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## Not-Quite-Equal: Mentoring Women for 21st Century Leadership

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

NOT-QUITE-EQUAL:

MENTORING WOMEN FOR 21ST-CENTURY MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

SUSAN ROSE

PORTLAND, OREGON

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## DEDICATION

To Dave, who has lived this journey with me since I felt God's call on my life. Thank you for your love, encouragement, and never-ending optimism about how God is calling and equipping us to live our lives faithfully together.

To my mother, the first Dr. Rose, who showed me that great accomplishments can come from difficult circumstances; and to my sister, for loving me fiercely and always having my back.

To KNK, the Peter who has inspired so many ministries to be born and grow. Your faithful witness built a runway for yourself and the next generation.

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An achievement such as this is an individual endeavor that happens in community.

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I am especially grateful for the LSF4 cohort and the friendships-for-life I've made within it. I could not have crossed the finish line without you, Joyce and Alyssa!

## EPIGRAPH

*Some of us have great runways already built for us. If you have one, take off!  
But if you don't have one, realize it is your responsibility to grab a shovel and build one  
for yourself and for those who will follow after you.*

—Amelia Earhart

Table of Contents

DEDICATION ..... III

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... IV

EPIGRAPH ..... V

LIST OF FIGURES ..... VIII

LIST OF TABLES ..... VIII

PREFACE ..... IX

ABSTRACT ..... XI

SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM: FROM SILENT, SUBORDINATE, AND  
SUBMISSIVE TO ORDINATION ..... 1

    Anne’s Story ..... 2

    Telling Her Story ..... 3

    “The Woman’s Sphere” ..... 5

    “Women’s Work for Women” ..... 8

    “Ecclesiastical Feminarchy” ..... 11

    The Feminization of the Church ..... 12

    The “Onslaught of Lady Applicants” ..... 16

SECTION 2: OTHER SOLUTIONS: ORDAINED BUT NOT-QUITE-EQUAL ..... 26

    The Stained-Glass Ceiling or The Broken Rung? ..... 26

    How Do Women in Ministry Find Support? ..... 37

        The Company of New Pastors ..... 38

        The Association of Theological Schools Women in Leadership (WIL) Program ..... 45

        Young Clergy Women International ..... 48

        RevGalBlogPals—Creating Community for Clergywomen ..... 49

        What’s Next? ..... 52

SECTION 3: THE SOLUTION: MENTORSHIP: AN OLD PRACTICE IN A NEW  
WAY ..... 54

    Where Did Mentoring Come From? ..... 55

    Mentoring: Defined and Practiced ..... 57

    One Word, Several Meanings ..... 62

    Why Women Need Mentors ..... 65

    Mentorship as a Model for Women in Ministry ..... 68

SECTION 4: THE ARTIFACT: DIAKONOS SOLUTIONS ..... 77

    Introduction ..... 77

    Goals ..... 77

    Mission and Vision ..... 77

        Who Would Benefit from Mentoring with Diakonos Solutions? ..... 78

        Diakonossolutions.com ..... 80

SECTION 5: DIAKONOS SOLUTIONS: MENTORING WOMEN FOR 21ST CENTURY MINISTRY LEADERSHIP .....	81
Overview .....	81
Purpose.....	81
Sustainability: Financially and in the Marketplace.....	87
SECTION 6: THE ENDING IS THE BEGINNING .....	88
APPENDIX A: ARTIFACT .....	90
APPENDIX B: DATA FROM THE “DENOMINATIONAL ROLLS AND STATISTICS” AT THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND APPENDICES 5 AND 6 FROM <i>LIVING BY THE GOSPEL</i> .....	98
APPENDIX C: EXCERPT FROM THE COMPANY OF NEW PASTORS MANUAL .....	104
APPENDIX D: FIELD RESEARCH DATA .....	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	112



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1—The Corporate Ladder: The First Step Up to Manager Stands Out as the Biggest Obstacle for Women .....	29
--	----

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1—Time Between Graduation and First Ministry Position .....	19
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## PREFACE

Women actively engaged in ministry with Jesus and for Jesus in the Gospels and the nascent Christian movement. When the early church removed women from leadership to reflect the public-private gender roles of the dominant culture in which Christianity was accepted and growing, women lost not only their positions within the church, but their voices. Nevertheless, women continued to answer God's call on their lives, working within the established hierarchy when it was permissible and alongside it in their own endeavors when it was not. In the contemporary Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the PC(USA)) denominational context, women attained full equality through ordination as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament in 1955. The polity changed overnight to allow women as ministers. The biases and prejudices against women in ministry leadership, however, persist even today.

In the American Presbyterian Church, there has been more than two centuries of culturally accepted discrimination against women in the church. Today we may consider gender equality to be the "norm" in society and the church, but biases against women are deeply embedded within systems and psyches alike, often without people realizing it. People attending a Presbyterian Church today have only ever known full inclusion of women into every aspect of church leadership, including ordained ministry. Women serving in ministry roles, however, realize that full inclusion does not necessarily mean full equality. By neglecting the history of women's leadership within the denomination and the discrimination surrounding it, we ignore the root causes from which inequality continues to manifest itself in a modern context.

PC(USA) women are no longer bound by church polity to be silent, subordinate, and submissive in the church. Yet despite full access to leadership and ordination, women are still valued as “less than” their male counterparts, as indicated in the most recent survey results from *Living by the Gospel*. In the 21st century, women develop their sense of call believing that gender equality in ministry has already been achieved, but their experiences in ministry are incongruent with the stated values of the denomination. Nothing in their journey to ordination prepares them for the biases they will encounter once they graduate from seminary. What if women preparing for ministry understood that they were still not-quite-equal in the culture of the church? What would mentoring women for 21st century ministry leadership look like?

## ABSTRACT

Women are being ordained to ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at a higher rate than men, but they are not achieving parity in ministry opportunities, salary and benefits. Women comprised 52% of the ordinations in the PC (USA) denomination from 2006-2018. However, they receive fewer full-time positions, fewer congregational positions, less pay for the same positions as men, and Board of Pensions benefits at a lower percentage than men. Reviewing the history of women's leadership in the church contextualizes biases and prejudices women continue to face today. In Section 1, this paper examines the history of women's leadership in the Presbyterian Church since the Civil War, including their immensely successful mission boards and subsequent dismissal from leadership. Then, I examine biases, excuses, and propaganda used against women serving in leadership. These biases and excuses persist today, although the phrasing has changed. I explore the broken rung theory, proposing that a woman's first position in ministry is critical to her career growth and trajectory. In Section 2, I review a PC(USA) program for students transitioning from seminary to their first ordained call. I also examine organizations dedicated to women in ministry leadership and how their success differs from standard denominational programs. In Section 3, I propose mentorship as a form of leadership and spiritual formation that will help women in ministry in their professional and personal lives. Although mentoring is an ancient concept, there is little to no data on mentoring in ministry in contemporary contexts. Sections 4 and 5 outline the formation of Diakonos Solutions, a nonprofit dedicated to mentoring women in ministry through the key transitions of their ministries and lives. Section 6 includes my reflections on the process of writing, developing, and executing this project.

## SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM:

### FROM SILENT, SUBORDINATE, AND SUBMISSIVE TO ORDINATION

Ordained women in the PC(USA) denomination comprise 32% of the total ordained leadership, with a remarkable 52% of the ordinations from 2006-2018.<sup>1</sup> However, women are not achieving parity in ministry positions, salary, or benefits. Statistically, ordained women receive fewer full-time positions and fewer congregational ministry positions that set career trajectories. They are paid less than ordained men across the job codes tracked by the Board of Pensions and do not receive Board of Pensions benefits at the same rate as ordained men. It takes women longer to find their first ordained call out of seminary, and, even when they do, they fall behind their male counterparts in pay and benefits. Women continue to enter ordained ministry at higher numbers than men, but the church hires and promotes men at faster rates.

Women nurtured in their faith and their call to ministry can go all the way through seminary without realizing the obstacles they will encounter as they look for their first ordained call. As the church focuses on women who have “made it” to highly visible leadership positions, they neglect the entry-level, or first-call, positions, preferencing men over women from the very beginning of their ministry careers. Without examining the transition from seminary to first ordained call, women will continue to be marginalized in ministry leadership, despite outpacing men in ordained ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> This information was provided in an email by Kris Valerius, Manager of Denominational Rolls and Statistics at the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), September 24, 2020, and is included in Appendix B.

## Anne's Story

Anne sensed her call to ministry during college. She developed her leadership skills through many diverse experiences to hone her call. These experiences included leading a growing collegiate ministry, preaching in front of the presbytery (to date, the only college student to do that in her presbytery), and reorganizing a presbytery youth conference program that allowed college students to lead and share their gifts for ministry in a structured way. Within her home presbytery, her uniqueness was not wrapped in her gender, but in her age. Anne is considered a “cradle Presbyterian,” having been baptized as an infant and confirmed as a teenager within the denomination. After college, she participated in a year of service through the PC(USA)’s Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program. She then entered seminary on a full scholarship plus stipend. She continued to work in different ministry contexts during seminary, always receiving outstanding reviews for her work. Upon graduation, she married her seminary sweetheart. In their job search, he received a call to ministry before she did. He was installed and ordained as an associate pastor three months after graduation. She remains unordained, two years later. She fills in as a preacher at a small church that can’t afford a “regular” minister. She started a collegiate ministry for local students, but neither the host church nor the presbytery had the money to allocate for this to be an “ordainable” ministry position. Although she is doing ministry in the margins, the presbytery where she resides is reluctant to ordain her in a non-traditional ministry role. She and her husband graduated from seminary as equals. Now she is behind him in ordination, experience, salary, and benefits. Until she started the ordination process, she never knew her gender would be a disadvantage in ministry.

## Telling Her Story

Anne's story encapsulates the disparity for women in ministry in the PC(USA) in the 21st century. Her sense of call was nurtured and encouraged throughout her life—until she sought full inclusion in ministry through ordination. Then the door for serving in ministry leadership seemed to close for her. Opportunities to serve in the margins, for less pay, no benefits, and no status as an ordained pastor, were available, but the presbytery committee with the power to ordain her was reluctant to do so. She exemplifies a modern Presbyterian orthodoxy in how she developed her faith and sense of call. Yet, the same denomination that nurtured her call through grade school, high school, and college no longer seemed interested in her leadership as ordained clergy, despite her outstanding background, experience, and credentials.

Ordination for women in the Presbyterian Church happened over 60 years ago. The generation of “first” women ordained to ministry in the PC(USA) are now elderly and dying. Subsequent generations have not shared the stories of how women persevered in ministry despite the odds. The lack of storytelling about how women went from “silent, subservient, and submissive” as the polity of the church to full inclusion with ordination isolates women further, as they think they are the only ones encountering problems within their ministry contexts. They consider the problems to be their own individual issues instead of considering them within the larger denominational and historical contexts.

There is a discrepancy between the official policies of the denomination and the actual practices women encounter at a congregational level. Women graduating from seminary don't realize the impact of gender biases as they interview for ministry

positions in a contemporary congregational context. The stated values of the denomination at a national level don't necessarily translate into hiring practices at the local level in congregations and presbyteries.

There are inherent biases in hiring that disadvantage women coming out of seminary, making their lived experience in ministry much different than their male counterparts. Without a community of support, these experiences can be discouraging and overwhelming. Anne's experience shows how a woman with extensive education and ministry experience within the PC(USA) institutions and systems may remain unordained. There is a gap between the discernment and nurturing of a woman's call to ministry and how she may actually be allowed to serve in ministry as an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament. Because PC(USA) women are raised to believe they are equal in calling and ability in ministry, any experiences to the contrary become a woman's personal issue to fix and not a systemic problem to address.

For women discerning their call to ministry today, it seems like women's leadership as equals is a settled matter in the Presbyterian church. However, the polity of women being full members of the church with voice and vote is a recent phenomenon. Modern gender bias cannot be examined without examining the history of women's roles and leadership within the church. Diana Butler Bass says that "being a Christian should involve memory, history and story."<sup>2</sup> For contemporary women in ministry, the history of the women who have gone before them in ministry is not part of their institutional

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<sup>2</sup> Diana Butler Bass, *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story* (New York: Harper One, 2009), 9.



memory. Without knowing the “herstory” of women’s ordination, women today can’t see the patterns and phrases that limit women in ministry leadership.

For women attending seminary in the 21st century, there is no “before” and “after” women’s ordination. For them, women have always been ordained in the denomination during their lifetime. Visibility in leadership has been mixed, but enough women have broken through the “stained glass ceiling” to show that it is possible, if not a regular occurrence. To understand the biases within the denomination, it is important to know how women’s leadership evolved in the church.

### **“The Woman’s Sphere”<sup>3</sup>**

American religion and society have always been overly concerned about the appropriate place of women. The roles of women evolved as the nation evolved, often reflecting the social, political, and cultural needs of an era. In the 19th century, the Cult of True Womanhood emerged as the ideal for women, reflecting four “cardinal virtues” of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.<sup>4</sup> The doctrine of “separate spheres” emerged at this time as well, with the woman’s sphere revolving around the home—family, children, and morality. The man’s sphere was the public world—“economic striving, political maneuvering, and social competition.”<sup>5</sup> A True Woman could only really be happy in her home sphere. Religious activities were deemed appropriate

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<sup>3</sup> Lois A. Boyd and R. Douglas Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America: Two Centuries of a Quest for Status*, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), vii.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Hill Lindley, *“You Have Stept Out of Your Place”’: A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 52.

<sup>5</sup> Graham Warder, “Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” VCU Libraries Social Welfare History Project, 2015, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/woman-suffrage/women-in-nineteenth-century-america-2/>.

because they fell within the virtues of True Womanhood. It is important to note that the cultural dominance of the Cult of True Womanhood centered around white Protestants in the Northeast, with their vast influence on the rest of American society.<sup>6</sup>

Catherine Beecher, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, maintains that “each sex was superior within its assigned sphere” and thus equality is achieved. She goes on to say, “...it is in America, alone, that women are raised to an equality with the other sex.”<sup>7</sup> She wrote in her “Treatise on Domestic Economy”:

In civil and political affairs, American women take no interest or concern, except so far as they sympathize with their family and personal friends; but in all cases, in which they do feel a concern, their opinions and feelings have a consideration, equal, or even superior, to that of the other sex. In matters pertaining to the education of their children, in the selection and support of a clergyman, in all benevolent enterprises, and in all questions relating to morals or manners, they have a superior influence.<sup>8</sup>

It is in this era, under these societal influences, that Presbyterian women flourished in leadership with the mission boards and societies. The General Assembly of 1876 reached a consensus on “woman’s work” through missions and in local congregations. Both denominational leaders and laywomen enthusiastically received this opportunity for women to serve in the church “without stepping beyond the sphere of refined Christian womanhood.”<sup>9</sup> Work within the mission field increased visibility and opportunity for women while maintaining appropriate gender roles and boundaries. The mission field

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<sup>6</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 56.

<sup>7</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 56.

<sup>8</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 56.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret L. Bendroth, “Women and Missions: Conflict and Changing Roles in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1870-1935,” *American Presbyterians* 65, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 50-51, [www.jstor.org/stable/23330790](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23330790).

was part of the “exuberant, optimistic spirit of postwar Protestantism.”<sup>10</sup> The women’s mission boards were an extension of this optimism, allowing the sharing of the gospel in new ways. Women’s mission boards did not “overtly” challenge the traditional ideals of femininity and womanhood. A woman’s primary focus was still the home and children. The purpose of the mission boards reflected the primary focus in evangelizing non-Christian women as a means of converting the entire family.<sup>11</sup> Even the staunchest traditionalists regarding women’s service in the church were swayed by their success in the mission field and their contentment to stay within the “women’s sphere.”<sup>12</sup>

This phrase, “the woman’s sphere,” signaled to both men and women the “silent, subordinate and submissive” nature of women doing work regarding the church. The “woman’s sphere” phraseology within the church context specifically prohibited women from speaking, teaching, or praying aloud in mixed-gender assemblies.<sup>13</sup> If women were perceived to be crossing established gender lines, male church leadership used these key phrases to remind women of their place within the church hierarchy. Women had no voice, vote, or leadership within the church at large. The mission boards were the only place that allowed women to express their faith through leadership in sharing the gospel in a societally accepted manner.

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<sup>10</sup> Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 51.

<sup>11</sup> Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 51.

<sup>12</sup> Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, vii.

<sup>13</sup> Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, vii.

### “Women’s Work for Women”<sup>14</sup>

In 1893, the General Assembly voted that local sessions and congregations could institute the office of deaconess “for ‘godly and competent women’ to minister to those ‘bodily and spiritual needs’ which properly fell ‘within their sphere.’”<sup>15</sup> The vote to institute this office was to recognize “women’s work” in the church as important without having to discuss equality through ordination, thus maintaining the gender status quo. Church leaders sought to engage women’s leadership skills, developed in the mission societies, without causing direct conflict with the male-led denominational established boards.<sup>16</sup>

In 1920, many missions’ organizations celebrated 50 years in existence. In recounting their accomplishments, their membership included one third of the denomination’s women and children and they raised over \$13 million in total contributions.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, their successes in leadership, organization, and fundraising led to their demise. Within the celebration of their success, the women proved that they were neither silent nor subordinate, while remaining submissive to the church structures.

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<sup>14</sup> The Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS) in Philadelphia founded the popular periodical *Woman’s Work for Woman* in 1871. (Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, 14.) This phrase “women’s work for women” was used often to refer to the allowable work, primarily missions, for women to do in the church.

<sup>15</sup> Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 52.

<sup>16</sup> Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 52.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change: Women’s Ordination 50 Years Ago and Now,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* (1977-) 83, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005): 107, [www.jstor.org/stable/23337637](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23337637).

By 1923, the church eliminated the women's mission boards and put them under the national, male-led mission board leadership.<sup>18</sup>

The 1920s saw a shift in leadership, direction, and vision within the mission boards, the denomination, and the women themselves. In the early 1920s, the mission boards were still raising and expending \$3 million annually on their mission projects, including financial support for schools, hospitals, and missionaries.<sup>19</sup> The women's boards were much more successful in fundraising and mission execution than the male-led denominational boards.

In 1920, the Presbyterian Church moved to reorganize the mission boards, publicly stating that it was to achieve more efficiency and centralization.<sup>20</sup> However, power and money were the real underlying reasons. There was concern that the fundraising efforts of the women's boards were siphoning off funds from the denomination. Critics of the success of the women's mission boards pointed to the "feminization" of the church, as opposed to the strictly male-led orthodox Calvinism.<sup>21</sup> In the gender-separated mission boards, the Presbyterian denominational (male) mission leaders never asked the women-run boards how they could so effectively create and grow the mission field to the extent that they did. In 1923, with no voice or vote from the women themselves, the women's boards were absorbed into two denominational boards, with minority representation on the new, combined board and promises of continued

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<sup>18</sup> Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, 31.

<sup>19</sup> Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Bendroth, "Women and Missions," 50. The role of women within the church was part of a larger orthodoxy fight within the Presbyterian Church that began in the 1920s

financial support for the schools and hospitals their previous mission boards supported.<sup>22</sup>

The consequences of the “merger” of the mission boards was profound. Missions at the denominational level never recovered in scope or financially after the consolidation of the boards.

The denomination’s leadership eliminated the one place in which women were allowed to serve the church enthusiastically and autonomously. The women serving the mission boards did not overtly challenge the gender status quo within the denomination. The success of their endeavors, however, certainly did. The move to consolidate mission boards for the sake of “efficiency” propelled the issue of gender equality in church leadership, primarily through ordination in church offices, to the forefront. Katharine Bennett, the recognized leader among the women’s mission boards, noted that young women in the 1920s were “a generation looking with unafraid eyes at all institutions, even ecclesiastical—and asking ‘why?’ of many accepted customs.”<sup>23</sup> Women in leadership of the former mission boards realized they truly could not lead without voice and vote within the denomination. The absorption of the women’s mission boards, as well as the impending economic, gender, and cultural shifts of the 1920s, changed the trajectory for women in church leadership.

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<sup>22</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 304; Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, 31-32.

<sup>23</sup> Boyd and Brackenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America*, 30.

### “Ecclesiastical Feminarchy”<sup>24</sup>

At the same time that the women’s mission boards were eliminated, the 1923 General Assembly moved to “compensate” women for this loss of autonomy and leadership by allowing them to become ordained deacons, with the same privileges as male deacons. Women still could not be ruling elders (members of session) or teaching elders (pastors). Because of the continued discontent among women, including a report entitled “Causes of Unrest” presented by Katharine Bennett and Margaret Hodge, the General Council of the Presbyterian Church formed a commission to study the matter. The committee sent three overtures to the 1929 General Assembly. Overture A granted full equality to women. It was soundly defeated. Overture B allowed women to be ruling elders, eligible to serve on the session of a church. This overture passed, although few women were ordained as ruling elders to serve in this leadership position in local congregations. Overture C proposed to grant licenses to women as evangelists. It was narrowly defeated.<sup>25</sup> In 1938, the General Assembly proposed an official, but unordained, position for women as “commissioned church workers.”<sup>26</sup> The church continued to inch forward in ways that would allow *some* women *some* roles in the church without upsetting the gender status quo. From then, women’s status in the church remained unchanged and unchallenged until the 1950s, when the Northern Presbyterian church

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<sup>24</sup> In response to the perceived growing authority of women in the church as well as the power of the women’s mission boards, Finley D. Jenkins wrote in the *Presbyterian* dated March 27, 1930, “This ‘ecclesiastical feminarchy’ threatens the survival of ‘masculine Calvinistic doctrines.’” Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 54.

<sup>25</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 312.

<sup>26</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 312.

voted to extend full ordination rights to women, allowing women to become teaching elders.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Feminization of the Church<sup>28</sup>**

As the church continued to move through the 20th century, the language of the “woman’s sphere” diminished as, culturally and societally, gender roles became less rigid. Instead, the “feminization of the church” replaced the “woman’s sphere” as the phrase to critique female agency within the church. Feminization in secular occupations is defined as women entering a specific occupation in substantial numbers. It is typically associated with devalued prestige, and reduced wages and job opportunities.<sup>29</sup> The church wrestled with women’s place within the church and the church’s leadership in the 19th century into the middle of the 20th century. Church leaders recognized that the church membership was comprised (and still is today) with more women than men. As long as men remained as the undisputed leaders in the church, this imbalance between genders in membership was tolerated. When women began to advocate for leadership positions, then the arguments for why women cannot and should not lead in the church emerged in new ways.

The “feminization of the church” emerges as an argument and valid reasoning for the subordinate status for women in the church in the 20th century. This phrase was first

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<sup>27</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 105.

<sup>28</sup> In the argument surrounding women’s leadership in the church circa 1929-30, Ethelbert Warfield argued that the genius of Calvinism is that it “is essentially masculine. Nothing worse could happen to the church,” he warned, “than its feminization.” Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 54.

<sup>29</sup> Paula D. Nesbitt, *Feminization of the Clergy in America: Occupational and Organizational Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 26.



leveled in 1906 by the Presbyterian Brotherhood in America, who determined that they needed to “inject ‘vim and vigor and virility’ into a lagging Calvinism.”<sup>30</sup> Their goal was to restore balance within the church by attracting more men with their message. One member noted that the success of the women’s missionary boards had made many men “ashamed of themselves.”<sup>31</sup> In 1911, the Men and Religion Forward Movement launched a country-wide revival that explicitly excluded women in an attempt to draw more men into the church.<sup>32</sup> Although these organizations and events did not make great inroads, they signaled the end of the culturally preferred status given to women for their moral “superiority” within the realm of the church.

The next time the charges of the feminization of the church occurred was during the women’s mission boards merger and acquisition by national leadership. Male denominational leaders were concerned that the women of the church had erected “a rival or parallel” church with their mission boards that competed with the larger denominational body for financial resources. Female mission board leaders countered this argument by saying that when they fundraised, they asked and received “double giving” from their members, thus not diminishing the church’s overall general budget.

The male-led denominational mission boards were also sensitive to criticism they received regarding their costs of running their mission boards. The women used volunteers almost exclusively in their management and execution of their mission

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<sup>30</sup> Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 53.

<sup>31</sup> Bendroth, “Women and Missions,” 53.

<sup>32</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 299.

endeavors, keeping their overhead costs low.<sup>33</sup> The irony of the denomination's decision to merge the boards for efficiency is that they did not eliminate the higher-cost, lower-producing male-led boards, but "merged" the lower-cost, highly productive and efficient women's boards with them. The leadership, fundraising, and mission scope rested safely within the denominational structure, meaning that the male leadership no longer needed to contend with the success of the women's mission boards.

When women's ordination as teaching elders resurfaced in the 1950s, the argument of the "feminization of the church" appeared as the dominant reason against women being ordained as ministers. As in earlier charges of the feminization of the church, this argument revealed itself in the reality that women made up the majority of church membership. The argument made this time was that if women were allowed to be ministers, men would leave, or never be enticed to enter, the church. Furthermore, the argument contended, fewer men would be interested in a career in ministry, thus "feminizing" the profession.<sup>34</sup> In the throes of the debate over women in ministry, the following reasons were most often cited for why women could not achieve equality through ordination:

- Women can't be ministers *and* wives and mothers at the same time
- They would leave ministry once they got married
- Ordained women pastors would disrupt the church practice of the unpaid, but expected, work of the minister's wife within the ministry
- Women's voices don't carry well as speakers
- Women would not be able to answer emergency pastoral calls in the evening<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Lindley, *"You Have Stept Out of Your Place,"* 300.

<sup>34</sup> Lindley, *"You Have Stept Out of Your Place,"* 313.

<sup>35</sup> Lindley, *"You Have Stept Out of Your Place,"* 313.

Many of the excuses from the 1950s are still used today as reasons not to hire women in ministry. The addition to this list in contemporary ministry settings is that “We’ve already had a female minister” is considered a reason not to interview or hire another one. The accusations that women have feminized Christianity continue today.<sup>36</sup>

The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America voted to affirm that “both men and women” might be called to serve as ministers at the General Assembly in May 1955.<sup>37</sup> First Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Pennsylvania ordained Margaret Towner in 1956.<sup>38</sup> Although ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Towner never preached, led worship, or served communion at the church that ordained her.<sup>39</sup> All of the privileges conferred upon her through ordination were moot. Her role was strictly as a Christian Educator.

She affirmed the church’s gender status quo by stating that she had “no designs on the pulpit.”<sup>40</sup> She told her congregation that her ordination would not change anything, but that she would continue to do the educational work she was already doing in their church. She believed women’s ordination would allow cash-strapped churches to hire an assistant minister who could also do Christian education. In many ways, Towner affirmed

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<sup>36</sup> Kristen Rosser, “The ‘Feminization’ of the Church,” Wordgazer’s Word (blog), March 1, 2014, <https://krwordgazer.blogspot.com/2014/03/the-feminization-of-church.html>. Although this is a blog post, it is very well-researched, with links from contemporary and historical sources regarding women in the church.

<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Part I. Journal and Supplement, One Hundred and Sixty-seventh General Assembly, Los Angeles, California, May 19-25, 1955 (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, 1955), 95-98.

<sup>38</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 105.

<sup>39</sup> Sherry Blackman, “The Rise of Women in the Pulpit,” *The Presbyterian Outlook*, October 7, 2019, 12, <https://pres-outlook.org/2019/10/women-in-ministry-october-7-2019/>.

<sup>40</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 105.

the “silent, subordinate and submissive” status of women in the church even in her ordination.

In 1978, Towner changed her opinion of women’s role as ordained ministers from primarily being assistant pastors in charge of Christian education to embracing the full equality ordination entailed for women, including pastoral leadership. She stated, “At that time, I guess, I didn’t know better and that statement has come back to haunt me.”<sup>41</sup> The evolution of women’s leadership within the Presbyterian Church shows that even with the polity of the church embracing equality as the standard for leadership, the practice of women’s leadership in the church tells a different story. From the time Towner was ordained and then marginalized within her role, the standard was set for ordained women to be not-quite-equal in ministry positions.

### **The “Onslaught of Lady Applicants”<sup>42</sup>**

After the Presbyterian Church’s decision to ordain women,<sup>43</sup> the *Christian Century* editorialized in 1957 that they did not expect this to change the church much at all. They assured their readers that they were “not likely to be subjected to any sudden onslaught of lady applicants” to their pulpits.<sup>44</sup> John Craig, a vocal opponent of women’s ordination in the early 1950s, stated that “most female clergy were ‘members of fringe

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<sup>41</sup> Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place*,” 313.

<sup>42</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 112.

<sup>43</sup> The Methodist church voted to extend full ordination rights to women during the same time frame as the Presbyterian church.

<sup>44</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 112. The *Christian Century* went on to say, “a conflict that has long embarrassed groups holding that all Christians are equal members of the body of Christ has been set to rest.”

sects hovering on the edge of Protestantism.”<sup>45</sup> He predicted that, at most, there would be 15 to 20 women ministers by 1970.<sup>46</sup> The *Christian Century* editorial board and John Craig could not have been more wrong. By 1970, there were 76 ordained Presbyterian women, growing to 189 by 1975.<sup>47</sup> Growth for women in ordained ministry grew by 310% between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s.<sup>48</sup> Women have always heard God’s call in their lives. How they have been allowed to answer it within the church hierarchy is what changed in the 20th century.

Women seeking ordination surged again in the 21st century. In the early 2000s, ordained women accounted for 17% of the clergy in the Presbyterian Church.<sup>49</sup> The most recent denominational statistics show that women are 32% of the ordained leadership in the church. However, 59% of the ordained men and 38.5% of the ordained women in the PC(USA) are over the age of 65. Sixty-five percent of the ordained leadership of any gender is over the age of 60. When adjusted for age, looking at ordained leadership in people from their 20s to 59, women comprise 43% of the total ordained leadership in the church.<sup>50</sup> In a document researched by the Board of Pensions in conjunction with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, newly ordained women outnumber men in the Presbyterian Church (USA) 52% to 48% in the last 12 years.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 105.

<sup>46</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 106.

<sup>47</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 106.

<sup>48</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 106.

<sup>49</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change,” 106.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>51</sup> Blackman, “The Rise of Women in the Pulpit,” 12.

Yet, despite women's ordination being a "settled" subject, female pastors still face significant biases in hiring and career promotion. The *Living by the Gospel* document explicitly states, "Over the last 12 years, there has been a distinct gender disparity as to the provision of benefits in the PC(USA)...While the Board cannot know the individual circumstances and choices of those seeking a call, the overall pattern cannot be ignored."<sup>52</sup> Women's experience in ministry does not match the denomination's stance regarding women in leadership. Although women in ministry in the PC(USA) continue to make strides in leadership and achievements, they are still working toward an equality in practice that reflects the equality guaranteed in the polity.

Anne discovered the disparity between the denomination's stance on full inclusion and actual equality for women in ministry after graduating from seminary and beginning the ordination process. Because she was nurtured in her faith and leadership abilities throughout her life, she did not know there would come a time when her call to ministry would not be fully embraced by other congregational and presbytery leaders within the denomination.

The *Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA)* report published by the Presbyterian Mission Agency researched gender discrimination and disparity within the denomination. One female pastor discussed the inequity of opportunity within the denomination this way:

I think the church has tried to pretend that the gender issue is no longer an issue when in reality I think it is more of an issue today than ever before. Churches don't want the female head of staff, or the married woman; they want a male with a wife and 2.5 kids and a white picket fence and instead of exposing this lie and helping equip churches to openly deal with the fact that the gender issue isn't solved—we simply pretend. Seminaries do nothing to prepare pastors to navigate

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<sup>52</sup> The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Living by the Gospel*, 9.

these issues, nor do they do anything to help pastors with understanding and negotiating the terms of call and so women automatically are at a disadvantage as statistics show time and again women find it hard to advocate for themselves...<sup>53</sup>

This pastor expresses her frustration at the lack of acknowledgment of continued gender bias within the denomination. It's not just that it still exists, but that organizations and institutions preparing women for ordained ministry are not equipping them with the information to help them navigate the bias they will experience in interviews and within congregations and presbyteries. Anne's situation shows that this continues to be a problem within the denomination. The common practice for ministry candidates graduating from seminary is to find their first ministry position to become ordained as quickly as they can.

In my field research, both men and women who were mentored found positions faster than those who were not mentored. Women who were mentored took 10 months to find their first position, while it took 11.7 months for women who weren't mentored to find their first position. Men who were mentored found their first position in 3.4 months. Men who were not mentored took 9.9 months to find their first position, virtually the same amount of time it took mentored women.<sup>54</sup>

*Table 1—Time Between Graduation and First Ministry Position*

	Female	Male	Grand Total
No Mentor	11.7	9.9	11.0
Yes	10.0	3.4	8.3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>9.9</b>

<sup>53</sup> *Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA)* report, PC(USA) Research Services, October 19, 2016, 29, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>.

<sup>54</sup> Data compiled from field research for DMIN 736, Fall, 2019, answering the question "How long did it take from graduation to your first ordained call?" Data compiled in months and averaged from respondents.

Mentoring is advantageous in finding a first ordained position. What if Anne had been counselled that it was important for her to find a ministry position first, with her husband trailing her? Would a local presbytery allow a qualified male candidate to remain unordained in their midst for two years, or would they have been more open to creating a position for him to begin his career? These questions are speculative, but there is enough data to presume that if the roles were reversed, the story would be different for both of them.

More women are being ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA), but they are not achieving parity in positions, income, or benefits. From 2007 to 2016, more women (52%) were ordained in the PC(USA) than men (48%). From that same group of ordained pastors, however, 50% of the men were called to pastor and associate pastor positions, while only 37% of the women received calls for those positions.<sup>55</sup> The roles of pastor or associate pastor are key congregational ministry positions that lay the foundation of experience and income for a person's career.

Two other important figures were noted in this article. First, 37% of the women in the study had never received Board of Pensions benefits, while only 23% of the men had not received benefits.<sup>56</sup> Benefits are a key indicator to longevity within a pastoral career. Statistics from the first *Living by the Gospel* study in 2017 showed that pastors without benefits were not actively engaged in a pastoral position at a rate of 50% higher than

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<sup>55</sup> Rev. Frank Clark Spencer, "Hope and Challenge: Vocation Within the PCUSA," *The Presbyterian Outlook*, May 30, 2018, <https://pres-outlook.org/2018/05/hope-and-challenge-vocation-within-the-pcusa/>.

<sup>56</sup> Spencer, "Hope and Challenge."



pastors who received benefits.<sup>57</sup> Board of Pensions president, Frank Spencer, says, “Full participation in our benefits, part of our larger community of care, is associated with substantially better outcomes.”<sup>58</sup> Later, Spencer says in another article, “[the] data...revealed ‘real and distinct and disturbing gender disparity’ particularly in the job patterns for women...”<sup>59</sup> Secondly, compensation for women in the parish job codes studied came in at \$55,672, while men’s compensation was \$65,097. Women earned slightly more than men in one category—temporary pastoral relationships in large churches. They outnumber men 5-to-1 in this category.<sup>60</sup> The patterns for gender inequity repeated themselves in the study released in 2018 as well.<sup>61</sup>

The position, salary, and benefits information stated above confirms research Paul Sullins did in 2000 when he was studying the patterns of ordination and promotion of women in the Episcopal and PC(USA) denominations:

Contrary to my initial expectations, this study found resistance to the ministry of women to be undiminished over the past 20 years both in the aggregate and in its effect on individual careers. Also contrary to expectations, this unchanging resistance was found to be located entirely in congregations, and not at all in decisions of the church hierarchy or other clergy. On both counts it appears that male/female inequality among the clergy is not due to formal institutional

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<sup>57</sup> Rev. Frank Clark Spencer, “From Our President: Benefits Make a Difference,” The Board of Pensions of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), October 3, 2018, <http://www.pensions.org/news-and-events/articles/From-our-President-Benefits-make-a-difference>.

<sup>58</sup> Spencer, “Hope and Challenge.”

<sup>59</sup> Leslie Scanlon, “Board of Pensions Releases Data Showing Benefits Trends, Gender Disparities,” *The Presbyterian Outlook*, October 5, 2018, <https://pres-outlook.org/2018/10/board-of-pensions-releases-data-showing-benefits-trends-gender-disparities/>.

<sup>60</sup> Spencer, “Hope and Challenge.”

<sup>61</sup> The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Living by the Gospel*, 9 and Appendix 6.

discrimination but is a result of embedded cultural values, values that are particularly resident in congregations and that show no indication of changing.<sup>62</sup>

Based upon the statistics revealed within the PC(USA) in 2020, women face the same obstacles in ministry today. The discrepancy between the stated and expressed values of the denomination and the “embedded cultural values” of local congregations continues to be an impediment for career establishment and growth for women in ministry.

Research into denominations allowing women as ordained clergy shows that the official policies of the denomination often don’t match the practices within the denomination at lower levels. The discrepancy between the policy and the practices of an organization is called “loose coupling,” and it is particularly evident in churches.<sup>63</sup> Loose coupling reflects the complicated nature of church organizations and hierarchy. The church at a national level is more sensitive to external cultural pressures, while the local church may be more resistant to national overtures, instead being more responsive to their own internal concerns and biases.<sup>64</sup> One researcher, examining the ordination of women Episcopal priests and women clergy in the PC(USA) (before the denominational merger in 1983) found similar results. Congregations did not have a problem with women ordained to ministry leadership as long as the position was a subordinate one. Once a

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<sup>62</sup> Paul Sullins, “The Stained Glass Ceiling: Career Attainment for Women Clergy,” *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 61, no. 3 (2000): 261, [https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_216770038](https://alliance-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/fui76t/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_216770038).

<sup>63</sup> Jimi Adams, “Stained Glass Makes the Ceiling Visible: Organizational Opposition to Women in Congregational Leadership,” *Gender and Society* 21, no.1 (2007): 82, <https://doi-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0891243206293773>.

<sup>64</sup> Sullins, “The Stained Glass Ceiling,” 245.

woman is considered for what is deemed “senior” leadership, their opinions change, and they are not supportive of women clergy in those positions.<sup>65</sup>

The *Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA)* report states that 9 out of 10 members in the PC(USA) believe that men and women should have an equal opportunity to be a pastor. Yet only 3 out of 10 members think that the denomination needs more female pastors. The report concludes that members believe more in equality of opportunity than they are concerned about equal representation. The researchers surmised that members in the denomination are unaware of the underrepresentation of women as pastors and don’t realize the extent of gender discrepancy in the pulpit.<sup>66</sup> Two issues come into focus with the statistics and conclusions in this report. First, how do local congregations recognize the disconnect between nurturing the faith and sense of call for young women within their own congregations while also rejecting the leadership of an ordained female pastor? Second, if 70% of PC(USA) members think that there are enough women pastors already and more women are being ordained than men within the denomination, where will these women serve?

In her research on religious gender inequality, Elizabeth Ozorak found that women employed interpretation, or “cognitive coping,” to deal with the inequities they found within their religious experience.<sup>67</sup> This allowed them to respond to situations that they felt unable or unwilling to act upon. The most popular strategy within cognitive

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<sup>65</sup> Sullins, “The Stained Glass Ceiling,” 253-256.

<sup>66</sup> *Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA)*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Weiss Ozorak, “The Power, But Not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves Through Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35, no. 1 (1996): 23, <https://www-jstor-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/stable/1386392>.

coping is scientifically referred to as cognitive reframing, or, in lay language, appealing to tradition or historical context to understand one's current situation. Essentially, women acknowledge the inequities within their religious tradition, but they also recognize that they have made progress, historically speaking, and are hopeful that the trajectory will continue toward more gender equality within their tradition.<sup>68</sup>

Presbyterian women moved from little to no recognized status in the church to ordination equality in the 20th century. Yet inequities continue, followed by the same coping, and the same hope that the system will change. Progress *has* been made. However, gender inequality remains within the PC(USA) in the form of salary discrepancies, lack of benefits, and fewer opportunities for full-time ministry.

With more women attending seminary and serving in ordained positions, the church will once again need to wrestle with the “feminization” of the church in the 21st century. In the PC(USA) today, women believe, especially when they are nurtured in both their faith and their call to ministry, that they can serve equally in ordained leadership in the church. The reality for women ordained to ministry, however, is that their experience post-seminary is incongruent with a lifetime of faith formation in the church.

Even though more women are being ordained to ministry in the PC(USA), they are not achieving parity in ministry positions, salary and benefits. Mentorship for women in ministry is an answer to the denominational dilemma of how to solve gender inequality within the church. In an era when the church needs excellent leadership, and more women than men are answering that call to leadership in the church, it is essential that the

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<sup>68</sup> Ozorak, “The Power, But Not the Glory,” 25.

church addresses and dismantles gender inequality. The next section examines obstacles and biases that women encounter as they transition from seminary to ordained ministry.

## SECTION 2: OTHER SOLUTIONS: ORDAINED BUT NOT-QUITE-EQUAL

The first section briefly sketched the history of women's leadership in the church through the mission boards up to the time the denomination voted to ordain women as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament. By the time the opportunity for ordination was achieved in 1955, it occurred with little fanfare and low expectations of very many women pursuing ordination status. However, since Margaret Towner's ordination in 1956, women have steadily increased in numbers as ordained ministers. In the PC(USA) today, women make up 32% of the ordained ministers. In the last twelve years, 52% of the ordinations have been women. However, despite reaching parity in recent ordination statistics, women are still not quite equal to men when it comes to opportunities, salary, and benefits. This section will examine obstacles and biases that women encounter as they transition from seminary to the congregational ministry context. Having been nurtured in their call as equals to the men they were going to seminary with, they emerged to enter the ordination process without knowing they were disadvantaged as women. Many find out in the midst of the process that, despite ordination, they are not quite equal to their male colleagues.

### **The Stained-Glass Ceiling or The Broken Rung?**

The "glass ceiling"—a term introduced more than 40 years ago—refers to an invisible, systemic barrier that prevents women from rising to senior leadership. But contrary to popular belief, the glass ceiling is not the biggest obstacle to

women’s progression. It is actually at the first step up to manager—or the “broken rung.”<sup>69</sup>

Gender disparity and discrimination in the workplace are not new for women. In the business world, it is called the “glass ceiling.” In ministry, it is called the “stained glass ceiling.”

The church and the business world are similar in their approaches to achieving gender parity. They have both focused their attention on women rising to executive positions. When sustained attention is focused on an issue, changes occur as part of solving the initial problem. In ministry, women have achieved more executive pastor positions recently due in part to the focused attention of promoting more women into senior leadership.

The *Presbyterian Outlook* devoted an entire edition to women in ministry, in which the success of eight women in the PC(USA) who had achieved Senior Pastor or Head of Staff positions were highlighted.<sup>70</sup> While it is important to celebrate the success of the women who become Senior or Head of Staff pastors, the church may be better served by focusing on women transitioning from seminary to their first ordained position. The *Women in the Workplace 2019* study showed that women fall behind men in the first promotion from an entry-level position to their first position in management and never catch up. They called this missed step into management the “broken rung” on the ladder

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<sup>69</sup> Rachel Thomas, et al., *Women in the Workplace 2019*, McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, 10, [https://wiw-report.s3.amazonaws.com/Women\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace\\_2019.pdf](https://wiw-report.s3.amazonaws.com/Women_in_the_Workplace_2019.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> An article highlighted eight women who had achieved success within the denomination, while also noting that many women were not serving in *any* ministry position. Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, “Women in Ministry Through the Lens of Former Co-Moderators (Who Are Women in Ministry),” *The Presbyterian Outlook*, October 22, 2019, <https://pres-outlook.org/2019/10/women-in-ministry-through-the-lens-of-former-co-moderators-who-are-women-in-ministry/>.

of success.<sup>71</sup> Prior to the study, many people thought that women either self-selected out of the managerial track for promotions or the lack of women represented in management was due to attrition. However, the study shows the significant gap in the leadership pipeline from the very beginning.

The graphic below from the *Women in the Workplace 2019* report shows men and women begin in entry-level positions in relatively equal numbers.<sup>72</sup> It is in the first promotion to management that men outpace women and women never catch up. Research done for the report revealed that companies who paid attention to the broken rung for women created more career opportunities for women in both the short and long terms. What if the church did something similar?

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas, et al., *Women in the Workplace 2019*, 11.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas, et al., *Women in the Workplace 2019*, 10-11.



THE CORPORATE LADDER: THE FIRST STEP UP TO MANAGER STANDS OUT AS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE FOR WOMEN

AT THE MANAGER LEVEL, THE GAP IN TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN AND MEN IS THE LARGEST

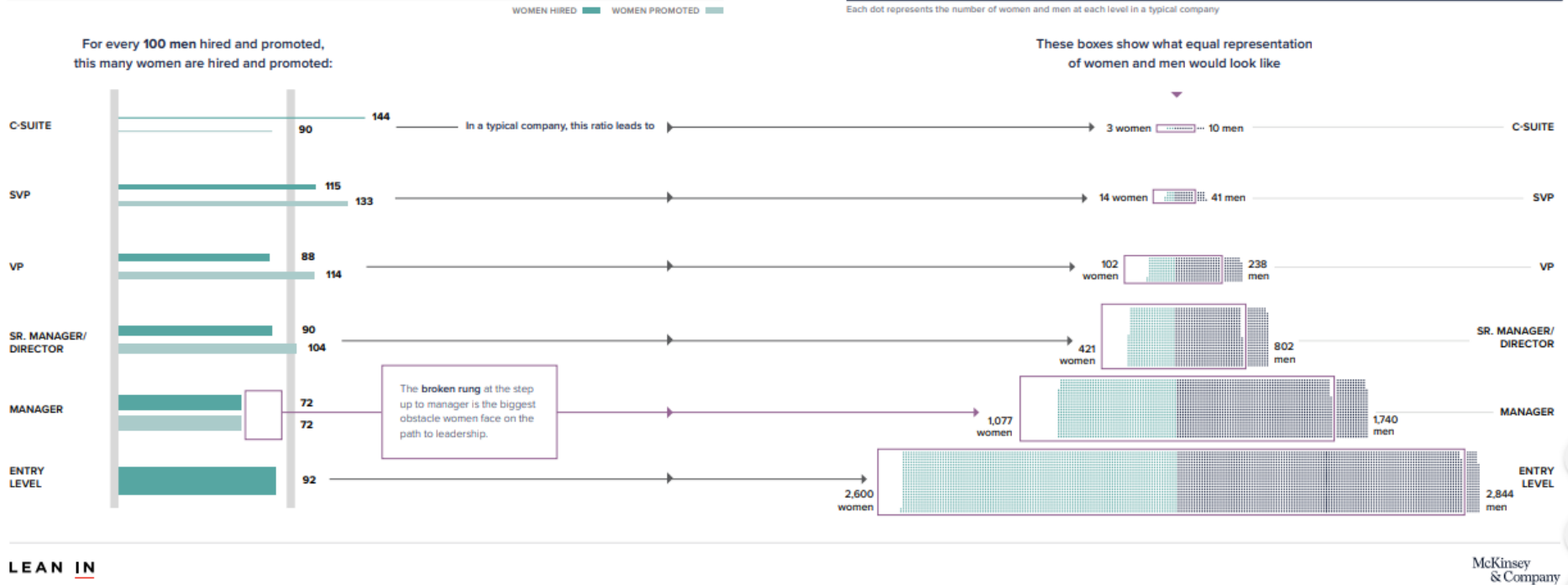


Figure 1—The Corporate Ladder: The First Step Up to Manager Stands Out as the Biggest Obstacle for Women

For women in ministry, their first ordained call is akin to the first promotion to management in business. Although the attention in both business and the church is on promoting women to top positions as a way to show gender equity, what the *Women in the Workplace* study finds is that the pool of female candidates is small or non-existent for top positions because of the broken rung at the beginning of their careers.

The church fails to notice women in ministry, like Anne, who are not being ordained at the same rate as or receiving comparable positions to their male counterparts. If the church were to examine the broken rung theory within their infrastructure, the attention should be on the *first* position a woman attains. Women often do not have the formal and informal networks available to them to understand how they can bypass the broken rung and other obstacles that inhibit their ministry success. The transition from seminary to first ordained call is pivotal. More women will achieve Senior Pastor or Head of Staff positions if the focus is on the beginning of their careers, filling the leadership pipeline with qualified candidates. The stained-glass ceiling will be less of an issue once the broken rung at the beginning of a woman's ministry career is addressed.

Jan Edmiston, former co-moderator of the PC(USA) and currently Executive Presbyterian in the Charlotte Presbytery, shares the status of women in leadership in her own presbytery:

In Charlotte Presbytery, for example, there are no female heads of staff in multiple-staff congregations at this writing. This particular presbytery—blessed in a geographic area with lots of Presbyterian Christians and quite a few large congregations with more than 500 members—currently counts only three women as full-time solo pastors and two women as interim pastors. There are two called and installed female co-pastors serving with male colleagues. But of all the big-steeple and medium-steeple churches, not one is currently served by a female head of staff. The largest group of women fall into the “minister at large” and

“validated ministers” categories. We trust this will shift in the future, but this is the reality at this moment.<sup>73</sup>

This real-life scenario exemplifies barriers for women in ministry already discussed, such as loose coupling, which is the disparity between the stated values of the church nationally and the lived values within the local church. Women in ministry leadership are accepted, generally, and can excel individually, as the Rev. Jan Edmiston demonstrates. However, even with a woman leading a region with healthy Presbyterian churches, female pastors are still not easily accepted as leaders at the local church level.

The church no longer requires women to remain silent, subordinate, and submissive, yet the divergence between the values and practices within the denomination from the national level to the local level become eerily familiar in outcomes. From the time of the missions’ boards, women worked within the church structures to use their gifts for ministry to share the gospel. Less than one hundred years ago, women in the church were removed from their organizations and given minority status on reconstituted church boards. The church hierarchy remained safe in systemic subordination.

Now, women are afforded full equality through the polity of the church with voice and vote in all of the ordained positions—deacon, elder, and minister. As more women are entering ministry, denominational figures show an emerging statistical parity between ordained men and women in their 20s and 30s. The church will need to reconcile its unspoken biases regarding women in ministry leadership. The “ordained but not quite equal” status for women is no longer sustainable.

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<sup>73</sup> Anderson and Edmiston, “Women in Ministry Through the Lens of Former Co-Moderators,” 20.

The church does not address the issue of inequality within its ranks—either real or perceived—for women transitioning from seminary to their first ordained call, leaving many women unprepared for the difficulties they may encounter. In describing the call process, the gaps within it become evident. During the time from discernment to ordination, women are trying to get to the next step within the process, often with steps overlapping one another. To fix the broken rung for women entering ordained ministry, the church needs to honestly assess the call process.

The call process begins with the woman meeting with the session (ruling board) of her church to share her sense of call with them. If the session affirms her sense of call, the woman then comes “under care” of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) at the presbytery level. The CPM designates her as an “Inquirer” and assigns her a committee liaison to help with the various requirements she will need to fulfill to move from the Inquirer phase to the Candidate phase. At any point in this process, a person may apply to and attend seminary. The more frequent occurrence is that a person has discerned their call and already applied to seminary even before meeting with their home church’s session. Often, it is the acceptance to seminary that “affirms” the person’s call, and then they start the Presbyterian proceedings to align their call and seminary attendance with the polity of the denomination. In the PC(USA), successful graduation from an accredited seminary is another step in the process toward ordination.

Then candidates must successfully pass five ordination exams. Once they have completed those requirements and have been approved by their CPM to be “certified ready to receive a call,” then they may interview for ministry positions throughout the denomination. When they find a ministry position that is suitable for ordination, *then* they

may be ordained. This is a broad overview of the process, where different people, committees, and institutions play important roles throughout the process. It is fast-paced and often overwhelming. At what level—home church, presbytery, or seminary—does a woman learn that she enters vocational ministry as not-quite-equal with her male counterparts? The answer is, unfortunately, she learns it through experience interviewing and serving in ministry positions.

In the Learning Pastoral Imagination report, two women share their frustration with how their seminary did not equip them for the reality of being an ordained woman in ministry. Cassandra said it is difficult for women and minorities to find positions directly out of seminary. She wished that the seminary were more direct in their career counseling advice to her. “If you are a 25-year-old single woman looking for a church, you may need an additional vocation to consider, you know, you might not come out with a church right away, you may not come out making enough to sustain yourself.” The LPI report continues, “Given that most women graduates she knows have struggled with these issues, [Cassandra] laments not hearing anyone say to expect it—and how to survive it creatively—during seminary.”<sup>74</sup>

Theresa, another woman in the LPI study, said that she was told that she was “special, called and gifted” while in seminary. She said she excelled at the academic aspect of seminary, but was not prepared for how different ministry was from the academic setting of divinity school. She said this about her transition from seminary to ministry: “You taught us to critique a world and how to tear it down, but you didn’t

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<sup>74</sup> Christian A.B. Scharen and Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, “Learning Pastoral Imagination: A Five-Year Report On How New Ministers Learn in Practice,” *Auburn Studies*, no. 21 (Winter 2016): 39. <http://pastoralimagination.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CSTE-LPI-030116.pdf>.

prepare us to be torn down by it. So, it was really difficult to transition [from school to ministry]. It didn't matter that I got an 'A' on [my] paper."<sup>75</sup>

The women in the LPI study said that is one thing to name injustice "out there" but it was quite another "when one feels its violence or attacks in one's own life and person."<sup>76</sup> The LPI study summarizes that "Explicit engagement with this reality, and strategizing modes of response, would have been a more pragmatic lesson for the actual leadership challenges these students now face in ministry."<sup>77</sup>

Besides the broken rung theory and the difference between policy and practice within the church, women encounter other biases as they search for their first ordained call. The "Prove-It-Again!" bias states that men are hired and promoted based on their potential while women are hired and promoted on their achievements.<sup>78</sup> Women have to demonstrate their competency for a position, not just their potential growth. How can the church overcome its own bias toward giving male seminary graduates positions based upon their potential while not offering female seminary graduates the same opportunities? What if, as Cassandra noted above, seminaries prepared women for potential biases during the interview process and helped them overcome those obstacles?

Another type of bias women may encounter is casuistry bias. Remember the female pastor describing what a church wants in a pastor: "a male with a wife and 2.5 kids"? Casuistic bias happens when people default to making judgments based upon a

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<sup>75</sup> Scharen and Campbell-Reed, "Learning Pastoral Imagination," 39.

<sup>76</sup> Scharen and Campbell-Reed, "Learning Pastoral Imagination," 39.

<sup>77</sup> Scharen and Campbell-Reed, "Learning Pastoral Imagination," 39.

<sup>78</sup> Joan Williams and Rachel Dempsey, *What Works for Women at Work: Four Patterns Working Women Need to Know* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), chap. 2, Kindle.

person's social category, in this case a married man with two children, when faced with a decision between two individuals.<sup>79</sup> This is a particularly difficult bias to identify because people think they are using objective criteria to make their decisions, when in reality they are modifying the criteria used for judgment based upon their unconscious biases.<sup>80</sup>

“Casuistry...[is] a technical term for what happens...when people misapply general rules to justify a specific behavior or use specious reasoning to rationalize their behavior.”<sup>81</sup> This bias explains how the current process of selecting a pastor unconsciously favors men over women even when Pastor Nominating Committees think they are reviewing candidates objectively.

The *Women in the Workplace* study shows that businesses that focus on that “first rung” of hiring and promoting are increasing the number of women leaders at all levels. What if the church focused on first-call positions in a similar manner? Men and women graduate seminary with similar experiences and education. It's in landing their first ordained position—or, in the business world, the promotion to management—that men secure positions, benefits, and experience that set their careers on a significantly different pathway than women in ministry.

Seminaries are not addressing issues of bias with female graduates, nor are the presbytery committees who are charged with their care and oversight as they move through the system. Men and women are on equal footing in the academic setting of

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<sup>79</sup> Michael I. Norton, Joseph A. Vandello, and John M. Darley, “Casuistry and Social Category Bias,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87, no. 6 (December 2004): 817. [https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/norton%20vandello%20darley%20casuistry\\_115b1688-4ccd-435d-abc8-78fe39295b2b.pdf](https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/norton%20vandello%20darley%20casuistry_115b1688-4ccd-435d-abc8-78fe39295b2b.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> Norton, Vandello and Darley, “Casuistry and Social Category Bias,” 817.

<sup>81</sup> Williams and Dempsey, *What Works for Women at Work*, chap. 2, Kindle.

seminary. Women are unaware and unprepared to face the issues of hiring bias and discrimination when they begin to interview for their first ministry position. Without knowing about the biases they may encounter, women will continue to fall behind men in income, benefits, and experience, starting with their first ordained position.

The key transition between seminary and first ordained call remains a vulnerable one for students seeking to become pastors. There are a few programs available, almost all of them funded by the Lilly Endowment through grant initiatives, to ease that transition. Although the Lilly Endowment has impacted countless lives through their grants, it also shows the lack of initiative, imagination, and financial wherewithal in the church to pursue new ideas. As noted below with the Company of New Pastors program in the PC(USA), even good programs eventually need to be sustainable on their own within regional bodies, the denomination, or the seminaries themselves. The Presbyterian Church did not allocate the resources, either financially or in personnel, to continue a program that proved to be beneficial for new pastors transitioning from seminary to congregational ministry.

Furthermore, a student can move from their seminary education to working as a pastor without looking holistically at what they will need to succeed as a pastor. For many new pastors, their focus is task-oriented on what needs to get done for “church.” No one asks how they fuel themselves—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—to be able to sustain the rigors of being a pastor for a long and fruitful career. This is damaging to everyone involved—the pastor and their family, the congregation, and the church at large.



## How Do Women in Ministry Find Support?

Women encounter biases and the broken rung as they transition from seminary to their first ordained call. Despite years of formal education, until they experience it in the interview and ordination process, they do not realize the role their gender plays in the selection of candidates. The next section outlines what different organizations have done or are doing to encourage women in ministry leadership.

The Company of New Pastors (CNP) was a program specific to the PC(USA) that worked with seminary students transitioning to their first called position in ministry. It began as a Lilly grant funded project, but ultimately did not receive denominational funding to maintain the program.

The next organization cited is the Association of Theological Schools Women in Leadership program.<sup>82</sup> Although the ATSWIL does not work with women in ministry in the congregational setting, their work, research, and commitment to women in leadership at theological schools is extraordinary. They have consistently studied women in ministry and leadership with a sustained focus that few other organizations can match.

The other two groups, Young Clergy Women International (YCWI)<sup>83</sup> and RevGalBlogPals,<sup>84</sup> are organizations women created to mitigate the isolation of women in ministry. Both are ecumenical and international. YCWI specifically focuses on female pastors under the age of 40. Both groups work primarily through social media platforms, have large followings, and have integrated their work into nationally recognized

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.ats.edu/resources/current-initiatives/women-in-leadership>.

<sup>83</sup> <https://youngclergywomen.org/>.

<sup>84</sup> <https://revgalblogpals.org/>.

denominational conferences. In terms of sustainability, longevity, and reach, the ideas germinated by women for women in organizations outside of the church have been far more successful than programs created within the institutional church.

### *The Company of New Pastors*

The PC(USA) received a grant for a program called Excellence from the Start from the Lilly Endowment in 2003. The Excellence from the Start grant then grew into the Company of New Pastors (CNP) program. The grant and subsequent program were planned and directed from the Office of Theology and Worship within the national office for the PC(USA). The program expanded and changed, as often is the case with grant-funded projects. The administrative team continued to hone the initial “transition-into-ministry” project throughout the lifetime of CNP, making it more responsive to the mentors and the new pastors it sought to serve.

After the initial grant was awarded, the Lilly Endowment awarded a second grant to extend the work of the CNP team. As of 2013, though, CNP was no longer grant-funded and sought to be self-sustaining through the support of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and their own fundraising efforts. Although the CNP had some moderate fundraising success, the program ceased due to lack of funding in 2017-18.

From the Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, the program described itself as

...a pastoral formation program that seeks both to deepen and sustain the theological foundation of pastoral leaders. Company of New Pastors focuses on the critical period of vocational formation, beginning in seminary and continuing

into the first years of ministry, helping to establish and nurture habits of theological reflection and spiritual formation to sustain a lifetime of ministry.<sup>85</sup>

The CNP emphasized the development of spiritual practices individually as well as in community for pastors during the transition between seminary and their first call. The spiritual disciplines new pastors and the program mentors engaged in were “daily prayer, daily scripture reading and regular and ordered theological reflection in community with others.”<sup>86</sup> Throughout the program, these objectives remained foundational. In the training manual, it states, “Pastoral leaders who are, first and foremost, dedicated disciples can lead worshiping communities to be communities of disciples.”<sup>87</sup> The program also stressed the importance of one’s vocational call, incorporating language from one of the constitutional questions a pastor is asked when they are ordained:

Being a good pastoral leader is more than what one does. What one does as a pastor must flow from who one is as a person called by God. This sense of vocation infuses the actions of the individual, transcends any job description, and grants the freedom and resources necessary to fulfill the promise to serve “with energy, intelligence, imagination and love” as proscribed in the *Book of Order* (W-4.0404h).<sup>88</sup>

From its inception, the CNP was about the spiritual formation of the pastor as they moved from being a student to a full-time pastor. In documents and articles throughout the years, their dedication to this mission was tantamount, even as the program grew, changed, and ultimately ended.

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<sup>85</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, March 2014, 5. Provided via email. The “Covenant” for pastors participating in the CNP can be found in Appendix C.

<sup>86</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, 5.

<sup>87</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, 5.

<sup>88</sup> Office of the General Assembly, *Book of Order 2019-2021: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II*, 2019, [http://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2019-boo-elec\\_071219.pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2019-boo-elec_071219.pdf).

Initially, participants in the CNP were invited in their second year of seminary, with a Seminary Cohort led by a faculty mentor. They would meet monthly throughout their senior year, focusing on the study of the ordination vows they would take as part of their first call. After graduation, all members would meet at the National Transition Gathering the following fall. They would be assigned to Covenant Groups that would meet approximately every eight months for the next three to four years. At the beginning of the program, cohorts were geographically mixed to give the widest possible exposure of students to different regions. Later, as the program looked at saving on expenditures, the cohorts were assigned and met regionally.

The CNP stressed that pastoral ministry is a “corporate vocation.” Citing Jesus’ apostolic model of shared ministry within community, the CNP emphasized the importance of forming friendships with other pastors. The training manual specifically cites the development of a pastoral community as a “shield against loneliness and discouragement” that can lead to burnout. The manual states, “Ministry in community embodies and authenticates the Gospel we proclaim...”<sup>89</sup> Participating in a mentored peer group was part of the CNP covenant for participants. This is the group the pastor met with regularly after graduation. Praying the daily office was central to their time together. Fellowship over meals and in downtime was also stressed..<sup>90</sup>

Besides the spiritual disciplines undergirding the basis of the program, it was also reliant upon the Pastor-Theologian Consultation Model. This model is outlined in detail

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<sup>89</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, 7.

<sup>90</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, 8.

in the Mentor's Guide.<sup>91</sup> The model asks pastors within a group to study the same book, work on a theological reflection paper regarding the topic, and present and discuss the paper to the group in a retreat-like setting. The purpose is to develop the theological "muscles" of a new pastor while sharing within community. This model had been used in other areas of the denomination with success, so it was incorporated as part of the CNP project as well.

When the Company of New Pastors initially started, it was considered a "boutique" ministry for the selected "best and brightest" within several of the denomination's seminaries. However, as the program was implemented, it became clear that the CNP needed to be more accessible. The program remained by invitation only but expanded to several non-PC(USA) seminaries in 2015. It is interesting to note that not all PC(USA) seminaries participated or wanted to participate in the CNP program. This realization that a program located at the denominational headquarters in the Office of Theology and Worship could not secure the participation of all nine PC(USA) seminaries underlies the difficulties in disseminating a program, even a good one, within the denomination. It also strengthens my conviction that my mentoring model needs to be outside of but working with individuals, churches, seminaries, and regional governing bodies. As pointed out in the overview to this section, groups and organizations outside of the denominational framework have more opportunity to be flexible and responsive to the needs of their members, allowing them to be sustainable in ways denominational programs cannot be.

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<sup>91</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor's Guide, 11. The Pastor-Theologian Consultation Model can be found in Appendix C.

After reviewing documents shared with me by Rev. Jim Kitchens, a Program Mentor with CNP and Excellence from the Start, it became evident that several areas were a challenge in executing both the grant and the program. The first was simply administering a program with participants that spanned across the United States. Another challenge was communication among the mentors for the program. The Program Mentors met together for the first time together in 2012. The first time the Faculty Mentors and Pastor Mentors met, through conference calls, occurred in 2012 as well. Prior to that, the Faculty Mentors and Pastor Mentors worked independently of each other, even though they were working toward the same goals in the program.

The CNP program was in transition at this point, trying to become self-sustaining within the denomination. It seems unfortunate that the leadership within the program did not begin collaboration earlier. Fundraising and long-term sustainability also were addressed during this transition. Several members of the CNP team solicited donations totaling \$35,000 for the program. This is significant, but also reflects the difficulty the team must have encountered because the Company of New Pastors was viewed as a national, denominational endeavor.<sup>92</sup> In an article written in 2016, the CNP boasted of 400 current participants and 500 alumni.<sup>93</sup> Although this is a significant number of participants, it did not seem to translate as something meaningful either locally or nationally.

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<sup>92</sup> Charles A. Wiley, *Report to the Lilly Foundation: Company of New Pastors- Grant 2008 1514-0000* (Louisville, KY: Office of Theology and Worship Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2013).

<sup>93</sup> Emily Enders Odom, "Company of New Pastors Program Expands to More Seminaries," Presbyterian News Service, October 6, 2016, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/company-new-pastors-program-expands-seminaries/>

One wonders if a regional concentration working with new pastors, rotating annually to different regions, might have produced more support for the program as it sought to be sustainable. Synods, presbyteries, and local churches could then see the tangible results of a transition to ministry program like CNP on both pastors and congregations within their midst. It appears that while the Company of New Pastors did everything right, they had no one to advocate for them on the larger church stage. Why does the church—locally, regionally, and nationally—cede innovation and imagination to large funding organizations like the Lilly Endowment without maintaining the successes of their endeavors?

The Company of New Pastors specifically integrated the concept of mentoring within their program. They considered the faculty and pastoral leaders as mentors within CNP. In the CNP Mentor's Guide, the role of mentor in the program is delineated this way:

- A mentor is a *counselor*, observing needs in participants and responding to those needs in a manner that fosters intellectual and spiritual growth.
- A mentor *keeps account*, holding participants to standards and promises as a way of enabling them to transcend the walls of mediocrity and self-deception that rationalization erects.
- A mentor is a *teacher*, offering participants knowledge born both of study and of experience as they face the varied tasks, perplexities, and exigencies of ministry.
- A mentor is a *model*, embodying what it means to be a good and faithful pastor.
- A mentor is a *friend*, supporting, encouraging, enjoying and sacrificing for a sister or brother in Christ.<sup>94</sup>

The manual continues,

Mentors work in teams of two, embodying in their own mutual friendship the graces, benefits, and challenges associated with pastors learning from and with each other how best to fulfill their calling as servants and apostles of Jesus. Their

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<sup>94</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor's Guide, 16. Emphasis in original.

relationship furnishes an example to the rest of how the covenantal, corporate character of the pastoral vocation actually works itself out.<sup>95</sup>

The definition of mentors and mentoring will be explored in depth in the next section.

When the denomination ceased funding CNP, it made a budgetary decision without considering the potential impact of future pastoral leaders within the church. The denomination failed—and continues to fail—to look at the investment they make into each ministry candidate in time and money just to complete a seminary education. This investment requires personal time and financial sacrifices to achieve. It reflects the support of a local church and a presbytery, both in time and financially. Graduating from seminary and transitioning to a first call is not the finish line, but the beginning of their journey as pastors. Proper support in this key transition time gives pastors the lifegiving spiritual practices and community that will sustain them for a long career. Without the support of colleagues in ministry, they are at risk for isolation and the problems associated with it. In an era when denominational loyalty, as well as adherence to a religious lifestyle, continues to decline, those tasked with the preparation of a ministry candidate cannot assume spiritual practices and community are in place to sustain them personally or professionally. What would happen if those discerning their call to ministry practiced spiritual disciplines in community throughout their journey to ordination? Could spiritual formation begin even earlier, as part of their youth experience, to either help with discernment to ministry or another vocational call?

It is much easier to see some of the shortcomings of the CNP program now that it has ended. After reading through the documents and speaking to Rev. Kitchens, it was

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<sup>95</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor's Guide, 16.



obvious to me they were passionate about the work they were doing. It is difficult to manage all the moving pieces of a grant, transitioning to an established national program while dealing with the financial pressures and people involved at all levels. It is unfortunate that the denomination did not look at this transition to ministry program as a long-term investment in the pastors who will lead the churches of the future. It is easier to retain pastors by equipping them with the tools they need as they transition from seminary to ministry than to try to attract, educate, and replace new pastors each subsequent generation.

*The Association of Theological Schools Women in Leadership (WIL) Program*

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) recognized the importance of nurturing women in leadership as early as 1972. The ATS celebrated its 20th anniversary of Women in Leadership in early 2018. Mary Young, the director of leadership education, said in her opening remarks at the 20th anniversary conference, "...since 1997, ATS has designed intentional educational programming to support women faculty and administrators and to assist schools in their efforts to include women in leadership positions."<sup>96</sup>

One of the early pioneers in the ATS's WIL programing was Barbara Brown Zikmund, known affectionately as BBZ within the organization. She was the president of Hartford Seminary in the 1990s and receive the ATS Distinguished Service Award in 2004. She noted that the ATS started recording gender data in 1971. In that year, women

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<sup>96</sup> Eliza Smith Brown, "150 Theological Educators Celebrate 20th Anniversary of Women in Leadership," *Colloquy Online*, March 2018, 1, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/colloquy-online/150-theological-educators-celebrate.pdf>.

were 10% of the students, 3% of the faculty and 12% of the full-time administrators.<sup>97</sup> As of the 20th anniversary celebration, BBZ noted that women comprised 35% of the students, 25% of the faculty and 39% of the full-time administrators.<sup>98</sup>

Another article noted that when the ATS started the Women in Leadership program, there were 30 women who occupied chief executive and chief academic officer positions out of the approximately 450 positions available in ATS member schools, representing less than 7% overall. In 2016-17, there were “73 women serving in approximately 580 positions” with a larger number of ATS member schools, raising the percentage to 12.5% overall.<sup>99</sup> The ATS concentrates their efforts on faculty and administrative positions for women in leadership in theological schools. Women in Leadership estimates that over 800 women have participated in their conferences, which are designed “to encourage and equip women in their roles as leaders and potential leaders in ATS institutions.”<sup>100</sup> The Women in Leadership program has been grant-funded through the Carpenter Foundation. The Lilly Endowment has provided funding for most of the conferences and staffing of WIL since 2006.<sup>101</sup>

The ATS shared results from a Women in Leadership survey, revealing how women who have attended their WIL conferences are more confident in their leadership

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<sup>97</sup> Brown, “150 Theological Educators Celebrate 20th Anniversary of Women in Leadership,” 2.

<sup>98</sup> Brown, “150 Theological Educators Celebrate 20th Anniversary of Women in Leadership,” 2.

<sup>99</sup> “Carpenter Grant to Fund ATS Research and 20th Anniversary Celebration for Women in Leadership,” The Association of Theological Schools, January 2017, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/colloquy-online/carpenter-grant-to-fund-research.pdf>.

<sup>100</sup> The Association of Theological Schools, “Carpenter Grant to Fund ATS Research and 20th Anniversary Celebration for Women in Leadership.”

<sup>101</sup> The Association of Theological Schools, “Carpenter Grant to Fund ATS Research and 20th Anniversary Celebration for Women in Leadership.”

abilities. When asked to respond to the statement, “I am a leader,” WIL participants responded with “strongly agree” at 72% and “agree” at 28%. None of the WIL participants marked “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” Women who did not participate in Women in Leadership conferences were asked the same question. Of them, 54% answered strongly agree and 39% agreed with the statement. However, 5% disagreed with the statement and 2% strongly disagreed.<sup>102</sup> The researchers see the statistics from surveying conference participants versus non-conference participants but can’t quantify scientifically “why” it is this way. At the end of the article, the author notes the importance of avoiding claiming causality in reviewing research, i.e., that Women in Leadership conferences develops more women leaders.<sup>103</sup>

As the ATS’s Women in Leadership conferences demonstrate, it is powerful when women affirm other women in their leadership abilities. Sometimes, it is simply affirming the entirety of their lives as they carry the different roles of wife, mother, minister, daughter, sister, caregiver, professor, pastor, administrator—and seeing all of them integrated into the person standing before them. Women who have achieved career success at the levels required to be selected as part of an ATS conference program or a DMin program know that they have *something* special inside them. They’ve seen glimmers of it in the work they’ve done to get them to where they are. However, that “spark” or “something” has likely never been tended, coaxed, encouraged, or affirmed in

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<sup>102</sup> Deborah H.C. Gin, “Women in Leadership Survey: What We Found May Not Be What You Think,” *Colloquy Online*, June 2018, 2-3. <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/colloquy-online/women-in-leadership-survey.pdf>.

<sup>103</sup> Gin, “Women in Leadership Survey,” 5.

any consistent way. An ATS Women in Leadership conference or a doctoral cohort ignites the spark and tends the flame in a way that cannot be extinguished.

Once affirmation begins, women have confidence in themselves and their abilities to a much greater extent. They may rely on the support network that helped them recognize and celebrate their gifts and abilities, but they also trust themselves more in leadership situations. As they trust themselves more, they encourage others in their gifts as well. It is important to avoid implying causality in research. Maybe more research needs to be conducted specifically on the development of women in ministry leadership to determine patterns leading to consistent success.

### *Young Clergy Women International*

The Rev. Susan Olson founded The Young Clergy Women Project (TYCWP) in November 2006. A grant from the Louisville Institute in 2007 supported their preaching conference, board meeting, and web page. TYCWP is now Young Clergy Women International (YCWI).<sup>104</sup> This group is open to ordained women in ministry under the age of 40.<sup>105</sup> They meet primarily online through closed groups on social media platforms, but also have annual gatherings and regional gatherings for women to meet in person for continuing education and fellowship. Rev. Olson said this about YCWI:

My interest in the project is both professional and personal. Professionally, I work at a theological school, and am interested in ways to make transitions to ministry smoother for my students and others. Also, my first master's degree was in the social sciences, and I enjoy the research aspect of the project.

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<sup>104</sup> "Our Founder," Young Clergy Women International, accessed July 20, 2020, <https://youngclergywomen.org/about/our-founder/>.

<sup>105</sup> "Membership in Young Clergy Women International," Young Clergy Women International, accessed July 20, 2020, <https://youngclergywomen.org/about/membership-yewi/>.

On the personal end, I was ordained in my twenties, and remember the searing isolation of those years. Things have changed, but many of the same things are issues for young women. I have stood, and continue to stand, on the mighty broad shoulders of first generation of ordained young women, and for that I am grateful. If I can do even a bit of the same, I would count it as joy.<sup>106</sup>

YCWI is a non-profit organization that is ecumenical and international in scope.

According to their Facebook page, they have 1,600 members, with an additional 5,600 people “liking” and “following” the page. YCWI created an e-zine, *Fidelia*,<sup>107</sup> for and about young clergy women in 2007. It continues to publish online regularly on their website [www.youngclergywomen.org](http://www.youngclergywomen.org). YCWI offers a group specifically focused on young women discerning their call to ministry called “On the Road” Young Clergy Women. As with the other YCWI communities, an application is submitted before admission to the password-protected online community is granted. The YCWI community initially was grant-funded and benefited from some other grant partnerships during its early years, but appears to be self-sustaining through volunteer leadership.

#### *RevGalBlogPals—Creating Community for Clergywomen*

RevGalBlogPals is a non-profit organization that is also ecumenical and international in scope. Under their “Guiding Values” on their website, they state, “RevGalBlogPals ministers to and with clergywomen around the world and across denominations through resource creation, online community and continuing

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<sup>106</sup> Young Clergy Women International, “Our Founder.”

<sup>107</sup> “Magazine,” Young Clergy Women International, accessed July 20, 2020, <https://youngclergywomen.org/magazine/>.

education.”<sup>108</sup> Their Facebook group is private and open to clergywomen only. The group currently has over 3,200 members.

Rev. Martha Spong, one of the founders of the RevGalBlogPals group, received a grant from the Louisville Institute in 2017-18 for a Pastoral Study project entitled “Alleviating Isolation: The Role of Online Community in Sustaining Clergywomen.”<sup>109</sup> Unlike the other ministry initiatives noted previously that were launched *through* grants, RevGalBlogPals started as a blog, grew to other platforms, and *then* received a grant to study issues that continued to emerge through their online platforms. Rev. Spong says she was a clergy-mom looking for other clergy-moms, so she turned to the internet and started writing a blog to find the connection she could not find locally. That was in 2004. RevGalBlogPals was launched in 2005. Now, she says, virtual connection and communication is the norm. In her research project, she found that 98% of her digital survey respondents connected with others on Facebook, while 92% cited texting as their preferred form of connection. However, 10.57% (82 respondents) answered the question “Where have you found support specific to clergy? Clergywomen?” with “none, very little/not much and even LOL.”<sup>110</sup> Rev. Spong notes that “Collegial relationships are therefore invaluable. Pastors operate at a disadvantage when they lack community with

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<sup>108</sup> “Guiding Values,” RevGalBlogPals, accessed August 17, 2020, [https://revgalblogpals.org/guiding\\_values/](https://revgalblogpals.org/guiding_values/).

<sup>109</sup> Martha Spong, “Alleviating Isolation: The Role of Online Community in Sustaining Clergywomen,” Louisville Institute, <https://louisville-institute.org/our-impact/awards/pastoral-study-project/13185/>.

<sup>110</sup> Martha Spong, “Women in Ministry: Sustaining Clergywomen Online and In Person, Part 2,” *Columbia Connections* (blog), March 28, 2019, <https://www.ctsnet.edu/women-in-ministry-sustaining-clergywomen-online-and-in-person-part-2/>.

other clergy.”<sup>111</sup> Spong’s research showed that community-making in contemporary life shifted toward activities and common interests and away from neighborhoods. While this accommodates women living in urban or suburban areas, Spong found geography to be an isolating factor in over 51% of her digital survey respondents.<sup>112</sup>

Spong’s research is supported by two different, yet complementary, sources regarding the need for community. The first is biological. Human beings are wired to be connected with one another. She quotes from *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection* by John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick that human beings are “obligatorily gregarious.” She summarizes the information this way, “Loneliness diminishes our executive control, which is to say, lonely people make poorer choices about what to eat or drink, whether to smoke, even about sexual behavior.”<sup>113</sup> Understanding that isolation is not simply a social connotation, but a biological one, should impact how we develop and treat new ministers, especially in the key transition time between seminary and a first call, when isolation and loneliness are sure to emerge.

The other resource comes from the Lilly-funded *Flourishing in Ministry* project at Notre Dame University. They look at the well-being of pastors through the lens of social science, seeking “to understand what constitutes good work for pastors, their families and the churches” they serve.

One of the most significant insights from our research is the importance of membership for the well-being of pastors. The degree to which a pastor experiences a sense of belongingness—community, fidelity, and mutuality—with

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<sup>111</sup> Spong, “Women in Ministry: Sustaining Clergywomen Online and In Person, Part 2.”

<sup>112</sup> Martha Spong, “Women in Ministry: Clergywomen Need Community, Part 1,” *Columbia Connections* (blog), March 21, 2019, <https://www.ctsnet.edu/women-in-ministry-clergywomen-need-community-part-1/>.

<sup>113</sup> Spong, “Women in Ministry: Clergywomen Need Community, Part 1.”

other pastors appears to be one of the most important factors of that pastor's flourishing. Pastors who experience a strong sense of membership in the community of pastors are much more likely to experience and sustain high levels of happiness and thriving over many years. They also appear to be the most resilient and are among those most likely to experience a long and fruitful ministry. In other words, membership appears to be one of the essentials for flourishing.<sup>114</sup>

What Spong sought after as a clergy-mom looking for other clergy-moms was a sense of community and belonging that she could not find "in person" within her geographic area. The *Flourishing in Ministry* project confirms that a sense of belonging contributes significantly to a pastor's thriving and resiliency. Spong concludes "that virtual community is real community, that it forms and re-forms more quickly than face-to-face community." Furthermore, her experience, informed by research, showed that the combination of online and in-person groups develop the deepest and most abiding relationships.<sup>115</sup>

### *What's Next?*

Women achieved equality in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the 20th century through ordination in all offices. Despite early estimations that women would account for a tiny minority of ordained pastors, in the 21st century, women currently are 32% of the ordained pastors in the PC(USA).. Yet even though these numbers should suggest greater parity in the pulpit, women still receive fewer full-time positions, benefits, and key positions for promotions. Often women in ministry don't realize the disparity until they have graduated from seminary and are searching for their first ordained call.

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<sup>114</sup> Matt Bloom, *The Flourishing in Ministry Project*, (Mendoza College of Business: University of Notre Dame, 2013), 35, [https://wellbeing.nd.edu/assets/198819/emerging\\_insights\\_2\\_1\\_.pdf](https://wellbeing.nd.edu/assets/198819/emerging_insights_2_1_.pdf).

<sup>115</sup> Spong, "Women in Ministry: Sustaining Clergywomen Online and In Person, Part 2."



The obstacles women face in becoming a minister necessitate more intentional community and formation through their journey. What if women discerning their call to ministry were mentored through seminary and their first ordained call? Would mentoring women fix the broken rung in the PC(USA)? What would the impact of mentoring be on the mental, physical, and spiritual health and well-being of women serving as pastors?

### SECTION 3: THE SOLUTION:

#### MENTORSHIP: AN OLD PRACTICE IN A NEW WAY

In the previous section, different methods and organizations that help students transition from seminary to their first pastoral call were highlighted. The PC(USA) launched a successful grant-funded program called The Company of New Pastors. Unfortunately, it was not financially sustainable at the national level. The Association of Theological Schools Women in Leadership program consistently researches and publishes work on the status of women in leadership positions in theological schools. While they do not deal directly with congregational ministry leadership, the barriers to success in theological schools and congregational ministry are often comparable. Two organizations, Young Clergy Women International and RevGalBlogPals, were started by women for women outside of denominational or institutional structures to meet the needs of women in ministry. Both groups have been successful in establishing and growing connectional outlets for women in ministry, online and in person. YCWI focuses exclusively on clergy women under the age of 40. RevGalBlogPals initially began as a group of clergy-moms, but grew to include all ordained women in ministry. What all four organizations have in common is the impact of connecting and mentoring women in ministry through different venues.

In this next section, I will explore mentoring historically and in modern practice. Very little research, practice, and writing has been done on mentoring in ministry, so the research from other disciplines will be applied to ministry contexts. Mentoring for women in ministry will be explored as an important way to overcome biases and

obstacles, allowing women to achieve parity in salary, benefits, and ministry positions in the PC(USA).

### **Where Did Mentoring Come From?**

History most often credits Athena, the goddess of wisdom, as the embodiment of the first mentor. In Homer's *The Odyssey*, she appears to Odysseus's son, Telemachus, as Mentor, an old family friend, to help guide him during his father's absence.<sup>116</sup> Athena as Mentor guides Telemachus to embrace who he is supposed to be in his family and society. This story is most commonly told as how the concept of mentoring began.

However, it was really the French writer, cleric, mystic, and educator Francois de Salignac de La Mothe-Fenelon (1651-1715) who should be credited for our modern definition of a mentor. In 1699, he wrote *Les Aventures de Telemaque*. In it, he parodied the Odyssey-like journey of Mentor with Telemachus in a way that truly educated Telemachus in the proper way for a young man to rule. Fenelon was the tutor to King Louis XIV's grandson when the book was published. It became one of the most read political books of its time.<sup>117</sup> The popularity of the book was so great that it was translated into English in 1699-1700, German in 1700, and Italian in 1719. It was the most reprinted book of the 18th century.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, linguistic research reveals that the use of the word "mentor" entered popular language around the 1750s, in conjunction with the

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<sup>116</sup> B.R.J. O'Donnell, "The Odyssey's Millennia-Old Model of Mentorship," *The Atlantic*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/10/the-odyssey-mentorship/542676/>.

<sup>117</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Mentor," accessed May 7, 2020 via George Fox.

<sup>118</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Mentor," accessed May 7, 2020 via George Fox.

popularity of Fenelon's book.<sup>119</sup> It is through Fenelon's portrayal of Mentor in his book that the word has become synonymous with "wisdom, guidance, counseling and advising."<sup>120</sup> The concept of mentoring has found a resurgence in the last 20 years in business and academia, with the most research coming from those areas of interest and study.

Although mentoring is not actively engaged in in the modern church, this was not always the case. In his book *Soul Mentoring*, David Robinson reinterprets Gregory the Great's classic *The Book of Pastoral Rule* on mentoring clergy. Gregory the Great became the pope, reluctantly, in 590. He wrote his pastoral book on mentoring to one of his own mentees, John, the archbishop of Ravenna, Italy in 591.<sup>121</sup> "For a millennia [sic], from the late sixth century well into the sixteenth century, *Pastoral Care* [Robinson's translation of the title] was the most popular mentoring manual among spiritual leaders across the Roman Empire, an ancient gold mine of practical wisdom for the soul care."<sup>122</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that the upheaval of the Reformation, with the ensuing political and religious battles, may have halted the sharing of Gregory's wisdom from one generation of pastoral leaders to the next.

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<sup>119</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, "Entry Profile," accessed May 7, 2020 via George Fox

<sup>120</sup> Reprinted by permission of the author by Fred Nickols, Managing Partner of Distance Consulting. Andy Roberts, "Homer's Mentor: Duties Fulfilled or Misconstrued," *History of Education Journal* (November 1999), [https://nickols.us/homers\\_mentor.htm](https://nickols.us/homers_mentor.htm).

<sup>121</sup> David Robinson, *Soul Mentoring: Discovering the Ancient Art of Caring for Others* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), xvi, 145.

<sup>122</sup> Robinson, *Soul Mentoring*, 142.

However, upheaval can lead to transformation. Gregory the Great did not want to be pope and even asked not to be confirmed.<sup>123</sup> Yet his dedication to being the “servant of the servants of God” yielded a foundational work of pastoral care and mentoring in the early church that lasted for one thousand years.<sup>124</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that the significant changes brought by the Reformation altered the Catholic Church in such a way that surviving the Protestant insurgence took precedence over how the next generation of priests were trained and mentored.

We are in the midst of another religious upheaval, with the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and political discontent. The foundation of the modern American church context—the ability to meet in a building to worship and fellowship together—dissipated in a matter of days in March 2020. How will the church transform under these circumstances? The toll on church leadership, in burnout, health crises, and retirements, is just beginning to become evident. In this time of upheaval, uncertainty, and transformation, mentoring emerges as a way to abide with pastors through both ministry and life. Fenelon’s version of Mentor, offering “wisdom, guidance, counseling and advising,” is sorely needed for ministers in today’s tumultuous ministry contexts.

### **Mentoring: Defined and Practiced**

The commonly used definition of mentoring is “a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of

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<sup>123</sup> Robinson, *Soul Mentoring*, 144.

<sup>124</sup> Robinson, *Soul Mentoring*, 144.

helping and developing the protégé’s career.”<sup>125</sup> In my field research, when asked how to define a mentor or a mentoring relationship, respondents replied predominantly with the accepted traditional definition. Respondents cited “experience” 76% of the time and “advice, support, guidance and/or wisdom” 60% of the time. An emphasis on “relationship” and “journey” tied at 24% each. Ministers today continue to seek the same mentoring characteristics attributed to Athena and portrayed by Fenelon’s Mentor.

Yet, the practice of mentoring is lost in ministry contexts today. Will Willimon, in a footnote, writes this, “That nearly all of the research and most of the thoughtful books on mentoring (with the exception of this volume!) are from business and academia is judgment upon the too-limited practice of pastoral leadership done by many clergy.”<sup>126</sup> Willimon, echoing the sentiments of other ministry leaders, says that ministry is too demanding to be done “solo.” The sense of isolation emerges again among clergy persons, who are often unprepared for this feeling and how to cope with it. Willimon, summarizing the philosopher Theodore Zeldin, says isolation is “a byproduct of romantic individualism.”<sup>127</sup> At best, it “stifles creativity and truthfulness.” At worst, it may contribute to lapses in behavior and clergy misconduct.<sup>128</sup>

Amy Banks proposes that the “self-made man” imagery that is so embedded within the American mythology is scientifically incorrect. Citing the relational cultural

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<sup>125</sup> Belle Rose Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work Theory, Research, and Practice* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2007), <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.4135/9781412976619>.

<sup>126</sup> Will Willimon. “The Gifts of Mentors in Ministry,” in *Mentoring for Ministry: The Grace of Growing Pastors*, ed. Craig T. Kocher, Jason Byasse, and James C. Howell (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), Chapter 6, Kindle.

<sup>127</sup> Kocher, Byasse, and Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry*, Chapter 6, Kindle.

<sup>128</sup> Kocher, Byasse, and Howell, *Mentoring for Ministry*, Chapter 6, Kindle.

theory, she states that growth happens in relationships, not in separation and autonomy.<sup>129</sup>

The Social Pain Overlap Theory (SPOT theory) suggests that “social connections are so essential to the health and well-being of humans that they share a neurological pathway with physical pain. The human body and mind do not differentiate between physical pain and social rejection or isolation in terms of the amount of stress placed on the body.”<sup>130</sup>

Although Banks’ research focuses on early connective relationships, specifically between parent and infant, she notes the evidence of the human brain’s neuroplasticity to change as situations change. The brain can adapt and grow based upon good relationship connections.<sup>131</sup> She states, “A healthy connection may quite literally rewire the brain to yearn for more healthy connections.”<sup>132</sup>

Compare this with Martha Spong’s research that reveals “isolation is a daily reality for many clergywomen.”<sup>133</sup> She continues that “even in moderate-to-progressive mainline denominations, the default preference for churches is a white, male pastor. Women thus tend to be called or appointed to pulpits in less desirable social, theological, and/or geographic locations, where they are in a social fishbowl and a collegial desert.”<sup>134</sup> Spong explored the viability of online community in response to the vocational and

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<sup>129</sup> Amy Banks, “Developing the Capacity for Connection,” *Zygon Journal of Religion & Science* 46, no. 1 (2011): 168, <https://doi-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-9744.2010.01164.x>.

<sup>130</sup> Banks, “Developing the Capacity for Connection,” 171.

<sup>131</sup> Banks, “Developing the Capacity for Connection,” 174.

<sup>132</sup> Banks, “Developing the Capacity for Connection,” 175.

<sup>133</sup> Martha Spong, “Alleviating Isolation: The Role of Online Community in Sustaining Clergywomen,” Pastoral Study Project grant from the Louisville Institute, 2017, 1, <https://marthaspong.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/louisville-institute-pastoral-study-project-report-with-bibliography-1.pdf>.

<sup>134</sup> Spong, “Alleviating Isolation: The Role of Online Community in Sustaining Clergywomen,” 3.

geographical isolation experienced by clergywomen. Her conclusion was that online community *was* community. If people could meet in person in addition to online, the bonds forged were incredibly strong.

Mentoring in a ministry context is about more than just career guidance; it's about sharing a grounded, long-term, Christ-centered relationship between two people. With the science supporting the necessity of good relationships to the overall wellbeing of a person, now more than ever it is imperative to connect new female pastors with a mentor. MaryKate Morse, in defining spiritual mentoring, calls it “whole-life mentoring.” She goes on to say, “Whole-life mentoring means that the mentor cares about the mentee’s emotional and relational life, physical well-being, ministry journey and faith walk.”<sup>135</sup> Notice that “ministry journey” is *one* aspect of a person’s life, not the *only* aspect. For women in ministry, it is especially critical to integrate all parts of their life. Mentoring relationships encourage integration of the whole person, appreciating all the roles a woman embodies in her life.

However, within the PC(USA) denomination, mentoring is not practiced in any systemic way. Neither the students pursuing ordained ministry nor the institutions that are supposed to guide them on the journey from discernment to ordination understand the importance of a mentoring relationship. Yet a mentor during seminary and early career transitions is especially impactful. When asked, “When has a mentor been most helpful to you?” 48% of the respondents in the field research survey replied, “in the first 3-5 years of ministry” and 36% replied “in seminary.”<sup>136</sup> Respondent #16 added at the end of their

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<sup>135</sup> MaryKate Morse, *Lifelong Leadership: Woven Together Through Mentoring Communities* (Saugatuck, MI: NavPress, 2020), 31.

<sup>136</sup> See Appendix D.



survey, “Mentoring relationships are important to ministry. I would encourage mid-level councils to strive to foster such relationships—especially for new pastors.”<sup>137</sup> Yet presbyteries do not stress or even encourage a student who is either an Inquirer or a Candidate to seek out a mentoring relationship as part of the process of discernment going into or through seminary.<sup>138</sup>

After asking participants when a mentor was most helpful to them, they were then asked the question, “Is there a time when you wish you had a mentor but didn’t?” Respondents in the field research survey mentioned key transition points in life (24%) and ministry (20%) as times they wished they had a mentor, or times when a mentor proved invaluable to them.<sup>139</sup> In fact, times of transition were most cited as when a mentor was most helpful or needed. Those key transitional times include graduating seminary, taking their first ordained call, their first three to five years in ministry, and any time they have taken a new call or leadership has changed within their church. Respondents also mentioned personal issues in which a mentor was or would have been helpful, including going through a divorce, navigating health issues, and experiencing burnout. Respondent #12 said this: “Mentors are needed, certainly. Many who think they are good mentors just want to preach at you, lecture you, reminisce endlessly. Ministry is so often in flux, it is hard to maintain relationships for the long haul, even among peer support groups. Honestly, I desperately long for a solid mentor.”<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>138</sup> The PC(USA) process for the Preparation of Ministry can be found in the *Book of Order*, G-2.06. The “*Purpose of Inquiry*” is found in G-2.0603. [http://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2019-boo-elec\\_071219.pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2019-boo-elec_071219.pdf).

<sup>139</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>140</sup> See Appendix D.

In Greek mythology, Athena guided Telemachus away from disastrous decisions, allowing him to fully realize himself. With her help as Mentor, he understood who he was within the locus of his family, his career, and society. Fenelon’s version of Mentor guiding Telemachus shaped how the term mentor is used today. The guiding wisdom of a mentor in today’s ministry contexts goes beyond being important or recommended. It is imperative for personal and professional thriving.

### **One Word, Several Meanings**

Kathy Kram did groundbreaking research regarding mentoring in the 1980s. She determined that mentoring functions could be assigned to two categories: career and psychosocial functions.<sup>141</sup> Mentoring that focuses mostly on career functions is a relationship geared primarily toward career development and advancement, including “sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments.”<sup>142</sup> Psychosocial functions, however, offer more of a personal relationship that enhances “a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness.”<sup>143</sup> Psychosocial mentoring impacts the mentee both personally and professionally. Characteristics of this kind of relationship are “role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship.”<sup>144</sup> Outside of the mentoring research world, though, the word “mentoring” is used uniformly, without the distinction of what either

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<sup>141</sup> Peter F. Wilson and W. Brad Johnson, “Core Virtues for the Practice of Mentoring,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 29, no. 2 (2001): 122. ExLibris.

<sup>142</sup> Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1988), 22-23.

<sup>143</sup> Kram, *Mentoring at Work*, 22.

<sup>144</sup> Kram, *Mentoring at Work*, 22-23.

the mentor or mentee intends the relationship to focus on or the desired outcome of the relationship.

Theresa Hammond studied similar criteria to “career” and “psychosocial,” categories, but named them differently. She evaluated coaching and mentoring in pastoral ministry, highlighting the retention of pastors. She termed her areas as “characteristics” and “functions.” “Characteristics” reflected the educational level, length of service, ministry rank, size of congregation, and leadership positions of the mentor. “Functions” reflected the relational, informative, facilitative, confronting, mentor model, and ministerial vision of a mentor. She determined that “characteristics” made no significant difference in retention, whereas “functions” did.<sup>145</sup> Her conclusions emphasize that many pastors are seeking the relational aspect of a mentoring relationship, with career help being secondary or as an addition to the relationship.

In my own field research, I asked the question, “Is there a time you wish you had a mentor but didn’t have one?” Respondents cited “first years in ministry” 36% of the time and “leadership transitions” 20% of the time. Dealing with conflict within the congregation or difficulty with congregation members came in at 16%.<sup>146</sup> Several respondents mentioned more than one category response occurring simultaneously, such as a leadership transition and congregational conflict. While the categories of “career” and “psychosocial” may divide more easily in business and academia, they may be more difficult to separate in ministry. For example, a leadership transition has specific “career”

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<sup>145</sup> Theresa Hammond, “Q Methodology as an Evaluation Tool: Evaluating Coaching and Mentoring in the Pastoral Ministry,” *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, no. S10 (2016): 186, EBSCOhost.

<sup>146</sup> See Appendix D.

mentoring components, yet they can't be isolated from the "psychosocial" aspects of that transition. A minister-to-minister mentoring relationship can help integrate both career and psychosocial aspects in a contextually appropriate way.

My field research highlights the importance of the "psychosocial" (Kram) and "functional" (Hammond) aspects of mentoring in ministry. Respondents were much more concerned about the relationship than the career development, although career-specific situations would certainly be discussed in the ministry mentoring context. Survey respondents wanted mentors with *experience* (76%) who would actively *listen* to them (68%), while being *available* (32%) and willing to *journey in relationship* with them (24% each).<sup>147</sup> These results highlight a comment Dr. Gupta shared, attributing it to Dr. Kerns, "People can get content anywhere. People *crave* relationships."<sup>148</sup> Our institutions at every level are focused on the "content"—taking the right classes in seminary, completing the paperwork and interviews for candidacy, graduation, ordination, and first call, and learning how to do "real-world" ministry tasks as a new pastor. We have forgotten that relationships are the basis and the essence of *who* we are and key to *what* we do in ministry. How can a pastor consistently pour themselves into the lives of the people they have been called to serve if they have no one to pour into *their* life, especially during key transitions in their ministry? Developing a relationship with a mentor who can help a student navigate through seminary, ordination, and the first few years of ministry is not part of the process in any of the institutional aspects of becoming a minister and yet it may be the critical difference in a person's success as both a person and a minister.

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<sup>147</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>148</sup> Dr. Nijay Gupta, Zoom meeting, May 4, 2020.

### Why Women Need Mentors

Both my husband and I (female) are clergy in our late 40s. I've watched as more seasoned male clergy frequently "adopted" my spouse as a "mentee" while more seasoned women clergy invited me to join a group as an equal. I've wondered if women are more socialized to resist being an official mentor because it implies authority of one person over another, while the guys didn't have as much issue with establishing authority. Whatever the reason, he's definitely had multiple older male clergy offer to do one-on-one mentoring, while no one male or female has ever offered the same to me, and we have almost always had comparable positions in different congregations.<sup>149</sup>

-Field Research Survey Respondent #14

Although more women are entering ordained ministry in the PC(USA), they are not attaining the same career milestones in salary, benefits, and positions as men.<sup>150</sup> This could be by choice. The research is currently not available as to why more part-time positions with no benefits are taken by women than men. However, the "broken rung" theory says that, in business, women fall behind men in the first promotion from entry level to management.<sup>151</sup> I postulate this is the equivalent of women graduating seminary and taking their first ordained position in ministry. Women take positions to become ordained without fully appreciating how it may impact them over their career trajectory. My research showed that even if a woman was mentored, it took her on average 10 months to find a position, virtually the same amount of time for a man who was not mentored (9.9 months). Women who were not mentored took almost a year to find a position: 11.7 months on average. Sometimes the pressure to land a position may mean compromising, to their career detriment. Raymond Noe wrote one of the foundational

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<sup>149</sup> Respondent #14 (on line #15) answering the question, "Any final thoughts or comments you would like to share?" (Column H) Field Research Spring 2020 spreadsheet.

<sup>150</sup> See Appendixes 5 and 6 in *Living by the Gospel*, included here in Appendix B.

<sup>151</sup> Thomas et al., *Women in the Workplace 2019*, 10-11.

articles for women and mentoring in 1988. He states: “Without a mentor, women often are unable to understand the reality of the male-dominated business culture and they fail to obtain the sponsorship needed to identify them as highly talented and to direct them in their career advancement.”<sup>152</sup>

Women in ministry continue to face similar issues today. While more women are being ordained than men, men secure ministry positions faster and hold more Head of Staff and Senior Pastor positions. LeanIn.org reports that “mentorship is critical to the success of women across industries.”<sup>153</sup> The site says women continue to get less mentorship and sponsorship, critical aspects for career development. Furthermore, 60% of male managers surveyed by Lean In and Survey Monkey in the United States are uncomfortable working alone with a woman, including mentoring women, in the #MeToo era.<sup>154</sup>

As the number of women ordained to ministry in the PC(USA) continues to rise, they are not seeing commiserate rates in pastoral job codes, salary, or benefits.<sup>155</sup> Roe continues that mentoring “may help women to develop career plans and to acquire a self-identity.”<sup>156</sup> Although that statement may make modern readers cringe, the sentiment still rings true, especially for women in ministry. If a woman wants to be a Senior Pastor, or a Head of Staff, there are choices regarding clergy or staff positions that need to be made at

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<sup>152</sup> Raymond A. Noe, “Women and Mentoring: A Review and Research Agenda,” *The Academy of Management Review* 13, no.1 (January 1988): 65, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/258355>.

<sup>153</sup> “Men and Mentorship,” Lean In, accessed May 16, 2020, <https://leanin.org/mentor-her>.

<sup>154</sup> Lean In, “Men and Mentorship.”

<sup>155</sup> See Appendixes 5 and 6 in *Living by the Gospel*, included here in Appendix B.

<sup>156</sup> Noe, “Women and Mentoring,” 66.

the very beginning of their careers. The pressures during the last year of seminary can be overwhelming. A student is finishing classes, taking ordination exams, working through the process to be able to interview for ministry positions, the interviews themselves, losing housing and a support network at seminary, as well moving and starting a new career. Long-term career goals aren't at the forefront of their minds during this pivotal year in their lives and careers. Yet, especially for women, having a mentor throughout seminary to ask about career goals, and help guide the mentee with those goals, might allow them a better opportunity to step over the broken rung when they graduate.

Instead of waiting for parity in senior positions in ministry to be able to undertake same-gender mentoring, women need mentoring now as the gender balance in leadership in the church reaches a tipping point. Jean Lau Chin writes, "Women as mentors often have the advantage of sharing the experience of bias and barriers that are different from men."<sup>157</sup> She continues that women still bear more work-life stressors, such as child care or home-related duties. "Mentors can offer role modeling on how to do something and lead the way."<sup>158</sup> The words of grace, guidance, and affirmation from one woman in ministry to another can be extraordinarily encouraging and empowering. Especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, a mentoring relationship is life-giving. Women crave the trusted relationship of mentorship with one another.

Based on my field research, having a mentor in seminary through the transitions of graduation, interviewing, into their first call, and through the first five years of

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<sup>157</sup> Carole A. Rayburn, Florence L. Denmark, Mary E. Reuder, Asuncion Miteria Austria, eds., *A Handbook of Women Mentors: Transcending Barriers of Stereotype, Race, and Ethnicity* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 257.

<sup>158</sup> Noe, "Women and Mentoring," 257.

ministry is wanted and needed. Although some students and early career ministers have created those relationships on their own, the vast majority have not. Mentorship needs to become an active part of the discernment process and faith journey of women entering ministry. What if women were purposefully set up for greater success at the earliest possible point in their ministry career through mentorship?

### **Mentorship as a Model for Women in Ministry**

Mentorship is an ancient concept that has been rediscovered as an emerging practice in the business and academic world. Some of the outcomes of mentoring include higher job satisfaction and more career advancement.<sup>159</sup> Unfortunately, in modern ministry contexts, mentoring is done informally, if at all. Pope Gregory the Great wrote about mentoring the next generation of pastors in the 6th century. His work was used for almost a thousand years in the church before falling into obscurity.

Until the 20th century, preaching and pastoring was the sole purview of men. One notable exception was Louisa Woosley, who was ordained by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on November 5, 1889.<sup>160</sup> Women were granted full access to all offices in the PC(USA), including as ordained ministers, in 1955. From there, many women entered ministry, despite early and vocal opposition, significantly changing the gender ratios within denominations by the end of the 20th century. Despite more women

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<sup>159</sup> Wilson and Johnson, “Core Virtues for the Practice of Mentoring,” 122; <https://leanin.org/mentor-her>.

<sup>160</sup> Mary Lin Hudson, “‘Shall Woman Preach?’: Louisa Woosley and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” accessed September 13, 2020, <http://www.cumberland.org/hfpc/minister/woosleyL.htm>. Woosley’s ordination was reviewed and rescinded by the Synod. Her home presbytery refused to remove her from the rolls. Ultimately, the presbytery granted her the status of *in transitu*, dropping her name from their ministerial rolls while allowing her to retain her status as an ordained minister. In 1913, her name was added to the ministerial rolls of another presbytery unchallenged.



entering ordained ministry, lower salaries and fewer opportunities appear to be available to them. For women in ministry, who lag behind men in salary, benefits, and career advancement, a mentor may help bridge the gap to greater career achievement and satisfaction. This dissertation and the accompanying artifact are intended to provide future data and research on the impact of mentoring women in ministry.

My field research shows ministers especially want mentoring from their time in seminary through their first five years of ministry. Mentoring doesn't eliminate the obstacles ministers will encounter, but it will help prepare them as they encounter issues. The intense disruptions to church in 2020 underscore the need for mentoring, especially for women, as part of more holistic approach for ministers in their ministry contexts.

Mentorship combines both leadership and spiritual formation principals.

Northouse emphasizes four parts of leadership. He defines it as “a *process* whereby an individual *influences a group of individuals* to achieve a *common goal*.”<sup>161</sup> Leadership is a process. It is interactive and occurs over a period of time. Leadership influences others, primarily through communication. Without influence, there is no leadership. It occurs within a group of people or community and it spurs people toward a common goal.<sup>162</sup> Mentorship adheres to three of the four aspects of the definition of leadership. In light of Northouse's definition, mentorship is a process. It is a relationship formed most often between two people but could also occur in a peer group setting. The influence of mentorship is multilevel. Certainly, the mentee is influenced by the career and psychosocial interactions within the relationship. However, research continues to show

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<sup>161</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2019), 5. Emphasis in original.

<sup>162</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 5-6.

that the mentor is positively impacted by the relationship as well.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, if the mentee is growing in both their professional and their personal life, the mentee is influencing their family, friends, and the people they serve in ministry. While Northouse's definition says that leadership occurs within a group of people, in mentorship, the mentee grows in their leadership from the relationship, affecting how they interact with the community around them. This is the difference between mentoring in business and even academia and mentoring in ministry. In ministry, the whole person needs to be mentored, not just their career. Finally, mentoring challenges individuals toward their goals, which may be professional, personal, or a combination of both. Especially in the COVID-19 era, pastors are realizing they need to attend to themselves as whole people to be able to respond to the ongoing demands of ministry. Mentorship is one way pastors can thrive in their ministry contexts despite difficult circumstances.

Mentorship conforms with many of the attributes of both transformational and adaptive leadership. Transformational leadership is described as "a process that changes and transforms people."<sup>164</sup> It dovetails with mentorship because "it is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals."<sup>165</sup> Transformational leadership works with the whole person, inspiring and motivating them to do more than they imagined possible of themselves. Like a mentoring relationship, transformational leadership is most successful when the relationship is grounded in "trust, loyalty and

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<sup>163</sup> Wilson and Johnson, "Core Virtues for the Practice of Mentoring," 122.

<sup>164</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 163.

<sup>165</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 163.

mutual respect.”<sup>166</sup> As research continues regarding transformational leadership, mentorship may be considered part of this leadership style or mentorship may be considered as its own standalone leadership practice.

Ministry leaders today must also be skilled in adaptive leadership to survive, much less thrive, in their ministry contexts. Pre-COVID-19, ministry leadership needed adaptability based upon the needs of the ministry and the abilities of the people within the ministry. However, temperaments of both the ministry leader and the congregation dictated how much change through adaptation would be tolerated. As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and continues, change happened regardless of their tolerance level for it. As a ministry leader, embracing adaptive leadership in an ever-changing environment allows leaders and congregations to respond appropriately in their ministry context. Northouse describes adaptive leadership as more “follower-centered” than “leader-centered” as the leader helps people prepare, change, and adjust to new circumstances.<sup>167</sup> Adaptive leaders “mobilize, motivate, organize, orient and focus the attention of others” to address and resolve changes that affect followers’ lives.<sup>168</sup> Adaptive leadership is a skill both the mentor and mentee develop within their relationship, while increasing their capacity as adaptive leaders in other areas of their lives.

Mentorship mirrors Ronald Heifetz’s adaptive leadership model. Heifetz defines leadership as an activity that a person can do, regardless of their position. Leaders mobilize people to do something “socially useful,” achieving goals that meet the needs of

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<sup>166</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 173.

<sup>167</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 257 and 258.

<sup>168</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 258.

the community.<sup>169</sup> He says that to produce socially useful outcomes, the vision must “track with contours of reality.”<sup>170</sup> Mentoring women in ministry to see the obstacles and biases they may encounter in their ministry careers certainly casts a vision with the reality in mind. Heifetz says that the adaptive leadership model allows for leadership to be evaluated as a process, rather than waiting for the outcome to become clear.<sup>171</sup>

Developing a non-profit organization independently of the denominational and institutional channels allows me to adjust in response to women seeking mentoring. Finally, Heifetz says that adaptive leadership must be “spacious,” allowing for diversity.<sup>172</sup> Again, my plan is to be ecumenical and inclusive. The one area that may be considered restrictive by specifically focusing on mentoring women comes from previous experience as well as statistical evidence—men aren’t experiencing inequality in pay, benefits, and ministry positions.

Mentorship is an *abiding* relationship. A solid mentoring relationship would be able to navigate changes in the lives of both the mentee and the mentor. This is the key difference between mentorship and other leadership styles—the relationship is intended for the long term. Many women in ministry don’t have a mentor they can count on to see them through career and life transitions. This model intends that a mentor and mentee stay together through those key transitions.

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<sup>169</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 20.

<sup>170</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 24.

<sup>171</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 24.

<sup>172</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 26.

Mentorship incorporates the science of human connection, while also giving a contemporary twist on the Benedictine model of stability, fidelity, and obedience. Stability and fidelity in the mentorship model are found in the loyalty to the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Unlike monastic life, in which these vows are lived out in one place, the mentorship model allows stability and fidelity to the person and the relationship. Obedience within the model would be to God's call on one's life and to the ordination vows one takes in one's religious tradition. Too many times, a mentoring relationship that has been established remains in the place in which it was formed. This was a common refrain with field research respondents—that they might have had a mentoring relationship in seminary, but that relationship did not continue after graduation. In this mentorship model, the relationships will be established virtually in an online platform from the beginning. Opportunities to meet at conferences and retreats will be explored as part of the model post-coronavirus. This allows women to “take the relationship with them” no matter where they go. A woman could stay with her mentor if she takes a new ministry position, follows a spouse's career, experiences family changes, or any of the myriad ways life changes, often very quickly. This mentorship model is designed to journey together, sustainably, for the long term.

The spiritual formation aspect of the mentorship model fills a need that may not be addressed in the pastor through seminary and or during the ordination process. With the diverse denominational backgrounds and religious upbringings of seminary students, there may not be a common language regarding spiritual practices or formation. Church membership, just like seminary attendance, does not equate to spiritual formation of the person-as-pastor. This can become further complicated if a student has little to no faith

tradition or foundation on which to draw. As religious life and church attendance become less important in American culture, the institutions of the church cannot assume a baseline in faith language or practices. Spiritual formation through mentorship equips the pastor with skills and disciplines that will sustain them personally and professionally.

Mentorship invites a closer, more intimate relationship with God by developing and sustaining spiritual practices within an accountable relationship. As defined by Dallas Williard, “Spiritual transformation, without regard to any specifically religious context or tradition, is the *process* by which the human spirit or will is given a definite ‘form’ or character.”<sup>173</sup> This is not a boost of adrenaline that one might get from a conference or a retreat, but it is the steady practice of spiritual disciplines daily and seasonally that maintain spiritual health and growth. This will be achieved individually, with one-on-one mentoring, and within peer mentoring groups.

Mentorship is not solely about professional growth but is a spiritual journey for a pastor as well. Journeying together through life’s and ministry’s ups and downs, together, is a unique and profound experience. Once trust is established and vulnerability is revealed and held, not capitalized on or manipulated, then the mentee can truly grow into a deeper relationship with God and other people. Knowing that you are beloved despite your shortcomings is an earthly reconciliation that reflects the kingdom to come. In a time when vulnerability is often exploited, to have a trusted mentoring relationship in which one can be fully known is a gift.

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<sup>173</sup> Dallas Williard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012), 19.

This mentorship model allows women the opportunity to receive professional guidance while also recognizing all the roles in their lives as part of the mentoring equation. In a social media world, where our brains are wired to get hits of dopamine with each like, follow, or comment,<sup>174</sup> it is counter-cultural to slow down and deepen a relationship with one person. With the fast pace of life, to be in a relationship that will withstand time and life events anchors one's soul in a different way. This refers not only to the mentoring relationship but also our relationship with Jesus Christ. Ronald Rolheiser warns us that by not having the "proper interiority (intimacy with God) and the personal moral fidelity to back up our faith," we risk turning Christianity into "a philosophy, an ideology, and a moral code," but we miss that Christianity is about a real relationship with a real person, Jesus.<sup>175</sup> Mentorship offers these deep and abiding connections that have proven to be essential scientifically, sociologically, and religiously. For women, this mentorship model embodies their whole personhood. In this mentorship model, created by women, for women, outside of denominational channels and politics, female pastors have the opportunity to grow in ways not previously offered to them.

Mentorship strengthens resiliency for women in ministry. The classic definition of resiliency is "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness."<sup>176</sup> However, a wider definition says that resilience is "an ongoing protective capability that enables, 'not

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<sup>174</sup> Simon Parker, "Has Dopamine Got Us Hooked On Tech?" *The Guardian*, March 4, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/mar/04/has-dopamine-got-us-hooked-on-tech-facebook-apps-addiction>; "Why Are We Addicted to Social Media?" Design Lab, April 4, 2019, <https://designlab.net.au/why-are-we-addicted-to-social-media/>.

<sup>175</sup> Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Image, 1999), 63.

<sup>176</sup> Ivan Robertson and Cary L. Cooper, "Resilience," *Stress & Health* 29, no. 3 (August 2013): 175, <https://doi-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/smi.2512>.

only reactive recovery but also proactive learning and growth through conquering challenges.”<sup>177</sup> The discernment of a vocational call to ministry is intensely personal, yet also affirmed through a denomination process (outlined earlier) toward ordination. With either individual mentoring or peer mentoring in a cohort, women strengthen their call to vocational ministry and build their resilience in facing obstacles encountered through the ordination and call process.

The mentorship model I propose seeks to initiate change within the PC(USA) from the margins. James Davison Hunter calls this “Proposition Nine”—that elites outside the power and prestige of the center influence the system through innovation. “The novelty they represent and offer call into question the rightness and legitimacy of the established ideas and practices of the culture’s leading gatekeepers.”<sup>178</sup> The goal of innovation is to infiltrate the center, redefining the ideas and practices of the system. By forming Diakonos Solutions, a non-profit organization to mentor women, the intention is to slow and eventually stop the inequity experienced by women in the denomination. The denomination continues to identify consistent patterns of gender discrimination, yet no actionable solutions are offered to fix the problems. Diakonos Solutions will focus on women starting out in ministry and ones who are seeking advanced degrees, influencing women in key transitions in their ministry careers. Mentoring women in ministry equips them with the skill sets needed for ministry in the 21st century. It is time to build the runway for the next generation of women in ministry.

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<sup>177</sup> Robertson and Cooper, “Resilience,” 175.

<sup>178</sup> James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 42-43.



SECTION 4:  
THE ARTIFACT: DIAKONOS SOLUTIONS

**Introduction**

Diakonos Solutions is a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring women in ministry. It will serve as a laboratory for leadership practices for women leading in 21st-century ministry. It will offer spiritual formation practices and guidance as part of a holistic approach to personal and professional sustainability in a ministry career.

**Goals**

Diakonos Solutions intends to be ecumenical, as the stories of women in ministry across denominations and traditions often have a common thread to them. It is intentionally outside of denominational structures to provide space for women to develop in both their leadership skills and their spiritual formation without the pressure of institutional hierarchy. The goals are:

- To *engage* women in community, so they know that they are not alone in their ministry.
- To *encourage* women within their ministry context.
- To *empower* women to achieve their ministry goals, professionally and personally.

**Mission and Vision**

The mission of Diakonos Solutions is to engage, encourage, and empower women in ministry through mentoring. The vision of Diakonos Solutions is to create leadership

equity in the church by closing the gap between men and women in pay, benefits, and ministry positions.

*Who Would Benefit from Mentoring with Diakonos Solutions?*

Diakonos Solutions seeks to work with women in ministry who are interested in our mission and vision. There are two specific groups of women in ministry, however, that Diakonos Solutions will focus their attention on initially. The first group is the woman who is discerning her call to ministry and attending seminary. This can be in two distinct stages of discernment and then seminary, or it may be discernment while starting seminary. The primary purpose of engaging with a woman in the midst of discernment and attending seminary is to be a stable and neutral voice in what can often be a long and arduous process. Diakonos Solutions would be able to advocate for this woman in a way she might not experience within her denominational journey. She would receive advice, counsel, and spiritual direction in an ongoing mentoring relationship. This is a holistic approach that will follow her as she continues to move through seminary, internships, and first ministry position interviews. Mentorship bridges the gaps in the education and ordination journey, ultimately addressing the broken rung for women in ministry. In that key transitional time between seminary and establishing herself as an ordained minister, she has the resources and community to draw upon as she begins her ministry career through a mentoring relationship with Diakonos Solutions.

The second group of women in ministry that Diakonos Solutions will focus on are women who are pursuing doctoral studies. This particular focus emerged as the founder of Diakonos Solutions pursued her own doctoral studies. The research provided in the previous sections recounts that women are not-quite-equal as they practice ministry in

congregational settings. Often, an advanced ministerial degree is the prerequisite for higher-visibility positions within the church. According to the Association of Theological Schools, in the fall of 2019, 387 women graduated with their Doctor of Ministry degree, compared to 1,129 men.<sup>179</sup> It is not easy to complete doctoral studies, whether you are male or female. However, women may encounter different obstacles than their male colleagues, primarily in that, for women, studying is considered “extra” work that can be done in the margins of work and family life instead of a primary goal to be achieved.

Diakonos Solutions offers two ways to encourage women who are pursuing doctorates. The first is mentoring, either individually or in a cohort model. This may be the ideal encouragement needed to get through some of the difficult parts of completing a doctoral degree. The mentor has the advantage of seeing the whole process, noting what is normal and how to overcome obstacles to completion. Diakonos Solutions will also offer peer mentoring through DMin Working Retreats. This is designed as a five-day, small group retreat that combines fellowship with other women working toward the same goal, daily worship, blocks of uninterrupted study time for research, writing, and creative thinking, and intentional sabbath. A collegial mentoring community, either individually or in a cohort, may make the difference for women finishing their degrees. The emphasis is on building relationships that offer the support and encouragement needed to finish the doctoral process.

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<sup>179</sup> Table 2.18-A “Head Count Completion by Degree Program, Race or Ethnic Group, and Gender, Fall 2019, All Member Schools,” The Association of Theological Schools, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2019-2020%20Annual%20Data%20Tables.pdf>. The statistics report 22 Asian women, 117 Black women, 22 Hispanic women, zero Native American women, 161 white women, 39 women with visas and 26 women did not report their race or ethnicity. Because this reflects all ATS member schools, it includes schools and denominations that do not admit women to ordained ministry.

*Diakonossolutions.com*

Diakonos Solutions intends to be a resource for women in ministry leadership to use throughout their ministry careers, from the beginning of seminary through doctoral studies. Diakonos Solutions will be promoted through a website, [diakonossolutions.com](http://diakonossolutions.com). The website will provide information to services provided as well as links to resources and other Diakonos Solutions media platforms. As a non-profit organization, Diakonos Solutions intends to fund innovative ministry ideas through grants, partnering with other non-profit organizations, individual subscriptions to the website, and regular fundraising.

SECTION 5:  
DIAKONOS SOLUTIONS:  
MENTORING WOMEN FOR 21ST CENTURY MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

**Overview**

The first part of this paper broadly outlined the history of women's leadership in the church through the mission boards of the 19th and early 20th century to women's ordination in the mid-20th century. Despite PC(USA) denominational polity declaring women equal through ordination to all offices in the church 65 years ago, the lived reality of women ordained to ministry in the 21st century reveals that they are not-quite-equal in salary, benefits, and ministry positions. The Artifact resulted in the creation of Diakonos Solutions, a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring women in ministry.

**Purpose**

Diakonos Solutions intends to embody "faithful presence"<sup>180</sup> as defined by Hunter and the ancient Benedictine commitments to fidelity, stability, and obedience,<sup>181</sup> both with the modern necessity of facilitating these goals through an online platform. Hunter says that faithful presence is Christ's love embodied through our lived faith and our spheres of influence. We are present to one another in such a way that the world becomes "authentic and trustworthy."<sup>182</sup> He also recommends that we become faithfully present

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<sup>180</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World*, 252.

<sup>181</sup> Robinson, *Ancient Paths*, xvi.

<sup>182</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World*, 252.

within our own community. For Diakonos Solutions, this embodies the mission of the organization in gathering women in ministry together to engage, encourage, and empower them within their own ministry calls and contexts. Heifetz says that in doing work through the adaptive leadership process, one needs to consider the values the goal represents as well as the “ability to mobilize people to face, rather than avoid, tough realities and conflicts.”<sup>183</sup> Launching Diakonos Solutions allows women to bridge the gaps between the formal, institutional processes and their lived experience in ministry.

The PC(USA) recognizes the inequity between male and female pastors but has no workable solutions to make the system more equitable. Diakonos Solutions embraces the values that women are called by God, just like men, to serve in ministry leadership. The work of Diakonos Solutions is to see the church reconcile itself in actions to the declaration of Overture B in May 1955, “affirming that both men and women might be called to ministerial office.”<sup>184</sup> It is not enough to *allow* women into ordained office. Without a sense of urgency to correct the statistically proven inequality of women in ministry, the church is in opposition to its own polity and stated values. The vision of Diakonos Solutions will be achieved when the gap between pay, benefits, and ministry positions for men and women is closed.

The creation of Diakonos Solutions as a non-profit organization is in process. The non-profit paperwork was filed with the state of Florida on November 4, 2020. 501c3 paperwork was filed with the IRS on November 6, 2020. The website was launched in early November as a “soft start” while content is produced and posted. It will be linked to

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<sup>183</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 23.

<sup>184</sup> Bendroth, “An Understated Tale of Epic Social Change: Women’s Ordination 50 Years Ago and Now,” 105.

several social media platforms to increase engagement. The intention is for the website to be fully functional by January 1, 2021.

This is some of the information that can be found on the website:

**About Us/Leadership:** A brief introduction about myself and Diakonos Solutions.

**Scholarship Resources:** Links to scholarships will be offered here for women pursuing Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees.

**MDiv Scholarships:** The MDiv scholarship will be \$100 per recipient, with the goal of 10 recipients each academic year (five in the fall and five in the spring.) It is not tied to any denomination—if a student is attending an ATS-accredited seminary, they may apply for the scholarship. The scholarship would be distributed directly to the student.

**DMin Scholarships:** The DMin scholarship will be \$500 per recipient with the goal of four recipients each academic year (two in the fall and two in the spring.) This scholarship is meant to provide a little bit of financial support while also affirming their sense of call to do doctoral studies. This scholarship would be sent directly to the institution to be credited to their account.

**Scholarship Rationale:** Why give away money? First, I have been the student searching for help funding my education. To be able to help fund someone's education and affirm their sense of call, even in a small way, is a joy. Secondly, I am using the scholarship applications as a way to traffic my website and build my database. This will increase the name and mission recognition of Diakonos Solutions within the key demographic of women in ministry.

**Programs:** There are two programs in process for the launch of Diakonos Solutions and one program that is in development. Mentoring for individuals and cohorts will be ready for implementation in early 2021. The DMin Working retreat will be available in Fall 2021. One program that is being developed for implementation later is a Ministry Internship Program specifically for seminary students to integrate theological learning with hands-on ministry experience.

**Mentoring:** The first program ready to be launched is mentoring for individuals and small groups. Women seeking mentoring will start with eight sessions over four months. Three primary topics are explored in the beginning. Two sessions will be dedicated to sharing their sense of call and their faith story. In this time, women will review the people, places, and events that have shaped them up to this point in their life. In taking stock of their faith journey, they will be asked to think about where God may be leading them in their vocational ministry. Two sessions will use the Enneagram for self-leadership and spiritual formation understanding. Three sessions will be dedicated to reviewing, developing, and practicing a Rule of Life. The outline of the remaining session depends upon whether mentoring is done individually or in a group. Individually, the remaining session will be at the end and will review what has been beneficial, where more work needs to be done, and what next steps are for the mentee. In cohort mentoring, the session will be used at the beginning for introductions and an overview of the remaining sessions. All mentoring will occur on Zoom at this time. Mentoring can be implemented in early 2021.

**Mentoring in Seminary:** This is a mentoring cohort model intended specifically for women in seminary. It would cover similar topics as the Mentoring program with the



flexibility to add and change topics based upon the needs of the group. Incoming seminary students may need more emphasis on discernment and “Who am I?” while second-year students may need topics on vocational exploration as they start applying for ministry internships. Seminary seniors may need an emphasis on vocational placement—completing denominational forms and interview techniques. While this can be an exclusively online program, I would like to be able to bring mentoring groups together for a three-day weekend for fellowship, worship, and to discuss or review a topic specifically for their group.

**DMin Working Retreat:** The second program ready to be launched is the DMin Working Retreat. This retreat allows woman in the writing phase of their doctoral studies to come together for a working retreat that includes worship, fellowship, and sabbath. Although the retreat is in person, women interested in attending the retreat would begin meeting online to get to know one another and discuss some topics related to their doctoral work in preparation for meeting together. Pre-retreat topics would include how to maintain creativity through the writing process, scheduling hacks, and resilience in the face of obstacles to completion. The retreat includes daily worship and fellowship, intentional blocks of time for writing, researching, and creative thinking, and intentional sabbath. The first working retreat is tentatively slated for the fall of 2021, depending on the ability to safely travel and gather together.

**Ministry Internships:** This is an academic year-long ministry internship for four to six women living in community. They would work in separate ministry settings, getting valuable hands-on training in various size churches and in different roles. They would also learn leadership skills and spiritual formation practices that would be essential

for vocational ministry once they graduate from seminary. This program needs to be implemented in a geographical location that has enough healthy churches for students to learn in where the church leadership has a healthy mindset to try something new and different than the typical ministry internship program.

**Blog:** Right now, I will maintain a weekly blog on the website. However, other media platforms may be better for communicating and engaging my target audience. I will remain flexible in how to connect with women in ministry.

**Rationale:** In the initial design and implementation of Diakonos Solutions, I pulled on my experience as a minister and mentor as well as from the research conducted for my dissertation to develop resources to close the equity gap for women in ministry. The initial programs outlined address major issues uncovered in my research. Diakonos Solutions is designed to journey with women over the duration of their careers. The programs are designed to develop and enhance the leadership skills and spiritual formation practices of women in ministry. Diakonos Solutions intends to integrate seminary education and ministry practices to minimize pitfalls women in ministry currently realize through painful experiences and the benefit of hindsight. By specializing in advocacy for women in ministry through mentoring, Diakonos Solutions intends to equip women with the skills needed to excel in ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, stepping over the broken rung and resulting in equity for women in ministry.

However, I understand that a plan on paper rarely survives interaction with the people it is intended to benefit and serve. To that end, I will be ready to change plans to respond to the needs of female pastors as they emerge.

### **Sustainability: Financially and in the Marketplace**

Success for the Artifact is gauged in two ways. The first is the success of the women in ministry who are being mentored by Diakonos Solutions. The impetus of mentoring women in ministry early on in their careers is to allow them to excel and succeed with their gifts in ministry in ways they could not imagine. Connecting with women as early as possible and maintaining the relationship over the long term through resources and services is the first element of success. Analyzing what drives engagement with the website and other media platforms will help the overall performance in engaging with women in ministry.

The second benchmark of success is being financially solvent. Diakonos Solutions needs to be self-sustaining as well as pay me a modest salary. I would like to work with a combination of grants and fee-based work so that I am diversifying revenue streams. Each will most likely have their own “season” of bearing fruit that will allow a minimum income stream to support the organization and myself. I have also started fundraising for 2021. The budget is included as part of Appendix A.

## SECTION 6:

## THE ENDING IS THE BEGINNING

I knew the “system” was broken for women in ministry from lived experience as an ordained PC(USA) minister. I took an unorthodox route to ministry compared to my colleagues. I was second career, with a toddler and kindergartener, when I started seminary. I did not attend a PC(USA) seminary but attended various seminaries over an extended time period as my husband’s career flourished and we moved every two to three years. When I finally was ready to start my ministry career in 2009, after taking eight years to complete seminary and ordination exams, the financial crisis kept us grounded in a geographical area with only one ordainable part-time ministry position available. After a drawn-out interview process, I took that position and stayed in it— “part-time” with no benefits—for almost a decade. In that time, my personal ministry gifts emerged in preparing college students for seminary. I helped them discern their call to ministry as a pastor and mentor. It was the disparity I witnessed for the young women graduating from seminary that propelled me to this project. They had done everything the orthodox PC(USA) way, yet they were having a hard time becoming ordained. I assumed their outcomes would be much different than mine since they were entering ministry in the traditional way as prescribed by the denomination. In a time when the church needs talented and committed leadership more than ever, I watched the church “pass” on women. When I had to change my dissertation topic due to a change in my ministry context, I knew the not-quite-equal aspect of women in ministry would be my focus.

The research showing how broken the system is for women in ministry with no real pathway to fix it was stunning. This is within a denominational context that prides

itself on equality and justice for all. The well-crafted statements from the denomination did not match the lived experience of many women in ministry. I knew I could no longer nurture women discerning their call to ministry without also letting them know that their experience post-seminary may be different than their male colleagues. Through my research, I realized that the denomination is either unwilling, unable, or both, to achieve parity for women entering ordained ministry. I created Diakonos Solutions to address the issues that the denomination is not addressing or fixing. My hope is that the research I've done is a new beginning to help women who are entering ordained ministry achieve their goals in ministry.

Continued research needs to examine if women in ministry consistently *choose* lower-paying positions with few to no benefits or if these are the positions most frequently available to them. My frustration with the system hasn't dissipated. However, I've channeled that frustration into the excitement of building a runway for women in ministry.<sup>185</sup> I will change the system of inequity one woman at a time, and they will carry the change with them in their ministries and mentorships. I will engage, encourage, and empower women in ministry to achieve God's call on their lives through Diakonos Solutions.

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<sup>185</sup> A quote attributed to Amelia Earhart that I used as my epigraph.

APPENDIX A:  
ARTIFACT

Although women in the PC(USA) can be ordained to any leadership office within the church, in reality, ordained women in ministry experience a not-quite-equal status in their compensation, benefits, and ministry opportunities. For that reason, I created Diakonos Solutions, a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring women for 21<sup>st</sup> century ministry leadership to lead the way in solving the problem. The 501c3 tax exempt status was submitted to the IRS on 12/15/20. Diakonos Solutions is already registered with the state of Florida as a non-profit.

The artifact is the website, <https://diakonossolutions.com/>.

The mission of Diakonos Solutions is to engage, encourage, and empower women in ministry through mentoring.

The vision of Diakonos Solutions is to create leadership equity in the church by closing the gap between men and women in pay, benefits, and ministry positions.

Outlines for the Mentoring and the DMin Working Retreat programming ideas are included in this appendix.

## Mentoring

This mentoring program, either individually or in a cohort, is designed to set foundational principles and a common language with the women participating. It is organized to meet twice monthly for the first four months to help accelerate behaviors and practices that align with a woman's values.

Based on my research, mentoring for women is especially key in their transition from seminary to and through their first ordained call. This program is meant as an introduction to mentoring. Currently, there are no organized types of long-term mentoring programs at the Presbytery or Synod level. Mentoring should be integrated into the development of the pastoral leader. Diakonos Solutions can provide mentoring, individually and in cohorts, as well as advocate for mentoring on a larger scale within the denomination. Mentoring sets the foundational principles of leadership for new pastors. This is especially critical for women in the first five years of their vocational ministry careers.

### Month 1: Discerning My Story

#### **Session 1:**

“What is my faith story?”

Content: Participants will work on their faith story, primarily through writing it but may also include pictures, symbols or another creative expression that ties into their story. It is not easy or quick to detail your faith story, so participants will be encouraged to set aside time before this session to complete their story. Participants will be asked to share highlights of their story, approximately 10 minutes, in the session.

Questions to consider while reflecting on your faith story:

- When did you first recognize God in your life?
- Is there a significant place within your faith story? A significant person?
- Did an event in your life bring you closer to God? Did an event in your life damage your relationship with God?
- Tell about the church or faith community you grew up in. What did you love about it? What do you wish they had done better?
- What is your favorite scripture passage? Tell us how that become your favorite.
- Why do you believe in God?

These questions are meant to start the creative process, not define the limitations of your story.

Goal: To tell their own faith story, recognizing how people, places and events have shaped their life and their faith.

#### **Session 2:**

“What is my sense of call?”



Content: Participants will share their call story and their sense of vocational call. Participants will write their call story. This assignment may also take time as details are remembered. Then, participants will be asked to the vocational question, “Where do I feel God leading me in ministry?” The first two sessions work on where participants have been. This question seeks to elicit participants imagination towards the future. Participants should be able to integrate gifts and skills they know they have with hopes and dreams for what they would like to do. Participants will be asked to set several short and long term ministry goals in this session. Highlights of both their call story and where they would like to go in ministry will be shared in the session.

Goal: To be able to articulate their sense of call as their own story, revealing how God has moved in their life. To start imagining how they may use their gifts in ministry in the future by setting ministry goals for themselves in the short term and long term.

## **Month 2: Understanding My Story**

### **Session 3:**

“What is the Enneagram and how is it used?”

Participants would take the Enneagram test prior to this session. This session would discuss how the Enneagram is a tool for understanding ourselves better. Depending on the level of knowledge and experience the person has with the Enneagram would shape the content and discussion.

Goal: To understand what the Enneagram is and how it is used.

### **Session 4:**

“What number are you?”

This session would explore a participants Enneagram number, their strengths, weaknesses and growing edges.

Goal: To understand themselves better through the personality types.

Note: Because the Enneagram has surged in popularity, I would want to gauge participants understanding of the Enneagram before using it with an individual or a cohort. I will be doing more work with the Enneagram in January 2021 to be able to better detail these sessions.

## **Month 3: Shaping My Story**

### **Session 5:**

“What is a Rule of Life and why would I use it?”

Content: This session will discuss how to integrate personally held values into a way of life through a Rule of Life. Participants will use Joan Chittister’s book *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* to understand foundationally St. Benedict’s Rule. Participants will draft their own Rule of Life

Goal: Prioritizing how you want to live your life into a written document.

**Session 6:**

“The Rule of Life”

Content: Participants will bring the draft of their Rule of Life. They will share why they have crafted it in the way they have and how they intend to live it. In sharing and receiving feedback, they may choose to make some adjustments to their Rule of Life.

Goal: The participant should be able to articulate their priorities and how they intend to live them.

**Month 4: Living My Story****Session 7:**

“Living the Rule of Life”

Content: In between the Session 6 and 7, participants will be asked to live the Rule of Life they created, noticing what works well for them, what might need more practice for integration into their life and what might need to be changed. Participants may need to actively change their schedule and routines to live their Rule of Life. In practicing their own Rule, participants should recognize how their Rule encourages them in living the priorities they have set in their lives.

Goal: Having participants live the Rule of Life they created gives them a chance to “try on” their Rule of Life in real time and real life. It allows them to understand what helps fuel their leadership and spiritual formation every day.

**Session 8:**

If mentoring is done individually, the last session will review what has been most beneficial, what areas are growing edges, and how she would like to continue the mentoring relationship.

If mentoring is done in a cohort, this session would be used as Session 1, allowing time for introductions and a course overview. The last session “Living the Rule of Life” would be adjusted in a way so that it wraps up the course and discusses next steps in the mentoring relationship.

### DMin Working Retreat

The purpose of the DMin Working Retreat is twofold. First, it allows women dedicated time to work on an aspect of their dissertation without the distractions of life and work. I envision the space to accommodate women working individually and in a group setting, whatever works for their creative style. The second purpose of the working retreat is to allow women to connect with other women who are working towards the same goal. Through fellowship over meals, in worship and down times, the intent is for the women to develop relationships that will sustain them through peer-to-peer mentoring when they return home. When they complete the retreat, they should have tangible work completed on their dissertation with new skills and relationships to help them complete their doctoral process.

Thursday:

- Arrive
- Dinner & Fellowship

Friday

- Breakfast
- Worship
- Equipping Session/Small Group
- Lunch and Share Projects
- Block of work time
- Vespers
- Dinner

Saturday

- Breakfast
- Worship
- Workday
  - Allow time slots for mentoring or one-on-one dissertation strategizing.
- Lunch (grab and go soup, salad, sandwich)
- Vespers
- Dinner

Sunday

- Sabbath day, quiet retreat, worship in local congregations

Monday

- Breakfast
- Worship
- Workday
- Vespers
- Dinner

Tuesday

- Breakfast/Depart

The working retreat is designed to get tangible work done on their dissertation but also to equip them with the skills that will sustain them when they return home to work independently. Three topics that seem essential for equipping women to complete their dissertations and doctoral process are: scheduling, creativity and resilience. I have not determined if there will be online sessions prior to the retreat to address these issues, if they can be included in the retreat, or if it is a hybrid of online and in person.

### **Scheduling**

Goal: When the participant has completed this session, they will understand what fuels them well for a busy life.

Content: Participants will learn about developing habits that will help them achieve their doctoral goals. They will complete a weekly calendar with their regular routine, understanding what is essential on their calendar, what they can delegate and what can give up. They will assign regular writing time in their calendar, including their writing goals and milestones.

### **Creativity**

Goal: When the participant has completed this session, they will understand that creativity is a process *and* a discipline.

Content: Participants will discern what helps energize their own creative process on a regular basis. They will learn to recognize their own creative rhythms as well as how to approach a “dry spell.” They will return to their schedule (previous session) to make sure it is arranged in a way to maximize their creative output.

### **Resilience**

Goal: When the participant has completed this session, they will understand the components involved in resilience and how to grow their own resilience.

Content: Participants will examine events in their lives in which they needed resilience to get through that event. The latest science on resilience and faith will be presented.

Participants will appreciate the resiliency they already possess, understanding that it will continue to grow through the doctoral process.

Diakonos Solutions Budget								
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Web Revenue</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Monthly Fee</b>	<b>Monthly Revenue</b>	<b>Annually</b>
Server Hosting	\$20.00	\$240.00	Web based application costs	Subscription Annual	100	\$10.00	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00
Database Provider	\$50.00	\$600.00	Web based application costs	Subscription Monthly	200	\$14.00	\$2,800.00	\$33,600.00
Website (Diakonos)	\$20.00	\$240.00		<b>Total Web Revenue</b>			\$3,800.00	\$45,600.00
CRM	\$50.00	\$600.00	Will be \$30 to \$50 a month					
Quickbooks	\$20.00	\$240.00		<b>Grants and Consulting Revenue</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Monthly Fee</b>	<b>Monthly Revenue</b>	<b>Annually</b>
Susan Salary	\$2,500.00	\$30,000.00	Salary	Grants				\$0.00
Freelancer	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00		Consulting	10	\$100.00	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00
Mailchimp/Other	\$30.00	\$360.00	Could be \$30 a month	<b>Total G &amp; C Revenue</b>			\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00
<b>Total Fixed</b>	<b>\$3,690.00</b>	<b>\$44,280.00</b>						
				<b>Total Revenue</b>			\$4,800.00	\$57,600.00
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Total Start Up</b>			-\$6,200.00	-\$49,100.00
Supplies	\$60.00	\$720.00		<b>Gross Profit</b>			-\$1,400.00	\$8,500.00
Lawyer	\$50.00	\$600.00						
Marketing	\$100.00	\$1,200.00		<b>Total Revenue</b>			\$4,800.00	\$57,600.00
<b>Total Variable</b>	<b>\$210.00</b>	<b>\$2,520.00</b>		<b>Total w/o Start-up</b>			-\$3,900.00	-\$46,800.00
				<b>Gross Profit</b>			\$900.00	\$10,800.00
<b>One Time</b>	<b>One time</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>Comments</b>					
Non-ProfitApplicati	\$800.00	\$800.00						
Misc	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00						
Lawyer Fees	\$500.00	\$500.00						
<b>Total One Time</b>	<b>\$2,300.00</b>	<b>\$2,300.00</b>						
	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Annual</b>						
<b>Total Start Up</b>	<b>\$6,200.00</b>	<b>\$49,100.00</b>		<b>Expendures</b>	<b>Months</b>			
					<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>		
<b>Total w/o Start-up</b>	<b>\$3,900.00</b>	<b>\$46,800.00</b>		Total Fixed	\$22,140.00	\$44,280.00		
				Total Variable	\$1,260.00	\$2,520.00		
				Total One Time	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00		
				<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,700.00</b>	<b>\$49,100.00</b>		
							<b>Months</b>	<b>Annually</b>
				<b>Revenue Options</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Monthly Fee</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>
				Subscription Annual	100	\$10.00	\$6,000.00	\$12,000.00
				Subscription Monthly	200	\$14.00	\$16,800.00	\$33,600.00
				Diakonos Consulting	0		\$0.00	\$0.00
				<b>Total Revenue</b>			<b>\$22,800.00</b>	<b>\$45,600.00</b>

APPENDIX B:  
DATA FROM THE “DENOMINATIONAL ROLLS  
AND STATISTICS” AT THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
AND APPENDICES 5 AND 6 FROM *LIVING BY THE GOSPEL*



**2019 Age/Gender Breakdown**

	2019	2018
<b>Total</b>		
<b>Minister</b>	<b>19,066</b>	<b>19,243</b>
20's	0.33%	0.33%
30's	5.49%	6.15%
40's	9.10%	9.15%
50's	13.16%	14.34%
60-64	11.93%	12.67%
Over 65	52.83%	50.64%
Unknown	6.25%	6.72%
<b>Female</b>	<b>32.04%</b>	<b>31.34%</b>
20's	0.65%	0.70%
30's	8.92%	9.93%
40's	12.33%	11.92%
50's	16.54%	18.52%
60-64	15.91%	15.92%
Over 65	38.57%	35.47%
Unknown	7.07%	7.54%
<b>Male</b>	<b>67.96%</b>	<b>68.66%</b>
20's	0.17%	0.16%
30's	3.87%	4.42%
40's	7.55%	7.88%
50's	11.53%	12.44%
60-64	10.01%	11.19%
Over 65	59.11%	57.57%
Unknown	5.83%	6.34%



**2019 Race/Gender Breakdown**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Total Ministers</b>	<b>19,066</b>	<b>19,243</b>
Asian/ Pacific Islander/South Asian	5.59%	5.32%
Black/African American/African	3.16%	3.04%
Hispanic/Latino-a	2.03%	2.00%
Middle Eastern/North African	0.07%	0.06%
Native American /Alaska Native /Indigenous	0.20%	0.19%
Multiracial	0.01%	0.00%
Other	0.47%	0.49%
White	82.40%	80.78%
Unknown	6.07%	8.11%
<b>Female</b>	<b>6,108</b>	<b>6,031</b>
Asian/ Pacific Islander/South Asian	2.77%	2.54%
Black/African American/African	3.60%	3.48%
Hispanic/Latino-a	1.49%	1.49%
Middle Eastern/North African	0.02%	0.02%
Native American /Alaska Native /Indigenous	0.21%	0.20%
Multiracial	0.00%	0.00%
Other	0.34%	0.35%
White	83.50%	81.06%
Unknown	8.07%	10.86%
<b>Male</b>	<b>12,598</b>	<b>13,212</b>
Asian/ Pacific Islander/South Asian	6.92%	6.59%
Black/African American/African	2.96%	3.04%
Hispanic/Latino-a	2.28%	2.23%
Middle Eastern/North African	0.09%	0.08%
Native American /Alaska Native /Indigenous	0.19%	0.19%
Multiracial	0.01%	0.00%
Other	0.53%	0.56%
White	81.88%	80.65%
Unknown	5.13%	6.86%

## Appendix 5

### Ordained Ministers 2007-2018 / Plan Member Participation by Age at Ordination (with Gender)

Ordination and Plan Membership (2007-2018) by Gender and Average Age by Year

	2007-2018	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Ordinations	3,549	374	341	350	331	341	327	304	293	249	207	229	203
Female Ordained Total	1,855	176	164	171	175	174	174	164	160	140	108	128	121
Male Ordained Total	1,694	198	177	179	156	167	153	140	133	109	99	101	82
Total Ordained Average Age	39.1	38.5	38.7	39.9	39.4	40.1	38.9	37.3	39.4	39.5	38.8	39.2	38.9
Total in Benefits Plan	2,462	252	265	253	236	256	222	210	202	163	129	148	126
Female in Benefits Plan	1,165	100	113	113	114	116	110	107	99	85	63	74	71
Male in Benefits Plan	1,297	152	152	140	122	140	112	103	103	78	66	74	55
Average Age in Benefits Plan	37.1	37.3	38.2	38.5	37.2	37.3	36.7	34.7	37.6	37.0	35.7	36.8	37.4

More women than men have been ordained (52% v. 48%); 62% of women are in the Benefits Plan compared to 77% of men.

Ordination and Plan Membership (2007-2018) by Gender and Age

	Total	20s	30s	40s	50s	60-64.9	65+	#N/A
Grand Total	3,549	967	1,013	511	533	151	69	305
Female Total	1,855	478	434	262	351	85	47	198
Male Total	1,694	489	579	249	182	66	22	107
Plan Member Total	2,462	811	814	361	365	81	30	
Plan Member Female Total	1,165	387	323	166	228	40	21	
Plan Member Male Total	1,297	424	491	195	137	41	9	
Ordained (Not Plan Member) Total	1,087	156	199	150	168	70	39	305
Ordained (Not Plan Member) Female Total	690	91	111	96	123	45	26	198
Ordained (Not Plan Member) Male Total	397	65	88	54	45	25	13	107

Where ages are available, 56% of those ordained (2007-2018) are under 40.

## Appendix 6

### Congregational Ministry Effective Salary Study of Board of Pensions Plan Members as of 1/1/2019, Relationships by Age Group (and Gender)

	Total Count of Members	Average Salary of Members	Count of Members Younger than 30	Average Salary of Members Younger than 30	Count of Members in their 30s	Average Salary of Members in their 30s	Count of Members in their 40s	Average Salary of Members in their 40s	Count of Members in their 50s	Average Salary of Members in their 50s	Count of Members Age 60- 65	Average Salary of Members Age 60- 65	Count of Members Older than 65	Average Salary of Members Older than 65
<b>Total</b>	5,342	\$63,613	77	\$52,477	818	\$59,959	1,027	\$64,510	1,507	\$66,751	1,207	\$63,293	706	\$61,608
Female	1,832	\$58,109	41	\$52,565	361	\$57,149	337	\$60,019	495	\$59,491	382	\$57,198	216	\$56,232
Male	3,510	\$66,486	36	\$52,378	457	\$62,178	690	\$66,704	1,012	\$70,302	825	\$66,115	490	\$63,978
<b>Pastor or Co- Pastor</b>	3,691	\$66,150	30	\$47,346	456	\$61,947	717	\$67,382	1,125	\$69,347	870	\$65,158	493	\$63,849
101 Female	995	\$58,459	11	\$41,666	154	\$57,354	201	\$61,499	286	\$60,237	213	\$56,278	130	\$56,146
Male	2,696	\$68,989	19	\$50,634	302	\$64,289	516	\$69,673	839	\$72,452	657	\$68,036	363	\$66,607
<b>Assoc. Pastor</b>	695	\$65,615	34	\$56,345	256	\$59,369	165	\$65,580	126	\$74,383	81	\$73,889	33	\$70,017
103 Female	403	\$64,650	24	\$55,155	159	\$59,331	78	\$64,715	73	\$72,314	46	\$73,489	23	\$69,115
Male	292	\$66,947	10	\$59,199	97	\$59,432	87	\$66,356	53	\$77,232	35	\$74,415	10	\$72,092
<b>Interim Pastor or Interim Associate</b>	424	\$61,363	-	-	33	\$53,330	47	\$52,543	104	\$62,078	131	\$65,546	106	\$62,021
105 Female	200	\$59,397	-	-	14	\$45,020	21	\$53,134	59	\$61,263	62	\$62,862	42	\$58,803
Male	224	\$63,118	-	-	19	\$59,453	26	\$52,065	45	\$63,146	69	\$67,958	64	\$64,132
<b>Temporary Pastoral Relationship</b>	362	\$40,244	-	-	51	\$48,030	64	\$40,659	98	\$38,684	85	\$37,865	58	\$37,876
108 Female	169	\$42,548	-	-	27	\$49,103	27	\$45,479	51	\$39,614	43	\$41,561	17	\$35,754
Male	193	\$38,227	-	-	24	\$46,823	37	\$37,142	47	\$37,675	42	\$34,081	41	\$38,756
<b>Designated Pastor or Associate Pastor</b>	170	\$55,723	-	-	22	\$63,211	34	\$60,196	54	\$54,794	40	\$47,937	16	\$58,516
191+193 Female	65	\$48,698	-	-	7	\$58,377	10	\$47,345	26	\$50,241	18	\$44,284	-	-
Male	105	\$60,071	-	-	15	\$65,467	24	\$65,550	28	\$59,022	22	\$50,925	12	\$63,029

APPENDIX C:  
EXCERPT FROM THE COMPANY OF NEW PASTORS MANUAL

## THE COVENANT<sup>186</sup>

Company of New Pastors has a [two-fold covenant](#): a covenant to **personal spiritual disciplines** and a covenant to **participate in a mentored peer group**.

### PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Participants engage the spiritual practices of the [Company of Pastors](#) as their personal spiritual disciplines, which include a covenant to **read scripture daily, to study the confessions of the church, and to pray daily for the church and for each other**.

There are four sources for daily readings: the [Daily Lectionary](#) (BCW 2-year cycle), the *Psalms (using the Company of Pastors eight-week cycle)*, and the [Book of Confessions](#) (including selections from The Book of Order and the Study Catechism).

### MENTORED PEER GROUP

Company of New Pastors Participants covenant to **meet together regularly** for study and corporate prayer; **between meetings they practice daily disciplines of The Company of Pastors**.

Group gatherings are framed **by common prayer**, and seasoned **by table and social fellowship**. Participants prepare for covenant group meetings by completing **assigned reading and ordered reflection** (usually some kind of writing assignment), utilizing the [pastor-theologian model](#). Leaders frame agendas for gatherings, assuring that all group members share equally in leadership. Leaders also ensure that meetings stay “on task.”

[Company of New Pastors has two types of groups](#): Seminary Groups and Covenant Groups.

Seminary groups are formed during the spring semester of the middler year and meet monthly during the final year of seminary.

Covenant groups are formed at the National Transition Gathering. These groups meet approximately every 8 months, or 5-6 times over approximately 4 years.

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<sup>186</sup> Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide, March 2014, 8. Provided via email.

## THE NATURE OF GROUP GATHERINGS<sup>187</sup>

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Modeled on the Office of Theology and Worship's [Pastor-Theologian consultations](#), *Company of New Pastors* **gatherings are framed around the rhythm of daily prayer – morning, midday, and evening.** They provide generous space for leisure and table fellowship, during which real and abiding friendships take root. The main part of the agenda is devoted to rigorous study of Scripture and Theology – not under the leadership of “experts,” but led in turn by the members of the group.

### The Pastor-Theologian Consultation Model

The Office of Theology and Worship has hosted Pastor-Theologian consultations for pastors in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) since 1993. These numerous three-day consultations have evolved into a proven model, as outlined here:

1. Participants read an **assigned book** in preparation for the consultation.
2. Participants present **ordered reflection** (usually writing) based on the readings.
3. Conversation is **rooted in assigned readings** and participant papers.
4. Relies exclusively on participating pastors for theological work: **no “theological experts”** are brought in.
5. Takes the participants out of their ordinary locations into a **retreat-type setting**.
6. Knits consultation events together around **observance of the “offices” of Daily Prayer**.
7. **Seeks to renew pastors** in deep, sustained attention to the Christian faith.

#### **Pastor-Theologian conveners follow these general guidelines:**

- **Moderate** the discussions mainly to keep order and stay on topic.
- Try gently but persistently to **encourage** everyone to participate, and none to dominate, in-group discussions.

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<sup>187</sup> *Company of New Pastors Mentor’s Guide*, March 2014, 11. Provided by email.

- **Steer discussions** toward theological reflection on issues of pastoral significance.
- **Assign readings and papers** that lead participants to think theologically about particular pastoral situations and tasks in their spheres of ministry.
- While the gathering will certainly have therapeutic value, **avoid the temptation** to allow the gathering to become an extended group therapy session.

APPENDIX D:  
FIELD RESEARCH DATA



## Survey Results

1. Did you have a mentor or advocate as you transitioned from seminary to your first ordained call?

### All Answers

Answer	Sum of Count	Percent
No	89	58%
Yes	53	35%
Yes, but	8	5%
No Information	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Answers by Gender

Answer	Female	Male	No Information	Sum of Count
No	58	29	2	89
Yes	39	14		53
Yes, but	5	3		8
No Information	2		1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>153</b>

Women (38%) had mentors at a slightly higher rate than men (30%). Are women better at connecting with mentors or for asking for help?

The “yes, but” category is when a respondent indicated that they were assigned a mentor, but the relationship wasn’t necessarily helpful.

### Average Months Taken Between Graduation and First Ordained Call

Did You Have a Mentor?	Female	Male	Total
No	11.7	9.9	11.0
Yes	10.0	3.4	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>9.9</b>

Any respondents who took longer than 5 years to become ordained were removed from the sample results. One took 20 years, and another took 7 years. I determined that

those were not common experiences and removed them from the data set. It takes an average of 10 months (9.9) to receive a call to ministry. Without a mentor, it takes 1.1 months longer. With a mentor, it is 1.6 months sooner. Where mentorship seems to be the most helpful is with men, taking an average of 3.4 months to get a ministry position with a mentor. Is this due to the mentoring relationship, gender bias toward men as pastors or both? Questions regarding the mentoring relationships during the transition from seminary to first ordained ministry position need to be asked during focus group sessions.

This information was gathered and used as part of required field research for DMin 736 in the Fall of 2019.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Male	44.0%
Female	56.0%

Question 1:

How would you define a mentor or mentoring relationship?

<b>Key Category Answers (% of all respondents):</b>	<b>1 Choice</b>	<b>2 Choices</b>	<b>3 Choices</b>	<b>All 4</b>	<b>Total % Who Selected This Answer</b>
Experience	20.0%	40.0%	16.0%	0.0%	76%
Journey	4.0%	8.0%	12.0%	0.0%	24%
Advice, support, guidance, wisdom	4.0%	44.0%	12.0%	0.0%	60%
Relationship	4.0%	12.0%	8.0%	0.0%	24%

Question 2:

What qualities characterize a good mentor?

<b>Key Category Answers (% of all respondents):</b>	<b>1 Choice</b>	<b>2 Choices</b>	<b>3 Choices</b>	<b>All 4</b>	<b>Total % Who Selected This Answer</b>
Experience	12.0%	16.0%	12.0%	4.0%	44%
Listener	12.0%	36.0%	16.0%	4.0%	68%
Encouragement	4.0%	16.0%	12.0%	4.0%	36%
Availability	0.0%	20.0%	8.0%	4.0%	32%
Other	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8%

This information was gathered from field research required for DMin 746 in the Spring of 2020. The respondents for 746 were those who agreed to answer follow up questions from the DMin 736 project.

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