹⁶ Women experience role incongruity in the church because their skills and traits do not overlap with their perceived competence.¹⁷ Notably, the role incongruity is at two levels –

¹³ Julie Ma, "The Role of Christian Women in the Global South," *Transformation*, 31, No. 3 (2014): 193.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos*: 59.

¹⁶ Halee Scott, "Perceptions of Christian Women Leaders In Church-Related Organizations," *Research On Educational Ministry*, 11, Vol. 1 (2014): 51.

¹⁷ Scott, "Perceptions of Christian Women Leaders," 53.

personal and social. The women in churches experience misalignment of their perceived characteristics and competencies in various church roles because of the restrictive culture that present men as the best alternative for church leadership. Women also experience role incongruity because society does not believe that their skills could match the competencies needed for the various church roles.

Women can participate in various leadership roles within the church, but the congregants have varying views on each role. The view that women should not take up senior church leadership roles, like becoming a senior pastor, was reflected in the study results. A majority of women (14 out of 17) were unsatisfied with female pastors at a time when only three out of eight men were unsatisfied. The results show that a third of the participants did not support the idea of churches having female pastors. The results point to the dominant male leadership and a society that does not support women's leadership quest.¹⁸ Though female bishops and pastors have increased in the last decade, most churches have male pastors and bishops to the extent that the congregants believe it is the norm.¹⁹ Besides, the results indicate that women do not support their colleagues. Women are the greatest enemy to their development because they do not support each other.²⁰ Fourteen out of 17 women not supporting a female pastor, yet they support women's participation in church leadership, which indicates they do not perceive a lack in their capabilities.

Women could serve as a youth leader, children's director, or chairperson of committees. A majority of the participants were "satisfied" with women becoming youth leaders (17 out of 25), children's director (18 out of 25), and chairperson of committees (24

¹⁸ T T Rugwiji and M. A. Masoga, "The Quest for Gender Equality In The Bible:6.

¹⁹ Katherine A. Tunheim and Mary Kay DuChene, "The Professional Journeys And Experiences In Leadership Of Evangelical Lutheran Church In America Women Bishops," *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 18, No. 2 (2016): 195.

²⁰ Nicole L. Davis, "Women In Ministry: How Conflicts Between God's Purpose And Church Doctrine Impact The Efficacy Of Female Church Leaders," *Nova Southeastern University Theses and Dissertations* (2019): 18.

out of 25). Notably, in the three roles, the women are mostly supportive, numbering 11, 12, and 18, respectively. The results mirror the ideas by Player that men have leadership potential like men.²¹ Although they contribute to significant positions, these leadership positions are not senior in the church. A children's director and youth leader amount to a teaching position and are, therefore, appropriate because the beneficiaries are children or young adults. Women should teach young people in the church because teaching adults, particularly men, would be contrary to 1 Timothy 2.²² Besides, women's participation in leadership should appreciate the unique factors in that environment.²³ In that case, Prosperous Temple Church members consider women appropriate leaders in operations; hence, the high satisfaction rate with women becoming chairpersons of committees.

Music is a crucial tool in Christian service, considering it amounts to worshipping God. Miriam in the Old Testament (Exodus 15:20-21) led the Israelites into worshipping God after He delivered them from Egypt. In that case, women can serve in the church by leading worship. However, music could be misused by proud individuals to show off and distract the congregants; hence, the emphasis on individual responsibility – as presented in 1 Timothy 2:9-11 - for women who serve in any church position.²⁴ Unlike other leadership positions, a significant number of participants (eight out of 25) took a neutral position, while half (13 out of 25) were “satisfied” with women serving as worship leaders. The high number of people taking a neutral position indicates that a section of congregants was unsure whether women

²¹ Abigail Player, Georgina Randsley de Moura, Ana C. Leite, Dominic Abrams, and Fatima Tresh, "Overlooked Leadership Potential: The Preferences for Leadership Potential In Job Candidates Who Are Men Versus Women," *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10 (2019): 753.

²² Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, S. M. Baugh, Denny Burk, Albert Wolters, Robert W. Yarbrough, and Thomas Bowen et al., *Women in The Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 (3rd Ed.)*. 79.

²³ I. A. Nell, "Women On Leadership? Perspectives From Postgraduate Theology Students Through The Lenses Of Social Identity," *Acta Theologica*, 35, No. 1 (2015): 119.

²⁴ Inyamah, Deborah C. Inyamah, "Contrasting Perspectives On The Roles Of The Feminine In Ministry And Leadership Roles In John 4 And 1 Timothy 2:11-15. 96.

were appropriate as music directors or not. Music and worship are a rich ground for disruption of the orderliness in the church, as Paul discusses in 1 Timothy 2:9. If women do not dress modestly and end up wearing expensive clothes and elaborate hairstyles then participate in leading church worship, they will disrupt the service by causing divided attention. In that case, half of the congregants did not support women serving as music directors.

Additionally, the church trustee role attracted unique responses – half of the participants were “satisfied” with women taking up the position while the other half was “not satisfied.” A church trustee handles finances and works alongside the treasurer. The divided support for women taking up the position is informed by the restrictive organizational cultures that have dominated churches over the years.²⁵ The restrictive cultures prioritize men for the trustee position to the extent that the congregation perceives that women are inappropriate to take up the role.

The study revealed that the church congregation (men and women alike) appreciate women's participation in church leadership. However, they have reservations to the extent that they only want women to serve in particular roles and not others. The study revealed that the different approaches to women's church leadership participation are informed by a lack of contextual biblical interpretation of notable verses. Modern-day churches have based their approach to women's leadership on biblical verses without considering the context.²⁶ They also ignore notable examples of women serving in notable positions alongside Paul, yet they claim that Paul did not conceptualize a church with female leaders.²⁷

²⁵ Nicole L. Davis, "Women In Ministry: How Conflicts Between God's Purpose And Church Doctrine Impact The Efficacy Of Female Church Leaders." 19.

²⁶ Vivian A. Petties, "A Biblical Perspective On Women In Leadership: A Fresh Look at 1 Timothy 2: 8 -15," *Biblical Perspectives* (2008): 4.

²⁷ Solomon O. Ademiluka, "1 Corinthians 14:33-36 In Light Of Women And Church Leadership In Nigeria," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017): 5.

Congregants in modern-day churches derive their understanding of women's participation in church leadership from biblical verses. Notably, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 stands out owing to its categorical approach to women's leadership. At face value, the passage, particularly verse 12, discourages women from teaching or assume authority over a man. The study's results mirror the discussion brought out by researchers like Petties and Harrison in their past studies. Almost half of the participants (12 out of 25) said that the Bible passage (1 Timothy 2: 11-14) meant, to them, that women should not become pastors. Petties argued that the verse occasioned institutional challenges in women's quest to take up church leadership.²⁸ Though the verse has a cultural context, women should take up other service and leadership roles within the church.²⁹ In that case, the quietness and submission discussed in the Bible verse emphasize the need for women to take up other roles within the office other than office leadership.³⁰

The study results revealed that the institutional challenges that women faced when ascending to leadership emanated from misleading biblical interpretations, restrictive policies, and lack of mentorship programs. Gendered practices in local churches are occasioned by a failure by modern-day Christians to participate in exploratory Bible studies and listen to the voice of God.³¹ Christians should base their actions on the affirmations given to them by God through the Holy Spirit. They should also seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to aid in their effective interpretation of Bible verses.

²⁸ Vivian A. Petties, "A Biblical Perspective On Women In Leadership: A Fresh Look at 1 Timothy 2: 8 -15. 5.

²⁹ Janelle L. Harrison, "Female Roles in Leadership And The Ideological Texture Of 1 Timothy 2: 9 – 15. 4.

³⁰ Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, S. M. Baugh, Denny Burk, Albert Wolters, Robert W. Yarbrough, and Thomas Bowen et al., *Women in The Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15 (3rd Ed.)*. 118.

³¹ Julie Ma, "The Role of Christian Women in the Global South. 181.

Churches have occasioned the exclusion of women in leadership through restrictive cultures and a failure to offer equal opportunities. The project revealed that churches have dominant male leadership that implements gender-biased policies. Women support the policies because they have been socialized to believe that men should dominate. Besides, the churches do not offer opportunities for growing women's leadership potential, such as mentorship programs. Whenever vocal women rise and air their grievances, they are considered a challenge and sometimes expelled from the church. The twenty-first-century church should sport women and offer them leadership and service opportunities. The project also revealed that women impede their success. They do not support their colleagues who take up leadership. In that case, women should learn to appreciate and support each other so that the gender disparity is bridged over time.

The study results are a guide for an intervention plan on including women in church leadership. The results show that women can serve in the church in a way equal to or better than men. Besides, the focus of the gospel is to reach more people while encouraging each other. In that case, when churches include women in leadership, they will support the goal of evangelism by reaching more people with the truth. The results indicate that women desire to participate in church leadership and have diverse gifts to serve in the church. The results also prove that men support women's participation in church leadership instead of the perceived notion that men want to dominate church leadership positions. In that case, the results prove that women's leadership is beneficial to a church's growth, considering it also entrenches inclusion. The results are, thus, replicable across churches in the world. The churches should apply the results by developing interventions to guide the procedural inclusion of women in leadership. In this case, they should develop policies and frameworks on women's leadership. They should also hold seminars to teach women the need to take up leadership opportunities. Besides, the seminars will guide women that service amounts to leadership. Eventually, they

should create mentorship and support programs to ensure that women take up service opportunities within the church and associated ministries.

The study has shown that women's leadership is valuable and beneficial to church growth. However, the data was obtained from congregants and not female church leaders. In that case, future research should examine the impact of female leadership on church growth by observing female leaders. Future research should measure the effectiveness of female church leaders compared to male leaders.

Appendix A
Questionnaire

The lack of female leadership at Prosperous Temple Church

Considering your *complete* experience with this Church, how likely would you be to recommend us to a friend or colleague?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Very Unlikely
Very Likely

How long have you been attending this church?

- 0-6 months
- 7-12 months
- For the last 2 years
- More than 2 years

How would you rate your satisfaction with the Church on these parameters?

	Very dissatisfied,	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Ability to confess	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication about Church Events	<input type="radio"/>				
Environment	<input type="radio"/>				

Please state your agreement with the below statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall, I am satisfied with being a member of this Church	<input type="radio"/>				
The Church cares about its members	<input type="radio"/>				
I receive timely updates about events in the Church	<input type="radio"/>				
I receive timely updates about money collected in the Church	<input type="radio"/>				
I receive timely updates about money being spent in the Church	<input type="radio"/>				
I understand the process of becoming a Volunteer	<input type="radio"/>				
The management takes a special interest in making the services lively	<input type="radio"/>				
The Church is welcoming to new Members	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It is easy to get legal documents for these Sacraments at this Church	<input type="radio"/>				
The pastors are worried about the wellbeing of the laity	<input type="radio"/>				

What aspects of the Church do you actively participate in? check all that apply

- Choir
- Management
- Finance
- Operations
- Events
- Festivals
- Teaching
- Charity
- Other

Have you attended another Church in the last 2 years? If yes, what aspects of that Church is better than ours?

How did you hear about this Church?

- I've attended since I was a kid
- My family goes here
- My friends go here
- My neighbor's go here
- My community goes here
- TV
- Radio
- Internet
- Other

Is there any other feedback you would like to provide?

How do you feel about women in a Leadership position?

- I don't have any feelings
- I think men should lead
- I feel it's ok for some churches
- I do not want a female leader
- I think it would be good for the church

How satisfied would you be with a female pastor?

    
Very Unsatisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

How satisfied would you be with a female worship leader?

    
Very Unsatisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

How satisfied would you be with a female trustee?

    
Very Unsatisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

How Satisfied would you be with a female youth leader?

Very Satisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

How Satisfied would you be with a female children's leader?

Very Satisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

How Satisfied would you be with a female choir/music leader?

Very Satisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

How Satisfied would you be with a female chairperson of committees?

Very Satisfied Unsatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

Do you consider the following as an appropriate leadership role for women? (Tick yes or no)

1. Children's ministry director [Yes] [No]
2. Youth director [Yes] [No]
3. Women's ministry director [Yes] [No]
4. Choir director [Yes] [No]
5. Chairperson of committees [Yes] [No]
6. Catering/cleanliness director [Yes] [No]

What leadership role would you like to see more females be apart of?

What do you think of the leadership role women have in our church as it stands?



Love It



Hate It

What Bible passage molds your view of women in ministry and or leadership?

- 1 Corinthians 11:3
- 1 Corinthians 14:34
- Galatians 1:27
- 1 Timothy 2:11-15
- Other

Comments/Suggestions: about the leadership role of women in our church

Appendix B

IRB Participant Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
2/10/2020 to --
Protocol # 4144.021020

CONSENT FORM

The Lack of Female Leadership at Prosperous Temple Church
Jonathan Hackett
Liberty University
Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries
Liberty University School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study regarding the lack of female leadership at Prosperous Temple Church. Many theologians have reflected on this issue and have concluded that the leadership role is exclusively assigned to men. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a female member at Prosperous Temple, who is at least 18 years of age. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Jonathan Hackett, a D. Min candidate at Liberty University's School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to understand the lack of female leadership. One comes to understand the debate about whether a woman is permitted to be a leader or pastor continues to intensify. Many theologians have reflected on this issue and have concluded that the pastoral role is exclusively assigned to men. Leadership is vital to the unity of the church; therefore, the researcher is hoping that the findings of this research will serve as an avenue to enhance the leadership experience.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- 1) Complete an anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not receive any form of compensation for participating in this study.

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
2/10/2020 to --
Protocol # 4144.021020

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet located in the researcher's home, and only the researcher and the researcher's faculty chair will have access to the records. The records will be retained for three years. After three years, the records will be deleted. Participant survey responses will remain anonymous.

Conflicts of Interest Disclosure: The researcher serves as the head pastor at Prosperous Temple Church. To limit potential conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Prosperous Temple Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, before submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please do not complete or submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Jonathan Hackett. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 205-331-6764 or Jhackett5@liberty.edu. Mr. Hackett's faculty mentor is Dr. Joel Breidenbaugh. Dr. Breidenbaugh can be contacted at jrbreidenbaugh@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Appendix C

IRB Approval letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 10, 2020

Jonathan Hackett

IRB Exemption 4144.021020: The Lack of female leadership at Prosperous Temple Church of God in Christ

Dear Jonathan Hackett,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy outlined in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

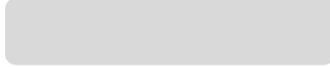
(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

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

Sincerely,



G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office



Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

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