

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Biblical Literacy: A Theological Exploration of What God Says
About Women Called to Pastor**

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

Doctor of Ministry

By

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This Doctoral Research Project aims to answer the question, Is there biblical awareness among the congregation about God's acceptance and call of female pastors? The problem presented identifies a gap in biblical knowledge about women in church leadership due to the lingering effects of patriarchal influence. There may be resistance to church growth due to the uncertainty of the Scriptures, which sanction women to the call of God. This research project proposed to improve the Bible literacy of ten Christian men and women to cultivate spiritual growth and strengthen their theology. Historically, the conservative church taught that the Bible forbids women to pastor or hold any position of authority over men. There is a resurgence of women having experiences, as do men, reflecting the undeniable call to the pastorate. Women who, through the auspices of the Holy Spirit, obtain professional pastoral credentials but continue to encounter resistance. This qualitative research project uses Sensing's triangulation method to validate the problem. The researcher used seven data collection methods to study the problem such as a pre-assessment survey, which served as a control mechanism for evaluating the results; a weekly Bible study on the roles of women in the Bible; a middle assessment questionnaire to measure the effectiveness of the Bible study; random participant interviews; and a focus group to test the results. The data collection culminates at a luncheon seminar presentation featuring successful female pastors interviewed by the researcher. The results yielded improved learning about acceptable leadership roles for women in scripture. Ultimately, an objective is to present a teaching tool for other churches to teach biblical equality in leadership roles within their congregation.

Keywords: Church leadership, female pastors, complementarian, egalitarian, patriarchy, biblical literacy, women.

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Abbreviations

AME	<i>African Methodist Episcopal</i>
AMP	<i>Amplified Bible</i>
CBMW	<i>Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
JOPA	<i>Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Church & Ministries</i>
KJV	<i>King James Version</i>
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
NKJV	<i>New King James Version</i>
NLT	<i>New Living Translation</i>
SC	Soft Complementarian
UPC	<i>United Pentecostal Church</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Experts say history repeats every 100 years or more.¹ Historic recurrence may be what the church is experiencing today with the rise of women in church leadership roles. Despite some Christian denominations' disagreement with female pastors, women are again organizing ministries and planting churches. Dr. Karen Cunningham explores the successes and woes of women in ministry leadership within the Pentecostal oneness movement: The United Pentecostal Church (UPC), a fundamentalistic organization. It is noted that while women participated in church leadership, the worship services thrived. Early in the 19th century, the church lost its zeal and impromptu style of worship.² Church services were structured systematically, while the leaders demoted women from preaching in the pulpit and leading the congregation to do what was considered women's work.³ For many today, the church structure reflects what was then, adding that women can evangelize, preach, and prophesy if their husband or another male leader guides them. Women are responding by the leading of the Holy Spirit to obtain ministry credentials, organize ministries, and plant churches without patriarchal auspices. However, for centuries, some church leaders interpreted Scripture that it is not God's design for His church that a woman lead a congregation, which poses a fundamental obstacle to women in church leadership and the congregations they lead.

Another dynamic added to the rejection of women in pastoral roles, not just towards single women but wives who experience a divine call to lead a church. Where single women may

¹ "It's All Just History Repeating Itself," accessed October 29, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/06/30/its-all-just-history-repeating-itself/>.

² Karen Cunningham, "Muted Prophets Up Close and Personal: An Inside Look at Four Pentecostal Women Who Broke the Barrier." (PhD Diss., Regent University, 2016), 2, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection, 2.

³ Ibid.

be granted an exception by some complementarians, a married woman is restricted simply on the premise that her husband should be the head of the church because he is the head of the home. One modern view that denies women in church leadership roles is Complementarian, which teaches that men and women are equal in value but distinct in roles in the church, the home, and the world. Complementarians believe the Bible does not permit a woman to lead over men in the church or home.⁴ For proponents, Complementarianism is an effort to restore the family structure and protect godly marriages. However, when people misapply the theory, it is used to cause and conceal distress in women and may lead to abuse. Dr. Bill Rudd asks, “What if men and women are like two hands God designed to build Jesus’ church?”⁵ This research project examines what God says about women in church leadership in conjunction with the biblical interpretation that rejects female leadership.

Ministry Context

The ministry under review is Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Ministries (JOPA), which operates the Kingdom Citizens United in Prayer Church in Newark, New Jersey. Their vision is to become a staple in a community, operate as a metaphorical and physical shelter, and act as the conduit that leads to changed lives. JOPA's mission each year is to conduct outreach in the community for discipleship and to fulfill the needs of the people. The acronym represents a biblical city in Israel, Joppa, known as their cultural and economic center.⁶ Today, it is identified

⁴ Melissa Archer and Kenneth J Archer. “Complementarianism and Egalitarianism—Whose Side Are You Leaning On?” *Pneuma: the journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. 41, no. 1 (2019): 66–90.

⁵ Bill Rudd, *Should Women Be Pastors and Leaders in Church?: My Journey to Discover What the Bible Says About Gender Roles*. West Bow Press, 2018, 2.

⁶ E. Razin, "Tel Aviv–Yafo." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 20, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tel-Aviv-Yafo>.

as the city of Tel Aviv, which some may contrast with Jerusalem.⁷ JOPA aspires to become the new Joppa, a holy place of refuge for God's purpose. The church aims to tell the world that God can transform lives with just one prayer – the prayer of repentance.

Beliefs and Organizing Structure

The pastor organized the ministry in 2015 as a New Jersey Faith-Based Nonprofit Religious Corporation. JOPA elected not to apply for Federal 501c3 status to avoid any future obligation that may compromise its beliefs and purpose. As the church's prerogative, the article of incorporation includes this statement:

JOPA Church reserves our constitutionally protected right to freedom of religion and adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 18: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.'⁸

JOPA church will confidently conduct faith-based programs in the community or otherwise to improve the lives of its residents. God calls and gifts believers to create, establish, and operate a church where a body of believers unite and proclaim Christ as the head. JOPA Church declares that the Bible is the divinely inspired holy Scriptures of the Lord and the supreme authority in the lives of Christians, based on 2 Timothy 3: 16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”

⁷ E. Razin, "Tel Aviv–Yafo." Encyclopedia Britannica.

⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/11/universal-declaration-human-rights-70-30-articles-30-articles-article-18#:~:text=Article%2018%20of%20the%20Universal%20Declaration%20of%20Human,while%20not%20presuming%20any%20national%20or%20state-sponsored%20religion.>

(NKJV). The multifaceted purpose of the ministry is to reconcile the covenantal relationship of humanity to God through acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which describes His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension for the remission of the sins of this world. The church believes that through the gospel, believers receive forgiveness of sins and experience new life by faith. JOPA endeavors to direct people to know Jesus Christ in the pardon of their sin and maintain a lifestyle of holiness and righteousness according to the holy Scriptures. The pastor established the Bible Education Ministry to cultivate spiritual development, teach sound doctrine, and prepare the students to present Christ to the world as the remedy for calamity, distress, famine, and violence. The Missionary and Street Ministry provides help to the disabled, elderly, homeless, and sick. JOPA implements its purpose by conducting weekly worship services and Bible study, prayer conferences and retreats, and organizing street services for those unlikely to enter the church building. The pastor is the governing authority in the church, providing spiritual guidance, setting policies, making financial decisions, and organizing events. The Board of Trustees consists of the pastor, who operates as the President, Treasurer, Secretary, and two other members.

Theological Structure

The congregation values a theology that presents God as a loving Creator and reads the Bible through the lens of love based on John 3:16 - 17. The church functions as a deliverance ministry following Scripture references of God rescuing people from the perils of life, and deliverance is available to all in body, soul, and Spirit. The ministry teaches about healing and miracles from sicknesses and taking preventative measures for healthy living. The church accepts the trinitarian concept of the Godhead and foundational Christian biblical doctrines. These teachings are essential in the discipleship and spiritual development of every Christian.

Community Outreach

During the 2021 Thanksgiving holiday, the church prepared a traditional hot meal for its members and visitors and distributed 50 care packages and meals on the streets of Newark, most of whom are homeless. The church provided physical and spiritual food as the Word of God. As a result, two homeless men, one inebriated with a substance, prayed the prayer of repentance and received the Lord as Savior. The other man is a discharged veteran who became homeless after his mom's death due to COVID-19. After accepting Jesus Christ, he asked for prayer regarding veteran resources and residence. Later, this man shared that he received the answers to prayer, the apartment, and the due money. Another woman waiting at a bus stop accepted prayer for restoring her life with Christ. The church organizes community outreach events during the summer to provide for adults' and children's natural and spiritual needs. The church conducted a back-to-school worship service after providing pizza and 100 book bags filled with school supplies and a Bible. Initially, these efforts appeared unfruitful because church attendance and membership did not largely increase. However, several months later, on Easter Sunday, a woman returned to the church with her five grandchildren, testifying of her gratitude towards the church and God for sparing her life in illness. During the summer of 2023, 41 persons prayed the prayer of repentance due to summer outreach. JOPA learned that successful ministry is not in membership numbers but in the revelation of the transformative power of God, even for one person.

Historical Background

The pastor is a married woman and mother of two young adult children, called to plant and pastor JOPA. The pastor was born and raised in New York City, where her family joined their former church when she was five years old. At this unusually young age, the pastor had a

Pentecostal experience after fasting for 24 hours and tarrying for the gift of the Holy Spirit. This first grader, who, to the amazement of teachers, declined to eat school breakfast and lunch, was endowed by the Holy Spirit with power, as in Acts 2. Pentecostals believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit after the initial conversion in fulfillment of the prophecy given in Joel 2:28, “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions” (NKJV)⁹. The child continued to live as a Christian, praying and studying Scripture, becoming the church's youngest ordained Evangelist. The call to pastor/shepherd existed from a young age, although not apparent, but revealed through her desire to help the less fortunate, lead peers, and protect the weak. However, being raised in a strict Christian home and church, pastoring was considered unbiblical. The former church did not explicitly teach a Complementarian theory, nor was this a known term, but the concept is seen in practice as its history dates back centuries.

The pastor of the NYC church was a divorced male who believed that women could preach, prophesy, and operate in other areas of ministry but did not believe the Bible permits a woman to pastor a church or assume authority over men. In contrast, he supported female pastors of other churches. Although he did not ordain women as pastors, he became the overseer of female Pastors who had established their church. This premise led to the struggles and uncertainty of the pastoral call as a woman.

JOPA is a non-denominational Pentecostal church established on January 10, 2016, in the home of the pastor, their children, and a live-in relative. Their first worship service was conducted in the living room, where they served Holy Communion. After serving the former

⁹ Amos Yong and Estrelida Alexander. *Afro-Pentecostalism : Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 4.

church with a membership of 45 years and in leadership positions, the Holy Spirit compelled the pastor to begin the ministry. In 2021, the church moved from the pastor's home to rent a small sanctuary in a large church building. As of December 2023, the church began renting a newly constructed ground-level unit in a high-rise apartment building. It is an ideal space and community for discipleship.

Worship Style

The church conducts one weekly in-person Sunday worship service, midday prayer every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by telephone, and weekly Bible study via Zoom on Tuesday evenings. The worship service begins with corporate prayer for 30 minutes, followed by songs of praise and testimonies, ending with the preached Word and an invitation to follow Christ. Every second Sunday, the pastor administers Holy Communion according to Scripture. The pastor preaches every Sunday except when inviting a guest preacher or other church clergy. The clergy team comprises the pastor, one female Evangelist, one female Missionary, two female Ministers in Training, and two male Deacons. Every fifth Sunday, the Evangelist preaches to the entire congregation. Prayer and Spiritual Disciplines are essential to the spiritual growth of the pastor and congregation. The church conducts all-night prayer sessions throughout the year and a 40-day Spiritual Renewal Consecration during the Easter season. These practices help to shape church culture and strengthen theological formation.

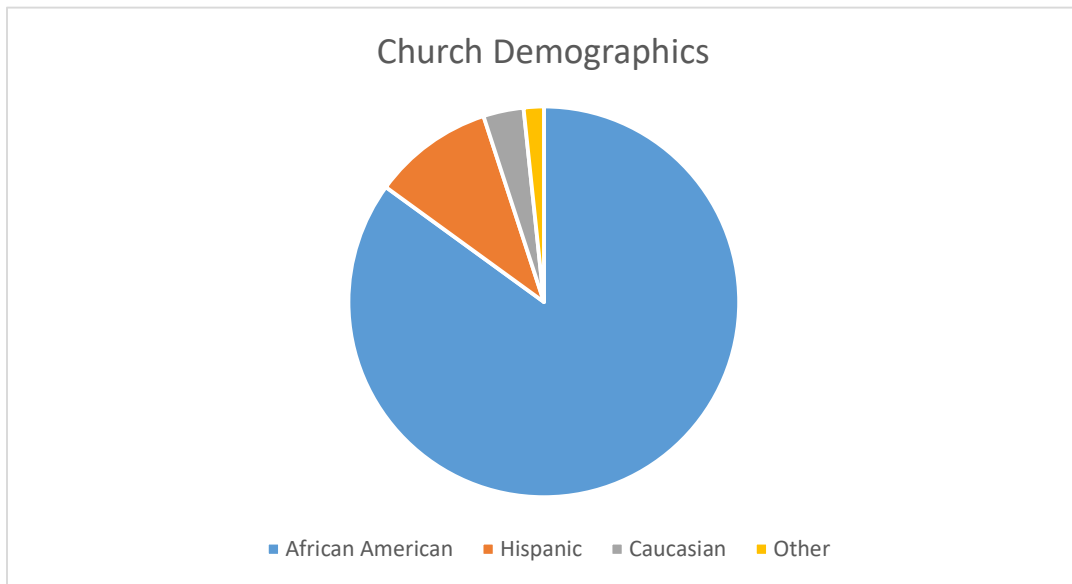
Demographic and Geographics

The church congregation is composed of approximately 28 adults and seven children. The ages, gender, and marital status are as follows: (*Adults = 18 and over*)

Table 1.1

	FEMALES	MALES
AGES: under two years	1	
AGES: 2 - 11	1	3
AGES: 12 - 19	5	2
AGES: 20 - 30	5	2
AGES: over 30	14	6
Married	4	3
Single Adults	20	8

Chart 1.2: Race and ethnicity charted below



The Caucasian and Hispanic members have a Catholic background, and all other members have a Pentecostal background. The majority of the JOPA congregation, including the pastor, was influenced by a theological environment that excluded women from operating in

roles that appeared to usurp authority over men. The congregation may be unaware of this influence; therefore, the researcher wants to bring awareness and strengthen their biblical literacy in this area.

The church is near downtown Newark in a mixed commercial and residential area. The location is easily accessible to many highways and public transportation from local areas and New York. One family of four (two adults, two children) lives in Newark, one family of four (two adults, two children) lives in an adjacent city, and one member has a 15-minute commute to the church. All other members, including the pastor, live approximately 45 to 90 minutes away. Most people regularly attend Sunday worship services and are dedicated to God and the church. The pastor coordinates the service time, considering the long commute and supporting quality family time.

Many people travel through the area for personal grooming services, restaurants, shopping, and work, in addition to those who live and attend school in the neighborhood. According to the United States Census Bureau online search engine, as of 2021, there are approximately 24,147 adults residing within the zip code.¹⁰ The information shows potential for church growth through discipleship and evangelism, which makes this research project even more valuable to the kingdom. The small group of people currently attending JOPA functions as the nucleus of the church and contributes to the formative quality of church culture. Church culture assumes that social groups, including faith-based entities, have common beliefs, experiences, practices, and stories that shape the group's personality.¹¹ Church culture may be

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Demographics and Housing Estimates," accessed January 28, 2023, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=07107&y=2021>.

¹¹ Sandra L. Barnes, "Black Church Culture and Community Action." *Social Forces* 84, no. 2 (12, 2005): 967-94, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/black-church-culture-community-action/docview/229859353/se-2>.

reflected in music, song selection, sermon delivery, or theology. Biblical literacy concerning gender roles and other doctrinal truths is vital to JOPA's current and future members as well as the growth of the ministry. This research project aims to resolve any misunderstanding of what the Bible permits for church leadership and to affirm the JOPA approach.

Problem Presented

The problem at JOPA is a lack of biblical literacy concerning women called to pastor. The congregation and pastor are influenced by a long history in Christendom of church patriarchy, presenting an obstacle to the growth of the members and the ministry. Some doctrinal teachings they may have received before attending JOPA may have created presuppositions about female pastors. These doctrines may not have been explicitly taught but likely became part of their previous church culture and accepted behavior without the members' knowledge of Scripture. The pastor faces challenges in the ministry amid the influence of patriarchal structures and belief systems. The congregation may not be cognizant of this influence, which creates a need to analyze people's behaviors, beliefs, and experiences in this research study and determine strategies for change. Ernest Stringer points out that people may be unaware of the impact of subliminal concepts deeply ingrained in their experiences.¹² Church leadership may shape church culture and theology through doctrinal teachings while socializing the congregants towards normative patriarchal behaviors. The perceived lack of biblical education and understanding about female church leadership has seemingly confused some ministry members. The researcher intends to develop an approach to resolve this confusion to position the ministry toward the successful fulfillment of the great commission.

¹² Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research (4th Edition)*, (US: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 135, Available from Liberty University Online Bookshelf.

A former male leader at JOPA held an assistant pastoral title at the church and positioned himself as the head. People instinctively addressed him by first order with all questions while he privately directed their questions to the pastor, misleading the members as if he were the senior pastor. This misleading behavior indicates the need for further study. The church direction needs to come directly from the one called and graced to lead the congregation. Acts 20:28 says: "So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock – his church, purchased with his blood – over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders" (New Living Translation). A power struggle problem will lead to less church effectiveness, growth, and harmony.¹³ Thom Rainer points out that church conflict will lead to a loss of purpose, stewardship, and the ultimate death of the church.¹⁴ Also, the former assistant pastor influenced young and dating couples in the church on theories of male dominance over females, which resembles a misapplied Complementarian thought. Hierarchical relationships may be a factor that facilitates mistreatment.¹⁵ Proponents of complementary gender roles believe the Bible positions men to lead in the church and home from a posture of protection, not dominance. Therefore, where there is male dominance, the Complementarian model is misunderstood. The pastor is concerned that if the church does not value both men and women equally, some will internalize it, leading to a false theology about God's value for them and impeding their spiritual development. Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (NKJV), which is a reflection of the Genesis

¹³ Jason Sweeton, *Applying Biblical Teaching to Resolve Power Struggles Between the Pastor and Deacons in a Southern Baptist Church*, (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2022), 17.

¹⁴ Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive*, (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 7c.

¹⁵ Peter J. Jankowski, Steven J. Sandage, Miriam Whitney Cornell, Cheryl Bissonette, Andy J. Johnson, Sarah A. Crabtree, and Mary L. Jensen, "Religious Beliefs and Domestic Violence Myths," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 10, no. 4 (2018), 386.

narrative that describes God creating humanity in God's image, female and male,¹⁶ and called them "Adam" (Genesis 5:2).

The church's position on gender leadership roles leans toward Christian Egalitarianism or biblical equality, where all church members submit to one another as Scripture teaches in Ephesians 5:21. In this view, women can operate in any ministry capacity as God ordains it through the Holy Spirit. If the pastor educates the church about what God says about ministry roles as ungendered spiritual gifts, the members can operate at their fullest potential. The problem at JOPA is the lack of biblical understanding regarding women in church leadership due to the lingering effects of patriarchal influence.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to improve the Bible literacy of the members at JOPA who are 24 years or older using a triangulation model to evaluate the problem. Biblical literacy will benefit the members by cultivating spiritual growth and strengthening their theology. In the second epistle to Timothy, Paul writes, "Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15, NLT). The current debate on gender equality and leadership roles for men and women divides the church. One book discovered in research is titled *Pierce, Discovering Biblical Equality: Biblical, Theological, Cultural, and Practical Perspectives*. This book contains a collection of essays from female and male scholars who agree that the conversation on gender roles in the church is evolving, but the body of Christ

¹⁶ James M. Scott, "Cosmopolitanism in Gal 3:28 and the Divine Performative Speech-Act of Paul's Gospel." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums*. 112, no. 2 (2021), 186.

remains in debate and disagreement.¹⁷ Research of the two main views, Complementarianism and Egalitarianism, present a worthy argument using Scripture references that reject or support women in church leadership roles. This imperative conversation must continue among scholars and Christendom while expanding specifically on the challenges wives face when called to ministry. Because of the traditional church leadership views, being a wife called pastor presents a different dynamic than being a husband called to pastor. A Liberty University Library search on married female pastors did not return many relevant scholarly sources. The researcher would propose an ethnographic study; however, time does not permit this consuming fieldwork.

In a journal review of R. K. Yin's book, *Case Study Research Design & Methods*, Yin notes, "Case study research constitutes an all-encompassing method that covers the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis, which ultimately informs the structure of the book."¹⁸ Instead, the researcher will use face-to-face interviews with married female pastors to discuss the woes and wonders of pastoring against the Complementarian view. The interviews will present the successful pastoring of wives and inform JOPA of Scriptures and strategies for overcoming the conflict that may arise due to opposing views. A secondary objective of this research project is to develop a faith statement regarding gender roles that members can accept and follow. This faith statement will be scripturally based and confirm the church's beliefs about gender equality in leadership. It will also help the leaders and members be accountable to each other while providing a tangible reminder of the corporate theology.

¹⁷ Ronald W. Pierce and Cynthia Long Westfall, *Discovering Biblical Equality: Biblical, Theological, Cultural, and Practical Perspectives*, Third ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021).

¹⁸ Trista Hollweck, Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods (5th ed.)*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. 10.3138/cjpe.30.1.108.

Basic Assumptions

Whether the church should affirm women as church leaders is a sensitive subject. Church leaders have taught for centuries that the Bible rejects female leadership. Some ministers engrained this ideology in people's hearts and minds, heavily contributing to their theology formation. To avoid engaging in heretical or unorthodox beliefs, people may not be susceptible to doctrinal changes. The researcher is committed to a hermeneutical Bible study that may appease their concerns. The second epistle to Timothy says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15 NKJV). The church is responsible for studying the Scriptures and avoiding the application of Western logic to historic Eastern culture.

There is another assumption that some congregation members may deny that a problem exists for fear of offending the pastor or retaliation. The researcher must clearly and gently express the importance of the research for the individuals, the ministry, and God's kingdom. Additionally, members may reject the existence of the problem where biblical literacy is lacking. The researcher believes that an exegetical study may resolve these challenges and enlighten the members of JOPA about biblical leadership. A secondary result is that the individuals will become confident about personal ministry and equipped to fulfill God's purpose. The researcher will approach the study gingerly and respectfully, considering the probable hierarchical influences over the years of which they may be unaware of its effects.

Definitions

This thesis project aims to research opposing and supporting views of women in leadership roles in the church to inform the biblical understanding of the JOPA congregation,

where a woman is the senior pastor. The concepts and terms defined in this section are essential to the research and will provide an understanding of the subject's premise.

Biblical Equality. It is the belief that God created all people equal in responsibility and value, calling and gifting, regardless of class, gender, race, or wealth, and mutual submission based on Ephesians 5:21.¹⁹ It is a principle developed on the premise of three essential ideas: Human equality, where all people are equal before God in church, home, and society; Equal responsibility, where race, gender, and class are not barriers to Christ and membership, ministry, and mission are open to all in his kingdom, based upon our vocation, moral and personal qualifications, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; Mutual submission which is Christian love in action treating each person with dignity and at the heart of life in the Spirit.²⁰

Biblical Manhood. As with womanhood, this concept is different from the secular definition. John Piper says, "At the heart of masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships."²¹ For complementarians, biblical manhood is equal to masculinity, which is a social construct.

Biblical Womanhood. This concept is distinct from a secular view of womanhood and creates a basis for rejecting women as leaders. Some primary Scriptures used to define the character of Christian women are Titus 2, Psalms 31, and 1 Timothy 2. John Piper, a strong proponent of Complementarianism, describes biblical womanhood as mature femininity that

¹⁹ <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/what-biblical-equality/#:~:text=What%20is%20biblical%20equality%3F%20It%20is%20the%20belief,Bible%20and%20Jesus%20Christ%20teach%20it%20to%20us.>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ John Piper and Wayne A. Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood a Response to Evangelical Feminism*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 32.

accepts a woman's role to submit to the leadership of worthy men.²² He believes God created men and women equally but with complementary roles. For Piper and his supporters, the biblical image of womanhood produces a fulfilling life for everyone.

Church Planting. Historically, church planting has been happening since the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus Christ is the actual church planter as He tells Peter, "Upon this rock, I build My church" (Matt 16:18, NKJV). Church planting involves a called and gifted person building a church ministry in a particular community by the Holy Spirit's leading. Apostle Paul is the most prominent church planter in history, and the book of Acts chronicles his vision of the call to preach in a community that needed help (Acts 16:6-10). C. Peter Wagner, an authoritative voice in this field, says, "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches."²³ Church planting is at the cusp of missions and the fulfillment of the Great Commission, but it is more than personal soul-winning.

Christian Egalitarianism. Egalitarians hold that men and women are equal before God and have equal roles in marriage and the church.²⁴ In this view, men and women have equal authority in the church and home and submit to one another as the Scriptures teach. Church leadership is equally open to men and women. Supporters of CE believe that this ideology is truly complementary.

Complementarianism. Complementarians hold that men and women are equal before God but that God has assigned them different and complementary roles in marriage and the church.²⁵

²² Piper, Grudem. *Recovering*, 42.

²³ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest: A Comprehensive Guide*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010), 11.

²⁴ Morgan, Peterson, *A Concise Dictionary*, xli.

²⁵ Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson. *A Concise Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), xli, ProQuest Ebook Central.

They believe that women are subservient to men and can serve in all areas of church ministry except pastor/elder, which is only to men.

Exclusivism. This researcher opines that a theology that teaches divine partiality is rooted in Exclusivism or privilege. According to the Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization, Exclusivism is the insistence that one perspective is uniquely proper while conflicting perspectives are necessarily false.²⁶ Opponents believe that, according to Scripture (Matt 28:19, Gal 3:28), God shows no partiality. Religious proponents of Exclusivism are Evangelicals and Mormons.²⁷

Hermeneutics. "The study of the general principles of biblical interpretation. For Jews and Christians throughout their histories, the primary purpose of hermeneutics, and of the exegetical methods employed in interpretation, has been to discover the truths and values expressed in the Bible."²⁸ Bleicher notes it as a theory on the interpretation of meaning and uses it in the philosophy of art, language, social sciences, and literary criticism.²⁹

Pastor. A pastor is one of God's human gifts to the church, "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11, NKJV). In his letter to the Ephesians, Apostle Paul teaches that there is grace, a spiritual gift, given by Jesus Christ, such as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. No gender is associated with these spiritual gifts, as Jesus Christ appoints them for God's purpose. According to the

²⁶ William Renay Wilson II, "Exclusivism." In *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, by George Thomas Kurian. Wiley, 2012

²⁷ Jenny Trinitapoli, "'I Know This Isn't PC but...': Religious Exclusivism among U.S. Adolescents." *The Sociological Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (2007): 451–83. Accessed 1/31/2023, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40220033/>

²⁸ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "hermeneutics." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 13, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/patriarchy>.

²⁹ Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as method, philosophy and critique*. Vol. 2. Routledge, 2017.

Oxford Dictionary, the term pastor originates from the Latin word interpreted as "Shepherd." Some say a Pastor should be an elder or experienced Christian, hence the probable reason for the association of church elders as Pastors. *A Concise Dictionary of Theological Terms* lists a pastor as one of two offices in the Congregational Church who is a Christian of sound doctrine and administers care and nurture of God's Word.³⁰

Patriarchy. It is a system recognizing that the father or eldest male is the head of the family with absolute authority.³¹ In this system, men hold power, and women are considered subservient and excluded from holding power. "Building on the theories of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin, many 19th-century scholars sought to form a theory of unilinear cultural evolution."³² Meyers defines patriarchy with a two-fold meaning as "the disproportionate control of the father in families or clans; and, by extension, the organization of an entire society in ways that exclude women from community positions."³³

Pentecostalism. It is believed that the "baptism" or "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit on the believer is a distinct work of grace subsequent to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit given at initial conversion and is an essential aspect of the Christian experience.³⁴ This experience of Spirit baptism is understood as a direct fulfillment of the prophecy of the Old Testament book of Joel,

³⁰ Morgan, Peterson, *A Concise Dictionary*, xxxvii.

³¹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "patriarchy." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 13, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/patriarchy>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Carol L. Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 1 (2014): 8-27, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/was-ancient-israel-patriarchal-society/docview/1636546161/se-2, 9>.

³⁴ Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander. *Afro-Pentecostalism : Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 4.

in which the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) and, among other signs, individuals would speak with other tongues as the Spirit makes its presence known. (Acts 2:4).³⁵

Preach. According to the ATS Bible Dictionary, preaching refers to public and persistent instruction on religious truth.³⁶ According to Crockett, the role of the preacher in the pulpit was to be God's prophet.³⁷ Jude 1:14, 15 references preaching by Enoch, "Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, 'Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on the people of the world'" (NLT).³⁸ The idea of preaching is to prophesy the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ effectively.

Prophesying. Unlike prophecy, it refers to a forth-telling of a divine matter, such as the message of God.³⁹ The Scriptures identify it: "But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them" (1 Cor 14:3, NLT). Crockett notes that in Old Testament Scriptures, prophesying referred to a prediction of a significant event in the future, and in the New Testament, it meant the same and was given another name as preaching.⁴⁰ Ultimately, God uses the preacher as a prophet, in word and deed, to inspire the listeners toward God.⁴¹

Shepherd. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary describes Shepherd as a person who tends to sheep as a guide or guard. Bible dictionaries describe the term similarly, adding that the

³⁵ Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander. Afro-Pentecostalism .

³⁶ "Preaching", Bible Hub, ATS Bible Dictionary, accessed February 26, 2023, <https://Biblehub.com/topical/p/preaching.htm>

³⁷ Bryan Crockett, "The Act of Preaching and the Art of Prophesying." The Sewanee Review 105, no. 1 (1997): 42.

³⁸ "Preaching", Bible Hub.

³⁹ "Prophesying", Bible Hub, ATS Bible Dictionary, Accessed February 26, 2023. <https://Biblehub.com/topical/p/prophesy.htm>

⁴⁰ Crockett, 42.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Shepherd nurtures and protects the sheep. The term is often used interchangeably with pastor. The Scriptures reference Shepherds and Sheep to describe the relationship between a leader and followers and God and His people. The Bible shows men and women holding the title of Shepherd, such as Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Lot, Rachel, Jacob and sons, Moses, and David. One qualifying requirement for a Shepherd is to have the heart of God (Jer 3:15).

Spiritual Gifts. Spiritual gifts are the Holy Spirit's Gifts of spiritual endowments and abilities given to God's people.⁴² Through many gracious ministries, the Spirit enables us as the church to live for God: indwelling, empowering, producing fruit, providing leaders, enabling worship, and giving spiritual gifts.⁴³ The Bible says: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all" (1 Cor 12:4-6, NKJV).

Limitations

This research project will investigate the church congregation's biblical knowledge regarding the roles women should carry and attempt to enhance their literacy. Several limitations exist concerning resistance to participation, risk of disunity in the church, and trustworthy response. The lack of participation by church members may do a disservice to the spiritual growth of the individual and the ministry. A sound biblical education is essential to the development of the Christian. Fundamentally, discipleship should be filtered through an exegetical study of the Scriptures to avoid the consequences of legalism and false theology.⁴⁴ It

⁴² Morgan, Peterson, *A Concise Dictionary*, 18.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 20.

⁴⁴ Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift: Five steps that help your church to make disciples who make disciples* (Zondervan, 2013), 19.

is also possible that after the study, a participant will continue to disagree with female leaders in the church but remain in fellowship. A member who disagrees with the pastor and remains active is not uncommon but could cause disunity in the church. According to a Focus on the Family article, a church member assaulted Dr. Charles Stanley because he disagreed with selecting him as the senior pastor.⁴⁵ A well-established church with longevity may survive such conflict; however, a newly planted or growing church may not.

The researcher is limited in knowing whether participants have provided honest responses and is bound to accept the participants' Pre-Assessment and Middle Assessment responses as their best. The participants are all honest Christians. However, some people may act out of fear in a presumed intimidating environment. Sensing cautions researchers to be aware when gathering and analyzing data that may not represent the participant's best response.⁴⁶ Other limitations involve participants experiencing sudden changes, including sickness, death, relocation, or leaving the church. The researcher will not consider education levels, race, socio-economic status, or the participant's former denomination as a factor in this research project. Outside of participant involvement, the researcher is limited by the resources and time available to indulge in extensive research or case studies regarding the subject. Also, limitations exist with the interviews of the female pastors, especially regarding whether they should decline or drop out of the project.

⁴⁵ <https://dailycitizen.focusonthefamily.com/strange-but-true-dr-charles-stanley-was-punched-before-he-was-promoted-to-senior-pastor/>

⁴⁶ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 21.

Delimitations

The researcher determined that a qualitative method would best inform this thesis project. The fieldwork involves a pre-assessment survey, Bible study, middle assessment questionnaire, focus group, and a recorded panelist interview to collect data for analysis. The panelists interviewed were limited to married women who had been in a pastoral role for more than ten years. The researcher will not interview single women because the experience of pastoral married women is unique to all other pastors. The requirement for ten years of experience will ensure that the panelist can contribute to the biblical understanding of church leaders and offer suggestions for overcoming any obstacles. The research project scope is restricted to JOPA congregational members aged 24 years and above to ensure that participants comprehend the subject and have sufficient life experience. The research will not include women in leadership roles outside of the church, nor will it address every Scripture found in the Bible that pertains to leadership roles, gender-related topics, or the roles of men and women in the marriage relationship. This research will not address biblical authority on marital roles. Further, the researcher requests that participants honor the researcher's and other participants' confidentiality throughout the project study.

Thesis Statement

Theologians and others have debated, researched, and studied the topic of gender roles in religion and the denial of female leaders in the church for decades, but Christians have not determined a unified position. However, according to Lucy Pappiott, a new Christian movement is growing among church leaders, members, men and women, and theologians to affirm gender equality based on Scripture exegesis that God calls women to operate in the same capacity as

men.⁴⁷ This research study addresses the lack of biblical understanding regarding female leaders in the church. Some Scriptures appear to deny women in leadership, and other Scriptures support gender equality. This research project will closely examine Scripture content and context to form a church belief system. If the members of JOPA exercise a thorough study of women's roles in Scripture, then can the church develop a faith statement that reflects gender equality in the pastorate.

⁴⁷ Lucy Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women: Fresh Perspectives on Disputed Texts*, (InterVarsity Press, 2019), 2. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5807918>. Created from liberty on 2023-02-27 01:58:36.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research project will address a Bible literacy problem at JOPA concerning women in pastoral roles. Discussions on the topic are still developing. Literature is limited in identifying the problem and does not offer an objective review. Many authors discuss their interpretation of the scriptures, but there is no discussion on why Christians have not determined an amenable resolve. The scholarly sources used in this literature review provide the framework to substantiate the researcher's theory. This project aims to present a variety of recent peer-reviewed scholarship, original material, and secondary sources to perfect this project and help formulate a faith statement regarding church leadership.

As the Scripture says in 2 Peter 2:20, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation (NKJV)," the researcher explored related precedent literature to inform the researcher's theory. This chapter will explore what scholars and Scripture say regarding biblical acceptance or denial of female pastors. Interpretation of Scripture is one variable that affects people's behaviors toward women in church leadership. The literature review contains sources from both the Complementarian view that denies female authority and the Christian Egalitarian view that permits it.

Literature Review

The researcher found few sources addressing Bible literacy regarding women in ministerial positions. Further, not many sources spoke to married women as senior pastors, and a search in the Liberty University Library on these subjects only returned information regarding pastors' wives. The authors write material to persuade readers to accept the author's viewpoint, and no source presents all beliefs objectively for the reader to make an informed decision. As such, the primary focus of this research project is to perfect and strengthen JOPA's support for

women to operate in any calling of God. A secondary aim is to present the two main sides of gender in ministry leadership. The following subjects were pulled from the sources to present the ideas contributing to the church's approach to ministry leadership. The subjects are Complementarianism, Christian Egalitarianism, Biblical Womanhood, Female Leadership in the Old Testament and New Testament, Shaping the Canon, Patriarchal Power Systems, and Improper Use of Scripture. These topics inform this project to enhance the understanding of the call of women in church ministry.

Complementarianism

Complementarianism is the main counter-viewpoint about women in leadership roles in the church and home where there is a father or husband. A religious view shared in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam believes men and women are equally valuable but created to function in different roles in the world. Opposers say that even if God does require gender roles, it does not denote authority or leadership. Wayne Grudem, the founder and former president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, refers to the belief that God creates females and males to live distinct but complementary roles in the church and home, where the male is the headship, and the female is the support.¹ His views on gender roles closely connect with his trinitarian view of the second Godhead. Grudem's "Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father" theory teaches that Jesus Christ sits on the Father's right hand, subordinate to God, who has supreme authority.² He compares it to God giving males authority over women who respond with eternal

¹ Peter Lockwood, "The Ordination of Women: Assessing the Counter Claims of Complementarianism." *Other Journal Article, JOUR. Lutheran Theological Journal* 55, no. 1 (2021), 2.

² Wayne Grudem, "Biblical Evidence for the Eternal Submission of the Son to the Father" *The New Evangelical Subordinationism?* edited by Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 224.

and willful submission. Grudem asserts that the Bible substantiates his theory with several Scriptures relating to Christ's submission to the Father. The doctrine of hypostatic union challenges this theory, which identifies that the two natures of Christ are inseparable.³ Therefore, while Christ on earth submitted to the Father, He remained with equal authority and eternal existence. It is as impossible to separate Christ's divinity from His humanity as it is to separate the essence of each person of the trinity or to separate any human from its function. Kevin Giles argues against the trinity argument for Complementarians, identifying it as heretical and biblically unsupported.⁴ Christians disagree with the subordination of Christ and women and, for the same reason, disagree with Complementarianism. John Piper, a co-founder, coined the statement, "ontologically equal, functionally different."⁵ While proponents of this theory reject Christian women as leaders in the church and home, they do not apply this theory in business or politics. Christian women question this practice, which has led to an upheaval across Christendom.

John Piper shares a story of his youth when his father was a traveling preacher. In his father's absence, his mother assumed the roles of both the leading husband and the submissive wife.⁶ Considering that Piper's mother was permitted to lead temporarily under extenuating circumstances, a question of the theory's merit arises. If the Scriptures forbid women from leading, the Bible will never become contradictory, allowing women to lead even in dire need.

³ Murtoff, J.. "two natures of Christ." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 12, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/two-natures-of-Christ>.

⁴ Kevin Giles, *What the Bible Actually Teaches on Women*, Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018, .

⁵ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering*, 34.

⁶ Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway, 2006.

Jeff Miller appeals to complementarians to remain consistent in Scripture application.⁷ Miller says, "I am concerned that their treatment of certain issues is inconsistent and amounts to constructing unhelpful fences around the law."⁸ He credits complementarians for being sincerely committed to Scripture and calls for unity within Christendom to keep engaging, fellowshiping, and studying. Whether the church agrees with women as leaders is not a salvation issue and should not become a barrier to unity. The global church should reflect Ephesians chapter four, which teaches humility, love, and patience. Ephesians 4:3 – 6 says, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (NKJV).

Evangelical leaders began developing the doctrine of Complementarianism with intentions to protect and restore family traditions from perilous influence. It was a family values campaign. According to Susan M. Shaw, scholar and professor of gender and evangelical Christianity, in the 1970s, church leaders supported women's equality but shifted their support when feminism threatened women's traditional roles.⁹ Complementarians saw feminism as an obstruction to traditional church and family structure. Proponents held that God gave men the responsibility to protect and provide for women and children, which is commendable. Piper says, "At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women."¹⁰ For Complementarians, husbands have the eternal responsibility to lead

⁷ Jeff Miller, "An Open Appeal to My Complementarian Brothers and Sisters." *Leaven* 22, no. 2 (2014): 13.

⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

⁹ Susan M. Shaw, *God Speaks to Us, Too Southern Baptist Women on Church, Home, and Society*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky), 2015, 14.

¹⁰ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering*, 49.

the family, and wives have an eternal conclusive responsibility to submit. Complementarianism suggests gender equality regarding personhood and value in the kingdom of God. Miller notes, "Complementarians self-identify as promoters of gender equality, and egalitarians self-identify as promoters of gender complementarity."¹¹ Gender equality is a core part of the theory; however, Miller finds that a developing argument concerning the absolute necessity for Christ's maleness threatens it. It is in direct contradiction to the belief that the genders are ontologically equal. This new doctrine teaches that God could not atone for the sins of the world if the Messiah were female¹² when, in fact, God can do as God pleases. Psalms 135:6 says, "Whatever the Lord pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places" (NKJV). God could have allowed the birth of Christ through a male and used a female to atone for sins, as the Old Testament scriptures show atonement through animal sacrifice. The scriptures do not share why God chose a woman to give birth or Christ as male. Theoretically, a female could be chosen as the savior if God will. The idea that God presents Jesus as a male or implants his seed in a female does not make one gender superior.

Acceptance or rejection of women in pastoral roles is not a salvation issue but a principle of church administration. Neither will it determine one's eternal resting place. 1 Corinthians 12:5 – 6 says, "There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all" (NKJV). One resolve could be that all Christians honor and respect how a church operates. Complementarians are faithful Christians, scholars, and theologians diligent in Scripture interpretation according to their convictions. The Renew Organization is a Christian network for discipleship that embraces Complementarianism.

¹¹ Miller, *Open Appeal*, 13.

¹² *Ibid*, 14.

The organization believes that men and women were equally created and valued by God but with different expressions of submission, husbands with sacrificial love, and wives willing to follow. Their website states, "In the church, men and women serve as partners in the use of their gifts in ministry, while seeking to uphold New Testament norms which teach that the lead teacher/preacher role in the gathered church and the elder/overseer role are for qualified men."¹³ The Renew Organization leaders suggest that egalitarian leaders consider the implications of following that ministry approach.¹⁴ The concern is that church leaders will succumb to the pressure of following modern church culture and misapply Scripture. Jeff Miller, a convinced egalitarian, suggests the same of complementarians. He calls them to be diligent in biblical research to avoid a misinterpretation of the scriptures. Miller says, "A problem for both sides is lack of careful thinking."¹⁵ Critical to the success of any church or discipleship endeavor is an accurate and non-partial application of the Bible. This doctoral research project considers Jared Wilson's question: what if we are not doing church right?¹⁶

Christian Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism is a societal concept that dismantles economic, political, religious, and social inequalities.¹⁷ The Egalitarian view works well within the civil and social aspects but may not consider God's standards for Christian leadership. Christian Egalitarianism adds biblical principles to the Egalitarian theory. Supporters believe God created females and males with

¹³ <https://renew.org/about/faith-statement/>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Miller, *Open Appeal*, 13.

¹⁶ Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 2015, 24.

¹⁷ S. Eldridge, "egalitarianism." Encyclopedia Britannica, October 1, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/egalitarianism>.

equal authority, giftedness, rights, responsibilities, and value. Rebecca Groothuis says, "The essential message of biblical equality is simple and straightforward: Gender, in and of itself, neither privileges nor curtails one's ability to be used to advance the kingdom or to glorify God in any dimension of ministry, mission, society or family."¹⁸ This theory has a complementary component that all Christians submit to one another. Biblical equality is Complementarianism without hierarchy.¹⁹ For Egalitarians, the main issue with Complementarian views relates to culture and hermeneutics. Understanding the content, context, history, and other areas of literary language is essential to interpretation.

Bill Rudd relates God's call of men and women to lead in the church to bimanual daily tasks.²⁰ Imagine baking a cake or repairing a vehicle with one hand – even the most skilled person would have difficulty completing the task. Rudd's question relates the denial of women in church leadership to cutting off one hand and working with a handicap.²¹ Functional restrictions placed on disabled people may affect a successful outcome. When comparing marriage and family to a paddle boat, it moves faster and more precisely when two people operate it with equal mobility. Prohibiting women from leadership is like cutting off a hand and attempting to operate at full throttle.²² Some see it as counterproductive and self-destructive to the body of Christ.

¹⁸ Ronald W. Pierce, *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, edited by Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, (InterVarsity Press, 2005), ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=2009903>. Created from liberty on 2023-02-28 01:19:13.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Bill Rudd, *Should Women Be Pastors and Leaders in Church? My Journey to Discover What the Bible Says About Gender Roles*, (West Bow Press, 2018), 2.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Bill Rudd, *Should Women*, 2.

Stanley Grenz, a respected voice in the evangelical circle, affirms gender equality in the church and home.²³ In his review of the Grenz book, Dr. Schreiner, a Complementarian, points out the exegetical, historical, and theological arguments for female leadership in the church and home.²⁴ Schreiner concludes that an inductive approach is used to defend biblical equality. Through exegesis, Grenz shows the authority key women demonstrated in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, including the gospels.²⁵ Schreiner disagrees with Grenz's position on gender equality based on a faulty church history analysis and insufficient exegesis of all pertaining text. Schreiner feels that the length of the analysis proposing that church revival resulted from women's involvement and church decline following the removal of women's leadership is insufficient.²⁶ The introduction of this project thesis confirms Grenz's findings on the effects of female leadership in the 19th-century church, using a different literary source. For Schreiner, Jesus' respectful treatment of women does not prove God-ordained leadership.²⁷ In response, it is noted that Jesus' respect for women does not disprove God's selection of female leaders. The gospel narratives, in some instances, show Jesus communicating with women more than men, and his gentle treatment of women may explain why he did not select women to travel with male disciples. While Schreiner has points of disagreement with Grenz, he admits that the burden of the decision is on the local church.

²³ Stanley J. Grenz (Stanley James), and Denise Muir. Kjesbo. *Women in the Church : a Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

²⁴ http://d3pi8hptl0qhh4.cloudfront.net/documents/tschreiner/review_Grenz.pdf

²⁵ http://d3pi8hptl0qhh4.cloudfront.net/documents/tschreiner/review_Grenz.pdf

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Complementarians make an excellent point of concern for egalitarians not to lean far into the world's culture. Social egalitarianism involves the equality and justice of abortion rights, same-sex marriage, and transgenderism, which are all contrary to biblical Christian theology. While Christianity believes in economic, legal, and political equality, foundational is the acceptance and belief of heterosexual marriage only and sustaining life in the womb. Complementarians fear that egalitarian churches will eventually follow the paths of progressive liberal churches through a new interpretive process of Scripture.²⁸ Christian egalitarians use a scholarly method of biblical interpretation: exegesis and hermeneutics. The Bible is both a historical ancient text and a spiritual authority. Nineteenth-century theologians described the biblical family structure as patriarchal but recently reexamined the application of this concept, considering differing theories about ancient Israel and biblical texts.²⁹ Scholars and Theologians of the ancient Hebrew text are curious as to the use of the word patriarchy to describe biblical family structure when there was never a word translated to mean patriarchy in Scripture.³⁰ Through an exegetical and hermeneutical approach, Meyers determined, "Examining a broad range of nonlegal texts reveals aspects of daily life in which fathers do not exercise absolute authority."³¹ Even in ancient Rome, the idea of male headship did not exist. The Bible shares that Rome ruled over Israel and may have influenced family structure. The Greek philosopher Xenophon's study on the household shows that roles within marriage were complementary, sometimes with wives exercising authority over husbands, such as God advising Abram to

²⁸ <https://renew.org/about/faith-statement/>

²⁹ Carol L. Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 1 (2014): 8-27, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/was-ancient-israel-patriarchal-society/docview/1636546161/se-2>, 8.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 10.

follow his wife's advice, Sarai. The biblical narrative of Abraham and Sarai shows an equal number of times when each advises the other. This is the relationship that is reflected in an egalitarian marriage ideal. According to Meyers, biblical scholars continue to hold Israel as patriarchal, yet classical studies determined through closely examining specific biblical texts that the concept is not supported.³²

Alternative View

A Confessional view is an alternative church leadership theory in the gender equality arena. The Westminster Confession of Faith formed the Confessional doctrine, which describes creation as God creating man (human) as male and female and does not identify gender for church government leadership.³³ Aimee Byrd, a fresh voice and author on this subject, identifies as Confessional in her recent book, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: How the Church Needs to Rediscover Her Purpose*.³⁴ This book responds to Piper and Grudem's *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, where the author calls for men and women to reclaim their siblinghood.³⁵ Byrd does not agree with Complementarianism or Egalitarianism because, in her view, pastoral roles are exclusive to qualified men but not based on female subordination.³⁶

³² Carol L. Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 1 (2014): 8-27, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/was-ancient-israel-patriarchal-society/docview/1636546161/se-2>, 19.

³³ "Westminster Confession of Faith - WestminsterStandards.Org," accessed October 8, 2022, <https://westminsterstandards.org/westminster-confession-of-faith/>

³⁴ Andrea Palpant Dilley, "Confessional, Not Complementarian: Author Aimee Byrd rethinks the 'Biblical Manhood and Womanhood' movement." *Christianity Today*, May-June 2020, 74. Gale In Context: Biography (accessed October 8, 2022).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

Soft complementarianism (SC) is another view and derivative of the Complementarian theory. It stands in the center of both sides of the church leadership theory. SC believes that men and women are equal in God's sight and that women can lead in the church with limitations, such as a male "covering." Also, proponents accept that men maintain the headship role in the home, even where the woman leads in the church. Some Pentecostals are known to operate under this type of SC due to the Pentecostal Movement: Azusa, where women were given equal leadership status in the church.³⁷ In an article, Moore argues that some of the most conservative Christian homes are also lacking in strong emotional health.³⁸ Complementarians sought to change or remove the harsh language, such as patriarchy, to strengthen the family circle.³⁹ It was an effort to maintain their biblical convictions and appease proponents of gender equality. The result is simply a softening of the language and tones with a patriarchal foundation.

Biblical Womanhood

Complementarians describe biblical womanhood as, "At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships."⁴⁰ They believe it is a woman's responsibility to affirm men, which some believe is acceptable if affirmation were mutual. Byrd argues that womanhood contributes more than nurturing male leadership; it is a reciprocal dynamic that leads men and women together toward God.⁴¹ Cassandra Chaney, scholar and

³⁷ Tanya Riches and Mark Jennings. "Explainer: why some churches teach that women are 'separate but equal.'" *The Conversation* 22, 2016).

³⁸ Russell D. Moore, "After patriarchy, what? Why egalitarians are winning the gender debate." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 3 (2006): 569.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering*, 54.

⁴¹ Dilley, *Confessional*, 75.

author, adds that although most scholars describe womanhood through the lens of femininity based on appearance, demeanor, and values, some communities subscribe to a definition of womanhood that comes from a healthy perception of self.⁴² The research shows that womanhood is a subjective, broad concept that varies by community, culture, ethnicity, generation, and race. One's perception of womanhood relates to environment, experience, and upbringing. Kim Anderson describes Native womanhood as heroic and resilient matriarchs who were the backbones of their communities even after experiencing oppression, trauma, and violence.⁴³ Chaney asserts that African American womanhood is the prescriptive antidote that adds value to a nation despite marginalization.⁴⁴ A general idea of womanhood can hardly be applied to a collective population. Biblical womanhood, a derivative, adds a God-ordained context to womanhood.

The term neighborhood denotes a distinction of a community from others. Adding the suffix (hood) to woman denotes a character different than manhood, which, from a spiritual perspective, is an errant theory. Byrd says, "When we go to the riches of His Word, we don't find a masculine or feminine version, but one Bible to guide us all."⁴⁵ While God distinguished humanity as male and female, both remain one to God, having made them in His likeness and image. Galatians 3:28 states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (NKJV)." The Scriptures teach that all Christians, female and male, are sons of God through faith in Jesus. Sonship refers

⁴² Cassandra Chaney, "The Character of Womanhood: How African American Women's Perceptions of Womanhood Influence Marriage and Motherhood." *Ethnicities* 11, no. 4 (2011): 516.

⁴³ Kim Anderson, *A recognition of being: Reconstructing Native womanhood*, (Canadian Scholars' Press, 2016), xxiii.

⁴⁴ Chaney, *Character of Womanhood*,

⁴⁵ Byrd, *Recovering from*, 25.

to spiritual adoption and inheritance not based on gender or feigned biblical womanhood but on faith.

Women Leading in the Old Testament

Female leadership was prevalent in Old Testament Scriptures, although ambiguously included. One Scripture shows female leadership in Psalms 68:11, “The Lord gives the command; The women who proclaim the good news are a great army. (NASB)” The various versions of the Bible heavily differ in the translation of this text.⁴⁶ While each agrees that God commands a word to proclaim, the translation difficulty is with who heralds this proclamation. In the translations that do not identify women giving the proclamation, the subsequent verse references women staying home to gather the goods obtained. Another difference is that some minimize the interpretation of the text to women celebrating a military victory in song instead of a declaration of God’s providence. Scholars suggest that the former interpretation disregards the authority of God’s sovereign word given to the celebrants as God’s law.⁴⁷ Some scholars agree that the public speech presents an image of the victory God will ultimately give to all believers through Jesus Christ. Dr. Mariottini references Psalms 68:11 - 12 with Judges chapter 5 when Sisera initially fled, and God gave victory to the female leaders.⁴⁸ Mariottini suggests that some biblical translations omit female proclamation in verse eleven to avoid acceptance of women preaching the good news, which is the translation of the Hebrew word.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner. *The Book of Psalms*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 422.

⁴⁷ <https://Biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/psalms/68.htm>

⁴⁸ <https://claudemariottini.com/2016/05/16/women-who-proclaim-the-good-news/>

⁴⁹ <https://claudemariottini.com/2016/05/16/women-who-proclaim-the-good-news/>

The Old Testament Scriptures reveal many women diligently responding to God's call to lead. Huldah, a prophet, teacher, and wife, was called by God to interpret the written law. Second Kings Chapter 22 and Second Chronicles 34 provide the narrative of King Josiah sending the priests, the scribe, and other leaders in the King's camp to Huldah for Godly counsel on the book of law. A relative of the Prophet Jeremiah, Huldah was one of the few esteemed prophetesses in Old Testament Scriptures.⁵⁰ According to Rabbinical literature, King Josiah chose to enquire of Huldah instead of Jeremiah to take advantage of the supposed soft nature of women.⁵¹ Instead, Huldah's response was just as assertive as Jeremiah's.

There are biblical principles for appointing judges or prophets, including women. The qualifications for Old Testament judges may be equivalent to those of New Testament Elders.⁵² Jethro advised Moses to appoint minor judges who were apt to teach, God-fearing, and trustworthy. The heads of the Hebrew family were typically called elders and were not always men.⁵³ Moses selected qualified judges from the family leaders, leaving a blueprint for selecting Deborah as judge and prophet over elders, generals, males, tribal heads, and her husband. The term Elder in the Old Testament Scriptures refers to those of a certain age, gray-haired, and full of wisdom.⁵⁴ Moses was instructed in Deuteronomy 1:13 to "Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you" (NKJV).

The Hebrew term used in this Scripture for men is Enosh, translated as mankind and includes all

⁵⁰ <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7923-huldah>

⁵¹ <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7923-huldah>

⁵² Christina Campbell, "Principles of female ordination in the Old Testament." *Priscilla Papers* 7, no. 2 (1993): 8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ David A. Mappes, "The 'Elder in the Old and New Testament: Part 1 of 4 Parts of 'Studies on the Role of the New Testament Elder.'" *The Bibliotheca sacra*. 154 (1997), 80.

humanity.⁵⁵ The establishment of elders most likely originated in the patriarchal tribal settings where the family was the basic social unit.⁵⁶ Elders may be a reference to age or the character of leadership who assisted Moses in judging the people, administering the law of God, worshipping, and observing memorialized events. A reading in the original text extends this leadership position to qualified females and males.

Women assumed leadership positions as the Queen regent – on behalf of her son (1 King 15:9-15; 2 King 15:33, 22:1; 2 Chronicles 24:1), regnant – on her own (1 King 10:1-13; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12, 22:10), or consort - alongside her husband the king (Genesis 36:39; 1 King 11:19; Psalms 45:9; Song 6:8).⁵⁷ These women served as monarchs and sovereign rulers with significant influence and power over all people. These Scriptures were written about God's original people and posit a guide for church leadership today. The Queen of Sheba is one of history's most famous Queen regnants. The Queen is depicted as one of great power and respect and having greater wisdom than Solomon.⁵⁸ When the Queen learned of Solomon's wisdom, she visited him and tested him with hard questions (1 Kings 10:1).

Female Leaders Omitted

The book *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible* identifies hidden female leadership in Scripture. Claassens and Fischer assert that inadequate interpretation of Scripture is the cause for the subtle narratives of women leading.⁵⁹ Cocco Francesco may agree in *Women in the*

⁵⁵ <https://Biblehub.com/hebrew/582.htm>

⁵⁶ Mapps, *The Elder*, 81.

⁵⁷ Jason Thompson, *Wonderful things: a History of Egyptology*. Vol. 2. Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁵⁸ Jillian Stinchcomb, "Race, Racism, and the Hebrew Bible: The Case of the Queen of Sheba." *Religions* (Basel, Switzerland) 12, no. 10 (2021): 795.

⁵⁹ Juliana L. Claassens and Fischer, Irmtraud. *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2021), 2.

Wilderness: The 'Female Legislation' of the Book of Numbers. Francesco says, "The commentators are in substantial agreement that what we have here are symbolic names: this is not an unimportant observation insofar as it enables us to understand better the nature and purpose of the narrative in which these women are the leading figures."⁶⁰ Sarah is not easily seen as a leader but is widely accepted as an example of wives submitting to their husbands. A question about Sarah's submissiveness is proposed. Abraham and Sarah seem to have more of an egalitarian relationship as they submit to each other. The Scripture shows that on two occasions, Abraham tells Sarah to lie about their relationship – Sarah submits to him. On two different occasions, Sarah directs Abraham to use Hagar as their surrogate for the promised son, and again, when she becomes concerned about that child's influence on her and Abraham's son, Sarah insists that Abraham remove Hagar and Ishmael from their home. In both instances, Abraham submits to his wife, and God instructs him to obey his wife. This part of the narrative is often overlooked and does not show a subservient Sarah.⁶¹ Where people say there is no biblical precedence for women in leadership among God's people, these Scriptures show otherwise.

Francesco suggests that specific chapters in the Book of Numbers identify harsh laws used explicitly against women, revealing disenfranchisement early in history.⁶² Further, it gives plausibility to the idea that women were treated differently than men and were expressly forbidden some of the same pleasures of life.

⁶⁰ Francesco Cocco, *Women in the Wilderness: The "Female Legislation" of the Book of Numbers (Num 5,11-31; 27,1-11; 30,2-17)* Vol. 138. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020, 129.

⁶¹ <https://theBiblespeakstoyou.com/sarah-called-abraham-lord-was-she-submissive-to-him/>

⁶² <https://theBiblespeakstoyou.com/sarah-called-abraham-lord-was-she-submissive-to-him/>.

Table 2.1 The table below provides examples of other female leadership in the Old Testament.

NAME	SCRIPTURE	ACTIVITY
Timna	Genesis 36:12, 20-22, 40; 1 Chronicles 1:36, 39, 51.	A daughter of royalty and the sister of Prince Lotan, therefore making her a Princess. Esau selected her as a Duke (Chief) of the family from Esau.
Zelophehad Daughters	Numbers 27	Having no male leaders in their family, they advocated for themselves before Moses, the priest, and tribal leaders to receive their inheritance from their father. It resulted in a permanent change in the laws regarding inheritance.
Abigail	1 Samuel 25	She openly initiated peace and convinced King David to spare the life of her aggressive husband, Nabal. She later became King David's wife.
No name Prophetess	Isaiah 8:3	Wife of Prophet Isaiah. Some scholars believe her to be a Prophetess.
The Abel-Beth-Maacah Woman	Proverbs 31:26; 2 Samuel 20:17, 18; Genesis 46:17	Rabbis attributes her knowledge of the Torah, persuasiveness, and rhetorical skills to saving her city with her wisdom. ⁶³

⁶³ Kadari, Tamar. "Wise Woman of Abel-beth-maacah: Midrash and Aggadah." Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women. 31 December 1999. Jewish Women's Archive. (Viewed on January 27, 2024) <<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/wise-woman-of-abel-beth-maacah-midrash-and-aggadah>>.

Women Leading in the New Testament

Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, in their essay titled *In and Out of the House: Changes in Women's Roles From Jesus's Movement to the Early Churches*, identify conflicting models regarding the roles of women seen in the Bible.⁶⁴ One model points to a decline in the importance of roles played by women during the period between Jesus Christ and the formation of the early church, which led to an inferior position of women.⁶⁵ Another model shows the active role of women in the early churches. These two patterns are not distinct but to be explored together to find the nuances in the gap. Destro and Pesce point to the social construct in which Jesus lives and the implementation of His teachings. The Scriptures do not explicitly show Jesus selecting female disciples, but other details in the gospel allow for a conclusion about their existence. Some of the male disciples were appointed as Apostles, and while it is not clearly seen in the Scriptures, women were not omitted from this appointment. Pauline literature reflects a conflict in Scripture texts. For example, in 1 Corinthians 14:34, he instructs women not to speak in public, but in chapter 11 of the same epistle, Paul instructs women to cover their heads when they pray and prophesy. Paul seems to carefully craft these instructions to conform to social normalcy while still not denying women to operate in their gift. Destro and Pesce say, "That 1 Corinthians (14:33–35) attempts to prevent women from speaking in public assemblies means that women quite likely were participating actively in those assemblies."⁶⁶ An acceptable

⁶⁴ Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, "In and Out of the House: Changes in Women's Roles From Jesus's Movement to the Early Churches," In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 299.

⁶⁵ Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce, "In and Out of the House: Changes in Women's Roles From Jesus's Movement to the Early Churches," In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 299.

⁶⁶ Destro and Pesce, 301.

translation of prophecy in Scripture is to preach, as both terms include an element of forth-telling, indicating that women were preaching to the entire congregation.

Andrea Taschl-Erber writes about Mary Magdala as one of Christ's followers and the first apostle. Taschl-Erber says, "A history of interpretation determined by androcentric mechanisms and patriarchal projections obscured the significance of this prominent disciple and prophetic apostle. Thus, it is necessary to liberate her specific literary and historical role from the shadows of reception history."⁶⁷ The author determined through research that Mary's active role in the passion and resurrection of Christ, a prominent mention of her name before other women in all of the Gospels, and her voluntary relocation from her hometown to the Jesus movement without male representation show her leadership position and apostolic designation. Although Marinella Perroni's article indicates that Luke has good intentions of portraying women in key prominent roles, some promote the gospel or prevent it.⁶⁸ Some believe that in doing so, Luke reveals a patriarchal framework that divides Luke's narrative against itself.

The Gospel of John also tells the story of women in leadership and prominent roles with Jesus. The narratives share that female disciples interact with Jesus as much as male disciples.⁶⁹ According to Judith Hartenstein's article, passages in the Gospel of John (8:31, 15:8) portray disciples as more of an assignment than a title, which would avail it to women and men.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Andrea Teschl-Erber, "Mary Magdala: First Apostle?" In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 431.

⁶⁸ Marinella Perroni, "Disciples, Not Apostles: Luke's Double Message," In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 173.

⁶⁹ Judith Hartenstein, "Masculine and Feminine Narrative Figures in the Fourth Gospel: Gender Perspectives," In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 455.

⁷⁰ Hartenstein, 457.

Hartenstein says, "Although no woman is explicitly called a disciple, the disciples include women. This is most noticeable regarding Mary Magdalene." She is present at the crucifixion and the tomb on Easter morning; she is in direct contact with the group of μαθηταί (20:2, 18), and her relationship to Jesus proves her to be a disciple (e.g., address by name and reaction)."⁷¹ Another author determined that the Johannine narrative presents women as relevant and significant to Jesus' ministry. Turid Karlsen Seim says, "Women are main actors in major episodes, and they are represented as having a remarkable singleness of purpose in relation to Jesus: 2:1–12 (the mother of Jesus); 4:4–42 (the Samaritan woman); 11:1–44 (Martha and Mary); 12:1–8 (Mary and Martha); 19:25–27 (the mother of Jesus, her sister Mary wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene); 20:1–18 (Mary Magdalene)."⁷² In fact, in John and other gospel narratives, Jesus speaks to and gives women more voice than men. In most cases, Peter speaks for the men.

Female Leaders Omitted

The research shows that while the Bible remains the supreme authority for Christians, evidence of vast female leadership is hidden in Scripture and, in some instances, may have been omitted. Scholars argue that Paul's epistles were doctored or written after he died in his honor.⁷³ This supports the contradiction in his letter regarding the support of women preaching and leading. Research shows that women were preachers and prophets in the early church, but this

⁷¹ Hartenstein, 457

⁷² Turid Karlsen Seim, "Women and Negotiations of Gender in the Gospel of John" In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 215.

⁷³ Turid Karlsen Seim, "Women and Negotiations of Gender in the Gospel of John" In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 24.

changed with the onset of imperial power.⁷⁴ If these findings are accurate, they do not negate the authority or infallibility of the Scriptures, which are God-breathed and inspired by the original text.

Shaping the Canon

Research shows that there is no systematic process for the canon of the Bible. However, early church fathers developed the biblical canon over time through debates within the political and religious arena.⁷⁵ Canon lists were formed of combined genres and used by political and religious leaders to advance their agendas.⁷⁶ Rine sees the canon lists as significant beyond their content, presumably the Holy Scriptures.⁷⁷ Some scholars used the lists for comparative analysis and developing concepts that may not relate to their original intent. The lists were becoming more important to some than the Scriptures. Users of these lists could apply personal interpretations that would alter the message of the original texts and negate its integrity.

In his epistles to the church of Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, and Rome, Apostle Paul expresses, “the gospel that I preached” (1 Cor 15:1) or “according to my gospel” (Rom 2:16) or “that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.... But it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:11, 12; Eph 3:3). An argument could be made that Paul referenced the canon lists and process as incomparable to the true gospel. The formation of the canon affected the gospel narratives and other books of the Old and New Testaments. Rine says, “The list in Athanasius’s Festal Letter 39 (367) stipulates that there are twenty-seven books in

⁷⁴ Seim, 24.

⁷⁵ Frost, 27.

⁷⁶ C. Rebecca Rine, "Canon Lists are Not just Lists." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139, no. 4 (2020), 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

the New Testament, but that the roughly contemporaneous record from the Synod of Laodicea leaves out the now widely accepted Revelation.”⁷⁸ Frost suggests a distinction between Jesus’ and the Apostle’s reference to “Scriptures” as the Torah and Prophets and “Writings” as the third division of the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁹ According to Frost, “Scriptures” and “Writings” come from the same original word. Frost says, “What the earliest Christians and Jews were referring to as “the Scriptures” [or “the Writings”] must have been easily distinguishable from other writings that were clearly not.”⁸⁰ In Luke 24:44, Jesus says, “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” An inference can be drawn that there were Scriptures and Writings already accepted as God’s Word, and there were false texts. Justo L. Gonzalez notes that in early Christianity, the books of the Bible were not deemed sacred except the Pentateuch and the Prophets.⁸¹ The canon's formation significantly impacts biblical interpretation regarding gender equality in church leadership.

Research findings regarding the redaction of the Old Testament text suggest a strong possibility that women held many leadership roles. Some say that opposers of female leaders intentionally arranged the Scriptures to suppress any idea that women could lead men. Scholars say internal and external factors, including ecclesiastical politics, influenced canonical texts.⁸² Other researchers theorize, "Feminist research of the past 40 years has amply documented that such a canonization process, which went hand in hand with the imperialization process of the

⁷⁸ Rine, 812.

⁷⁹ Frost, 27.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 28.

⁸¹ Justo L. Gonzalez, “The Bible in the Early Church.” (Grand Rapids MI, Eerdmans Publishing), 2022, 9.

⁸² Anthony Frost, “Tracing the Emergence of a Canon of Holy Scripture in Churches.” Other Journal Article, JOUR. Anglican Historical Society Journal 57 (2014), 27. [https://search-informit-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/10.3316/informit.322267054516434](https://search.informit-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/10.3316/informit.322267054516434).

church in the fourth century CE, resulted in the exclusion of women's early Christian leadership traditions from the canon."⁸³

The canon of the Christian Bible takes place during an early period of imperialism, which weighed heavily on the selection of information included in Scripture. The church and government formed an affinity seen as a victory for the church in spreading the gospel.⁸⁴ Constantine had an agenda to conform the church to societal norms. Scholars suggest that the government financially supported the church in exchange for expensive custom-made Bibles.⁸⁵ This newly formed relationship opened the door for government control in the church and the selection of canon. Not all canonized Bible compositions are accepted by all churches.⁸⁶ The disunity in Christendom led to compromise. Each group selected the best canon that suited their agenda and was closest to what they believed was right.

God's Will Beyond Canonization

The Bible remains God's infallible Word, breathed out and inspired by God to writers. This research project questions the canon selection and interpretation of Scripture, not the authority of the God-inspired original text. Philip Sumpter uses Brevard Child's canon criticism approach to exegete Scripture for interpretation. Sumpter says, "A canonical approach is inconceivable without a rudimentary appreciation of divine inspiration. It is only when these two dimensions, the human and the divine, are brought together that the hermeneutical implications

⁸³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "New Testament Canon Formation and the Marginalization of Wo/Men." In *Gospels: Narrative and History*, edited by Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Marinella Perroni, and Amy-Jill Levine, Society of Biblical Literature, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt175x2sz.7>, 19.

⁸⁴ Fiorenza, 19.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 24.

⁸⁶ Fiorenza, 21.

are drawn in preparation for my own act of canonical exegesis in Part II."⁸⁷ Using this approach allows one to look into the meaning of the text for application.

Consider the space between hearing, writing, and interpreting God's Words and how the spiritual gifts work with humanity. God's instructions to humanity are subject to the writers' experiences, feelings, interpretations, and thoughts. This seems to be the idea in 1 Corinthians 14:32 when Paul teaches the church that a prophecy is subject to the control of the Prophet. Consider Eve in the Genesis story, who knew God's instruction forbidding them to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve rationalized God's Word and disobeyed the instructions at the cost of a covenantal relationship with God. Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God and has the final authority for living. However, as the interpretation of the original text is subject to human experience and fallibility, God's message may not be translated explicitly. This does not reduce the authority of Scripture but mandates that Scriptures must be explored to find the truth.

Patriarchal Power Systems

Unfortunately, patriarchy in the church has led to abuse, misogyny, and subjugation in the pew. Kim argues that most of those who oppose women's ordination are men who want to promote hierarchy and male superiority.⁸⁸ Some Christian women are socialized to accept, agree with, and deny their peers the right to exist and operate in divine authority. Andy Johnson suggests that systems that place women in second-class status establish male leadership as more

⁸⁷ Philip Sumpter, "Introduction." In *The Substance of Psalm 24: An Attempt to Read Scripture after Brevard S. Childs*, 1–4. *The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. Accessed February 27, 2023. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9780567662101.ch-001>.

⁸⁸ Eun-Young Julia Kim, *When Women Reject Women's Ordination: Reframing and Semanticizing in the Speeches of Two Female Seventh-Day Adventists*. *Feminist Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 33-47.

blessed and worthy in God's eyes than inferior women.⁸⁹ This could lead to women preferring men as pastors. Paul Rigby points out that St. Augustine of Hippo confessed to needing healing from spiritual narcissism, which shows that this system was formed even in the early church.⁹⁰

Patriarchy is the culprit of many problems in the church. Where one group of people in the church has an agenda to self-promote, Scripture application and interpretation will not come from a divine order. Based on the research, Complementarianism seeks to restore wholesome traditional values. However, when a church's leadership team misapplies the scriptures non-altruistically, it renders an incomplete understanding of complementary gender roles that could perpetuate male dominance and devalue women. Ally Moder says, "Patriarchal interpretations of Scripture that subordinate women to men continue to proliferate throughout the Church, leaving women more likely to experience spousal abuse."⁹¹

Complementarianism has the propensity to be seen as a theory of hierarchy and patriarchy, although it was not the founders' intention. One opposing author stated, "For centuries, many Christians have been taught that the submission of women to men in church, home, and society is God's plan (even as some have observed how these teachings can lead to an abuse of authority)."⁹² A study conducted in 2018 determined that Complementarian hierarchy is directly correlated to domestic abuse.⁹³ Some sources discuss hidden abuse in a church that

⁸⁹ Andy J. Johnson, *Religion and Men's Violence Against Women*, (New York: Springer, 2015),

⁹⁰ Paul Rigby, *The Theology of Augustine's Confessions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 453.

⁹¹ Ally Moder, "Women, Personhood, and the Male God: A Feminist Critique of Patriarchal Concepts of God in View of Domestic Abuse," *Feminist Theology* 28, no. 1 (September 2019): 85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735019859471>.

⁹² Barr, 88.

⁹³ Peter J. Jankowski, Steven J. Sandage, Miriam Whitney Cornell, Cheryl Bissonette, Andy J. Johnson, Sarah A. Crabtree, and Mary L. Jensen, "Religious Beliefs and Domestic Violence Myths," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 10, no. 4 (2018), 386.

purports male authority over women. Women are smiling in church but suffering at home from an emotionally, mentally, and spiritually abusive husband simply because they desire to fulfill the calling of God. The abusive husband tends to hide in churches that subscribe to Complementarianism or similar, seeking a faithful, godly, and resilient woman.

Improper Use of Scripture

Scripture misinterpretation can lead to a theological formation of divine partiality rooted in patriarchy. Church leaders have used Scripture to abuse, control, and manipulate people, specifically women. Rachel Denhollander says, "Abusers can wield Scripture and theology like a weapon."⁹⁴ Covert abusers hide in churches and misappropriate Scripture, especially in a church that functions on a hierarchal system. Even church leaders with good intentions can misapply and misinterpret the Scriptures when administering pastoral care and counseling. Leslie Vernick says, "Biblical steps sloppily taken do not provide safety. It can hurt people with the best intentions and good theology poorly applied."⁹⁵ "When a spiritual abuser twists Scripture and uses it to attack, his abuse can feel as though it comes from God Himself."⁹⁶

In the book *Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims*, the author shares a story of a Christian woman whose abusive Christian husband falsely accused her of being evil and lacking self-control for minimally overspending on groceries for their family.⁹⁷ He used Scripture to pray over her, asking God to deliver her from evil. False

⁹⁴ Rachel Denhollander, *Becoming a Church That Cares Well for the Abused*, edited by Brad Hambrick, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 119. Accessed September 12, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁹⁵ Leslie Vernick, *Becoming a Church That Cares Well for the Abused*, edited by Brad Hambrick, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 24.

⁹⁶ Darby A. Strickland, *Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2020), 195.

⁹⁷ Strickland, 194.

interpretation of Scripture is a threshold of abuse. The church must ensure the proper application and interpretation of Scripture for the safety and sanity of all. Strickland states, "Spiritual abuse occurs when an oppressor establishes control and domination by using Scripture, doctrine, or his "leadership role" as weapons."⁹⁸ Before attending JOPA, some congregants were influenced by similar spiritual abuse; for some, it was the reason for removing their membership from the abusive church. Jeff Crippen identifies abuse as a unique sin that the church can address through the proper application of Scripture. Crippen states, "Scripture, it turns out, is indeed sufficient – but our knowledge and understanding of God's Word most often are not, and that is what needs to be corrected."⁹⁹ Historically, churches have misapplied and misinterpreted the Scriptures, causing a disservice to evangelistic efforts. Approximately 30 years ago, churches taught Christians that it was a sin to go to the movie theater or for women to wear specific clothing, jewelry, or hairstyles. This is not practiced today because the church reviewed the Scriptures that cast false biblical teachings and discovered the truth.

In extreme cases, wives called to ministry leadership may experience abuse by their husbands due to a misunderstanding of the Scriptures used to forbid women from leadership roles. Traci West delivers a book with interviews, testimonies, theory, and theology regarding abusive experiences shared by African American women in church leadership roles. West shares one story of a woman who turns to God and the church while dealing with an abusive husband. She became heavily involved in church ministry; however, West shares, "The more successful and fulfilling her ministry became, the more the beatings by her husband escalated. She admitted

⁹⁸ Strickland, 195.

⁹⁹ Jeff Crippen and Anna Wood, *A Cry for Justice: How the Evil of Domestic Abuse Hides in Your Church*, (Amityville: Calvary Press, 2012), xi. Accessed September 12, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central.

that she felt "perplexed" about trying to live in accordance with biblical scriptures...."¹⁰⁰

Specifically, African American women comply with authority figures with resilient faith while dealing with private matters. If a woman is raised to believe that God requires unquestionable submission to her husband or Father, she will suffer the abuse, thinking God orders it.

Unfortunately, this experience may translate to a God who is biased and unloving and eternally changes the way they feel about God, love, and themselves. West states, "Biblical and church teachings that reinforce submission to men as proper authority figures in the home can also support the idea that God sanctions the abuse of women."¹⁰¹ A church structure that supports the subjugation of women using Scriptures to force submission or deny the availability of spiritual gifts is doing an injustice to the kingdom of God.

Theological Foundations

In this section, the researcher intends to create a biblical foundation that supports an ungendered pastoral call to ministry. The researcher opines that there is a difference between what is perceived to be what the Bible says and what God says. What the Bible says refers to the mere words in the text that are open to interpretation. What God says is the message embedded in the text obtained through exegesis and hermeneutics. There is a significant process in understanding biblical text written hundreds of centuries before and addressed to a vastly different culture.

¹⁰⁰ Traci C. West, *Wounds of the Spirit Black Women, Violence and Resistance Ethics*, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1999), 81.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 62.

Further, this section explores the Scriptures used to deny and approve of women's church leadership. These are the biblical texts used to form concepts and principles for understanding what God wants for the genders. Several Scriptures are referenced in the Complementarian and Egalitarian theories, and it becomes a matter of interpretation. In the second epistle of Timothy, Paul encourages him always to be careful when righteously dividing the word of truth. Essentially, the application and interpretation of Scripture are best when the texts are juxtaposed for a complete understanding.

Scriptures Used to Deny Female Leadership

In the Lutheran Theological Journal, Peter Lockwood points out that since Christ came to restore the fallen state of humanity, as narrated in Genesis, biblical gender equality has been restored, and men and women have equal and shared responsibilities on earth.¹⁰² Through Christ, humanity is restored to innocence and purity, and all rights and duties to both genders are restored. However, regarding Complementarianism, Lockwood argues that his position is not considered in the Complementarian view as they remain fixed on the idea that the subordination of women is God's created order.¹⁰³

Genesis 3:15 - 19

Followers of complementary gender roles use this Scripture to form the theory of the predestined authority of man over woman. God told Eve, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow

¹⁰² Peter Lockwood, "The Ordination of Women: Assessing the Counter Claims of Complementarianism", *Other Journal Article, JOUR. Lutheran Theological Journal 55, no. 1* (2021): 13–32. <https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/10.3316/informit.873364646975141>.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 15.

and your conception; In pain, you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16, NKJV). Complementarian opposers argue that Christ's death and resurrection reversed this curse, which no longer applies to the believer. Galatians 3:13 says: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (NKJV). In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul also teaches the Christians that a new life in Christ omits the old nature of life.

1 Corinthians

The Bible says: "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says" (1 Cor 14:34, NKJV). This teaching is deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of many, but it is not juxtaposed with the text in 1 Corinthians 11:5, "But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head" (NKJV). These two Scriptures were written by the same author and contained in the same epistle but appear contradictory until the text is exegeted. In chapter 11, Paul distinguishes between female and male coverings when praying and prophesying.¹⁰⁴ However, what should be noted is that both men and women are praying and prophesying (preaching) publicly. As we defined, preaching and prophesying can be seen as a forth-telling of truth. While these two terms are not the same, there are similarities. The text in chapter 15 is directed at a specific issue since Paul's writing is not contrary. Another thought is that some scholars say that the text in chapter 15 was added later to prevent female leadership in Rome intentionally.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ B. J. Oropeza, *1 Corinthians*, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017). Accessed February 7, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central, 141.

¹⁰⁵ Oropeza, 187.

Further, Oropeza says, "The qualification, nevertheless, neither is woman independent of man nor man independent of the woman in the Lord reaffirms earlier teachings about gender equality in the Lord Jesus Christ (see Gal 3:28)."¹⁰⁶ The text in chapters 14 and 15 leading to 15:34, reflect Paul's instructions when the people assemble to prophesy and speak in tongues in an orderly fashion. Again, there is no gender distinction for praying, prophesying (preaching), or speaking in tongues publicly. Oropeza points out that Paul's community was not receptive to women speaking publicly but may have been allowed with male permission.¹⁰⁷ Oropeza states, "I hope to demonstrate that Paul's command for women again is not based primarily on male consent. Together, these passages [11:5 and 14:34] may even assume that wives and other females could speak publicly in worship gatherings if they are gifted and inspired by God's Spirit to do so."¹⁰⁸ Oropeza would agree with this researcher's theory on Ephesians 4:11, indicating that God selects pastors as ungendered gifts to the church. Further, Oropeza opines that the 14:34 text refers to wives as opposed to all women, and it is likely not a reference to the universal church. Oropeza suggests that this Scripture relates specifically to women who were chatty and speaking out of turn to scrutinize the prophets as they spoke.¹⁰⁹

1 Timothy

Additional Scriptures used to sway God's will for women in leadership roles include 1 Timothy chapter 2:11, 12, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (NKJV). Paul

¹⁰⁶ Oropeza, 148.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 188.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

continues sharing his rationale, considering Adam being created first and Eve being deceived. Aida Besancon Spencer's commentary shows that the woman title is unlikely to refer to a wife because no personal pronoun is attached.¹¹⁰ Spencer also notes that the text refers to a singular woman, unlike in verse 15, where the noun becomes plural.¹¹¹ This denotes that Paul's instruction was not to forbid wives or other women from publicly praying or prophesying. One understanding is that "let a woman learn" or study in silence may have a positive connotation. Spencer states, "Manthanō could refer to the acquisition of knowledge or skill gained by instruction, such as when the centurion Claudius Lysias "learned" Paul was a Roman citizen (Acts 23:26– 27)."¹¹² Further, all Christians are admonished to "Study to be quiet... (King James Version)"

Scriptures Used to Support Female Leadership

Leadership refers to giving direction to others in a community or organization. In the Old Testament Scriptures, Miriam is acknowledged as the first female prophet in Christianity (ref Ex 15:20).¹¹³ Miriam demonstrated leadership from youth by rescuing baby Moses from the river and displaying the courage to suggest to Pharoah's daughter that he be given to a Hebrew woman for care.¹¹⁴ Later, Miriam became a prominent and heroic character in Scripture, leading Israel's children out of bondage with her brothers. Deborah was a prophetess and military leader in

¹¹⁰ Aída Besançon Spencer, *1 Timothy a New Covenant Commentary*, (Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press, 2014), 58.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Spencer, *1 Timothy*, 58.

¹¹³ Chia-An Victor Tung, "Miriam The Performer: A New Perspective On The First Israelite Prophetess." *Magistra* 28, no. 2 (2022): 40.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Israel, appointed by God¹¹⁵, who led them to victory. Queen Esther is acknowledged as a liberator of the people who, despite a difficult marriage and powerless position, risked her life to save the people.¹¹⁶ Lydia, Pheobe, and Priscilla are New Testament female leaders, businesswomen, and deaconesses who are essential contributors to the history of effective leadership. All of the women mentioned here and in Scripture are God's contributions to modern society, and women were not omitted from God's leadership design.

Research shows that opposers of women church leaders have not explicitly explored the Scriptures in this section. Piper explains that he did not examine every Scripture on this topic.¹¹⁷ Gesila Nneka Uzukwu exegetes Galatians 3:28c regarding the phrase, "There is no male and female." Uzukwu concludes, "For the Galatian audience, the statement 'there is not among you male and female' suggests the irrelevance of the use of gender or sexual distinction as criteria, codes, and values for determining who participates in the promise and who has a true genealogical link with the patriarch and the matriarch of the promise."¹¹⁸

Galatians 3:28

The text used in the commentary reads, "There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer "male and female"; you are all one in the Messiah, Jesus."¹¹⁹ The phrase "no longer" denotes the new life obtained through Jesus Christ. This idea

¹¹⁵ Deborah Brown, Deborah!. September., 2014.

¹¹⁶ Olufunmilayo O. Akinyele, "Queen Esther as a servant leader in Esther 5: 1-8." *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in leadership* 2, no. 2 (2009): 54.

¹¹⁷ Piper and Grudem. *Recovering*, 42

¹¹⁸ Nneka Uzukwu, Gesila. *The Unity of Male and Female in Jesus Christ: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 3. 28c in Light of Paul's Theology of Promise*, (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2015), ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=4007312>.

¹¹⁹ N. T. Wright, *Galatians*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021), 177. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=6608825>.

would agree with Peter Lockwood, who pointed toward restoring humanity's fallen state through Christ and equal and shared authority and responsibilities to men and women. N. T. Wright suggests that verse 28 of pericope continues the theme at the beginning of chapter three regarding Abraham's irreversible promise for believers.¹²⁰ Paul continues to explain the purpose and fulfillment of the law through Christ Jesus. Paul confirms that all Christians, female and male, are sons (believers) of God through Jesus. Wright explains, "Verse 28 comments on this, drawing out particular significance in terms of the undifferentiated membership of the family."

Once again, the theme of the complete restoration of humanity is repeated. The consequences of the first act of disobedience are redeemed. Some Christians may use the Genesis narrative to deny gender equality, but according to this theory, it has been restored. First Corinthians 12:13 says: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. Adam and Eve are renewed and no longer of the world" (NKJV). Ephesians 2:15 says: "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace" (NKJV). The two humans are made the same through Christ in God's eyes. The redeemed Eve is no longer subject to the rulership of her husband but to the headship of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (NKJV). This Scripture has not been widely considered in support of gender equality. However, it is one of few texts that name church leaders without any

¹²⁰ Wright, 177.

implication of gender. Darrell Bock, an American evangelical Christian New Testament Scholar and Professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary states that Paul "speaks of how God gifts the church and what that provision of roles is designed to do (4:7– 16). The church finds itself effective when each person who believes contributes to the gifts God has given him or her. The church is more of an organism than a hierarchy."¹²¹ The point is made in verse 11 that Christ indeed calls, graces, and gave human gifts to the church for God's purpose and to fortify the church. Bock states, "God makes the church work in part by giving gifted people to it to equip the rest of the body for ministry."¹²² It is noted that Bock does not connect these ministry leaders to a particular gender.

Origin of Church Government

It seems probable that the church established a hierarchical government patterned after Jethro's instruction to Moses in Exodus 18. Jethro says: "...you shall select from all the people... men...." (Exod 18:21, NKJV). This may be one premise by which some churches seek to select male leadership for church government. Scholars note a literary distinction between the first half (1 – 12) and the last half (13 – 26) of Exodus chapter 18, whereas verse 21 is part of a later addition possibly written by Levitical groups with sociopolitical agendas.¹²³ A conclusion was made that the judges appointed may not have come from the people of Moses' community.¹²⁴ Jeon Jaeyung noted, "Scholars should consider the scribal groups who produced these texts, as

¹²¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, (InterVarsity Press, 2019), 117. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5774149>.

¹²² Bock, 126.

¹²³ Jae young Jeon, "The Visit of Jethro (Exodus 18): Its Composition and Levitical Reworking." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, no. 2 (2017), 4.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

well as their activities and sociohistorical contexts, in any reconstruction of a literary history of these texts."¹²⁵ Jeffrey K. Salkin notes that as Jethro advises Moses, "Jethro not only "invents" the ancient Jewish judicial system, the Sanhedrin; he also plants the seeds for the modern Supreme Court system."¹²⁶ A Supreme Court system that now has women leading as judges.

The researcher opines that the issue is not with the biblical text but with application and interpretation. Jethro instructs Moses to select Judges "from the people," but assumptions, interpretations, and other factors infiltrate the execution of the assignment. In the book of Acts chapter 16, Paul envisioned a Macedonian man needing help, and he immediately believes this to be a sign from God to preach in Philippi, which is in Macedonia. When Paul arrives in Philippi, he does not find a man but several women in prayer with Lydia. The point here is that God sent Paul to preach, and he assumed, due to his presuppositions, that he would see a man. Thankfully, he did not allow that assumption to impede his acceptance of the women.

Theoretical Foundations

This research proposes to enhance the literacy of the Scriptures regarding women called to pastor. Information related directly to biblical literacy concerning female lead pastors is limited. No sources provided directives on informing a congregation about women in church leadership. Neither are there sources that provide a model for female church leadership. There are many sources to persuade and promote a particular viewpoint but not to give objective information. The two models of gender in the pastorate are Complementary, which does not permit women to lead a church, and Christian Egalitarian, which believes in complete biblical

¹²⁵ Jae young Jeon, "The Visit of Jethro, 5.

¹²⁶ Jeffrey K. Salkin, *Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23) and Haftarah (Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6): The JPS B'nai Mitzvah Torah Commentary*, (The Jewish Publication Society, 2018), 15. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5490698>.

equality. These two approaches to church leadership are discussed in a former section of this thesis. This section will discuss the concepts, ideas, and models of church leadership that are inclusive of women.

The theory behind women being called to pastor is based on Ephesians 4:11 - 12: “And He [Jesus] Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (NKJV). It is noted that this Scripture nor any biblical text that references spiritual gifts assigns these gifts to gender. This Scripture calls for unity within the body of Christ while providing the structure for church leadership. There is no indication that the text only applies to the atonement of sin or salvation alone, as it addresses the lives of God’s people related to ministry.¹²⁷ The text points out that each believer is given gifts directly from God for God’s purpose. Van Wyk states, “It is important to notice that the gifts mentioned in verse 11 are God-given, and it forms a strong motivation for modern-day officials to act according to their calling.”¹²⁸ As Christ is the Head of the church, He calls for the church to continue His work and perfect it with these ministry gifts. These gifts are called to lead the church post-ascension of Christ in preparation for His return. Apostles and prophets are also mentioned in chapters two and three of Ephesians. Apostles are accepted in the community as divinely commissioned missionaries and church planters.¹²⁹ Prophets are also seen as regular leaders in the community who are specialists in mediating divine revelations.¹³⁰ The evangelists, pastors, and teachers were

¹²⁷ Barry Van Wyk, “The Application of Ephesians 4:11 in the Recent Missional Debate with Reference to Scripture.” In *Die Skriflig* 52, no. 3 (2018), 4.

¹²⁸ Van Wyk, “The Application of Ephesians 4:11, 5.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

known in the communities as leaders who regularly exercised their gifts and were accepted by the people. Based on this Scripture, there was no issue with the authenticity of these ministry gifts or their acceptance within the congregation. Instead, Ephesians chapter 4, the author reminds believers that Christ appointed these persons. Van Wyk asked, “Does he [author of Ephesians] have different offices in mind, or is he only using the different offices which functioned and were well-known in the Early Church as a paradigm for the church then and thereafter, to act as role models in the more recent church of Christ.” Most important here is not whether these ministry gifts are offices within an institution but that each is chosen by Christ Himself.

Galatians 3:28 - 29 is also used as a premise for the call of women to the pastorate, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (NKJV). Another Scripture that calls for unity within the body of Christ denotes that all believers are heirs of Jesus Christ through whom all receive Abraham’s blessing. While the Greco-Roman world was strictly hierarchical during these times, Paul assures the reader that because of Christ, those times have ended.¹³¹ Where Jews possessed freedoms not extended to Greeks, the circumcised practiced laws that the uncircumcised could not, and males had privileges not afforded to females; now, all in Christ were given the same benefits, privileges, and rights. It was no longer about ethnicity, gender, or status but a spiritual rebirth. “Paul announces that the era of such divisions is over! These distinctions no longer hinder an individual from being a full member of God’s people. The privileges “in Christ” are not hierarchically ranked. No Christian believer is second class.”

¹³¹ <https://blog.cph.org/study/commentary-galatians-3-28-29>

Whereas the law of Moses in Leviticus 15:19 allowed a male to observe the law and forbid a woman due to her menstrual was now reversed. A woman is no longer denied worship because of her DNA. Some scholars point to Paul's minimizing of maleness when explicitly addressing the unity of females and males. "In his argument about Abraham, Paul "decenters" maleness by arguing that biological lineage does not define who can be a recipient of the promise."¹³² A woman who was once forbidden to observe the law because of her woman-ness can now operate in religious practices. The implication is that if women were forbidden to lead in worship before Christ's resurrection, that restriction is now overturned. This appears to be Paul's point in other epistles where he gives directives on how a woman should present herself in public worship and when certain women should refrain from loud outbursts.

Models of Female Church Leadership

Church leadership approaches directed explicitly toward women are limited. This new phenomenon remains developing, considering that the church is still divided on biblical inferences. Continuing the theme of equality, pastoral qualifications would be the same for females and males. Based on Scripture, the first qualification of a pastor is to be called and chosen by Christ directly (Eph 4:11). Other Scriptures describe the qualifications of an elder, overseer, or shepherd, which are interchangeable with a pastor and prescribed to men. The Old Testament scriptures show female shepherds, such as Rachel Laban's daughter and Jacob's wife. Genesis 29:9 says, "Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess" (NKJV). Other female shepherds are the seven daughters of

¹³² Jason Maston, "The Unity of Male and Female in Jesus Christ: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 3.28C in Light of Paul's Theology of Promise. by Gesila Nneka Uzukwu." *Library of New Testament Studies*, 531. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. *Religious Studies Review* 44, no. 1 (2018), 111.

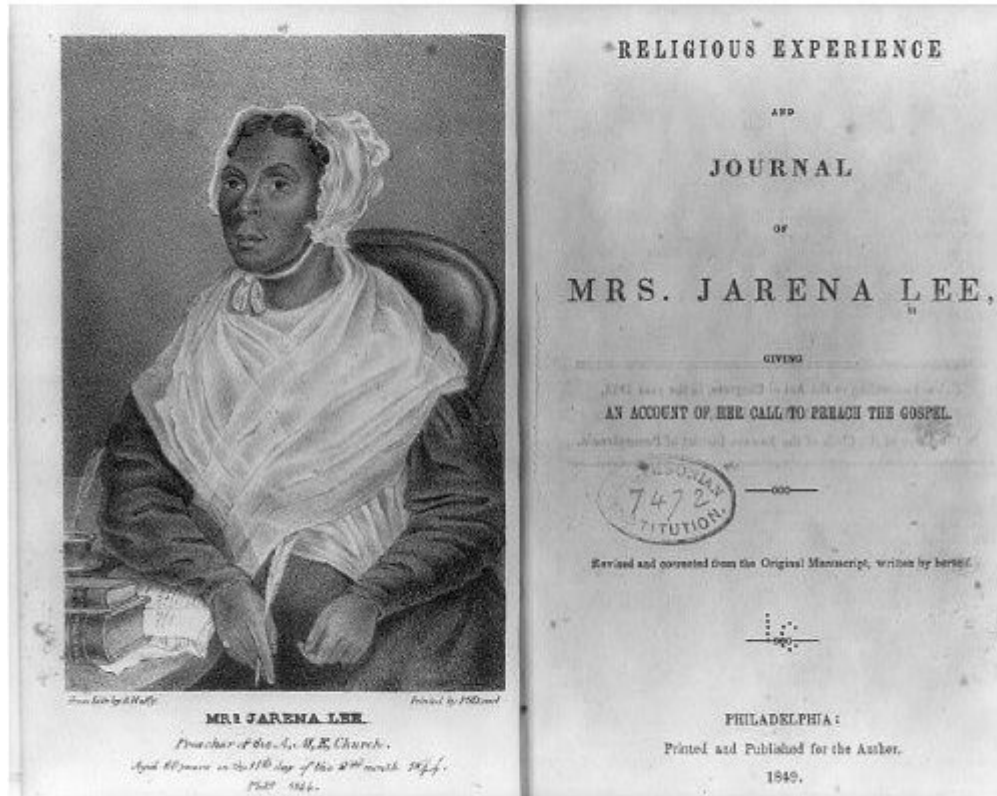
Midian, including Zipporah, who became Moses' wife. Exodus 2:16 says, "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock" (NKJV). These female shepherds relate to the duties and qualifications of a pastor.

Further studies need to be explored regarding women who desire the office of an overseer and those who have spiritual encounters like men called to pastor. Consideration is not given to those women who have experiences with God that agree with a call to ministry. In the mid-19th century, a woman named Jarena Lee became the first female preacher and itinerant pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) after proving her call to preach to the founder of the AME church, Richard Allen.¹³³ He initially denied her ministering due to the church bylaws having no provision for female preachers. However, Reverend Allen was compelled by the Holy Spirit to accept her into the clergy (see Figure 1 for illustration). Jarena was a married woman and mother whose parents were born free, although she was separated from her parents at a young age to work in New Jersey. Jarena was independent and taught herself to read. She felt the call to the ministry at an early age and attended several churches in hopes of fulfilling that calling, to no avail. It was when she finally arrived at Reverend Allen's church, where a visiting male preacher was ministering, that Jarena stood up in the congregation and preached when the male preacher stumbled. Some women's religious experiences agree with the Bible's description of a church leader but are denied based on DNA. Pappiatt writes, "There is a growing assurance that the Bible tells a story of God releasing women alongside men into all forms of ministry, leadership, work, and service based on character and gifting rather than based on biological sex."

¹³³ Hoffy, Alfred M. "Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee - Giving and Account of Her Call to Preach the Gospel", 1849.

It was God that chose their gender and God that gave them spiritual gifts. God does not contradict God. The Scripture says: "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13, NKJV). While there appears to be some positive progress, the glass ceiling theory is still in effect. Women can teach and preach in combined congregations but are denied ordination as Senior Pastors in some denominations.

Figure 1: Jarena Lee. First itinerant pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church



Glass Ceiling and Glass Cliff Theories

A study was conducted within the Protestant Church to explore the relationship between female pastors and congregations. The analysis of the 2018–2019 National Congregational Study and the National Survey of Religious Leaders linked data shows that churches with more participants are less likely to have a female pastor, implying that the glass ceiling is more pervasive in larger congregations.”¹³⁴ The glass ceiling theory refers to limitations and

¹³⁴ Young-Joo Lee, "Women in the Pulpit: Characteristics of Protestant Churches Led by a Female Pastor." Nonprofit Management and Leadership, Accessed March 14, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21612>.

restrictions placed on women and other marginalized groups as an invisible blockage to prevent them from obtaining high achievements.¹³⁵ The theory dates back to 1978 when Marilyn Loden coined the term.¹³⁶ The glass ceiling theory relates to church leadership, where women can function in certain leadership capacities without the hope of becoming senior pastors. Pastoral roles in the Protestant denominations such as Anglican, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, United Methodist, Presbyterian (USA), and United Church of Christ have shifted from majority males to more females represented in the past twenty years.¹³⁷ There has also been a considerable change within the AME, Baptist, and Pentecostal faiths. Still, women are underrepresented in pastoral leadership. One study reports that women represent thirteen percent of pastors in Protestant churches in the United States.¹³⁸ The Zippia Pastor Demographics research summary shows that there are nearly 13,000 pastors in the United States, with thirteen percent females, eighty-seven percent males, and sixteen percent LGBT of both genders.¹³⁹ More women are obtaining professional pastoral credentials and not securing senior-level church positions to recover the finances used for education. While more women qualify as senior pastors, they are not gaining leverage in this field and are relegated to accept auxiliary positions.

The study also showed that small churches with fewer resources are likely to be led by women, which reflects the glass cliff theory. The glass cliff theory states that women may break through the glass ceiling barrier to an organization that is not expected to survive. A fifty-year-

¹³⁵ Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. *Solid Investments: Making Full Use of the Nation's Human Capital*. Archived 2014-11-08 at the Wayback Machine Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, November 1995, p. 13-15.

¹³⁶ Marilyn Loden On Feminine Leadership. Pelican Bay Post. May 2011

¹³⁷ Young-Joo Lee, "Women in the Pulpit"

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ <https://www.zippia.com/pastor-jobs/demographics/>

old single woman graduated from seminary and was appointed as pastor within the organization to a church located thirty-five miles from home. The congregation was small and faced serious financial implications unknown to the pastor. The woman was forced to relinquish the position. Women face criticism, career damage, and soiled reputations when placed in these environments.¹⁴⁰

Awareness of the glass ceiling and glass cliff tactics may reduce the probability of women becoming victims of the theories. These stereotypes suggest incompetence and limit the potential success of women as church leaders.¹⁴¹ “With churches being among the most patriarchal institutions, the glass ceiling is especially pervasive in churches. The patriarchal authority in the church creates a clear division of labor between men and women and defines church leadership as men's role.”¹⁴² As Paul alludes to in Ephesians 4:11, it is imperative for the church as a whole to resolve the gender church leadership issue for the purpose of global effectiveness, evangelism, and solidarity.

Principles of Female Ordination

Previously, this thesis discussed the relationship between elders in the New Testament and judges in the Old Testament and the qualifications for such receptivity for Deborah, the judge and prophetess. Campbell states, “The qualifications for such judges are similar to the qualifications required of New Testament elders today – well taught, capable, God-fearing,

¹⁴⁰ Michelle K. Ryan and S. Alexander Haslam (9 February 2005). "The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are Over-Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions". *British Journal of Management*. 16 (2): 81–90.

¹⁴¹ Young-Joo Lee, “Women in the Pulpit”

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

trustworthy, haters of dishonest gain (Judges 18:20 – 21).”¹⁴³ Jethro instructed Moses to appoint seventy judges to alleviate the pressure of leading the multitude of people. These judges were already positioned within the family as elders, and Deborah was among them. According to Numbers 11: 16 – 17, these judges were anointed and ordained of God, “So the Lord said to Moses: “Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.” God chose Deborah to serve as a judge, military leader, and prophetess, to whom God granted victory over their enemy. “In view of the text, there can be little doubt that Deborah was the recognized, appointed leader/judge of the Israelites at that time.”¹⁴⁴ The implication for today is that as God appointed and approved Deborah, it set the precedence for women to be called and ordained today.

Conclusion

In today's culture, women have been passed the baton and are thriving in leadership roles at work, in government, and in the church. However, there remain limitations on some women leading church ministries. In some ministries, women are allowed to lead and teach women only, and in others, women are allowed to preach to the entire congregation but only under the auspices of male authority. One point about Scripture made clear during this research is that

¹⁴³ Christina Campbell, "Principles of female ordination in the Old Testament." Priscilla Papers 7, no. 2 (1993): 8.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Paul's letters addressed biblical principles related to their culture. The culture did not speak to the Christian standards but did speak to the application and interpretation.

Biblical womanhood and the acceptable roles of women in the church are among many similar topics experts have researched for years. The church still has not agreed on the subject or found a resolution that frees everyone to operate in their divine calling. One way to deal with the issue is to agree to differ and continue in ministry until we meet in heavenly places. However, this is a disservice to the kingdom as the church is the body of Christ and should operate in agreement. Further, it is a disservice to evangelism when the church does not show unity in the world.

The lead pastor at JOPA is a woman, and most congregants are female. JOPA's model for ministry leadership is closely related to Christian Egalitarian or biblical equality, which supports equality in economic, political, religious, and social arenas.¹⁴⁵ JOPA appreciates their acceptance of Scriptures that affirm females in church leadership roles. However, as some Christians are concerned, JOPA will not subscribe to the feminist agenda supporting the alternative lifestyles of same-sex love relationships.

The people at JOPA may feel drawn to the ministry due to the pastor's preaching but have reservations about the church's authenticity if there is no male authority due to the lack of biblical literacy regarding women in leadership. The symptoms appear as members question the pastor's authority, distrust decisions, and disregard the leadership. This research project will explore Scripture and scholarship concerning women's roles in the church and use this information to educate JOPA for their understanding and spiritual growth.

¹⁴⁵ S. Eldridge, "egalitarianism." Encyclopedia Britannica, October 1, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/egalitarianism>.

The long-term objective of this study is that church leaders would consider the probable adverse effects of misapplied Complementarianism that may lead to abuse, revisit the Scriptures, and cultivate women in ministry so that they, too, can fulfill God's purpose for their lives. While women seemingly thrive in church leadership today, equally, some women who seek to fulfill their calling are being attacked.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the proposed research project design to address the problem at JOPA. The problem is that there is limited biblical knowledge regarding the acceptable roles of women in church leadership. The following is a plan summary; details will be outlined in the sections below. This research study is designed to enhance biblical literacy about females in ministry. An exegetical study of Scripture will be conducted and presented to the congregation through a seven-week Bible study (see Appendix I) and culminate with a seminar luncheon (see Appendix F) showcasing other married women in successful pastoral roles. The researcher and a focus group will form a faith statement supporting women in ministerial positions. The idea is not concerned with convincing anyone or seeking acceptance; the purpose is to design an approach to ministry leadership and present it to the congregation.

Before beginning this process, the researcher will complete much fasting and prayer to maintain a divine connection and see to the successful completion of the project. Matthew 17:21 says: “However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (NKJV). This does not indicate an evil presence within the congregation of JOPA but rather ensures that there will be no space for contrary activity.

Here are the methodological steps used as a guide to ensure a successful DMIN action research study:

1. Conduct preliminary work that includes identifying the problem, literary and theological research, and defining key concepts and terms.
2. Develop the proposed study probability.
3. Define the population of participants.
4. Determine tools used to gather data.

5. Obtain IRB approval of the research prospectus.
6. Secure permission from the church being studied.
7. Discuss the research problem, purpose, and thesis with the church to gain interest.
8. Obtain consent from all participants.
9. Analyze the data obtained from the pre-assessment survey.
10. Conduct the weekly Bible study.
11. Analyze the responses from the middle-assessment questionnaire.
12. Select members of the focus group.
13. Interview three panelists.
14. Conduct luncheon and seminar.
15. Organize all data and analyze it.

Intervention Design

The research project will begin immediately following IRB and faculty mentor approval. After securing permission from the church trustee board (see Appendix A), the researcher will conduct a church meeting describing the research project and requesting participation. The researcher will read portions of the approved prospectus to appeal to the congregation and explain the need for the research. After the meeting, a paper copy of the consent form (see Appendix B) and Likert Pre-Assessment Survey (see Appendix E) will be distributed to all congregants meeting the criteria outlined in this prospectus's delimitation section and agreeing to participate. The consent form and survey will also be emailed to each participant to allow time for later submission.

Once all surveys are returned and analyzed, a seven-week Bible study will be conducted via Zoom recorded video. Participants will be informed of the recorded Bible study, which will

be made available for those who missed that week's Bible study. Following the Bible study, a questionnaire will be distributed to all participants to assess their level of knowledge after the Bible study. Culminating the intervention, a seminar luncheon will be conducted to present a summary of the Bible study and the videos of each panelist interview. In addition, a video featuring the story of Jarena Lee will be presented. There will be a question-and-answer period where participants can ask questions. An observational study will be completed throughout the project and an additional three months following the conclusion of the research. This part of the study will observe the participants' behaviors with the pastor and other female leaders to determine spiritual growth. The sections below provide the details of each stage of the intervention.

Obtaining Permission

A letter to the church trustee board was drafted (see Appendix A) and will be submitted to Deacon Joe Smith before beginning the study. The letter seeks permission to conduct the research project with the congregation at JOPA. The letter includes a copy of the consent form and Likert pre-assessment survey, which will be given to participants. The researcher anticipates an affirmative response from Deacon Joe Smith.

Once permission is granted, a meeting will be held with the congregation at the church to introduce the research project to the prospective participants. Tentatively, this meeting will be held immediately following a Sunday worship service. The church will be informed of an official church meeting two weeks before ensuring all members' attendance. The researcher will advise the people of the church board approval and use the IRB-approved prospectus as a guide to discuss the project with the congregation. After this meeting, the researcher will ask the people to participate in the study. The consent form (see Appendix B) and survey (see Appendix E) will

be distributed to those who meet the requirements for selection and agree to participate. The consent form and Likert survey will be openly read, allowing for questions and clarity.

Additionally, the consent form and survey will be available in E-format for submission via email (see Appendix G) and to inform any members who did not attend the meeting. If participants choose to submit the survey anonymously, they will be required to print the document and submit a completed hard copy at the church. A box or area will be set up at the church to collect the surveys privately. The congregation will be informed that participation is voluntary, and should they agree to participate, they can decline to answer any question or cancel participation at any time.

Likert Pre-Assessment Survey

The Likert survey (see Appendix E) is the measuring tool used to assess biblical knowledge regarding biblical equality, women's leadership roles in the Bible, what they believe about female church leaders, and to determine if there is patriarchal influence before starting the Bible study. The following statements are included: 1. Based on my understanding of the Scriptures, a woman should not pastor a church or have authority over men. 2. In my opinion, 1 Corinthians 14:33 – 35 is proof that God does not permit women to pastor a church. 3. There is a difference between what the Bible says and what God says. 4. I believe God equally calls men and women to the ministry. 5. I believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ reversed the curse on humanity in Genesis 3:15 – 19. 6. I believe that only the King James Version of the Bible is true. 7. I believe that God gives men and women equal responsibility in the home and church. 8. Ephesians 4:11 is proof that God does not look at gender when calling one to ministry. 9. My understanding is that the church is responsible for ensuring the proper application and interpretation of Scripture. 10. In my opinion, women should always follow the leading of men

no matter what. The participants are asked to respond to each statement by placing a check mark in one labeled column closest to their response. The column labels are Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The data gathered in this survey will not be shared with anyone and will be kept only for the researcher's reference. It will also be used as a knowledge base to determine the depth of teaching on each topic in the Bible study outline. Regardless of the outcome, all topics will be covered in the Bible study, but more time will be spent teaching the topics where most participants demonstrate the slightest knowledge.

Seven-Week Bible Study

After analyzing the pre-assessment surveys, a four-week Bible study (see Appendix I) will be conducted. The day and time of the Bible study will be arranged according to the availability of the participants. Although the surveys will be used as a knowledge base, all topics included in the outline will be taught. The data from the survey serves to guide the Bible study in terms of depth and length of time. As outlined, participants will be taught the three church leadership approaches: Complementarian, Christian Egalitarian, and Confessional. Less time will be spent discussing the confessional approach. Participants will be taught which approach JOPA will use in ministry: Christian Egalitarian or Biblical Equality. The definition of biblical womanhood will be discussed from each leadership approach. Also, a definition of biblical womanhood will be formed for JOPA. Participants will be taught about female leadership seen in the Old and New Testament Scriptures and those that may be hidden or omitted. A brief discussion regarding the canonization process will occur regarding the possibility of omitting specific stories in biblical history. Finally, participants will be taught the effects of

misinterpretation of the Scriptures, misapplied Complementarianism, and patriarchal power systems that may lead to hidden abuse in the church.

Middle-Assessment Participants' Questionnaire

Immediately following the Bible study, a questionnaire will be distributed to all participants to assess their level of knowledge after the Bible study. Participants will be given ten open-ended questions and asked to review the Bible study. Each question is directly from the outline of the Bible study and will assess their knowledge at this stage. The questions will demonstrate their knowledge gained from the Bible study regarding the two main views about women leading in the church; Scriptures that support female leaders; Scriptures that reject female leaders; a female national leader in the Old Testament; a female leader in the New Testament; discuss whether God permits a women to operate as a church leader; expound on 1 Corinthians 14:34 from an Egalitarian perspective; explain why it is important that the church ensures proper application and interpretation of Scripture. All participants will be allowed and encouraged to work as a team to complete the questionnaire. This approach will ensure accountability and unity regarding the commitment to embrace JOPA's support of women in leadership. Participants will be asked to submit the questionnaire individually and include their names. The purpose of including the names is to select focus group members. If the participant does not want to include their name, it will not be required; however, this participant may be excluded from the selection of the focus group. The researcher will advise that questionnaires will be kept confidential, not including the participants with whom they complete the questionnaire.

Focus Group

The data from the questionnaire will be used to select participants to form a focus group that will work with the pastor to formulate a faith statement regarding biblical equality. Three to five persons whose questionnaire responses show strong knowledge and commitment to the support of women in a leadership position will be selected for the focus group. One week following the seminar, the focus group will meet as a group interview with the pastor. Subsequent meetings will be arranged after that if necessary. The pastor will meet with the focus group as an advisor and guide. The researcher will ask permission to record each meeting for the accuracy of notes. Each group member can express their experience and perspective about the research project without contention or interruption. At the beginning of the meeting, the researcher will explain the procedures and rules clearly, which means that each member will have ample time to express their thoughts without judgment, and everyone will be respectful. The team will select a recorder and leader who is not the pastor. Four questions will be addressed before the primary question. The following are the questions:

- Do you believe there is/was a problem at JOPA regarding understanding women's roles in church leadership and why?
- In your opinion, was Bible study practical for bringing change?
- In your opinion, was the seminar effective in bringing change?
- Do you believe God allows women to lead a church or ministry?

The primary question to help the group formulate the faith statement is, how can we develop one that expresses biblical gender equality and frees every Christian to operate in their God-given calling? Once the faith statement is created, all group members will express their agreement or not. If all members do not agree, the faith statement will not be used, and the group will continue the discussion until an agreement is made with all members.

On Sunday, following the final focus group meeting, the team leader will present the faith statement to the congregation, and the pastor will ask the congregation to affirm their position on the faith statement. The faith statement will then be posted in a conspicuous location of the sanctuary for all to see.

Panelists' Interviews and Questionnaire

As stated in earlier chapters of this prospectus, few sources were available that directly addressed an intervention such as this research project. There was sufficient information regarding gender equality in the church, men's and women's responsibilities and roles, and the subjugation of women; however, all the sources were geared to gain the reader's support for the author's approach to ministry. As such, the researcher thought conducting interviews with three female pastors who may have experiences to share and contribute to this intervention is well suited. Selection of the panelists is limited to married women who have been senior pastors for ten or more years. The researcher will select three panelists who are friends and co-laborers in the ministry. They will be contacted initially by telephone to discuss the research project and their need for participation. Subsequently, they will be emailed (see Appendix H) the consent form and questionnaire (see Appendix D) to confirm their participation in the study.

The panelists will be informed of the intended use of the video interview to record for presentation at the seminar. Interviews will be arranged according to a convenient schedule for the panelists, and a Zoom video interview will be conducted at the scheduled time. The researcher has four potential panelists for the interviews. All panelists live far from the church, and requesting they travel a distance for in-person attendance may be challenging. The panelists will be invited to attend the seminar in person, but it is not required due to the length of travel. The panelists' questionnaire includes open-ended questions to obtain the details of each

panelist's experience as a female pastor, asking them to respond to the ideologies that reject women leading in the church. Also, the panelists are asked to expound on the Scriptures used to deny and accept women in leadership roles. The panelists will be asked to provide advice to women who are leading churches or other ministries. The questions will request:

1. Please tell me about yourself, e.g., your name, how long you have been married, your children, the church's name, etc.
2. Please tell me about your ministry. How long have you been pastoring?
3. Tell me about your call to the ministry. How did you know you were called to pastor? What Scriptures did you use to confirm your call?
4. What does it mean to be called, and how is it different from an occupation?
5. What is your husband's function in the church? Is he supportive of your role as the senior pastor?
6. Being a pastor and a wife are two completely different positions. How do you function in each role without either negating the other?
7. Did you experience any pushback when starting to operate in your calling? What were some reasons for the rejection? What Scriptures were used, if any?
8. You know, many do not believe the Bible permits women to pastor or lead the church, and they use Scripture to support their theory. What is your response to those with differing views on female church leaders? What Scriptures would you use to support your view?
9. Do you believe that gender roles in the church are distinct from those in the home? For example, the Scriptures say the man is the head of the wife (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:7; etc.) However, is this limited to the home?

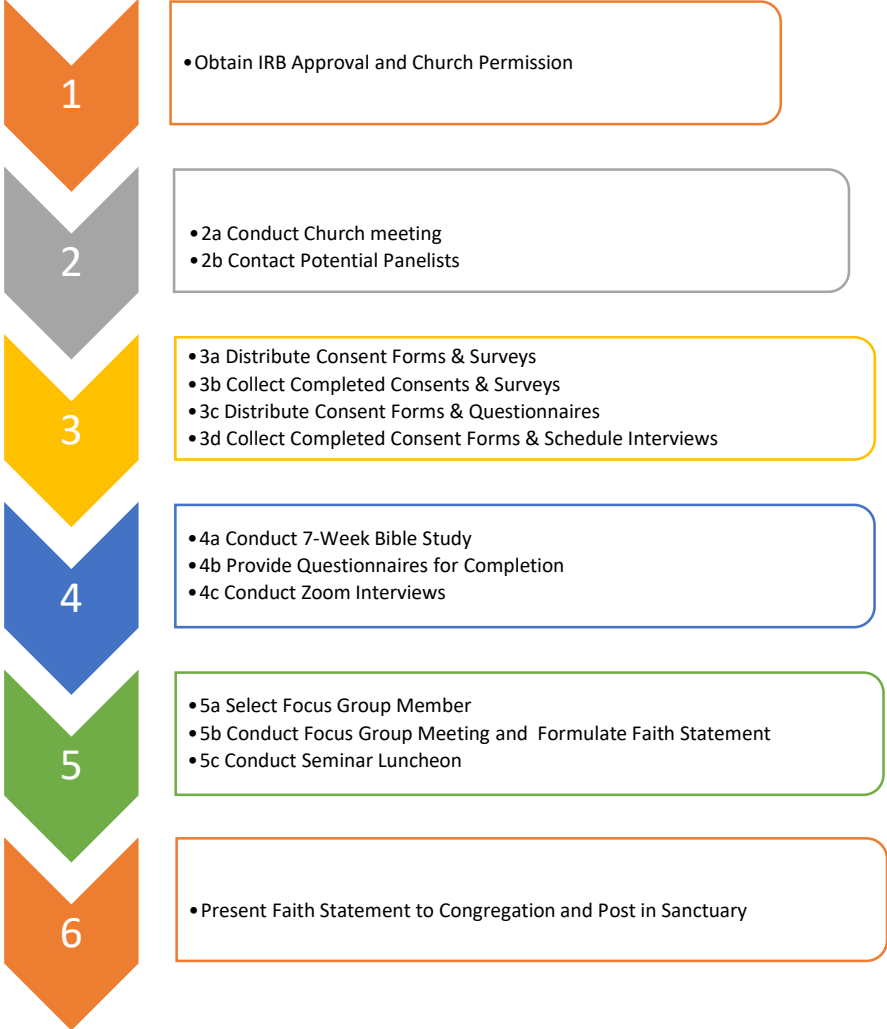
10. What advice would you give a woman who feels called to a church leadership capacity but is experiencing rejection?

Seminar Luncheon

The seminar and luncheon will be held at the church tentatively on Saturday, August 5, 2023, at noon. A flyer will be sent to participants to remind them of the event (see Appendix F). The pastor will give a welcome, explain the seminar's purpose, and give a brief overview of the Bible study. If the panelists choose to attend in person, special seating will be provided for them. Each panelist's interview video will be presented, and a question-and-answer segment will be conducted after each video. Also, the pastor will show a video of Jarena Lee, the first African American woman accepted into the AME Church as an itinerant preacher and Reverend. Another pre-recorded YouTube video of Pastor Sheryl Brady being interviewed about her role as pastor of The Potter's House of North Dallas may be shown.

The researcher will be responsible for all costs of conducting this research study. The researcher will secure a venue for the event, preferably at the church, where tables and chairs are accessible and do not have to be rented. Other items to be secured but not limited to are caterers, a rental projector and screen, disposable linens and tableware, paper utensils, and photocopying of all consent forms, questionnaires, and surveys. The researcher will ask family and friends not participating in the research to volunteer to set up, break down, decorate, and serve. The below chart provides a visual of the six-stage intervention process.

Chart 3.1 Progress Steps



Measuring Effectiveness

The problem presented in this research study pertains to a lack of understanding at JOPA regarding the roles in which God calls and permits women to lead due to the lingering effects of patriarchal influence. This research project proposes to enhance the Bible literacy of the congregation regarding female pastors to cultivate spiritual growth and strengthen their theology. The intervention plan outlines a triangulation methodology using surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups to accomplish the task. As a final plan of efficacy, the researcher will conduct an observational study to measure the outcome of each participant's biblical knowledge and spiritual growth. As is the practice of successful pastors, the researcher will conduct careful observation by listening, interpreting, and praying throughout the entire process of the study.¹ Observation will continue for a minimum of three months following the conclusion of the research. The pastor will passively monitor the behavior of the members to check the consistency of what people reported in the questionnaires with their behavior.² Reference will be made to the ministry context and problem statement in this prospectus and compared to the behaviors after the study is completed. If it is determined that a member (s) are not behaving in line with their agreement to support women in leadership, an interview will be conducted with said person (s) to review the Bible study outline and questionnaire. This does not apply to any member who chooses not to support women in leadership or has not made a choice. These persons can choose to remain a member or remove membership.

¹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 10.

² Ibid, 93.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The following section of this chapter provides a descriptive account of the implementation of this doctoral research project. The objective was to evaluate the congregation at JOPA, study the subjects, and give a narrative report of the findings. The researcher proposes that there is a problem in the female-dominated congregation, with their theology on gender equality in church leadership, that prevents the growth of the church. Many of the congregants, female and male, were formerly influenced by a patriarchal church government that believes the Bible does not permit women to pastor. Many of the women in the congregation have experiences conducive to God's call to ministry. These women lack the biblical knowledge and confidence to operate in the gifts of God. A secondary prompt for conducting this research project was to help men who desire to support women in leadership but are challenged by hegemonic masculinity relative to their upbringing. The researcher believes this project will produce enlightenment and unity among the congregants and improve marriages and other relationships. A proposed outcome is that the fellowship at JOPA will be strengthened, and the church will be better equipped to evangelize the community.

The observation used Sensing's triangulation method to validate the problem addressed³. Sensing suggests, "The key to interpretation is not in the tools, or the reporting of the information guided by a set of techniques, but rather in how one makes sense of everyday life experiences."⁴ Therefore, triangulating the research methods will confirm the proposed issues and ensure the reliability of the data obtained. In writing the gospel narrative, Luke, not an eyewitness, used triangulation to investigate and research an accurate description of the life of

³ Sensing, 71.

⁴ Ibid, 72.

Jesus Christ. Luke 1:3, 4 says, “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed” (NKJV). The researcher employs a methodological type of triangulation⁵ using seven data collection ways to study the problem. The first is a pre-assessment survey, which served as a control mechanism for evaluating the results. The second is a weekly Bible study on women's roles in the Bible, followed by a middle assessment questionnaire to measure the effectiveness of the Bible study. The researcher kept field notes, including recorded Bible study and written notes, with the participants' permission. Random participant interviews were conducted, and a focus group was formed to investigate the biblical knowledge further and test the results. The data collection culminates at a seminar luncheon presentation featuring successful female pastors interviewed by the researcher.

Sensing recommends using data analysis tools that render thorough evaluation and precise interpretation of the information collected. The evaluation tools used are based on the method of data collection and expected results.⁶ Sensing says, “Respect for people requires you to choose the appropriate tools for your particular project.”⁷ The data was analyzed using the recommended tools for each level of data collection while considering the participants' proposed responses. The data collection methods were used for all participants except those selected for the focus group and random interviews. Theoretical sampling was used to select the focus group and random interviews, where analyzing the data collected from the middle assessment

⁵ Sensing, 73.

⁶ Ibid, 81.

⁷ Ibid.

questionnaire helped to determine which participants would best suit the purpose of the focus group.⁸ The random participant interviews were selected based on the researcher's observations during the Bible study and other data collection events. Sensing notes that some participants, who are congregation members, while sincere in their efforts, may show symptoms of the Hawthorne Effect.⁹ These participants were interviewed privately to ensure the integrity of the data.

Before starting the Bible study, the researcher analyzed the completed pre-assessment surveys and noted common responses that guided the Bible study lessons. Sensing says, "One way to organize the data is to discuss the areas of significant overlap as themes or patterns, the areas of disagreement as slippage, and the "realities" not represented in your findings as silences."¹⁰ The chart below labeled "Phases of Thematic Analysis" was used as a guide to find common patterns and themes within the group's responses and categorize them by age, gender, and knowledge base. This was used as a guide to form the focus group. Participant responses that were contradictory or unclear were noted as slippage and further investigated during a private interview. The researcher is aware that all of the participants were influenced by patriarchy, and where the participant did not discuss this, it was treated as silence. More information is discussed later in this chapter. The second image below shows the cycle and process of the information collected.

⁸ Sensing, 83.

⁹ Ibid, 82.

¹⁰ Ibid, 197.

Figure 3.1

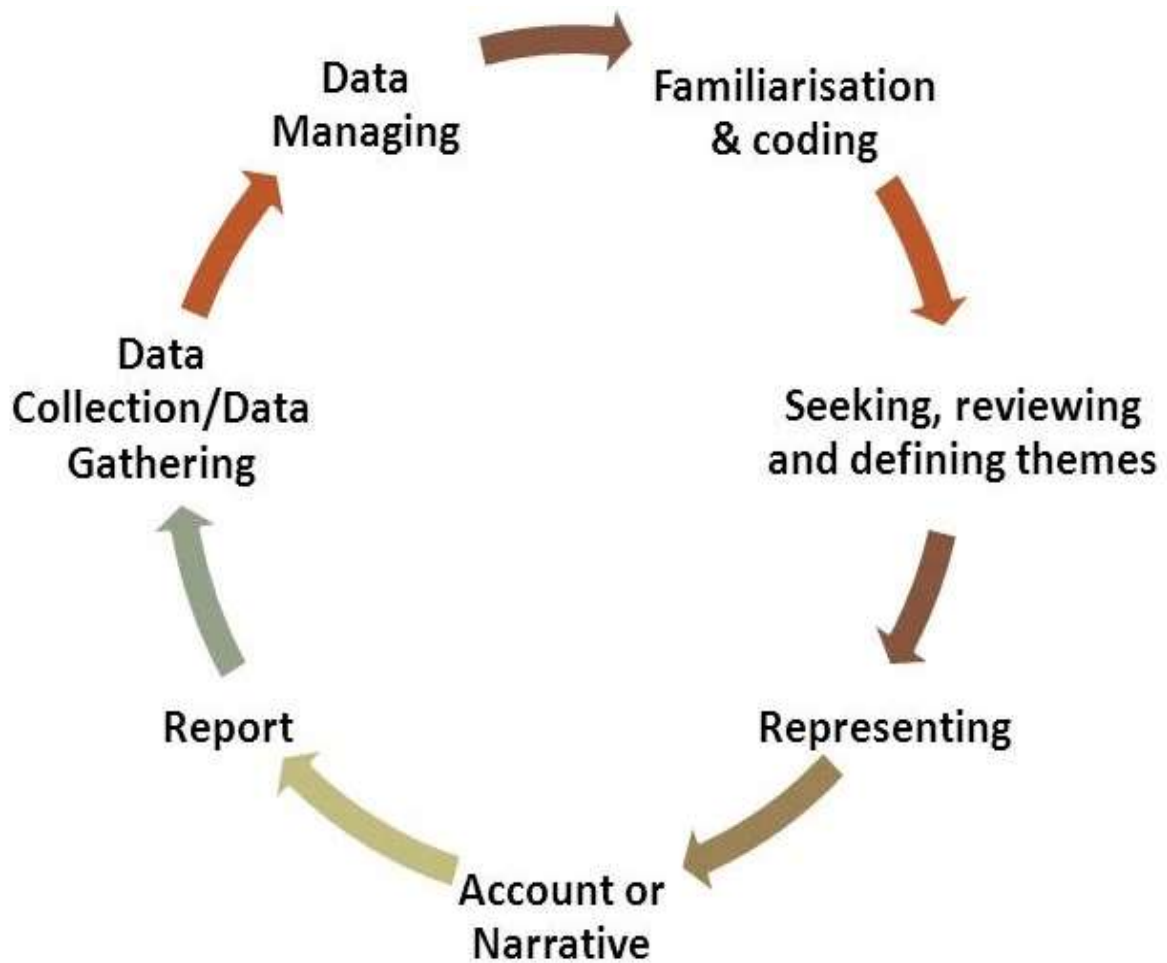
TABLE 1
PHASES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS
(ADAPTED FROM BRAUN & CLARKE, 2006)

	PHASES	DESCRIPTION OF ANALYSIS PROCESS
1	Familiarising myself with data	i) Narrative preparation, i.e. transcribing data ii) (Re-)reading the data and noting down initial ideas
2	Generating initial codes	i) Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across entire data set ii) Collating data relevant to each code
3	Searching for themes	i) Collating codes into potential themes ii) Gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes	i) Checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts ii) Checking if themes work in relation to the entire data set iii) Reviewing data to search for additional themes iv) Generating a thematic “map” of the analysis
5	Defining and naming themes	i) On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells ii) Generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the report	i) Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples ii) Final analysis of selected extracts iii) Relating the analysis back to the research question, objectives and previous literature reviewed

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¹¹ <https://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html> accessed 2/8/2024. Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101

Figure 3.2



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¹² <https://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html> accessed 2/8/2024. Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101

Challenges during implementation prevented the researcher from following the intervention design precisely. First, all participant surveys were not submitted on time, and the start date of the Bible study was delayed by one week. This delay did not adversely affect the project, but it allowed the researcher to gain additional participants. Additionally, as the Bible study started in June 2023, the researcher did not anticipate the participants' absence to attend graduations. Although all Bible study sessions were recorded with permission and emailed to the participants, the researcher could not confirm if participants reviewed the recording or understood the content. The Bible study was projected to cover seven weeks; however, two additional weeks were added to ensure all material was covered. Another challenge was regarding the commitment of the participants. Of the 17 signed consent forms received, only 10 completed the survey and remained in the Bible study. The greatest challenge was getting all participants to complete the middle-assessment questionnaire in time. Only five of the 10 participants who remained in the Bible study completed the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were sent on August 10, 2023, and requested completion and return by August 26, 2023. Several participants returned the completed questionnaire late, delaying the project tremendously and threatening its success. The focus group was formed according to the participant's responses to the questionnaire. Therefore, not receiving the completed questionnaires on time halted the project overall.

Stage One: Preliminary Tasks

The research project began with a church congregational meeting following IRB and faculty mentor approval. The letter requesting permission to conduct the project was emailed to a trustee board member one week before the church meeting, who immediately approved and forwarded an approval letter. The researcher read portions of the approved prospectus to the

congregation and explained the need for the research. The attentive congregation immediately responded positively, agreeing to participate and requesting a consent form. A few participants completed the pre-assessment survey on the same day, eager to begin the Bible study. One female participant commented that such a project is needed at JOPA and other churches where women are being denied leadership. One male participant seemed skeptical and stated that he was interested in seeing what the Bible study is all about. All other participants returned their completed surveys in person or via email within three weeks.

The pre-assessment Likert survey was completed by the participants anonymously, analyzed by the researcher, and used as a measuring tool to assess the level of biblical knowledge regarding biblical equality, women's leadership roles in the Bible, what they believe about female church leaders, and to determine if there is patriarchal influence. The survey contained ten statements and a five-response category ranging from Strongly Agree to Disagree Strongly. The survey required the age and gender of the person completing it to determine any differences in responses between age and gender. For this project, each participant is named with the first initial of their gender and their age. For example, a male aged 46 is called M46. No female is the same age, and no male is the same age, which helps avoid duplicate study names. Each statement was addressed during the Bible study, and participants were allowed to express their thoughts. The researcher determined that one statement in the survey, "There is a difference between what the Bible says and what God says," did not work as supposed. The researcher proposed this creative statement so that the participants could consider the differences between God's sovereign Word, which is what God says, and human interpretation, which is what the Bible says. The participants did not immediately grasp this concept, but it was explained during the Bible study and the importance of hermeneutics in biblical exegesis.

Stage Two: Intermediate Tasks

The Bible study was projected for seven weeks; however, due to unanticipated circumstances, it was extended to nine weeks to ensure efficacy. The study was conducted on Thursday evenings at 7 pm via Zoom and recorded with the participant's approval. The mp4 recording of each session was emailed to the participants along with the course outline. Each class began with prayer and a review of the previous week's lesson. The lessons included topics on the three church leadership approaches: Complementarian, Christian Egalitarian, and Confessional; Call to Ministry; Female Leadership in Scripture, Patriarchal Power Systems, and Improper Use of Scripture. During the first week, the Problem, Purpose, and Thesis of the Prospectus were discussed, as well as Exegesis and Hermeneutics and Canonization of Scripture. Many of these terms were unfamiliar to the participants, so ample time was given to understand the definitions and explanations. Generally, the participants were quiet during the lecture; however, occasionally, a participant would provide feedback. Midway through the course, the researcher specifically requested the participant's opinion about the Bible study and whether it was helpful. All participants provided positive feedback and expressed that they learned new information. The researcher used Scripture, scholarly material, encyclopedias, and other acceptable tools to show the sources of the information.

Immediately following the Bible study, the middle assessment questionnaire was distributed to all participants via email to assess their level of knowledge after the Bible study. The questionnaire included eleven open-ended questions and asked them to review the Bible study. Each question is directly from the outline of the Bible study. Obtaining completed questionnaires promptly was a great challenge. Only five of the ten participants who remained in the Bible study submitted the middle assessment. The questionnaire was used to select

candidates for the focus group. All five participants expressed a thorough understanding of the lessons and were invited to the focus group. Three of the participants agreed and accepted the invitation.

Stage Three: Final Tasks

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed and used to select participants for the focus group that will work with the pastor/researcher to formulate a church faith statement regarding biblical equality. While the current pastor is a female, the faith statement is instituted in church government should the pastor transition at the appointed time. The researcher and three participants conducted one meeting for three hours via Zoom. After the opening prayer, the researcher explained the purpose of the focus group and faith statement. The researcher provided a brief review of the Bible study. Also, the participants discussed the following questions and provided scriptural references: Do you believe there is/was a problem at JOPA regarding understanding the roles women play in church leadership and why? In your opinion, was Bible study practical for bringing change? Do you believe God allows women to lead a church or ministry? The primary question was, how can we form a faith statement that expresses biblical gender equality and frees every Christian to operate in their God-given calling? What does this statement look like? Each focus group member expressed their thoughts and referenced scriptures. The final faith statement was formed as a group collaboration based on the Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11, and Galatians 3:28.

The last stage of the project was to conduct a luncheon/seminar and present videos of successful female pastors of small local churches. The researcher interviewed two married female pastors with extensive experiences and advice to share. The interviews were conducted

separately on Zoom, recorded with their permission, and the panelists were provided with the questions a few weeks prior. The panelists' questionnaire included open-ended questions to obtain the details of each panelist's experience as a female pastor. The panelists were asked to respond to the ideologies that reject women leading in the church. Also, to expound on the Scriptures used to accept and deny women in leadership roles. The panelists were asked to provide advice to women who are leading churches or other ministries.

The luncheon and seminar were held at the church and investigated with the permission of the church board. A complimentary meal was provided at the researcher's cost. After the opening prayer and welcome, the researcher reiterated the seminar's purpose and gave a brief overview of the Bible study. After the video presentation, a question-and-answer segment was conducted. Time did not permit the presentation of the second video, and the researcher agreed to email the video to each participant. Also, time did not permit the showing of a video of Jarena Lee, the first African American woman accepted into the AME Church as an itinerant preacher and Reverend, neither was there time to show a video of Pastor Sheryl Brady being interviewed about her role as pastor of The Potter's House of North Dallas. The participants provided positive feedback, and many expressed their gratitude for being allowed to participate in this doctoral project.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This Doctoral Research Project aims to answer the question, Is there biblical awareness among the congregation about God's acceptance and call of female pastors? The problem presented identifies a gap in the congregation's biblical knowledge of women leading in the church due to the lingering effects of patriarchy. There may be resistance to growth due to the uncertainty of Scripture related to women in church leadership roles. This research project proposes improving their Bible literacy to cultivate spiritual growth and strengthen their theology.

This chapter will present the analysis of the data and the results of implementing the plan of action. Included are charts, graphs, and a narrative of the results from the researcher's interpretation of the data. Sensing suggests that the data be assessed considering where the researcher is within the framework of the project.¹ The researcher provides a unique perspective from above and within. The goal was to have an aerial view of the participant's response to analyze objectively and without prejudice. This view allows the researcher pastor, as a practitioner, to observe the participants' responses while considering the whole group. The disadvantage of a distant view is that it may restrict the responses of those who may become intimidated or unwilling to share their truth with a figure of authority. In addition, participants may be subject to the influence of others and not provide genuine responses. Having a perspective within the group of participants allowed the researcher to receive honest feedback from a place of shared experience. The researcher identifies with the congregation influenced by a fundamentalistic theology and could offer an informed and renewed perspective. Being reflexive, the researcher carefully examined themselves and ensured no bias in the research. Dr.

¹ Sensing, 194.

Lisa Starr suggests that the researcher use reflexive practices to consider personal influences during the implementation of the project.² The researcher thought it essential to share some experiences that led to exegeting and researching scriptures about gender and church leadership. Dr. Starr says, “The purpose of reflexivity is to acknowledge your [the researcher's] perspective and why it’s important and why you're there and establishing yourself as the person who can communicate that best.”³ In Starr’s opinion, doctoral research is best conducted by one who has experienced the problem presented and is familiar with the signs.⁴ The researcher’s experience with gender inequality in the church provides a unique perspective. In addition, the researcher attended therapy sessions to help comprehend those negative experiences and avoid overlapping with the project.

Participant retention was low. Seventeen people agreed to participate in the research and signed the Consent. There were 12 females and five males who signed the Consent. However, only ten participants (seven females and three males) consistently attended the Bible study; five completed the middle assessment questionnaire (four females and one male), which limited the number of participants selected for the focus group. All five participants who returned the completed questionnaire were invited to the focus group, but only three accepted the invitation (two females and one male). All participants, who did not return the completed questionnaire, expressed regret and attributed their lack of completion to conflicts in their calendars and other urgent obligations. A few of these participants offered to complete the questionnaire months later but were politely released from the obligation due to the timing.

² <https://the-action-research-pod.captivate.fm/episode/episode-6-reflexivity-in-action-research-with-dr-lisa-starr>. Accessed 6/5/2023.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Pre-Assessment Survey

Once the participant returned the signed Consent form, a Likert survey was provided for their completion. The survey was designed to provide insight into the participants' beliefs about God, Scripture, and women in church leadership. Although the survey was completed anonymously, the participants were asked to include their age and gender to determine any variances based on these demographic factors. Each participant is assigned a name based on the first letter of their gender and their age. For example, a female aged 29 is named F29. There were no females or males of the same age and gender, avoiding duplication. The researcher anticipated a positive response from the participants as many have previously expressed their desire for clarity on what the Bible and God say about women in church leadership roles. Having biblical knowledge on the subject would help build their confidence in embracing their spiritual gifting. Overall, the project yielded positive results amid the high turnover rate. Below is the data analysis of the Pre-Assessment Likert Survey. It shows the statement responses from each participant, adding a generational label that provides insight into the assumed participant's rationale for the response.

Chart A 4.1

No.	RESPONDENT	STATEMENT 1	STATEMENT 2	STATEMENT 3	STATEMENT 4	STATEMENT 5	GENERATION *
1	M33	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Millennial
2	M46	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Gen X
3	M53	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Gen X
4	F26	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Millennial
5	F28	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Millennial
6	F31	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Millennial
7	F43	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Gen X
8	F44	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Gen X
9	F49	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Gen X
10	F50	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Gen X

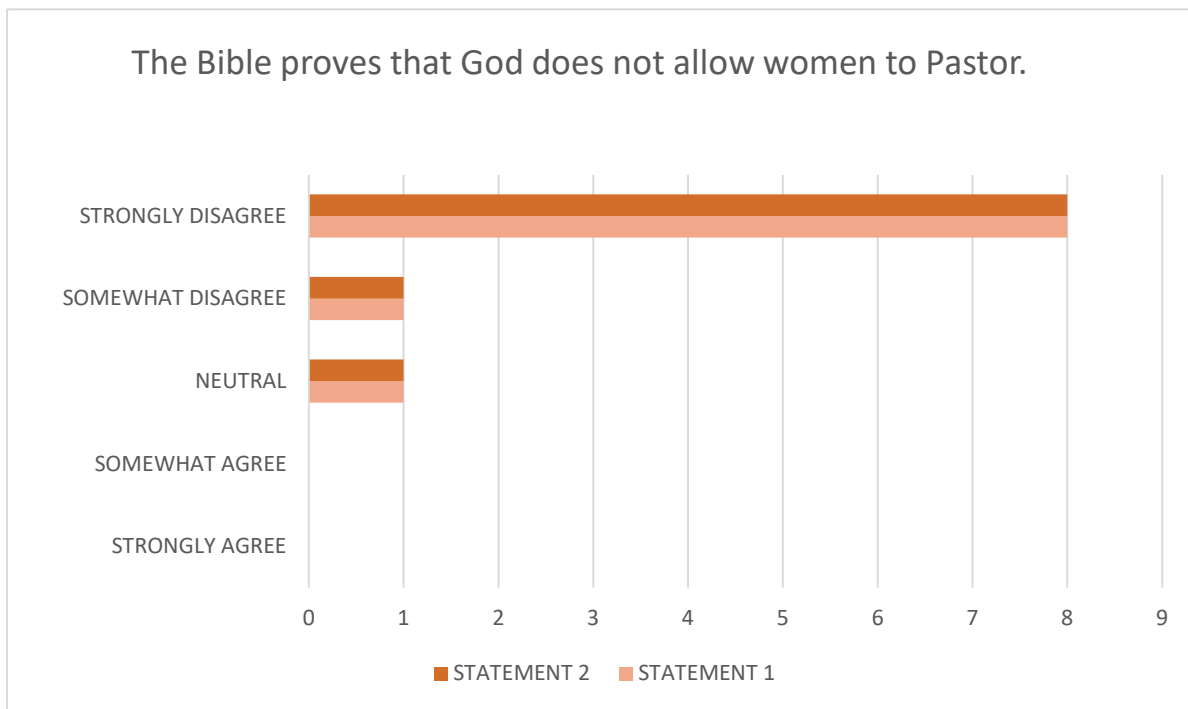
Chart B 4.2

No.	RESPONDENT	STATEMENT 6	STATEMENT 7	STATEMENT 8	STATEMENT 9	STATEMENT 10	GENERATION *
1	M33	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	<i>Millennial</i>
2	M46	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Gen X</i>
3	M53	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	<i>Gen X</i>
4	F26	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Millennial</i>
5	F28	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	<i>Millennial</i>
6	F31	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	<i>Millennial</i>
7	F43	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Gen X</i>
8	F44	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Gen X</i>
9	F49	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Gen X</i>
10	F50	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Gen X</i>

The Likert analysis includes a generational factor to show any relative responses characteristic of the age group. Overall, most participants provided common responses. However, some statements differ between Generation X (Gen X) and Millennials (Mills). Statement 1: "Based on my understanding of the Scriptures, a woman should not pastor a church or have authority over men." Statement 2: "In my opinion, 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 is proof that God does not permit women to pastor a church." The responses to these two statements similarly demonstrate the participant's belief about female pastors. The first statement is based on one's interpretation of the Scriptures, and the second is based on a cursory reading of the Scriptures. All Gen X participants disagree with both statements; however, the Mills participants show a disparity between the two statements. Respondent M33 is neutral on statement one but strongly disagrees with statement two. Respondent F28 has opposite responses, strongly disagreeing with statement one and neutral on statement two. Millennial respondents F26 and F31 gave the same disagreed response for both statements. While no participant affirms either statement, the neutral response demonstrates a lack of clarity or an inability to agree or disagree. Gen X is described as a strong communicator, efficient in study and work, and quickly digests the collected

information, sharing it with others.⁵ This characteristic is seen in the responses of the Gen X participants. Millennials are noted as open-minded and susceptible to ambiguous perspectives and opinions⁶, which lends to a better understanding of how a different response could be to a similar statement. The neutral response may indicate the participant has a more complicated answer to the statement.

Chart 4.3

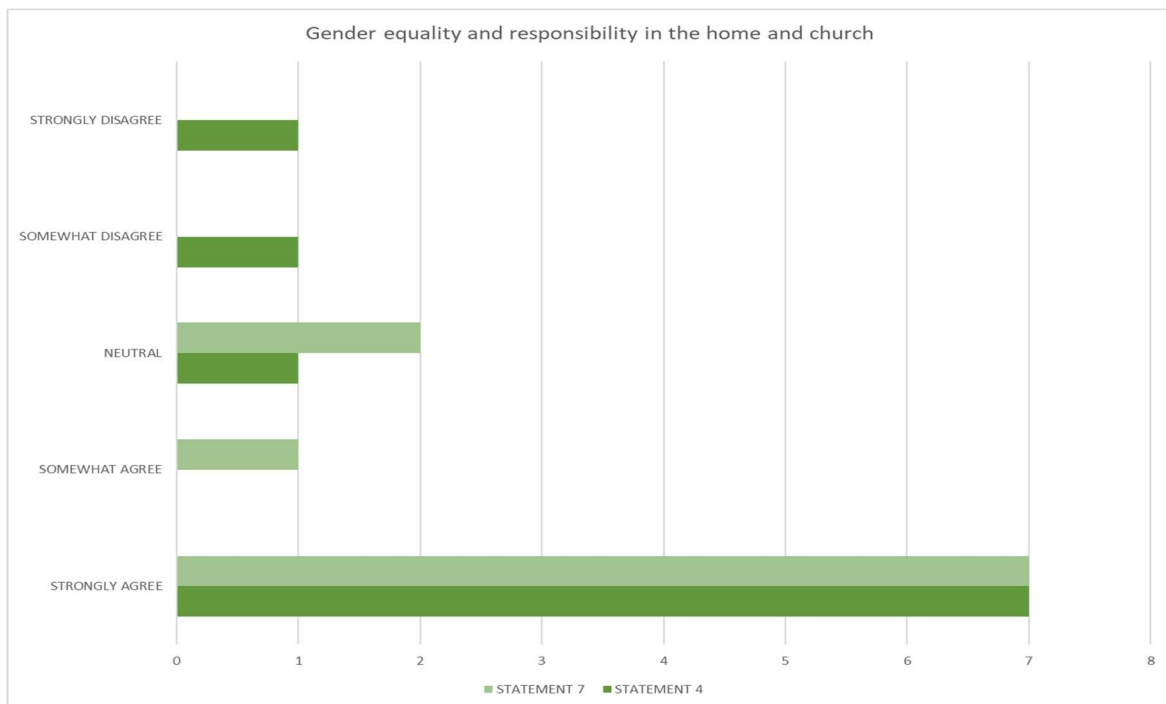


⁵ Anita Kolnhofner-Derecskei, Regina Zs Reicher, and Agnes Szeghegyi. "The X and Y generations' characteristics comparison." *Acta Polytechnica Hungarica* 14, no. 8 (2017): 107-125.

⁶ Ibid.

Statements four and seven are equally compared regarding respondents' generational replies. Statement four says, "I believe God equally calls men and women to the ministry." Similarly, statement seven says, "I believe that God gives men and women equal responsibility in the home and church," adding the element of the home. All Millennials agree with statement seven except M33, who responds with neutrality. However, 50% of Millennials firmly agree with statement four, F28 disagrees, and M33 is neutral. Ninety percent of the Gen X population strongly agrees with statement seven, with F49 responding neutrally. Also, ninety percent strongly agree with statement four, while M53 somewhat disagrees. The collective group of participants has a preconceived notion that God does call women to pastor; however, a minority may be uncertain or unfamiliar with the practice.

Chart 4.4



The following charts show participants' responses to statements 3, 5, 6, 8 -10.

Chart 4.5



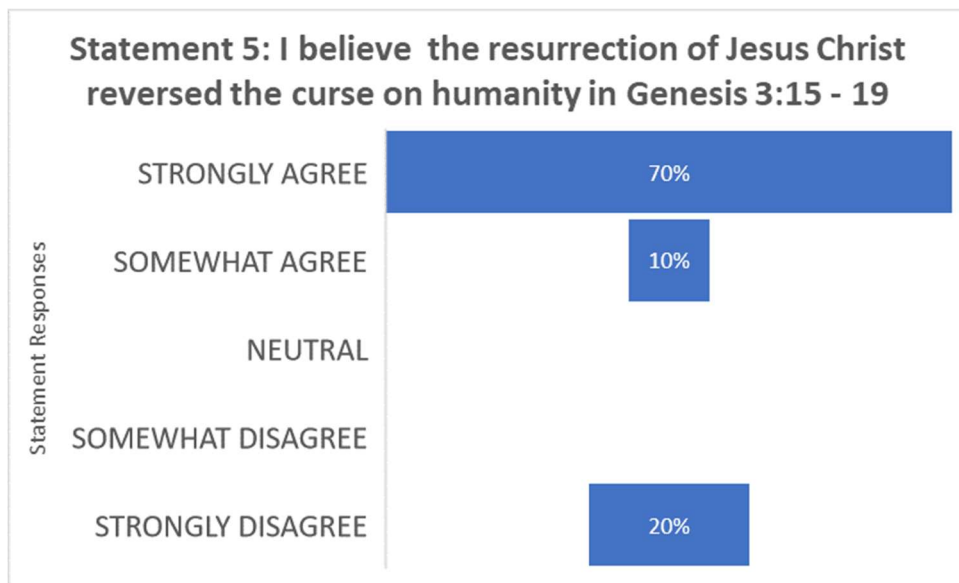
Although all participants strongly disagreed with this statement, the purpose was to direct the participant's attention to the differences between God's message in the Bible and the reader's interpretation of the Scriptures. The researcher also strongly disagrees with the statement, knowing the importance of hermeneutics when studying Scripture. The Bible study revealed that some participants did not understand the difference between Scripture interpretation and application. Interpretation relates to the explaining of Scripture's content and context.⁷ Application refers to how the Scriptures are used in life experiences.⁸ James 1:22 says, "But

⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/interpretation>

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/application>

don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves" (NLT). What God's Word says is different than what it means.⁹

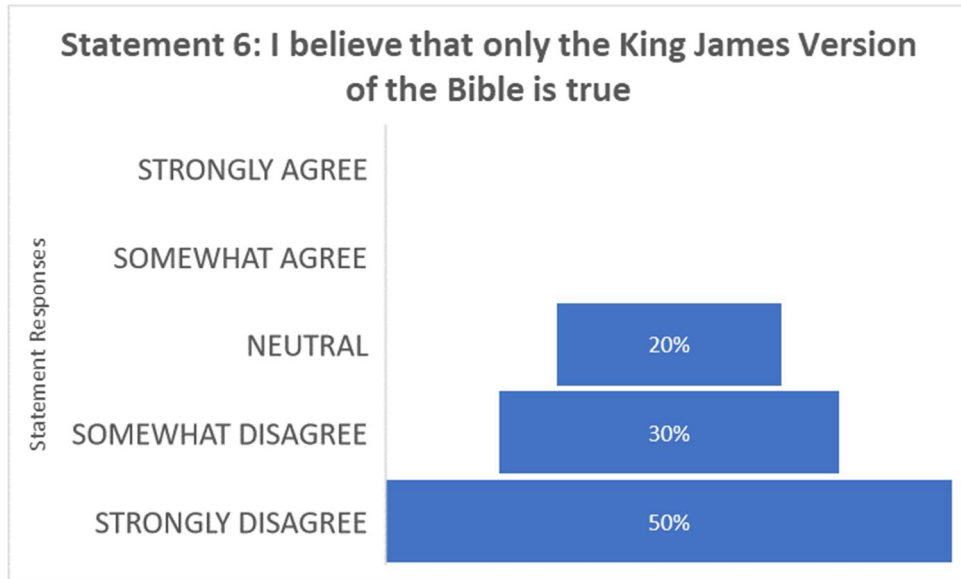
Chart 4.6



In statement five, the word consequences should replace the word curse. In Genesis chapter three, God does not curse humanity but curses the ground and the serpent. Interestingly, no participant was previously aware that God did not curse humanity. This error rendered a teaching in Genesis chapter three during the Bible study.

⁹ Klein, William W. (William Wade), Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Third edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017.

Chart 4.7



The purpose of statement six was to determine the participant's awareness of the canonization of Scripture and the availability of other accurate English Bible translations. One participant admitted that being taught the KJV of the Bible was the most accurate translation of Scripture. The researcher has an advantage in this study, having been subject to teachings similar to those of these participants. This advantage allows the researcher to identify the effects of patriarchal doctrines and offer a different perspective.

Chart 4.8



Chart 4.9

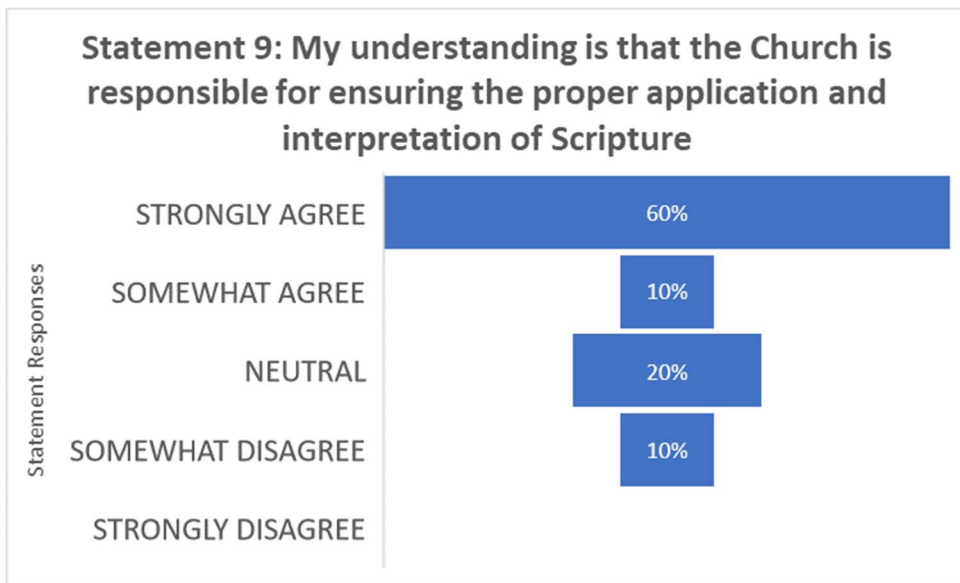
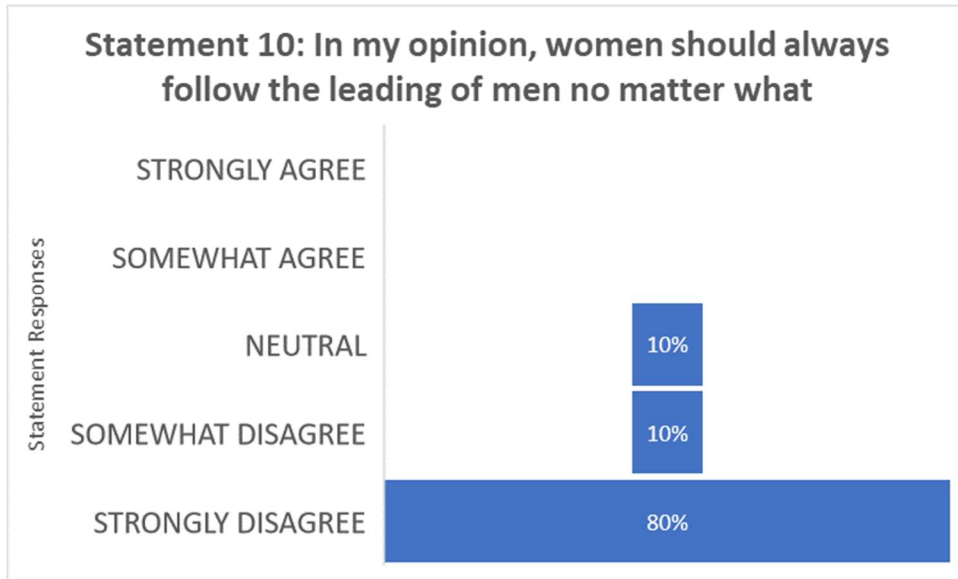


Chart 4.10



Weekly Bible Study

The weekly Bible study sessions were conducted through Zoom, with all 10 participants in attendance most of the time. A recording was made available for review when a participant could not attend. The researcher projected that the Bible study would successfully meet the objective, which was affirmed. The first weekly session included introducing the problem, purpose, and thesis and discussing Exegesis, Hermeneutics, and Canonization of Scripture. All participants appeared to be intrigued by the discussion. Participant M53 stated, “The old men's club of the church leadership I grew up in has stained the church with scandals and selfishness that another mindset that was ordained must be taken seriously. God has and had the ultimate plan for Christianity. Leaders need to be able to divide the word of God rightly. If a woman can help build, grow, and elevate a ministry, why can't she lead one?” This participant somewhat affirmed female pastors on the pre-assessment survey; however, strongly agrees that God gives equal responsibility in the church and home. It appears that M53 believes that God calls women

to church leadership where men have failed or are not available instead of valuing women being called by God independently. Complementarians are noted to place wives in headship when the husband is unavailable.¹⁰ Student F49 asked, “Could this phenomenon be happening to us women because of the Genesis scripture that says your desire will be toward him, and he will rule over you, for example?” This question led to a lengthy discussion about Genesis 3:14 – 17,

So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly, you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” To the woman, He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain, you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be [e]for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” Then to Adam, He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil, you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

F49 affirms women in pastoral roles but is neutral on the genders sharing responsibility in the church and home. Many students referred to this scripture as a curse on humanity, although the scripture only states a curse upon the ground and the serpent. Their misunderstanding of scripture is evidence of the need to enhance Bible study. As a result, the researcher used this example as a guide to provide thorough exegesis and review of even the familiar scriptures. Millennial M33 provided this feedback, “I really enjoyed this topic. Does God ever call the wife to be the head over her husband? Does harkening to his wife (Abram and Sarai) mean a change in the roles of headship? (Personally, I don’t believe so) Ref. 1 Corinthians 11:3. If the curse and punishment woman was given toward man (in Genesis), would man still be head of the woman

¹⁰ John Piper, and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Crossway, 2006.

(if Christ reversed the curse)?” This participant responded neutrally for five of the ten survey statements, specifically statements 1, 4, 7 – 9; while providing strong affirmations that 1 Corinthians 14:33 – 35 does not prove God’s denial of women in leadership, the resurrection of Jesus Christ reversed the consequence of the fall, and that women should not follow male leadership without question. He affirms women's leadership, but his responses are ambiguous. His theology appears to lean towards a soft complementarian thought, allowing women to operate in ministry leadership while promoting male headship in the home.

During another weekly Bible study, participant M33 commented that while he does not like to identify the distinctions or differences between men and women as it further segregates the genders, he does believe it is necessary to discuss and address the attacks on women today. Participant M33 affirmed that God can call women to lead in the church, and men should stand up with women and show support.

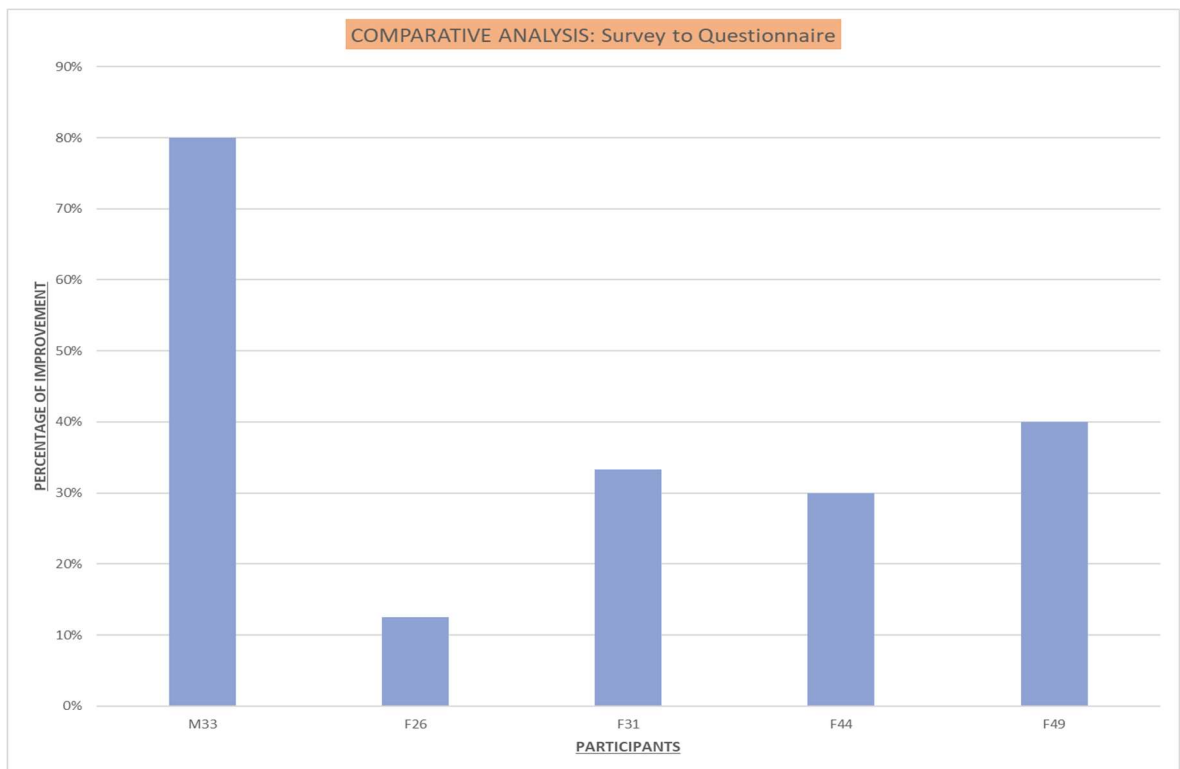
Another participant expressed gratitude for this doctoral research as she and other women have related experiences to the topics discussed. She communicated that she is grateful for the teaching, the scriptures, and other sources that affirm God’s calling for women. This participant mentioned that in her prior experiences, she felt brainwashed and need of mind reconditioning “because even though you may not believe it, it still stays in your mind, and it makes you question because you constantly hear it.”

Middle Assessment Questionnaire

The problem identified and addressed in this DMIN research project is the lack of biblical knowledge concerning God’s call of women to the ministry, which was denied by church patriarchy for centuries. This project aimed to conduct a biblical study that would advance

biblical literacy and inform the participants of scripture and scholars' support for women in church leadership. A pre-assessment survey was provided before the Bible study to serve as a basis, and a questionnaire was provided after the study to compare the responses. The questionnaire comprises ten open-ended questions designed to measure growth in biblical literacy after the Bible study. Unfortunately, only five of the ten students who attended the Bible study returned the completed questionnaire on time. The participants were assured that their questionnaire responses would be kept confidential.

Chart 4.11



The questions were based on the Bible study lectures and allowed participants to share their knowledge gained on specific topics such as the two main views on church leadership, the scriptures that are used to reject and support women, examples of females as leaders in the Bible,

the effects of patriarchal power systems, and to identify their informed view on the biblical interpretation of women in ministry. The questionnaire responses would demonstrate the participant's enhanced literacy of scripture. Below is a chart of the questionnaire topics and corresponding statements from the pre-assessment survey. The chart also shows the five participants' questionnaire answers related to their former survey responses. Comparatively, the chart will show whether the participants improved their knowledge in that category, declined, or remained the same. The percentage of improvement represents the number of improved responses compared to the total responses. A higher percentage denotes an increase in biblical knowledge for that topic.

All participants who responded to question number one advanced in understanding the terms for the two main church leadership views because they were not previously exposed to the theories. Participant M33 showed the highest percentage of improvement due to the many neutral responses given on the survey at a 50% rate. This millennial male is a minister, husband, father, and brother well-versed in the scriptures. Before attending the Bible study, he wavered his views concerning women in ministry leadership as pastors or having equal responsibility in the home. Question two is "Please choose a scripture from the following selection that supports female leaders in the church and briefly discuss your understanding from the Bible study (Gal 3:28; Eph 4:11)." Question two corresponds with survey statements 4, 7, and 8 which participant M33 responded neutral. M33's response is, "According To the Bible studies, Galatians 3:28 projects a greater understanding (in my opinion) of the roles of females called to leadership in the church. From what I understand, this scripture tears down the walls between men and women being segregated because of their gender to certain calling. All based on scripture stating there is neither male nor female rather oneness in Christ Jesus." Similar results are seen in his answer to

question three, “These heresies were without proper hermeneutics that would have captured where this took place, who wrote the text, and the period or the issues during that era that the text is reflecting.” In other questionnaire answers, M33 refers to Deborah, the judge, as having the same wisdom as great kings, and Phoebe was of great value and established the church. In his Bible study review, M33 says, “I understand this teaching has a foundation toward building up women and having men a part of that is just as important as having women a part of it. We sometimes treat symptoms but never address the problem. I believe that just like God gives man gifts and callings, he is never above Christ, and a woman is never above her head, though given gifts and calling. I believe headship and leadership are two different things.” All respondents gave a positive review of the Bible study. Participant F44 says, “[The Bible study] was an eye opener for me and helped me understand some things that were said since I was a little girl that I felt was incorrect but didn’t have the knowledge or information to back it up.” Participant F49 review states, “I was shocked to see all the supporting scriptures for woman preachers and leaders. I have noticed that other translations of the Bible explained certain scriptures, namely Psalms 68:12, much better than the King James Bible. A former pastor told me that the King James Bible is the oldest translation and, therefore, the best to use since the others were manufactured after the original KJV. I wonder if I was told that so I would not discover my true calling.”

Below is a detailed comparative analysis of the completed Middle Assessment Questionnaire. The first chart shows the data from the two participants with the highest percentage of improvement. The second chart shows the data from the other three respondents with some percentage of improvement.

Chart A 4.12

MIDDLE-ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE				
		Participants with greatest percentage of improvement		
			RESPONDENTS	
	Relative Survey Statement	Questionnaire Topics	M33	F49
QUESTION 1	Stmt 1, 2, 4, 7	Discuss two main views about women leading in the church	Improved	Improved
QUESTION 2	Stmts 4, 5, 7, 8	Scriptures that support female leaders	Improved	Improved
QUESTION 3	Stmts 2, 10	Scriptures used to reject female leaders	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 4	Stmts 4, 7, 8	OT female leaders	Improved	Remained
QUESTION 5	Stmts 4, 7, 8	NT female leaders	Improved	Remained
QUESTION 6	Stmts 1, 2, 5, 10	Effects of patriarchal power systems	Improved	Improved
QUESTION 7	All	Does God permit women to lead in the church	Improved	Remained
QUESTION 8	Stmt 2	Christian egalitarian perspective on 1 Cor. 14:34	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 9	Stmt 9	Importance of church interpretation of Scripture	Improved	Remained
QUESTION 10	All	Review of the Bible study	Improved	Improved
		Percentage of improvement	80%	40%

Chart B 4.13

MIDDLE-ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE					
		Other Participants Percentage of Improvement			
			RESPONDENTS		
	Relative Survey Statement	Questionnaire Topics	F26	F31	F44
QUESTION 1	Stmt 1, 2, 4, 7	Discuss two main views about women leading in the church	Incomplete	Improved	Improved
QUESTION 2	Stmts 4, 5, 7, 8	Scriptures that support female leaders	Remained	Remained	Improved
QUESTION 3	Stmts 2, 10	Scriptures used to reject female leaders	Remained	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 4	Stmts 4, 7, 8	OT female leaders	Remained	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 5	Stmts 4, 7, 8	NT female leaders	Remained	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 6	Stmts 1, 2, 5, 10	Effects of patriarchal power systems	Incomplete	Improved	Improved
QUESTION 7	All	Does God permit women to lead in the church	Remained	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 8	Stmt 2	Christian egalitarian perspective on 1 Cor. 14:34	Remained	Remained	Remained
QUESTION 9	Stmt 9	Importance of church interpretation of Scripture	Remained	Improved	Remained
QUESTION 10	All	Review of the Bible study	Improved	Incomplete	Improved
		Percentage of improvement	13%	33%	30%

Focus Group

All participants who completed the Middle Assessment Questionnaire were invited to join the focus group; however, only three accepted the invite. The focus group comprised one millennial male and two Gen X females, M33, F44, and F49; the researcher was the advisor. The

objective was to discuss the purpose of the research project and the problem addressed and formulate a product of the intervention, a church statement of faith that would reflect a Christian egalitarian view of church leadership. The researcher explained the project's purpose and the group meeting's scope and provided a guideline to accomplish the task. The following questions were addressed during the focus group meeting:

- Do you believe there is/was a problem at JOPA regarding understanding the roles
- women play in church leadership and why?
- In your opinion, was Bible study practical for bringing change?
- In your opinion, was the seminar effective in bringing change?
- Do you believe God allows women to lead a church or ministry?

Each focus group member responded to the above questions and shared their review of the Bible study and its necessity. Some sections of the Bible study were reviewed to help frame the statement of faith. Each member discussed the scriptures to support women in church leadership and formed a separate statement of faith. Each statement was synthesized to produce one coherent statement, as shown below. This statement will be shared with the congregation and placed in an inconspicuous location of the church building.

We believe that the word of God affirms male and female church leaders without respect to gender, appointed by God, for the edification of the church, with all callings and gifts according to 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11, and Galatians 3:28.

Seminar/Luncheon

A final intervention method employed was a seminar luncheon to present video interviews of successful female senior pastors. The objective was to show current married women who overcame obstacles designed to prevent them from operating in their call to

ministry. The researcher proposed that after biblical, scholarly, and field research, showing the participants examples of women, particularly wives, who are successfully functioning as senior pastors would be beneficial. The complimentary luncheon served as the researcher's expression of appreciation to all participants for their time and work. Before the seminar, the researcher conducted a Zoom video interview with two married women who are senior pastors to discuss their call to ministry, their journey to function in that calling, and the balance of married life. The researcher provided each panelist with ten questions to discuss during the interview. Each panelist described a call to ministry conducive to the Scripture's descriptions and examples of Pastors and Shepherds. Ephesians 4:11 says, "Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ" (NLT). The panelists were always confident about their pastoral calling and attributed it to the respected voices, female and male, who helped to shape their theology.

Panelist 1, whose church origin is in the Baptist Faith, shared that gender was not an issue for ministry calling. Instead, she received support from her male pastor and her father. Panelist 1 experienced opposition after the passing away of her pastor and a new pastor was installed. The conflict resulted in her leaving her church and eventually planting and building a church by the ordinance of the Holy Spirit. This pastor overcame these obstacles and found solace in Joel 2:28, which says, "Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people, Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions." Through much prayer and fasting, the pastor received divine confirmation to operate in her calling and not worry about the opposition. Dr. Charles Stanley says, "Obey God

and leave all the consequences to Him,” which takes courage and faith.¹¹ Panelist 1 acknowledged that some women were not as fortunate to have supportive male leaders and provided advice for women whom God calls. This pastor’s advice to women called by God to pastor is to “Climb over the noise of the opposers to avoid remaining in a holding place. A leader must be confident, determined, and exhibit the heart of God (Jer. 3:15, 17).” The pastor also advised that a church leader should not allow the voices of others to supersede the voice of God.

The participants responded to the video presentation with positive feedback. Participant F49 shared with the group that the pastor’s interview exposed her to biblical truths that were not previously clear. This respondent also shared that it was confirmative to see and hear the stories of other women with similar experiences who obtained victories. Participant F44 shared her appreciation for the pastor’s dual role as pastor and wife, which did not cause hardship in the marriage.

¹¹ <https://www.charlesstanley.com/life-and-ministry/family#:~:text=During%20those%20six%20transformative%20days%20in%201949%2C%20his,out.%20God%20will%20provide%20for%20all%20your%20needs.>

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The problem addressed in this study was a gap in biblical knowledge and interpretation about women in church leadership among the congregation at JOPA church that warranted research and intervention. The purpose of this DMIN action research was to improve the Bible literacy at the church regarding female pastors. The study answered the question, Is there biblical awareness among the congregation about God's acceptance and call of female pastors? There was a concern that this gap would lead to the spiritual decline of the individuals and the death of the church. The congregation appeared to be uncertain of the Scriptures that sanction women to the call of God. The JOPA congregation and pastor were influenced by a long history in Christendom of church patriarchy, presenting an obstacle to the growth of the members and the ministry. The congregation was unaware of this influence, which created a need to analyze their behaviors, beliefs, and experiences and determine strategies for change. Ernest Stringer points out that people may be unaware of the impact of subliminal concepts deeply ingrained in their experiences.¹ This project sought to resolve concerns about the spiritual development of individual congregants who may feel devalued by a theology that makes women inferior to men. Historically, the conservative church taught that the Bible forbids women to pastor or hold any position of authority over men, although the Bible teaches that men and women are equal in God's sight. Despite the teaching by the church, there is a resurgence of women having experiences, as do men, reflecting the undeniable call to the pastorate. Women who, through the auspices of the Holy Spirit, obtain professional pastoral credentials but continue to encounter resistance. Scholars, Theologians, and church leaders have debated, researched, and studied the

¹ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research (4th Edition)*, (US: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 135, Available from Liberty University Online Bookshelf.

topic of gender roles in religion and the denial of female leaders in the church for decades, but Christians have not determined a unified position.

This research addressed the lack of biblical understanding regarding female leaders in the church in one small group in a way that could translate to a broader spectrum. This project closely examined Scripture through an exegetical process to form a church belief system. The researcher developed an approach to effectively bridge the gap in the scriptural knowledge base by researching Scripture and subject matter experts and implementing a methodology for improving the lack of understanding. To achieve its purpose, Sensing's triangulation method was used to test the hypothesis and validate the problem. The researcher used seven data collection methods to study the problem such as a pre-assessment survey, which served as a control mechanism for evaluating the results; a weekly Bible study on the roles of women in the Bible; a middle assessment questionnaire to measure the effectiveness of the Bible study; random participant interviews; and a focus group to test the results. Additionally, the researcher maintained field notes and recorded the Bible study with the participants' permission. The data collection culminates at a luncheon seminar presentation featuring successful female pastors interviewed by the researcher. The participants responded positively to this study and formed a faith statement.

The current chapter summarizes the statistical analysis results, discusses the implications that were extracted from the intervention and the research limitations, presents suggestions for further study, and summarizes the conclusion.

Summary of Results

This DMIN research project examined what God says about women in church leadership in conjunction with the biblical interpretation that rejects female leadership. The question was, Is there a lack of biblical knowledge regarding women in leadership due to conservative church roles? This question was addressed by examining the two main viewpoints: Complementarian, which rejects female leadership, and Christian Egalitarian, which accepts women in church leadership roles. The intention was not to criticize or promote these two viewpoints but to explore Scripture and scholarly sources to inform the congregation of the church's approach.

This study yielded improved learning about acceptable leadership roles for women in scripture and the church. As a result, the members of JOPA improved their biblical knowledge of church leaders, learned the importance of hermeneutics, and developed a faith statement that reflects gender equality in the pastorate. The results of this research study show validity to the problem presented. The participants showed limited knowledge of women in leadership roles in the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures. Also, their biblical interpretation did not reflect a hermeneutical study.

Research Implications

The literature review found common themes related to complementarianism, Christian egalitarianism, Biblical Womanhood, Female Leadership in the Old and New Testaments, Shaping the Canon, Patriarchal Power Systems, and Improper use of Scripture. These subjects informed this project and supported its findings. The implications of the findings are categorized as spiritual and theological development, the life of the church, and the human effect. As the church continues to be divided about female pastors, the conversation continues, and the results

of this study will add to the perspectives. This section of the final chapter will discuss the results of this action research project and the implications projected from it.

Spiritual and Theological Development

For centuries, church leaders taught, directly or implicitly, that women are subservient to men by God's order.², which is a supporting argument of the Complementarian theory. For this reason, Complementarians are criticized for not exploring a hermeneutical interpretation of Scripture. Miller compliments complementarians for their careful study of the Bible and criticizes them for not thoroughly engaging with the text for a better understanding.³ From the researcher's perspective, the Bible as an ancient text is better studied by an exegetical process to gain God's message. Fundamentally, discipleship should be filtered through an exegetical study of the Scriptures to avoid the consequences of legalism and false theology.⁴ It is noted that the Complementarian theory, when properly applied, may not be as harsh as some assess it. The Complementarian doctrine seems more of a Christian theory than a biblical one. In other words, it appears to be a position of some well-intentioned Christians who love God and God's people. However, the rationale and Scriptures used are not convincing due to the lack of Scripture exegesis. Considering this, lacking a complete examination of all Scriptures on the subject would allow malicious persons to identify the flaws and fill the gaps with false information. When people misapply the theory, it is used to cause distress in women and may lead to abuse. Also, if

² Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2021), 88.

³ Jeff Miller, "An Open Appeal to My Complementarian Brothers and Sisters." *Leaven* 22, no. 2 (2014), 106.

⁴ Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *DiscipleShift: Five steps that help your church to make disciples who make disciples* (Zondervan, 2013), 19.

the church does not apply biblical equality, some women will internalize it, leading to a false theology about God's value for them and impeding their spiritual development. For example, a woman with father issues may develop trust issues with God as Father without considering Numbers 23:19, which says, “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good (NKJV)?”

Further, misinterpretation of Scripture causes women to form a theology that God is partial, which is erroneous since God loves His entire creation. A theology that teaches divine partiality is rooted in Exclusivism, hierarchy, and vanity. We know that the Bible is not only for women to read and follow but to apply its principles and promises to their lives. How does a woman determine which Scriptures do not apply when the same Scriptures teach that there is neither male nor female in the eyes of God (Gal 3:28)?

Life of the Church

A significant concern is that this newly born church may not survive any conflict that arises from a misinterpretation of Scripture. In his doctoral thesis, Jason Sweeton identifies the implications of power struggles in the church, where there exists a misconception of the duties of the pastor and lay leaders.⁵ Sweeton shares that the conflict would have been avoided if a biblical foundation had been laid about the respective responsibilities.⁶ It is not understood why some congregants prefer to remain in a church with disdain for the pastor. A church will lose effectiveness in the community without measures for healthy conflict resolution. Rainer points

⁵ Jason Sweeton, *Applying Biblical Teaching to Resolve Power Struggles Between the Pastor and Deacons in a Southern Baptist Church*. Lynchburg: Liberty University, 2022, 10.

⁶ *Ibid*, 14.

out that church conflict will lead to a loss of purpose, stewardship, and the ultimate death of the church.⁷ The conflict in Sweeton’s study resulted in a decline in church attendance and membership.⁸ The church in this research study desires to function as a haven for people to learn about God and a staple in the community. A lack of Scripture interpretation threatens this endeavor.

The Human Effect

All Scriptures that reference Spiritual gifts have no association with gender. These Scriptures clearly state that God gives the gifts for God’s purpose, as He will do. How should a woman ignore these Scriptures when experiencing a call to the ministry? Nicole L. Davis, in her dissertation “Women in Ministry: How Conflicts Between God's Purpose and Church Doctrine Impact the Efficacy of Female Church Leaders,” presented a biographical narrative on the implications of female church leadership.⁹ The results of her dissertation found that the organizational culture had an arbitrating impact on gender equality and the effectiveness of female church leadership due to the patriarchal power systems being challenged. However, prior to this challenge, there was a struggle with gender bias, discrimination, and equality.¹⁰ It was pointed out that these restraints impacted both females and males in the church. When women

⁷ Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive*, (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 7c.

⁸ Sweeton, *Power Struggles*, 18.

⁹ Nicole L. Davis. 2019. *Women in Ministry: How Conflicts Between God's Purpose and Church Doctrine Impact the Efficacy of Female Church Leaders*. Doctoral dissertation. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences – Department of Conflict Resolution Studies. (131) https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dcar_etd/131.

¹⁰ Ibid.

are prevented from operating in their divine calling or gifting, they experience a conflict in self-identity.

Hannah, a barren wife during a time when women took pride in what seemed like a God-given ability, experienced extreme conflict within herself. “This treatment of women had given rise to the growing interpersonal and church conflict amongst its members, thus also sparking identity conflicts within women about who they were in the eyes of God and their value and contribution to the ministry work of the church.”¹¹ There may be psychological harm to a woman who is taught a theology that devalues her humanity and spirituality. One participant in this research shared that she had experienced depression as a direct result of being prevented or restricted in the call to the ministry. Another female participant expressed appreciation for the project endeavors and stated that the information received will be shared to help women within her access.

Theories of male dominance and female subservience in the church open the door to abuse and failed marriages. Bauman presents research on the rapid growth of abuse and sexism in the Protestant Church. “The Protestant church has been significantly informed by the Greek and Roman cultural patriarchal norms. Often, those in power (i.e., pastors, elders, deacons) share their experiences from the pulpit while those who are marginalized (i.e., women) remain unheard, and their voices and experiences are dismissed.”¹² In another church with spiritual barriers to women, approximately forty marriages ended in separation or divorce over 40 years.

¹¹ Nicole L. Davis. 2019.

¹² Andrew J. Bauman, “The Elephant in the Church: Exploring Women’s Experience with Sexism & Abuse in the Protestant Church” (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2023), 16.

One would ask how there could be so many dysfunctional families where there is high spirituality. There is an imbalance of equality and power. A belief system teaches that one group of people in the church is superior to another. Abusers thrive in this environment to prey on the inferior group. It was noted that abuse existed in these marriages and others who did not end the relationship. Many of the wives were taught a theology that God prefers to save the institution of marriage and not the people in the marriage relationship. The wives were taught to obey and pray for their husbands despite the apparent abuse and were not offered any relief or assistance by church leadership. These experiences may expose women to depression, suicide, substance abuse, and other coping mechanisms. Buchanan shares that these experiences also lead to a thwarted image of God.¹³ Malicious people thrive in environments where a marginalized group is disempowered. One female in the group shared that she met and married a man at church who turned out to be abusive. Church leaders need to be more aware of the wolves in the church seeking to destroy the sheep instead of binding women in faith practices.

Research Applications

The project results validate the problem identified. The methodological tools implemented in the research successfully intercepted the issues. It was determined by the responses in the Likert Pre-Assessment Survey that there was limited knowledge about what God says about women called to pastor. Some of the participants responded to similar statements with differing responses. For example, statement four, “I believe God equally calls men and women to the ministry,” is compared to statement seven, “I believe that God gives men and women equal

¹³ Danette A. Buchanan, “Women in Ministry: How Conflict’s Between God’s Purpose and Church Doctrine Impact the Efficacy of Female Church Leaders” (PhD diss., Nova Southeastern University, 2019), 1, NSU Works.

responsibility in the church and home.” Eight out of ten participants strongly agreed with statement four; two responses from males were neutral and somewhat disagree. Eighty percent of the respondents agreed with statement seven. However, they were different persons than stated in statement four. The one male respondent remained neutral on statements four and seven.

However, the one male who somewhat disagreed with statement four strongly agreed with statement seven. This was interesting. Equally interesting is that only one female is neutral on statement seven and strongly agrees with statement four. This female was raised in the home with a dominant male husband and father. Her response seems to reflect her childhood experiences. Half of one male respondent's responses were marked neutral, demonstrating the need for further learning in those areas. As the research project progressed, this same male participant engaged in the Bible study, responded to the questionnaire and eagerly anticipated joining the focus group. He showed significant improvement in biblical knowledge on the subject matter. Also, there were two generational groups, Generation X and Millennials, where each group showed similar characteristics. This was important to help understand how the respondents interpreted the questions and statements and how they can be applied across ministry contexts.

The Pre-Assessment Surveys effectively measured the participants’ knowledge base and informed the researcher of their theology concerning women in church leadership. Level of education was not considered for this project; however, it may have affected their understanding of terminology and test-taking skills. Seventeen people signed the Consent Form in agreement to participate in this doctoral research project. However, ten participants attended the weekly Bible study, and only five completed the Middle Assessment Questionnaire. This was not very

reassuring but did not affect the results. There was still enough data to analyze and evaluate the findings.

Research Limitations

It was assumed that this research project would have successful results within approximately three months after starting. It was also believed that more people would remain in participation with the project. The researcher learned that no matter how convincing the Bible study was, the participants' schedules or time could not be controlled. Some participants had personal obligations that took precedence over this project. The fieldwork was extended an additional three months due to additional weeks of Bible study, as one week was canceled due to the Independence Day holiday, and another week was added because of low attendance. It was disappointing that the seventeen persons who originally signed the Consent agreement to participate effectively declined participation. Participant turnover was high but did not affect the data received or the results.

No consideration was given regarding the participant's selection based on education levels, race, socioeconomic status, or the participant's former denomination as a factor in this research project. With the high turnover of participants leaving the project and not completing the questionnaire, it could not be ascertained whether omitting education levels was correct. Most participants quickly returned the completed Likert Pre-Assessment Survey, which only required a check-the-box response. The Middle Assessment Questionnaire contained ten open-ended short answer questions that needed more engagement, a review of Bible study notes, and time. These skills are usually developed in high school and mastered in college. If the participant's level is below high school, that may be the reason for not returning the completed

questionnaire. All participants who returned the completed questionnaire had some college or completed undergrad level, except two participants who expressed conflicts with their schedules.

Further Research

The church debate on whether the Bible permits women to pastor has been ongoing for centuries and most likely will continue until Christ returns. Can the church stand divided? Christendom is divided, but the conversation continues. Historically, women have freely operated in church leadership in segments of time. In the 1970s, not only did conservative church communities affirm women preachers, but Bethel University Seminary presented the first woman with an M. Div in 1976.¹⁴ Some churches even ordained female ministers.¹⁵ A worthy research suggestion addresses the rationale for these changes in women's roles in the church. What issues led to the occasional acceptance of females in leadership and its decline? Women have always played a vital role in planting and building churches but have received limited recognition.

Another dynamic added to the rejection of women in pastoral roles, not just towards single women but wives who experience a divine call to lead a church. Where single women may be granted an exception by some complementarians, a married woman is restricted simply on the premise that her husband should be the head of the church because he is the head of the home. A Liberty University Library search on married female pastors did not return relevant scholarly sources. Searching other databases returned a reasonable number of sources. The researcher proposes an ethnographic study on the lived experiences of wives called to plant, build, and pastor a church. This rare and unique dynamic deserves attention due to the growing number of

¹⁴ <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2018/11/evangelical-free-women-preaching/>

¹⁵ Ibid.

women moving toward this field. In a journal review of R. K. Yin's book, *Case Study Research Design & Methods*, Yin notes, "Case study research constitutes an all-encompassing method that covers the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis, which ultimately informs the structure of the book."¹⁶ Another area for future study regarding women in church leadership is to explore the impact of female leadership in marriages and families. Also, a call for a step-by-step implementation of how to move a congregation toward biblical equality effectively seems worthy.

¹⁶ Trista Hollweck, Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods (5th ed.)*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. 10.3138/cjpe.30.1.108.

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APPENDIX A

Permission Request

May 15, 2023

C. L. Sewer
Trustee Board, Secretary
Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Ministries (JOPA)
P O Box 123
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Dear C. L. Sewer,

As a graduate student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a project as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my project is *Bible Literacy: A Theological Exploration of What God Says About Women Called to Pastor*, and the purpose is to enhance Bible literacy at JOPA regarding the roles of female leaders in the church.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my project at JOPA and contact church members to invite them to participate in the study.

The data regarding women in leadership roles in the church will be used to enhance biblical literacy among participants. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. After agreeing to participate, they will be asked to complete a survey, participate in a seven-week Bible study, complete a questionnaire, attend a free luncheon seminar, and possibly participate in a focus group. Participating in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Shannel Williams
Researcher/Pastor of JOPA

APPENDIX B

Consent

Title of the Project: Bible Literacy: Understanding the Roles of Women in Church Leadership and What God Says About Women Called to Pastor

Principal Investigator: Shannel Taylor, Doctoral Candidate and Pastor of JOPA, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Project Study

You are invited to participate in a project study. To participate, you must be 24 years of age or older. Taking part in this project is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or removal of church membership. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or removal of church membership.

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

At the request of any participant, this consent, survey, and questionnaire can be conducted verbally in private. In this case, these sessions must be recorded for accuracy and will be stored in a password-protected computer at the home of the investigator.

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

The purpose of the study is to enhance Bible literacy on the topic of women called to Pastor.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Complete a Likert pre-assessment survey which will be provided immediately upon signing this consent. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You may complete the survey today or later and return it within one week. You may include your name on the survey or make it anonymous.
2. Participate in a seven-week Bible study regarding the roles of female leadership in Scripture. The Bible study will be conducted via Zoom and last approximately one hour each week. The Bible study will be recorded in Zoom and stored in the cloud storage. The recording will be made available to participants and the investigator only. The Bible study will be made accessible through a conference call for those without access to Zoom. The Bible study will also be recorded on the conference call and deleted at the completion of the study.

3. Complete a middle-assessment questionnaire at the completion of the Bible study which will take approximately one hour to complete. This questionnaire will request your name for assessment purposes.
4. Attend a luncheon seminar to hear from other female Pastors about their pastoral call and successful ministries.
5. Possibly participate in a focus group to devise a faith statement on what this church believes about gender roles and church leadership. Five participants will be selected to form a focus group based on the questionnaire responses. The focus group will meet once at a mutually agreed time and place. An additional meeting will be arranged if necessary and everyone agrees.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include:

- Biblical training that would otherwise not be available if not participating
- Thorough exegetical Bible study of Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures about the roles of female leaders
- Free attendance at the luncheon seminar
- An opportunity to participate in a doctoral project that will be published

Benefits to society include having more Christian denominations accept, appoint, and support female leadership roles in the church. Also, women will benefit by becoming confident about their call to ministry and securely operating in that call.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

How will personal information be protected?

The non-anonymous records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Records will be stored securely, and only the investigator will have access to the records.

- Participant responses on the Likert pre-assessment survey will be anonymous if the participant chooses. If the participants choose to include their names they will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

- The data collected from you on the middle assessment questionnaire will NOT be anonymous. Data collected from you may be used in future studies and/or shared with other investigators. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Completed surveys and questionnaires will be collected on paper. The paper documents will be scanned as PDF documents and immediately destroyed/shredded. The scanned document will be stored on a password-protected computer at the home of the investigator. After seven years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- The Bible study conducted on Zoom will be recorded and made available for participants and the investigator only. Recordings will be stored in the Zoom cloud storage for the duration of the Bible study and participants will be given access. At the completion of the Bible study the Zoom recordings will be downloaded on a password-protected computer for seven years and then deleted. Only the investigator will have access to these recordings.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

There is no cost to you to participate in the project.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Ministries (JOPA). If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

For an anonymous Likert survey, if you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the investigator that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

For non-anonymous surveys and questionnaires, if you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the investigator at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The investigator conducting this study is Shannel Taylor. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her by phone and/or email. You may also contact the investigator's faculty sponsor, Dr. Thomas Spotts.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the investigator, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

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

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the study, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the investigator using the information provided above.

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The investigator will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX C

MIDDLE-ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name and briefly discuss the three views about women leading in the church.
2. Please choose a Scripture from the following selection that **supports** female leaders in the church and briefly discuss your understanding from the Bible Study (Gal 3:28; Eph 4:11;
3. Please choose a Scripture from the following selection that is used to **reject** female leaders in the church and briefly discuss your understanding from the Bible Study (Gen 3:15-19; 1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11, 12).
4. How does Scripture define biblical womanhood? Please include Scriptures
5. Name and briefly discuss one Old Testament female national leader as judge, prophet, or any other leadership capacity.
6. Name and briefly discuss one New Testament female leader as a businesswoman, a deacon, an evangelist, a house-church leader, or a prophet.
7. Briefly discuss the effects of patriarchal power systems.
8. Are you in agreement with and support of women who operate in church leadership roles that are traditionally held by men, such as apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher? Please explain what God says about these roles and human gifts to the church.
9. From a Christian Egalitarian perspective, what is the intended message of 1 Corinthians 14:34 which says: “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says” (NKJV)?
10. What are some reasons that led to the possible omission of female leaders in Scripture?
11. Why is it important that the church ensures proper application and interpretation of Scripture?
12. Please provide your review of the Bible study.

You may provide responses on a separate sheet

APPENDIX D

PANELIST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell me about yourself e.g., your name, how long you are married, children, name of the church, etc.
2. Please tell me about your ministry. How long have you been pastoring?
3. Tell me about your call to the ministry. How did you know you were called to pastor?
What Scriptures did you use to confirm your call?
4. What does it mean to be called and how is it different than an occupation?
5. What is your husband's function in the church? Is he supportive of your role as the senior pastor?
6. Being a pastor and a wife are two completely different positions. How do you function in each role without either of them negating the other?
7. Did you experience any pushback when starting to operate in your calling? What were some reasons for the rejection? What Scriptures were used, if any?
8. You know there are many who do not believe the Bible permits women to pastor or lead the church and they use Scripture to support their theory. What is your response to those with differing views on female church leaders? What Scriptures would you use to support your view?
9. Do you believe that gender roles in the church are distinct from those in the home? For example, the Scriptures say the man is the head of the wife (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:7; etc.) However, is this limited to the home?
10. What advice would you give a woman who feels called to a church leadership capacity but is experiencing rejection?

APPENDIX E

PRE-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Bible Literacy: Bible Literacy: A Theological Exploration of What God Says About Women Called to Pastor *Psalms 68:11, "The Lord gives the command; The women who proclaim the good news are a great host" (AMP).*

By taking this survey you are confirming your participation in the project. Please provide your responses to the questions below to the best of your knowledge and understanding. You may decline a response to any question or cancel your participation at any time. This survey can be submitted anonymously.

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? ___ female or ___ male

Please respond to each statement below by placing a X or check mark in one box.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Based on my understanding of the Scriptures, a woman should not pastor a church or have authority over men.					
In my opinion, 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 is proof that God does not permit women to pastor a church.					
There is a difference between what the Bible says, and what God says.					
I believe God equally calls men and women to the ministry.					
I believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ reversed the curse on humanity in Genesis 3:15 - 19					
I believe that only the King James Version of the Bible is true.					
I believe that God gives men and women equal responsibility in the home and church.					
Ephesians 4:11 is proof that God does not look at gender when calling one to ministry.					
My understanding is that the Church is responsible for ensuring the proper application and interpretation of Scripture.					
In my opinion, women should always follow the leading of men no matter what.					

Additional comments or questions:

APPENDIX F

Permission Response

June 2, 2023

Shannel Williams
Researcher/Pastor of JOPA
Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Ministries (JOPA)
P O Box 123
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Dear Pastor Shannel Williams:

After carefully reviewing your project proposal, *Bible Literacy: A Theological Exploration of What God Says About Women Called to Pastor*, we have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Ministries (JOPA).

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

[We] grant permission for Shannel Taylor to contact the congregation of JOPA to invite them to participate in her project study.]

[[I/We] will not provide potential participant information to [your name], but we agree to [[send/provide] [his/her] study information to [description of potential participants] on [his/her] behalf.]

Sincerely,

C. L. Sewer
Trustee Board, Secretary
Just One Prayer Away Deliverance Ministries (JOPA)

APPENDIX G

Recruitment Follow-Up Email

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting a project as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. Last week, we conducted a meeting at the church inviting you to participate in a study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to contact me with any questions. Or, if you would like to participate and have not already done so, please read and sign the attached consent form. The deadline for participation is _____.

To participate, you must be 24 years of age or older. Participants will be asked to complete a 15-minute Likert survey, participate in a seven-week Bible study on a recorded Zoom meeting for approximately one hour, complete a questionnaire, which may take approximately one hour, attend a free luncheon seminar, and possibly participate in a focus group which will be recorded. Participating in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

At your discretion, the Likert survey may be submitted anonymously. However, all other data collected will be kept confidential. Names and other identifying information may be requested for this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please complete the attached survey and return it in person at the church next Sunday. If it is anonymous, a designated area in the church is provided for you to place the survey in a box.

A consent document is attached to this email should you decide to participate. The consent document contains additional information about my project. After you have read the consent form, please sign a printed copy and return it with the completed survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Shannel Williams

Researcher/Pastor of JOPA

APPENDIX H

PANELISTS' EMAIL

TO: marriedwomanpastor@yahoo.com; wifepastor@gmail.com; setherfree@aol.com

FROM: dminstudent@gmail.com

SUBJECT: Participation as a Panelist

DATE: June 4, 2023

Greetings, Co-Laborers in Christ!

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this much-needed project. As we discussed by telephone, the project title is *Bible Literacy: A Theological Exploration of What God Says About Women Called to Pastor*. The purpose of this project is to enhance biblical literacy at my church, JOPA. I pray that the study will be successful and used in other ministries.

Attached is a questionnaire with all the questions we will address during the Zoom interview. Your participation is voluntary, and you may decline to answer any question. Please let me know the best day and time for the Zoom meeting with you. Our Zoom interview video will be presented to the congregation during the Seminar Luncheon. If you are in the area, please join us as my special guest.

Please let me know if you have any questions. You may contact me at this email address or via telephone.

In His Service,

Pastor Shannel Williams

APPENDIX I
BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE

- ❖ Introduction
 - Problem, Purpose, Thesis
 - Exegesis and Hermeneutics
 - Canonization of Scripture
- ❖ Complementarianism & Christian Egalitarianism
 - History of two ministry leadership views
 - Scripture basis for each view
 - Alternative views
- ❖ Call To Ministry
 - What does it mean to be “Called”
 - How do you know you are called
 - How do you know what you are called to
- ❖ Female Leadership in Old Testament Scriptures
 - Scholarly Review
 - Scripture Review
 - Female leadership omitted
- ❖ Female Leadership in New Testament Scriptures
 - Scholarly Review
 - Scripture Review
 - Female leadership omitted

❖ Patriarchal Power Systems

- Effects of misapplied Complementarianism
- Effects of misapplied Egalitarianism

❖ Improper Use of Scripture

- Effects of misinterpretation of Scripture
- Hidden abuse in extreme cases

[External] IRB-FY22-23-1527 - Initial: Non-Human Subjects Research

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>

Mon 5/8/2023 11:09 AM

To: Taylor, Shannel <smtay1or20@liberty.edu>; Spotts, Thomas G (Rawlings School of Divinity Instr)
<tgsports@liberty.edu>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 8, 2023

Shannel Taylor
Thomas Spotts

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-1527 Bible Literacy: A Theological Exploration of What God Says About Women Called To Pastor

Dear Shannel Taylor and Thomas Spotts,

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

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your project is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(1).

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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