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A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THREE FEMALE
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD LEAD PASTORS

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By:
Ryan L. Harris
December, 2018

Approved by

Rev. Dr. Anthony Cook Advisor

Rev. Dr. Mark Rockenbach Reader

Rev. Dr. Charles Self Reader

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For all those who talked me through the various existential crises provoked by the process of writing this dissertation.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
ABSTRACT	xii
ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM	11
Why is This Problem of Interest to the Researcher?	11
Where Does this Problem Occur?.....	12
Who is Affected by the Problem?.....	13
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	14
Research Problem	14
Research Question	15
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	16
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	18
Overall Methodology	18
Sample Selection	29
Data Collection Methods and Procedures	30
Data Analysis Methods	31
Data Presentation Methods.....	32
ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS	33
DEFINITION OF TERMS	34

EXPECTED FINDINGS	37
Bracketing in Qualitative Research	38
CHAPTER TWO.....	41
LITERATURE REVIEW	41
INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....	41
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY	42
REVIEW OF CRITICAL LITERATURE.....	52
Historical Development	53
Qualitative Feminist Theological and Feminist Liberation Approaches	59
Hermeneutical Approaches	68
SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	72
CRITIQUE OF THE PREVIOUS RESEARCH.....	72
SUMMARY	75
CHAPTER THREE.....	77
METHODOLOGY.....	77
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	77
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	78
The Process of Semi-Structured Interviewing.....	79
Skype Interviews	81
TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION	85
PROCEDURES.....	87
Sampling Procedures	87
Obtaining Consent	87

Protection of Participant Rights.....	88
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	91
Research Instrument and Reflexivity.....	91
Interpretive Group and Triangulation	94
Background, Training, and Experience of the Researcher.....	95
Interview Questions	96
DATA ANALYSIS	98
Thematic Analysis	102
Cross-Case Comparison.....	104
Socio-Historical Context/Genre Analysis	104
Final Analysis	106
CHAPTER Four.....	107
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.....	107
THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCHER.....	107
Researcher’s Interest in Phenomenon Being Studied	107
Bracketing	108
Role of the Researcher in Data Collection and Analysis	109
Significant Influence of the Researcher on the Data Collection/Analysis.....	109
DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE PARTICIPANTS.....	110
Other Sources of Data Accessed	111
Excluded Participants.....	111
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY APPLIED TO THE DATA.....	111
Presentation of Data Results and Analysis.....	111

ANNA: INDIVIDUAL THEMES AND NARRATIVE SUMMARY	111
Anna’s Individual Themes	112
Anna’s Narrative Summary.....	117
JENNY: INDIVIDUAL THEMES AND NARRATIVE SUMMARY	122
Jenny’s Individual Themes.....	122
Jenny’s Narrative Summary	129
MARY: INDIVIDUAL THEMES AND NARRATIVE SUMMARY	135
Mary’s Individual Themes	136
Mary’s Narrative Summary.....	141
CROSS-CASE COMPARISON	146
Thematic Similarities	146
Unique Themes/Experiences	153
GENRE/PENTECOSTAL ANALYSIS	159
RESPONSE TO THE FIRST INTERVIEW	169
CHAPTER FIVE.....	172
RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	172
INTRODUCTION.....	172
Results Summary	172
Significance	173
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.....	174
Researcher’s Interpretation of the Results	174
Understanding the Results within the Research Framework	174
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature Review	191

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Research Problem and Research Question	196
Discussion of How these Results Could Be Used Within Various Cultural Settings	196
Limitations	199
Interpretive Group and Triangulation	201
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	205
Recommendations Based upon the Results of the Data Analysis	205
Recommendation Based Upon the Methodology or Research Design	206
Recommendations Based Upon Limitations	208
Recommendations Based Upon Issues Not Supported by the Data	209
Conclusion.....	209
APPENDIX A	211
TRANSCRIPTS : INTERVIEWS.....	211
ANNA: FIRST INTERVIEW	212
ANNA: SECOND INTERVIEW	246
JENNY: FIRST INTERVIEW.....	262
JENNY: SECOND INTERVIEW	306
MARY: FIRST INTERVIEW	323
MARY: SECOND INTERVIEW	356
BIBLIOGRAPHY	379
VITA.....	384

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ABSTRACT

Harris, Ryan L. "A Narrative Inquiry into the Lived Experience of Three Female Assemblies of God Lead Pastors." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2019. 396 pp.

This study utilizes qualitative narrative inquiry to examine the lived experience of three female Assemblies of God lead pastors. It does so to investigate the following research question: Given the complex and inconsistent history and present reality faced by women in the Assemblies of God, how do the participants in this study narrate their lived experience as lead pastors in Assemblies of God churches?

To engage in this investigation, the study begins by explaining the complex and at times confusing history of the status of female leaders within the Assemblies of God. The research framework for the study is a social-constructionist approach based on the work of Jerome Bruner, George Lindbeck, and Kevin Vanhoozer.

A review of pertinent literature is then presented, which examines works that were related to the research question. This section presents works that examine the question historically, those that examine the question using qualitative feminist approaches, and those that consider the subject of the Pentecostal hermeneutic approach to the status of women leaders/pastors.

The specific methodology used for this study is Corrine Squire's Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented approach to narrative research, which is a hermeneutical approach based on the work of Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. It focuses on four main elements: how the gathered narratives are sequential and meaningful, how they are definitively human, how they re-present, reconstitute and express experience, and how they display transformation and/or development.

The study then presents the analysis of the data which was gathered through semi-structured interviews. (Interview transcripts are attached as appendices). After offering a comprehensive breakdown of themes gathered from the three participants, these themes are synthesized into the results of the study, which are offered in the last chapter.

The results of the study show that the participants have created elaborate narratives that display two main themes. First, the theme of gender-based resistance. This gender-based resistance took many different forms, including things like: being excluded by male leaders, sexual objectification, accusations of heresy or sinful living, scriptural arguments, isolation, and many others. In their response to this resistance, the second major theme became evident: the participants' concept of being trailblazers or pioneers who are responsible for helping to improve conditions for future women leaders in the Assemblies of God. The study concludes by offering suggestions on how this data may be used in various contexts, though it focuses on how it might be used in the Assemblies of God.

ABBREVIATIONS

AG	Assemblies of God
CMN	Church Multiplication Network
EP	Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God/Executive Presbyter
ESV	English Standard Version
GP	General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God/General Presbyter
NEA	National Association of Evangelicals
NIV	New International Version

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Women have played an integral role in the development of American Pentecostalism since its inception just over one-hundred years ago. Though male leaders such as Charles Parham and William Seymour receive most of the attention of historians and scholars, many women were just as instrumental in initiating revivals and spreading the movement around the world.¹ As American Pentecostalism spread and developed into different denominations, women often maintained their prominent leadership roles. Some of these women were pastors, while others were evangelists and missionaries.

Many of these women became part of the AG, which would eventually become the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world.² However, there has often been a tension in the AG as the fellowship attempted to discern how gender affected leadership and what was and what was not appropriate for women who held positions of authority. This tension is illustrated by the fact that even though the first General Council of the AG only ordained women as evangelists and missionaries, much of the early growth of the denomination was due to the efforts of women—by the 1930s, one out of every five ministers and two out of every three missionaries were women.³ As time has progressed, the status of women in leadership within the AG has changed in many ways, and the fellowship's doctrinal stance has not always mirrored its practice in

¹ Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2005), 10.

² Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal*, (Nashville: Nelson, 2001), 6.

³ Gary B. McGee, *People of the Spirit: The Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 2004), 213.

regards to women in pastoral leadership. That is, while the official doctrinal stance of the AG has permitted and affirmed the full ordination of women since 1935, women often have been discouraged from seeking to fulfill the calling to ministry that God has placed on their lives. This took place in different ways; despite what official doctrinal stances may say, women leaders were sometimes explicitly discouraged from pastoral leadership because it was thought that their gender precluded them from having pastoral authority over men, or their ministries were viewed as “placeholders” until a suitable male could be found to lead it.⁴

This tension between the reality of the divine call to ministry experienced by female Pentecostal ministers and the discouragement they received from those in roles of pastoral authority has always been evident in Pentecostalism and within the AG. It is evident in two ways: First, there are places in the New Testament that would seem to indicate that women should be precluded from pastoral ministry, and second, many of the early leaders of Pentecostalism and the AG actively discouraged women from engaging in leadership roles.

This creates a complex and difficult scenario for women who feel called to pastoral ministry, because some verses in the New Testament would seem to preclude them from offices that hold any ecclesiastical authority and especially authority over men. The verses that are most commonly mentioned in relation to this topic are First Corinthians 14:34–35 and First Timothy. 2:11–15. First Corinthians 14:34–35 states that “women are to keep silent in the churches for they are not permitted to speak but are to subject themselves just as the law also says. If there is

⁴ Joy E. A. Qualls, “God Forgive Us for Being Women: The Rhetorical Negotiation and Renegotiation of the Role of Women in the Assemblies of God” (PhD diss, Regent University, 2010), 193. Qualls notes that while many women missionaries were commended for their service in the early days of the fellowship, there was still the idea that they were “standing in the gap” until suitable male workers could be found. It is Qualls’ opinion that this fostered the idea that single women were “second class,” and not viewed as suitable for ministry as men or married couples.

anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.”⁵ First Timothy 2:11–15 says, “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” Given that Pentecostals insist on the infallibility and total authority of the Bible over the lives and conduct of the Christian, on the surface of things it is interesting and may appear confusing how there can be a place for female ministers in AG churches at all, at least when these texts are interpreted in a “traditional” manner.⁶

In regard to discouragement from early Pentecostal/AG leadership, some perfect examples include Frank Bartleman, an early Pentecostal writer, evangelist, and missionary who was responsible for recording much of what took place at the Azusa Street revival, and E.N. Bell, the first General Superintendent of the AG. While Bartleman’s account of the Azusa Street revival proclaimed that there were no distinctions between gender, race, or class due to the work of the Holy Spirit⁷, a tract he wrote later in 1920 indicates that he believes there is no place for women to be in any kind of authority over men:

A female ministry is a weak ministry ... Effeminate men follow a female ministry too largely through a spirit of fleshly attraction to the opposite sex. How can such ministry work real righteousness? It cannot. It is abnormal, unscriptural. Because men will not obey God is the real reason for the general acceptance and popularity of flapper evangelism. God is not changing His order, raising woman to equality with

⁵ All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise indicated.

⁶ Most Pentecostals developed hermeneutical answers to this question. These will be addressed in chapter two.

⁷ Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls In* (Northridge: Voice Publications, 1962).

man in the ministry. The Apostles were men. The early church is our example. God made Adam first. Then the woman for his helper.⁸

Yet, even while people like Bartleman were proclaiming the evils of women in positions of ministerial authority, there was also the reality that women enjoyed a great deal of prominence in Pentecostal meetings which approached parity with men.⁹ Wacker notes, “Perhaps the most revealing index of female authority in the worship context was men’s grudging willingness to subordinate themselves to women in spiritual matters.”¹⁰ These spiritual matters included allowing women to preach and to prophesy, and especially allowing women to pray for men to “receive their baptism [in the Holy Spirit].”¹¹ Wacker relates the story of T.B. Barratt, a Norwegian Pentecostal pioneer. Apparently, when a woman offered to lay hands on him so that he might receive the coveted baptism, Barratt stiffened. He said, “The devil taunted me by saying, ‘the idea of a minister going to ask a woman to pray for him!’”¹² Wacker also notes, however, that in the end Barratt relented and allowed this woman to pray for him, after which he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This same tension was also evident in the early days of the AG. When asked to address the question of whether or not women should be elders in the Church, E.N. Bell, the first superintendent of the AG, published an article in the *Christian Evangel* magazine entitled “Women Elders.” In the article, Bell explained:

There is no instance of any woman being put in a place of authority to rule, govern, or teach in the authoritative sense, that is, by the authority of their office, anywhere in

⁸ Frank Bartleman *Flapper Evangelism: Fashion’s Fools Headed for Hell* (Oklahoma City: Charles Edwin Jones, 1920), 2.

⁹ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 104.

¹⁰ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 104.

¹¹ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 104.

¹² Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 104.

the New Testament. When one speaks as a prophet, he speaks with the authority of God, but when one speaks as an Apostle, he speaks with the authority of an Apostle... No woman has been known to have been appointed by the Lord as an elder or an Apostle, or to any position where ruling with authority is inferred... we could not conscientiously advise any church to ordain any woman however gifted or blessed of God to the office of an elder without precedent in the scripture for so doing, either in example or by direct teaching.¹³

Because of the shifts and changes, both in doctrine and practice, women who are pastors in the AG often found themselves in a difficult position which continues to this day. Faced with the reality of their call to ministry and their experiences of God working through them and in their ministries and the competing voices either encouraging or discouraging them from answering that calling, they have had to craft different understandings and explanations for their roles as pastors. The tension created by the intersection of their calling and their gender often requires them to explain, and in some cases, justify, their positions to themselves as well as to the members of their congregations and society as a whole. Various socio-historical factors, such as feminism and the Women's Rights movement, as well as the "evangelicalization" of the AG and its development into an institution, also affected this process.¹⁴

The question under consideration is how the female lead pastors in the AG who participate in this study describe their lived experience as lead pastors of AG churches. Since Pentecostals place so much importance on the narrative process and employ a narrative-experiential hermeneutical approach to the scriptures, and because they see their own lives as a continuance of the scriptural, and specifically Lukan, narrative, the best way to examine the lived experience of female pastors is by using a qualitative narrative methodology that focuses on a narrative understanding of experience. The complex history of the status of women leaders in the AG,

¹³ E.N. Bell, "Women Elders," *The Christian Evangel*, 15 (August 1914): 2.

¹⁴ See Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), for a thorough treatment of these factors.

which continues to have effects to the present day, forms the context and cultural orientation for the study. Drawing on the field of narrative inquiry, this study aims to examine the ways in which female ministers in the AG describe their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches. Examining how the women who participate in the study describe their lived experience will offer a rich understanding of those experiences. The precise methodology will be introduced below and explained in detail in chapter three.

In addition to the historical and sociological context/orientation described above, one important dimension of this subject is the hermeneutical approach Pentecostals take towards the scriptures. This study does not attempt to lay out a hermeneutical approach that would claim to be the only one used by all Pentecostals in every instance. However, the hermeneutical approach used by Pentecostals in general and the AG in particular is important to an understanding of this topic. In order to explain the hermeneutical approach, we must first examine the Pentecostal attitude toward the scriptures in general. After doing so, the Pentecostal narrative-experiential hermeneutical process will be described in detail.

For Pentecostals, the Bible is the standard by which a Christian should live his or her life, and it is also the “final authority on all questions of daily living as well as human salvation.”¹⁵ In addition, Wacker explains that for Pentecostals, “the Bible contain[s] all the information one need[s] to know in order to navigate life’s tough decisions ... whenever serious questions about God’s purpose for humans [arise], the obvious recourse [is] to open the book and ‘see what God Himself says on the subject.’”¹⁶ The first entry in the AG’s statement of fundamental truths reads

¹⁵ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 11.

¹⁶ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 71. Wacker is quoting Assemblies of God Superintendent E.N. Bell from an article he wrote in the *Word and Witness* magazine, 1915.

as follows, “the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.”¹⁷

Moreover, Pentecostals believe that the Bible’s authority is unquestionable and that it reaches to every part of the lives of human beings, and its authority is both divine and final. In his article, “God’s Inspired Word,” John R. Higgins explains that for Pentecostals, “the scope of Scripture’s authority is as extensive as God’s own authority in relationship to all areas of human existence. God is over all areas of life and speaks to all areas of life through his Word. The authority of the written word is the authority of God himself.”¹⁸

In addition to the insistence on the centrality of the scriptures as well as a belief that the scriptures are authoritative over every aspect of life of the Christian, there is also a natural relationship between Pentecostals and narrative, and this relationship creates a hermeneutical approach to scripture that insists on the primacy of narrative. Greger Andersson explains that Pentecostals “tend to dress their own lives and experiences in the garb of the biblical narratives,”¹⁹ and that they “assume the text’s reference world is their actual world.”²⁰ As a result, when a Pentecostal reads the biblical narratives, and especially the Luke-Acts narrative, they see

¹⁷ The General Council of the Assemblies of God, “Statement of Fundamental Truths,” *Assemblies of God*, accessed April 4, 2017, http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_short.cfm The “Statement of Fundamental Truths” contains the 16 core doctrines of the Assemblies of God. These are non-negotiable tenets of faith that all Assemblies of God churches adhere to. Four of these, Salvation, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Divine Healing, and the Second Coming of Christ are considered cardinal doctrines which are essential to the church’s core mission of reaching the world for Christ.

¹⁸ John R. Higgins, “God’s Inspired Word,” in *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition*, ed. Stanley Horton (Springfield: Logion, 2007). Higgins is writing from the specific context of the Assemblies of God, but the ideas he sets forth in his article would be accepted and affirmed by any groups belonging to the family of American Classical Pentecostalism. This text was written to be used in systematic theology classes in Assemblies of God institutions. Thus it offers systematic theology from the perspective of the Assemblies of God, and not necessarily all Pentecostal groups.

¹⁹ Greger Andersson, “To Live the Biblical Narratives: Pentecostal Autobiographies and the Baptism in the Spirit,” *PentecoStudies* 13, no. 1 (2014): 114.

²⁰ Andersson, “To Live the Biblical Narratives,” 115.

their own lives as a continuation of that same story. This is due to the fact that Pentecostals are “natural storytellers [who] transmit their theology through narrative means. They have been “conditioned to engage Scripture as a story.”²¹ This idea that their lives are continuing the biblical narrative allows Pentecostals to identify their own lives with the lives of the biblical characters and events; for Pentecostals, it is natural to assume that the supernatural events that take place in the New Testament, and especially in the Luke-Acts narrative, should be sought after and expected in their own lives in the present.²² Arlene Sanchez Walsh explains that for Pentecostals, their lives are the process of creating “spiritual life stories as a way to corroborate the biblical sacred narrative.”²³ Furthermore, Pentecostals interpret their lives and experiences through a narrative lens, and this narrative approach to hermeneutics and praxis has become “vital to the identity and ideology of Pentecostalism.”²⁴

This narrative hermeneutical process also has a decidedly experiential element. The elevation of experience in the role of Pentecostal hermeneutics and praxis can be seen in the very origins of Pentecostalism itself. This emphasis on experience in the life of the Pentecostal requires a brief explanation of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, perhaps the central tenet of Pentecostal theology. Pentecostalism arose out of the Holiness movement, which taught that sanctification was a “second work of grace” that the believer

²¹ Kenneth Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 166.

²² See, for example, the Assemblies of God position paper on divine healing, which insists that divine healing is not only possible today, but an “integral part of the gospel” and is provided for “all who desire it and belong to Jesus.” The General Council of the Assemblies of God, “Divine Healing,” *Assemblies of God* accessed April 14, 2017, http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position_Papers/pp_downloads/PP_Divine_Healing.pdf.

²³ Arlene Sanchez Walsh, “Sacred Narratives,” *Patheos Library*, 2017, accessed December 12, 2016, http://www.patheos.com/Library/Pentecostal/Beliefs/Sacred-narratives_. Sanchez Walsh is the Associate Professor of Church History & Latino Church Studies at Azusa Pacific University in California.

²⁴ Andersson, “To Live the Biblical Narratives,” 123.

received subsequent to their initial conversion to faith in Christ.²⁵ This meant that the Christian received justification through faith in Christ at the time of conversion, but sanctification took place as a subsequent experience where the dominance of the sinful nature was broken. This was accomplished through the work of the Spirit, and was thus referred to as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.²⁶ However, as the movement developed, some began to reinterpret this theology of experience by saying that rather than being a part of the second experience of God through sanctification, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was actually a third experience of God subsequent to sanctification.

It was in this context in 1901 that Charles Fox Parham, considered to be one of the founders of the American Pentecostal movement, opened a bible school in Topeka, Kansas. On January 1, 1901, Agnes Ozman, a student at the school, received the baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues. Parham formulated his understanding of speaking in tongues²⁷ as a direct result of what he witnessed and participated in at the Topeka school, and Parham even claimed that the scriptural account of the book of Acts acted as the “bible evidence” for the doctrine.²⁸ Parham’s understanding of the doctrine of tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was formulated in the context of the three works or experiences of grace theology, and his teaching that this experience should be the way in which this theology is realized in the life of the believer demonstrates the experiential approach to both hermeneutics

²⁵ *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), s.v. “Experience.”

²⁶ *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, s.v. “Experience.”

²⁷ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 43. Parham believed that speaking in tongues was always going to provide the believer with a new earthly language that could be used for missionary activity, and he thought this meant that there was no need for missionaries to engage in language training before heading out to their various destinations. This idea is sometimes referred to as “xenolalia.”

²⁸ *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, s.v. “Experience.”

and doctrinal formulation from the very beginnings of the Pentecostal movement.

This experiential approach to both hermeneutics and doctrinal formulation has endured to the present day. In his article “Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics,” Roger Stronstad explores the subject at great length.²⁹ He claims that for Pentecostals, their charismatic experiences of the Holy Spirit enable them to understand the biblical text, and specifically Lukan on a deeper level than those who have not engaged in such experiences. He quotes another scholar, Clark Pinnock, who states, “The charismatic experience of the Pentecostal—ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, being led by the Spirit—enables him to understand Luke’s record of the activity of the Holy Spirit in Acts better than the non-Pentecostal.”³⁰ Stronstad’s uses Pinnock’s assertion as a starting point for his own thesis, which he explains this way:

Charismatic experience in particular and spiritual experience in general give the interpreter of relevant biblical texts an experiential presupposition which transcends the rational or cognitive presuppositions of scientific exegesis. Furthermore, this charismatic experience results in an understanding, empathy, and sensitivity to the text, and priorities in relation to the text that other interpreters do not and cannot have.³¹

Stronstad’s thesis clearly demonstrates that the emphasis on the experiential remains a central part of the Pentecostal hermeneutic.

Having introduced the complex history of the status of female ministers in the AG, as well as the narrative and experiential hermeneutical approach utilized by Pentecostals for questions of doctrine and praxis, it is necessary to discuss the way in which the subject of how female ministers discuss and/or describe their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches will be

²⁹ Roger Stronstad, “Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics,” *Paraclete: A Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 26, no. 1 (1992): 14–30.

³⁰ Stronstad, “Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics,” 14.

³¹ Stronstad, “Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics,” 16.

investigated in this study.

Background of the Problem

Why is This Problem of Interest to the Researcher?

This problem is of interest to this researcher for a variety of reasons. First, I am interested to see how the narrative-experiential hermeneutic Pentecostals use when reading scripture is enacted in the lives of real people, in this case in the lives of female ministers. Female ministers in the AG are a perfect group to examine this question of how hermeneutics are practiced, because their unique situations and the reality of the tension(s) they experience have required them to employ this hermeneutic approach on a more consistent basis. In essence, I am interested to see how this hermeneutic is applied in practical and real contexts. Issues of doctrine and hermeneutics can often reside solely in academic textbooks and professional theology. Yet, Pentecostals have always been people who approach God and their relationship with him in very immanent and practical ways. For many Pentecostals, the question is not just what we know about God, but what does he actively do in our lives. This corresponds perfectly to narrative inquiry because narrative research allows the researcher to offer a much more practical and human take on the narratives being examined. Connelly and Clandinin explain that “stories stand between the general and the particular, mediating the generic demands of science with the personal, practical, concrete demands of living. Stories function as arguments in which we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as lived. The narrative inquirer undertakes this mediation from beginning to end and embodies these dimensions as best as he or she can in the written narrative.”³² Therefore, I believe this project

³² F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin, “Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry,” *Educational Researcher* 19, no. 5 (1990): 8.

will address the narratives offered by the participants in a very practical way. It is not enough to discuss what the AG's doctrinal stance on women in ministry is; in order to fully engage the question, an approach that focuses on narrative experience and praxis is warranted and required.

I am also fascinated by the relationships between narrative and doctrine and narrative and praxis in the Pentecostal world and within the AG in particular. While every denomination or likely even every religious group has foundational narratives within which they operate and present to the world, the Pentecostal relationship with narrative is unique and worthy of more thorough and practical investigation in the context of this issue. While this project cannot offer generalizable data about every woman's experience, it will allow a very specific picture how this narrative-experiential hermeneutical process is employed in the specific ministry contexts of three female pastors. It addresses the question of what the hermeneutical process actually looks like in the lived experience of real people.

Third, I am curious to see how the complicated and difficult history of women in leadership in the AG affects the lived experience of the pastors who participate in this study. It will be interesting to see what role this historical and cultural context plays in the lives and ministries of female pastors today. This will be one of the main things that I look for in the analysis of the data collected during the interviews; are these women aware of the complex history, and if so, what role does it play in their experience and how they talk about it?

Where Does this Problem Occur?

The problem primarily occurs in the churches/faith communities where the women participating in the study are engaged in pastoral ministry, though in a broader sense it also takes place in their own specific geographical and sociological contexts.

This also takes place in the AG as an organization. While the fellowship has officially

affirmed the biblical appropriateness of women in ministry, by doing so it has also approved of the broad hermeneutical approach these women take regarding scriptures that others claim should prohibit them from engaging in leadership roles in ministry. The fellowship as a whole, then, is also affected by this issue, especially since this approach may also be involved in the doctrinal stances and practices towards the leadership roles of women as well as other issues. Moreover, the experiences of women who are in leadership in the fellowship affect how the fellowship recruits, trains, and equips new leaders, as well as how it engages with the larger society.

Who is Affected by the Problem?

At its most basic level, the question of how female ministers in the AG narrate their lived experience as lead pastors affects the women in those positions themselves. Their experiences, as well as their understanding and shaping of those experiences into narrative(s), affects how they minister in their churches as well as how they interact with people outside of the church. These narrative(s) can influence their sermons, approach to pastoral counseling, how they conduct the administration and business of the church, as well as how they relate to their staff, volunteers, and church members. It can also affect how they function in their own districts and in the General Council as a whole.³³ For example, a pastor who sees herself as a victim will minister

³³ For those not familiar with the governmental structure of the Assemblies of God, a brief description is provided: Each assembly operates its ministries under both a district and national structure. The 67 districts basically follow state boundaries or are set according to specific language groups. Districts oversee the ministries in their areas, such as camps and outreaches, as well as provide ministry opportunities and avenues of fellowship for ministers and constituents. Districts also recommend ministers for national credentialing. They are authorized to lead, solving matters of leadership and direction for local assemblies. They operate as a type of regional leadership between the local church and the national Fellowship. The national church is called "The General Council of the Assemblies of God." In keeping with the original intention of the founding body, the Assemblies of God is considered a cooperative fellowship rather than a denomination. As a result the national headquarters operation exists primarily as a service organization - providing educational curriculum, organizing the missions programs, credentialing ministers, overseeing the church's colleges and seminary, producing communication channels for the church and non-church public, and providing leadership for many national programs and ministries of the

differently than one who feels supported and affirmed. Additionally, the people in their churches are also affected by experiences of their pastor, since the way in which their pastor carries out her ministry will naturally be observed and experienced by them as they listen to her sermons, work as her staff or volunteers, etc.

The narrative understanding of female lead pastors also affects the lives of many people within the AG. First, it can create difficulty for the pastors themselves, since they have to wrestle constantly with the tension between fulfilling their divine calling and the conflicting messages they receive from both within the fellowship and from the larger society. In one article, Janet Everts Powers explains how the tension female pastors experience as a result of marginalization and a lack of support from the institutions they serve has led to the quality of brokenness being at the center of the ministry of female pastors.³⁴ While this does allow for their ministries to have a focus that is helpful to other groups who are marginalized or mistreated,³⁵ it nevertheless creates a harmful reality for female ministers and those to whom they minister.

Statement of the Problem

Research Problem

The history of the evolving understanding of women's leadership roles in the AG is complex and often confusing.³⁶ The process of the development of a narrative-based hermeneutic

Assemblies of God. The General Council of the Assemblies of God, "Our Form of Government," *Assemblies of God (USA) Official Website*, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://ag.org/top/About/structure.cfm>.

³⁴ Janet Everts Powers, "Brokenness as the Center of a Woman's Ministry," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 17, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 237.

³⁵ Powers, "Brokenness as the Center," 243. The article explains that one benefit of brokenness being at the center of the ministry of female ministers is that it allows them to "develop compassion for those who are marginalized and treated as inferior by those around them; the physically and mentally ill, the victims of abuse, the destitute and the disadvantaged."

³⁶ Edith L. Blumhofer, "Women in American Pentecostalism," *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of*

is also one that has confusing elements; while it is recognized by scholars and most Pentecostals would agree that they employ that hermeneutical approach to scripture, it is still one that is developing and has been recognized as “emerging” within the last few decades.³⁷ Additionally, there remains a constant tension between what the AG teaches and what it actually practices and encourages. Though many steps have been taken in recent years to rectify this discrepancy, many factors still exist that create great difficulty for women who are trying to figure out where they fit as leaders in the fellowship. While there are many such factors that could be investigated, this project will focus on the way in which three female pastors in the AG narrate their lived experience as lead pastors within AG churches. The research problem being addressed, then, is this: Due to the complex and often confusing history of the status of women pastors in the AG fellowship, there is a lack of understanding of how female pastors in the AG understand and narrate their own experience as pastors within the fellowship. While this project cannot offer generalizable statements about the experience of every female lead pastor in the AG, it offers a rich description of the experiences and the understandings of those experiences in order to offer a perspective on the issue from a small subsection of those most affected by it.

Research Question

This study does not attempt to present a holistic picture of every way that the status of women in the AG has changed in history. Historical information concerning the development of the doctrine and praxis of the AG in regards to this issue will be offered where appropriate to give context and to allow the reader to understand the data and conclusions made about it, but

Pentecostal Studies 17, no. 1 (1995): 20.

³⁷ Gordon L. Anderson, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Part One,” *Paraclete: A Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 28 (1994): 18.

this will not be the main focus of this project.³⁸ Instead, this study focuses on the way in which three female pastors in the AG describe or narrate their own lived experience(s) as pastors. The project uses a qualitative narrative method as a vehicle for investigating this topic and will present and discuss the narratives used through the method of qualitative interviews and specifically narrative analysis. The specific research question is: Given the complex and inconsistent history and present reality faced by women in the AG, how do the participants in this study narrate their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to use the process of qualitative narrative analysis to examine how the participants in this study narrate their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches. While much has been written about Pentecostal women in ministry, including qualitative studies on this topic, this study is unique and will bridge a gap that is in the current literature on the topic.

First, much has been written about the historical development of the AG's doctrinal stance on the question of women's pastoral leadership. Qualls' work specifically addresses the process of how women in the AG have had to rhetorically negotiate and renegotiate their positions within the AG, but she focuses mostly on the historical development; she does not, for the most part, address how current female pastors narrate their positions within their local contexts. Furthermore, she situates her project within the field of history and rhetoric, whereas this project primarily addresses the issue from a stance of narrative analysis. This project builds on the

³⁸ This is closer to the project that Qualls undertakes in her dissertation, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 2. Joy E. A. Qualls, "God Forgive Us for Being Women: The Rhetorical Negotiation and Renegotiation of the Role of Women in the Assemblies of God" (PhD Dissertation, Regent University, 2010).

foundation provided by Qualls and narrows the focus to a much more contextual and specific study. Instead of making conclusions about the entire subject of women in ministry in the AG, this study will zero in on how the issue is experienced and lived in the lives of three specific people. Doing so should allow a more specific and personal picture of how three people affected by this issue have wrestled with it and what effect that struggle has had on their own lives and ministries.

While Qualls does not employ qualitative research or interviews to address her topic, there are other studies that have been carried out that use a qualitative approach to investigate the status of female pastors within Pentecostalism. Three important works take such an approach: Mary McClintock Fulkerson's *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*,³⁹ Elaine Lawless' *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion*,⁴⁰ and Susan Kwilecki's article "Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen: Female Christian Leadership, Old Style."⁴¹ All of these works employ qualitative methods and some use form(s) of narrative analysis. However, they do so from within a very particular perspective: that of folklore, feminist theology, and in the case of McClintock Fulkerson, feminist liberation theology. This study does not attempt to situate itself within a folklore, feminist, or feminist liberationist perspective, though it may have instances where these

³⁹ Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), viii. Fulkerson's work employs interviews of female ministers from the Church of God that were actually performed by David Roebuck. Her work is not strictly qualitative, though she does use qualitative data in order to examine her question of how women's discourses in various religious systems can help move feminist theology beyond mere appeals to women's experience. McClintock Fulkerson believes that by challenging the appeal to women's experience as the basis for feminist theology will allow the creation of "categories from feminist and liberationist uses of poststructuralism [that] are useful for probing the hidden commitments of the communities in which women reside."

⁴⁰ Elaine J. Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

⁴¹ Susan Kwilecki, "Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen: Female Christian Leadership, Old Style," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 3 no 2 (Fall 1987): 57–75.

perspectives are discussed or seen, especially as the participants may discuss these very topics.

Another important element to this discussion is that these qualitative works, while very important and an integral part of addressing this issue, were all performed more than two decades ago. Kwilecki published her article in 1987, Lawless published her book in 1988, and Fulkerson published hers in 1994. This does not mean that the findings and information presented are not valid. However, it does indicate that a new look at this topic from a different perspective can add new data that are an important part of this subject as a whole.

Lastly, while all of these works do focus on Pentecostal women ministers, they all interviewed women from various American classical Pentecostal denominations, whereas the current study will situate itself specifically within the context of the AG.⁴² It is also important to mention that the researcher's situatedness within the AG will offer a perspective that is different from the ones in the aforementioned qualitative works.

Given all of this information, this study is unique in that it examines the issue of how female ministers describe their lived experience as female pastors in AG churches from a different perspective than that of the other qualitative studies mentioned, and it focuses on the AG specifically rather than American Pentecostalism as a whole. It also offers an updated look at the question that has not been seriously examined using a qualitative/narrative analysis lens for twenty-three years.

Research Design

Overall Methodology

To begin a discussion of the overall methodology, a philosophical and methodological

⁴² McClintock Fulkerson and Kwilecki do include ministers from the Assemblies of God in their studies, but they also include women from other Pentecostal groups such as the Church of God, Church of God: Holiness, etc.

framework must be offered. Since narrative plays a central role in this study, a narrative-based research framework is employed. This framework employs Donald Polkinghorne's concept of narrative understanding and a combination of George Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model and Kevin Vanhoozer's modification of Lindbeck's approach, which he calls the canonical-linguistic approach to theology. The project applies these principles using a social-constructionist⁴³ research approach. While the precise details of the methodology used in this project will be offered in chapter three, some introductory comments and definitions will introduce these topics for the reader.

Donald Polkinghorne's concept of narrative understanding forms the starting point for the research framework. Polkinghorne begins by explaining that human beings are continuously engaged in the process of storytelling, and this process of storytelling takes many different forms. Some overt or obvious types of storytelling include fictional works such as plays, novels, movies, or television programs. However, these mediums are not the only place where storytelling takes place; narratives are also present in the form of personal, social, or even national histories. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly for this project, human beings also engage in a narrative process that takes place in the "everyday stories we use to explain our own actions and the actions of others."⁴⁴ Indeed, human existence and understanding itself takes a narrative form; human beings engage in a narrative process in order to make sense of the worlds

⁴³ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 122. There is some disagreement in the pertinent literature about whether the term should be "social constructionism" or "social constructivism." Patton quotes Michael Crotty, who differentiates the two terms this way: "It would appear useful, then, to reserve the term *constructivism* for the epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on the meaning making activity of the individual mind and to use *constructionism* where the focus includes the collective generation and transmission of meaning." Patton points out that it is unclear as to whether the distinction will endure at all.

⁴⁴ Donald Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 1.

they inhabit and the experiences that take place in the course of their lives. Polkinghorne sees narrative as one of the main “meaning systems that form human experience.”⁴⁵ When an event or experience takes place, a person immediately engages in “sense-making” behavior, which is an attempt to “[link] individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understanding composite.”⁴⁶

Building on the work of cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner, Polkinghorne uses this view of the narrative process and its importance for the understanding of human actions and behaviors to discuss how narrative understanding is one of the two basic intelligences or modes of cognitive functioning. In his 1985 work *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*,⁴⁷ Bruner argues that narrative knowledge is more than mere emotive knowledge and is instead a legitimate form of reasoned knowing.⁴⁸ Bruner explains that there are two types of understanding, what he terms paradigmatic cognition and narrative cognition. Paradigmatic cognition involves classifying a particular instance as belonging to a category or concept. These concepts are defined by a set of common attributes that can be further explained through subordinate concepts or categories. For example, the category “furniture” is further understood by the subordinate concepts of “chair,” “sofa,” or “table.”⁴⁹ One important distinction of paradigmatic cognition is that it focuses on items as instances of a category, and it does not focus on what makes it different from members of other categories. In keeping with the furniture example, the actual size, shade, or marks on the

⁴⁵ Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing*, 17.

⁴⁶ Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing*, 13.

⁴⁷ See Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

⁴⁸ Donald Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis,” *Qualitative Studies in Education* 8, no. 1 (1995): 5–23.

⁴⁹ Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration,” 10.

surface of an item that make it unique are not of concern.⁵⁰

In contrast to paradigmatic cognition, Polkinghorne explains that the process of narrative cognition is more concerned with understanding human action. He explains, “Human action is the outcome of the interaction of a person’s previous learning and experiences, present-situated presses, and proposed goals and purposes ... whereas paradigmatic cognition is focused on what is common among actions, narrative knowledge focuses on the particular and special characteristics of each action.”⁵¹ Therefore, while paradigmatic cognition looks for similarities and subordinate categories as a way of classification, narrative cognition examines the differences and diversity of people’s behavior.⁵² Polkinghorne’s explanation of how this process is useful in qualitative studies is worth quoting in full:

Narrative cognition configures the diverse elements of a particular action into a unified whole in which each element is connected to the central purpose of the action. Hearing a storied description about a person’s movement through a life episode touches us in a way as to evoke emotions such as sympathy, anger, or sadness. Narrative cognition gives us explanatory knowledge of why a person acted as she or he did; it makes another’s action, as well as our own, understandable ... this collection of storied experiences provides a basis for understanding new action episodes by means of analogy. The collection of stories is searched to find one that is similar in some respects to a new one. The concern is not to identify the new episode as instance of a general type but similar to a specific remembered episode. Thus, the understanding of the new action can draw upon previous understanding while being open to the specific and unique elements that make the new episode different than all that have gone before.⁵³

Due to the relationship between Pentecostal hermeneutics and narrative, Polkinghorne’s idea of narrative cognition and narrative understanding provide a natural avenue for examining the ways in which the female lead pastors in the AG who participate in this study discuss and understand

⁵⁰ Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration,” 10.

⁵¹ Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration,” 11.

⁵² Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration,” 11.

⁵³ Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration,” 11.

their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches.

This study also utilizes elements of postliberal theology, especially the cultural-linguistic model offered by George Lindbeck.⁵⁴ In order to explain how Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model is a part of the research framework for the project, we must first offer a brief explanation of the cultural-linguistic model itself. Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model is presented in his 1984 book *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. In it, Lindbeck claims that until postliberal thought, there were two main ways of understanding theology: the cognitive-propositional model and the experiential expressivist model. The cognitive-propositional model, generally thought of as the premodern approach to theology, emphasizes the cognitive aspects of religion and stresses the ways in which church doctrines function as "informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities."⁵⁵ Thus in this approach to religion, a strong emphasis is placed on doctrinal orthodoxy and assenting to formulated theological statements or beliefs. The Experiential-Expressivist model, on the other hand, presents doctrine as "non-informative and nondiscursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations."⁵⁶ Lindbeck further explains that such an approach to doctrine finds "ultimately significant contact with whatever is finally important to religion in the prereflective experiential depths of the self and regards the public or outer features of religion as expressive and evocative objectifications of internal experience."⁵⁷ As a result, doctrines are not truth statements, but are instead an attempt to articulate the veracity of shared inner experiences.

Instead of these two approaches, Lindbeck argues for the cultural-linguistic model of

⁵⁴ George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

⁵⁵ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 16.

⁵⁶ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 16.

⁵⁷ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 32.

religion. In the cultural-linguistic model, doctrines are understood to function as grammars for a community; that is, they establish the boundaries of thought, dialogue, and praxis within faith communities, which allows doctrines to take on a regulative function. More specifically, in the cultural-linguistic view, religions are seen as “comprehensive interpretive schemes usually embodied in myths and narratives heavily ritualized, which structure human experience and understanding of self and world.”⁵⁸ Lindbeck goes on to say that, in this model, religions can be seen as “a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework that shapes the entirety of life and thought.”⁵⁹ Therefore, doctrines are not making evaluations of truth statements about independent or objective realities. Instead, they function in a similar way as the grammar of a language. As a result, becoming a Christian involves learning how to think, speak, and act like a Christian within the specific context of Christianity. Joel Okamoto summarizes the cultural-linguistic model this way: “The cultural-linguistic model does not so much *replace* as *relativize* both cognitive and experiential dimensions of religion to a more basic linguistic or cultural level. The religious person does not so much choose and explicitly follow known propositions or directives as learn how to think, feel, and act in conformity with the grammar or logic of a given religious tradition.”⁶⁰

Moreover, Lindbeck emphasizes that the cultural-linguistic model of religion requires one to see the fundamental importance of the narrative of scripture, as well as seeing how they

⁵⁸ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 32.

⁵⁹ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 33.

⁶⁰ Joel P. Okamoto, “Postliberal Approaches to the Theology of Religions: Presentation, Assessment, and Critical Appropriation (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 1997), 77. Okamoto also explains that “the cultural-linguistic model is similar to the cognitive-propositional account in that maintains that there are meaningful claims about reality, but it holds that religion in its most comprehensive dimension is a framework for thought and life, not a set of claims about reality. The framework determines the kinds of claims that can be made in a meaningful sense. Thus the cognitive dimension of a religion, while important, is not basic but stands in a subordinate relation to the cultural-linguistic framework.”

themselves are a part of that same narrative. He says, “To become a Christian involves learning the story of Israel and of Jesus well enough to interpret and experience oneself and one’s world in its terms.”⁶¹ Communities that operate within the cultural linguistic model, then, do not see the biblical accounts of Israel or Jesus as mere stories that took place at some point in history. Instead, they see them as a continuing story in which they also participate and carry out today. The reason this study includes elements of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic model is because the cultural-linguistic model allows a context within which narratives can be understood and evaluated. Since this study utilizes the work of Polkinghorne which believes the narrative process offers the primary method of understanding human experience and behavior, it also needs the work of Lindbeck to offer a context and grammar within which to understand and evaluate those narratives of experience, which the cultural-linguistic model provides.

As previously mentioned, this study uses a combination of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic approach and Kevin Vanhoozer’s canonical-linguistic system. Vanhoozer lays out this approach in his book *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*.⁶² This canonical-linguistic approach is a modification of and corrective to Lindbeck’s, because while Vanhoozer affirms many things about Lindbeck’s work and recognizes its significant contribution to theology, he believes that it displays significant flaws that require an alternative. Vanhoozer’s *Drama of Doctrine* employs the metaphor of drama, and the performance of that drama, to understand this approach to theology. In many ways this is closely related to Lindbeck’s concept of the performative quality of doctrine. However, where Lindbeck places his entire emphasis on the performance of doctrine within a particular community, and thus leaves

⁶¹ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 34.

⁶² Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster, 2005).

the question of truth and faithfulness to the scriptural account entirely in the various communities themselves, Vanhoozer believes this creates difficulty because it would seem to indicate that as long as a doctrine is performed within a community that declares it faithful and beneficial to that community, there is no way to evaluate whether or not that is actually the case. He says,

[The canonical-linguistic approach] answers the question “Why consider *this* community’s practice as normative?” by appealing to the role of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is still not clear whether, or how, the gospel narrative governs ecclesial practice. To state the core problem: How can the biblical text exercise authority *over* the church if its meaning depends on its use *in* and *by* the church? Or better: Whose use of biblical language is normative for Christian doctrine? The text’s? The interpretive community’s? The Spirit’s? ... The canonical-linguistic model affords primacy to the Scripture as a species of divine discourse. The way forward, I believe, is to see the scriptures themselves as “spirited practices.”⁶³

This is not to say that Vanhoozer believes that using scripture in this manner means that practices have no importance; instead, he believes the practices themselves need to be governed by an authoritative script, which provides direction for those who seek to perform the roles they play at the direction of the script and the Holy Spirit. Both Lindbeck and Vanhoozer will be explained in further detail in chapter two.

There reason this study employs a combination of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic and Vanhoozer’s canonical-linguistic approach is that they both provide a needed element that fits with the experiences of the participants in this study. The cultural-linguistic approach provides an avenue for exploring what it means for people to *live* doctrine within a particular community. For the women in this study, they have had to figure out what the grammar of their community and what that means for their individual praxis; the process of carrying out their divine call to ministry is a perfect example of someone engaging in this practice.

Yet, Vanhoozer makes an excellent point that Lindbeck’s approach is not sufficient in and

⁶³ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 98–99.

of itself, especially within the Pentecostal community which sees the scriptures as such an integral part of their lives and praxis. It acknowledges and takes seriously the performative aspect of doctrine, recognizing that doctrine without any kind of performance struggles to have any relevance at all. However, unlike Lindbeck's system, it allows for a way of grounding that performance within a divinely-directed and scriptural basis for that praxis. Second, the women who participated in this study exemplify the approach that Vanhoozer is using. They have found themselves having to engage in the process of working out their approaches to life and ministry, since they operate within a context that provides confusing and conflicting direction about how to act within the roles they have been given by God. Furthermore, as will be seen in the first interview and data analysis, they all ground this process within their understanding of the scriptures, or to use Vanhoozer's metaphor, the script. For them, they are Pentecostal and faithful ministers of the gospel not in spite of the script but based on their understanding of it. Though some have told them that the script would actually prevent them from doing so, these women have a different understanding of that script which enables them to improvise their role in the drama in a way they believe is faithful to the direction of the Holy Spirit and the script/scriptures.⁶⁴ Due to the correspondence between Vanhoozer's approach and the narratives

⁶⁴ Vanhoozer's concept of "improvisation" will be explained in further detail in chapter two. This also raises an interesting question or possible objection which Sarah H. Lancaster considers in her article "Dramatic Enactment of Christian Faith: A Review Essay," *Asbury Journal* 62, no. 1 (2007): 119–26. In a discussion of Vanhoozer's work and specifically his idea of improvisation, she says, "As a woman, I cannot help but have another concern. It is one thing to recognize the need for fitting enactment in new situations; it is another to face hindrances to enactment that arise from past performances in the Bible or history. [This books] stress[es] faithful creativity, but they do not pay much attention to how hard it can sometimes be to take one's place in the ongoing drama. To his credit, Vanhoozer does discuss how revised understandings of the past are possible and how the Holy Spirit may lead us into "new truths" that need not contradict the old. What I continue to wonder is the extent to which in his understanding "just these words" that God assured would be written down by the apostles can be understood differently. What actually happens when the words "women should be silent in the churches" provide the script for thinking about women's preaching, especially as ordained ministers? Does the category "improvisation" allow us to enact the opposite of what is said?" This is an interesting point. In the context of this study, however, I would point out that the participants do not see themselves as "enacting the opposite of what is said." Instead, they believe they are being faithful to a correct understanding of the script and are thus acting in a way that is appropriate and contextual to their own lives and ministries. See chapter four and five.

of experience offered by the participants in this study, the philosophical framework for this study combines Lindbeck's idea of the community as a context within which doctrine is performed or carried out and Vanhoozer's corrective that relies on a performance that is grounded within a Spirit-directed and scripturally governed improvisatory approach to life and ministry.

This narrative framework utilized by this project also requires the research perspective of social constructionism, as social constructionism is very closely related to both Polkinghorne and Lindbeck's work. First, social constructionism "begins with the premise that the human world is different than the natural/physical world and therefore must be studied differently."⁶⁵ Social constructionism focuses on the world of human perception rather than on ontologically or empirically verifiable "reality;" instead, social constructionism is interested in how human beings collectively construct their own realities.⁶⁶ Patton explains that while social constructionism denies that the socially constructed world created by humans is actually "real" in the ontological or empirical sense, this does not mean that it isn't "perceived and experienced as real by real people."⁶⁷ Instead, it means that social constructionism relies on the principle of ontological relativity, which "holds that all tenable statements about existence depend on a worldview and no worldview is uniquely determined by empirical or sense data about the world."⁶⁸ Social constructionism, then, views reality as negotiated and subjective, and examines how those realities are created and experienced within various communities. Creswell also points out that social-constructionism places certain demands upon the researcher, since researchers

⁶⁵ Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 121.

⁶⁶ Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 121.

⁶⁷ Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 121.

⁶⁸ Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 122.

engaged in qualitative studies that employ the framework of social constructionism “recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they ‘position themselves’ in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural and historical experiences.”⁶⁹

Using the work of Polkinghorne, Lindbeck, and Vanhoozer within a social-constructionist research approach as a framework, the methodology employed by this project is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry can take many different forms and is often used in various fields,⁷⁰ and is very much a “field in the making.”⁷¹ As such, it allows for a great deal of flexibility to those wishing to undertake a narrative study. This is not to say, however, that there are no requirements or that a researcher who is using narrative inquiry can do whatever she or he wants. While he explains that not every narrative study will include all of these elements, Creswell does offer some defining features of narrative studies; the ones pertinent to this project are listed below. I will only offer a brief explanation of the broad elements of qualitative narrative methodology, as a more detailed explanation of the specific research methodology and interpretation will be provided in chapter three.

First, Creswell mentions that narrative researchers “collect stories from individuals about [their] lived and told experiences.”⁷² These stories can be ones that participants tell the researcher, but since the researcher often becomes a participant in the narrative that is created or

⁶⁹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 24. Creswell points out that this is why qualitative research is often called “interpretive research;” qualitative researchers attempt to interpret or “make sense” of others’ perspectives about the world, as well as their experiences and the meanings they create.

⁷⁰ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 70. Creswell explains that these fields can include everything from literature and history to psychology, sociology, and even some interdisciplinary efforts.

⁷¹ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 71.

⁷² Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 71.

presented, they can also be a “product of co-construction between the researcher and the participant(s) ... this creates a strong collaborative function in narrative research.”⁷³ Second, they tell of individual experiences which may shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves.⁷⁴ Third, these narratives stories are often analyzed in different ways, such as searching for common themes, structure and structural features of the narrative itself and what those structural elements display, or who the story is directed towards; this last element is referred to as dialogic or performance analysis.⁷⁵ Narrative researchers will also often take note of how the stories that arise in their research are situated within specific places or situations, which “allows the researcher to tell the story within a specific context or place.”⁷⁶

These elements that Creswell provides formed the methodology for this study. It used qualitative interviews to collect stories from individuals about their lived experiences as female lead pastors within the AG and looked to examine the how these women then discussed and described their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches.

Sample Selection

This study employed purposeful sampling, which allowed me to select individuals for study who were able to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study.⁷⁷ The reason that I used the approach of purposeful sampling as opposed to a random sampling is because this study addressed a very specific topic. As a result, I

⁷³ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 71.

⁷⁴ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 71.

⁷⁵ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 72.

⁷⁶ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 72.

⁷⁷ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 156.

needed to be careful to select individuals who fit the requirements of the study; that is, they needed to be female ministers in the AG who have had experience in lead pastoral ministry.⁷⁸ Since narrative studies produce a great deal of data and, therefore, need to be limited to a small number of individuals,⁷⁹ this project recruited three individuals who were able to address the issue. Basing the study on three individuals allowed for a more balanced perspective than a study that focused on a single individual. It also allowed for a more robust cross-case comparison than a study that focused on one or two individuals. While it is not the goal of this study to make generalizable conclusions about how every female minister in the AG's describes their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches based on the narrative experiences of three women, a narrative approach allowed for the collection and presentation of rich data that authentically portrayed those experiences in the voices of the people who experienced them.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The primary way this study collected data was through interviews which were conducted using Skype.⁸⁰ The Interviews asked open-ended questions that encouraged the interviewee to narrate their experiences and tell stories that address the questions presented. Since audio recording is essential to the process of data analysis in qualitative research, these interviews were recorded with the permission and informed consent of the interviewee. This is due to the amount of data provided in qualitative interviews and a need for the interviewer to be engaged with participants and focused on their responses rather than simply on recording/note taking. In order

⁷⁸ For the purposes of this study, pastoral ministry would include both licensed and ordained ministers who have had at least one year of ministry in a church or district context.

⁷⁹ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 74.

⁸⁰ There are some practical and ethical considerations to take into account when using Skype as a medium for qualitative interviews. These concerns will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

to properly analyze the data provided, detailed transcripts were made (see Appendix 1).

Data Analysis Methods

After these narratives were collected and transcribed, they were then analyzed. While there are many ways to analyze data obtained in qualitative research, I employed Corrine Squire's methodology of experience-centered and culturally-oriented narrative research.⁸¹ This will be explained in greater detail in chapter three, but a basic description of this methodology is as follows: Squire's methodology is based on the hermeneutical approach of Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, which requires the researcher to analyze data by "going round in hermeneutic circles."⁸² This process going round in hermeneutic circles employs three steps: First, the researcher starts with his an explanation for what is seen in the text, or in this case, transcripts, then moves back to text, which allows her or him to develop a naïve understanding. The researcher then reexamines the text in light of the naïve understanding, which will eventually lead to a deeper understanding.

The first part of the actual process of data analysis is to describe the interviews thematically. The researcher does this by examining the transcripts and looking for recurring themes or similarities within and between accounts. In order to carry out this thematic analysis, I used the coding method provided by Johnny Saldana in his book *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*.⁸³ In the process of qualitative data analysis, a code is "a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or translates data and thus attributes interpreted meaning to

⁸¹ Corrine Squire, "Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative," in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corrine Squire, and Maria Tamboukou (London: Sage, 2008), 41–63.

⁸² Squire, "Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches," 51.

⁸³ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015).

each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, assertion or propositions development, theory building, or other analytic processes.”⁸⁴ The specific coding process I used will also be explained in more detail in chapter three, but it is sufficient to say at this point that coding allowed data obtained from the interviews to be classified in terms of patterns or themes which were then an important part of the thematic analysis.

After a thematic analysis, I engaged in a cross-case comparison of the data obtained in the interviews. This required me to search for similarities and differences between the themes present in the accounts of the different participants in the studies. There were many thematic similarities and differences across the three accounts. As such, the cross-case comparison allowed for a great deal of worthwhile inquiry.

A third method of data analysis that is employed by most studies that use experience-centered narrative research is to look for how the data is affected by the larger sociological/historical setting in which those narratives are situated. Squire argues that one of the best ways to do this is to examine stories for different genres that the narratives may display.⁸⁵ In order to carry out this process, I examined how the narratives I gathered display inherent Pentecostal qualities. The detailed results of this process are presented in chapter four and analyzed in chapter five.

Data Presentation Methods

The data collected by way of interviews was transcribed and coded and is provided in chapter four. It will be presented in a narrative format that will seek to show how the participants have addressed and experienced the issue in their lives and ministries.

⁸⁴ Saldana, *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4.

⁸⁵ Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 54.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study made some important assumptions and also had some limitations in the data it offers and in the conclusions it makes. One of the major assumptions in this project is the way in which it conceives of narrative, especially in how that relates to the process of narrative analysis. First, this study used narrative as both an approach and an interpretive paradigm, and not just as an object for analysis, which required the researcher to conceive of every part of the study as part of a narrative it is offering. Doing so allowed me to situate the study within its context as well as see participants as co-contributors in the narrative and not just as data sources. Roberts and Shanhav explain that this is important because it allows for the researcher to “eschew the objectification of the people that we study and we understand and espouse the constructedness of our knowledge.”⁸⁶ They further explain that viewing narrative as an approach or paradigm requires “adopting a set of specific ontological and epistemological assumptions, such as subjectivism, and an attention to processes of co-construction of reality.”⁸⁷ This is in contrast to studies that view narrative as an object or, “primarily as a “unit” and that narrative analysis is defined by the study of such units.”⁸⁸ In the opinion of this author, viewing narrative as an object or merely as a unit for study deprives narratives of their rich and situated or contextual character as the approach used by real people.

In regards to limitations, the narratives and information provided in this study are not generalizable; that is, while it offers large amount of data and information on how the three participants in the study describe their lived experience as female lead pastors in the AG, the

⁸⁶ Dominique Robert and Shaul Shenhav, “Fundamental Assumptions in Narrative Analysis: Mapping the Field,” *Qualitative Report* 19, no. 38 (September, 2014): 8.

⁸⁷ Robert and Shenhav, “Fundamental Assumptions,” 8.

⁸⁸ Robert and Shenhav, “Fundamental Assumptions,” 9.

project cannot and does not attempt to make generalizable conclusions about the lived experience of all female ministers in the AG as a whole. Doing so is outside both the scope and intent of this study.

Another important limitation of this project that is similar to its inability to offer generalizable information about an entire population is its inability to comment on any kind of objective or objectively verifiable reality. Some narrative studies do attempt to do so, in that they seek to utilize the correspondence theory of truth or descriptive realism in order to show that narrative can help us access “reality.”⁸⁹ In contrast, this study used a viewpoint that depends on co-constructed and community defined subjectivity. Instead of using narratives as a way to verify “what actually happened,” or to inquire as to the nature of objective reality, this study, in agreement with the cultural-linguistic model and social-constructionism framework it utilizes, operated under the principal that truths don’t reveal the past “as it actually was,” aspiring to a standard of objectivity. Instead, narratives give us the truths of our experience ... Unlike the Truth of scientific ideal, the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretation.”⁹⁰

Definition of Terms

Narrative: The term narrative can be defined in many different ways, and the way in which narrative is conceived and defined affects the entire project and how it is carried out. In this project, the definition of narrative is a combination of the work of Donald Polkinghorne and Catherine Kohler Riessman. Polkinghorne defines narrative as “a discourse form in which events

⁸⁹ Robert and Shenhav, “Fundamental Assumptions,” 6.

⁹⁰ Robert and Shenhav, “Fundamental Assumptions,” 6.

and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot.”⁹¹ Riessman defines narrative as “talk ordered around consequential events as well as a retelling or crafting of a world in order to make a point, and this point is often a moral one.”⁹² The combined definition used for this study, then, is this: A narrative is an emplotted discourse in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity. This discourse is created to craft a world in which to make a point or relate a moral truth.

Narrative Inquiry/Analysis: The narrative approach to qualitative inquiry focuses on stories. Researchers collect these stories from participants, and the stories tell of personal experiences, and they may “shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves.”⁹³ These stories are gathered through different methods, such as interviews, observations, documents, pictures, and other sources. After these stores are collected, they are analyzed in different ways. They can be analyzed thematically, structurally, or dialogically. Narrative analysis also searches for “turning points,” which Creswell defines as “specific tensions or interruptions that are highlighted by the researchers in the telling of stories.”⁹⁴ Lastly, narrative inquiry often examines how narratives are situated within specific places or situations and will comment on how context may be affecting the narratives offered.

Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics studies the process of interpretation and how meaning is derived from texts, and how those texts are understood and applied. These texts are often written in a time or context that is different than our own.⁹⁵ Since this project focuses on the ways in

⁹¹ Polkinghorne, “Narrative Configuration,” 5.

⁹² Catherine Kohler Riessman, “Analysis of Personal Narratives,” in *Handbook of Interview Research*, ed. J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002), 695–710.

⁹³ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 71.

⁹⁴ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 72.

⁹⁵ Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 136.

which a specific group has understood and applied certain biblical texts, Thiselton's definition of biblical hermeneutics is extremely helpful. He says, "Biblical hermeneutics explores levels of meaning, strategies for reading, historical distance, appropriation, engagement, and formation, and often features patient and attentive listening. The relation between text and community remains constantly in view."⁹⁶ For the purposes of this project, then, hermeneutics/hermeneutical process will be defined as the process by which a certain community reads, understands, derives meaning from, and practices certain biblical texts to their own lives and ministries.

General Council of the AG: The General Council of the AG (USA), one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States, was organized in 1914 by a broad coalition of ministers who desired to work together to fulfill common objectives, such as sending missionaries and providing fellowship and accountability. Formed in the midst of the emerging worldwide Pentecostal revival, the AG quickly took root in other countries and formed indigenous national organizations. The AG (USA) is a constituent member of the World AG Fellowship – one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the world.⁹⁷

Code/Coding: Saldana defines a "code" as follows: "A code is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based visual data."⁹⁸ This word or short phrase is applied to data gathered in qualitative research, usually in the form of interviews, field notes, documents, journal entries, etc., in order to assist the researcher in the process of data analysis. These codes are used for the purpose of "pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition

⁹⁶ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), xx.

⁹⁷ The General Council of the Assemblies of God, "The Assemblies of God," accessed May 29, 2017, <http://ag.org/top/About/History/index.cfm>.

⁹⁸ Saldana, *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4.

development, theory building, and other analytic processes.”⁹⁹

Expected Findings

First, I believe that the participants will have a hermeneutical approach to the scriptures that uses the aforementioned narrative-experiential focus. This narrative-experiential focus will allow them to place themselves in the biblical story, which I anticipate will they will find value in their ministries, despite certain scriptures such as First Corinthians 14:34–35 and First Timothy 2:11–15. I also think that each woman will have instances where they have had to validate their ministries to people who have used these scriptures to silence or delegitimize them and/or their ministries. Moreover, while I believe that each of the three women interviewed will have developed a hermeneutical “strategy” for dealing with these passages and explaining why their ministry is still “valid” in spite of the traditional interpretations of those scriptures, I anticipate that they will have had significant questions about their hermeneutical stance/approach or periods of time where their confidence in their interpretations of these passages was less than absolute. If so, it will be interesting to see how those questions and doubts have affected their ministries; do they still deal with persistent doubts, or have they found a way to settle those doubts and be confident in their positions of authority?

Secondly, I expect that the descriptions the participants offer of their lived experience as female lead pastors will be heavily influenced by the complex and, in many ways, confusing history explored in detail above. While it is possible that this history will be explicitly referenced by the participants, I find it more likely that there will be similarities or instances within their ministries where they have experienced the mixed messages or even outright resistance based on

⁹⁹ Saldana, *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4.

their gender.

Thirdly, I expect that there will be many instances in the interviews where certain Pentecostal qualities or characteristics will be evident. It is likely that events such as baptism in the Holy Spirit or the continued operation in the gifts of the Spirit will be mentioned repeatedly in the accounts offered by the participants. I also expect certain Pentecostal themes such as eschatological urgency, the immanence of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the calling to ministry. It will be interesting to see which of these elements are present in the data.

Bracketing in Qualitative Research

Bracketing is a method used by some qualitative researchers to “mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the researcher and thereby increase the rigor of the project.”¹⁰⁰ This is done through a process that “facilitates the researcher reaching deeper levels of reflection across all stages of qualitative research.”¹⁰¹ Tufford and Newman note, however, that there is some confusion as to the particulars of the process as well as when it should be employed by researchers. How bracketing is employed depends on the philosophical orientation of the researcher. Some follow the approach of Husserl, who advocated what he called *das unmittelbare sehen* or “direct seeing,” which surpasses sensory experience.¹⁰² Tufford and Newman summarize Husserl’s approach this way: “Direct seeing looks beyond constructions, preconceptions, and assumptions to the essences of the experience being

¹⁰⁰ Lea Tufford and Peter Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Social Work* 11, no. 1 (2012): 2.

¹⁰¹ Tufford and Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” 2.

¹⁰² Tufford and Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” 3.

investigated... this process later came to be called various terms: phenomenological reduction, epoche, or bracketing.”¹⁰³

Some of Husserl’s students, however, rejected his approach. One such student was Martin Heidegger, who argued instead that “fully comprehending the lived experience was, in essence, an interpretive process and that bracketing out preconceptions was neither possible nor desirable ... Heidegger instead adopted the position of being in the world, where contextual interpretation and meaning were sought and valued.”¹⁰⁴ This led Heidegger to advocate for the concept of “engagement,” which “stresses the importance of the researcher’s subjectivity given the tight relationship between researcher and participant, who function as decision makers in all aspects of the research process.”¹⁰⁵ Engagement encourages researchers to understand, embrace, and surface the frames of reference they bring to an inquiry such as their political, racial, cultural, and gender influences.”¹⁰⁶

Since this project operates within a narrative and cultural-linguistic framework that examines the lived experiences of people and how those experiences are narrated, it was not possible to adopt a Husserlian approach to bracketing. Furthermore, this project’s social-constructionist research approach depends on the idea that meaning in narratives are co-created between researcher and participant. Therefore, instead of trying to bracket out or eliminate all preconceptions, as a Husserlian approach would require, this study engaged in the process that is much closer to Heidegger’s concept of engagement. The way in which I accomplished this was with the process of reflexivity, which attempted to honestly disclose as much of my own

¹⁰³ Tufford and Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” 3.

¹⁰⁴ Tufford and Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” 3.

¹⁰⁵ Tufford and Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” 4.

¹⁰⁶ Tufford and Newman, “Bracketing in Qualitative Research,” 4.

preconceptions and situatedness within various contexts, such as my gender, racial, political, and cultural influences as possible. I did so to examine honestly the way in which I as the researcher affected the gathered data, as well as how I analyzed and interpreted in this study. Doing so was not only required to create and conduct a rigorous study; it was also important because I am very interested in assessing the process of how narratives are a joint creation of researcher and participant. I address the topic of reflexivity at greater length in chapter three.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature Review

In order to examine the topic of how female lead pastors in AG churches describe their lived experience as pastors, a thorough survey of pertinent literature needs to be presented. The research process for this project involved consulting many sources from three main categories: literature about narrative or postliberal theology, historical materials concerning the status of women in classical Pentecostalism and the AG, and qualitative studies that approach similar questions from a feminist theological viewpoint. A critical examination of these works will help provide the historical and cultural background for an inquiry how the participants in this study understand and describe their lived experience. After presenting the main arguments made in the pertinent bodies of work, they will next be synthesized in order to show how they developed into the current study as well as demonstrating how this study takes their work and builds on it and advances the consideration of the topic in a unique direction.

Literature was collected in a variety of ways, but for the most part it was located through the regular process of research. Many of the core texts/articles utilized were discovered through a careful reading of footnotes in various other articles and books; this helped the project take shape over a long period of time devoted to research and review. Numerous journal articles were also obtained for use in this study, and some of these were located in print form through the seminary library, while others were located through three main databases: the ATLA Religion database, the MLA database, and Google Scholar. I also received assistance from the seminary reference

librarian when I had difficulty locating some of the more obscure articles or conference papers. When using these databases, a variety of search terms were used, though it is not possible to list all of them here. In many cases I was searching for specific articles that were cited in the various other works I was using in my research, which would necessitate me searching for the exact title of the article itself. However, some articles were located through the use of specific search terms. The most important ones that resulted in materials which were later used included: “Women in Ministry,” “Women in classical Pentecostalism,” “Status of Women,” “Female ministers, qualitative studies,” “Narrative Inquiry,” “Narrative research,” “Qualitative Interviews,” “Ethics in narrative research,” “Bracketing,” and “Narrative Interviews.”

Theoretical Orientation of the Study

The literature that contributed to the formation of the theoretical orientation of the study comes from two main categories: Postliberal or narrative theology, and literature concerning the Pentecostal practice of narrative-experiential hermeneutics. Since these two categories form the theoretical orientation of the study, they will be surveyed first.

Considering postliberal theology and how it relates to this project, the best place to start is with the Yale School and specifically the work of George Lindbeck. To understand Lindbeck’s position, a short word about Hans Frei is necessary.¹ Hans Frei’s book *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* examines the way in which hermeneutics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries approached the text of scripture.

¹ It would be inaccurate to say that the genesis of postliberal theology is entirely the result of the work of Frei and Lindbeck. Indeed, Michener explains that the work of Frei and Lindbeck expands and formulates the previous thoughts and work of a great many people such as Thomas Aquinas, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Barth, Clifford Geertz, and others. While all of these thinkers and their works are important to postliberal and narrative theology, it is outside the scope of this project to consider all of them in detail. Ronald T. Michener, *Postliberal Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 50.

He explains that the process that took place was one where the biblical narratives were forced into modern paradigms and interpretive methods, which was a reversal of how the hermeneutical process worked until that point. He says, “Interpretation was a matter of fitting the biblical story into another world with another story rather than incorporating that world into the biblical story.”² For Frei, hermeneutics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries went drastically wrong because “instead of letting the biblical narrative function as the framework within which the rest of the world made sense, [the] mediating and hermeneutical theologians of England and Germany made sense of the biblical story by first putting it in a general philosophical framework.”³ Rather than being accepted as normative for doctrine and praxis, the “focus of hermeneutics had dramatically shifted to an acute attention on the context and spirit of the individual author, grammatical interpretation, subjective consciousness, and the process of the interpreter’s understanding.”⁴ Instead, Frei calls for a return the interpretation of the biblical narrative *as* narrative, claiming that narrative form and meaning are inseparable: “The story is the meaning or the meaning emerges from the story form. There is neither need nor use in looking for a meaning of a more profound stratum underneath the structure or in the author’s intention or in a combination of such behind the scene’s projections.”⁵ Comstock notes that “Frei has rightly understood that stories are immediately intelligible to human beings and intimately bound up with human self-understanding.”⁶ Perhaps the best way to distill *Eclipse* is to state that

² Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 130.

³ Jeffrey C.K. Goh, *Christian Tradition Today: A Postliberal Vision of Church and World* (Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 137.

⁴ Goh, *Christian Tradition Today*, 138.

⁵ Frei, *Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative*, 280.

⁶ Gary Comstock, “Truth or Meaning: Ricoeur versus Frei on Biblical Narrative,” *The Journal of Religion* 66, no. 2 (April 1986): 121.

for Frei, the Bible is “not an academic or historical sourcebook, but rather a story to indwell.”⁷ Thus he believes that Christians err when they insist on using outside factors, schemas, or verifiers as a way of finding meaning or reliability of scripture. For Frei, the narrative itself is the meaning, and it needs no outside or extra-narrative validation. In some ways this is very similar to the Pentecostal approach to hermeneutics; specifically, the idea that the biblical narrative is a story to indwell, as explained in chapter one.⁸

George Lindbeck’s work *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* expands the ideas offered by Frei in *Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative* and creates the cultural-linguistic model of religion. While the particulars of the cultural-linguistic model of religion have already been introduced in chapter one, the implications of that model have not been fully explored. Like Frei, Lindbeck also saw the importance of narrative in the role of theology, and he too insisted that meaning or “reliability” of the narrative of scripture derives from the narrative itself, and not from extra-textual verifiers such as the historicity of the events described. He says, “The Bible is often ‘history-like,’ even when it is not ‘likely history.’”⁹ It can therefore “be taken seriously in the first respect as a delineator of the divine and human agents, even when its history or science is challenged.”¹⁰

Lindbeck builds on the concept of realistic narratives offered by Frei, and develops what he calls an intratextual system. This intratextual system is utilized by those who follow the cultural-

⁷ Michener, *Postliberal Theology*, 56.

⁸ See Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Methods, System, Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 39–41. Stephenson explains that Pentecostal spirituality “has formal continuities...with narrative theology and postliberal theology.” He emphasizes the “orality and narrativity” of Pentecostal theology and its “continuity with Hans W. Frei’s descriptions of pre-critical biblical interpretation.”

⁹ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 122.

¹⁰ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 122. Lindbeck also mentions that parables such as the prodigal’s son remind us “the rendering of God’s character is not in every instance logically dependent on the facticity of the story.”

linguistic model of religion, whereas propositionalists or the experiential-expressivists depend on an extra-textual system.¹¹ When comparing the two models of religion and theology, Lindbeck explains, “The [extra-textual mode of thought] locates religious meaning outside the text or semiotic system either in the objective realities to which it refers or in the experiences it symbolizes, whereas for cultural-linguists, the meaning is immanent.”¹² In order to fully explain this idea and its ramifications, he gives the example of how the meaning of the word “God” is determined “by examining how the word operates within a religion and therefore shapes reality and experience rather than by first establishing its propositional or experiential meaning and reinterpreting or reformulating its uses accordingly.”¹³ For Lindbeck, then, any kind of religious action can never be understood in isolation; it can only be apprehended from within its own linguistic system and its praxis by members of that system.

This intratextual system also has much to say about the nature of the scriptures themselves and how they interact with or relate to the world. Instead of looking to the outside world or outside factors for verification, “Intratextual theology redescribes reality within the scriptural framework rather than translating scripture into extra-textual categories. It is the text, so to speak, which absorbs the world, rather than the world the text.”¹⁴ The canonical writings of any religious system, Lindbeck argues, encompass all of reality, and the world created by these authoritative texts is “real” in every meaningful and practical sense. He says, “For those who are steeped in [authoritative texts], no world is more real than the ones they create. A scriptural

¹¹ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 114.

¹² Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 114.

¹³ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 114.

¹⁴ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 118.

world is thus able to absorb the universe. It provides the interpretive framework within which believers seek to live their lives and understand reality.”¹⁵

As explained in chapter one, Kevin Vanhoozer’s *Drama of Doctrine* offers a needed corrective modification to Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic system. Vanhoozer’s work does not only offer a corrective modification to Lindbeck’s work, however. He also develops his dramatic metaphor by expounding the idea of “dramatic improvisation.” He explains that “the church is not called to play the same scene over and over but to take the gospel into new situations. To be faithful in witness, the church must constantly be different. Indeed, at times it must improvise.”¹⁶ This idea sometimes creates objections, in that improvisation often evokes the concept of actors doing whatever they want in an impetuous and totally spontaneous manner. Some might even argue that the idea of an improvisational approach is something that doesn’t rely on a script at all. Not so, claims Vanhoozer; instead of improvisation being a haphazard and irresponsible approach to doctrine, he explains that this is a misleading understanding of dramatic improvisation. Instead, “improvisation requires both training (formation) and discernment under the rubrics of perception and perspective.”¹⁷ In fact, those who are good improvisers are trained to avoid two common problems: a lack of preplanning and a temptation to adlib or to be original.¹⁸

He explains further that improvisation does indeed require a type of spontaneity, but it is one that is “the result of extensive training and discipline. Training for improvisation usually takes the form of games and exercises that develop both perception and imagination.”¹⁹ By doing

¹⁵ Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 117.

¹⁶ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 128.

¹⁷ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 337.

¹⁸ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 337.

¹⁹ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 337. He further explains that “an improvising actress, if she is performing well, does not feel that she can say anything at all. She must suit her choice to the evolving story, which has its own

so, they wrest control of game by “scriptwriting the play,” rather than situating their performance within the character and roles offered to them within the larger story and context of the character they are playing.²⁰ To summarize, Vanhoozer says,

The spontaneity at the heart of genuine improvisation, therefore, has nothing to do with arbitrary or random action. [It] instead describes the state of an actor’s readiness: one’s preparedness to fit in and contribute to whatever starts to happen. Such readiness, far from being a native reflex, is actually the result of disciplined preparation. The improviser is both ready because of her prior training and because she is alert and attentive to her environment. Improvisation is not about being outrageous but about being *obvious* – acting in ways that are entirely keeping with the developing action.²¹

Vanhoozer further develops his concept of improvisation in a way that is related to this study. He explains that the improviser is not solely focused on present action. In fact the improviser often focuses on the past. He says, “the improviser is one who seeks not to create novelty but to respond to the past, for the future is formed *out of the past*.... Improvisers thus need narrative skills: [they] must keep the full picture in memory in order to move the scene forward effectively.”²² The way this takes place is when the improviser uses what Vanhoozer terms “reincorporation,” which is “about remembering and recapitulating past elements in narrative order to make the scene a whole and unified action.”²³ This process of improvisational narrative reincorporation is clearly displayed in the narratives offered by the participants in this study. For a discussion of how this is displayed in the participants’ accounts, see chapter five.

The reason the ideas of realistic narrative, intratextuality, and improvisation form the theoretical foundation for this study is that the postliberal and cultural-linguistic approach’s

form and continuity.”

²⁰ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 338.

²¹ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 338.

²² Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 339.

²³ Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 340.

insistence on the importance of narrative, and the ability of the narrative of scripture to create the very world in which Christians live and operate is directly compatible with the Pentecostal insistence on the primacy of narrative and experience in their hermeneutical approach. Chapter one explained how the Pentecostal approaches scripture through a narrative-experiential and decidedly Lukan lens. Furthermore, many Pentecostal scholars have noted the parallels between both Pentecostal hermeneutics and narrative/postliberal theology. In his book, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture, and Community*, Kenneth Archer says,

The most helpful contemporary literary method that could be woven into a strategy for Pentecostals is the Narrative Critical Approach. A Narrative method allows for the dialectic interaction of the text and reader in the negotiation of meaning. Pentecostals by their very nature are inherent storytellers. They primarily transmit their theology through oral means. They have been conditioned to engage scripture as story. Thus a Narrative Critical approach with a bent towards reader response would enable the Pentecostal community not only to interpret scripture critically but also let scripture critically interpret them.²⁴

Archer is not alone in seeing the correspondence between the postliberal approach to theology and Pentecostal hermeneutics/theology. Taking the perspective even further, Joel Shuman believes that Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach should be utilized to understand the central Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the practice of glossolalia as initial evidence. In his article "Toward a Cultural-linguistic Account of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," he offers "an interpretation of the Pentecostal position on glossolalia based upon an understanding of the doctrine as being an expression of one of the practices of a particular cultural-linguistic community...which may be said to represent a particular way of seeing the

²⁴ Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture, and Community* (London: T&T Clark, 2004): 166. Archer is the Professor of Theology at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida. Archer has pastored two Assemblies of God churches at taught at many Pentecostal seminaries around the world. He also served as president of the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 2015.

world.”²⁵ Shuman argues that the validity or orthodoxy of the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit should not be evaluated from those outside the Pentecostal community; instead, he utilizes Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic approach to shift the debate around Pentecostal doctrine and practice to within the Pentecostal system itself. He maintains that this is appropriate because,

Interpreted within this framework, the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit" represents both a description of a phenomenon that occurs, or is expected to occur, when the Pentecostal community gathers for worship and a prescription concerning the form and meaning of that liturgical experience. It is a phrase that finds its full intelligibility in the unique, and, to some extent, esoteric language of the Pentecostal community.²⁶

Shuman also notes the correspondence between the cultural-linguistic perspective on narrative, the belief that the narrative creates the world in which people dwell and practice their faith, and the Pentecostal emphasis on a narrative-experiential hermeneutic. He explains,

The Scriptures, and especially the book of Acts, are read by Pentecostals in such a way that they create a world in which Pentecostals live. In the gathered Pentecostal community the Scriptures are read, or at the very least assumed, and the world in which phenomena such as glossolalia are excluded is, as Lindbeck might say, "absorbed" by the Scripturally-created world. As such, Pentecostals see themselves as a community that participates in the life of the Spirit of God in much the same way that the New Testament Church participated in the life of the Spirit. Pentecostals believe that God will act among and within them in the same ways that God acted among and within the Church in Acts, an acting that allows a significant role to "wonders and miraculous signs" (Acts 2:43, NIV). In an Acts-created world the phrases "they were filled with the Holy Spirit" (2:4) and "the Holy Spirit came on all who heard" (10:44) refer to a particular occurrence, the definition of which includes glossolalia.²⁷

However, some Pentecostal scholars object to Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic system and see it as being incompatible with Pentecostal theology and hermeneutics. One such scholar is Frank

²⁵ Joel Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 213.

²⁶ Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account," 214.

²⁷ Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account," 219–20.

D. Macchia,²⁸ who, while appreciative of how Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic system allows us to "move on from modernistic rationalism,"²⁹ nevertheless objects to the cultural-linguistic system on the grounds that such a framework requires "experience as deriving from particular symbol systems or cultural and linguistic frameworks."³⁰ In essence, Macchia is troubled by Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic system because it would seem to imply that an experience of God only takes place within various interpretive systems or frameworks. Neumann summarizes Macchia's objection to Lindbeck this way: "The Pentecostal experience of the Spirit involves the interruption and transformation of human lives and conceptual frameworks, and such encounters need to be granted more weight than Lindbeck might allow."³¹

The question, then, is what we are to make of such an objection. I believe that Macchia is both misunderstanding Lindbeck's approach while at the same time raising a valid point. It seems obvious that there is a great deal of similarities between the Pentecostal narrative-experiential hermeneutical approach, but Pentecostal scholars like Macchia insist that pneumatological experience exists outside of interpretive frameworks, and, if correct, this means that a cultural-linguistic approach is not appropriate for examining Pentecostal theology and hermeneutics. In response, I would argue that Macchia misunderstands the goal that Lindbeck is trying to achieve with his cultural-linguistic approach. Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach does not preclude

²⁸ See also John C. Poirier, "Narrative Theology and Pentecostal Commitments," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16, (2008): 69–85. Poirier's main objection is that, "the readerly hermeneutic of narrative theology traces an understanding of truth as a matter of storytime actuality, while the apostolic kerygma in the New Testament traces an understanding of truth as a matter of space-time actuality." In essence, Poirier insists on seeing "Truth" as an ontological certitude; he is insistent that the events described in the New Testament (and the rest of the Bible) must have some kind of external referent or extra-textual validator. In response, I would point out that relying on the narrative to validate itself instead of trying to find some external referent that validates it does not mean that it is not true. Instead, it simply relocates the question of truth within the story itself.

²⁹ Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 165.

³⁰ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 166.

³¹ Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 166.

any talk or instance of experience. Instead, it gives communities ways of describing and understanding that experience, and then encourages them to practice that experience within the faith community itself. Consider the example of the Pentecostal doctrine of glossolalia as the initial evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe the act of glossolalia is dependent on the direct experience of the Holy Spirit; that is, a person can only engage in glossolalia as a direct response to their infilling by the Holy Spirit himself. That experience, though, is only intelligible and practicable within the system of Pentecostal belief itself; without the Pentecostal hermeneutic and interpretive community such an experience would be completely unintelligible and impossible to teach or practice. Shuman agrees, saying,

An appropriation of a cultural-linguistic understanding of doctrine, however, does not mean we are forbidden to speak of experience or of truth. Experience is not dispensed with, it is simply redescribed. [Lindbeck explains:] "Instead of deriving external features of a religion from inner experience, it is the inner experiences which are viewed as derivative." The experiences we have and the way we describe them are not absolutely independent of the way we are constituted by our communities. Instead, we learn to name and describe experiences in certain ways based on what our constituting traditions teach us about those experiences.³²

Moreover, the cultural-linguistic framework explains how the doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as evidenced by glossolalia enabled the Pentecostal community to exist at all. Clifton explains it this way:

In the cultural and linguistic context of early Pentecostalism, the doctrine functioned to encourage and direct the nature and purpose of Pentecostal spiritual experience. It also facilitated the creation of uniquely unifying social structures, at a time when the church as a whole was subject to major division. Further, it framed the Pentecostal culture and worldview, sustaining an emphasis upon universal priesthood, confronting racial, social, and gender divides, and orienting a movement of people toward increasing holiness and passionate missionary endeavors.³³

³² Shuman, "Toward a Cultural-Linguistic Account," 216.

³³ Shane Clifton, "The Spirit and Doctrinal Development: A Functional Analysis of the Traditional Pentecostal Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Pneuma: Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* 29, no. 1, (2007): 21.

The objection raised by Macchia is not entirely without merit, however. His objection seems to hinge on the idea that Lindbeck's approach minimizes the divine role in the experience and performance of doctrine. He says, "religious experience [is] most fundamentally affected by God's presence and action. Our religious experience is to be the experience of God and not most fundamentally our interpretive frameworks!"³⁴ Lindbeck would claim that a cultural-linguistic approach does rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but I believe Macchia is correct when he points out that this seems to give the community priority over the Spirit. This is why this study uses a combination of Lindbeck's and Vanhoozer's approach, because while Vanhoozer affirms the importance of community performance, he also insists that these experiences of God are guided by the divine director, the Holy Spirit, and firmly grounded within an authoritative script, the scriptures.

Review of Critical Literature

The next task is to assess those works that are critical to the research question itself. In order to do so, I have divided them into three categories: works that concern the historical development or understanding of the status of women in classical American Pentecostalism and the AG, the work of feminist theologians³⁵ who have examined this question from the perspective of qualitative research, and works that examine the Pentecostal hermeneutical approach to this topic need to be examined in order to determine which hermeneutical perspectives to search for in the narratives of the women interviewed in this project.

³⁴ Frank D. Macchia, "Christian Experience and Authority in the World," *Ecumenical Trends* 31, no. 8, (2002): 12.

³⁵ One of the authors, Elaine J. Lawless, approaches the topic as a folklorist as well as from a position of feminist theology.

Historical Development

In considering those works that discuss the status of women within American classical Pentecostalism and the AG in particular, a good place to begin is with Charles Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard's 1977 article "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches."³⁶ This article is discussed in nearly every book or article on the subject of the status of women clergy in classical Pentecostal churches. In the article, Barfoot and Sheppard use Max Weber's insight that "the religion of the disprivileged classes...is characterized by a tendency to allot equality to women."³⁷ However, after an initial acceptance of women in roles of ministerial authority, "a reaction occurs against Pneumatic manifestations of charisma among women, which come to be regarded as undesirable."³⁸ The article uses a content analysis of minutes from the General Council of the AG and statistical data regarding the sex ratio among four Pentecostal denominations in order to explore the status of women clergy in those denominations.³⁹

In their examination, Barfoot and Sheppard affirm Weber's assertion about the tendency of religious groups to grant leadership authority to women in its early stages, only to rescind it as the group grows and develops. In order to support their assertion, they divide the development of Pentecostalism into two phases: "Prophetic Pentecostalism" and "Priestly Pentecostalism."⁴⁰

³⁶ Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," *Review of Religious Research*, 22 no. 1, (September, 1977): 2–17.

³⁷ Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon, 1964), 104.

³⁸ Barfoot and Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion," 4.

³⁹ Barfoot and Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion," 2. In addition to the Assemblies of God, Barfoot and Sheppard examine data from the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, The Church of God in Christ, and the Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God.

⁴⁰ Barfoot and Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion," 3.

Barfoot and Sheppard argue that,

Early Pentecostalism often did allot equality to women and that, at times, this equalization of the sexes in principle did coexist with some monopolization by men of certain church functions. This period of Pentecostal evolution will be termed “Prophetic Pentecostalism.” We also will argue that the early equality of women in Pentecostalism was limited to the first stage of the movement’s evolution. As routinization and regimentation of community relationships set in, reactions did occur against the movement’s prophesying daughters. The subsequent shift will be noted as “Priestly Pentecostalism.”⁴¹

Picking up where Barfoot and Sheppard end is Margaret M. Poloma’s book *The AG at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemma*.⁴² Poloma offers a sociological examination of the AG based on historical records and a mixed-methods research approach. She used data from interviews, surveys, publications, and case studies. Using Barfoot and Sheppard’s article as a starting point, Poloma also incorporates the work of sociologist Thomas O’Dea’s concept of mixed motivation to explain the status of women in the AG. O’Dea’s thesis of mixed motivation claims that there is a single-minded motivation present in the early days of a religious movement, usually focused by a charismatic leader.⁴³ However, as the movement becomes institutionalized, this single-mindedness gives way to desires for “prestige, expression of teaching and leadership abilities, drives for power, aesthetic needs, and the quite prosaic wish for the security of a

⁴¹ Barfoot and Sheppard, “Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion,” 3. See also Lisa P. Stephenson, “Prophesying Women and Ruling Men: Women’s Religious Authority in North American Pentecostalism,” *Religions* 2, (2011): 410–26. Stephenson argues that while Barfoot and Sheppard’s use of Weber’s typology of prophet and priest is appropriate, she believes it is incorrect to describe the prophetic and priestly roles of women in American classical Pentecostalism as being two separate periods. In response, Stephenson argues that women clergy played the roles of prophet and priest concurrently, and that there was always a great deal of ambivalence on the part of the women themselves as to their status and whether or not and in what way they should submit to male authorities. Stephenson argues that the reason women’s access to power was restricted was “the cultural ideas they themselves adopted.” However, regardless of whether or not there were two obviously demarcated periods of women’s authority or if the periods were concurrent, both articles affirm the ambivalence and confusing reality faced by women in positions of leadership within classical Pentecostalism.

⁴² Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemma* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

⁴³ Poloma, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 101.

respectable position in the professional structure of the society.”⁴⁴ Poloma claims that the development of the AG into an institution and more of an established denomination, as well as the process of becoming more and more “evangelicalized,” has resulted in the difficult and complex reality faced by women in leadership in the AG. She says, “the bottom line in the erosion of women’s status in the AG ministry may be attributed to the move away from sect-like status into denominational standing...women have been systematically squeezed out of the pastoral ministry.”⁴⁵

The data obtained by Poloma give credence to this claim. In a survey of 244 pastors, 240 of whom were male, Poloma found evidence that “although there is verbal support for an official position of allowing women in the AG to pastor, such practice is uncommon in reality.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, she reports that most of the pastors she interviewed “seem to have no concern about the decrease in women in ministry, the lack of women in congregational leadership, or the discrepancy between official policy and action.”⁴⁷ She says that when she questioned the respondents about these ambiguities, many of the pastors revealed ambivalence on the issue of women in ministry.

While Barfoot and Sheppard and Poloma provide a helpful perspective on the issue, it is important to note that Barfoot and Sheppard wrote in 1977 and Poloma’s book was published in 1989, and thus do not offer a current perspective on the issue. In order to update the data on the status of women within the AG, two important sources need to be considered: Deborah M. Gill’s

⁴⁴ Poloma, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 101.

⁴⁵ Poloma, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 115.

⁴⁶ Poloma, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 113.

⁴⁷ Poloma, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, 113.

article “The Contemporary State of Women in the AG,”⁴⁸ and 2015 statistics obtained from the office of the General Secretary of the AG.

Gill explains that the number of women ministers has increased in the AG since 1977 with the exception of 1989, with the percentage of female ministers in the AG rising to 15% in 1994.⁴⁹ However, though this would seem to indicate a positive trend of continual growth, Gill notes that 38% of those women ministers are in the age bracket of 65 and older.⁵⁰ She also notes that at the time of writing the article, only 6% of female credential holders were lead pastors, and that

The percentage of credentialed women who progress to full ordination is decreasing; and the percentage of female ministers who are not senior pastors, nor serving in home or foreign missions, or who are past retirement age, is increasing. More and more female leaders are limiting, or have been limited in, their church involvement to peripheral activities in the ministry or are choosing secular employment over full-time ministry. Women in the AG have been losing ground.⁵¹

While Gill’s article does offer an important update on the status of female ministers in the AG, it is important to note that even this update is from more than twenty years ago. While I was not able to find an article that has reexamined the question since then, data on the subject does exist in the form of annual reports from the office of the General Secretary of the AG. Two reports are pertinent; the “AG USA Female Ministers 1977–2015” and the “AG USA Minister’s Report 2015.”⁵² These reports offer statistics on the current status of ministers in the United States by gender. The “AG USA Female Ministers 1977–2015” report reveals that there were

⁴⁸ Deborah M. Gill, “The Contemporary State of Women in the Assemblies of God,” *Pneuma: A Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* 17, no. 1, (Spring, 1995): 33–36.

⁴⁹ Gill, “Contemporary State of Women,” 33–34. The reason that the data begins at 1977 is because that was the first year the office of the General Secretary kept statistics on female ministers.

⁵⁰ Gill, “Contemporary State of Women,” 34.

⁵¹ Gill, “Contemporary State of Women,” 34.

⁵² Assemblies of God Office of the General Secretary, “AG USA Female Ministers 1977–2015,” under “About/Statistics,” accessed April 28, 2017, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>.

8,697 female ministers⁵³ out of a total 37,068, or 23.5%, which is a 2.9% increase from 2010.⁵⁴

The “AG USA Ministers Report 2015,” offers more context to these data by offering a comprehensive breakdown of where and in what way ministers are serving in churches and AG ministries. Of the 8,697 female ministers in 2015, the largest group is the Seniors/65+, which consists of 2,398 ministers or 27.5% of the total number of female ministers in 2015. The next largest group is “Church Staff Members,” which consists of 2,316 individuals or 26.7%. When it comes to lead pastors, there were 540 individuals or 6.2%.⁵⁵

When compared to Gill’s article, it would seem that there has been growth in the number of female ministers in the AG since 1995. Where Gill reported a total of fifteen percent of ministers in the AG being female, that number has since risen to twenty-three and one half percent. However, while it is not as high as it was in 1995, there are still a large number of female ministers who are sixty-five or older. Furthermore, the number of female lead pastors remains almost unchanged at six point two percent. The data indicate that while there has been some progress in some areas, there is still a huge disparity between the number of women and men in positions of ministerial leadership; this is especially evident in the case of lead pastors.

Another important work that gives a great deal of useful historical background on the topic of female ministers within the AG is Joy E. A. Qualls’ dissertation *God Forgive us for Being*

⁵³The Assemblies of God employs three levels of ministerial credentials: Certified Minister, Licensed Minister, and Ordained Minister. Certified ministers are usually engaged in part-time ministry and under the supervision of a pastor or designated supervisor. Licensed ministers are those that are engaged in regular preaching ministry or specialized ministries. After being licensed and in full-time ministry for two years, a person may then be ordained. The “AG USA Female Ministers Report 1977–2015” includes all three categories of licensure.

⁵⁴ Assemblies of God Office of the General Secretary, “AG USA Female Ministers 1977–2015,” under “About/Statistics,” accessed April 28, 2017, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>.

⁵⁵ Assemblies of God Office of the General Secretary, “AG USA Female Ministers 1977–2015,” under “About/Statistics,” accessed April 28, 2017, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>. The remaining women are distributed among the categories of chaplaincy, district officials, evangelists, missionaries, and teachers (at Assemblies of God colleges), and missionaries.

*Women: The Rhetorical Negotiation and Renegotiation of the Role of Women in the AG.*⁵⁶

Qualls' work focuses on how women in the AG have had to negotiate and renegotiate their leadership status in the AG throughout history. She does so through a primarily rhetorical lens; that is, she examines how the rhetoric used by women and predominantly male denominational leadership has changed through history and what effect those shifts in rhetoric have had on the status of female ministers in the AG. Her work also provides a very helpful timeline of when and how the AG has changed its view of women in ministry over time. She does this by offering a broad look at how the work and ministries of women evangelists, missionaries, and preachers is often celebrated and proclaimed as being a unique and special part of the history of the AG (and classical Pentecostalism in general), yet there exist great discrepancies between what is proclaimed from the pulpit and within official doctrinal publications and the reality that women in ministry face.⁵⁷ The main thesis of her dissertation is that "these discrepancies and the resulting tensions are profoundly rhetorical and are primarily rooted in the way people use words, language, and symbols."⁵⁸ She also explores how outside cultural factors affect the both the changing status of women within the AG as well as the rhetorical process of negotiation and renegotiation.⁵⁹ Taken together, these works provide important historical information needed to situate this study within its context, which will be especially important when the data is

⁵⁶ Joy E. A. Qualls, "God Forgive Us for Being Women: The Rhetorical Negotiation and Renegotiation of the Role of Women in the Assemblies of God" (PhD diss., Regent University, 2010).

⁵⁷ Qualls, "God Forgive Us," 3.

⁵⁸ Qualls, "God Forgive Us," 4.

⁵⁹ Qualls, "God Forgive Us," 6. For an even more in-depth look at the process of how the Assemblies of God changed as a result of outside cultural influences and how those changes affected the status of women in ministry, see Zachary Michael Tackett, "The Embourgeoisement of the Assemblies of God: Changing Perspectives of Scripture, Millennialism, and the Roles of Women," (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998). Tackett identifies these cultural features as Feminism, the Women's Rights Movement, and what he terms the "evangelicalization" of the Assemblies of God.

examined through and experience and culturally centered approach to analysis, which requires narrative analysis to situate itself within the proper historical and sociological contexts. This will be explained in more detail chapter three.

Qualitative Feminist Theological and Feminist Liberation Approaches

The next type of work that needs to be considered are the ones that approach the topic of the status of women in Pentecostalism and the AG are three works by feminist scholars. They are important to this topic because they pose an important question about the status of women in classical Pentecostalism, and these understandings are very important for forming the cultural and historical background within which the participants will situate their lived experiences and formulate their narrations of that experience. These three works utilize a similar qualitative approach and engage in varying degrees and methods of narrative analysis, though they do so with a much broader approach and focus on the status of women within classical Pentecostalism rather than specifically the way their participants describe their lived experience(s). These works are Elaine J. Lawless' *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion*,⁶⁰ Susan Kwilecki's article "Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen: Female Christian Leadership, Old Style,"⁶¹ and Mary McClintock Fulkerson's *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*.⁶² All three of these works examine the topic from the perspective of feminist theology.⁶³

⁶⁰ Elaine J. Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1988).

⁶¹ Susan Kwilecki, "Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen: Female Christian Leadership: Old Style," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 3 no. 2, (1987): 57–75.

⁶² Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

⁶³ Feminist theology is the term the authors use to describe their own work.

Elaine J. Lawless' work *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* collects what Lawless terms the "folk history" of the Pentecostal movement, and she has focused much of her research on Pentecostal women and their roles within their religious communities.⁶⁴ Lawless became interested in the study of women in Pentecostalism because she could not understand how women could be given religious authority within the Pentecostal system. She says, "Knowing these fundamentalist people so well, I found it incongruous that a woman might be able to stand at the altar, behind a pulpit, and preach a sermon. The male dominance, female subservience hierarchy that persists so strongly within the privacy of Pentecostal homes also remains firm within the walls of the church."⁶⁵ Due to her interest in Pentecostalism and specifically the discrepancy when it comes to the roles of women within it, Lawless uses *Handmaidens of the Lord* to probe this seeming disparity. She seeks to present the "life stories of Pentecostal women preachers and their perceptions of themselves within a cultural milieu which does not condone their occupational decision. [She is] also concerned with the way in which they manage to become pastors of congregations and how they conduct themselves as leaders of the church and community figures."⁶⁶ She profiles and interviews four women preachers from Pentecostal churches in rural Missouri. She also devotes a great deal of her study to an analysis of sermons delivered by these four women. Lawless discusses how they "rescript" their lives in order to fulfill their divine callings, and this "rescripting" process allows them access to pastoral authority within the church. Moreover, the

⁶⁴ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 8. Lawless' other works study the maintenance of religious boundaries and self-imposed segregation through semiotics and religious language, on testimonies within the religious service and the gender-linked roles of service participants, and on a variety of other aspects of the Pentecostal experience.

⁶⁵ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 8.

⁶⁶ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 13.

“rescripting” displays some important themes and methods.

First, she notes the continual theme of “passive submission equals freedom,” which she proposes is unique to women.⁶⁷ This submission is usually framed as radical submission to God. Interestingly, however, radical submission may end up providing some amount of freedom for the woman from her husband or family responsibilities – their devotion to God’s divine calling gives them the ability to say, “My body is my own and I am going to give it ALL to God! And I don’t have to ask permission!”⁶⁸ Second, she also demonstrates the prevalence of maternal themes and reproductive imagery that is a staple in the sermons and interviews she analyzes. She explains that by doing so, these women “strip their presence behind the pulpit of its most threatening aspects.”⁶⁹ Additionally, Lawless explains that by way of “basing their roles as preacher and pastor within the very frameworks that support a traditional, fundamentalist religiosity, these women pastors are able to employ the system to their advantage.”⁷⁰ Examples of the maternal themes and reproductive imagery include the importance of a woman pastor being the “Mother” of the congregation and displaying characteristics of tender compassion and caring for all of her congregation. These kinds of attributes are “often mentioned in contradistinction to the attributes of male pastors, who are often characterized as fine leaders or strict disciplinarians.”⁷¹ Importantly, to complete the metaphor of pastor as mother, Lawless explains that women who are pastors in the congregations she investigated, in addition to being the “Mother” of the congregation, must also be biological mothers themselves. She says that this is

⁶⁷ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 130.

⁶⁸ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 131. This is a direct quotation from a sermon that Lawless analyzes.

⁶⁹ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 145.

⁷⁰ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 146.

⁷¹ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 148.

because “an unmarried woman, rejecting the life of wife and mother, would pose a serious threat to the equilibrium of the fundamentalist congregation.”⁷² In order to evaluate what this means for these women from a feminist perspective, Lawless explains that while the women she interviews are not seeking liberation from oppressive systems or looking for new theologies or hermeneutical approaches, which, in the setting of fundamentalist Pentecostalism would actually be counterproductive, these women who “rescript their lives to fit this unusual and difficult mold are liberated. They are not liberated from all the prejudices and restrictions that hamper women in general, and most particularly women in this conservative fundamentalist milieu, but they are liberated from the standard script of cloistered wife and mother.”⁷³ Therefore, in Lawless’ view, the women she studies do enjoy a type of liberation and empowerment as women. However, their liberation is only a partial one, for

The penalties are high, however, for they must be “super-Moms” in the greatest possible extent of that term. “Rescripting actually means scripting *in* extra parts for themselves and indicates the imperative of cautious and superlative performance at every level...the role is a complex one, full of pitfalls and possible infractions. The woman pastor clearly has to balance her life on a tenuous pivot – any move too far in any direction could cause her to lose her hard-earned position of spiritual power and religious authority.⁷⁴

As the text of *Handmaidens of the Lord* unfolds, Lawless displays an obvious admiration for the women she studied. However, she also seems to express a concern that their way of living and the way in which they negotiate the tightrope of their ministerial authority is, in the long run, unsustainable.

In a similar vein, in her article *Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen: Female Christian Leadership, Old Style*, Susan Kwilecki examines the church leadership of fifty–three Pentecostal

⁷² Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 149.

⁷³ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 163.

⁷⁴ Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord*, 164.

clergywomen. In a way that is very much like that of Lawless, Kwilecki was struck by the puzzling reality of the status of women pastors within Pentecostalism. After relating a short anecdote about a woman preacher who had successfully started and revitalized churches through her own tremendous ability, Kwilecki remarks, “How could a woman do what Willis had done, I wondered, and yet believe herself unequal to men? Pentecostal religion, of course, was at the heart of the paradox.”⁷⁵ In an attempt to better understand this “paradox,” Kwilecki interviewed fifty–three Pentecostal clergywomen from various classical Pentecostal denominations about their vocation as pastors and their thoughts on gender issues and the roles of women.

Interestingly, some of the themes Kwilecki discovered mirror those found by Lawless. Like those interviewed in *Handmaidens of the Lord*, the women Kwilecki interviewed also display a firm belief in the “passive dependence on the Holy Spirit for the necessary skills and constant guidance. [This was] the first principle of ministry for all fifty–three subjects.”⁷⁶ Moreover, they also displayed a belief in the importance of their own emotional disposition to carrying out their vocation as pastors. Lawless described how important it was for women who minister in Pentecostal churches to display the characteristics of kindness, tenderness, and motherhood. Many of the women in Kwilecki’s study also reported that it was imperative for women in ministry to display “meekness, flattery, self–abasement, [and] deliberate displays of helplessness.”⁷⁷ While this is not exactly the same as the theme of motherhood and reproductive imagery Lawless discovered, there are nevertheless many similarities.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 57.

⁷⁶ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 61.

⁷⁷ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 67.

⁷⁸ Also, Lawless discovered first her theme of maternal and reproductive imagery primarily in the sermons given by female pastors, and then discovered that same theme in their ministries afterwards. The fact that maternal/reproductive imagery was not as explicit in Kwilecki’s study may be due to a difference in methodology;

There is also one point of variance between Lawless and Kwilecki. Whereas Lawless insisted that a female Pentecostal pastor must be married in order to have access to the pastorate, Kwilecki notes that some of her respondents were unmarried. In fact, she reports that some of the unmarried respondents regarded ministry and marriage as mutually exclusive alternatives.⁷⁹ These women “spoke wistfully of devoting themselves to God rather than to a husband.”⁸⁰ However, Kwilecki notes that her data does not support generalizations about Pentecostal clergywomen as such, so it may be that this was a small anomaly or that it was particular to the sample she found. It is also possible that Lawless found something that is common but necessarily true in every single instance.

In a similar way to Lawless, Kwilecki clearly admires the women she studied. She says that “If Christians may be evaluated based on the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount – dependence on God, meekness, peacemaking, selflessness – then Pentecostal clergywomen go to the head of the class.”⁸¹ Yet, also like Lawless, Kwilecki notes that this “paradox” or struggle faced by Pentecostal clergywomen is destined for difficulty and internal strife. As she says, “The Pentecostals, endeavoring to play two divinely ordained but often contradictory roles, know their own brand of confusion and conflict...like their feminist contemporaries, Pentecostal clergywomen must weave a personal order from female gender, Christian faith, and the contradictions of the historical moment.”⁸²

The last feminist work that needs to be considered is Mary McClintock Fulkerson’s

Kwilecki used phone interviews as opposed to sermon analysis.

⁷⁹ She does not note, however, how many of her total sample of 56 individuals were unmarried.

⁸⁰ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 59.

⁸¹ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 75.

⁸² Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 75.

Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology. In it, Fulkerson explores the elements of women's discourses, how the term "woman" is socially constructed, and how those two factors and their relationship is important for feminist theology. She takes issue with the fact that feminist theology has long been predicated on an appeal to women's experience, arguing instead that "categories from feminist and liberationist uses of poststructuralism are useful for probing the hidden workings and commitments of the communities in which women reside."⁸³ The reason that she critiques the appeal to experience is because she believes women's experience is neither universal nor, perhaps more importantly for her work, "independent of the languages which have identified and the theological institutions which have ratified it."⁸⁴ She also attempts to explain and assess women's practices within their own canonical systems and comment on how those practices resist or achieve liberation from systemic oppression. As she says, "Women's practices can be characterized as resistance and as liberationist when they are rejections of the kinds of dependencies generated by patriarchal capitalism and when they mount refusals through their sources of the Christian faith."⁸⁵ In order to assess this, she looks at different communities of Christian women and the way in which they practice and perform their faith.

Most pertinent to the present study, however, is her chapter entitled, "Joyful Speaking for God: Pentecostal Women's Performances."⁸⁶ In this chapter, she examines the discourses of

⁸³ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, viii.

⁸⁴ Graham Ward, "Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology: Review," *Modern Theology* 11 no. 4, (October, 1995): 477-78.

⁸⁵ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 177.

⁸⁶ The first half of the book lays out her approach and explains her poststructuralist take on the subject, which depends a great deal on the work of Michel Foucault. Next, she examines the discourses of three different Christian communities: Presbyterian women from the Presbyterian Church (USA), Pentecostal Women Preachers, and Feminist Academic Theologians such as Rosemary Radford Reuther and Mary Daly.

Pentecostal women preachers⁸⁷ regarding their call narratives and status within their own canonical system. In an evaluation of their discourses, Fulkerson sees both positive and negative aspects of the women's performances of their faith. She explains that while the women themselves see their status and performances as something that is positive, she agrees, at least in part: "My readings agree with the women's self-descriptions that [their] practices are performances of joy and exhilaration. These practices create subject positions of great worth for the women, worth that counteracts a social formation that qualifies them for special programs at best, disdains them at worst."⁸⁸ However, she also notes that there is a great deal of difficulty in the way these women perform their faith. She says, "My readings diverge from their own, however, in other respects. I do not share their interpretation of their practices as ideal or as God's will."⁸⁹ Admitting that her evaluation is a product of her "feminist grid," she claims that their practices have a "transgressive but predominantly status quo relationship to the rules of their canonical system."⁹⁰

Perhaps the most important aspect of McClintock Fulkerson's work for this study is that she links the practices of female Pentecostal preachers to the Pentecostal hermeneutic. She discusses how Pentecostals have a firm belief in the importance of scripture in the life of the believer, yet their belief in the inspiration of the Spirit and the way he anoints those who speak or preach from the scriptures, allows them to "assume a plenitude of meaning [which] is mediated by a Spirit-led interpretation and not worry about a problematic hermeneutical gap created by

⁸⁷ The women assessed by McClintock Fulkerson come from the work of David Roebuck, who performed interviews with twelve women ministers from the Church of God. McClintock Fulkerson also draws on the work of Lawless and offers a comparison between the two, saying the similarities are "striking."

⁸⁸ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 241.

⁸⁹ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 242.

⁹⁰ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 242.

critical-historical thinking.”⁹¹ Because of this reliance on a pastor or preacher for access to the message that the Spirit has for the church, new qualifications for leadership are created. She explains, “If God is to be the speaker in worship, then anyone, not simply the educated or the male adult, can be God’s vessel or mouthpiece.”⁹² The Pentecostal hermeneutical approach to scripture is all important, for it is what allows for what McClintock Fulkerson calls the “performance of scripture.”

However, in a way that is similar to Lawless and Kwilecki, McClintock Fulkerson notes a discrepancy or paradox between the Pentecostal insistence on the mandate of all scripture on the lives of believers and the practices of women’s performance of scripture within their canonical system: “Pentecostal belief in the infallibility of the entire canon have important implications for the rules for reading. They implicitly require that all scriptures that refer to women must be obeyed.”⁹³ However, the urgency of the need to preach the gospel, as well as the fervent seeking for the gift of glossolalia show that

Certain texts had more interpretive power than others – were plainer than others. The early Pentecostal leaders judged that Joel’s prophecy in Acts pertaining to the prophesying of sons *and* daughters in the days of Pentecost was a presiding warrant for women’s prophesying roles. No one could prohibit God’s Spirit from speaking through women. The verses that commend women’s silence (1 Cor. 14:34) could not be ignored; they were simply interpreted to refer to some activity other than preaching the gospel.⁹⁴

Given this hermeneutical approach and how it affects women’s status within the

⁹¹ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 250. She quotes Ruth Staples, a Pentecostal preacher, who says, “Even when a preacher is preaching on the same scriptural passage, a sermon is always so different, nobody would ever recognize it ... because it’s a different congregation, it’s a different anointing, and God has a different message for everyone.”

⁹² McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 253.

⁹³ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 254.

⁹⁴ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 254.

Pentecostal community, McClintock Fulkerson lays out the themes present in the practice/discourses of these Pentecostal women preachers. She finds many of the same or similar themes as Lawless and Kwilecki, such as the idea of radical dependence on God as an act of freedom, their inferiority as a sign of God's divine calling and a dependence on self-denigration.⁹⁵ When it comes to offering an assessment of the performance of scripture within their canonical system, McClintock Fulkerson sees a similar paradox or discrepancy as the one noted by Lawless and Kwilecki, though she evaluates it in somewhat different way. She believes that Pentecostal women are "neither utterly oppressed by patriarchal arrangements, nor have they resisted in completely successful ways."⁹⁶

Hermeneutical Approaches

To varying degrees, the work of Lawless, Kwilecki, and McClintock Fulkerson reveal how this discussion is, at its core, a hermeneutical one. In order to frame the discussion and to do so in a way that is relevant to this study, two articles from Pentecostal scholars need to be considered. The first article that is helpful is John C. Thomas' "Women, Pentecostals, and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics."⁹⁷ Thomas offers a hermeneutical approach that he believes should be applied to the question of women in ministry. His article calls for a greater recognition of the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of interpretation of the biblical text; not only does the Spirit illuminate the text, he also plays a direct participatory and experiential role in the community regarding the interpretation of texts. Thomas believes that the Spirit provides experience in a community which leads the community to the text and the process

⁹⁵ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 289–93.

⁹⁶ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 293.

⁹⁷ John C. Thomas, "Women, Pentecostals, and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* (1994): 41–56.

of interpretation. Using the text of Acts fifteen as an example, where the Apostles are confronting the difficult issue of the place of Gentiles in the Church, Thomas explains that while the Apostles cited scriptures from the Old Testament, “it appears that the experience of the Spirit in the community helped the Church make its way through the hermeneutical maze. In other words, despite the fact that there were plenty of texts that which appeared to teach that there was no place for the Gentiles as Gentiles in the people of God, the Spirit’s witness heavily influenced the choice and use of Scripture.”⁹⁸ Thomas does not argue that the passages which would seem to indicate the silence of women in the church are to be entirely ignored. Instead, he calls for a recognition that some texts should be given more priority in interpretation regarding this issue. He says, “In light of the experience of God in the community, there can be little doubt which texts are most relevant to Pentecostals in the question of the role of women in the ministry of the church. Simply put, it would appear that given the Spirit’s activity, those texts which testify to the prominent role for women in the church’s ministry are the ones which should be given priority in offering direction for the Pentecostal church on this issue.”⁹⁹

Janet Everts Powers’ article “Your Daughters Shall Prophecy: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women,” is a logical next step because she also examines the issue through a hermeneutical lens. Additionally, and more importantly, her article is a direct response to the work of Lawless and McClintock Fulkerson.¹⁰⁰ In order to set up her argument, Powers

⁹⁸ Thomas, “Women, Pentecostals, and the Bible,” 50.

⁹⁹ Thomas, “Women, Pentecostals, and the Bible,” 54. Thomas recognizes that one possible criticism of this approach is that it opens one up to the charge of “rampant subjectivism.” He maintains, however, that the community is an adequate guard against subjectivism, because he believes “the community functions as the place where the Spirit of God acts and where testimony regarding God’s activity is offered, assessed and accepted or rejected. It also provides the forum for serious and sensitive discussions about the acts of God and the Scripture. The community can offer balance, accountability and support. It can guard against rampant individualism and uncontrolled subjectivism.”

¹⁰⁰ Janet Everts Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophecy: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment

explains how the issue of women in ministry in Pentecostal churches should be approached through the lens of hermeneutics. Powers believes that Pentecostal hermeneutics “[offer] a paradigm which asserts that right experience leads to right doctrine, so Pentecostals are much more concerned with locating their experiences in the biblical narrative than with determining theological propositions based on the biblical text.”¹⁰¹ She explains that this hermeneutical approach has allowed Pentecostals to create doctrinal and scriptural validation for their experiences, and that this has been consistently applied in most major areas, especially in reference to their understanding of Spirit baptism and the charismatic manifestations of the Spirit. However, she points out that when the discussion shifts to women ministers,

Pentecostals are often hermeneutically inconsistent. On the one hand they have affirmed that, because women have an experience of the Spirit that is identical to that of men, parallel with the experience of the church on the day of Pentecost and compatible with the experience of other women in the Bible, they must be empowered to preach the gospel, just as men are. But Pentecostals have failed to carry this narrative hermeneutic into discussions on the position of women in society and the church. This ambiguity has meant that Pentecostals have expanded the traditional ecclesiastical roles of women and allowed them to preach as ministers empowered by the Spirit, and, at the same time, have never been certain if this Spirit empowering gives women the ability to assume positions of authority.¹⁰²

As previously mentioned, the article is also a direct response to the work of Lawless and McClintock Fulkerson. While she has some critiques of the works of both scholars, she admits that these two feminist scholars “raise important questions about the way the Pentecostal understanding of women’s ministries restricts women who pursue ministry within Pentecostal churches.”¹⁰³ She reacts to *Handmaidens of the Lord* and *Changing the Subject*, and after laying

of Women,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* ed. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, and Douglas Petereson (Irvine, CA: Regnum, 1999):313–37. Powers makes no mention of Kwilecki’s article.

¹⁰¹ Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 317.

¹⁰² Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 317.

¹⁰³ Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 315.

out their basic arguments she asks an important question. She says, “Both of these feminist scholars know that one of the dynamics which holds these women in a position of submission to men is the Pentecostal reading of the Bible...both also seem to assume that as long as Pentecostals believe in the infallibility of the Bible and read it literally, the ministry of women in Pentecostal churches will be restricted. Is this assumption necessarily true?”¹⁰⁴

Powers’ answer to this question is that Pentecostals need to apply the same sophisticated hermeneutic they developed in order to defend their experience of Spirit Baptism to the question of the leadership roles of women in Pentecostal churches. She lays out four distinct elements of the hermeneutic used by Pentecostals to defend their experiences and resulting doctrines of Spirit Baptism. She explains the four elements thus:

[The narrative hermeneutic] affirmed the vital role that experience plays in interpretation. It insisted on the value of narrative texts in developing theology. It refused to accept the traditional distinction between teaching passages and narrative passages, which assumed that since Paul’s writings were ‘teachings’ they were more authoritative than the narratives of the gospels and Acts. It saw the significance of the eschatological dimensions of Pentecost – that the church was meant to be a community being transformed by the power of the age to come which would reflect the reality of the coming kingdom. *But only the first element, the importance of experience in interpreting the text, was ever applied to the biblical passages about women.*¹⁰⁵

Having laid out the hermeneutical approach, she then proceeds to offer detailed exegesis of two biblical passages in order to show what such an approach to scripture looks like. The first is Mark 5:21–43, wherein she shows how “narratives about women can be used to develop a theology about women,”¹⁰⁶ and 1 Cor. 11:2–16, in which she illustrates “how refusing to make a distinction between teaching texts and historically conditioned texts can undermine the basis of

¹⁰⁴ Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 323.

¹⁰⁵ Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 324–25. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁶ Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 325.

the doctrine that the woman is submissive to man in ministry situations.”¹⁰⁷

Synthesis of Research Findings

The historical accounts of the discrepancies and difficulties faced by women in ministry in the AG and the hermeneutical questions asked by Lawless, Kwilecki, and Fulkerson, and responded to by Thomas and Powers, formed the starting point and basis of this study. The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the narratives of the female lead pastors in the AG who participated in this study to discover how they described and understood their lived experience as pastors within that system. While the specific questions that were asked and how this narrative process was explored will be explained in more detail in chapter three, the broad inquiry of this study is to determine how actual women in ministry in the AG today described their understanding of their lived experience as pastors. The literature in this chapter offers the cultural context or background, an understanding of which is required to understand the responses offered by the participants in the study.

Critique of the Previous Research

This section will demonstrate where there are gaps in the current research and how this study will address those gaps and advance or take the question in a different direction. Since Lawless, Kwilecki, and McClintock Fulkerson set the stage for this study, their work is a logical place to begin a critique of the previous research. One of the main critiques of *Handmaidens of the Lord* is that Lawless does not always understand the system she is critiquing/examining

¹⁰⁷ Powers, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy,” 25. For an even more in-depth examination of this topic, see also Janet Everts Powers, “Recovering a Woman’s Head with Prophetic Authority: A Pentecostal Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3–16,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10, no. 1 (2001): 11–37.

through the lens of feminism. Powers points out that Lawless misattributes Peter's assertion that Joel's prophecy has come to pass in Acts 2:28–29, which shows that she lacks basic biblical knowledge.¹⁰⁸ More importantly, Powers takes issue with Lawless' thesis that many of the themes Lawless points out as being unique to sermons preached by Pentecostal women, and specifically the themes of sacrifice and sin/salvation, are actually common to Pentecostal preaching in general. She says, "No one who sat in Pentecostal services on a regular basis would be surprised by any of these themes or see them as unique to women's sermons."¹⁰⁹

Powers' critique of Lawless is essentially correct; there were times in the reading of *Handmaidens of the Lord* where the author displayed the fact that she was very much an outsider who did not always understand the nuances or historical background of the faith community she was studying. However, while there are places where Lawless displays a fundamental lack of biblical knowledge, as well as a lack of understanding of some of the history and development of Pentecostalism, the most obvious problem with Lawless' work is that she seems to have only a surface understanding of how Pentecostal hermeneutics actually work. She has rightly noted the utter dependence and insistence on the total authority of the scriptures in the life of the Pentecostal, but she has neglected the important element of the idea that Pentecostals see their lives as a continuation of the narrative of scripture, and specifically the narrative of Luke-Acts. Of course, Lawless is examining the call narratives and sermons as a folklorist and not through a biblical or hermeneutical lens. However, the fact that she displays no understanding of the narrative quality of Pentecostal hermeneutics undermines her work.

The major problem with Kwilecki's article is that she treats her work as providing

¹⁰⁸ Powers, "Your Daughters Shall Prophesy," 334n10.

¹⁰⁹ Powers, "Your Daughters Shall Prophesy," 334n10.

generalizable data, even when she herself acknowledges that this is not possible. Of course, she does not do so in explicit ways. Instead she mentions that the data she has comes from a small subset, or at least a relatively small sample, of Pentecostal women preachers. However, even though she mentions that the data is not generalizable,¹¹⁰ and she often couches her data in terms of her sample, she then uses that data to make broad conclusions about Pentecostalism and the status of women within Pentecostalism itself. This is most evident in the conclusion, where Kwilecki goes back and forth between talking about her sample and restricting her analysis to those boundaries while simultaneously making broad generalizations about Christianity and Pentecostalism and their relationship to American society.¹¹¹

Fulkerson does both a better job understanding the system she is analyzing, and of understanding the ways in which narrative informs and guides the Pentecostal hermeneutic. First, she notes that the call stories of Pentecostal women preachers overlap with testimony, even to the point of being identified as “homiletic testimony.”¹¹² These homiletic testimonies relate how God has personally interacted in their lives, “proclaim[ing] God’s mighty work at the same time they proclaim the intersection of that divine story with their ordinary lives.”¹¹³ Furthermore, when discussing narrative, Fulkerson recognizes that Pentecostal practice is unique in that it depends on the “identification of supernatural guidance in the details of everyday life, the inbreaking of the Holy Spirit as cause in the life story, and the interpretive lens of biblical inscription to order that inbreaking.”¹¹⁴ Additionally, her poststructuralist focus on discourses prevents her from

¹¹⁰ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 59.

¹¹¹ Kwilecki, “Contemporary Pentecostal Clergywomen,” 73–75.

¹¹² McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 273.

¹¹³ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 273.

¹¹⁴ McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 258.

making broad generalizations about Pentecostalism in general. However, while she does appreciate the narrative aspect of Pentecostal hermeneutics as well as avoiding the pitfalls of generalization, her poststructuralist feminist liberation perspective leads her project in a much different direction than this one. This study does not seek to investigate the status of women within Pentecostalism as much as how women within the faith community of the AG describe their lived experience as lead pastors of AG churches.

In many ways, this study takes the starting point offered by the works presented in this chapter and focuses it in a more practical and nuanced manner. Instead of looking for grand narrative discourses that explain the history or the status of women leaders in Pentecostalism, this study confines itself to the narrative process and experiences of the women within the study itself. This is a much better fit with both the cultural-linguistic model and narrative qualitative studies, since both tend to resist totalizing or generalizable statements. The benefit of this approach is that it makes this project manageable to complete within the timeframe and parameters of a dissertation carried out by a single researcher, and it does so within the requirements of qualitative narrative methodology. Moreover, this approach builds on the work of others, yet does so in a unique and new direction by focusing on how the participants narrate their lived experience as pastors rather than their understanding of their status within the entire system of American classical Pentecostalism.

Summary

The current chapter presented a thorough account of the works that are pertinent to the proposed investigation. It began by looking at works that traced the historical development of the status of women in Pentecostalism and the AG in order to offer context for the resulting analysis. This analysis presented a discrepancy between the official doctrinal stance of the AG and its

praxis concerning women in ministry, and that discrepancy formed the starting point for the work of Lawless, Kwilecki, and Fulkerson, who assume that Pentecostal women preachers' dependence on the Bible makes them partially liberated yet simultaneously victims of systemic oppression. Powers and Thomas offer a possible hermeneutic approach to this issue that might allow female ministers to begin to change the discrepancy, and these hermeneutical questions form the cultural and historical background necessary for understanding and interpreting how the female lead pastors in the AG who participate in this study narrate their lived experience as pastors of AG churches.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In order to demonstrate how this topic was investigated in this study, this chapter will present a detailed explanation of the research design, population recruitment, data collection methods and procedures, and the processes by which the data was synthesized and analyzed. The sources used in constructing this methodology are explained and cited at length, below. Most of the material comes from John W. Creswell's *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*,¹ Katherine Kohler Riessman's *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*,² and Michael Patton's *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*.³ The interview process was developed using Lisa Whiting's article "Semi-structured Interviews: Guidance for Novice Researchers."⁴ Creswell and Patton offer information on how to construct a qualitative study and what differentiates one approach from another. Riessman and the article by Whiting provided information that is specific to a narrative approach to qualitative inquiry.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to use the process of qualitative narrative analysis in order to examine the way in which female lead pastors in the AG described their lived experience as

¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013).

² Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for Human Sciences* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008).

³ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 431.

⁴ Lisa Whiting, "Semi-structured Interviews: Guidance for Novice Researchers," *Nursing Standard* 22, no. 3 (2008): 35–40.

pastors.

Research Design

This section will outline the methods and procedures that were used to carry out this study. The primary method utilized in this study was the qualitative interview process. These interviews were conducted over Skype. The benefits, drawbacks, and ethical considerations of using Skype or other similar programs for conducting research interviews will be discussed following an explanation of the process of semi-structured interviewing.

The participants in the study were asked to complete two interviews, each lasting 60–90 minutes. The first interview focused on eliciting narratives of experience from the participants in response to specific open-ended questions, listed below. The second interview was even more open-ended than the first, and it focused on the participant's reaction to their experience of the first interview. It also asked for their input on my analysis of the first interview.

The participants were asked to choose a time and location where they are comfortable conducting the interview, which should help put them at ease. Before the interview began I explained the purpose of the interview as well as briefly reiterate the overall study topic, though they were already familiar with this information as a part of the process of informed consent. I then offered a brief explanation of the format of the interview as well as its approximate length. I assured them of confidentiality and reminded them that it would be recorded for later transcription. I also reminded the participant that she was free to ask questions at any point during or after the interview, especially clarification of the interview questions themselves. She was also told she could decline to answer particular questions and that she was able end the interview at any point with no penalty or repercussions if she felt distressed or uncomfortable.

The interviews used in this project were semi-structured. This is not to say, however, that

the researcher initiated the interview without precise interview questions in mind, but these questions were designed in such a way that they could create an opportunity for storytelling. Riessman gives an example of an interview study she performed considering the topic of infertility. She asked the question, “How did you first become aware that you were having difficulties with childbearing?”⁵ This question encouraged the study participants to “begin at the beginning, relate a chronological sequence of how they came to suspect fertility problems, and how their understandings changed over time.”⁶ At times this required certain questions from the researcher that helped bring chronological focus to the narrative, though Riessman encourages narrative interviewers to embrace the diverse methods of storytelling that will be employed by different people.⁷ While I will needed to be cognizant of the fact that I did not have a personal relationship with the participants in this study, and therefore sometimes needed to engage in some encouragement for them to offer detailed narrative experiences, the fact that I was studying pastors was helpful to this process; many pastors enjoy telling stories, and their vocation gives them regular outlets for creating and telling narrative accounts. This proved to be true in the interviews I conducted.

The Process of Semi-Structured Interviewing

The following is adapted from Lisa Whiting’s article: “Semi-structured interviews: Guidance for novice-researchers.”⁸ The article is geared towards nurse researchers, but the same principles apply. Whiting explains the process in five phases:

1. Apprehension phase

⁵ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 25.

⁶ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 25.

⁷ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 25.

⁸ Whiting, “Semi-structured Interviews,” 35–40.

The initial stage of the interview often feels somewhat strange or awkward, especially since the interviewer and the participants do not have an established relationship. Many researchers will engage in some general discussion or conversation before the interview begins to attempt to alleviate some of this tension.

2. Exploration phase

As the interview proceeds, the participant will hopefully begin to engage in more detailed descriptions. This can be aided by the interviewer using probing follow-ups or verbal or non-verbal encouragement, though this also somewhat depends on the personality of the participant.

3. Cooperative phase

At this stage, comfort is reached which creates the potential for more free discussion. It is at this stage of the interview where most qualitative researchers recommend asking the most potentially difficult or sensitive questions.

4. Participation phase

The participation phase is when rapport is reached and the participant will sometimes even “guide the interviewer” at this point in the process. This phase is not always reached, as it may depend on the subject, the setting, personalities, or timing.

5. Conclusion

The interview should conclude when both parties feel comfortable and ready to finish, as long as it stays roughly within the agreed upon time frame. Participants should be thanked for their help in the research process.

Semi-structured interviews require the interviewer to prepare between 5–7 open-ended questions beforehand. In the case of this study, these questions attempted to prompt the research participants to tell stories of their experiences. Since this study investigated how female AG

pastors described their lived experience as pastors, the interview questions focused on prompting them to tell stories or relate their experiences of fulfilling that role and how they understand them.

Skype Interviews

The interviews conducted during this study were done so over Skype. Since using Skype or other similar software can affect the interview process, some brief comments on available research on using Skype to carry out qualitative interviews are necessary. While there is not extensive research on the subject, some research has been conducted. Two journal articles and one online article will be presented and summarized to determine the possible benefits and drawbacks of which a researcher needs to be aware. The three articles are “Skype Interviewing: Reflections of two PhD Researchers,”⁹ “Skype: An Appropriate Method of Data Collection for Qualitative Interviews?”¹⁰ and “Research Interviews by Skype: A New Data Collection Method.”¹¹

The three articles cited above all advocate for the inclusion of Skype as a part of a researcher’s toolkit, and all the authors believe that Skype provides many benefits to the researcher that make it quite valuable for obtaining data. Deakin and Wakefield utilized Skype in

⁹ Hannah Deakin and Kelly Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing: Reflections of Two PhD Researchers,” *Qualitative Research* 14, no. 5, (2014): 603–16.

¹⁰ Jessica R. Sullivan, “Skype: An Appropriate Method of Data Collection for Qualitative Interviews?” *The Hilltop Review* Iss. 1, article 10, (Winter 2012): 54–60.

¹¹ Catherine Bertrand and Laurent Bourdeau, “Research Interviews by Skype: A New Data Collection Method,” (paper presented at the 9th European Conference on Research Methods, Madrid, Spain, June 24-25, 2010), 70-79, accessed April 27, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Catherine_Bertrand2/publication/256117370_Bertrand_C_Bourdeau_L_2010_Research_interviews_by_Skype_A_new_data_collection_method_In_J_Esteves_Ed_Proceedings_from_the_9th_European_Conference_on_Research_Methods_pp_70-79_Spain_IE_Business_School/links/00463521d569d741ff000000.pdf

their own PhD research projects, and they discovered that Skype adds a great deal of flexibility to the interview process, so much so that they suggest that “Skype should be seriously considered as a favored choice in interviewing methodology.”¹² Sullivan concurs, saying that while there are some drawbacks to using Skype in the qualitative interview process, “the benefits of using Skype and other communication programs as a method of data collection, especially in place of face-to-face interviews, definitely outweigh the drawbacks.”¹³ Bertrand and Bourdeau agree and conclude their article by saying they will continue to utilize Skype in their interview process.¹⁴

The reason the authors of these articles are in favor of using Skype to conduct interviews is because of the advantages Skype offers to both researcher and participant. Those advantages are: flexibility/access, recording capabilities, and the freedom of participants to withdraw from the interview if they become uncomfortable or if they decide to no longer participate in the project.

Regarding flexibility of access, Skype is beneficial because it allows researchers access to study participants regardless of geographical location. Deakin and Wakefield carried out their research projects in the United Kingdom, and they mention that Skype allowed them this type of access to people they could not interact with in a face-to-face interview. They say, “Without online interviewing opportunities, the scope and reach of both PhD studies would have been limited to UK-based interviewees within travelling distance.”¹⁵ They also mention that they were negotiating limited funds, and thus using Skype allowed them access to participants that might have been excluded from the study if face-to-face interviews were the only option.¹⁶ Since I am

¹² Deakin and Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing,” 607.

¹³ Sullivan, “Skype: An Appropriate Method,” 59.

¹⁴ Bertrand and Bourdeau, “Research Interviews by Skype,” 1. They do maintain, however, that Skype will not entirely replace the face-to-face interview process for them.

¹⁵ Deakin and Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing,” 607.

¹⁶ Deakin and Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing,” 607.

also without any outside funding, this was a benefit to this project as well.

In addition to avoiding problems of geographical and financial access, the authors maintain that Skype is also very helpful to the researcher because it is very easy to record the entire conversation, both audio and video, all within one program. Bertrand and Bourdeau point out that this is not only more efficient for the researcher, it also allows the researcher to examine non-verbal data such as body language, posture, and movement.¹⁷ Sullivan also emphasizes the benefits of having a video recording of the interview and not just an audio one.¹⁸

The last important benefit of using Skype for qualitative interviews is that it allows greater freedom to the people involved, which should in theory provide more enthusiastic participants. The main way that Skype offers more freedom to participants is that it allows greater flexibility in fitting the interview into the schedules of busy people. Deakin and Wakefield explain that in their projects they mostly did their Skype interviews in the evening, which was often found to be more convenient for interviewees who were in full-time employment.¹⁹ Furthermore, they found that “even when interviewees stated they did not have time to be interviewed face-to-face, when Skype was offered, they were willing to participate.”²⁰

Another important way Skype offers greater freedom to research participants is that it allows them to withdraw from the process at any time with ease and minimal confrontation. Bertrand and Bourdeau explain, “The research interview by Skype offers a real freedom space to the interviewed, [who] has the power to “quit” the session whenever he/she wants and thus

¹⁷ Bertrand and Bourdeau, “Research Interviews by Skype,” 1.

¹⁸ Sullivan, “Skype: Appropriate Method of Data Collection,” 54.

¹⁹ Deakin and Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing,” 608.

²⁰ Deakin and Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing,” 609.

requires his/her collaboration to an even greater degree.”²¹ Deakin and Wakefield point out that this might actually be even easier in Skype interviews than in face-to-face interviews, since an interviewee may feel more pressure to continue an unwanted or uncomfortable interview in a face-to-face setting than in a setting where they simply have to click a button in order to end the interaction.²²

While the articles examined do argue that Skype is a useful tool that can and should be used by qualitative researchers, they also admit that there are some potential problems of which researchers need to be aware. One possible drawback of using Skype for interviews is that it is not an uncommon occurrence for there to be technical problems with Skype – anything from internet connectivity issues to faulty webcams and many other such scenarios are always possible. While it is not possible to anticipate every possible technical problem, researchers need to be aware that these problems exist and, where possible, “have backup plans prepared in advance.”²³

Perhaps the most difficult problem with using Skype for the interview process is that it does raise issues of potential ethical concern. The obvious ethical issue that may come up in using Skype for interviews is that is difficult to obtain informed consent and document that consent in an online interview. While face-to-face interviews usually depend on a participant signing a consent form, this is a more difficult process over Skype. Since obtaining informed consent from participants is foundational to conducting ethical research, researchers who use Skype to carry out their interviews must be sensitive to the differences between face-to-face

²¹ Bertrand and Bourdeau, “Research Interviews by Skype,” 2.

²² Deakin and Wakefield, “Skype Interviewing,” 610.

²³ Sullivan, “Skype: Appropriate Method,” 59. Sullivan points out, though, that any type of technology is vulnerable to these types of issues.

interviews and Skype interviews before starting their interview process. The process of obtaining informed consent will be discussed below.

Target Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was female ministers in the AG, specifically lead pastors who have been in full-time leadership of their churches for at least one year. As of 2015, which was the last time statistical data was gathered and presented by the General Council, there were 540 female lead pastors in the AG. This study found three of those pastors who were willing to participate in the research. It was not difficult to find three participants from this sample; when the subject matter and methodology were presented there was a great deal of interest in the topic on the part of the participants. Furthermore, I think the emphasis on narrative and an encouragement to tell the stories of their own experience helped make the idea of participating in a research study more appealing and possibly less intimidating.

While the AG does keep detailed statistics about its ministers, not all data are divided by gender. However, based on information obtained from reports published by the AG statistician through the office of the General Secretary, I can report the following data about female ministers in the AG. The AG is divided into sixty-seven districts, which usually follow state boundaries, though there are some districts that were formed according to specific language groups. These districts are grouped into eleven regions. Of the 540 total female lead pastors in the AG, 205 or thirty-seven point nine percent are located in the Spanish language regions.²⁴ Outside of the language regions, the amount of female lead pastors is fairly evenly distributed,

²⁴ Assemblies of God Office of the General Secretary - Statistician, Report: *Ministers by Class - 2015* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 2015).

though the largest amount of female lead pastors are in the Great Lakes region and the lowest is in the Northwest region.²⁵

Another important element in describing the target population is marital status. Unfortunately, the data concerning the marital status of the 540 female lead pastors in the AG do not exist or have not been gathered. However, one statistical report reveals that seventy-one percent of all female ministers²⁶ in the AG are married.²⁷ Thus it is very likely that most of the female lead pastors in the AG are married as opposed to single or divorced.

In summary, while specific data about the specifics of the 540 female lead pastors in the AG are sparse, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, female lead pastors are a minority in all districts and regions of the AG, though the data do indicate that there is a somewhat higher percentage in the specific language regions as opposed to the regular geographic regions, as noted above. Second, female ministers in the AG are more likely to be married than divorced. Other data that would be helpful that is not collected by the AG include: education level, race, or income levels. Since these data do not exist, I am unable to make general conclusions regarding these elements about the 540 female lead pastors in the AG.

Sample selection involved contacting prospective participants via email and explaining the project to them and inquiring if they wanted to participate. Once I obtained three participants who fit the study I had the sample needed to complete the project. None of the participants were

²⁵ Assemblies of God Office of the General Secretary - Statistician, Report: *Ministers by Class* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 2015).

²⁶ This percentage includes all three levels of licensure; certified, licensed, and ordained. I searched for information regarding the marital status of each individual group, as lead pastors are more likely to be ordained than licensed or certified, but these data are not reported. Instead, data are only collected about the marital status of all female ministers at every credential level.

²⁷ Assemblies of God Office of the General Secretary - Statistician, Report: *Ministers Marital Status- 2015* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, 2015).

within travel distance, so I used Skype to conduct the interviews, as explained above. The sampling process will be discussed in greater detail, below.

Procedures

Sampling Procedures

Due to the specific requirements of the research topic, purposive sampling was utilized to recruit and select participants who fit the requirements of this study. Creswell explains that this method fits well when studies have very particular requirements, since it allows the researcher to “collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied.”²⁸ Therefore, using the method of purposive sampling, I contacted participants who fit the requirements and inquired if they were willing to participate in the study. The initial contact took place via email, and after prospective participants signified interest or willingness to participate I contacted them by phone in order to offer a full explanation of the study, both its purpose and the methods that would be utilized in order to investigate the subject.

Since narrative studies do not seek to offer generalizable information about an entire population, and because I was trying to investigate lived experience in a practical and specific manner, which is: in the experiential narratives offered by three female ministers in the AG, I did not sort the participants by race, age, geographical location, or any other factors. As long as they had been lead pastors for at least one year, they fit the requirements of this study.

Obtaining Consent

The first part of the consent process was verbal consent that was obtained from the participant by means of phone conversation with the researcher. Verbal consent was explicitly

²⁸ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 157.

asked for after the purpose(s) of the project were explained to each participant. However, verbal consent alone does not meet the full requirements of the process of containing informed consent from participants in human research studies; consent must also be gathered in written form. The consent form used in this study was a modification of Concordia Seminary's official consent form. Since the interviews took place over Skype or some other electronic research tool, I e-mailed them a consent form which was filled out and sent back to me with their signature and date.

Protection of Participant Rights

The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) is utilized by research institutions, and is “dedicated to promoting the public’s trust in the research enterprise by providing high quality, peer-reviewed, web-based educational courses in research, ethics, regulatory oversight, responsible conduct of research, research administration, and other topics pertinent to the interests of member organizations and individual learners.”²⁹ I completed CITI training as a requirement of the course I completed in qualitative research at Saint Louis University. One of the main focuses of the CITI program is ensuring that the rights of participants in human research studies are protected. Three important principles are integral to conducting an ethical qualitative research study: autonomy, voluntariness, and informed consent. I will explain each and how my study ensured that these principles were adhered to.

Autonomy refers to the fact that “people must be empowered to make decisions concerning their own actions and wellbeing,” and that “individuals must be given the choice whether to participate in research, and they must be provided sufficient information and possess

²⁹ Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, “Mission and History,” accessed May 30, 2017, <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/mission-and-history/>.

the mental competence to make that choice.”³⁰ Every participant in this study was ensured of full autonomy; the consent form indicated that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and that if they did so none of their data will be retained, and that doing so would not have any negative consequences to them. I also reiterated this verbally before the interviews took place.

The principal of voluntariness was also respected. Participants were not in any way compelled to be a part of this study since I conducted it on a strictly individual basis and was not doing so on behalf of the General Council of the AG and I am not a member of any of the churches which they pastor. While I am a licensed minister within the denomination, I have no position or influence that could have been used to affect their status or ministries in any way. Because of these factors, I had no way to pressure any participant into participating in this study; if they did so it is of their own voluntary choice. Moreover, I did not recruit anyone with whom I had any type of personal relationship. This fulfilled the other requirement of voluntariness, wherein the researcher “should be aware of situations in which prospective subjects may feel pressured to participate in the study.”³¹

Lastly, the process of informed consent was utilized. Informed consent involves three elements: “disclosing to potential research subjects information needed to make an informed decision; facilitating the understanding of what has been disclosed; and promoting the voluntariness of the decision about whether or not to participate in the research.”³² In order to

³⁰ Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, “Mission and History,” accessed May 30, 2017, <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/mission-and-history/>.

³¹ Lisa Robinson Bailey, “History and Ethical Principles,” CITI Online Training Course, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1>.

³² Lorna Hicks, “Informed Consent,” CITI Online Training Course, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1>.

meet these requirements, I offered a verbal explanation of the project which included the subject and aims of the study. After doing so, I offered a chance for the participant to give verbal consent to participate. This will be followed with a written consent form, which was explained to the best of my ability. I also gave the participant the opportunity to ask questions at any point in the process. This meets the other requirements of informed consent, since participants had a full understanding of the aims of the study before any research took place.

The other main consideration of protecting the rights of participants is protecting their privacy and confidentiality. The IRB Guidebook defines privacy as “having control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually) with others.”³³ This study aligns with those protocols by applying the principles of autonomy, voluntariness, and informed consent, explained in detail above. In addition to the ways previously explained, this study afforded privacy to its participants by protecting identities using pseudonyms and did not use any data that would allow the identification of the participants. Moreover, all data was kept in one location: on two flash drives in a locked cabinet at my home. I was the only person who had access to this information.

The IRB guidebook defines confidentiality as “the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others, in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure without permission.”³⁴ While there are no current plans to publish any parts of the study or share them with anyone other than the dissertation committee and department of practical theology at

³³ Hicks, “Informed Consent,” CITI Online Training Course, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1>.

³⁴ Hicks, “Informed Consent,” CITI Online Training Course, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1>.

Concordia Seminary, the consent form does indicate that results could be published at some point in the future. However, no identifying information was included in the study.

Privacy is also important in the types of interview questions that are asked of participants in research studies. If participants are asked questions that they find intrusive, this can fall under the definition of invasion of privacy in some cases.³⁵ This was not an issue since this is more common in studies involving questions about sexual behavior, use of psychotropic medication, and childhood abuse.³⁶ However, some things that came up in interviews did bring up emotionally difficult and even painful reactions. In order to address this, I gave participants a clear idea of the subject matter and the general direction of the interview process before we began. Additionally, I reminded them at the start of the interview that if a discussion topic becomes too distressing/painful then they could refocus the discussion on another topic or end the interview at any point, and solely at their discretion.

In addition to the above information, I have also completed the IRB process at Concordia Seminary. Receiving IRB approval meant that I would secure the data in order to preserve all of the rights of participants, outlined above. Through the CITI training and IRB process I have met the required ethical standards for conducting human research.

Data Collection Procedures

Research Instrument and Reflexivity

In qualitative studies, the instrument used to conduct research is the researcher him/herself. Therefore, it is important to consider the role played by the researcher in the data collection and

³⁵ Hicks, "Informed Consent," CITI Online Training Course, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1>.

³⁶ Hicks, "Informed Consent," CITI Online Training Course, accessed May 30, 2017, <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=665&ce=1>.

presentation process. This process of assessing the role of the researcher and his or her involvement in the creation of data is referred to as reflexivity. Previously, many researchers believed themselves aloof or separate from the data they collected, and would often write as “disembodied omniscient narrators claiming universal and atemporal general knowledge.”³⁷ Such an approach or philosophy of research has been widely criticized, since many researchers, especially those with postmodern research perspectives, have proposed that texts that “cannot be understood without references to ideas being concealed by the author and contexts within the author’s life.”³⁸ As a result, qualitative researchers today have embraced the process of reflexivity, which requires them to “come clean as a researcher about how race, class, gender, religion, and personal/social values influence the researcher’s understanding of the power dynamics of the research setting, the phenomena under study, and the researcher-respondent relationship.”³⁹ Creswell offers a similar explanation, explaining that the majority of researchers today “acknowledge that the writing of a qualitative text cannot be separated from the author, how it is received by readers, and how it impacts participants and sites under study.”⁴⁰

Naturally, I am situated within a particular context and this relates to this project. I do not anticipate that race or class will play a significant role. The race(s) and socioeconomic class(es) of the participants did not seem to influence my interpretation of the project, since the issues considered focused more on gender and gender status than on racial or class issues.

The area where there was the highest possibility for difficulty or difference lied in the area of gender. Since I am a man studying a subject that focuses on women and the perspectives and

³⁷ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 214.

³⁸ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 214.

³⁹ Sharan B. Merriam and Associates, *Qualitative Research Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002), 290.

⁴⁰ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 215.

experiences of women, especially in relationship to their leadership status as members of a community that has often presented conflicting messages from male leaders about their status and the appropriateness of their ministries, there was potential for difficulty here. However, I believe that the focus of this project helped alleviate some of these issues. In the interests of providing complete and honest reflexivity, I do need to expose my own presuppositions regarding the topic of women in ministry. I believe that the AG has been correct in its official and doctrinal support of women in ministry since 1935, and I also believe that the mixed messages and, in many instances, discouragement of female leaders is an unfortunate reality that needs to be rectified. I believe that no leader who is divinely called by God should receive anything except full support for their ministries, regardless of their gender. Furthermore, I believe that while this was never the intent of most people, the actions of many in the AG regarding the discouragement of women ministers or even the ambivalence towards the topic represents a type of marginalization of women within our fellowship. While I do agree with Merriam and Creswell that an interviewer cannot be aloof or detached from the process of data/narrative creation, I did not want to create my own narrative that does not depend on the views of those who are most affected by the issue or subject under investigation. In order to address this potential concern, I recruited an interpretive group to assist in thematic assessment and classification. The precise ways in which the interpretive group functioned and assisted in this manner will be explained below.

Considering religion and personal/social values, these were not significant factors in this study, since I share the same religion and denomination with participants in the study. I do tend to be somewhat more socially or politically liberal than the average AG pastor, but since this study did not focus on social or political issues, I do not think this is a relevant consideration

when it comes to reflexivity.

Interpretive Group and Triangulation

All qualitative researchers believe that it is very important to take steps to ensure the rigor and validity of their studies. Since qualitative research does not use the more mathematically rigorous approach that is present in quantitative studies, qualitative researchers have created other ways of approaching this issue. Squire explains that some researchers who use the experience-based qualitative research model will “submit their analysis to external assessment by interested others.”⁴¹ The reason for this external testing is that it helps the researcher see things she or he might miss, and it also adds important perspective to the analytical process. Qualitative researchers refer to this as “triangulation,” and in this case specifically analyst triangulation. I believe this helped provide a check on selective interpretation and helped point out blind spots in my analysis. It is important to note, however, that the goal of analyst triangulation is not necessarily consensus but is instead a way to understand multiple ways of seeing and interpreting data.

The interpretive group was three female pastors, two of whom were from the AG. The idea behind the interpretive group was that it would assist me in identifying important themes or perspectives I might otherwise have missed. Additionally, since I am a man studying women’s experience, it was important to have assistance in the interpretive process from women.

In the interest of participant confidentiality, the interpretive group received excerpts from the two interviews which focused on the two themes of “Resistance,” and “Trailblazer/Pioneer.” These themes, as well as why they were chosen for the interpretive group to examine, will be

⁴¹ Corrine Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative,” in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corrine Squire, and Maria Tamboukou (London: Sage, 2008), 50.

explained in detail later in the study. Each member of the interpretive group examined two excerpts from each participant from each interview that I believe displayed this theme. They were then asked if they believed the two terms were appropriate ways to describe the experience. If they believed there is a better or more accurate way to name or describe the themes, they were asked to provide their interpretation and reasoning. For a discussion of thoughts of the interpretive group, see chapter five.

Background, Training, and Experience of the Researcher

This study focused on the description of lived experience female ministers in the AG. Since I am also a minister in the AG, and since I have received undergraduate and seminary training at AG institutions, I am very familiar with the Pentecostal hermeneutic and the Pentecostal approach to the scriptures, as well as the general culture, viewpoints, and ecclesiastical procedures of the AG and the typical AG church.

Regarding training in qualitative research, I have completed a graduate course in the methods and practice of qualitative research, and this course provided me with the resources, vocabulary, and some practical hands-on experience in qualitative research, specifically in the creating, coding, and analysis of transcripts obtained through the qualitative process. The class also engaged in a qualitative project together and presented its findings at Saint Louis University's ATLAS conference in April of 2017. This means that I do have some experience in both obtaining, analyzing, and presenting data obtained from qualitative research. However, I am a novice when it comes to qualitative research, since I have never conducted a project of this scope or scale before, though, as Patton reminds us, the only way to actually learn the process of qualitative research is to practice it. In a section devoted to those engaging in qualitative studies for the first time, he says, "You must find ways of practicing [qualitative interviews], getting

feedback, and continuing to learn. Interviewing is a skill. Acquire it. Then, like many other skills, once acquired, use it or lose it.”⁴² I am also confident that the feedback and guidance of my advisor and PhD committee, as well as the IRB process, helped me conduct a study that adhered to the rigorous ethical and research requirements.

Interview Questions

In order to examine the descriptions of the lived experience of female ministers in the AG to look at how they describe their roles in ministry, interview questions focused on prompting participants to relay their experiences as lead pastors in AG churches. To that end, two interviews were conducted, as explained above. The approach to this study depended on the idea that narratives are co-created by the interviewer and interviewee; therefore, I endeavored to offer the interviewee more of a role in the creation of narratives offered than just simply as someone who answers my list of questions without being involved in the process. As Riessman reminds us, good narrative interviewing requires us to follow the interviewee down their “trails,” and not just our own.⁴³ Though doing so does require the interviewer to give up some control of the interview, I believe it creates a more authentic and useful text for analysis. As mentioned above, the interview process was semi-structured and employed open-ended questions. Open-ended questions encouraged the participant to offer longer stories of experience as opposed to short yes/no statements. An additional benefit of the semi-structured interview process is that it allowed the interviewer to follow up on pertinent information as it occurred in the course of an answer to a question. If a response lead to a fruitful direction, the interviewer was able to ask for detail and how that fits into the framework of everything else that has been shared during the

⁴² Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 431.

⁴³ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 33.

interview. Semi-structured interviews also tend to be more conversational, which helped put the participant at ease and assisted in building rapport. The interviews were audio-recorded so that they could be transcribed. This was necessary so that they could be analyzed; see below for the process of analysis. The questions used in the first interview are as follows:

- Tell me about your call to ministry.
- Tell me about your first pastoral or ministry position.
- Tell me about your first position where you were the lead pastor of a church.
- Tell me about a time when you experienced conflict or resistance from people in your church or from other pastors because of your gender.
- Tell me about a time when you think your pastoral ministry was affected by your gender, either positively or negatively, or both.
- Tell me about your perspective on the scriptures that some use to argue that women should not be in pastoral authority? (First Timothy Two and First Corinthians Eleven).
- Tell me about your perspective on being a female minister within the AG fellowship.

After the first interviews were completed, transcribed, and analyzed, I provided the participants with a copy of the transcript of their first interview. After giving them two to four weeks to reflect on the transcript and the analysis, (depending on their schedules), I then conducted a second interview with them. The second interview was even more open-ended than the first, and it focused on the participant's reaction to their experience of the first interview. It also provided opportunity for me to follow up on or seek clarification of things that presented themselves in the first interview. The second interview will include the following questions for all three participants:

- Tell me about the experience of the first interview. What were your thoughts/feelings about it?
- Are there any details you've thought of since then that you'd like to add?
- What is your reaction to reading the transcript? Does this represent your experience?
- One to two questions that were specifically referring to a story or detail in first interview that needed more investigation/clarification. These questions varied by participant because they were dependent on their responses in the first interview.
- Given the first interview, reading the transcript, and now this second interview, please summarize for me your lived experience as a female pastor in the AG.

Data Analysis

After the interviews were conducted, the first step in the process of data analysis was to transcribe the recordings so that they could be analyzed. While there are different ways to transcribe interview recordings, there is one important detail to note before I describe the method I used in transcription. The process of transcribing an interview recording is as much a part of the interpretive process as coding or looking for themes or structural elements in narratives offered. Researchers must be aware that the process of transcription “transforms a complex verbal exchange into an object that [serves] as a representation [or] imitation on a two-dimensional page of what had been said between [interviewer and interviewee].”⁴⁴ That is, transcription is not merely a mundane or technical process. Choosing how to represent all the complex elements in participant responses, such as pauses or dialect/diction, to offer just two examples, is a meticulous and time-consuming task. This process is very important to the process of interpreting the data, however, because it requires the researcher to immerse him/herself in the interview responses. Most importantly to this study, Riessman points out that the interpretive framework of the researcher also has a tremendous effect on the way in which interviews are transcribed, which is why she recommends not delegating the process of transcription unless the study is so large that the researcher(s) cannot complete the process themselves.⁴⁵ She points out that “the same stretch of talk can be transcribed very differently, depending on the investigator’s theoretical perspective, methodological orientation, and substantive interest.”⁴⁶ Therefore, I decided to transcribe the interview recordings myself, because I wished to immerse myself in the interpretive process. Additionally, I believe that this corresponds to the research framework used

⁴⁴ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 29.

⁴⁵ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 29.

⁴⁶ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 29.

in this study. If narrative texts and their interpretations are co-created between members of a community and between interviewer and interviewee, then I believe the transcription process was a valuable way to engage in the interpretive process that was consistent with the theoretical framework and methodological approach of the current study.

The actual method of transcription tends to vary depending on the study. I used a slight modification of Riessman's method, in which she seeks to "demonstrate how the act of storytelling in dialog constitutes the autobiographical self, that is, how the speaker wants to be known in the interaction."⁴⁷ This method requires all of the interactions between interviewer and interviewee to be included in the transcript, so my questions as well as requests for clarifications or further explanation were part of the transcripts. Doing so allowed an analysis of my own part in the co-constructed meaning arrived at in the study, because including all the interactions helped show how my interview methods shaped or affected the interview process. It also helped the project to demonstrate an honest and reflexive quality. Riessman explains that her method is based on the theory of a co-created self which is produced dialogically between interviewer and interviewee,⁴⁸ which also fits with the theoretical framework and methodological approach of this study.

I plan to use Riessman's method of transcription with no modifications. In her method, she records all the lines of dialog and then assigns a line number to each line so that they can be analyzed in a very easy and straightforward manner.

For an example, see figure 1.

⁴⁷ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 29.

⁴⁸ Riessman, *Narrative Methods*, 30.

Figure 1. Riessman's Transcription Method

Transcript 2.1

01 C: And have you ever been pregnant?
02 S: Yes (p) I think it was second or third year of marriage. (I—Aha)
03 that I was pregnant and then in the third month I started spotting
04 (I—Mmm). I think I was overworking (I—Mmm). Since it was a
05 choice marriage, I had a lot of—(p) We were trying to get my in
06 laws to be more amenable to the whole situation (I—Mmm). In
07 laws were against the marriage (I—Mmm) and so I used to work
08 the whole day, then go to their place to cook in the evening for a
09 family of seven (I—Mmm). Then pack the food for two of us and
10 bring it home (I—Mmm).
11 C: So you were living separately from them?
12 S: We were living here, my in-laws were staying in [city], some
13 distance away.
14 C: But you went there to cook everyday—

Notice how in this example, Riessman includes all her own questions and requests for clarification from the interviewee. She also includes non-verbal or paralinguistic utterances and notes where the interviewee pauses. I utilized this same format in the transcripts I created.

Once the transcripts were prepared, they then needed to be analyzed. There are many ways to analyze narrative discourse, and the choice of which typology to use in analysis was a difficult one since different types of analysis will lead to different insights and interpretations.

Furthermore, Riessman explains that in practice, “different approaches can be combined; they are not mutually exclusive and, as with all typologies, boundaries are fuzzy.”⁴⁹ Since this study employed Squire’s experience-centered and culturally oriented methodology, I also followed her recommended approach to analysis, explained below.

Squire’s method of experience-centered narrative research employs a hermeneutical method of analyzing data. She describes it as “going round in hermeneutical circles.” This idea is based on the narrative-hermeneutical approach of Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur.

⁴⁹ Catherine Kohler Riessman, “Narrative Analysis.” In *Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life* (Huddersfield, UK: University of Huddersfield, 2005), 2.

Gadamer's contribution to this analytic method is largely philosophical. He believed that every person stands within a tradition, and that this tradition is irrevocably linked to language, since language is the way a person thinks about and expresses that tradition.⁵⁰ He also believed that it is impossible for a person to stand outside of or remove himself or herself from this tradition. This was a reaction to Husserlian phenomenology, which claimed that a researcher should attempt to bracket out preunderstandings and tradition in an attempt to interpret objectively, because Gadamer believed this type of "objective bracketing" is impossible. Instead, he believed knowledge, especially of the other, comes because of collaborative discourse which takes place between the self and the other.⁵¹ During the discourse, an active and continual fusion of "horizons" takes place between the speaker and listeners.

Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach involves researchers beginning by examining all transcripts and data gathered from interviews for what he calls an explanation. After the explanation, the researcher then moves to a naïve understanding, which finally moves to a deeper understanding. This process involves what Ricoeur calls "hermeneutic arcs,"⁵² wherein the researcher starts with his or her explanation, moves back to text, develops a naïve understanding and reexamines the text, which can eventually lead to a deeper understanding.

After the interviews were transcribed, they were then coded. Coding is a method used by qualitative researchers to group interview data into themes and to highlight important information for more study or, if appropriate, follow-up with the participant. In his book *The*

⁵⁰ Valerie Fleming, Uta Gaidys, and Yvonne Robb, "Hermeneutic Research in Nursing: Developing a Gadamerian-based Research Method," *Nursing Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (2003): 113–20.

⁵¹ Fleming, Gaidys, and Robb, "Hermeneutic Research," 114.

⁵² Heather Tan, Anne Wilson, and Ian Oliver, "Ricoeur's Theory of Interpretation: An Instrument for Data Interpretation in Hermeneutic Phenomenology," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 4, (2009): 1–14.

Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers,⁵³ Joey Saldaña explains that a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or “translates” data and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for purposes of later pattern detection, categorization, position development, theory building, and analysis. Saldaña points out that coding is not a precise science but is instead an interpretive act.⁵⁴ For example, if during the process of analysis a researcher finds lines of dialogue or words that seem to indicate a theme of struggle, she or he would go through the transcripts and look for any other instances that seem to express the same or a similar idea. Codes are often broken into similar sub-codes. However, coding is not just labeling; Saldaña also explains that coding helps the researcher to link data together.⁵⁵ This is especially useful for thematic analysis and cross-case comparisons.

Saldaña explains that the coding process usually goes through three steps:

- Open Coding: The initial examination of data and attempts to begin their organization.
- Axial Coding: Trying to figure out how possible categories discovered in step 1 interconnect.
- Selective Coding: Development of a story that links the categories into a narrative.

After the interviews were transcribed, coded and examined using a combination of a Gadamerian/Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach outlined above, the actual process of analysis followed Squire’s methodology. Her methodology uses a thematic analysis, cross-case comparison, and a search for genre or culturally-relevant factors.

Thematic Analysis

Squire explains that the first part of experience-centered narrative research is thematic analysis, wherein the data is coded and then categorized into recurring or important themes.

⁵³ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015).

⁵⁴ Johnny Saldana, *Coding Manual*, 22.

⁵⁵ Johnny Saldana, *Coding Manual*, 26.

However, experience-centered narrative research takes this a step further and “pays attention to the sequencing and progression of themes within interviews, their transformation and resolution.”⁵⁶ By doing so, it highlights the specifically narrative aspects of the texts’ meanings. Therefore, I examined the data for recurring themes and patterns, but I also looked for how they progressed or changed over the two interviews.

As a supplement to Squire, the article *Introduction to Educational Research: A Critical Thinking Approach* by W. Newton Suter describes the process of qualitative data analysis as one where the “data are allowed to speak for themselves”⁵⁷ by the emergence of conceptual categories and descriptive themes. These themes are usually embedded in a framework of interconnected ideas that “make sense.”⁵⁸ The conceptual framework is then interpreted by the researcher with reference to the literature on a topic to explain with a theory (or a revision of one) about the phenomenon being studied. He also explains that “many different interpretations are typically considered before the researcher builds a coherent argument in the most transparent way possible (revealing how the conclusion was reached) so that others may judge the validity of the study.”⁵⁹ As a result, the first part of data analysis for this study involved an immersion through transcription, listening to the audio recordings of interviews, coding, and then reading and re-reading the data to look for themes and patterns that appear.

Suter also explains that many qualitative studies use a conceptual metaphor to describe the process of thematic analysis. He quotes Seidel, “Qualitative data analysis is best understood as a

⁵⁶ Corrine Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative,” in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corrine Squire, and Maria Tamboukou (London: Sage, 2008), 50.

⁵⁷ W. Newton Suter, *Introduction to Educational Research: A Critical Thinking Approach* (Los Angeles, Sage: 2012), 346.

⁵⁸ Suter, *Introduction to Educational Research*, 347.

⁵⁹ Suter, *Introduction to Educational Research*, 347.

symphony based on three elegant but simple notes—noticing, collecting, and thinking.⁶⁰ Clearly not linear, the process is described as iterative (a repeating cycle), recursive (returning to a previous point), and “holographic” (each “note” contains a whole) with “swirls and eddies.” When one notices, one records information and codes it using an organizing framework. When one collects, one shifts and sorts information. When one thinks, one finds patterns, makes sense of them, and makes discoveries (including “wholes” and “holes”).⁶¹

Cross-Case Comparison

After conducting a thematic analysis, I then carried out a cross-case comparison to see if the same or similar themes were present in the three transcripts. The cross-case comparison also allowed me to discover variations and developments of similar themes between the various responses. Squire indicates that researchers who employ this methodology “continually check their involving interpretation against the materials and actively seek out contrary cases.”⁶² Examining the similarities and differences between the responses to interview questions raised interesting analytical possibilities as well as a chance to ask participants for their thoughts on those similarities or differences, while still maintaining participant confidentiality.

Socio-Historical Context/Genre Analysis

A third method of data analysis that is employed by most studies that use experience-centered narrative research is to look for how the data is affected by the larger sociological/historical setting. Squire argues that one of the best ways to do this is to examine

⁶⁰ Suter, *Introduction to Educational Research*, 348.

⁶¹ Suter, *Introduction to Educational Research*, 349.

⁶² Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 50.

stories for different genres that the narratives may display. For example, in a study Squire did on how people live with HIV in South Africa, she analyzes how the responses she received fit within the genre of religious conversion story.⁶³ This made the tales have a morality function, and they used explicitly religious terms to do so. Squire maintains that this is important because “the interconnection between such genres and personal narratives may potentiate personal narratives’ effects.”⁶⁴ By turning their HIV diagnosis into religious morality tales, the narratives were able to function in such a way as to instruct or guide others in their society at that time.

Regarding this particular study, I examined how the narratives I gathered displayed inherent Pentecostal qualities. This took many different forms. Some responses displayed a great example of Pentecostal narrative hermeneutic. I was also curious to see if any particular genres emerged in the analysis. For a discussion of whether any types of genre or similar elements were found in the participant narratives, see chapters four and five.

The reason for examining narratives for genre and socio-historical context is because they make the narratives intelligible and understandable. Squire explains that she discovered that these kind of “cultural resonances” matter because “the interconnection between such genres and personal narratives may potentiate personal narratives’ effects.”⁶⁵ In the previously mentioned study that Squire performed on the subject of how HIV positive people talked about the epidemic in South Africa, she discovered that the stories fit into the genre of religious conversion, and this allowed them to “borrow ethical force of the conversion genre and equate it to living with HIV.”⁶⁶ Examining the personal narratives of experience gathered in the interview process for

⁶³ Squire, “Neighbors Who Might Become Friends: Identities, Genres, and Citizenship in HIV Narratives,” *Sociological Quarterly* 40, (2011): 109–37.

⁶⁴ Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 56.

⁶⁵ Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 56.

⁶⁶ Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 56.

Pentecostal qualities and investigating whether those responses fall under any genre categories assisted me with understanding how those narratives function within their community, which, as explained above, helped make the narratives more understandable.

Final Analysis

After the analytic process described above is completed, I then endeavored to see what new understanding was offered about the lived experience of the participants. This formed the conclusion of the project and focuses on how the data gathered described the lived experience of the participants, and how the new understanding reached as a result of the research process presents a richer understanding of the topic.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The Study and the Researcher

Chapter four will present the data that was gathered from the participants as well as an analysis of that data. The data will be analyzed using the methodology outlined in chapter three.

Researcher's Interest in Phenomenon Being Studied

The process of choosing a dissertation topic began with looking at the broad concept of doctrinal development; I was initially interested in how doctrines morph and change over time in different faith communities. As I researched this topic, I began to narrow my interest by looking at examples of where doctrine has changed and what effect those changes had on the way in which doctrine is practiced in that community. After also making the determination that I wanted to study this process within my own denomination, the AG, I eventually began to research the topic of women in ministry in the AG, and I became fascinated with the history of how the roles of women who were/are pastors in the AG have changed so much over time. This is partly because I greatly admire the women who pioneered churches and revivals and missions all around the world. I believe they did so within a system that often challenged their call to ministry, and I was very impressed with their dedication to following God's call for their lives regardless of what others may have said or done to discourage them, whether explicitly or implicitly.

As I was studying this topic, I also began to learn about how Pentecostals use a narrative-experiential theology and praxis to practice their faith and interact with the world. I find this very

fascinating because it helped me understand my own approach to theology and even my relationship with Christ. As a Pentecostal myself, it has been very helpful and rewarding to delve into something so integral to the Pentecostal approach to faith; I began to discover reasons and explanations for things I believed or do that I had not been previously aware of.

As I read more and more about these topics, I also realized that there was a distinct link between the narrative-experiential approach employed by Pentecostals and the way in which the women I would be studying described their lived experience. That is, I realized that if I wanted to attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what these women were describing to me, I would need to do so through a narrative experiential lens. Therefore, I chose a research methodology that examines narratives to understand experience(s). Once these two topics came together in this way, I realized that I was very interested, and I wanted to explore it to see what I could discover, and this chapter will present exactly that.

Bracketing

The methodology utilized for this project does not allow for or require the researcher to attempt to bracket out information. As explained in chapters two and three, this study engaged in the process that is much closer to Heidegger's concept of engagement by utilizing the process of reflexivity, wherein I did my best to honestly disclose as much of my own conceptions and situatedness within various contexts, such as my gender, racial, political, and cultural influences as possible. It did so to examine honestly the way in which I as the researcher affect data gathered, analyzed, and interpreted in this study. For a complete discussion on reflexivity and how my situatedness and preconceptions might affect the project, see the section on "The Research Instrument and Reflexivity," which begins on page ninety.

Role of the Researcher in Data Collection and Analysis

As the researcher in this study, I was the main instrument of data collection and analysis. I was responsible for recruiting participants, scheduling, and conducting interviews, transcribing, coding, and analyzing interview data, as well as formulating and presenting that analysis in this chapter and in chapter five. This chapter will present an in-depth picture of the data collected and the analysis of those data.

It is important to note, however, that while I was the main instrument of data collection and analysis, I was not the only person involved. The second interview allowed the study participants a chance to react to the transcripts of the first interview, thus providing them with the opportunity to be involved in the analysis process, albeit in a smaller way than the researcher. Additionally, my PhD committee has provided feedback on the design of this project as well as the analysis, which gives them a role in the way data was collected and analyzed. However, the researcher still played the most significant role in data collection and analysis.

Significant Influence of the Researcher on the Data Collection/Analysis

Since this study was carried out entirely by the researcher, all the data collection and analysis were carried out individually. In terms of data collection, there were a few very minor problems with the software used to conduct the interviews, such as when the internet connection cut out very briefly. When this happened, the researcher simply asked the participant to clarify or restate their response. This only took place a few times over the course of all six interviews.

Since the data for this study were gathered solely from interview questions and responses, the researcher himself was centrally involved in the process of data collection. While the PhD committee had influence on the main questions being asked during the interviews, during the actual interview itself the researcher had complete control and autonomy in terms of asking

participants to clarify, explain, or simply speak more about a topic. This certainly affected the data collected; if another researcher had carried out this same study they would not have necessarily asked the same questions.

Regarding the data analysis, the researcher's preconceptions, situatedness within a particular culture, gender, and context will have affected the analysis of the data. This was explored in the section on reflexivity in chapter three. Since this study uses the Heideggerian approach that uses reflexivity in place of bracketing, there was no attempt by the researcher to remove these from consideration. Instead, the act of being reflexive allowed the researcher to be as honest as possible about those things that might affect interpretation. The only development that arose that was not discussed in the section on reflexivity was that the researcher gained a definite admiration for the participants as they related their lived experience and how they have persevered through some very difficult situations.

Description of Sample Participants

This study recruited and interviewed three women who are lead pastors of AG churches. The only other requirement is that they had to be at least 18 years of age and must have been in their lead position for at least one year. All three participants met these requirements. Using their pseudonyms, the demographic information for the participants is as follows:

Anna: Anna is thirty-eight, married, has a master's degree, is bi-vocational, and pastors a church of approximately seventy people in an urban context.

Jenny: Jenny is sixty-two, married, has a master's degree, is not bi-vocational, and pastors a church of approximately three hundred people in an urban context. Her church also oversees three other campuses/faith communities.

Mary: Mary is thirty-nine, married, has a master's degree, is not bi-vocational, and pastors

a church of approximately thirty people in an urban context.

A rationale for sample size, as well as a description of how the participants were recruited, is contained in chapter three.

Other Sources of Data Accessed

The only source of data examined during this study were the interviews conducted between the researcher and the participants. No other sources of personal data were accessed during this project.

Excluded Participants

One potential participant indicated a willingness to participate in the project but never responded when the researcher tried to follow up to obtain consent and schedule an interview. Since no informed consent was obtained and no interview was scheduled, this participant was not involved in the study.

Research Methodology Applied to the Data

Presentation of Data Results and Analysis

The following data analysis was carried out after the conclusion of the two interviews according to the methodology outlined in chapters one to three. The reader is invited to read the attached transcripts to gain a deeper familiarity with the interview data being analyzed; see appendix A. In the following analysis, data from the first interviews are marked by parentheses, whereas data from the second interview are denoted by brackets.

Anna: Individual Themes and Narrative Summary

Anna is under forty, married and college educated with a graduate degree. She currently pastors a church of between seventy to eighty people. Anna comes from a Christian background,

though she did not start out in the AG, partly due to some negative experiences her parents had at AG churches in various locations throughout the country. However, the moving and work of the Holy Spirit and functioning in the gifts of the Spirit were always important to Anna and her family, so they usually attended smaller charismatic churches in their area. A more detailed narrative summary will be offered after the thematic analysis of her interview responses, below.

Anna's Individual Themes

The following themes were identified in Anna's lived experience as a female lead pastor in the AG:

Anna's Calling

- Initially thought her calling to ministry meant she would be a missionary (235–39; 264–70; 341–44; 358–65; 438–42)¹
- Did not think her testimony was adequate or “exciting enough” (274–82)
- Calling eventually clarified to direct her to preaching or pastoral ministry (613–22; 626–34)
- Sees her calling as an answer to resistance (1215–19) [225–65]
- Feels called to help improve things for other women pastors [128–30]
- Had her call validated by her family (both parents and grandmother) (358–65; 583–96)
Calling was initially characterized by lack of direction and confusion (598–99; 603–09; 613–22)

Anna has experienced some affirmation of her role as lead pastor

- People in her church are there because they want her to be their pastor (840–42)
- Some pastors at district events went out of their way to be welcoming to her (928–29)
- This experience of affirmation was not common early on in her ministry; the first time a male pastor treated her as a peer stood out to her (1026–32)

Anna's experience of AG culture as a female lead pastor has been largely negative

- Anna and her family experienced many instances of legalism in AG churches (446–47)
- Most of the resistance to her status as a female lead pastor has been from other credentialed ministers (1235–36)
- Anna sees a great disparity between what the AG says about women leaders and what their

¹The numbers in parentheses/brackets refer to the line number on the interview transcripts. See Appendix 1.

culture promotes (661–62; 666–67; 656–57; 729–32) [346–48]

- Official ideology does not match practices in regard to female leaders (656–57; 1260–63) [352–54]
- Believes the doctrinal stance that affirms women leaders allows people to ignore the fact that there are very few women leaders [354–57]
- The AG touts its success in empowering women, but Anna says, “We haven’t come as far as we think we have.” (1498–99)
- The AG has many blind spots because it gives status to people who teach that women should not be in leadership (1495–1505)
- The AG is an “Old Boys Club” (923–24)
- Some well-meaning actions by various districts actually undermine the ministry of female lead pastors (1307–79)
- Districts granted full ordination to Pastor’s spouses who have been in ministry for 10 years and this undermined the ministry of female lead pastors like Anna (1325–30)
- This is unfair both to the women who receive ordination themselves and to people like Anna because it an artificial parity (1353–76)
- Calls her gender a “monkey on her back” (682–84)
- Summarizes her experience as a female lead pastor in the AG as a “hall of mirrors” that “distort what she looks like,” and “presents the wrong image to others [622–48]

Has seen some improvement in the way female pastors are treated and viewed

- This has been most evident in her own church (991–1022)
- Has seen improvement in AG, especially in language used (1495–98)
- This improvement is seen in the actions of the national office promoting women in leadership and creating positions for women on the Executive Presbytery 1500–05)
- Her current ministry has seen a lot less resistance; she believes that is linked to its more urban context [305–8; 323–30]
- Sees the recent election of a single, female General Secretary as a very promising sign for women in the AG [656–81]
- Believes this election can serve as a sign that the door is “opening a little bit” for women who desire to be in national leadership in the AG [690–99]
- Regarding the future status of women in the AG, she has some optimism, but still believes there are deep-seated problems with “racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism” in the AG [704–13]

Church Plants played an important role in her story and experience as a lead pastor and do so to this day

- Has attended church plants from a very early age (24–5; 29–32)

Being married is viewed as necessary for a female pastor more than for males

- Credentialing committee assumed she needed to be married to carry out ministry (754–55; 917–18)
- Being single made her feel left out and segregated in ministry (917–18)

Mentors played an important role in her development as a leader and pastor

- Professor at college helped her see potential difficulties in being a lead pastor in the AG (515–21)
- When she was an associate pastor, her lead pastor played an important role in teaching her how to carry out pastoral ministry and encouraging her to pursue other ministry opportunities (763–75)

Networking is a central part of being successful in ministry

- Sees herself as someone who does not struggle to form networking relationships (1003–05)
- Created a network for female lead pastors because she felt isolation and needed support (264–88; 1434–47)
- Also wonders if it is wise to have events for women only [183–87]

Experienced many instances of feeling like an outsider

- As a teenager on a missions trip to Africa where she first experienced her call to ministry (331–35)
- When she moved to a new high school in her sophomore year (385–88)
- Did not have the built-in connections experienced by other students (392–99)
- Feeling like an outsider created severe emotional difficulty including depression and suicidal thoughts (403–09)
- Her gender causes her to feel “segregated and left out” in ministry (911–16)
- Male ministers at district events would say insensitive things or inappropriate jokes that made her feel like she didn’t fit in (928–48)
- Emphasized that “one of these things was not like the others.” (966–68)
- Expected to be the only female in the room at district events/meetings (972–78)
- The feeling of being an outsider pushes her to improve things for other women leaders [9–11]
- This feeling of being an outsider made her angry and she views it as “injustice,” [207–10; 213–16]

Characterizes herself as a Rebel

- Didn’t want to go AG college because everyone told her she “had to” (486–95)

Has experienced many kinds of resistance to her as lead pastor because of her gender

- Could not locate a church that would let her do an internship in college (650–57)
- Was told the AG would never ordain her (661–62)
- From another student in her college class on preaching (682–94)
- Every time a female student preached he would glare at them (698–713)
- People have told her she is in sin because she is in pastoral ministry (835–36)
- People sometimes quote passages from scripture to argue that her gender precludes her from

pastoral ministry upon first meeting her (1162–65; 1180–87)

- She has experienced the most resistance from other credentialed ministers (1235–36)
- Has had to combat negative stereotypes about women (886–87)
- Has experienced active resistance from people outside her church (846–51)
- The board at her church was indecisive in its support of her obtaining credentials though they never said this outright (747–50)
- Other pastors at district events avoided her (993–34) [339–48]
- Missionaries and guest speakers have contacted her husband instead of her to try and book events/preaching [355–73]
- This has also happened with district leaders [377–86]
- Has experience resistance from pastors outside of the AG [408–11]
 - This is particularly prevalent with Southern Baptists [410–16]

Has felt the need to respond to resistance

- Will push boundaries and insist on her right to be part of the group [216–20]
- Has found that “conversations are better than shouting” [220–21; 225–67]
- Believes the best way to respond to resistance is through relationship [390–93; 426–35]

Anna’s views on Scriptures traditionally used to argue women should not be in pastoral ministry

- Her response to scriptural arguments against her ministry is not a defense of herself but rather “teaching the truths of Scripture” (867–68)
- Believes that statements in Scripture that would seem to preclude women from pastoral ministry need to be balanced with the rest of Scripture (1122–24)
- Original and cultural context of these scriptures is different than today’s (1108–13; 1133–36)
- Jesus elevated women (1117–18; 1142–50)
- The New Testament portrays Jesus showing us we are all equal in the Spirit (1147–51)
- The Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (1122; 1142–50)
- Paul partnered with women (1123)

Sees herself as a trailblazer

- Feels a responsibility to make it easier for other women to be in pastoral leadership, even if it is hard or emotionally difficult for her (972–78; 982–85)
- She has felt this responsibility for most of her adult life [22-23; 27–28]
- Sees this as part of her calling [128–30]
- Wants to “widen the doorway for other women” [136–40; 165–70]
- Believes it is her job to be an advocate for other women leaders at every level [279–84; 445–48]

Feels a sense of Group Responsibility

- Pressure not to “mess it up” for other women (1378–79; 1383–85) [32–34; 53–59]

- Has been told that if she “messes something up,” then women might never be given the same opportunities she had [38–42]
- Notes that this is true for women and not for men [46–49; 67–69]
- She sees this as unfair and thinks it sets her up for failure [63]
- Felt like people who invited her to speak or lead things saw as a type of “experiment” [76–77]
- This made her unlikely to speak up or volunteer for things early in ministry [91–92; 96–99; 103–105; 111–15] because she was worried about disappointing others or experiencing rejection [106–107]
- No longer accepts the idea that if she makes a mistake then she has doomed other women’s chances of being offered opportunities [122–24]
- Thinks it’s unfair for any woman to be labelled as a representative for all women [144–46; 150–154] unless she is somehow elected to be so [169–70]

Anna’s Pentecostalism

- Feels the presence of the Holy Spirit with her all the time [461–64]
- Links her baptism in the Holy Spirit to her call to ministry (116–20)
- Her Pentecostal experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit did not fit stereotypes of “weird” or “disordered” (83–97)
- The charismatic churches she attended as a teenager operated in the gifts of the Spirit but in a way that wasn’t “weird” or “uncomfortable” (116–34)
- Her first experience was explained and presented in way that was understandable and not “weird” (202–26)
- Her experience of the Holy Spirit is often accompanied by physical sensations (314–16)
- This physical sensation takes place for her instead of affective experiences/feelings (319–22)
- Her experiences with the Holy Spirit have always been ones of comfort and gentleness [475–77; 511–12; 521–22; 534–35; 559–66]
- Sees the Holy Spirit as being feminine in “a lot of ways,” and having a “feminine energy,” [485–87;] though she worries that this will sound weird or “new-age” [486; 491]
- Compares the work/moving of the Holy Spirit to mothering or motherly conduct [495–98; 514]
- She compares the way the Spirit works to the way her own mother raised her [541–47; 551–55]
- Her parents always sought out Spirit-filled churches (423–28)
- Sees Pentecostals as “People of the Spirit” (1142–43)

Anna’s response to the first interview

- When asked if she had anything she would like to discuss/clarify/correct from first interview and her experience of the first interview, Anna stated that she had nothing to bring up and that she “had a good time,” [600–601]

Anna's Narrative Summary

Anna became aware of her calling to ministry at a young age. She relates her calling this way:

So, when I was fourteen almost going into my freshman year somewhere between my sophomore and freshman year sorry eighth grade and freshman year um there was uh we had a church that we had like a sister relationship with in Ghana west Africa and they were building a new church building. And they decided to take a youth team to Africa to Ghana ... I journaled a lot and that's where I started learning that I loved to write. Um and I was praying one day on the porch ... so I'd kind of pulled away cause we were like twenty-four seven with all of these people, and I was sitting quietly on the porch just watching my friends play like soccer or something and I was just kinda talking to the Lord and writing and I said God, if you'd just, God, if you wanted me to give my life to whatever this looks like. If you want me to live empowered to be your witness, what would you want me to do? I just remember him impressing on me that my life was going to take a turn that I didn't think it was going to take.

She later elaborates that God had "impressed upon her" a call to ministry that was a physical sensation that she compares to a "gut check." After having this initial experience with God in Ghana, Anna originally assumed that this calling meant that she would be a missionary, because in her mind that was the only place that women could serve in ministry. As she grew older, she began to realize that she was not called to the mission field, yet there was still a great deal of confusion and feeling like there was a lack of direction from God as to how to fulfill this calling upon her life. As she was repeatedly asking God to give her clearer direction, about midway through her sophomore year she was praying, and she said,

God do you want me to go overseas, do you want me to be a missionary, I remember saying, can you give me some clarity, because I feel like if I'm supposed to do something else, if I'm supposed to be preaching, and that was like the first time I said like am I supposed to be preaching, and it started to become a big thing. Like I loved preaching the word. I loved creating sermons I loved talking to people about God's word, and so I said, if I'm supposed to be preaching, is that what you want me to do, am I studying the right thing.... And so my question was, as I was getting to my sophomore year, my question was, if I'm supposed to preach, I remember the moment I said that word I just felt this, "Yes. You're supposed to preach, and you're supposed to pastor."

As she began to explore pastoral ministry, she held a variety of positions, including youth and associate pastor positions, as well as worship leading and various other ministries. Today, she is a lead pastor of a church plant. During her years of ministry, Anna has experienced both affirmation and gender-based resistance from various sources. Interestingly, the source from which she has received the most gender-based resistance to her pastoral ministry has been at the district level of the AG. Her experience of various districts has been largely negative, though she notes that she has seen some improvement take place, such as in the AG being intentional about using more gender-inclusive language and especially the most recent election of a single woman to the position of General Secretary of the AG. Anna sees this election as a very encouraging sign that “the door may be opening a little bit” for women who desire to be in national leadership in the AG.

Anna has also experienced affirmation of her calling and her ministry, and this was often from her family who were always supportive and willing to help her carry out God’s calling on her life. Her grandmother played an important role in helping her figure out what God’s calling meant for her, perhaps in a role of someone who validated Anna’s inclinations about what her future ministry might mean. She has also experienced some affirmation from people in her districts; she remembers times when pastors went out of their way to introduce themselves to her at district events, so she would not feel left out, and she believes that the people in her current church are there because they want her to be their pastor.

While she has experienced some instances of affirmation within the district level of the AG, she has also experienced a great deal of resistance there as well. She notes that most of the resistance she’s experienced has been from other credentialed ministers who are uncomfortable with her being in pastoral ministry due to her gender. She calls the AG an “Old Boys Club” that

does not always present an accurate picture of the status of female leaders within the fellowship. Though the AG talks about elevating women and working for equality, Anna believes that certain actions, especially at the district level, have served to undermine that. For example, certain districts recently instituted a policy where pastor's spouses who have been in ministry for ten years or longer could be granted full ordination without going through the regular educational or credentialing process. Anna sees this as a mistake, because it grants a parity to (mostly) women who have not learned how to be pastors or how to be members of committees and have no experience in pastoral ministry with people like Anna who have gone through the regular route as far as credentials and education and ministry experience.

Anna also related that she feels a distinct need to respond to resistance, though she has sometimes struggled to know the best way to do this. She reports feeling very angry about the experiences she's had, especially in school and early on in her ministry. Since then, however, she says she's learned that while she needs to "push boundaries and insist on her right to be part of the group," she has found that "conversations are better than shouting." Furthermore, she believes the best way to respond to resistance is through relationship. As an example, she mentioned one specific experience where she had a fellow student in her master's cohort who told her that her gender precluded her from pastoral ministry immediately upon meeting her. While this understandably angered and hurt her, Anna says she did her best to be patient and to continue to engage with him. She says this about her experience:

Yeah, and we became ministry ... I think we had a mutual respect, you know? Um, he, he even asked me after we had finished our masters to sit down and have coffee and tell him about my call. So, we sat down at a Starbucks, and we sat for about three hours, and he just asked me questions about my call. And at the end of it, he said, Um, "You know, I don't know what to do with this." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "The way you described to me your call is exactly the way I felt about being called." I said, "Well that's what the Holy Spirit does." He said, "I know, but I don't

believe that women should be pastors.” And I said, “I know you don’t. But ... [Pause] you aren’t God.” [Laughs]

When it comes to her perspective on the scriptures traditionally used to argue women should not be engaged in pastoral ministry, Anna believes that her response to such arguments is not a defense of herself or her ministry but is instead “teaching the truths of scripture.” In answering these arguments, Anna believes that these passages need to be placed in their proper biblical, cultural, and historical contexts, which she notes is different from today. Furthermore, she mentions that she sees Paul partnering with women leaders, such as Priscilla, which leads her to believe that Paul’s comments in these verses should not be seen as universally applicable. Lastly, she points out that if you look at the entire scriptural account, you see Jesus elevating women, and that the New Testament shows how we are equal through the work of the Holy Spirit; here she takes care to note that the Bible talks about the Holy Spirit being poured out on all flesh, and not just on men.

Anna also notes more than once that she feels a responsibility to improve conditions for other women who are called to ministry, even if it is emotionally difficult or painful for her to do so. She mentions how after experiencing an uncomfortable situation at a district event, she

decided that, I was like well if I’m going to be the only female in the room, then there may be women that come behind me, and I better try to make it a better place for them, and that was my hope, like can I make it a better place for them, you know? Right now I feel as if there is a just a jungle in front of me and I have a machete and I’m just walking trying to figure out what my path is. But hopefully, if some other women come behind me they’ll see a path; they won’t have to get the machete out, you know?

Moreover, Anna sees the responsibility to “widen the door” for other female leaders as a distinct part of her call to ministry, and so she does her best to advocate for other women leaders at every level. This responsibility to be a “trailblazer” for other women is very difficult to carry out, however, because she feels a tremendous sense of group responsibility that she believes is

unfair. She reports being told that she needs to make sure that she does an excellent job when invited to speak or present somewhere, because if she messes it up then another woman will never get another chance. While she no longer believes that it's her responsibility to be perfect, she says it was very difficult early on in ministry and that she would often refuse opportunities out of fear of "messaging it up" for other women. Lastly, though she sees the responsibility to "widen the doorway" for other women, she sees this as difficult and, in some way, confusing, because she thinks it is unfair to be made a representative of all women unless she is somehow elected to be.

At the end of the first interview, Anna was asked if there was anything else she would like to add about any of the subjects discussed. In response, Anna said:

I think for me, specifically with the AG, and like our, like our actual denomination as a whole, [sigh] I've seen change, and I've heard language change, you know? The way we talk about things ... you know, I've gone through those years and now it's the pastor and their spouse. And those things matter! Those changes matter and I'm happy it's happening, but we haven't come as far as we think we have.

The reason Anna believes the AG "hasn't come as far as [it] thinks [it] has," is because while there has been some progress made in terms of leadership and steps made by the national AG leadership, there are still too many people who publicly teach against women in ministry, and nothing is done to combat that. She mentions that if someone was in an AG church preaching against something like the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence,

Like no one would be ok with that. But we're totally fine with pastors teaching contrary to women, um, women in ministry. And that's the piece that's not ok to me still. Like whole churches where they don't allow women to do anything except for kids, and nursery. That's the piece that's not ok to me still.

At the end of the second interview, participants were asked to summarize their lived experience as female lead pastors in the AG. This gave them an opportunity to offer a detailed exposition of their own understanding of their lived experience. Anna responded by

characterizing her experience as a female lead pastor in the AG as being in a “hall of mirrors,” where the mirrors distort things and “make it feel like you are in a maze.” Furthermore, this process of being in funhouse “makes you look weird and makes you feel weird about yourself and sometimes you laugh at it and sometimes you're like, Hmm ... I don't know if I like that.”

She says,

And I feel I feel like sometimes I feel like that is kind of how it is being a female pastor in the Assemblies. You know you walk into you walk into a room and you think this is who I am. This is what I look like, and then you're faced with other people and they say oh no that's not what you should be or that's how you should be. That's not what you should look like. That's how you should conduct yourself. Go this way. And so you start to try to go that way and then there's another mirror that says you shouldn't do that you shouldn't be this you should be this other thing. So, go this way. And eventually you figure it out and you see your way out and you at the end of it go OK I got through, you know? And I don't know if I don't know if I'm through. You know I'm not through, but I feel like mirrors or at least starting to line up a little bit more and I look a little bit more like myself and I'm able to be a little bit more like myself, you know?

Jenny: Individual Themes and Narrative Summary

Jenny is in her sixties, married, and has a Master of Divinity degree. She pastors a church of around 300 people. Jenny has been very involved in the church from a very young age. She says that she was at the church “every time the doors were open” and Sunday was her favorite day of the week because church was her favorite thing. Moreover, her parents started their own store-front church when she was young and her involvement in this church played an important part in her beginning to realize her own calling to ministry. A more detailed narrative summary will be offered after the thematic analysis of her interview questions, below.

Jenny’s Individual Themes

The following themes were identified in Jenny’s lived experience as a female lead pastor in the AG:

Jenny's Calling

- Felt the call of God on her life at age 19. She experienced this through her heavy involvement in her church (84–96)
- Her calling was affirmed by a “general prophetic word” given during a Sunday service by her grandmother (90–96)
- Her Grandmother played an important role in validating her call throughout her early years in seminary (270–79; 289–300; 304–06)
- This calling required her to “surrender all of her life” (126)
- Her calling had an initial period of confusion and lack of direction from God as to specifics (226–31; 260–66; 363–68)
- Her introverted nature made the idea of pastoral ministry difficult to accept (18–20; 51–57; 928–32)
- Her call required her to pursue Christian education at the graduate level (221–22)
- Her call became strengthened throughout her educational and seminary experience (226–28)
- The death of her father impelled her to pursue her calling to ministry, specifically through seminary education (372–81)
- Her success in academics affirmed her calling was from God (412–15)
- She initially thought this meant her role would be that of an associate pastor (458–61)
- Another initial possibility was that she would have to be a missionary because that was the only place she saw women leaders (100–101)
- She did not think this was right for her (105–106)
- Resistance from her professor solidified her call to pastoral ministry (465–71)
- Her calling and her effectiveness in ministry is an answer to resistance (465–71; 857–69; 873–78; 921–24; 1389–94; 1510–16) [730–31]

Jenny's has had negative experiences with the “culture” of the AG

- Professor told her the AG was never going to give her a church (458–61)
- Many women who desired to be pastors had difficult credentialing interviews (543–45)
- There are systemic things within the AG that keep young people and women from moving forward (1389–94)
- Was the only female district level leader for a very long time; leadership lacked female representation (1423–39)
- One common early experience was condescension or patronizing behavior from male leaders (512–18)
- The AG was an “Old Boys Club” (1058–66)

She has seen improvement in the way the AG treats female pastors

- Districts have begun to use gender-inclusive language (1464–70)
- Some pastors who were initially against women in ministry have changed their minds (496–99)
- When her superintendent found out that credentialing committees were giving more difficult interviews to women he insisted it change (543–49)

- Despite some initial hesitance, her church decided Jenny could be their lead pastor (814–831)
- Upon being elected a presbyter, people were very supportive (1120–23)
- Her being in the room changed the dynamic (for the better) when dealing with important issues (1127–51)
- Her superintendent utilized her on many committees and district leadership positions because of her dependability and skillset and not because she was the “token” woman (1226–32; 1416–19)
- The Executive Presbytery’s inclusion of female presbyters has been an improvement from the national office (1412–15)
- Has seen resistance lessen over time, especially from Millennials [127–31]
- Former General Superintendent George Wood worked to improve things for women in ministry [249]
- Current General Superintendent Doug Clay has also worked to improve things for women in the AG [257–58]
- Sees the appointment of a single woman to the position of General Secretary as a sign of improvement [258–62; 266–69; 273–75]

Jenny has experienced affirmation of her pastoral ministry

- After Jenny submitted her name to take over the lead pastor role at her church, the board saw her as called to the role (827–31)
- The church voted her in with only 1 or 2 people against (835–38)
- There have been some people who have joined her church because Jenny was a woman [30–36]
- Emphasizes that leaders need to be intentional about affirming and advocating for women in ministry in the AG [720–26; 730–37]

Jenny has experienced advocacy from male leaders in the AG

- Her credentialing committee only had one holdout, and the other four made a point of supporting her (529–33)
- She was elected presbyter because two male pastors submitted her name for consideration and lobbied for her election (Though she notes they were “troublemakers,”) (1006–12)
- Her district superintendent saw her strengths and gifting and utilized her in roles in which she was most effective (1226–32)
- Her current superintendent is doing everything he can to “get women into the pastorate” (1358–59; 1479–88)
- The advocacy in her district has changed her perspective about female ministers in the AG (1398–1402)
- She has benefited from having district leadership that supported her (1461–1470)
- Her district superintendent provided a budget for creating a women in ministry network (1461–70)
- Her first superintendent was supportive of women in ministry; her second superintendent was advocating women in ministry and this is an important distinction (1499–1516)

Emphasizes the importance of female leaders in the history of the AG

- Many of the churches in the early days of the AG were planted by women (485–87; 1337–42)
- The AG has not done a good job of remembering its history regarding women’s important role in its foundational days (1322–33)
- The desire of the AG to “legitimize” itself through things like its membership in the NEA cause the AG to compromise its values when it comes to female pastors (1337–42)
- Female pastors lost ground in the 1960’s–1980’s (1351–54)

Church has always been a central part of her life

- Was at the church “every time the doors were open” (11–14)
- Sunday was her favorite day and church was her favorite thing (18–22; 89–92)
- Her parents started a church in their home in which she was constantly involved (36–41)

Education plays a central role in Jenny’s story

- Always excelled at school (91–92)
- After initially going to a state university, she realized she needed to change to a Christian university (165–68; 172–73)
- Her transfer to a Christian college was divinely directed (186–88)
- Her switch to majoring in Biblical Studies strengthened her calling (186–88)
- Some of the tougher requirements, such as biblical languages, were not difficult (247–51)
- Her grandmother’s affirmation of her calling stood out because she never went to High school and had no concept of what college was or what it entailed (270–79; 289–300; 304–06)
- Receiving A’s in classes acted as an affirmation of her calling (330–35; 339–41)
- Having a bachelor’s degree is important (335–59)
- She was “geared towards the more difficult classes” (412–15)
- Her education helped her to not be intimidated when dealing with difficult situations when she was a presbyter (537–39)
- Her education “spoke volumes” in these types of situations (1167–70) [301–03]
- When she was passed over for a position at her first church, it seemed more unfair because the candidate chosen instead of her had no education (613–17)
- Her education prepared her to “handle the text and preach the word” by giving her “better tools” [284–85; 289–97; 320; 325–26]
- Education created more career/ministry opportunities for her [307–10]

Hard work is one of the most important qualities of a leader

- Maintained a job at a local company the entire time she was in Seminary (385–89)
- Says working hard is “all she does” (445–46)
- Her practical work ethic enabled her to complete difficult tasks, such as dealing with church financial mismanagement without difficulty (1200–1222)

- Her superintendent utilized her on many committees and district leadership positions because of her dependability and skillset (1226–32)

Emphasizes the importance of being in a lead role in the church

- Applied for her first lead pastor position because she believed she could do a better job than any of the candidates that came to her church (663–71; 687–92)
- Her husband having a full-time job means that she can devote herself to lead the church and avoids any confusion about whether she or her husband is in charge (1423–439)

Her marriage to her husband is an important part of her success in ministry

- Her husband’s full-time job provides a steady income, so she doesn’t have to worry about supporting the family financially (1437–39)
- The fact that her husband is not in vocational ministry means that there is no confusion about who is in charge when it comes to the church and church matters (1437–39)

One of the difficulties for female pastors is a lack of mentors

- She had no mentor when trying to figure out what her calling meant (481–87)
- The first time she experienced a mentoring relationship from a lead pastor was notable and important because she had never experienced it before (715–21)
- There is a general lack of mentors for female pastors [230]
- Tries to mentor other women as much as she can [198–203; 207–20]

Sees her lack of ability to network as a detriment to her ministry

- She initially did not understand how to network (440–41; 533–54; 940–43)
- Men are better natural networkers than women (440–41)
- Created a women in ministry network to try and address this deficiency (971–96)
- One of the main things this network pushes is that female pastors need to attend events and engage in networking (1423–28)
- Lack of ability to network created “holes in her pastoral leadership” (990–91)
- Is often an answer to gender-based resistance (1155–63; 1510–16)

Pragmatism is very important to life and leadership

- Her father was very pragmatic and insisted she have skills that would allow her to get a job (192–93; 207–08; 212–22)
- While she was not opposed to marriage in anyway, she did not view it as something to do so “someone else could take care of her” (197–203)
- Her pragmatic approach assisted her be successful in the business world (355–359; 385–389)
- Her pragmatic approach to life allowed her to work out a compromise with her first pastor she worked for that avoided potential gender-related problems relating to her being in a

ministry position (706–711)

Sees herself as a Rebel

- Refused to follow the prescribed path for women who wanted to be in ministry (Christian Education) and pursued biblical studies instead (241–43; 247–49)

Has experienced gender-based resistance while pursuing her call to pastoral ministry

- Her first pastor let her do some things at church but was not comfortable with her doing other things (428–34)
- Her professor insisted the AG would not give her a church due to her gender (450–61)
- The board at the church where she accepted her first lead pastor position was initially unsure if a woman could be their pastor (816–17)
- One man in her church is against the idea of women in pastoral roles, though he now says she's the best pastor he's ever had (873–78)
- One member of her credentialing committee was opposed to giving her full credentials due to her gender (529–33)
- One of her pastors hired a less-qualified and less educated male candidate instead of Jenny for the job she had already been doing because he believed he could not hire a woman (568–74; 585)
- Resistance sometimes took the form of lack of opportunity for pastoral positions (458–61; 589–11)
- Some district officials/members were opposed to her nomination and election as Presbyter (1103–05)
- Believes a lack of female pastors creates resistance because it means there are no models for aspiring female ministers [15; 19; 28–30; 35–36]
- Believes visitors to her church sometimes don't return because the pastor is a woman [48–49]
- Has seen resistance lessen over time, especially from Millennials [127–31] but believes it hasn't changed much with other generations [135]
- Believes that women who refuse positions of leadership will not be asked again [184–91; 734–38; 748–51; 755]

Perspective on Scriptures traditionally used argue women should not be in pastoral ministry

- No one has asked her about those scriptures in approximately 15 years (1305)
- These scriptures need to be balanced with the rest of the scriptural account (1277)
- Context is important and is not the same as today (1292–96)
- We don't fully know or understand the context in which some of these scriptures were written (1266–77)
- She did have to wrestle with this issue, especially early on in her ministry (1277–84)
- Priscilla is an example of a female leader in the New Testament, and her co-ministry with Paul acts as a precedent for women in ministry today (1271–73)

Sees herself as a trailblazer who is responsible to improve things for other/future women leaders and pastors

- Felt a responsibility to accept the Presbyter position even though she was very busy and had many other obligations (1006–26; 1035–37; 1100–1103)
- She saw her election as an opportunity to change things for women (1058)
- Her experiences have impelled her to seek out and encourage other women to pursue positions of leadership (1474–75)
- Wants to celebrate women who are ordained or in ministry [149–55]
- Has accepted visible positions of leadership to promote visibility of a woman in leadership [155–58; 169–73; 177180]
- Encourages other women to say yes when asked to serve/lead [184–85]
- Tries to mentor other female leaders as much as she can [198–203; 207–20]
- Pushes female credential applicants to apply for the highest level of licensure possible [236–38; 242–43]
- Has worked to combat stereotypes [655–57; 664–65; 672–80; 684–93]
- People have called her a pioneer, and while she has struggled to accept that about herself, she believes that her visibility as a female leader has helped bring about positive change [658–63; 697–99]

Jenny's gender affects how she ministers to her congregation

- Tries not to put stereotypes on people [70–72]
- Does her best to “reach across gender lines” in her sermon illustrations [77–78; 83–84]
- Her gender does not stop her from visiting people who are sick [89–97] though with home visits she does sometimes send male leadership [93–97]

Jenny's Pentecostalism

- Emphasizes the experience of the Holy Spirit, especially through the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit (60–61; 84–85; 522–25; 529–33; 655–760)
- Often mentions speaking a “word of wisdom” (235–37; 465–67) [515–18]
- Being comfortable in the expression of the gifts of the Spirit made her more effective in pastoral ministry (589–605; 725–32)
- Her response to doctrinal issues demonstrates her “classical Pentecostal core” (1147–57)
- The “evangelicalization” of the AG and its desire to be seen as “legitimate” has dampened its experience of the Spirit (1329–42)
- Believes her Pentecostalism is “part of her entire Christian development” [338–40] and is “covers everything in terms of her ministry” [374–81]
- The churches her church as planted/parented place the same importance on the gifts of the Spirit and their use [381–83; 389–405]
- Operated in the gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, interpretation, and prophecy since she was 16 years old [341–42]
- Operating in the gifts of the Spirit was normative and expected [351–58]
- The gifts of the Spirit should always be guided by love [362–70]
- One of the main ways that the gifts of the Spirit are evident in Jenny's ministry is in her

pastoral counseling, where she will have prophetic insights/Words of Wisdom about the people she is counseling [415–20; 429–31; 442–50; 454–57; 461–65; 484–93; 497–500]

- An important part of being a Pentecostal is being sensitive to the “flow of the Spirit,” [546–53; 556–66; 588–91; 595–97]²
- The gifts of the Spirit should never “crowd out the Word,” [575; 579; 583–84]

Response to the first interview

- After reading the transcript of the first interview, she felt like she talked too much [623–24]

Jenny’s summary of her lived experience of being a female lead pastor in the AG

- Maintains that her identity is not solely wrapped up in her gender [639–40; 703–707]
- Believes that a lack of mentors is the common experience of female pastors in the AG [644–47]
- Believes that a lack of opportunities exists for anyone out of the norm, and especially for women [648–49]
- Has experienced a great deal of affirmation and support from the leadership in her location/district [650–55]
- Has worked to combat stereotypes [655–57; 664–65; 672–80; 684–93]
- People have called her a pioneer, and while she has struggled to accept that about herself, she believes that her visibility as a female leader has helped bring about positive change [658–63; 697–99]
- Believes that women who refuse positions of leadership will not be asked again, and so it is imperative for women to “show up” [184–91; 734–38; 748–51; 755]

Jenny’s Narrative Summary

Jenny felt the call of God on her life at the age of nineteen years, and this calling was affirmed by a “general prophetic word” that was given by her grandmother in a Sunday worship service. This calling required her to “surrender all of her life” to whatever God would have her do. However, there was initially a great deal of confusion as she tried to figure out what God had in mind for her life and future ministry. Her introverted nature made the idea of pastoral ministry difficult for her to accept, and she also mentioned that the fact that she only saw women serving on the mission field made her wonder if that was what God might have in store for her. She also wondered if God might place her in an associate pastor role.

² See below in Jenny’s narrative summary for an explanation of what she means by the “flow of the Spirit.”

Education plays a central part of Jenny's experiences, and this is very evident in her call narrative. She believed her calling required her to pursue graduate education at a seminary in her area. Her father's death was also involved in pushing her to pursue this direction. She believes the educational success she experienced while in seminary was an important affirmation of her call to ministry. Jenny never struggled with even the most difficult of classes, and she says this was an important way of knowing she was doing her best to follow and figure out God's will for her life. Perhaps the best example of how education played a central role in pushing her towards pastoral ministry is contained in a conversation she had with her grandmother during her second semester at seminary. During this time, she was at the point where she had to declare a major, and there was some confusion on her part as to whether she should choose to major in English Bible, which had no language requirements, or Biblical Studies, which required Greek and Hebrew. She recounts her conversation with her grandmother this way:

I called her up and I tried to explain to her you know Grandma this is what's going on if I major in Old Testament. Then I get it in a minor New Testament. I got to take Hebrew and Greek and that course of programs is going to keep me here another additional year, so a total of three years. And I say I don't know what to do if I major in the English Bible I can be done. You know the end of next year. And and she doesn't have any concept of what college is about none whatsoever no one ever you know not one of her grandkids the closest we got was my brother in law who who was graduated from seminary because he was going into the chaplaincy. And um I explained it to her and she said "Well Jenny," she goes "I can tell you," in her Arkansas way. "I don't know. I don't know nothing about about college and university but I know this: that God could teach you the English Bible on your knees. But he had to send you to university to learn the other."

Jenny sees her education as being so important to her ministry for two reasons. First, she believes it gives her the "tools" she needs to better handle the text and preach the word, or, as she says, to "rightly divide the word of truth." She talked about how she thinks that biblical knowledge is so important that she wryly noted that she needs to take care when preparing Bible studies because she sometimes becomes "too bogged down in all of the weeds, that nobody else

in my church is going to care about.” Second, Jenny believes that her education helped people recognize her qualifications for leadership and acknowledge that she was qualified and prepared to be in the pastoral role. In this way she believes her education helped “open the door a little more,” both in terms of people’s acceptance of her and in helping her find ministry positions.

One other important event took place in her seminary experience that really helped focus her calling into the direction of pastoral ministry. During a bible class, one of her professors was trying to push her into chaplaincy because he told her “The AG is never going to give you a church” due to her gender. Jenny’s response is very important to her call narrative:

And I looked at him and I spoke a word of wisdom. It was a word of wisdom back to myself and I didn't know it. And I said well it's a good thing that I'm not depending on the AG to give me a church to pastor. And yeah I became that was the moment in which I knew I was called to be a pastor.

During her education and after completing it, Jenny held a variety of pastoral positions, though at this point they were associate pastor positions of various types. During these positions, Jenny experienced a mixture of affirmation of her pastoral ministry and many emotionally difficult times of gender-based resistance. One example of the type of gender-based resistance she experienced was when the church she was in needed to hire an associate pastor for a job she had already been carrying out for quite some time. They decided to hire a man who had less training and fewer credentials than Jenny. Naturally she was quite upset about this and so she confronted her pastor about it.

And so I went to him and I said and he didn't even tell me. They told me and I went to him. I said how can you do this? I'm doing the job. You know I'm preparing for ministry. How can you do this. And he goes he says well I, I you know I just can't have a woman. It just no one's going to hire you if it's only you on staff because you're a woman and as a man it's just not safe, you know, for me to work with a woman ... And he is crying and he saying I know it's not right [pause] but it's the way it is.

Jenny left this church after this event and she ended up back at the church her parents had

started so long ago. This church was in-between pastors and had a few people who were filling in or pastoring on a type of interim basis. During this process, candidates came to submit their name for consideration, and Jenny remembers thinking that she could do a better job than the people who were candidating. So, after prayer and consideration, she decided to submit her name and ask the board if she could be their pastor. The board seems to have been initially surprised by this, wondering if it is right for a woman, and Jenny specifically, to be their pastor, but they decided this was the right direction and made Jenny their lead pastor.

Regarding her experience with the AG fellowship, Jenny has had a mixed record of both affirmation/advocacy and gender-based resistance. A good example of this mixed experience is her credentialing interview, wherein four out of five members of the credentialing committee were very supportive of her, while one member was against approving her for credentials due to her gender. He was out-voted and she received her credentials at that point. Another example of affirmation or advocacy she has experienced is when she was elected a district presbyter, though this surprised many people in her district (and Jenny as well). She notes that she has benefitted from district superintendents who gave her duties to perform that fit her unique giftings and personality, and she also received funds from the district to form a Women in Ministry Network. Her first superintendent was supportive of women in ministry, which was beneficial, but her second superintendent advocated for women in ministry, which she says was even better. In the second interview, she also mentioned that she believes there have been some people who have joined her church because she is a woman.

She has also experienced some gender-based resistance to her pastoral ministry. In addition to the events related above, she also currently has a member in her church who is entirely against women in pastoral roles, and he has made this very clear to Jenny. However, he also keeps

attending and now calls her the “best pastor he’s ever had,” so Jenny has seen a great deal of improvement in the treatment she’s received. In the second interview, Jenny was asked to offer her perspective on the resistance she’s experienced, and she said one of the most harmful forms of resistance she sees is the lack of female pastors itself. It is her opinion that this lack of female pastors results in there being too few role models for women who might feel called to ministry. Indeed, the theme of a lack of mentors for female pastors was something that came up repeatedly in Jenny’s interviews. In response, Jenny has gone out of her way to try her hardest to always offer mentoring and guidance to any female leaders/pastors she encounters.

While Jenny admits that she has experiences plenty of gender-based resistance, her account is also the most positive of the three concerning the way that the AG treats women leaders. She acknowledges a great deal of difficulty and painful experiences, but she has also seen a great deal of improvement. She also believes she has really benefitted from leaders who have “sheltered” her from some of the harsher criticisms or attacks.

When it comes to her perspective on the scriptures traditionally used to argue women should not be in a place of pastoral leadership, she uses the concepts of balance and context to understand those scriptures. She notes that anything Paul says needs to be balanced with the rest of scripture, which also has positive things to say about women leaders, such as Priscilla, whose co-ministry with Paul serves as a precedent for women in ministry today. She also believes that we don’t fully understand the context of some of those passages, and she thinks it is very different from today’s. As a result, she is comfortable with her role and no longer questions if it is appropriate for her to be in pastoral ministry. Interestingly, she told me that no one has asked her about those scriptures in approximately fifteen years.

Another theme that saturated Jenny’s accounts is that of being what I have termed a

“trailblazer.” She admits to being somewhat uncomfortable with this idea, but she acknowledges that she is a kind of pioneer simply by being a female lead pastor in the AG, and that being this type of visible leader has helped bring about positive change. She says,

Um and I think if you were, I hate to talk about myself, but the thing that people who have been around me for a long time and around me in leadership. I mean right now I'm at the age, they say, "You've been such a pioneer in [location]." And I'm like when did I pioneer? I felt like for ten years I didn't know what I was doing in pastoring. And I learned so much from other people. But I think what they are talk/speaking of is that the way I carry and hold myself within the context of what was all male dominated, pretty much field [Laughs].

Second, and perhaps more importantly for her, she also believes she is called to use her unique role to help improve things for other women who feel a call to ministry in the AG. She has done this by combatting stereotypes, encouraging other women to always say yes when asked to lead, pushing women to apply for the highest level of licensure possible,³ and creating networks for women in ministry.

The other element that plays a central part in Jenny's lived experience is her understanding of her Pentecostal faith and how that presents itself in her ministry. Naturally, she had a great deal to say about this over the course of the two interviews. This will be examined in detail, below, in the section on Pentecostalism and how it appears in each of the three accounts.

³ The Assemblies of God uses a three-tiered process of ministerial credentials. The first level is Certified Minister, which involves the close supervision and mentoring of the certified minister by an experienced and ordained minister. The next step is licensure, which is for those who have displayed a “clear evidence of a divine call, character and preparation suitable for that calling, practical ministry experience, and an evident purpose to devote one’s life in service to the proclamation of the gospel. The last stage of ministerial credentials in the Assemblies of God is Ordination, which is for “those who give proof of their call and whose mature ministry qualifies them for a wide range of leadership responsibilities in full-time gospel ministries. Applicants must be at least 23 years of age, have held a ministries license, and have been engaged in active work as a pastor, evangelist, or some other recognized and proven full-time ministry for 2 full consecutive years immediately prior to ordination.” Therefore, Jenny’s insistence of women becoming ordained rather than just licensure is because she believes it is necessary for women to not just be given licensure, which would demonstrate they have a divine calling, but to demonstrate “proof” of this divine calling by receiving ordination.

The Assemblies of God, “Pentecostal Ministry and Ordination,” Assemblies of God Beliefs, accessed November 11, 2018, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Topics-Index/Pentecostal-Ministry-and-Ordination>.

At the end of the second interview, participants were asked to summarize their lived experience as female lead pastors in the AG. For Jenny, this question provoked a very nuanced answer. First, Jenny was quick to point out that her identity is not solely wrapped up in her gender; while her gender is an important part of her experience, she prefers to see it more holistically. In her words, “I don't know if I can summarize it representing myself merely as a female because I don't know. Um my identity is not completely wrapped up in that. So, I would have to summarize it as Jenny and the AG.”

Immediately after this, Jenny explains that one of the things that seems to be common to all women leaders is a lack of mentors – echoing a theme that came up many times during both interviews. For Jenny, a lack of mentors for female leaders is a distinct and very problematic reality for female pastors/leaders in the AG. However, she was also emphatic about the fact that she has seen this improve in her own district/geographical location. She believes she has benefitted from leadership that seeks to affirm and advocate for women in ministry, and for her this makes a huge difference. Indeed, when asked if she had anything else she'd like to talk about at the end of the second interview, the last things that Jenny brings up is that one of the biggest needs for women in ministry in the AG is the need for advocacy on their behalf.

Leaders have to be intentional about affirming and advocating for women in ministry. Just as they would for minorities, minorities in places of leadership. That it it's not going to just happen that we have to be very intentional. But once you're intentional then you'll begin to see a perpetuation because people are not going to replicate what they do not see and if they don't see women in a leadership role they're not going to replicate that. Young women aren't going to feel called. Or they're not going to feel able to follow their calling or um people are not going to affirm or churches won't call women.

Mary: Individual Themes and Narrative Summary

Mary is in her late thirties, married, and holds a graduate degree. She pastors a church plant of approximately thirty people in an urban context. Mary experienced her call to ministry at the

age of twenty-seven, which she notes is somewhat later in life than some who experience a call to ministry. A more detailed narrative summary will be offered after the thematic analysis of her interview responses, below.

Mary's Individual Themes

The following themes were identified in Mary's lived experience as a female lead pastor in the AG:

Mary's Calling

- Experienced later in life (9–12)
- God told her that her call was to pastoral ministry (18–20)
- This was a new way of thinking about a long-held concern for people's spiritual wellbeing (24–25)
- When she told her lead pastor this, she was made an associate pastor at her church right away and she was able to preach, lead worship, train leaders and run discipleship programs (42–44; 62–68)
- None of the resistance she's received has stopped her from fulfilling her calling, it has just made it more difficult (986–87)

Mary's experience of the culture of the AG has been mixed — both positive and negative

- Often feels left out at district events where she was not acknowledged (620–22)
- Was often assumed to be another pastor's wife (623–36; 790–99; 820–24)
- District events often lacked any recognition of the fact that there were any female pastors at all (785–86; 813–16; 803–809; 828–32; 836–48; 967–71)
- Many of the leaders in her district have been supportive of her ministry and "allies" to her (437–39)
- District officials including district presbyters and superintendent were excited about a female church planter and have worked closely with her (649–55; 779–81)
- That national AG leadership is aware of this problem and working on it (815–16)
- Her ordination interview was an odd experience where the committee gave her a condescending lecture about how her husband needed to be on board with her plans to be a pastor (318–24; 328–33)
- When at a church planter's training session, the person leading the group was condescending and patronizing (918–53)
- Mary sees a great disparity between what the AG says about women leaders and what their culture promotes [287–99]
- Believes that women are often not taken seriously in the AG [308–25]

- Summarizes her experience as a female pastor in the AG as “very challenging” [819–20] yet “rewarding,” [824–25]
- She explains that it is challenging due to her gender because of feelings of being left out, misunderstood, mischaracterized, patronized [839–51]
- The most rewarding part of her experience is being a “pioneer” [859–918]
- Has been told that there are people in district leadership that are against women in ministry [944–47]
- Has recently been able to have conversations with some in national/district leadership about her experiences of being a female lead pastor in the AG, and her comments were “well-received” [1002–06]

Mary sees herself as a pioneer

- Has spearheaded a credentialed Women in Ministry network [868–72; 890–94]
- Invited to be part of interviews for candidates seeking ministerial credentials [877–83] and leading ordination ceremonies [881–86]
- Believes being a pioneer results in “more eyes on her” [894; 905–06; 940–47]
- Having more eyes on her creates an opportunity for there to be misunderstandings and misinterpretation [968–69]
- Has had female pastors she does not know reach out to her to thank her for her encouragement and example [898–902]
- Thinks that being a pioneer is “kind of fun” [911]
- Being a pioneer creates opportunities to have conversations that are culture-setting/altering [915–18]

Mary has experienced a great deal of emotional difficulty in fulfilling her calling to pastoral ministry

- Mary had many emotionally painful experiences during her time as an associate pastor (92–96; 151–57; 257–75; 755–65) [32–34; 49–52]
- She often felt very misunderstood (84–88; 123–26; 123–38) [222–24; 390–92; 839–51]
- These experiences have taught her not to be afraid of “crossing pain lines” with people and not being afraid of needed confrontation [110–15; 120–36; 140–41]

Mary has often felt like an outsider in her pastoral ministry

- Her lead pastor was hesitant to meet with her in public due to fears of an inappropriate appearance (498–501; 505–13)
- She eventually had to start driving by herself to events because male leaders did not want to drive alone with her (552–56)
- The “homogeneity of teams” has often resulted in feelings of not belonging (561–70)
- This feeling of being an outsider has caused her to seek diversity in her church now that she is the lead pastor (466–69; 561–65)

She often experienced feelings of inadequacy or insecurity

- Her lack of credentials/experience made her initial days of ministry difficult (32–34)
- Initially felt very insecure and unsure of her place (108–13)
- These feelings often displayed themselves in a lack of confidence in herself (610; 620–27; 631–36)

Sometimes Mary’s gender is an asset to her pastoral ministry

- In Mary’s location diversity is considered a benefit (425–26)
- This often helps her connect with the unchurched (430–33)
- Mary’s experiences as a female pastor have helped her develop empathy for minorities (461–62; 466–69) [182–86; 191–92]
- It sometimes allows her to have difficult conversations, though she says this is not always 100% due to gender; sometimes personality and gifting plays a greater role (593–96)

Being in the role of lead pastor has improved many things for Mary

- Results in less “drama” than you experience as an associate pastor (390–91; 395–97; 401–03)
- Being in the lead role allows her to set the culture of her church (407–10)
- Being the lead pastor creates a great deal of freedom [15–22]
- Allows her to not have to worry about modulating her responses to “almost everything” [27–40; 58–63; 67; 72–73]
- The small size of her church makes it less likely for these kinds of difficult situations to arise [85–88]
- Being lead pastor gives her the power to “shape the culture” of her church and prevent people from acting in threatening or aggressive ways [96–102]
- Sees the recent election of a single woman to the office of General Secretary is a definite sign of improvement [848–58]

Mary has seen some improvement in the way female pastors are treated/received in the AG

- Her lead pastor was very supportive of her working into a lead pastor role and lobbied the board on her behalf (249–53; 286–90)
- Has received affirmation from her district and other pastors (614–16)
- While she has experienced many negative things, she does think people are “growing and maturing” (631–32)
- One of the main sources of improvement was her status as a church planter (631–41; 649–55)
- People who have been against her pastoral role due to her gender have partially or completely changed their minds (732–51)
- She has seen her district start to do a better job in the last few years about being more inclusive (836–48)

Mary has experienced affirmation as a lead pastor

- Her lead pastor was very supportive of her working into a lead pastor role and lobbied the board on her behalf (249–53; 286–90)
- Many of the leaders in her district have been supportive of her ministry and “allies” (437–39)

Mary’s gender sometimes provoked feelings of unease and pushback from male leaders

- The topic of women leading in the church “pushed on some sensitive places” in male leaders in her church (166–72)
- Mary’s suggestions at leadership meetings sometimes seemed to be taken as threatening and “disempowering” (197–21)
- Board members were resistant to her planting a church close by and said it was “just a hobby for her.” (286–96)

There has been a distinct yet unmet need for mentors and networking in Mary’s ministry

- Mary and her lead pastor initially experienced a lack of a mentoring relationship because her lead pastor was concerned about the appearance of him having a close mentoring relationship with a woman much younger than him (493–513)
- A lack of mentors also leads to a lack of opportunity to network with and learn from other pastors (561–65)
- This led her to form a network for women in ministry (803–09) [868–73]
- The process of learning to network with other pastors took her much longer than it did for male pastors (631–36)

Mary has faced many kinds of gender-based resistance to her pastoral ministry

- Some male leaders would make unfounded assumptions about innocuous things Mary said and make a major issue out of them (123–38; 161–62) [36–37]
- These issues sometimes caused her to be accused of having a “feminist agenda” (117–19; 134–38; 176–78) [216–18; 262–63; 841]
- Sometimes felt “ganged up on” (167–68)
- Staff meetings often felt “unsafe” [44–45]
- She has often felt like some of the resistance she has experienced would never have happened to a male leader who did the same thing(s) (108–13; 176–78; 197–221; 314–18; 328–37; 346–51; 943–51)
- She has experienced people making disparaging comments about her assumed political opinions and voting patterns based solely on her gender (729–32)
- Her blog posts have received comments/responses that were disagreeing with the idea that women should be pastors (742–51)
- She thinks that visitors to her church sometimes don’t return because the pastor is a woman (414–15; 453–54)
- Resistance sometimes takes the form of sexual objectification of women (861–76) [358–67; 378–86]

- Still trying to figure out how to respond to resistance [205–13] though she believes relationships might be a key part of responding [229–32; 877–79]
- “Frets” about how to respond to resistance because she worries about being misunderstood [282–83; 303–07]
- Resistance has created a distinct sense of ambivalence towards involvement in the AG [213–18; 225–28; 979–86]
- Felt a sense of “conviction” from God (in the sense that it was something that needed to change) about her ambivalence [233–45]
- In response to this feeling of conviction, Mary reached out to various officials and ministries and informed them of her willingness to serve in any way, and this has created opportunities for her to talk about her experiences as a female lead pastor [249–58; 269–78]
- Has often felt patronized by people in the AG [331–39]
- The resistance she has experienced has given her “thicker skin” [350–51; 364–70; 396–98]

Mary’s Perspective on scriptures traditionally used to argue women should not be in pastoral ministry

- These scriptures need to be balanced with the rest of scripture, which portrays women leaders in a positive light (720–24)
- Priscilla and Junia are examples of such female leaders (696–99)
- Junia was originally translated as “Junias” by bible translators due to misogyny (709–12)
- These scriptures need to be read in proper cultural and historical context, which is different from today (683–92)

Women sometimes react negatively to women in roles of pastoral leadership

- Women who were angling for power or influence would sometimes try to manipulate Mary in ways they would not do with the (male) lead pastor (1008–16)
- Wonders if a future study could be done to assess how women respond to healthy female pastoral leadership (1028–32)
- Some women saw Mary as a “softer presence” they could more easily manipulate (1077–89)

Mary’s Pentecostalism

- Mentions the leading of the Holy Spirit and how a leader should be sensitive to the Spirit’s guidance (918–22)
- Has an “ever-deepening” sense of needing to be “rooted and in intimacy with the Holy Spirit” [421–23; 525–27]
- Says her church may not look “obviously Pentecostal” [427–28; 447–48]
- Her experiences with the Trinity and her understanding of scripture are what causes her to be Pentecostal [432–35; 520–21]
- Wanted to experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit from an early age [443–45]
- One of the primary ways Mary functions in the gifts of the Spirit is through prophetic dreams [445–66; 470–523; 626–34], which happen frequently [564–67]
- Initially, Mary had a lot of trouble sharing these dreams with others because she lacked

confidence [581–84]

- Over time, these dreams have provided direction and guidance for Mary and for others [470–79], reassurance in the face of difficulty [488–95], confidence in ministry [508–11; 591–92; 620–22; 654–55], and intimacy with the Holy Spirit [525–29]
- Has a type of loose process for determining if dreams are prophetic or not [588–90]
- The dreams have become more specific in the last 3–5 years [596–616]
- Dreams that have spoken or written words in them are usually much more specific and clearly from God [638–42]
- Has had physical experiences of the Holy Spirit, including feeling “drunk in the Spirit,” and had “gold dust” appear on her body [518–19]

Mary’s Response to first Interview

- Stated that she felt sad when she read the transcript of the first interview [671–73] because it reminded her of the pain of the experiences she was describing [682–86; 728–29]
- Reflecting on the experiences described in the first interview brought up feelings of shame [695–97]
- Reflection also brought tears to her eyes [709–13]
- She wishes many of the painful experiences hadn’t happened [738]
- Worried about people being able to recognize her from the events described [748–57]
- Asked for one detail from the first transcript to be changed due to a misunderstanding on the part of the researcher (This was fixed in the transcript of the first interview) [779–81]
- Appreciates the opportunity to be candid about her experiences [796–800]

Mary’s Narrative Summary

Mary relates that God specifically told her that her calling was to pastoral ministry, and she views this as a new way of thinking about a long-held concern for people’s spiritual wellbeing. She describes her call to ministry this way:

But um I was probably about twenty-seven and was a stay-at-home mom and I was a writer and just really focused on continuing to pursue writing and uh get a graduate degree.... Um however like uh we were at a church a new church to us and we'd just gone through kind of a traumatic church experience uh at our previous church and spent a year at this new church just sort of healing and recovering and um during that time God just really healed my heart from the stuff we'd gone through. And I really started feeling very strongly like I wanted to give back. I wanted to um help this church grow. It was a church plant incidentally that we were a part of that we had found and um at a certain point during the first year I felt like God was saying you're pastoral and so um there was just a long process for me of really praying about that and feeling nervous about that and what that would mean.

Though she was initially unsure of how to pursue this call to ministry, she discussed it with

her lead pastor, who was very supportive. She ended up being made an associate pastor almost right away, and she began to preach, lead worship, run leadership training and discipleship programs. While she was doing this, she went through the credentialing process and was ordained a few years later. She eventually left that church to plant the church she currently pastors.

Mary has experienced a great deal of emotional difficulty in pursuing her call to pastoral ministry. She explained that her time as an associate pastor had many painful emotional experiences for her. She also mentions that she felt very misunderstood and like there were often unexplained double-standards applied to her that were not applied to male leaders. One example she gives is an event that took place after what she saw as a rather innocuous conversation about a how some women in the church had mentioned they weren't always comfortable approaching the male leaders in the church. This conversation took place between her, two board members, and a couple of members of the church. When Mary asked what could be done about this, the two (male) board members were quite upset. They later went to the lead pastor complaining about Mary's "feminist agenda." The lead pastor then called Mary on the phone to confront her about this:

And so he called me on the phone and he was like really upset. And was like challenging me and saying, "Are you sure that like you don't just have some pet agenda? Because that's not what we're here for. That's not what our church is all about. Like you know I don't care about special agendas or whatever." And I was just like what on earth is going on. I have no idea what you're even talking about. And um at a certain point I just started crying and started asking him like, what did you hear like what do you think I said and was able and apparently like he was talking to me from a church office and the guys were like in the background hearing him talk to me... And in the course of that conversation he realized that he had made some assumptions and backed down and apologized. But it was still kind of like what the hell just happened, you know?

Mary acknowledges that this was probably somewhat due to personality clashes, but she also says that her being a woman really "pushed on some sensitive places."

She also experienced some very emotionally difficult reactions when she decided it was time to plant a church. Her lead pastor was very supportive and even lobbied the board on her behalf, but some of the board members were against supporting Mary's church plant. One board member seemed upset that she was hoping to plant a church in a nearby city, and Mary thinks he might have seen it as a type of "competition." Another board member said that church planting was just a hobby for her. Naturally, this was all very difficult for Mary to hear. They did end up supporting her church planting efforts, but they made her leave the church and resign from her position much faster than she had hoped. When I asked her why she thought this was their reaction, she replied,

Um I don't think like any of them like had open or conscious feelings of, Hey like she's a woman so she shouldn't be doing this or we don't respect her for that. However, it's really hard for me to imagine them saying that to a man like the whole like church planting is a hobby for you. There's no risk involved. Like I just like can't imagine that happening.

Mary has also experienced a great deal of emotionally difficult situations of gender-based resistance from the AG fellowship itself. One example is during her credentialing interview:

Yeah. And and even like in my ordination interview which happened several months before that um when the people interviewing me asked if I ever thought about being a pastor and I said well as a matter of fact I've been talking to the district supervisor, superintendent about this about planting a church. I expected that they would say that's great! You know like tell us more. Um But instead they sort of like launched into a lecture about how my husband had to be on board too and um sort of as if they were worried that he wasn't and we'd come to that interview and I'm like dropping a bomb or someth ... I don't know what they thought. Um and it also led to like all this concern and hesitation of like oh man how are you going to work that out in your marriage, Mary, if you're the lead pastor. And you know and your husband is the leader at home, like how will you figure that out. Like I don't know. And like we just kind of looked at them and laughed and just said we've never done our marriage that way where like one person decides everything you know like that's just not how we operate. So again like I don't think they would have said all those things to a guy.

Mary offered other examples, but the one that came up the most and seemed to affect her the most negatively was the Launch Training events put on by the Church Multiplication

Network. These are events that church planters attend in order to train pastors and help them prepare to plant new churches. She mentions that there was a distinct lack of recognition that there were any female pastors at these events at all, and that she was often in an awkward spot of being expected to attend events for pastor's wives when she was the pastor.

Another type of resistance that presented itself in Mary's interviews was that of sexual objectification. She talked about an experience where a keynote speaker at one the CMN event related above went on and on about how "hot" his wife was and how this was a very objectifying and offensive experience for her. She has also had instances of people "leering" at her during her sermons or misunderstanding her attempts at pastoral care as romantic in nature. She even had someone come up to her after she finished her Easter service and ask if she'd like to go to the bars with him even though she had talked about her family in that very sermon.

This theme of emotional difficulty is very prevalent throughout Mary's two interviews. During the second interview, Mary was asked how these experiences of emotional difficulty have affected her and her ministry throughout the years. Her response was poignant:

And I do, when I think back on that I think I was always just feeling like, you know, I need to be like not talk too much and I need to be careful about saying this and really diplomatic about this or that and really there's just like the degree to which you know, you're always doing that stuff but I think probably felt it more because of those painful experiences.

Mary believes this dynamic has changed since her early days in ministry, though, mostly because she is now the leader instead of a subordinate. She sees being the lead pastor as very freeing, in that it allows her to "set the culture" and avoid some of these types of difficult issues before they happen. Being able to set the culture of her church in this way allows her to avoid feeling "threatened or unsafe" in difficult contexts. This is an area of growth that Mary sees in herself and her ministry, and she believes they have helped prepare her for dealing with difficult situations she experiences in the present:

Yeah. I mean one of the things I think it really taught me was the importance of crossing those pain lines with people or having, having a straightforward respectful conversation about things that don't seem right. And um learning how to do that in a way where another person isn't feeling defensive or on their guard. I do feel like I have learned to do that really well.

Another theme that comes up often in Mary's narrative of her experiences is how she has often felt like an outsider due to her gender. This was the case from the very initial days of her pastoral ministry, where her lead pastor was hesitant to meet with her in public or ride in a car with her to events because he was concerned of the appearance of an older pastor being seen alone with a woman fifteen years younger than him in public. This was enough of an issue that she eventually just started driving herself to events because it was the easiest solution. She also mentions that she often felt unacknowledged or assumed to be a pastor's wife.

However, this is not to say that all of Mary's experiences with the AG have been negative. First, she notes that she has seen improvement in how the AG approaches the subject of women in ministry. Her first lead pastor was very supportive of her being in ministry, even though he once told her he would have been uncomfortable with the idea of a female pastor ten years before. She believes that one of the things that let her see the most improvement in her own life and ministry was her status as a church planter. Her district has been and continues to be very excited about a female church planter and have gone out of its way to help her with this. It has also given her a great deal of access to district officials that she might not have had if not for this special status, and she mentions that many district officials have become "allies" who have worked closely with her in her new ministry. She has also seen her own district do a much better job of being inclusive in the last few years. Lastly, she notes that the national AG is aware of the problem/disparity on the subject of women in pastoral ministry, and she recognizes they are working on improving things for female leaders.

When it comes to her perspective on scriptures traditionally used to argue that women

should not be in pastoral ministry, she believes that the most important thing to keep in mind when approaching these scriptures is that they need to be balanced with the rest of scripture, which also portrays women leaders in a positive light. She mentions Priscilla specifically, and she also brought up the idea that where some translations render a particular leader the masculine form “Junias,” the actual and correct translation is the feminine form “Junia,” which was only changed due to misogyny on the behalf of bible translators. She also believes that the scriptures need to be read in their proper historical and cultural context, which is not always easy to discern.

When asked to summarize her understanding of her lived experience as a female lead pastor in the AG, Mary responded that it has been both challenging and rewarding for her. She makes clear, however, that the part that was rewarding was not necessarily due to her gender, but that many of the challenges were. When I asked her to tell me more about what she meant about the challenges she’s experienced being mostly related to her gender, she responded this way:

Yeah. Um I mean just you know all the different things that we have talked about before such as just working with people with uh resistance to me. Experiencing painful situations because of being misunderstood because of my gender or being perceived as having an agenda, um feeling like I need to be super careful about what I say when and how so as not to be perceived a particular way. [Pause] Um yeah so, I think all those things are challenging. Feeling overlooked or outside as you mentioned before. That's been challenging. Being left out of things that like maybe all guys would do or networking things that might just be easier for the guys to go to because they've developed more of a buddy-buddy friendship than um something that would be just like easy to be like, "Oh you come along like this was in the earlier days." It's more challenging for that reason.

Cross-Case Comparison

Thematic Similarities

An important part of comparing the three cases is to examine how they are thematically similar. While it is not possible to compare every single area in which the three cases are the

same, there are some significant areas that show very interesting similarities. We will first highlight themes that were offered by all three participants.

One such area is in the case of their call to ministry. All three report receiving some type of external validation of their call to ministry. In Anna's case this was from her grandmother, who she believes was used by the Holy Spirit to offer this validation. Interestingly, Jenny first felt her call to ministry through a prophetic word offered by her grandmother, and a later conversation with her grandmother while she was attending seminary clarified that her call to ministry was a divine one and gave her direction on how to pursue it. Mary did not receive direction or clarification from her grandmother; instead, she received validation from her lead pastor, who was willing to support her calling by making her an associate pastor very soon after she told him she felt a call to ministry.

All three participants also offered some variation of the idea that their calling is the best answer to gender-based resistance. Anna relates a story where someone who was opposed to her pastoral ministry eventually admitting that while he didn't believe women should be in pastoral ministry, he could not deny her divine calling. Jenny explicitly says that her "calling makes the way" for her ministry to be successful, even in the face of resistance. Mary mentions that while the resistance she's received to her pastoral ministry has made it very difficult to fulfill her calling at times, nothing has been able to actually stop her from pursuing it. In essence, the three participants seem to indicate that the best way to confront gender-based resistance is to let their callings speak for them. This is not to say, of course, that they never have discussions or even verbal disagreements with people who challenge the appropriateness of their pastoral roles. However, they seem to believe that faithfully following their calling and God's direction is the most effective way of responding to gender-based resistance.

Another area that all three offer strikingly similar responses is in the area of the need for networking or mentoring in ministry. Anna explains that one of the most difficult things in her early days of ministry was feeling like there was no one with whom she could form a peer or mentor type relationship, and she believes this was because of her gender. In fact, when she became a lead pastor and a male pastor reached out to her and treated her like a peer this was a very significant event for Anna; for her, being treated like a peer was something that was missing from her ministry. Jenny also relates that mentoring was very important to ministry, but she never felt like she was able to do it very well. In fact, she repeatedly mentions that there were no mentors for her in her early days of ministry, and how this was to her “detriment” as a pastor. Her first experience of being mentored by another (male) pastor was also very significant for her because she had not previously experienced it. Similarly, Mary also reports a lack of mentoring relationships or networking opportunities at the beginning of her ministry. Like the other two participants, Mary also saw this as being very unfortunate — her account indicates that this magnified her feelings of being an outsider and not always equipped for the ministry roles she initially took on. It is also notable that all three have formed some type of network for women in ministry, mostly in response to the distinct lack of mentoring/networking opportunities they experienced in their ministries. Jenny did this through her district, whereas Anna and Mary formed or joined their own and used platforms such as Facebook to stay connected and plan events and encourage other female pastors.

It seems almost unnecessary to say that all three participants have experienced gender-based resistance to their pastoral ministry, but the most striking similarity in this area is that they all report experiencing at the district level of the AG, rather than at a national level, which they view in a much more positive light. Anna says that she has experienced the most resistance from

other credentialed ministers, and she related many times when she felt like she did not fit in at district events simply because she was a woman. While Jenny experienced less resistance at a district level than Anna or Mary, she did report a particularly resistant member of her credentialing committee who was opposed to giving her full credentials due to her gender (though it should be noted the other four members of the committee were supportive and overruled him), and she also mentions that there were members of her district that were opposed to her election as presbyter because she was a woman. Mary has also experienced significant resistance through events she has attended. She reported one instance where a keynote speaker repeatedly emphasized how sexually desirable his wife was, which she felt was objectifying and insulting to women. Additionally, she also reports feeling like there was a lack of recognition that there are female leaders at all. She often found herself having to tell people that she was in fact a pastor and not a pastor's wife. This created many awkward situations for her where she had to decide if she should bring it up or not and just go along with how they had things set up at these events.

However, even though all three have experienced significant gender-based resistance from other pastors or district officials, they all report that they have seen improvement in the way the AG has approached the subject of female pastors and women in leadership. All three recognize the important strides the national AG fellowship has taken to address the lack of support for female pastors. Also, all three provided instances where they were affirmed or directly supported by male leaders in their districts. Even though Anna was often ignored by male pastors at district events, she mentions that some went out of their way to reach out to her and make her feel welcome. Jenny seems to have experienced the most affirmation and support from district officials; this is evident in the fact that she was elected a district presbyter. Moreover, she

explained that first and second superintendents she worked for have been supportive and advocating for women in ministry, respectively. Mary notes that many people in her district were very excited and supportive about her being a church planter. She even calls them allies and she believes that this has given her access and support that many pastors don't receive. In the second interview, all three participants mentioned the recent election of Donna Barrett to the office of General Secretary of the AG⁴ as a very positive sign. Jenny believes that the former General Secretary, James Bradford, stepped down specifically so a woman could be in a prominent position of national leadership. Anna and Mary both mentioned this a positive sign because it might inspire other women to seek denominational leadership.

Another area that is extremely similar between all three participants is their approach to the scriptures that have been traditionally used to argue women should not be in positions of pastoral leadership. All three believe that the context in which Paul was writing is very different than today's and that it is difficult to know exactly what he meant. Anna notes, for example, that unlike in the time when Paul is writing, women are no longer property who are "given" to their husbands in marriage. As a result, it would not make sense to assume there is a one-to-one correlation between what Paul says and today. Also, they insist that those verses need to be balanced with the rest of scripture, where Paul is seen to partner with women leaders and therefore it would not make sense to assume his statements apply to all women everywhere. All three specifically mention Priscilla as an example, and Mary relates that story of how "Junias" is actually a mistranslation of "Junia" which she says is due to misogyny.

One of the most interesting themes that showed up in the accounts of all three participants

⁴ The General Secretary is responsible for records, statistics, credentials, etc., and is a member of the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God national fellowship. Barrett was recently elected to replace Jim Bradford, who stepped down from his position.

is the idea improving things for other women leaders. Anna explains that she has often had to do emotionally difficult or uncomfortable things, but she did them because she wanted to help create a better environment for future women leaders; she even describes feeling like she's hacking at a jungle with a machete, but she's willing to do so because future women leaders won't feel like they must clear as much of a path. Jenny offers similar sentiments. When she was relating the story of being elected presbyter she mentioned that she felt like she had to accept the position even though she was very busy and not sure she really had the time for it. When I asked her why she felt that way, she immediately responded with, "Because I'm a woman." She also noted that she was the only woman to be elected presbyter in her district at that point, and so she knew she had to accept the position. She developed this theme even further in the second interview, explaining that she does whatever she can to encourage other women by accepting positions of visibility whenever they are offered to her. Mary didn't mention this idea in the first interview, but in the second interview she described herself as a sort of "pioneer." She believes her status as a pioneer has enabled her to have conversations with people about her experiences in an effort to help bring understanding and improvement for current and future women pastors/leaders. In addition, she notes that her visibility as a female church planter itself makes her a pioneer in some sense.

Interestingly, all three participants expressed some degree of discomfort about applying the idea of being a trailblazer or pioneer to themselves, though this varied a great deal. Anna says she really struggles with feeling like she is somehow representative of all female pastors in the AG; in her mind she only represents herself unless she is somehow elected to a position that represents all women leaders. However, she also acknowledges that "being in the room," and "insisting on her right to be there," does make her representative of other women – though she

believes this is an unfair double standard that is not applied to men. Jenny also seems uncomfortable with the idea of being a pioneer. She said that she never felt like a pioneer; for the first ten years of ministry she felt like she had no idea what she was doing. However, she admits that her accepting positions of visibility and responsibility have made her into a pioneer for women leaders in some way. Mary expresses the least amount of discomfort about being thought of as a pioneer, though she seemed somewhat hesitant to accept the label for herself. However, she admits that pioneering a new work and helping improve things for other women is something she finds fun and rewarding. This theme of “trailblazer/pioneer,” will be explored in detail in chapter five.

There are also some similarities between two participants that do not necessarily appear in all three. One is displayed in the fact that Anna and Jenny experienced significant gender-based resistance was in a lack of opportunity or being denied positions they were qualified for, sometimes losing them to less qualified male candidates. Anna had a great deal of difficulty finding a church that would let her do an internship while she was in college. Jenny had an experience where a male pastor who had no credentials and less education than her was hired to do a job she had already been doing, and the pastor specifically told her it was due to the fact that he could not hire a woman for a pastoral position. Mary had somewhat of the opposite experience. She told her pastor about her sense that she was called to pastoral ministry, and he gave her a staff position at her church very soon after that.

There was one interesting instance of similarity between Anna and Mary. First, both report a great deal of difficulty working in associate pastor roles – they often seemed to be unable to have the relationship with the lead pastor they felt they needed. While Anna notes that the first lead pastor she worked with helped her in many ways, there were also many times when he

didn't push hard enough on her behalf because he didn't want to cause trouble in the church. This is similar to Mary's experience. Even though her lead pastor was supportive of her call to ministry, there were also many times when he assumed the worst of Mary when people complained about innocuous comments she made. Additionally, he was very hesitant to meet with her in public due to concerns about the appearance of impropriety. Second, the boards at their first churches were often resistant to giving them opportunities to lead, in Anna's case, or in supporting Mary's vision for planting a church in a nearby city.

Unique Themes/Experiences

While it would be possible to speak of "thematic differences" between the three accounts, it would be more helpful to talk about how the accounts display unique qualities. This is because the term "thematic differences" is too vague; there are numerous differences that could be commented on that would likely not reveal any information that is particularly useful for understanding the lived experience of the participants. However, when we examine themes and notable⁵ experiences that exist in one account and not others, especially since all participants were asked generally the same questions, this can help illuminate important themes that might be otherwise missed. To do so, I have divided this section by participant. In each section I will discuss unique themes or important details that appear in her account and not in the others.

Anna

One of the main themes discovered in the interview data was that of gender-based resistance. This resistance took many different forms; see above. A notable experience that Anna

⁵ I recognize the difficulty of the term "notable;" after all, what is notable to one person is not necessarily notable to another. However, in this case I am using the term "notable" to refer to experiences that add understanding to previously explored themes.

had that did not appear in the other two was that she mentioned experiencing the most direct type of gender-based resistance when compared to the other two. This is seen in the fact that people, most of whom she'd never met before, will tell her she is "living in sin" for being in pastoral ministry. She also offered a story about how a person in her church was confronted with resistance; he was apparently castigated by another person, who never attended Anna's church, for attending a church that had a female lead pastor. She has had missionaries and Evangelists (from within the AG) who wanted to speak at her church to raise funds, yet when they found out it was pastored by a woman they refused to call her back. Neither Jenny nor Mary mentioned anything like this happening.

Another element that was unique to Anna's account was that she seems to experience people using the scriptures to argue against her ministry more often than do Jenny or Mary. Anna reports people have directly quoted those scriptures to her, where Jenny says that no one has brought them up to her in approximately fifteen years. Mary said that she thinks someone may have brought them up to her pastor once, but she hasn't experienced it directly herself. It is unclear as to what causes this difference, though it may have to do with the different regions/cultural values of the locations in which the participants pastor.

Perhaps the most interesting thing that Anna brings up that is not emphasized in the same way by the other participants is the idea of a group responsibility that is experienced by female pastors that is unfair and not experienced by male pastors. She talks about how women have a responsibility to not "mess things up" for other women by doing something incorrectly. She recounts how her (female) friends have been invited to speak at a church or a conference and told not to "mess things up," because if they do then another woman will never be able to be invited to speak. This has changed quite a bit for Anna since her early days of ministry; she now reports

that she no longer feels that she needs to carry the weight of every woman on her shoulders. Instead, she believes that all she has to do to be faithful is to be obedient to God and do her best in whatever context he places her.

She also brought up her frustration with the districts that have recently been offering full ordination to pastor's spouses who have been in ministry for 10 years or more. While she was upset because of the unfair parity it grants people who have not necessarily had the same education or experience as people like her, she was also extremely upset because she was worried that this would put women in positions they are not qualified for, and if they make mistakes it would then make it that much harder for other female leaders to be accepted or taken seriously. It should be noted that there are elements of this idea in Jenny's account, in that she mentions she feels a responsibility to help improve things for other female leaders, but she does not take it in this same direction Anna does.

Her summary of her lived experience as a female lead pastor in the AG was also very unique. Her characterization of her life in ministry as a funhouse or house of mirrors was something she has clearly done a great deal of thinking about. While the other participants reported feelings of misunderstanding and distortion, neither of them did so in such a distinct and metaphorical way.

Jenny

One of the most unique things that appears in Jenny's account is the importance she places on education. Since all three participants hold graduate degrees, it's reasonable to conclude they all value education to some degree. However, Jenny repeatedly emphasizes how her education was an integral part of her calling and ministry. She explains that her success in seminary education is evidence of God's calling on her life. Indeed, in her conversation with her

grandmother wherein she received a type of validation of her call to ministry, her grandmother encouraged her to stay at school longer and choose the program that would require more work and more difficult classes. Jenny also brought up how her education often let her avoid being challenged in her leadership. When she was a district presbyter, she remembered being reticent about how much and what to say in her early days. However, she says that in addition to her Pentecostal orthodoxy (see below), her education allowed her to be accepted by the other presbyters in ways a less educated woman would not have been. Additionally, when she was passed over for a staff position in her first church, one of the things that stood out to her was that the person selected had no education. Moreover, Jenny sees her education as helping to provide her with the tools she needs to be a good pastor, especially in the sense that it gave her the tools she needed to understand the scriptures and relay their truths to her congregation.

Another unique element to Jenny's responses is her emphasis on how important it is to be pragmatic in both life and ministry. She often mentions how her father was very pragmatic and he taught his daughters to be pragmatic as well. He did this by teaching them how to do traditionally "masculine" things such as changing oil, cutting the grass, etc. He also insisted his daughters receive some kind of training that would enable them to get a job; that included classes in typing, shorthand, and other valuable business skills. This caused Jenny and her sisters to be self-reliant, and this meant that she would never consider getting married just to have a man to support her. She did mention that she and her sisters were never against marriage, just that they did not view it as being "just so someone could take care of her." Her pragmatic approach to life allowed her to be successful in the business world, and this in turn allowed her to graduate seminary with no debt.

It is very interesting that these two themes of education and pragmatism occur in such great

detail in Jenny's account but are not really present in the other two. This is likely partly due to personality and family upbringing. However, it may also be because Jenny is from a different generation than Anna and Mary, and people from Jenny's generation often view education in a different (and usually more positive) way than more recent generations.

The other unique part of Jenny's account is that she seems to have had the most positive experience as a female pastor in the AG. While it has not been without gender-based resistance, (see above), she reports a lot less than the other two. Furthermore, she explains that she has benefited from working with superintendents who were supportive of and even advocating for women in ministry. It is likely that her position as district presbyter also gave her an opportunity to see more positive responses to her than the other two participants. By being in a position of visibility and leadership, Jenny was likely able to serve as a positive example of effective female leadership that would have been more evident in her district. Due to her experiences of receiving advocacy on her behalf, Jenny believes the most effective way to improve things for women who feel a call to pastor in the AG is to advocate for them. This is why she tries to mentor as many female leaders as she can in a variety of different ways. She also said it is imperative that male district and national leadership not only permit women to be in leadership, but directly advocate for it.

Mary

Mary's account also has very interesting unique details that don't appear in the interview data of the other two. First, Mary's experience of receiving a divine call to ministry was different than Anna's or Jenny's. While Anna and Jenny report feeling called to ministry at ages fourteen and nineteen, respectively, Mary says she experienced her calling later in life, when she was 27. Also, Anna and Jenny both reported initially thinking they were called to the mission field, partly

because they saw very few, if any, female pastors. Mary, however, does not report wondering if she was called to missions at all. Also interesting is that fact that Anna and Jenny report feeling very confused about what their calling to ministry actually required of them; as a result they both told me about instances where they engaged in fervent and repeated requests for clarification and direction. Conversely, Mary describes receiving her calling and seeing it as a natural development of her long-held concern for the spiritual health and wellbeing of others. Mary also experienced somewhat more of a direct path to fulfilling her calling to ministry, in that she was given the position of associate pastor very soon after approaching her lead pastor to tell him she felt called to ministry.

All three participants mentioned some instance(s) of feeling like they experienced gender-based double standards. Mary, however, brought this up much more than the other two. In fact, Mary often said that while she could not tie every negative experience she had entirely to her gender — she believes that personality also played a role in some cases — she nevertheless repeatedly says that she does not think a man in her position would have experienced the same things she did. She gives examples from her own local context, such as when members of the board were opposed to supporting her church plant because “it was just a hobby for her.” She also provides examples of experiences she had when dealing with the AG in things like her credentialing interview, where she received a condescending lecture that assumed she and her husband had not actually thought through the consequences of her being in ministry, which she is certain would not have happened if she were a man.

Mary is also the only one of the three participants who reported instances of sexual objectification being a part of her experience. These events were mentioned above, but to summarize: She attended an event for church planters where a speaker went on and on about how

“hot” his wife was and how thankful he was for that fact. Mary recounts feeling like this was really objectifying of women and that it was also not helpful for any woman in the room who may feel less than confident in their physical appearance. This event was obviously very upsetting to Mary and she recounted it with a great deal of dismay and even some anger. She also had instances of people who attended her church and misinterpreted her attempts at pastoral care as romantic overtures.

Lastly, Mary is the only one of the three participants who brings up the idea that women sometimes react negatively to other women in leadership. She tells a story about women in her church who would try to manipulate her on their behalf or try to do things she believes they would never have tried with the other (male) leaders of the church. She even wondered if a study had been or could be done that looks at how women respond to women in leadership.

Genre/Pentecostal Analysis

I did not identify any kind of specific genre in the narratives offered by the participants in this study. However, one element that is very important to gaining a deeper and richer understanding of the lived experience of the three participants is attempting to understand how their Pentecostal beliefs and culture shape their understanding and behavior. As Squire points out, “narratives are the means of human sense-making.”⁶ It is somewhat outside of the scope of this project to construct a comprehensive picture of “Pentecostal Culture” and then situate the narratives offered by participants within it. However, ministers in the AG do share certain cultural factors and characteristics that would not be found, or at least not found in the same way, in non-Pentecostal ministers. Particular attention will be paid to the features unique to the

⁶ Corrine Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative,” in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corrine Squire, and Maria Tamboukou (London: SAGE, 2008), 43.

Pentecostal approach to scripture and hermeneutics explained in chapters 1 and 2. To briefly restate: This study is situated within the postliberal and cultural-linguistic approach's insistence on the importance of narrative, and the ability of the narrative of scripture to create the very world or universe in which Christians live. This is combined with the canonical-linguistic approach's insistence on the idea that this narrative world must be firmly grounded within the divine discourse relayed by the scriptures. This approach is directly compatible with the Pentecostal insistence on the primacy of narrative and their hermeneutical approach that prioritizes narrative. In chapter one I explained how the Pentecostal approaches scripture through a narrative and Lukan lens. Furthermore, many Pentecostal scholars have noted the parallels between both Pentecostal hermeneutics and narrative/postliberal theology; for Pentecostals, the scriptural narrative, and especially the Lukan narrative, create a world to indwell. As a result, this section of the analysis will attempt to do two things: first, a general summary of how Pentecostal beliefs, doctrines, and experiences appear in the narratives offered by the participants. Second, it will attempt to examine if these elements of Pentecostalism display the postliberal/narrative theological hermeneutical and practical approach to scripture and doctrine, explained above. Third, it will explain how the participants firmly ground their narrative experience within their understanding of what the canon of scripture teaches about qualifications for leadership.

Anna

Pentecostalism clearly plays a central role in Anna's narrative accounts. The most important example is contained within her call narrative. When I asked her about her call to ministry, after offering a brief family history she stepped backwards chronologically and told me a story about her experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. While she did not say these

exact words, the way she constructs her narrative suggests that her call to ministry flows out of her Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. She also describes her call to ministry as a distinct physical sensation, which she calls a “gut check.” Her description of this process is fascinating and worth quoting in full:

Yeah. So, um, it's that kind of gut check feeling uh for me, at least when the Holy Spirit is speaking there's kind of this um gut check physical reaction, like Oh ok, this isn't just me thinking about this, this is the Holy Spirit kind of directing my thoughts and my ideas...I'm not a “feeler,” so you know how some people like say they feel their emotions in places in their body? I am not that way, so that's been one way that I have often known that the Holy Spirit is speaking, is that there's been kind of a physical like movement in my like gut, you know? Like there's my gut feeling, that feeling that something physically is happening.

While not every single Pentecostal would say that physical sensations accompany the direction of the Holy Spirit, it is very common for Pentecostals to describe their experience of the Holy Spirit in that or similar ways. This also corresponds to the experiential approach Pentecostals take to their spiritual lives, explained in detail in chapters one and two.

Returning to the subject of Anna's experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, she takes great care to explain that this experience was not “weird” or disordered. As she explains, some Pentecostals have stories where “someone laid their hands on me and like told me to blab until the Holy Spirit took my tongue and talked through me.” The way she expressed this indicated she thought this was rather odd and incorrect. She describes her own experience, by contrast, as being in a small group of people from her church (which she carefully notes was a charismatic church, but not one that was “crazy”) who matter-of-factly stated they believed in the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, and then invited people to seek this experience of Spirit baptism for themselves. She recounts the event thus:

And if you want we wanted to give opportunity today for you to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and they're like so what we're gonna do is you're just gonna sit here, and you're just gonna wait, and some people are gonna be praying, you know, and we're going to invite you to pray, however you feel led, but don't feel like you

have to talk, don't feel like you have to do anything, and if the Holy Spirit wants to baptize you with evidence of speaking in tongues, then that's gonna happen. And they just ... it was super simple.... And I was baptized in the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues.

For Anna, the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit is a normal part of the life of the Pentecostal Christian believer, which means it should not be weird or crazy. It is also important to notice that this experience demonstrates the narrative approach to hermeneutics outlined above and in the first two chapters. The people praying for Anna explained that this experience was contained in the scriptures, specifically within the Lukan narrative, and it was therefore normal for a Christian to expect to experience the same thing today. Therefore, it is a great example of how that Pentecostal approach and understanding appears in the actual lived experience of a Pentecostal Christian.

In the second interview, participants were asked to offer their own explanation of their Pentecostal beliefs and the ways in which those beliefs affect their pastoral ministry. In response, Anna explained that one of the most important things to understand about the Holy Spirit is that the Spirit always interacts with people using comfort and gentleness. In fact, she even explained that in a lot of ways she views the Holy Spirit as acting in a more feminine way, though she worried that that made her sound too "new-agey." The reason she sees the Holy Spirit as acting in a feminine way is because she sees the Holy Spirit as being motherly; for Anna, the Holy Spirit works in ways that are very similar to the way her own mother raised her. She says,

And I think that maybe it's because my mom was often this way and that even though she was upset, angry we did something wrong. I always knew that at the end of the conversation after she had said, "No you're grounded. That was wrong you shouldn't have hit your brother." I always knew what would end. And the way it would end would be with an "Ok, come here." And a hug and a hold/holding. And we would cry or we would you know even when I was stubborn and not wanting it she often would just wrap her arms around me and say, "No I'm not leaving until you have accepted that you're forgiven and you're loved." And my Dad did that as well. But I think I don't know. There's just something about that. She could literally correct us in one sentence and be like you just lied to me why are you lying? And we could we would

go uh uh you know the whole thing when you're caught and she go "You're not, do you understand why you can't lie? That's wrong." And then in the next moment I'd be crying and she'd be holding me, you know?" And I think I see the Holy Spirit that way.

Because of this, Anna has tried to incorporate this own approach into her pastoral ministry. She especially tries to incorporate this gentle approach into her sermons, because she believes that even messages that convict and correct should do so with gentleness and invitation:

When we preach the word it's not to beat people with it. The word is not a weapon. The word is ... the scriptures are there to guide us and lead us. And they're all supposed to point towards Jesus and as if our messages don't point towards Jesus and his open arms and the Holy Spirit who is this extension and this presence and this felt-ness; if we're not pointing towards that, if we're not preaching conviction but also preaching invitation, then I don't, like what are we doing? We're just beating people up and letting the enemy bring shame. That's not a kingdom tool, you know? So I think restoration and reconciliation are Kingdom tools and [pause] to be loved and accepted even when you have just slapped someone is a really big deal, you know?

This quotation also demonstrates how Anna sees her Pentecostal experience and pastoral ministry as being firmly anchored within the scriptural account. She sees scriptural precedent for her experiences and has therefore allowed them to affect her entire approach to pastoral ministry itself. Her responses to people who have challenged her pastoral ministry because they believe women should not be pastors also display the canonical-linguistic approach's insistence on the primacy of scripture for evaluating the performance of a doctrine within a particular community. She interprets scriptures such as the ones from Timothy and 1 Corinthians as not prohibiting her from pastoral ministry because they need to be interpreted within the wider canonical context. She also uses scriptural characters like Priscilla as evidence that there is a scriptural precedent for women being in pastoral leadership. Anna sees her ministry not as outside the script, but as a faithful interpretation of it.

Jenny

Jenny's responses are interesting in that they are the most overtly Pentecostal in tone and

vocabulary. The most obvious way this takes place is in her repeated mentions of the gifts of the Spirit in her life and ministry. Her call to ministry was received through a prophetic word offered by her grandmother, and she gives many examples of how the Holy Spirit used her by giving her various gifts of the Spirit in different situations, particularly in pastoral roles. The most common gift that appears in Jenny's responses is the idea of a "word of wisdom."⁷ One particularly significant event in Jenny's life where this took place is when she was told by one of her seminary professors that the AG would never give her a church to pastor due to her gender.

Jenny told me this:

And I looked at him and I spoke a word of wisdom. It was a word of wisdom back to myself and I didn't know it. And I said well it's a good thing that I'm not depending on the AG to give me a church to pastor. And yeah I became that was the moment in which I knew I was called to be a pastor.

Thus, in a manner similar to Anna's, her call to ministry itself is situated within the idea of the experience of the Holy Spirit, though in Jenny's case it is with a specific spiritual gift rather than the more foundational experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The "word of wisdom" plays a very important role in Jenny's Pentecostal experience. In the second interview, I asked Jenny to tell me more about the idea of a word of wisdom,⁸ and she related that one of the most prominent places the word of wisdom shows up for her is in her pastoral counseling. She says,

But what happens in a counseling context with the manifestations or the gifts of the Spirit is that's where the word of knowledge comes involved, word of wisdom so much. It's the, um bringing that "Aha!" moment to people's lives.

⁷ Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* (Springfield, MO: Gospel: 1972): 37. For those not familiar with the Pentecostal concept of a "word of wisdom," it is mentioned in the list of Spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12. It is usually a prophetic word that a person is given by the Holy Spirit that can be used for encouragement, correction, or confirmation. Donald Gee explains it this way: "One is deeply conscious that the supremely right thing has been said and the true course of action indicated. No further appeal is desired because the heart rests in a calm satisfaction that the will of God has been revealed."

⁸ Jenny uses the terms "word of wisdom," and "word of knowledge," interchangeably.

This “Aha!” moment has taken many different forms for Jenny. She related a story where the Holy Spirit revealed to her that a person she was counseling was suffering from abandonment issues, and when she said that in a counseling session, the person she was counseling was amazed because there was no way for Jenny to know that. She also talked about how the Spirit has revealed to her that some of her leaders have struggled with pornography, and she brings it up with them to help them with accountability and to make sure it doesn’t remain a long-term issue. When she has these “Aha!” moments, she is careful to note that she will always refer them to a professional counselor when necessary, usually after three pastoral counseling sessions.

Though she did not use these specific words, one story Jenny told me displayed how her Pentecostal beliefs were an effective answer to gender-based resistance. At the very beginning of her first term as a district presbyter, she recounted being at a meeting where some kind of doctrinal issue related to the Pentecostal distinctive⁹ came up. Though she felt a great deal of trepidation due to being new as well as being the only woman, she nevertheless made a statement where she asked why people who didn’t believe in the importance of the Pentecostal distinctive bothered to call themselves Pentecostal at all. By “demonstrating her classical Pentecostal core,” some of the people in the room who were opposed to her being there due to her gender changed their minds:

And suddenly all of the honorary presbyters. These are all the old guys and um our superintendent. You know? Now he walks up to me and I know that he would not have had me in the room. I know that from the get go that he was not somebody that would have been inclusive for a woman but he walks up to me. And he says it's good to know that we stand in the same place. I looked at him and I said, "What are you talking about?" He goes your classical Pentecostal stance. And I said Oh OK.... And I discovered that that was something that they began to see me as something other than just the woman in the room.

⁹ This probably refers to either the baptism in the Holy Spirit or evidentiary speaking in tongues as a result of that experience.

She also believes that the gifts of the Spirit are one of the primary ways that female pastors can see more acceptance and support of their ministries. She believes this because she says the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and especially when women function in those gifts in pastoral ministry, it makes it very difficult for people to claim she is not called by God. As a result, the calling, specifically supported by the acceptance and use of the gifts of the Spirit, is an answer to gender-based resistance:

I think the other thing that we can stand up is a wonderful history and I also think that women in ministry do better when you're into a classical Pentecostal structure where the manifestations of the gifts are in use and those gifting are um seen [pause] and recognized because that's undeniable. It's part of who we are as part of our theology. And it's undeniable that this is a call this is a gifting and it really does. It creates its own platform for women as God calls you. So that helps.

In a way that is very similar to Anna, Jenny also sees her ministry as being affirmed by her understanding of the scriptures. She also thinks that the wider context of scripture provides her with a supportive precedent for her being in ministry (and women being in ministry in general). Like Anna, she does not see her ministry as contrary to the scriptures but instead sees them as something that affirms and guides her pastoral ministry.

Mary

In the first interview, Mary's account is intriguing in that it is the least Pentecostal of the three; her experiences rarely mention her Pentecostal beliefs or experiences, especially when compared to the accounts of Anna and Jenny, which seem almost saturated with them. This is not to say that Mary does not mention her Pentecostalism in her first interview at all; she does make references to "being led by the Spirit" and how it is very important for a leader to be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the casual way she discusses this seems to indicate a comfort with such ideas and practices. However, when asked in the second interview to explain her

understanding of her Pentecostal experience and what role that plays in her ministry, Mary gave a very detailed and fascinating account of how her Pentecostal theology and praxis is incorporated in her ministry.

Mary explained that her “experiences with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and [her] understanding of scripture is what causes her to be Pentecostal.” She described how she always wanted to experience the more “dramatic” manifestations of the spiritual gifts. For Mary, though, there is one particular gift she operates in on a regular basis: Mary related how the Holy Spirit often communicates with her through prophetic dreams, either about her own life or about the lives of other people. She talked about how she had a couple in her church where the man was kind of “on the fence” about whether or not he believed that God could or would forgive people. His fiancé also struggled due to being raised in a very legalistic environment.

And so, in a series of like two weeks or three weeks I had a prophetic dream for him and a prophetic dream for her. And in the dreams, they were telling me things about their lives that I didn't know like I didn't know about these things and um. So, it was with a degree of like fear and trembling and prayer that I, you know, prayed about how to handle that or have a conversation with them about it. It seemed like God just wanted to create kind of a pastoral experience right, to like bring some stuff to light.

As a result of these dreams, Mary was able to have an in-depth pastoral conversation with this couple that challenged them in their relationship with God. After this conversation, the fiancé told Mary about how she was “freed from something” that Mary would have had no way of knowing about.

Mary spoke about many such instances of receiving prophetic dreams. Some of them were for other people, as described above, and some have been more personal. For example, she talked about how she had a dream when she was pregnant with her twins. In this dream, a friend knelt down and touched her stomach, and whispered to her that her “new ministry would start in September in the East.” The location where she started her church is directly east of where she

lived at the time, and so she interpreted this as confirmation that she was following God's will. She applied this even further when her twins were born prematurely. Though they were born at twenty weeks, they were very "strong, sturdy, and healthy." She says,

So like God was just encouraging me through it and I've come back to it a lot, like. Ok these babies were born sooner than I thought. Which is true. I mean the church started a little sooner than I was ready for. I had to leave my church sooner than I was ready for. But this promise of like it stirred me there's going to be like a stability to it cause God is in charge, right?

She explained how it has been a "journey" for her to learn how to tell the difference between regular dreams and prophetic ones. During the second interview I asked her to talk about her process of becoming more comfortable with determining the difference as well as knowing how and when to share them with others. She says she often begins by writing down the dream and then praying about it and asking God what he might be saying through it. It is sometimes clear right away and sometimes she has to wait much longer. However, she told me about how every time it's confirmed to be true this builds her confidence. She also described a very specific way she is usually able to recognize a dream is prophetic:

And I feel like I'm starting to learn that like when people speak to me in dreams or there's like words or texts or emails that I see in dreams, or I'll see scriptures like, that's a [pause] a higher level of specificity that I take a lot more seriously.

Mary's experiences with the Holy Spirit and the way she sees her Pentecostal theology and praxis displays a very clear correspondence with the narrative-experiential approach outlined above. She noted how her experiences combined with her understanding of scripture result in her being Pentecostal. Furthermore, she incorporates these experiences into her pastoral ministry, even though there have been times when she wasn't sure exactly how to do so. Mary is confident, however, that these experiences she has are from God and are to help her become a better minister and to enable her to better shepherd her people. She says it best: "So for me there's just an ever deepening, ever-growing sense of needing to be rooted, and intimacy with the

Holy Spirit and really um walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

In a way that is very similar to Anna and Jenny, Mary also sees her ministry as functioning based on the precedent provided in the scriptures. She responds about the verse in 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians in the same way as Anna and Jenny. Furthermore, in the quote above where she discussed her Pentecostal experience, she says her experiences with the Holy Spirit are based on her understanding of scripture. In this she perfectly demonstrates how her ministry displays a mixture of the cultural-linguistic and canonical-linguistic approaches to theology. She recognizes the importance of experience and performance of doctrine, but she sees both of those elements as depending on her understanding of scripture.

Response to the First Interview

During the second interview, all three participants were asked if they would like to respond in any way to the experience of the first interview. Each participant was given a copy of the transcript of the first interview which they read before the second interview took place. It was important to give the participants a chance to react in this way because it provided them with a way to have a voice in the interpretive process. It allowed them to do so by letting them correct anything they thought was mischaracterized or misunderstood, as well as giving them a chance to explore further any topic they might think necessary.

One thing that all three participants seemed to share was that they expressed unease with the way in which their language looked when transcribed. All three were surprised how much they used words like, “um, like,” etc. This made them noticeably self-conscious of their answers in the second interview, though as it proceeded they seemed less concerned. Below is a summary of their individual reactions.

Anna

While she did express some surprise about how her language was portrayed in transcript form, Anna was the least concerned of the three participants about this. In fact, when asked if she would like to respond to anything from the first interview, whether the experience of the interview itself or to anything in the transcript, Anna responded that she didn't feel like anything needed to be clarified or corrected, and she also laughingly said that she had a "good time." The only thing she mentioned was that it sometimes felt awkward to be talking about herself in such an in-depth manner.

Jenny

Jenny did not have very much to say about the content of the first interview; she did not feel the need to correct anything or to talk more about the first interview. When given the opportunity to respond to it, she replied that the only thing she thought was that she "talked too much." Though the researcher assured her that she could not talk "too much," and that everything she said was valuable for this kind of research, it seemed to have had a notable effect on her responses. In the first set of interviews, Jenny's interview was by far the longest. Her second interview, however, was the shortest of the three.

Mary

Mary was the most specific in her response to this question. She brought up one place from the first interview where the researcher misunderstood what she meant. She asked for a small part to be changed so that it was more accurate.¹⁰ She also expressed some anxiety about the fact that it's possible someone could read her account and link it to her identity, though she was

¹⁰ This part was changed in the transcript per Mary's request.

careful to note she had no specific concerns about any of the steps taken to ensure confidentiality/anonymity and that she still wanted all of her responses to be part of the project.

She also reported an emotional response. She said,

I think just like remembering the pain of it you know and just yeah, it's it's weird. I mean like I don't know [pause] I'm just a human being so I don't know how this stuff works, right? But like I'm at a good place in my relationships with these guys. But there is a degree of like shame that I felt being misunderstood or characterized like harshly. And so, I think just the memory of that: it stings still.

However, she also talked about how it was cathartic for her, in that it was very satisfying to express how she was feeling and to be able to express those feelings with candor and honesty.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter five will present the results, conclusions, and recommendations that have been formulated after the data analysis presented in chapter four. To summarize, the research problem that prompted this study was: due to the complex and often confusing history of the status of women pastors in the AG fellowship, there is a lack of understanding of how female pastors in the AG understand and narrate their own experience as pastors within the fellowship. In order to investigate this problem, a research question was developed. The research question was: given the complex and inconsistent history and present reality faced by women in the AG, how do the participants in this study narrate their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches?

Results Summary

This study utilized data gathered from two interviews with three different participants who fit the research criteria. These data presented a complex and fascinating narrative of how these participants understand their role as female lead pastors within the AG fellowship. For an exhaustive look at all the themes discovered in the interview data, see chapter four. The results that were the most prevalent and therefore the most significant to the participants were the themes of gender-based resistance, their roles as “pioneers” or “trailblazers,” and each participant’s understanding of the Pentecostal theology and how that understanding affects and is present in their approach to ministry.

Significance

There are many reasons these results are significant. First, the only way to develop a rich understanding of lived experience is to investigate a participant's description and understanding of those experiences. Since a researcher will never be able to experience the same thing the participants did, the researcher needs to rely on the narrative accounts offered by the participants. Doing so allowed the researcher to investigate thoroughly the research problem and research question.

Second, these results are significant because they present a new and more personalized understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. This type of narrative research offers the participants a chance to use their own voices and talk about their experiences in a way that is highly individualized. This study endeavored to allow the participants to provide their own understandings and enable them to guide the interview and data collection process; the semi-structured interview process sought to follow the avenues brought up by the participants themselves, while still having prepared questions that allowed the researcher to probe the responses for a deeper understanding their lived experiences.

Third, the results of this study present a very practical example of how Pentecostal narrative-experiential theology looks in the lives of real Pentecostal ministers. The participants' accounts definitively show how their experiences shape their approach to the scriptures and ministries, as well as presenting a narrative theological approach to the scriptures. This moved the understanding of the idea of the Pentecostal narrative-experiential theology from an academic one to a practical one. Indeed, the results explained below evince a very practical approach to investigating the research problem and research question.

Fourth, these results are significant because they will help the AG fellowship develop a deeper understanding of how a group of female lead pastors understand and describe their lived

experience within the AG. The fact that the status of women in the AG has been “complex and confusing” for so long demonstrates that the fellowship will need to wrestle with the reality that there is still confusion regarding to this subject. While this study cannot and does not attempt to offer generalizable conclusions about the lived experience of every female pastor in the AG, it does provide a very rich picture of how some of those female pastors view themselves, their roles in ministry, and place within the AG fellowship. Doing so may prompt the fellowship to ask more questions and investigate this subject more thoroughly and in other ways.

Discussion of Results

Researcher’s Interpretation of the Results

To understand the data gathered and presented in chapter four, this section will offer an interpretation of those results. It will do so by presenting how the results can be understood in light of the study’s philosophical framework, overall methodology, and literature review. This interpretation will then be synthesized to discuss the results in light of the research problem and research question. It will then conclude with a discussion of how these results could be used within various cultural settings.

Understanding the Results within the Research Framework

The research framework for this study depends on three main elements: Donald Polkinghorne’s understanding of narrative and how it functions in human understanding, a combination of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic and Vanhoozer’s canonical-linguistic systems,¹ and the research approach of social-constructionism. A discussion of how the results of this study fit within these three elements is provided below.

¹ For a discussion of this framework, see the pertinent sections in chapters one, two, and three.

First, Polkinghorne believes that humans are constantly engaged in storytelling activity, and they do this to make sense of the experiences that take place in their lives. He says that experiences result in sense-making behavior, because they allow people to “link individual human actions into an understanding composite.”² This understanding composite allows an individual to craft broad narratives that help them understand and explain why they acted as they did in any given circumstance. Additionally, this understanding composite allows a person to understand her/his place in the world and their roles in life. The women who participated in this study offer an excellent example of this process of narrative understanding. During the interviews, not only did they speak about events that took place in their lives, they always did so in a way that fit within a broader narrative that helped them understand what took place as well as their own actions in response. For example, each of the participants had an elaborate call narrative, but this narrative of how they received their call to ministry was never an isolated event. Instead, it often came up as a reason for why they are engaged in pastoral ministry and how they carry out that ministry today. Moreover, their experiences with gender-based resistance allowed them to see themselves as “trailblazers” or “pioneers.” These roles provided the women involved in the study a way to make sense of the difficult things that had happened to them during their ministries. This understanding has also shaped how they plan to keep carrying out their ministries in the future, thus establishing that the participants display a perfect example of Polkinghorne’s idea of narrative cognition and narrative sense-making.

Building on Polkinghorne’s ideas, the results of this study also clearly display a cultural-linguistic approach to religion and praxis. One way the cultural-linguistic approach to theology presents itself in the results of this study is in its ideas that the scriptures create a world for

² Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing*, 13.

believers to indwell. For example, in Anna's case, when I asked her how her baptism in the Holy Spirit and Pentecostalism factored into her understanding of the scriptures that some use to argue she should not be in pastoral ministry, she responded this way:

So, what I believe is that um I know that in the AG is that we say we are People of the Spirit. We are Pentecostal people who believe that the Spirit was poured out on all flesh. And that to me, speaks to an equality, and when you look at Christ, and you look at what Jesus has done for us, the cross, the resurrection, um all of that, his life was spend bringing equality of value to people and elevating those who have been made low and um the favoritism aspect that can come within systems, um, was spoken against. I mean, just even throughout the New Testament there is this idea of caring for the poor, and those things, and so I see the work of the Spirit as fulfilling and continuing the work of Jesus in making people, and not just making people equal, but showing us we are equal in the Spirit.

In this response, Anna clearly demonstrates the narrative-theological quality of the Pentecostal approach to scripture and hermeneutics. She sees the work of Jesus as one that elevated women and brought equality, and the work of the Holy Spirit carried that on and continues to do so today; as she says, the work of the Spirit is "fulfilling and continuing the work of Jesus in making people equal" and "showing them they are equal in the Spirit." The way in which she constructs her argument and assumes it applies to today in the same way is a perfect example of the subject being analyzed.

Jenny also displayed this idea of the scriptures creating a world for her to indwell. For Jenny, functioning in the gifts of the Spirit are a perfect example of this because she insists that the believer today should expect to function in the spiritual gifts in the same way they are portrayed in the scriptural account. She repeatedly discussed the prophetic, specifically her understanding of the "word of wisdom" and how it helped her lead her church and shepherd her people, whether within her sermons or within her counseling sessions. However, she also clearly referenced the scriptures as a way to understand these gifts and how they should and should not function within various settings. It is fair to say, though, that Jenny's ministry depends on the

active function of the spiritual gifts, and she sees a clear precedent for it in scripture, as well as seeing her own actions as carrying on that same story.

Mary displayed a very similar understanding of how the scriptures function in a way that creates a whole world for her to indwell, which she shows by explaining that all of the experiences she has with the Spirit are firmly grounded within the scriptures themselves, going so far as to say, “So, I would say like my experiences with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and my understanding of scripture is what causes me to be Pentecostal, right? And not like I'm Pentecostal and therefore this is how it affects my ministry.” Notice here that she grounds her experience within the scriptures, and this causes her to be a Pentecostal, which is the community and the world in which she functions and ministers.

All three of the participants also exemplify Vanhoozer's canonical-linguistic approach. First, as mentioned previously, they all see themselves as being firmly anchored within the script and directed by the Holy Spirit, even though there have been many voices that have told them this was not possible and even sinful. Due to this resistance, they have crafted elaborate and sophisticated understandings of how their lived experience fits the roles they have been assigned by the direction of the Holy Spirit, which also displays the improvisational approach to theology that Vanhoozer discusses in *Drama of Doctrine*. The participants in this study have had to engage in the process of spontaneous improvisation as they have attempted to carry out their pastoral ministries. The results of this study show women who have used their lived experience to ready themselves for future action and “preparedness to fit in and contribute to whatever starts to happen.” As they have experienced resistance, they have used those experiences to prepare themselves for future instances of it, while also seeking to act during those instances in such a way that is consistent with their call to ministry and understanding of the scriptures.

Furthermore, their lived experience perfectly displays the process of improvisational narrative reincorporation as described by Vanhoozer. They have had to continually engage in this process in order to make sense of their experiences and to figure out how to perform their theology in a way that they see to be consistent with the both the direction of the Holy Spirit and the scriptural “script,” and they do so by looking at their past experiences and using them to spontaneously improvise their responses to resistance. In fact, their common view of themselves as “trailblazers” or “pioneers” is this exact process. Because of the things they have experienced, and specifically the many types of resistance, they have decided to craft a new narrative understanding of a significant part of their ministries. Instead of just doing their best to be in ministry and carrying it out on their own, they have used their past and present experiences to create a new role and understanding that requires them to help improve things for other women leaders in the AG. This is why Anna talks about “clearing the jungle in front of her,” why Jenny insists on the importance of women in visible positions of authority, and why Mary remains committed to and vocal within an organization that often leaves her feeling ambivalent; they have all developed an understanding that this is something they not only want to do; they also feel a responsibility to do so.

This study utilizes the research perspective of social-constructionism within the field of narrative inquiry. Social constructionism is interested in how human beings collectively construct their own realities,³ and it views reality as negotiated and subjective and examines how those realities are created and experienced within various communities. Moreover, narrative projects see reality as a product of co-construction between researcher and participants, since no event or experience can ever be re-experienced by either researcher or participant. Therefore, as

³ Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 121.

the researcher I crafted questions in an attempt to offer the participants a chance to narratively reconstruct their lived experience(s). Since my questions, inquiries, and requests for clarification or explanation guided this process, the participants and I engaged in the process of co-construction of their subjective experiences in an attempt to understand them.

A second way of interpreting the results of this study is to discover how they correspond to the chosen research methodology. Squire's Experience-centered Culturally-oriented approach to narrative research focuses on four main elements. These elements are: How the gathered narratives are sequential and meaningful, how they are definitively human, how they re-present, reconstitute and express experience, and how they display transformation and/or development. Each one of these elements will be examined below.

All of the narratives gathered during this study exhibit sequence, though they do so in different ways depending on the narrative style of the participants. There are also some similarities between the ways they structure their stories. It should be stated that no typology is perfect; it is likely that some exceptions to the narrative typologies offered below could be found somewhere in the transcripts. Additionally, due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, I sometimes asked for clarification of what the participant meant, or if they had an example of what they were talking about. As a result, some shifts in time or narrative order are due to the questions asked by the interviewer. Nevertheless, all three respondents can be classified in loose typologies; offered below.

Anna

Anna uses a mixture of a chronological and fractured approach to narrative structure. In this case, "fractured" refers to the idea that she moves forward and backward in time and does not follow a strictly chronological order in storytelling. As one reads through her transcript, it is

evident that she usually follows a fairly chronological approach to answering the interview questions, but she shifts back and forth in time in order to give an example of what she means or offer a corollary story that demonstrates her point. This is not unusual, since most people do not plan their narratives out sequentially before telling them. Furthermore, the interview questions I asked also required a little bit of chronological flexibility, since they didn't ask her to relate things in a chronological succession. For example: The first two questions asked participants to describe their experience of being called to ministry and their first pastoral position, respectively. The third question, though, simply asks for an example of when they have experienced conflict or resistance. The open-ended quality of this question (and some others) makes a strictly chronological response extremely unlikely.

A good example of the narrative structure Anna employs can be seen in her response to my prompting to tell me about her call to ministry. She responds in this way:

1. Explains her family background and familiarity with the church.
2. Begins to tell about a missions trip to Ghana wherein she received her call to ministry.
 - a. In the middle of this story, she shifts backwards in time and explains her experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which she sees as instrumental to receiving her calling.
 - i. Devotes a fair bit of time to explaining how this experience was normal and not "weird" like it sometimes is in Pentecostal churches.
3. Returns to her story of experiencing her call to ministry in Ghana.
4. Explains how this affected her when she returned to the United States.

Anna's narrative style remained consistent between both interviews.

Jenny

Jenny has a somewhat unique approach to narrative structure. Like Anna, Jenny does not always follow a chronological structure in her narrative responses. Sometimes she does offer details in a chronological format, but she almost always offers other details or stories that she sees as important that may or may not be in chronological order. As a result, she employs a mixture of both chronological and fractured narrative approach. For example, in responding to the question about her calling, she begins at the very logical place of her childhood and her heavy involvement in the church. However, while doing this she also gave many details about the church she attended, about her parents' spiritual status and relationships, and many other things. This was the general approach Jenny took to answering the interview questions. Her approach to answering the question that prompts her to tell me about her call to ministry is a perfect example of this. In order to demonstrate this, I have put the events in chronological order, but included the details she included about each point. As noted above, these details were often not in chronological order.

1. She explains how she was raised in an AG church where she was very involved.
 - a. While doing so, she offers the following details: Her introversion, she classifies her mother as a “zealot,” the Jesus Movement is going on at this point in history, the church was a storefront church offered by her parents.
2. Her grandmother gave a prophetic word in which she felt a call to ministry.
 - a. Details: she was confused by this because she only saw women in the missions field, her sisters stuttered and she had picked it up as well, the church grew over the next few years.
3. She attended seminary in order to pursue her call to ministry.

- a. Details: her father's pragmatism pushed her to ensure she had education so she could get stable employment, she and her sisters were taught how to do practical things like change their oil, etc.
4. She was confused about how to follow God's calling to ministry, so she engaged in urgent and persistent prayer for direction. A phone call to her grandmother clarified this calling.
 - a. Detail: her grandmother was from Arkansas, uneducated, but still a spiritual mentor.
5. Her father's death also compelled her and helped clarify her call to ministry.
 - a. Her older sister's husband was a chaplain stationed in Germany.
 - b. Her mother had a job that let her provide for herself.
6. Here she returns to the next event in her call narrative, chronologically speaking.

Jenny's narrative continues from there, but any question that asked her to offer a narrative response usually took this format. Her narrative approach remained consistent throughout both interviews.

Mary

Mary's approach to narrative is somewhat different than Anna's or Jenny's. Mary offered the most chronological approach to narrative structure of the three participants. I think Mary's narratives style was affected in some ways by the interview format. In the first interview, Mary was more reserved than the other two participants, and so I had to ask more clarifying questions, and so her narrative style was offered in a more chronological format. In the second interview, however, Mary seemed much more comfortable and offered responses with less prompting, though her narratives were still more chronologically formatted than those of the other

participants. Additionally, Mary is a writer and thus she may be more used to crafting narratives in chronological order.

Mary's call narrative offers a good example of her mostly chronological approach to narrative:

1. Received calling at age twenty-seven.
2. Approached her pastor about it.
3. Was made an associate pastor at her church.
4. Experienced a great deal of emotional difficulty and resistance, both gender and personality based.
5. Describes transition to lead pastor at the church plant she currently pastors.

Mary's narrative approach remained consistent throughout both interviews.

While more could be said about the narrative structures used by the participants, it is somewhat outside the scope of this study to offer an exhaustive examination of narrative structure.

The narrative styles of the participants show a definite sequence. However, they also clearly display meaningfulness for the participants. They narrate their lived experience in ways that display passion, sadness, joy, and many other emotions. As mentioned above, they also help the participants create meaning for the events that have taken place in their lives, both regarding their own action and the actions of others.

This leads to the next important part of the methodology used for this project, and that is the idea that narratives are definitively human. Jerome Bruner's idea that human beings are *homo*

narrans who have an inborn tendency to tell and understand stories⁴ provides a matrix for understanding the results of this study. The participants' narration of their life experiences displays this tendency perfectly. The stories told by the participants have provided them with a way to understand themselves, their careers, divine callings, and their roles in the world. Their act of telling these stories to the researcher also represents an attempt at sense-making; Mary's response that the interviews have been cathartic and helped her understand some of the things that took place in her life is a great example of this. Experience-centered narrative research further develops this idea of narratives being a method of human sense-making by explaining that one of the main ways human beings make sense of their experiences is by crafting what it deems "morality tales." This means they craft the telling of their experiences in such a way as to make a moral point.⁵

The participants in this study certainly present elaborate morality tales. The best example is in the way they talk about their experiences of gender-based resistance. As they talk about the ways in which they feel they've been excluded, overlooked, or even abused due to their gender, they do so to do more than just express pain or sadness. In all three cases, the participants use their stories to talk about how they would like to use their negative experiences to bring positive change for other female pastors in the AG. Anna talks about how her negative experiences have caused her to try and "widen" the door for other female pastors and leaders in the church. Jenny talks about accepting positions of visibility, such as being a district presbyter, with the intent of making it more acceptable and normal to see women in positions of authority and responsibility. Mary gave the example of sharing her experiences in ministry with a video chat with the Church

⁴ Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press): 1990.

⁵ See Riessman definition of narrative in chapter one.

Multiplication Network in an effort to talk about what has been positive and negative in her experiences as a female church planter in her network.

These morality tales offered by the participants allowed a major theme of the interviews to take shape, and that is what I have labeled the theme of being a trailblazer or pioneer. All three participants expressed some variation of this theme in multiple places in their interview responses. Anna talked about how her ministry has felt like she is in a jungle with a machete trying to chop away some of the foliage for future leaders. In addition to Jenny's acceptance of positions of visibility and responsibility, explained above, something that Jenny mentioned repeatedly was that female ministers need to accept any and all ministry opportunities offered to them, partly because she believes they won't get another if they refuse, but also because she thinks that doing so helps the idea of women pastors and leaders to become more normative in the AG as a whole. Mary also expressed how being in the role of a pioneer was rewarding because it allowed her to help lead the way for other women in her network that might need help find the resources and support they need to succeed in their ministries. She also talked about how being a pioneer allowed her to be involved in what she called "culture-setting" for her network, and perhaps even the AG as a whole, at least in some small way.

All three participants use these morality tales to explain their own actions, but they also use them as a call for improvement and change for women leaders within their contexts. One subject that presented itself many times in Anna's interviews was the idea that she felt a kind of "group responsibility" that is unfairly applied to women. This group responsibility took the form of feeling like she had to do everything perfectly because if she did not she would sabotage or prevent opportunities for other potential women leaders. This was mostly because other (male) leaders told her that this would take place. In response, Anna talks about how while she has

accepted that this is an unfair and unrealistic responsibility, it has nevertheless created a passion in her to speak to “injustice and sexism in the church.” She even took this somewhat farther by explaining that it has prompted her to broaden this approach by considering the issue of intersectionality beyond just women, but more specifically how these same unfair expectations are applied to women of color or other minorities. Jenny uses her experiences to argue that (male) district leadership needs to not just be supportive of women in leadership but also need to be actively affirming. Mary talked about how even though she sometimes feels discouraged and has even felt like giving up, she does not do so because “God [has] given [her] the favor and he’s given [her] the opportunity to [she] think[s] make a positive difference.”

These morality tales represent what Ricoeur calls “practical wisdom;” they convey and conduct moral messages that are time dependent and caught in a tradition.⁶ Put simply, these narratives represent the participants’ attempts to make sense of their situatedness within a particular context, and they require a dialectical negotiation of what Ricoeur terms “sedimentation and innovation.”⁷ Widder explains, “Narrative itself has a dual status as a ‘mix of sedimentation and innovation.’ It makes us what we are, while being outside of our full control, but it is also allows us to create, and as such, “it also points toward the possibility of innovation — the second order of meaning — within the sedimented given, which is the first order of meaning.”⁸ Thus, for the participants in this study, they display the way in which their experiences are sedimented within their Pentecostal and AG contexts or traditions and yet at the same time display new ways of understanding and carrying out their pastoral ministries in the

⁶ Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 45.

⁷ Farhang Erfani, *Aesthetics of Autonomy: Ricoeur and Sartre on Emancipation, Authenticity, and Selfhood* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011).

⁸ Farhang Erfani, *Aesthetics of Autonomy*, 48.

face of difficulty and resistance using creativity and innovation. Taken together, the narrative experiences offered by the participants in this study are a concrete example of the methodology's concept that the narratives gathered in Experience-centered narrative research are a process of representation and reconstruction of lived experience.

The last part of the methodology that needs to be examined is the idea that narratives are never static or unchanging; instead, this methodology proposes that narratives will display transformation and development. This was the reason that two interviews were conducted with each participant; it would be difficult to assess transformation or development using only data from one interview. Squire uses Bruner's idea that "stories involve the violation of normality and an attempt, through human agency, at its restoration."⁹ Each participant displayed this process of narrative development over the course of the two interviews conducted. The topics where this was the most evident was in the areas of gender-based resistance and being a trailblazer or pioneer.

As explained above, one of the main ways Anna experienced gender-based resistance was in the group responsibility that she felt was unfairly applied to women (and her specifically). She notes that at the beginning of her ministry this caused her to not accept some invitations to speak or opportunities for leadership roles, because she was concerned about failing in a way that might make things more difficult for other women. However, this sometimes made her feel like she might not be being faithful to her divine call to ministry. As her ministry has continued, she now reports approaching this issue differently. Instead of feeling like the weight of every female pastor in the AG is on her shoulders, Anna now says that the only thing that's required for her to be faithful to her calling is to be obedient: "And if I don't obey [God] then that's where I fail. If I

⁹ Squire, "Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches," 45.

obey then I I'm not failing, you know? If I'm faithful then I'm successful. And so I have really kind of tried to shed that whole I'm responsible for everyone.” This subject presented itself across both interviews, and that narrative Anna has crafted in relation to it displays a tremendous amount of personal growth and development, as well as development in the way she sees her pastoral ministry and the way she can be faithful to her calling. Moreover, it exemplifies the type of narrative development for which the study’s methodology seeks.

Jenny’s narrative of how she has responded to gender-based resistance also presents a great deal of narrative and personal development. Jenny often spoke of how she experienced a distinct lack of mentors, especially early in her ministry. She also believes that this is still a problem for many female pastors today; many male pastors are hesitant to mentor women for fear of how it may appear or simply because of their own discomfort. In response, Jenny has gone out of her way to be a mentor for other women leaders in any way she can. She does this informally with people in her congregation that sense a call to leadership, but she also does so through her position on her district’s credentialing committee. She says that women often apply for a lower level of licensure than what they are eligible for, and in response she will push them to always apply for the highest level of licensure possible. Once they have completed their licensed period, she also does her best to convince women that they need to progress to full ordination, because she believes this will help both the individual’s ministry as well as putting more women in places of visible authority, thus improving things for future women leaders as well. Jenny’s narrative displays a lot of change, because while she started in ministry as someone who felt a lack of needed mentoring, she now seeks to address that problem by mentoring others. This displays a great deal of confidence and maturity and shows a huge amount of transformation in both narrative and in personal and pastoral growth.

Mary's narrative of how she has responded and continues to respond to gender-based resistance is also a transformative one. One of the main things Mary talked about in her interviews was how emotionally difficult it has been for her to be a female pastor in the AG. In her initial experiences in pastoral ministry, Mary reports often feeling misunderstood or accused of having some type of feminist agenda by people in her church, and this response was usually regarding something she saw as innocuous. This created many difficult situations for Mary, because she wasn't always certain of how to respond in a way that was fair to herself but also would not exacerbate the problem. However, as she has continued in ministry, she reports learning how to do what she calls "cross[ing] pain lines" with people when necessary. She says,

Yeah. I mean one of the things I think it really taught me was the importance of crossing those pain lines with people or having, having a straightforward respectful conversation about things that don't seem right. And um learning how to do that in a way where another person isn't feeling defensive or on their guard. I do feel like I have learned to do that really well.

Another way that Mary's narrative of response to gender-based resistance displays transformation is related to this idea of "crossing pain lines" with people. At this point in her ministry, Mary feels somewhat ambivalent about her membership in the AG, largely due to the events that have taken place in her ministry. She says this even makes it difficult to speak about things that she believes need to change:

Yeah, I do that. Um I feel very ambivalent about the broader AG movement. Um, in terms of like being proactive about speaking to things that I see because I don't necessarily have relationship or well-established trust with people who are in power. If you wanna, if I can just say that. And so, I think I'm always concerned about being perceived as critical or having an agenda. I mean it's probably like all the stuff I felt at my old church like there there's just like a nervousness...So, I think there's ambivalence there. Like I do really want to, I do see a lot of things that I would love to see change and I just suspect that some people just haven't heard the perspective that I and maybe some other women share about the way things are structured or like how events happen, or whatever. Culture. But I feel very cautious about you know, sharing any of that stuff.

Furthermore, she says there have been times where she didn't want to "engage in this movement

at all,” largely because of the painful experiences she’s had. She says, however, that she realized she was feeling conviction from the Lord about her ambivalence, and that she believes he wants her to be committed to the movement in order to see change take place. As a result, she has transformed the ways she responds to difficult situations of resistance. Instead of simply confronting people, she now looks for ways to develop relationships or to use relationships that already exist, in an effort to see change take place:

So, I think what I have done instead is try to look for ways where I can connect in a positive way and serve and see if then like there are opportunities for relationships to develop. Because I feel like whatever I might have to share or say, uh is going to be better received if people know me, you know?

The second way that the narratives offered by the participants in this study display development or transformation is in the way they view themselves as trailblazers or pioneers. As previously discussed, all three participants see themselves in this way. Anna’s response to what she views as an unfair double-standard of group responsibility, wherein she felt the weight of all women upon her own shoulders, has developed to the point where she now feels like all she has to do is be faithful and obedient to what God desires for her and she is not responsible for all other women leaders. In her second interview, she talked about how part of this transformation was how she realized that not only was it unfair to her, but this kind of expectation was unfair to other women as well; in Anna’s mind, she is not a representative of women unless she is somehow elected to be such a representative. Jenny’s development as someone who felt a distinct lack of mentors in her own pastoral ministry caused her to seek positions of leadership, such as being a district presbyter and a member of credentialing committees, has allowed her to mentor other women and to help guide them into leadership positions. Her commitment to being in visible positions of leadership also displays this transformation as well, since she talked about how one of the main reasons she accepts and sought out such positions enables her to help other

women in the way she wished someone had helped her. Mary has seen her own leadership develop in a similar way; she believes that her being a “pioneer” has allowed her to help other women leaders who don’t always know how to navigate being in leadership, especially at the beginning of their ministries. Her pioneering is closely related the development discussed above, where she is willing to cross “pain lines” with people in difficult situations. Now, not only is she willing to have those difficult conversations when necessary, she also uses them to build relational rapport, which she sees as centrally important to improving things for female pastors/leaders in the AG. She says,

So, I feel like it's pioneering kind of in that sense, at least that that situation. And then I think because I'm a pretty persistent person and in theory I don't I don't want to cower and I didn't want to hide even if stuff is scary. It does cause me to reach out and have conversations with people that I think like other people, other women might avoid because it feels intimidating or they haven't really figured out how to navigate those waters yet. And so, I think because I do that it's gotten me more relational rapport with people. And so, I have been invited to be part of things that traditionally women haven't been asked to be part of.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature Review

Chapter two presented a review of literature pertinent to this topic. The main categories of works in the literature review were works that examined the historical development of the doctrine and praxis of women in ministry in the AG, works that employed a feminist qualitative approach, and ones that discussed Pentecostal hermeneutics and how they have been employed in relation to the topic of female pastors in the AG. The results will now be discussed in light of the literature review.

The first section of the literature review focused on works that explained the shifts and changes in the status of women pastors within the AG. The participants in this study are in many ways heirs of the historical confusion and mixed messages that have always been present for women who are pastors in the AG. Poloma talks about the AG being at a “crossroads” when it

comes to this issue. This study is not able to answer the question of whether or not the entire AG is in the same place when it comes to this issue, but the fact that the women in this study have experienced similar kinds of experiences to the ones she discovered thirty years ago should prompt further investigation. Qualls' work focused on the rhetorical negotiation and renegotiation that female pastors and leaders have had to engage in throughout the history of the AG, and the participants in this study certainly engaged in this process as well; they constantly had to negotiate and renegotiate their roles and their understanding of those roles with themselves and with others. Indeed, the themes of resistance and trailblazing/pioneering presented in this study are in many ways remarkably similar to the issues presented in the historical treatments of this topic.

In a way that is similar to the historical works, this study also exemplifies the hermeneutical ideas presented in the literature review, especially those presented by Everts-Powers. She discussed how Pentecostals have often been hermeneutically inconsistent by explaining,

Women have an experience of the Spirit that is identical to that of men, parallel with the experience of the church on the day of Pentecost and compatible with the experience of other women in the Bible, they must be empowered to preach the gospel, just as men are. But Pentecostals have failed to carry this narrative hermeneutic into discussions on the position of women in society and the church. This ambiguity has meant that Pentecostals have expanded the traditional ecclesiastical roles of women and allowed them to preach as ministers empowered by the Spirit, and, at the same time, have never been certain if this Spirit empowering gives women the ability to assume positions of authority.¹⁰

One can almost hear the participants in this study saying the same words; not only did they all insist their ministries are divinely ordained and appropriate based on their understanding of scripture, but over and over again they talked about the double standard that is applied to women,

¹⁰ Powers, "Your Daughters Shall Prophesy," 317.

thus illustrating the hermeneutical disconnect described by Everts-Powers.

The section of the literature review that is the most closely related to the results of this study is the section that describes feminist qualitative approaches to examining this topic, namely the works of Lawless, Kwilecki, and McClintock Fulkerson. Since they were very similar in their approach and conclusions, Lawless and Kwilecki will be discussed together. The first of these works, Elaine Lawless' *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion*, presented a narrative examination of interviews conducted with female Pentecostal preachers, as well as an analysis of some of their sermons. In her work, she discovered themes of women doing what she called "rescripting," whereby the women she studied would intentionally adapt their approaches in ministry to fulfill different roles which allowed them to be accepted by their congregations. One of the primary ways this process took place was for the women to portray themselves as the "mother" of the congregation, which resulted in them using a great deal of maternal and reproductive imagery in their sermons and interactions with their congregants. Another way she talked about the women she interviewed rescripting their lives was by discussing the fact that she saw them adopting the themes of passive submission, especially to God. She believed this made them much less threatening to their congregations, especially for the men.

Comparing Lawless' results to the results of this study present some similarities and some divergences. Certainly, the participants in this study engaged in a process of rescripting their lives and how they carried out their ministries. In fact, their reactions to resistance often displayed them figuring out how to respond in a way that would be heard and also help bring change, such as when Mary deliberately looked try to bring about change in the context of relationship rather than just being angry or "yelling at people." I would argue that their views of

themselves as trailblazers/pioneers is yet another example of this process of rescripting, since it was a process they developed over time in response to the resistance they experienced.

Moreover, this process involved significant development and was the result of reflection on past experiences.

Another important element of Lawless' work was the idea that the women she interviewed employed reproductive and maternal imagery in order to make themselves less threatening and therefore more acceptable to their congregations. This did appear in the interview data for this project, though it was nuanced in a different way. In Lawless' account, the women she interviewed explicitly called themselves the mother of the congregation and used maternal imagery in their sermons and interactions with congregants. This explicit use of this kind of imagery did not appear for the participants for this study. However, there were some elements of maternal and/or reproductive imagery offered in the data gathered during the interview process. Anna discussed how she views the Holy Spirit as being feminine and engaging with people in a feminine manner, which for her was a gentle way that mirrored the approach her mother took while raising her. She then talked about how she attempts to mirror this approach in her preaching and ministry. So, while she never calls herself the mother of her congregation she nevertheless employs a motherly approach to her preaching and pastoral ministry. Mary also used distinct maternal and reproductive imagery in her explanation of the prophetic dreams she experiences. In it, she talks about how she had a prophetic dream about the new church she was going to plant, and she directly links the birth of her twins, both in the dream and in real-life, to the birth of her new ministry. She did not report explicitly employing this type of language in her sermons or with her church members, however. Interestingly, the only place Jenny used any kind of maternal imagery is when she commented that millennials sometimes see her in a mother type

role.

McClintock Fulkerson's *Changing the Subject* evaluated the performances of Pentecostal women preachers to assess the degree of liberation or oppression the women she studied experienced.¹¹ Admitting that her evaluation is a product of her "feminist grid," she claims that their practices have a "transgressive but predominantly status quo relationship to the rules of their canonical system."¹² That is, while McClintock Fulkerson admires the way the women she studied perform their religion within a system that provides conflicting messages about what is and is not appropriate for women, she nevertheless sees their working within and submission to that system as being an oppressive arrangement. This study is not seeking to assess how "liberated" the participants are or are not. However, it is important to point out that the participants in this study do not seem to be maintaining a status quo relationship to their canonical system. This is why when Jenny's professor told her that the AG would never "give her a church," she responded with "Then it's a good thing I'm not relying on the AG to give me one." Similarly, Anna's evolving understanding of the fact that she is not representative of all women unless she is somehow elected to be so is another great example, because she sees her only responsibility to be obedient to God in whatever she's called to do. Mary's conviction from the Spirit about her feeling of ambivalence and her subsequent commitment to speaking out about the things she has experienced instead of "yelling at people" is yet another example of not being happy with the status quo for women in the AG. In fact, all three participants see their complete dependence on God as a way help them navigate through the resistance they've experienced in their lives, and I believe this is what has led them to see themselves as trailblazers

¹¹ See chapter two for a more detailed discussion of these terms and how they are employed.

¹² McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 241–42.

and pioneers. Instead of merely accepting the status quo of the conflicting and confusing roles of women in the AG, they have crafted the new identity of trailblazers or pioneers as a way to help improve the situations of themselves and of other women in the AG.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Research Problem and Research Question

The research problem that prompted this study is: due to the complex and often confusing history of the status of women pastors in the AG fellowship, there is a lack of understanding of how female pastors in the AG understand and narrate their own experience as pastors within the fellowship. This project has investigated this in great detail. It has done so by conducting interviews, detailed analysis, and a thematic interpretation of the results. Additionally, it did so with an eye to respecting the participants' own views and allowed them to be as involved in the interpretive process as possible. The researcher has shaped and presented an interpretation, but the participants were given a chance to speak to their own understandings of the themes discovered by the researcher in the second interview.

The research question is: given the complex and inconsistent history and present reality faced by women in the AG, how do the participants in this study narrate their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches? In response to this, the conclusions of this project display narrative understandings that use experiences of gender-based resistance to shape elaborate morality tales that display a transformed understanding of themselves as trailblazers/pioneers who feel a responsibility in some way to help improve things for other women leaders in the AG. This has been an arduous process that is certainly still in development, but the transformation is nevertheless evident in their narrative accounts.

Discussion of How these Results Could Be Used Within Various Cultural Settings

An important part of considering how these results can be understood and applied requires

a discussion of how they could be used within various cultural settings. Because this study is situated within the context of American Pentecostal studies, this section will examine how these results could be used within the AG itself, as well as within other Pentecostal denominations.

The main themes examined in this study are those of gender-based resistance and the fact that the participants in the study see themselves as pioneers or trailblazers. These two themes should provoke many questions within the AG, on the national level, the district level, and within local churches. First, while this study does not present generalizable results and cannot speak to the experience of every female pastor in the AG, it does present a rich understanding of the experiences of the women it studies. Therefore, the first thing the AG needs to do is discover how common these experiences are for women who are in leadership in the AG. They could do a larger study, or perhaps one with a different methodology, in an attempt to get a better idea of what it is like to be a female pastor in the AG. They could ask more women who are in pastoral ministry what their lived experience has been like, and they could also inquire as to whether or not they have experienced the same kinds of resistance faced by the women in this study. The results of this inquiry could lead to a clearer depiction of the actual status of female leaders within the fellowship. I believe the best way to do so would be to have a deeper understanding of the experiences of the people involved; in this case, AG female pastors.

Second, all three of the participants in this study reported instances of feeling affirmed or supported in their ministries. While this is undoubtedly a positive thing, examining how other women have experienced this affirmation, or if they have at all, would assist the fellowship in determining ways to further support and affirm women in ministry. This is important since this has been the official stance of the AG since 1932. All three of the women who participated in this study recognized what they view as progress that has taken place at the national level, yet

they all reported feeling like there was still room for improvement. Therefore, the AG national fellowship could assess what it can do to further build on the progress they've made thus far.

Given the fact that the AG is a voluntary cooperative fellowship wherein the national AG has little control over specific districts or local churches, these results also need to be considered at a district level. An important element of the results of this study is that all three participants reported experiencing the most gender-based resistance at the district level in various different ways. Of the three accounts, Jenny's was the most optimistic about the trajectory of female leaders within the AG, and she noted that she was able to see progress in and through her ministry because she had excellent district leadership that were supportive and affirming of women in leadership roles. Therefore, it would behoove the districts that make up the AG to ask themselves the same types of questions as discussed at the national level, above. After doing so, they could also consult with female pastors in their districts, even if it was through a more informal means than this type of study. Additionally, since the districts of the AG are made up of credentialed ministers, if people within the various districts decide that its current leadership is not affirming enough of women in ministry, they could make that opinion clear at district councils and through their votes for district leadership.

Local churches also play a part in this process. While it is unlikely that many (if any) local churches will be able to ask themselves questions about the status of women leaders within the AG, they could ask themselves similar questions, albeit in a more specific context. If they believe that their church, whether on a local, district, or national level, should affirm women being roles of pastoral leadership, they could seek out ways to equip and affirm women leaders from within their congregations. This could take many forms; it could be as simple as making women visible leaders within the congregation, or it could be hiring a female pastor.

Naturally, it is possible that the various levels of the AG could use this study as a platform to ask these kinds of questions and after doing so they could conclude many different things. They could decide that many changes need to be made and that the fellowship needs to go out of its way to be more affirming or supportive of women in roles of pastoral leadership. Conversely, they could also conclude that there's not very much that needs to be done, or they could recognize a problem but not be sure how to address it. It is more likely, however, that they would reach a conclusion somewhere between the two. The varied and voluntary structure of the AG presents many challenges to making any kind of systemic changes, and if they decide to do so it would likely be a slow process.

These results could also be used within broader classical Pentecostal contexts. While other classical Pentecostal groups are not identical to the AG, there is a shared heritage and history that would allow other groups within the larger classical Pentecostal family to ask similar questions as asked here in this study. There would of course be many differences to consider; for example, some Pentecostal groups offer full ordination to women, some offer a partial or modified one, and some don't ordain women at all. Asking questions about the status of women within their various contexts could look very different and might need appropriate contextual modifications.

Limitations

Since no research is perfect, it is important to discuss some of the limitations that affected this study. I believe there were three main limitations that presented themselves in the course of the research.

The first such limitation was the fact that all of the interviews that were conducted for this study were done so over Skype or similar programs. I do not believe this hampered the research

in any major way, but there were times where we had brief technical difficulties, which made the interviews take longer and also required either the interviewer or participant to ask for things to be repeated. More importantly for this type of research, I think that in-person interviews would have helped more quickly establish rapport. I think this was achieved relatively quickly overall even despite using online interviews, but the first interviews especially seemed to require more relational effort on the part of the interviewer. I think this would have felt more natural if I had met the participants in person. However, after the second interview, all the participants expressed gratitude for being a part of the study as well as interest in reading it when it was completed.

Another limitation is that the dissertation process limited the number of interviews that could be conducted. Given that the methodology requires the researcher to assess narrative development/transformation, it would have been helpful to conduct at least one more interview with each participant that asked them about how they view the transformative process evident in their narratives. I do not think this created a significant flaw in the project; it was definitely possible to track development across the two interviews. Additionally, every study could always use more data, but part of the process of qualitative research is knowing when to finish gathering data and formulate it into useable results.

Lastly, the participants in this study were asked to read the transcripts of the first interview before the second interview took place. This was done because I wanted to give them a chance to react to the first interview. After conducting the second interview, though, this was somewhat problematic. All three of the participants expressed concern about using too many filler words such as “um,” “you know,” etc. Also, one participant said that she felt like she talked “too much” in the first interview. I assured them that this was normal and that they should do their best not to worry about it, but it definitely affected their approach to answering questions in the second

interview. That said, as the second interview went on they seemed to be less concerned about how they spoke and seemed more focused on simply responding to the questions. Even though letting the participants respond to the first transcripts created some difficulty in the second interview, I still believe it was necessary to give them an opportunity to respond in this way. Given that the study is being conducted by a man, and that it focuses on the lived experience of women, all of whom discuss experiencing marginalization and resistance from men, it seemed necessary to give them as many chances as possible to voice their own feelings and reactions to the topic.

Interpretive Group and Triangulation

As discussed in chapter three, an important part of qualitative research is the process of triangulation. The method of triangulation used in this project was submitting elements of the research and interpretation to interested others.¹³ The reason for this external testing is that it helps the researcher see things he or she might miss, and it also adds important perspective to the analytical process. As noted in chapter three, the goal of the process of triangulation is not necessarily consensus but is instead a way to understand multiple ways of seeing and interpreting data. The members of the interpretive group were two AG pastors, (one of whom is a district presbyter), and one retired pastor who is ordained in the United Church of Christ. Their names have been withheld in the interests of confidentiality, and will therefore be referred to as Member one, two, or three.

When asked if they thought “Resistance” was an appropriate way to label the experiences of the women who participated in the study, members one and two thought that the term was

¹³ Squire, “Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches,” 50.

appropriate. Member one stated:

Yes, I think “Resistance” is a term or concept that is broad enough to encompass these examples and many which I have experienced in ministry, both overt and subtle. There are many different beliefs/traditions that are underneath the resistance, stereotypes, theology, culture, gender discrimination, patriarchy, etc. ... Yes, I think “Resistance” is a term or concept that is broad enough to encompass these examples and many which I have experienced in ministry, both overt and subtle. There are many different beliefs/traditions that are underneath the resistance, stereotypes, theology, culture, gender discrimination, patriarchy, etc.

Member two stated:

I do think that the term/concept, “resistance” is appropriate. I was thinking also of, “opposition,” (“opposition”: a hostile or contrary action or condition; “resistance”: any opposing or retarding force) ... I might add, “oppress/oppression.” “Oppress”: to crush; trample; to burden spiritually as if with weight; to weigh down; to crush, burden, or trample down by abuse of power or authority; to treat with unjust rigor or with cruelty.

Interestingly, member three did not think that “resistance” was the most appropriate term to use for the excerpts she was provided. She said:

I do not think resistance is an accurate label for the excerpts. This is not really what I would consider resistance, but it is misogyny and misogyny is exhausting and discouraging. I also just feel like the word resistance abstracts the truth of it, it’s not that there is just an obstacle that you push through, or something that gives way; the experiences are ongoing and probably unending. Resistance could mean this, but I don’t think that it immediately evokes that understanding. I would perhaps label it as degradation, though it’s hard to give a hard and fast label without more context of your writing.

I believe that member three raises some good points in her response. The focus of her disagreement seems to be that “Resistance” is too broad of a term that doesn’t fully encompass the experiences described. Her point about “resistance” making it sound like something that is overcome after a single struggle is compelling; all three of the study participants provided narratives that displayed ongoing negative experiences that were not easily overcome after just one instance of struggle. In response to member three’s concerns, I believe that while she makes good points, part of her objection to the term is because she does not have all of the data from the

study — a point she makes herself. The reason that I chose “Resistance,” as the category is because I had numerous different subcategories under the larger category of “Resistance.” Interestingly enough, “degradation” was one of them. Additionally, while I understand why she would label the excerpts as “misogyny,” I was hesitant use that term unless the participants used it themselves. I do not mean that it is inappropriate, but I believe that to label one of the main themes of the study as misogyny would perhaps unfairly influence my interpretation of the data. Note also that the other two group members referenced similar concepts of “oppression” and “patriarchy.” Based on the responses from the interpretive group as a whole, “Resistance” seems to be an accurate and appropriate way to describe one of the main themes present in the results of this study.

The second selection of excerpts provided to the interpretive group dealt with the theme of “Trailblazer/Pioneer.” In a similar way to “Resistance,” members one and two thought this was an appropriate description. Member 1 stated: “Yes, I think that term works very well to capture these examples and what I have experienced in ministry.” Member two stated: Yes, the term/concept, “trailblazer/pioneer” is appropriate in light of the excerpts and my own story. I would also add, “forerunner.” “Forerunner”: a messenger sent before to give notice of the approach of others; harbinger.”

Conversely, member three stated provided a longer response that is worth quoting in full:

No, I think it becomes an almost caricature of what is going on, it makes it seem as though the struggle is almost over or that there is an easy way for the people coming behind, or that these are superheroes who can do/bear more than the average person. Jesus is the trailblazer/pioneer (author/perfecter). Part of the issue is that people tell us it is our job to make the way for others, but in my strength, gifting, ability, I am unable. It becomes part of the oppressive narrative that discourages women from doing the work in front of them, because if you don’t do it well enough you have closed the road for those behind you. (I was literally in a meeting this week where this was the exact narrative as to why we can’t have a female camp speaker, because she has to be perfect or it’s ruined for the whole gender ...) Or on the flip side can

become a badge of honor that tells women to be prideful of what only God could accomplish... I think a better term is forbearers: what I mean by that is: women who have gone ahead, have fought battles, who have borne the burdens, who have gained wisdom and insight to encourage women behind them, but the way will likely always be difficult, and God is the only one who can make the way for the next generation of female pastors. We have a responsibility to the next generation, but we are not the authors of their stories, nor can we take credit for their journey, and we cannot tell ourselves that we have destroyed the path for those coming behind us. We can only help as God gives us ability & opportunity to do so.

Member 3's objection to the term "Pioneer/Trailblazer," is worth discussing. The crux of her objection is that using the idea of a "pioneer" or "trailblazer" puts too much weight or responsibility on the women themselves and actually becomes part of the "oppressive narrative that discourages women from doing the work in front of them" because of the unfair expectations that are placed upon them. However, in the second interview I asked the participants about being a pioneer or trailblazer, and all three of them expressed that they thought the term was appropriate and even seemed mostly comfortable describing themselves that way. That being said, I think member 3's point that being a pioneer or trailblazer does not mean that the issues or struggles will simply disappear or stop happening. In many ways this comment is very similar to Anna's complaints about group responsibility. Therefore, it is important for the reader to note that when I use the terms "pioneer" or "trailblazer," this is not intended to indicate that the participants have solved all their problems or that resistance will disappear. Additionally, I suspect that if I were to interview them again and ask them their perspective on this comment, they would agree that their struggles with resistance has not solved itself, and I also believe that they would agree that they are not the authors of the stories of all the women coming behind them.

The responses from the interpretive group are distinctly helpful in the process of triangulation for this study. Given the responses from all three members of the group, I do not think there need to be any major changes to the focus on the themes of Resistance or

Pioneer/Trailblazing, though member three's comments provided helpful nuance that had not occurred to me.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations Based upon the Results of the Data Analysis

As expected with qualitative research, no project can analyze every theme that arises in the process of gathering data. This project chose to focus on the themes of resistance and trailblazing/pioneering because they were what the researcher determined were the most interesting as well as the best fit with the historical, hermeneutical, and methodological focus of the study. However, this means that some topics that came up in the previous chapter were not able to be explored in as much detail as they could be. There are three such topics that I would recommend for further study.

First, an important part of the lived experience of all of the participants is their divine call to ministry. I asked the participants about this in the first interview, and they all had elaborate call narratives that they use as a part of their larger understanding of their own lived experience. While these call narratives did play a part in my analysis, especially since they were a part of the narrative summaries of each of the participants provided in chapter 4, they could be the focus of their own study. A future study could explore the idea of a Pentecostal call narrative and could then examine how women's call narratives affect their approach to ministry. A study could also be done that compares the call narratives of Pentecostal¹⁴ women to those of Pentecostal men. Doing so would present another interesting element that could be used to develop further understanding of this topic.

¹⁴ Naturally, it could also compare the call narratives of non-Pentecostals or compare Pentecostals to non-Pentecostals.

Second, all three of the participants mentioned how difficult they find it to network, which is something they view as an integral part of being successful in ministry. This topic was discussed in places during this project since this was often a way in which the participants had experienced gender-based resistance, or it was part of how they see themselves as trailblazers or pioneers, since they all helped form networks for women in ministry. However, it would be fruitful to investigate this topic in a deeper manner. Doing so could help provide an understanding as to whether this is feeling of difficulty in networking in ministry is something that is a product of biological or emotional gender difference, a patriarchal system that leaves little opportunity for women to engage in successful networking, or any other factors. This would help provide another avenue for exploring this subject, and it might also assist women in ministry who feel a similar lack of ability to network.

Third, another element that arose during the data analysis that could benefit from further research is the idea of how the gender of the participants has benefitted their ministry. For example, Jenny mentioned that her gender seems to be an asset when interacts with millennials, and Mary discussed how being part of a minority has created a sensitivity to the feelings experienced by marginalized groups, and that this has caused her to seek to create as diverse a church as possible. Anna talked about using a gentler approach which allows her to sometimes bring up issues with people in a helpful way that men may have more difficulty doing. While these were discussed in places in this study, a more in-depth examination of this idea would be very interesting.

Recommendation Based Upon the Methodology or Research Design

The methodology employed by this project focuses on the way in which narrative functions and how people use narrative to understand themselves and their experiences. There are two

recommendations for future research based on this methodology.

First, the section above that discusses how narratives function as morality tales talked about how the participants' narratives of experiencing resistance has allowed them to create detailed morality tales about how what they have experienced is wrong and how they do not want to see it continue, both for themselves and for others. There are other dimensions of this that could be fruitfully explored; for example, what other experiences have they had that have allowed them to craft similar morality tales? This study could also attempt to explore how these morality tales are communicated to others, especially in the cases where marginalization has taken place. It could do so by inquiring how the morality tales of the participants have caused them to act in relation to others.

Secondly, since this methodology focuses a great deal on how narratives develop and change over time, it would be both helpful and fruitful to conduct another interview with these same participants in the future, especially after a significant amount of time. How have the narratives offered by these participants developed after five or ten years, or possibly even longer? Presenting a longer examination of the responses of the participants could display the process of narrative transformation in a very distinct and more holistic manner.

Another possible recommendation based on the methodology is to recognize that by choosing a specific methodology a researcher limits herself or himself to only being able to explore certain things in certain ways. Therefore, choosing a different methodology would allow a researcher to examine this same topic using different avenues, and this might present a more holistic understanding of this topic. For example, a qualitative study that uses a larger sample size might present results that are more generalizable. Or, a project might utilize a grounded theory approach to create a theoretical answer for why female pastors in the AG have

experienced the things they've experienced in their lives, etc. There are numerous ways this topic could be examined using various approaches, and doing so could be very helpful in providing understanding of the topic.

Recommendations Based Upon Limitations

Of the limitations listed above, the one that seemed to be the most significant was the fact that all the interviews had to be conducted over the internet instead of in-person. I believe that if the interviews had been conducted in person, it may have been possible to more quickly establish rapport, which might have led to more avenues to explore in data analysis. In addition to rapport, as the interviewer I would have been more comfortable conducting the interviews in person because I would not have had to worry about technology working/not working and could have focused more closely on the interviews themselves. Because of this, any future study conducted on this topic would benefit from finding a way to conduct the interviews in person rather than over Skype.

Another recommendation based on the limitations is that I believe the project would benefit from further interviews; it would be nice to have the opportunity to ask for clarification on some issues that were not able to be explored in either the first or the second interview. Of course, every study could employ endless interviews and at some point the researcher needs to stop gathering data, but in this case, it would be helpful to further explore the main topics of resistance and trailblazing/pioneering, especially with an eye to what the participants envision for the future. Another possible approach would be to interview a different set of participants to determine how experiences differed or related.

Lastly, after conducting this study I would recommend not letting participants read the transcripts in between interviews. As discussed above, this created some difficulty during the

second interview, especially in the form of the participants feeling self-conscious about their responses. While we were able to overcome this, and I do not believe it undermined the project in a major way, it did create difficulty.

Recommendations Based Upon Issues Not Supported by the Data

One topic that would be a very interesting future research project was mentioned by Mary in the first interview. In one of her last responses, she mentioned that she had experienced some instances of resistance from other women who seemed to be very resistant to other women being in pastoral leadership. Because this was outside of the scope of this study it was not investigated. However, I do believe it would make a very interesting corollary study that would present another unique dimension of this subject. A project could be conducted that is similar to this one that focused on female pastors' experiences of resistance from other women.

Second, this study focused on the lived experience of three female lead pastors in the AG. The qualitative narrative methodology and sample size preclude the study from making generalizable conclusions about the lived experience of every woman pastor in the AG. However, a larger study could be conducted that might be able to provide a broader perspective on the issue. Perhaps the AG could commission and support such a study. It could also be possible to do a similar study that used a different methodology that would more easily handle a larger sample size.

Conclusion

This project began by presenting the research problem: due to the complex confusing history of women in leadership in the AG, there is a lack of understanding of how female pastors in the AG understand and narrate their own experience as pastors within the fellowship. To investigate this research problem, the study sought to discover how the participants in the study

narrate their lived experience as lead pastors in AG churches. After recruiting participants and conducting interviews, the study presents the idea that the participants narrate their lived experiences as female lead pastors in the AG as a process of gender-based resistance that has led to an understanding of themselves as trailblazers or pioneers who want to help other female leaders within the fellowship experience fewer instances of gender-based resistance that can hinder them from carrying out their ministries. The narratives offered by the participants display the qualities of the Pentecostal narrative-experiential approach to hermeneutics, and they also are perfect examples of Vanhoozer's concepts of a canonical-linguistic spontaneous improvisational approach to theology and praxis. They also clearly display the elements of Squire's approach to narrative research, in that the narratives offered by the participants are sequential and meaningful, they are a definitively human approach to making sense of experiences which are represented during research, and they have also developed and transformed over time.

The researcher believes that the AG would greatly benefit by examining these results and using them as a basis for introspection and inquiry. They could be used to ask broader questions and investigate an important subject that directly affects the lives of AG pastors, district/national leadership, and local church members.

APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTS : INTERVIEWS

Appendix A presents the transcriptions of the interviews conducted during this project. Each interview was conducted over Skype, and I used a handheld recording device to record the dialog between myself and the participant. The recordings were then transferred from the recorder to my computer for formatting and editing. I used a voice-to-text software program called Sonix that generated the text of the interview from the recordings. Voice-to-text algorithms are not perfect, so after the software transcribed the interview I then listened to the recording multiple times while editing the document to make the transcripts as accurate as possible.

Anyone who transcribes recording interviews must engage in an interpretive process. The transcriber must decide if she or he wants to include non-verbal utterances and other elements such as coughing or laughter. For these transcripts, I tried to describe the recordings as accurately as possible. To that end, I included all repeated words, non-verbal utterances such as “mmhm,” “uh,” etc. I also indicated things like laughter or coughing by putting the word in square brackets. In terms of punctuation, I did my best to punctuate the transcripts in a way that made them readable without losing the conversational quality of the interview process. Additionally, the participants occasionally offered identifying details about themselves during their narration. Any such details were redacted. I indicated this in the transcript when this took place. Lastly, I added line numbers to the transcripts for the process of analysis.

1 **ANNA: FIRST INTERVIEW**

2 Ryan: Ok, so the first question I have is I would like to ask you just to tell me about your call to
3 ministry.

4
5 Anna: Ok. So um I was raised um by my parents are first generation Christians, so they didn't
6 come to know the Lord until they were in High School and they got married um very young and
7 had me very young, and so um I grew up but I grew up going to church so they made a decisions
8 not to long after I was born that this faith they had both come to know in High School separately
9 apart from one another should be a part of their lives...

10
11 R: And was that the AG, or was that a different church at first?

12
13 A: No. No. [Laughs] No um my uh no my Dad was invited to a Presbyterian Church in High
14 school and my mom was actually saved in the Mormon Church, so...

15
16 R: Ok

17 A: there's a whole story there but um has since, you know, realized that was not a thing, So they
18 started going to they started actually just attending um they tried a Lutheran Church at first, they
19 tried a Presbyterian church, and ended up settling in kind of non-denominational charismatic
20 churches.

21
22 R: Right

23
24 A: Um we always went to small church plants, actually, which is funny, which is actually where
25 I ended up pastoring

26
27 R: that's interesting, isn't it?

28
29 A: yeah, it's really intriguing cause we were my dad was military um and so we moved every
30 two to four years and um a lot of my earliest memories were churches where we were in
31 community centers um or small venues where we had to set up and tear down, and my parents
32 were

33
34 R: Mobile church type idea?

35
36 A: Yeah, yeah. So we were in a small town and ended up meeting in a meeting room in one of
37 their museums, and um you know stuff like that. I remember attending ballet in the same place I
38 went to church cause that was like the church rented that space, you know? Um and so grew up
39 non-denominational, um, at first it was small community churches, I think the church plant we
40 went to when I was real young was like Baptist or something like that but we um are just ended
41 up growing up in faith with my parents really

42
43 R: Sorry. Did they seek out church plants specifically, or did it just kind of work out that way?

44
45 A: It just worked out that way.

46
47 R: ok
48
49 A: Um because they weren't they had no they had no real faith tradition, so whatever church they
50 felt they fit in, you know?
51
52 R: Right
53
54 A: So my Dad's a real relaxed kind of guy, even though he was in the military, he did not want
55 to wear a suit and tie. He did not want to dress up. Um [sighs] they they went places where you
56 know we also did end up in like small towns like we were in um so my Dad was in the Coast
57 Guard ... I'm trying to talk around that because I feel like that's totally gonna be one of those
58 things where people will know who I am.
59
60 R: oh, well, don't worry about that for the interview
61
62 A: OK
63
64 R: because I can redact it from the transcript so
65
66 A: Ok, ok
67
68 R: feel free to say whatever
69
70 A: Ok
71
72 R: I'll worry about that after
73
74 A: Ok thank you, sorry about that. So my Dad was in the Coast guard, so we lived in small towns
75 um other than I was born in [location], um so we were in like the [location] and stuff um but we
76 were in smaller towns, so the churches we were in were just community churches and they were
77 just smaller churches anyway and a lot of them were new and um the one church we went to that
78 wasn't brand new was a church in [location] and actually it was a really large non-
79 denominational community church and that was where I um we were stationed in [location] and
80 [location] when I was from fifth grade, all the way until I was
81
82 R: mmhm
83
84 A: until I was almost a sophomore in high school.
85
86 R: Oh
87
88 A: So I was I did a lot of forming of my faith in that age group you know that age when you're in
89 junior high when you're in junior high youth ministry and then you start to you know high
90 school ministry and the youth ministry at the church there was really um really great, and really
91 um like involved and so my parents started volunteering for youth ministry there the church

92 before that when we were in [location 1] was really developmentally something discipleship
93 wise for my parents that was a big deal. My mom started leading worship there and my dad was
94 even though he was in the coast guard so he was constantly on call with work it was hard to
95 commit to anything but he really started meeting with the pastor and the pastor really discipled
96 him in [location 1]. In [location 2] it was the same thing. Like the Pastor really discipled my dad
97 and then um so when I was 14 almost going into my freshman year somewhere between my
98 sophomore and freshman year sorry 8th grade and freshman year um there was uh we had a
99 church that we had like a sister relationship with in Ghana West Africa and

100

101 R: Ok

102

103 A: they were building a new church building. And they decided to take a youth team to Africa to
104 Ghana

105

106 R: Right

107

108 A: And I told my parents, I said I want to go. I'd always wanted to travel ... when I was 14 and
109 they were letting freshmen go, I was just in my freshman year, and so my parents um they let me
110 go. I raised the funds, and I went for three weeks to Ghana West Africa with a youth team from
111 our church and I was one of the youngest. I want to say there was one student who was 14, but
112 she was about 6 months younger than me

113

114 R: Ok

115

116 A: And so it was uh just a crazy experience, this is where I'm getting to my call, um [pause] the
117 year before that at like our Spring retreat I'd been baptized in the Holy Spirit and before that it
118 wasn't ... I just told this story to our church ... it wasn't weird. Um, so a lot of AG people have
119 this weird, like someone laid their hands on me and like told me to blab until the Holy Spirit took
120 my tongue and talked through me

121

122 R: [laughs] yeah

123

124 A: And I had ... the churches we were at were not crazy charismatic, like they weren't ... they
125 were believing in the Holy Spirit and the worship was contemporary with contemporary worship,
126 but they and they believed in prophecy and speaking in tongues and things like that, but it wasn't
127 overtly like in your face like punch you when you come in and if you don't know what's
128 happening you'll feel weird.

129

130 R: Right

131

132 A: So I saw very much that non-chaotic side of the charismatic movement. There was a freedom
133 to worship, um and there was a true belief that the Holy Spirit was going to move and that we
134 were responding to what God wanted us to respond to, but

135

136 R: Ok

137 A: but it was very um it wasn't chaos. I felt like there was order. There was like a sacred order to
138 it. And so they believed in the gifts, but they didn't push that. That wasn't the leaning, you
139 know? And and
140
141 R: So they didn't emphasize it all the time, or...? It was kind of expected but
142
143 A: It was expected but it wasn't emphasized. It wasn't like you stood up and said you know, and
144 now someone will speak in tongues and interpretation. If it happened then the Pastor would
145 explain what happened, you know, that sort of thing but it just wasn't the focus. I've been in
146 some churches where it felt almost [pause] out of order. And almost in some ways spiritually
147 abusive to people, because there was shame and guilt element, like "Why isn't the Spirit
148 moving," you know? And
149
150 R: Yeah, I've experienced my fair share of those.
151
152 A: Yeah, and I've seen those, and I've been in those, but I've always been like very, that's not
153 like that's not what I was raised with. And so, I told that, because I was at a retreat and they said
154 would you wanna...they did like break-out sessions... if you want to be baptized in the Holy
155 Spirit, why don't you come to this break out session. And if you don't know what that means,
156 we're just gonna teach on it. And I was like, "Never heard that term ever." Like it was really
157 weird. I knew the Spirit moved, and people gave prophecies, and people did those things, but I'd
158 never heard the term for speaking in tongues as baptism in the Holy Spirit
159
160 R: ok
161
162 A: Obviously I was not AG, um
163
164 R: Right
165
166 A: And so I was um I just felt like this desire like "I need to go listen to that." Um, one thing, I
167 always struggle with saying this, but I can't remember myself my salvation date, like I have just
168 always believed and loved Jesus
169
170 R: Ok
171
172 A: Like when they asked me on my credentialing, you know applying for licensing after college
173
174 R: uh huh
175
176 A: And it might have even been before college I started like they ask your salvation date
177
178 R: Sure
179
180 A: Well I know I was about this old so maybe I'll go with...so I chose like some random month
181
182 R: [laughs]

183 A: you know, in nineteen-eighty something
184
185 R: Right
186
187 A: When I was like six years old, you know?
188
189 R: I had a similar experience when I did that
190
191 A: Yeah! And so I just know that I've always wanted to seek the Lord and that I've always
192 wanted to do his will. And I went through some really hard times and rough times but I've
193 always been fairly sensitive to what the Spirit is saying, you know?
194
195 R: Yeah
196
197 A: And so I was just like, "I should do that!" And so I went into this room, there were only like
198 four of us. You could tell this was a real big deal, you know?
199
200 R: [Laughs] yeah
201
202 A: And there were like four of us in like a circle of chairs and it was just like a little break-out
203 room and they were like, "Listen, we believe that the Holy Spirit moves today, and they just did
204 a whole teaching from Acts and from um and throughout the New Testament about the Baptism
205 of the Holy Spirit and the empowerment for witness and um speaking in tongues and what that
206 meant and they did all this and it was very just biblically sound. Like biblically based, right? And
207 they said
208
209 R: Ok
210
211 A: And if you want we wanted to give opportunity today for you to receive the baptism of the
212 Holy Spirit and they're like so what we're gonna do is you're just gonna sit here, and you're just
213 gonna wait, and some people are gonna be praying, you know, and we're going to invite you to
214 pray, however, you feel led, but don't feel like you have to talk, don't feel like you have to do
215 anything, and if the Holy Spirit wants to baptize you with evidence of speaking in tongues, then
216 that's gonna happen. And they just...it was super simple,
217
218 R: uh huh
219
220 A: it was super um super just real chill; I didn't feel any pressure. No one touched me, and they
221 just prayed. And I began to pray
222
223 R: Ok
224
225 A: And I was baptized in the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues. Like I was just
226 like it was just like
227
228 R: And you were how old at this point, sorry?

229 A: I was thirteen.
230
231 R: Thirteen. Ok.
232
233 A: Yeah
234
235 R: And so, it was what, then, about a year after that you were in Ghana on the mission trip
236 A: Yes. So it was about a year later. I was in Ghana and we went for three weeks, and you know
237 [sighs] I've always been friends with older students, like people older than me. I've always had
238 older friends so I didn't feel the weirdness around being with, I mean, we ranged in age from 14-
239 18 and then obviously had 4-5 adults that went with us. Um
240
241 R: Ok
242
243 A: Um but the experience really, for me, was really one of introspection. I journaled a lot, I have
244 those old journals (I'm not sure where they are right now) but I've gone through them since um
245
246 R: Mmhm
247
248 A: I journaled a lot and that's where I started learning that I loved to write. Um and I was
249 praying one day on the porch, and you know when you're in a foreign country and you
250 experience this brokenheartedness for the people, and um you know at fourteen in some ways it
251 was pity, and in some ways it was like this recognition like oh I am so blessed and I did not
252 know, you know?
253
254 R: Right
255
256 A: My family was not wealthy, um, the military, the coast guard was I think my Dad once said,
257 you know they told me one time when I said well my wife and my child need to move with me,
258 and it's not the end of the school year, and my Dad said the guy, his officer looked at him and
259 said, "If we wanted you to have a wife and child we would have uh issued them to you at boot
260 camp. Like they just did not care.
261
262 R: [Laughs] Wow
263
264 A: Especially back then. They're way better about like, with families and stuff now, and trying
265 not to uproot kids as much, but it was really difficult and so I remember like I was always the
266 poor kid among my friend group, you know, stuff like that, and so we just didn't have a lot, and
267 so, going to Ghana just opened my eyes to the fact that I was so blessed materially, you know
268 living in the states and then it really was this very big eye-opening experience with my salvation
269 and my story regarding what Jesus had done for me because of course if you don't know when
270 you were first saved, there's not really like a before and after, and there's not really
271
272 R: You don't see it as that defining moment in your life
273

274 A: Yeah, that defining moment in your life and so I remember they told us we had to tell our
275 testimonies, and I was like “Testimony? Ummm...what? What Testimony do I have?”
276
277 R: [Laughs]
278
279 A: I don’t have one, I didn’t get saved from all the drugs and alcohol, you know?
280
281 R: Laughs
282
283 A: You know, there were these moments where I remember like talking to people we were
284 meeting and just them responding as I talked about how much Jesus loved them and um I
285 remember being able to do something, like we helped build things, and that felt very productive
286 to me, and that’s part of my personality, the productivity piece, you know? And so I felt I was
287 praying one day, I was sitting on the porch ... I’d drawn away from people; that was also when I
288 started to realize what an introvert was, and what I was
289
290 R: Mmhm
291
292 A: And that was an extreme introvert so I’d kind of pulled away cause we were like 24/7 with all
293 of these people, and I was sitting quietly on the porch just watching my friends play like soccer
294 or something and I was just kinda talking to the Lord and writing and I said God, if you’d just,
295 God, if you wanted me to give my life to whatever this looks like. If you want me to live
296 empowered to be your witness, what would you want me to do? I just remember him impressing
297 on me that my life was going to take a turn that I didn’t think it was going to take.
298
299 R: mmhm
300
301 A: And that he was leading me to ministry. And at that point
302
303 R: Um
304
305 A: Oh, go ahead
306
307 R: I was just going to say, so when you say “impressing on you,” can you just, I mean, I know
308 generally what you mean
309
310 A: Yeah
311
312 R: but just, you know
313
314 A: Yeah. So, um, it’s that kind of gut check feeling uh for me, at least when the Holy Spirit is
315 speaking there’s kind of this um gut check physical reaction, like Oh ok, this isn’t just me
316 thinking about this, this is the Holy Spirit kind of directing my thoughts and my ideas.
317
318 R: Ok

319 A: I'm not a "feeler," so you know how some people like say they feel their emotions in places
320 in their body? I am not that way, so that's been one way that I have often known that the Holy
321 Spirit is speaking, is that there's been kind of a physical like movement in my like gut, you
322 know? Like there's my gut feeling, that feeling that something physically is happening.
323
324 R: So there is some kind of physical sensation
325
326 A: Yeah
327
328 R: Ok. Alright, so, you had this impression that God was, you said God was going to lead you
329 into ministry
330
331 A: Yeah, and for me at that point I said, so you, you know I'm 14 and the of doing like any sort
332 of ministry is like in Africa, you know? Like so for me I'm like, "So I'm going to be a
333 missionary, you know? That's what I'm gonna do." Um and so I came back from that trip and
334 promptly experienced the largest um bout of culture shock that any 14 year old probably can
335 experience [laughs]
336
337 R: [Laughs] Right
338
339 A: Because my parents had never traveled outside the US, so they didn't have place to put this.
340 They didn't know what to do. And this was also the first time I actually became clinically
341 depressed and suicidal after that. Um
342
343 R: Like immediately after that?
344
345 A: It was that next year, yeah.
346
347 R: Ok
348
349 A: But there were some other factors in that.
350
351 R: Ok. But you would think that this impression or this calling you experienced was involved in
352 that?
353
354 A: No, mmmm. Sorry, that was just the culture shock from coming back.
355
356 R: Gotcha.
357
358 A: No, my calling, I definitely embraced that. I was like, yes Lord! I want to do your will,
359 whatever that looks like, whatever that is, I want to do it, and so I obviously kinda connected it to
360 traveling, to going overseas, being a missionary, that's how I remember coming home and
361 talking to my parents and saying I believe that God is calling me to be a missionary. And my
362 Dad and Mom were like, "Ok." That's the thing, is like they're like, Ok, if that's what you
363 believe then let's pray towards that. Let's believe for that. SO they didn't know what that meant

364 either, they weren't raised around like clergy or anything like that, so they had no idea, but they
365 were like "If God told you to do something, then that's what you do. " That was their cool thing.
366
367 R: Right
368
369 A: That was always what they said.
370
371 R: So, how did it go then from Missions...
372
373 A: Mmhm
374
375 R: to, I mean, to where you now?
376
377 A: Yeah
378
379 R: You can say as much as you need to there
380
381 A: To minister? Yeah
382
383 R: Yeah, exactly.
384
385 A: So um I we moved again, after and that's where I experienced my freshman year I had just a
386 lot of depression and then we moved right after my freshman year, from [state to state], so it was
387 a crazy culture shock again, I um, went from a school where my class size, my freshman class
388 was like 450, to a school where my whole school seventh through twelfth grade was 450. So
389
390 R: Oh, yeah
391
392 A: So I had learned who I was and what I was doing in [state] and then we moved to [state] and
393 um I went to a school where these students, these kids where my classmates, you know, had been
394 together since like literally their parents had went to high school together, you know? Like, they
395 were like My mom and her mom
396
397 R: mmhm
398
399 A: they all had babies together, like all of us were born at the same time!
400
401 R: [Laughs]
402
403 A: And they were so excited, because they were classmates, and they were raised together, you
404 know? And then, um, and so I experienced a lot of depression, I became suicidal that year, the
405 Lord really sustained me, and, uh, miraculously honestly miraculously healed me from suicidal
406 thoughts, uh I still struggled with depression throughout my life, but, the Lord, I had an
407 encounter with him at youth camp after my sophomore year where he really freed me from the
408 suicidal thoughts and um that was actually our first AG church. So this is how I got connected
409 with the AG.

410 R: Oh, ok.
411
412 A: Um,
413
414 R: And this is when you were 15? 14?
415
416 A: Mmhm yeah right before my sophomore year was when we moved, so I started my
417 sophomore year in WA and I was 15, and my we always as a family prayed together on Saturday
418 before Sunday when we were going to go to Church together, praying where should we go , and
419 we would grab the phonebook [laughs] and we would say where should we go?
420
421 R: [Laughs]
422
423 A: And we'd look because by then my parents were very firmly um looking for Spirit-filled
424 churches. By that point they were looking for churches where the gifts were you know, allowed
425 to operate, that people were actively wanting to witness to others, that loved their neighbors and
426 their community, and they were also looking for a place where myself and my younger brother
427 had friends in youth ministry. They didn't want to go to a church that didn't have a youth and
428 kinda family feel.
429
430 R: Ok
431
432 A: And so they saw this AG church, and my Mom was like I don't want to go there and I didn't
433 understand. My Dad said, well Janet we need to give em a try. Let's just give em a try, because
434 any other community churches or like charismatic churches, we didn't know the word
435 Pentecostal, we didn't know what it meant, so like
436
437 R: Oh, ok.
438
439 A: The Charismatic churches, cause we lived in a small town, they're gonna be like 20-30
440 minutes away, and our kids aren't going to go to school with those kids. And so my mom was
441 like ok, we'll give it a try, but if they're anything like those people in NY, then I'm not going
442 there. And so
443
444 R: So she had had a bad experience?
445
446 A: Horrible, apparently. I didn't know — this is how my parents are, my mom apparently had
447 had a really bad experience with some AG people, um, in [state], like super legalistic apparently
448
449 R: Oh
450
451 A: Like I've talked to her since then you know and um she's like no they were super legalistic,
452 super judgmental and they didn't like our church, apparently. And so they had been really mean
453 to her, and sh was like I don't want anything to do with people that believe that way, you know?
454 Um
455

456 R: Ok. But she agreed to go anyway, and then...
457
458 A: Yes. So we went, and all of us. I can't speak for my brother, because my brother and I didn't
459 really talk about spiritual things at that point but um my mom and my dad and I all felt the Holy
460 Spirit tell us this is where you're supposed to be at Church. Like this is your home. And so we
461 felt like that was home. And the pastor and his family had just moved there two, maybe two
462 years before us, and they had four kids, and their oldest was my age, and their next oldest was
463 my brother's age, and so we started to really fit in right away. [Pause]. Um and because they
464 were new to the harbor as well, it felt like they understood the plight of like new families coming
465 in because it was so like you're born, raised here, you marry your high school sweetheart, you
466 know what I mean? You have kids together
467
468 R: And they had just experienced the same thing, right?
469
470 A: And so my parents really connected with them. They stayed, and um so they've now been at
471 that church, my dad retired there, for 20 three years now.
472
473 R: Wow; a long time.
474
475 A: It is, yeah! UM and so the pastor's been there 25, they just celebrated 25, he did part of my
476 wedding, he was the first pastor that ever um let me preach, he I was his youth pastor after
477 college, um
478
479 R: And how old were you when you preached the first time?
480
481 A: Um, I preached, so we didn't have a youth pastor, so he was doing youth ministry, so I think I
482 might have been like 16.
483
484 R: Ok, so it was while you were in the youth group.
485
486 A: Yeah, while I was in the youth group. He let me preach and taught me how, um, and so about
487 [pause] I still thought I was going to be a missionary, at that time, so I went to college from, I
488 went to a disciples of Christ school in [location] because I just am rebellious enough, everyone
489 was like well all the AG kids here go up to [AG school in that region]
490
491 R: Right, Right.
492
493 A: And I was just rebellious enough that I wasn't going to go where everyone wanted me to go,
494 that's not what I do.
495
496 R: [laughs]
497
498 A: At that point I still didn't know if I want to be AG. I liked Summer Camp, I liked those
499 things, I mean I don't know what I think about this. And so I went to a disciples of Christ school
500 for a couple years and my freshman year at [name redacted] Christian College, it's now [name
501 redacted] Christian university, um, I felt, I um, I started in as a cross-cultural communications

502 major, because I was like well I'm going to be a missionary, that's what you do. You gotta figure
503 out how to talk about stuff cross culturally.

504
505 R: Sure

506
507 A: And I loved, what I really fell in love with anthropology and sociology and observing people,
508 like I loved all of that, I loved all of it. But what I really fell in love with was, were my bible
509 classes. I loved theology, just ate up any type of theology, and since I was from more loose
510 charismatic kind of background and then AG, I had some really interesting conversations with
511 my professors who were all disciples of Christ

512
513 R: I bet, yeah.

514
515 A: Yeah, and there was one professor who was my advisor and he just he was like come have
516 coffee with me and we sat down, and he knew a lot of AG history because he had been a
517 missionary and so he knew a lot of AG people, and so we would just talk. And he'd be like Well
518 you don't understand the AG background, because you weren't raised completely in them, and
519 we would talk about the theological differences, the view of the cross, the view of the tomb, and
520 like so he engaged me in this place of kind of paring down all the, you know, all the things you
521 have to do when you're a freshman and think you know everything

522
523 R: Right

524
525 A: And he engaged me in these conversations where he picked apart all the things I just kind of
526 held because I thought that was the way it was, and it was this very eye-opening experience for
527 me in great, just, great massive mystery that is the word of God. And how God is so mysterious
528 in calling us to different things, and so when I talk about calling on the Lord, and when he talks
529 about, well I hear from the Lord too, I don't view it the same way you do ... so it was just an
530 interesting time in my life.

531
532 R: mmhm

533
534 A: And I also started going to a very small AG church. And I started helping with the youth
535 ministry, and that was the first time I uh I remember it was really funny, because the first Sunday
536 I went to this tiny little church, the pastor introduced the new youth pastor, and I remember
537 thinking, Oh, he's so old, I was like 19, 18, right? He was just turning 23.

538
539 R: Mmhm

540
541 A: And I was like Oh my gosh I'm so ridiculous

542
543 R: [laughs]

544
545 A: But [name] was his name, and um, he and his wife had just moved there he was a youth pastor
546 and she was doing her masters in teaching and so the youth group was literally four students and
547 the pastor called me, this is a smart pastor, I learned from him, um the pastor called me, Pastor

548 [name], and he called me and said, “Hey, we’re so excited that you visited with us last week, and
549 we were wondering if you’d like to get plugged in, how you’d like, how would you like to serve,
550 you know, are you wanting to serve at this time? We know that, you know, being a student it’s
551 hard to get over here at this time during the week, stuff like that. And I said, well actually, I think
552 it’d be cool to help with the youth group. And he said, “I’ll connect you with [name].” And so, I
553 ended up going and meeting [name], and it was me and [name], and we did youth ministry for
554 two years. I served for two years. I did camps with him, and I led [chuckles] I led worship from
555 um a CD, cause neither of us could play a musical instrument,
556

557 R: You weren’t musicians?
558

559 A: We weren’t musicians but I could sing! I’d been singing my whole life; my parents both sing,
560 um, I just had never learned an instrument. And so I led from a CD and he taught me...I
561 preached for [name] a couple times when I was in HS but then [name] would share and I would
562 preach one Wednesday a month. And um we grew that youth ministry from four students when
563 we first started to by the time I left a year and a half later maybe two years, so by the time I left
564 we had ten students coming. And they had come in and got saved
565

566 R: Ok
567

568 A: It wasn’t just new families come to the church. They had actually students that we met and
569 brought into the church. And so um I did camps with him like I said, um yeah that time was
570 really good, and during that time, my freshman year during the spring, I’d been doing ministry
571 with [name] probably only like five months, and I was praying one night in my room, and I
572 remember just really distressed. I didn’t know what to do with my life, and I’m not sure if I can
573 travel, or be a missionary, or I don’t know if that’s what God is saying to me. I remember I was
574 praying one night, and by this time my grandmother had become a Christian, my mom’s mom,
575 and she is one of those [sighs] women
576

577 R: Ok
578

579 A: who um is very in tuned with what the spirit is saying, is an intercessor, in a lot of ways.
580

581 R: Alright
582

583 A: And so, when she had come to know the Lord, it was amazing to watch, and she would call
584 me — my grandmother and I are very close — she would call me and said, “Anna, I got this
585 weird impression and I wrote these words down, and it seems so strange to me, what is
586 happening?” And I would be like, “Grandma, the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. This is what’s
587 going on. Tell me what the words are saying!” And so she would tell me, this is what the words
588 are saying. And they were like encouraging words for like her pastor, and words of um hope for
589 her or for my grandfather who wasn’t saved, you know, stuff like that, and it was really beautiful
590 to watch her explore her faith and be able to ask her questions um, because I was so much older
591 than her in the faith, you know?
592

593 R: Ok

594 A: But I trusted her. I knew that she was from the Lord.

595

596 R: Right, ok.

597

598 A: I remember I was praying and I was so frustrated because I wanted direction, that calendar
599 where God's telling me the big dates, you know?

600

601 R: Like the timeline?

602

603 A: Yeah, the timeline! [Laughs] Yeah, I want the timeline. And I was so frustrated. God, why
604 can't you just give me clarity? Tell me what's going on! You know? And um I called her and I
605 was like Grandma, I just don't know what God is saying to me and I don't know what he's
606 doing. And I remember her saying to me, "Anna, you need to just walk the path that he's given
607 you right now. And he hasn't told you what to do yet. But don't worry. He's gonna tell you — if
608 you wanna know, he'll tell you. It's just not on your timing." And that was the hardest thing, of
609 course.

610

611 R: Sure, yeah.

612

613 A: And then about midway through my sophomore year, right at the beginning, I was praying
614 again and um [pause] I remember saying, God do you want me to go overseas, do you want me
615 to be a missionary, I remember saying, can you give me some clarity, because I feel like if I'm
616 supposed to do something else, if I'm supposed to be preaching, and that was like the first time I
617 said like am I supposed to be preaching, and it started to become a big thing. Like I loved
618 preaching the word. I loved creating sermons I loved talking to people about God's word, and so
619 I said, if I'm supposed to be preaching, is that what you want me to do, am I studying the right
620 thing? And that was what was becoming an issue. My question of cross-cultural communication
621 on the one hand, and learning to talk, and doing those things, but I wasn't learning like how to
622 put a sermon together and how to pastor, you know?

623

624 R: Sure, yeah.

625

626 A: And so my question was, as I was getting to my sophomore year, my question was, if I'm
627 supposed to preach, I remember the moment I said that word I just felt this, "Yes. You're
628 supposed to preach and you're supposed to pastor." And so I asked [name], he was the youth
629 pastor at the church I was going to, and I asked him, I said, "How did you become a youth
630 pastor?" And just something in there. And I don't remember the words, I don't remember exactly
631 what, but I knew that I'm gonna be a youth pastor. That's what I'm gonna do. And I remember
632 thinking, I'm gonna be a youth pastor, and I'm gonna make sure my students get out of their,
633 like, comfort zone and are sent overseas, or do work for their community and make sure the
634 experienced what I experienced in Africa. Yeah.

635

636 R: Oh, ok. So you wanted to replicate the same kind of experience that you'd had in your
637 students.

638

639 A: Yeah, because I felt like that had been such a turning point for me when it came to my faith,
640 and understanding the mission God had for us.
641
642 R: Hm
643
644 R: So, from there then, did you say you were the youth pastor for the
645
646 A: Yeah
647
648 R: first AG church that you went to?
649
650 A: So I went to [location] AG University, in [location], and I finished, I changed over to church
651 ministries with a specialization in youth. Um, and then and finished my degree there, and then
652 um I had sworn I would never go back to the small town in [location], I was like, I will never go
653 back there, and I ended up, because I transferred, I took a year off, so I transferred to
654 southwestern so my undergrad ended up taking four and a half years. Um so, the last year, so
655 before the last half of that semester, I had to do an internship. In youth ministry. And I could not
656 find an internship that would take me, anywhere. And it was at this point that I had finally
657 realized that oh, the AG says they let women, but ...
658
659 R: Sorry, the audio cut out there for a second, could you say that again?
660
661 A: So my professor at [University] told me, I know the AG says they like women, but I don't
662 think they're going to ordain you. And I was like, what?
663
664 R: Oh, ok
665
666 A: Never...that that wasn't a thing. And then I realized that I hadn't actually seen any female
667 pastors. Because I wasn't born and raised AG, I had not really entered any of the theology
668 around women, had not been in any churches where they talked about that, and um, my parents
669 weren't of a faith background, again, they were like, well if God tells you something, then that's
670 what you need to do.
671
672 R: Ok, so at that point you didn't expect any kind of um resistance, or, anything like that, based
673 on your gender.
674
675 A: Right, no. In fact, I [Recording had a slight issue here where it stopped for a second, so I
676 asked her to repeat her response to this question]
677
678 R: Ok, given what we've been talking about then, can you tell me about a time, or a few times,
679 whatever works, when you experienced like direct, opposition to your calling because of your
680 gender?
681
682 A: Yeah, so what I was gonna say is I didn't know about like that, like monkey on my back, type
683 thing. I didn't know that there was something holding me back. I didn't know about that. I didn't
684 know that in the AG churches they said they believed in women but really in practice it wasn't

685 there. It wasn't until my professor at [college] had told me, until I transferred to Southwestern,
686 after...I don't know how long I was there, but I was in a preaching class, probably in my first or
687 second semester there, and my preaching professor was so encouraging, and he was um teaching
688 me and believed in me, and I was going into like the first lab, where I was going preach my first
689 sermon in front of my class, and I remember this guy, that I did not really know him, I don't
690 remember his name, um, but I remember him seeing me at the very front of the lab, before I
691 walked in and he said, Oh are you preaching today? And I said yeah, I'm preaching today! It's
692 my first sermon for the class, When are you preaching? And he goes I'm preaching next week.
693 Yeah, I can't believe they let you girls do that here. And instantly I was like, what? I just looked
694 at him. I was like, "Is he trying to be funny?"

695
696 R: Wow

697
698 A: And he was just like yeah, I don't, I don't understand why they let you do that. And he
699 walked away. And then, throughout my first sermon, he glared at me. The entire time. The whole
700 time.

701
702 R: Huh. Interesting. Did he ever say anything else? Or was it just that?

703
704 A: Nope. He would glare. Any time I preached, he would glare. We started talking about it
705 actually I think there was one other one, one other woman in the class with me, and she and I just
706 kinda looked at each other and said, "Did he glare at you?" And she was like yeah, he just glares
707 at me and I don't know what I did. Yeah, it was both of us.

708
709 R: So he did it to both of you, then.

710
711 A: Yeah, it was both of us. SO it was totally just a female thing. I did look over to see if he was
712 glaring at one of my male, one of the other male students to see if he was glaring, and he wasn't.
713 And he was definitely very much just us. Oh, are you there?

714
715 R: Yeah, sorry. I'm still here.

716
717 A: Oh that's ok.

718
719 R: Um so, so that was the first time that you'd actually experienced it yourself

720
721 A: Yeah

722
723 R: Did you experience it anyway, like, in your credentialing process, or...

724
725 A: [Laughs] Yeah

726
727 R: or from anyone in the denomination...I mean, fellowship, sorry.

728
729 A: [Laughs] Yeah, so, um moving forward I became aware of it and then once you once the
730 curtain's kinda drawn back and you know the wizard is like this small little guy trying to be

731 really large, you recognize it happens all time, in like micro and macro ways, you know? So
732 there's those large ways, and then there's those tiny small ways

733
734 R: Sure

735
736 A: And I was single, and I went to be a youth pastor in [location] and um I was working towards
737 my credentials when I started as the youth pastor at my home church um I was not making any
738 money, they were not giving me anything, I told [name], the pastor, listen, you need a youth
739 pastor and I need to be a youth pastor, like that's what I need to do. And I'm really certain that
740 the Lord is telling me to come back to [location]. And he was like "I think that's true and I'd
741 love to have you be our youth pastor. I can't promise you anything, you know? And my parents
742 at that time were like, oh you can live with us, um they were just happy I wasn't moving across
743 the world, you know?

744
745 R: Sure, yeah.

746
747 A: And um, so I moved home and started working towards my credentials, and um consistently
748 the board, didn't, and I couldn't decide. At the time I thought it because a lot of them had known
749 me since I was fifteen. [Pause]. Looking back now I know that a lot of it was also because I was
750 a woman.

751
752 R: So the board at the church discouraged you from doing your credentialing?

753
754 A: No, like...I couldn't get paid anything until got my credentials, and um they kept pushing
755 like, "Well are you going to get married?"

756
757 R: Oh, I see.

758
759 A: And that was a big deal, because I didn't feel like I was going to get married.

760
761 R: So that came up a lot.

762
763 A: Yeah, that came up a lot by a lot of people. I couldn't figure out if it was just me because they
764 had known me and they knew my family, or if it was because I was a woman. But [name] was
765 always super, like he was so supportive of me, um, and got me all sorts of opportunities,
766 introduced me to people, and like made sure that I was growing. And I remember one of the
767 things he said to me is I know you think you're going to be here forever, but that is not the
768 Lord's plan. And I was like uh...you know, what do you do with that, because this is your boss!
769 Right?

770
771 R: Right

772
773 A: But he looked at me and said, you know, his biggest thing was I want to prepare you for the
774 ministry that God has for you and I don't want you to think that you can only ever minister here.
775 [Pause]

776

777 R: So you kind of if you can tell me if right here or not
778
779 A: Uh huh
780
781 R: you kind of from your pastor you experienced affirmation and no resistance based on your
782 gender
783
784 A: Yeah
785
786 R: Whereas the board at that church was kind of the opposite, or...? In some ways, anyway?
787
788 A: Definitely. And they were ...they loved me, definitely, a lot of those men on the board on that
789 time
790
791 R: They were all men?
792
793 A: Oh yeah, all men. They still do not have a female on the board, and that has been and that was
794 a thing when I was youth pastor. I went to [lead pastor], and was like, [lead pastor], you need to
795 start leading them through this. And [lead pastor], I love him, but he is not one to push the
796 envelope; that's why he's been in that church for 30, er 25 years. And they've grown, I mean
797 when we lived there they were running like maybe 75, and they're up over 300, they have well
798 over 10% of the town coming to their church. And everyone knows him and calls him their
799 pastor even if they don't go to that church.
800
801 R: I see. Ok.
802
803 A: And so he has played the long like he has become part of that community and I think he has
804 done a fantastic job, but part of the backend of that is that he has not pushed women in ministry
805 when it comes to the board and the whole of the body being part of some of those things. So now
806 they're at the place where they have actually nominated women for the board. That was a big
807 that was a huge deal that was progress for the board
808
809 R: uh uh
810
811 A: And so from [name] I did learn patience in some ways. Um when it came to that stuff. But I
812 also um it was that tensions, like I didn't feel like he pushed it far enough, you know? I was also
813 20-something. [Laughs]
814
815 R: That does affect it, doesn't it? [Laughs].
816
817 A: Yeah, yeah. And now as a pastor I can understand why he it didn't it didn't directly affect
818 him, does that make sense?
819
820 R: Mmhm. Well it sounds like it maybe wasn't as simple it probably seemed, you know?
821
822 A: Yes. And knowing those old fisherman guys, you know?

823 R: Right
824
825 A: [laughs]
826
827 R: So you said it sounds like the first one you experienced was pretty active unkind resistance,
828 whereas at your church it sounds like more of a passive resistance
829
830 A: Mmhm. Yeah.
831
832 R: Um so have you experienced both in your ministry, then? Like some passive stuff, some
833 active, like has it been a mix?
834
835 A: Yeah, I've experienced both. Well it's both. I've experienced people just flat-out telling me
836 um that I'm in sin. Because I was living in [location] at the height of Mark Driscoll,
837
838 R: Right
839
840 A: Yeah so a lot of people, and what I came to find when I became a lead pastor [pause] one, the
841 people in my church were there because they wanted me to be their pastor. You know? The
842 people were there because they didn't have a problem with it.
843
844 R: Mmhm
845
846 A: But other people had a problem with it. Like I had one guy [pause] who came to faith at our
847 church, at our church in [location] um, who came to me, well we were having coffee, and I was
848 discipling him, and he said "Hey I had a customer come in the other day, and he was a Christian,
849 and we were talking and I mentioned you and the guy just started in how I was in sin, and he was
850 in sin for following me, and how you know, didn't meet me, didn't have any idea who I was
851 R: So this guy had never met you?
852
853 A: He had no idea who I was, yeah. And so that opened up a conversation um with me and the
854 people of our church, so that I could help them because many of them were not raised believers
855 or in any faith at all and so I was able to have conversations with them about some of the many
856 of theological beliefs surrounding women in ministry and what we believed. It really opened up
857 doors, but it was really hard as a pastor to see my people, like, being questioned by others.
858 [Pause]
859
860 R: Sure, yeah.
861
862 A: So I just started to work on making sure they understood; that they understood the theology
863 around it.
864
865 R: So you had to teach them then why it was ok for you to be pastoral ministry?
866
867 A: Yep! [Laughs] But the way I came it, the way I always came it, is that I'm not defending
868 myself, I'm just teaching you what I believe is the truth of the scripture.

869 R: Right, so, I mean, sort of related to that, then, um my next question says tell me about a time
870 when you think your ministry was affected by your gender
871
872 A: Yeah
873
874 R: Either positively or negatively, but I mean we've kind of been talking about that, right?
875
876 A: Yeah
877
878 R: So I guess if I were to rephrase it a little given the context of our, of our conversation so far,
879 Um [pause] what's your perspective, then, if you could summarize it or whatever you want to
880 say about that, on how your gender affects your pastoral ministry?
881
882 A: Um [pause] Yeah. Hmm.
883
884 R: And that's a pretty wide question, so um
885
886 A: I think there have been times when I have had to [pause] um so I stereotypes [p] that were
887 not fair nor true.
888
889 R: Do you, do you have an example?
890
891 And so, yeah, yeah I am a fairly assertive person, I've always been a leader, I've always been a
892 leader, also I am from [location],
893
894 R: uh huh
895
896 A: And I lived in [other location], so I have a, I am not a beat around the bush kind of person,
897 I'm very direct
898
899 R: Was this difficult in [location] to be that way?
900
901 A: What's that?
902
903 R: I said, is it difficult to have that personality in [location]?
904
905 A: In the [location 1], no. In the [location 2] yes. It has been really difficult to have those direct
906 conversations. In [location 1] it wasn't so bad, because everyone is pretty straightforward up
907 there [Laughs]
908
909 R: Yeah
910
911 A: And so for me, um, the places that I found that my gender affected or influenced or there were
912 effects from me being a woman in ministry...when I was a youth pastor in the [location 1] I felt
913 the most um segregated and left out um because [pause]
914

915 R: Specifically because of your gender?
916
917 A: Yes, and being single. When I was single, I mean I was single when I was 35 and so...I've
918 only been married 3 years; I'm 38 now
919 .
920 R: Ok
921
922 A: And so I'm single, you know, I went into ministry when I was 23 and I was trying to go to
923 district events when I was first a youth pastor as much as they didn't want it to be, it was just a
924 boys club.
925
926 R: oh, ok
927
928 A: And so, I would go, and some of the guys were so welcoming, and didn't treat me as if I was
929 weird, or different, they talked to me like I was a peer, you know?
930
931 R: Right, uh huh.
932
933 A:Um but there were some that I could tell they just did not want to have anything to do with
934 me. Um
935
936 R: So
937
938 A: Go ahead
939
940 R: So it was more of that passive resistance kind of thing, again?
941
942 A: Yes. So we would go to meetings or whatever, and people would be mingling and talking and
943 so as a natural introvert I tend not to just insert myself into conversations and some guys went
944 out of their way to talk to me and get to know me, tried to introduce me to other people, and you
945 could just tell that they did not want to be talking to me. And there were times when it was just
946 awkward, because being the only female in the room I tried really hard not to make it awkward,
947 but um, sometimes, and I was always told that if you make it weird, they'll make it weird. If
948 you're normal, then they're normal, you know? So, off jokes, you know?
949
950 R: That they would make?
951
952 A: Yeah, you know, that they'd make. They were young married guys, and they'd say something
953 about their wives, or say something,
954
955 R: Oh, ok
956
957 A: And I'm just sitting there and like they'll realize, and I'm just sitting there and then
958 inevitably apologize to me
959
960 R: When it's too late?

961 A: When it's too late, yeah. And I'm like Oh my gosh, just stop drawing attention to the fact that
962 I'm the only female in the room, you know?

963
964 R: Just move on, yeah.

965
966 A: And it was never like, if it had been all males in the room, you know, probably no one would
967 have noticed and so those were the times when it felt like uhh one of these things is not like the
968 other.

969
970 R: Right, so you really felt like you stuck out a lot?

971
972 A: Yeah, yeah, and they quickly fixed it. And then the other part of that was, I just really decided
973 that, I was like well if I'm going to be the only female in the room, then there may be women
974 that come behind me, and I better try to make it a better place for them, and that was my hope,
975 like can I make it a better place for them, you know? Right now I feel as if there is a just a jungle
976 in front of me and I have a machete and I'm just walking trying to figure out what my path is.
977 But hopefully, if some other women come behind me they'll see a path; they won't have to get
978 the machete out, you know?

979
980 R: So you felt like you were blazing a trail, kind of?

981
982 A: I did, and I never would have said those words, but I still feel that way, I really feel like I
983 spoke up for things, when it wasn't popular to speak up for things; I took the opportunities the
984 Lord offered to me and I walked through the doors as much as I possibly could; I purposed to be
985 involved even when it felt [pause] hard

986
987 R: It felt uncomfortable?

988
989 A: It was uncomfortable, mmhm

990
991 R: Yeah, so um do you still experience that kind of stuff now that you are a lead pastor of a
992 church?

993
994 A: Yes. Not as much

995
996 R: Not as much

997
998 A: Yeah, so I have to preface this, because I've only been in — it's [location 2] — for three
999 years and it's much worse.

1000
1001 R: Ok

1002
1003 A: And here, it's way different. In [location1], when I was [there], I went from being a youth
1004 pastor to being a lead pastor. So I would always had relationships in the area I was in. I had good
1005 friendships.

1006

1007 R: Mmhm
1008
1009 A: I had proven ministry years.
1010
1011 R: ok, yeah
1012
1013 A: I had [lead pastor], um, he was a Presbyterian, so people knew who I was. You know; they knew
1014 me. So when I became a lead pastor, Um the Lord always brings those people of peace. Always.
1015
1016 R: Right.
1017
1018 A: So one of the neighboring pastors, of a small church, he reached out to me when he first heard
1019 my name and found out I was a pastor in their area and he had been a youth pastor and I found
1020 out he was very good friends with the one other single female youth pastor when I was — she
1021 and I had been good friends — so he reached out to me, and he said, “Hey, we have a friend in
1022 common, and you can ask her who I am, I’m not weird but we should get coffee.” [Laughs]
1023
1024 R: [Laughs]
1025
1026 A: And he said, he was like, “I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t want to make you think I was
1027 this weird guy who was like reaching out to me — he took the initiative
1028
1029 R: Right
1030
1031 A: - And that was the first time that a male peer ever took the initiative to get to know me.
1032 R: Ok, and this was in [location 2]?
1033
1034 A: This was in [location 1]. I was a lead pastor in [location 1] for three and a half years before I
1035 moved to [location 2] and became the lead here.
1036
1037 R: In [location 1], Ok.
1038
1039 R: So, um, I mean, you can tell me more about that if you need to
1040
1041 A: mmhm?
1042
1043 R: Um, but then I was also gonna ask ... so there’s been a ... we’ve talked a lot about things that
1044 were negative, or passive aggressive, or whatever
1045
1046 A: Yeah
1047
1048 R: I was wondering, though: Are there things or were there times where you felt like [p] your
1049 ministry was benefited because you were a woman or like were you able, you know, to to do
1050 things or say things
1051
1052 A: Yeah

1053 R: or something like that that you thought you might not have been able to if you were a man?
1054 Does that make sense?
1055
1056 A: Um...yeah. Hmmm. So I have found that people are disarmed [p] by me. So like um and I
1057 don't know if this is because I am a woman or if it's just because of who I am just who I am
1058 naturally [laughs]. Um But people open up to me. They feel comfortable. Guys... older men,
1059 younger women, it seems like pretty much every demographic feels comfortable with me. So
1060 they naturally are inclined to tell me their stories.
1061
1062 R: Ok
1063
1064 A: And I don't know...I have male peers who were like, "They ... They've never said those
1065 things to me."
1066
1067 R: Interesting
1068
1069 A: And so I don't know if it's a natural gifting, um, I don't know if you're familiar with the
1070 fivefold ministry gifts stuff, but I score very high on prophet/pastor.
1071
1072 R: Uh huh.
1073
1074 A: Those are my two highest gifts. And so um people naturally open up to me
1075
1076 R: Ok
1077
1078 A: So I don't know if it's just because of my gender, but I do know that that has, um, aided me in
1079 those times, when people just open up and tell me their stories. They let me in, you know? And
1080 so I've been able to serve people who wouldn't let a man come in, you know?
1081
1082 R: Mmhm
1083
1084 A: And so I have seen those times.
1085
1086 R: Interesting. Um, Alright, so this is kind of...we haven't talked about this specifically yet, but
1087 one of the things that came up a lot in all of the research I did with this and about this topic and
1088 the history and all of it
1089
1090 A: Mmhm
1091
1092 R: Was that um these you know those two scriptures in the New Testament, Um first Timothy 2
1093 and 1 Cor. 11,
1094
1095 A: Mmhm
1096
1097 R: Um and I was just wondering what your perspective on those scriptures are.
1098

1099 A: Yeah.
1100
1101 R: Because a lot of people will use them to argue that women should not be in ministry,
1102
1103 A: Uh huh
1104
1105 R: I found a few places where people had looked at them differently to say that it wasn't
1106 prohibited, so what's your perspective on those scriptures?
1107
1108 A: Yeah, so I tend to take those in the context of those were direct um [p] instructions about
1109 problems that were occurring. Um so for instance in the Timothy passage, Paul is addressing an
1110 issue within the Church and talking to Timothy about it, um, and so it's not that I think he was
1111 prohibiting it. I think the same thing in the Corinthians passage. The Corinthian passage is about
1112 how to organize and be organized in worship. And so I tend to think about them...am I thinking
1113 about the right ones?
1114
1115 R: Yeah, Yeah, you're right.
1116
1117 A: Yeah, and so I tend to think and look at them as more descriptive of er or more prescriptive to
1118 the time and more relevant to the time. Paul overall...I mean, one: Jesus elevated women.
1119
1120 R: Right
1121
1122 A: And the Holy Spirit, it says the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, you know? Um but
1123 overall Paul spoke to and spoke about and partnered with women. Over and over again. So I
1124 think that those two passages cannot be divorced from the actual tapestry of his ministry either.
1125
1126 R: So it sounds like, and again correct me if I'm wrong here
1127
1128 A: Yep
1129
1130 R: So it sounds like what you're saying is that these scriptures are tied to specific context, both
1131 time and place, that are not a 1:1 comparison with today's context?
1132
1133 A: Yes. Today. Because today's context for us is that women are not property today, you know?
1134 . Women are not um you know, given to their husbands, and the husband is not the owner and
1135 sole provider of the wife, and you know? So like our actual culture of the people in our world
1136 today is not the same.
1137
1138 R: Mmhm. Um...you kind of mentioned this, but so...how does, um, how does the baptism in
1139 the Holy Spirit, or being filled with the Holy Spirit, how does that, does that affect this question?
1140 And if so, how?
1141
1142 A: So, what I believe is that um I know that in the AG is that we say we are People of the Spirit.
1143 We are Pentecostal people who believe that the Spirit was poured out on all flesh. And that to
1144 me, speaks to an equality, and when you look at Christ, and you look at what Jesus has done for

1145 us, the cross, the resurrection, um all of that, his life was spend bringing equality of value to
1146 people and elevating those who have been made low and um the favoritism aspect that can come
1147 within systems, um, was spoken against. I mean, just even throughout the New Testament there
1148 is this idea of caring for the poor, and those things, and so I see the work of the Spirit as fulfilling
1149 and continuing the work of Jesus in making people, and not just making people equal, but
1150 showing us we are equal in the Spirit. Does that make sense?

1151

1152 R: Ok, Ok

1153

1154 A: This is a very deep theological discussion and I'm trying to keep that a little bit more short.
1155 [Laughs].

1156

1157 R: No that does make sense. I mean, that's great; that's what I'm looking for. However, like
1158 however you want to answer it is good. So, um I'm just curious...did any of the people, or any of
1159 the people who have given you resistance, or were acting horrible, did any of them mention those
1160 particular scriptures to you?

1161

1162 A: Oh yeah. I went through my master's courses um... yeah my favorite is always when I first
1163 meet people and they find out I'm a pastor and the first verse they quote to me is that Timothy
1164 passage. That's my favorite. I'm like, "Yeah we're on sure footing now! Yay, I want to be your
1165 friend!"

1166

1167 R: [laughs]

1168

1169 A: Um Yeah and so uh I was in my master's courses, and I actually became friends with this
1170 guy, he was at [college] to do his master's as well...he was a oneness Pentecostal and he had sat
1171 in on a class where I did a presentation on um um have you heard of Brian McClaren's
1172 "Adventures in missing the point?"

1173

1174 R: I don't think so

1175

1176 A: Tony Campollo and Brian McClaren.

1177

1178 R: Oh, ok. Yeah

1179

1180 A: I think wrote it together. I know Campollo wrote it. And we had to read that book, it was a
1181 biblical criticism class, and we had to read that book and kind of talk through it and link it back
1182 to scripture and so I of course did the Women in ministry one. And so this guy had sat in on that
1183 class and heard me give my presentation. So then he comes back in the fall, and I'm walking into
1184 one of the classes, and he is walking with me and he's like "Hey! I was watching you when you
1185 gave that presentation," I was like, "Oh yeah? What'd you...?" You know? And he was like
1186 "Hey, I listened to you when you gave that presentation...I didn't even know his name, and he
1187 was like, "What do you think about 2 Timothy and first Timothy blah blah blah?" [Laughs]

1188

1189 R: Oh wow

1190 A: I was like, “Uhhhhh...Did you want to go to dinner and talk about it?”[Laughs] I mean, he
1191 literally like looked at me. He ended up becoming a very good and very close friend, and
1192 we did studying together and had like a cohort going. But it took a while, because I told him, I
1193 had to pray for him for like the whole of that semester we were in a class together; I had to pray
1194 every time he talked.
1195
1196 R: [Laughs]
1197
1198 A: I had to deal with that here, you know? Um it’s been a while since anyone’s pushed at me like
1199 that, and I don’t want to deal with that here, you know?
1200
1201 R: Right.
1202
1203 A: So we became friends and we ended up having a lot of conversations about ministry — we
1204 had a lot of conversations about the Holy Spirit, because Oneness stuff, you know?
1205
1206 R: Lots to talk about, yeah.
1207
1208 A: Yeah, and we became ministry...I think we had a mutual respect, you know? Um, he he even
1209 asked me after we had finished our masters to sit down and have coffee and tell him about my
1210 call. So we sat down at a Starbucks, and we sat for about three hours, and he just asked me
1211 questions about my call.
1212
1213 R: Mmhm
1214
1215 A: And at the end of it, he said, Um, “You know, I don’t know what to do with this.” I said,
1216 “What do you mean?” He said, “The way you described to me your call is exactly the way I felt
1217 about being called.”
1218 I said, “Well that’s what the Holy Spirit does.” He said, “I know, but I don’t believe that women
1219 should be pastors.” And I said, “I know you don’t. But... [Pause] you aren’t God.” [Laughs]
1220
1221 R: [Laughs]
1222
1223 A: And he like, he was like, “Ok. “ And so he had to wrestle with it. Um And that was that was
1224 part of what I felt like...I’ve been, I know I’ve had micro and macro things happen throughout
1225 my ministry where people just write me off because I’m a woman or, or don’t want to have
1226 conversations with me, or... but the places I’ve felt the most are not from within my church, but
1227 my friends or family, um, you know, my peers... well not my peers, or my friends or family, it’s
1228 been within my fellowship.
1229
1230 R: The fellowship?
1231
1232 A: The AG.
1233
1234 R: The AG.

1235 A: Yeah, the ministers, the credentialed ministers. Um that's been the place where I've felt the
1236 most resistance. Which...
1237
1238 R: So...go ahead, sorry.
1239
1240 A: That has been hard.
1241
1242 R: That's been hard.
1243
1244 A: That's been the hard part.
1245
1246 R: Ok, well that actually leads great into our last question, then
1247
1248 A: Yeah
1249
1250 R: Um about, which is just, tell me about your perspective then on, and we've talked about it
1251 some already, I know, but your perspective on being a female pastor, a female lead pastor in the
1252 AG fellowship.
1253
1254 A: Um, so...Ok. I'm just going to tell you about...you're going to redact these things, some of
1255 these things, I'm sure. [Laughs].
1256
1257 R: I'll redact names and locations and identifying information, so you can, you can...it makes it
1258 easy for this, yeah.
1259
1260 A: Thank you. Ok. So, um, my biggest problem, um, like I said is not, not been with me leading
1261 a church and me pastoring. My biggest problem has been within our denomination, and it is a
1262 denomination no matter what we say, Um [laughs] um my problem has been because at an
1263 institutional level we don't, we don't practice our theology. We don't take the things that we say
1264 we believe...our ideology does not match our practice at all. So we can have churches that are
1265 large cornerstone churches of the AG um who can invite in people who fundamentally believe
1266 that um I'm in sin. You know, they fundamentally believe that my life is sin. And we have
1267 churches like this and they are heralded and applauded and people like Mark Driscoll can do
1268 things at their churches every year, and no one seems to think that is not an affront to every sister
1269 who is a pastor and a minister. And they don't, they don't step in
1270
1271 R: Hmm
1272
1273 A: I realize that institutions have all sorts of issues, you know, like the bigness, like the large
1274 span of our institution means that things don't always trickle down, but the top doesn't model
1275 what it, what it preaches.
1276
1277 R: So, like, there's been a lot of stuff wherein, like, the...you know, things from the executive
1278 presbytery and the denomination itself have tried to, you know, tried to address these things, but
1279 it sounds like you're saying you haven't seen...it doesn't seem like it's been realized on a
1280 national or a local level?

1281 A: No, because our districts don't necessarily have to do what the General Council says. We're a
1282 voluntary cooperative fellowship, and so there are some issues with that. Um and so There's
1283 issues with, you know, when you get human beings involved in things, they make mistakes. And
1284 so, but I don't believe that our, our, [coughs] let me take a drink real quick.
1285
1286 R: Sure
1287
1288 A: I don't believe that our leadership, they're trying, but they're not talking to the right people.
1289 So, [sighs] Ok, so... [Laughs] Ok. I am...I...I...I am very passionate about this, I passionate
1290 about it. I'm passionate about this because I'm trying to change it, I've been trying to stay, I've
1291 been trying to stay involved, because I don't want the women after me to have to deal with this
1292 stuff
1293
1294 R: Ok
1295
1296 A: But there's this this spoken and unspoken expectation that um pastors wives are ministers too.
1297 And that is a problem. And the reason it's a problem ... it's not that they aren't ministers, as in
1298 we are a priesthood of all believers.
1299
1300 R: Right
1301
1302 A: All people who are called — it's not that they aren't ministers, I mean they have ministry,
1303 they do things for the kingdom, in the kingdom
1304
1305 R: Sure
1306
1307 A: and for growing the kingdom. All of us have ministries and gifting that the Lord has called us
1308 to. Whether that ministry, you know...a stay at home mom, or a stay at home dad, or whatever
1309 those things look like, you have ministry calling and you have vocation, you know, all of those
1310 things. But, you know, so, four years ago now, the general presbytery decided they would give
1311 waivers to spouses, and they use the word "spouse" because they think it dresses it up, but it only
1312 affects the majority, and the majority of the people it affects are women.
1313
1314 R: Ok
1315
1316 A: They decided to give waivers to women who have been pastor's spouses for ten years, to
1317 become ordained. They go right to ordination!
1318
1319 R: They can go right to ordination?
1320
1321 A: Yes, they go right to ordination!
1322
1323 R: I don't think I knew that
1324
1325 A: Yeah, so this is what happened. The general presbytery, every year gets these um
1326 requests...the credentialing committee gets requests every year for people to skip all the classes

1327 and they have life experience, they have this, they have that. And so they offer exceptions for
1328 ministers spouses; and instead of just processing them as exceptions, they decided to make an
1329 across the board rule. And they didn't publish this decision because it was a non um general
1330 council rule. And they sent it to the general presbytery, and the general presbytery voted it in.

1331
1332 R: Ok, mmhm.

1333
1334 A: Well, what this did was, one: So many districts saw that they could get money because why?
1335 They're gonna have credentialers, new credentialed ministers, and so they sent out letters to
1336 pastor's spouses who'd been married to ordained ministers for ten years, and said you can get
1337 ordained. And so a ton of them, a ton of them went and did it! They're ... two years ago, three
1338 years ago, if you look at the statistics you're going to see a huge jump in female ministers, and
1339 it's not because we're credentialing female ministers who went to school and actually understand
1340 theology, and understand ministry. It's because we're credentialing women who have been
1341 married to someone who has been ordained for ten years! Sorry, feeling fired up! [Laughs]

1342
1343 R: Ok, no, feel free to be as passionate as you like

1344
1345 A: [laughs]

1346
1347 R: Um, so...I mean, I think I understand, but just for, you know, to be thorough,

1348
1349 A: Why am I upset?

1350
1351 R: Well, yeah. So...how then does that um how does that affect people like you?

1352
1353 A: Well, it muddies the water. Because someone who did not go to school did not do any of the
1354 testing, may have had an interview, different districts can do different things, but from what I
1355 understand, they now have the highest level we give — I had to work for it. I had to wait two
1356 years. I had to go through schooling. I had to do all of the things and prove myself, I had to work
1357 for it.

1358
1359 R: Right

1360
1361 A: They now have the same ordination level that I do. So, there's that. Also, women are always,
1362 or I should say consistently, I try not to use, you know, women are consistently questioned as to
1363 whether they are actually qualified to lead the way that they are leading.

1364
1365 R: Mmhm

1366
1367 A: So the fact that we now have an influx of female ministers who are now credential holders,
1368 who did not do all of the things to prove themselves capable of leading are now claiming to be
1369 ministers

1370
1371 R: So, it undermines some of the stuff, then, like your status just because they got to

1372

1373 A: Right
1374
1375 R: not just because they got to skip all of those things but because there's a parity there, that it
1376 doesn't sound like there maybe should be.
1377
1378 A: Right, right. So what that does is that there is now this unfair pressure on women to not mess
1379 it up for every other woman.
1380
1381 R: mm
1382
1383 A: So I've had friends, I haven't had this said to me, but I've been told by friends who are female
1384 pastors, who are invited to speak at a church and they're told, "Listen, don't mess it up, because
1385 if you mess it up we'll never be able to have another woman come."
1386
1387 R: Wow
1388
1389 A: And so when you're told that, one: that's wrong. Because guys mess it up all the time and
1390 they still invite guys to come. But for some reason women have to carry the weight of every
1391 other woman behind them
1392
1393 R: Right
1394
1395 A: And so there's this idea so now, there so now for me, my personal opinion is that and my
1396 personal feelings on this are that now we have a lot of women who have credentials, but they
1397 don't have the experience, what happens then? I've been in rooms with women like that who are
1398 put in charge of committees, and that sort of stuff, and they have no idea how to run a meeting.
1399 They have no idea how to delegate, and make things happen. And they're there because of their
1400 husband's credentials. But that is infuriating. They are nice women. They are nice women, but
1401 they are not skilled to be in that room.
1402
1403 R: Mm. Right
1404
1405 A: And so it creates this dissonance, between what is being said is happening, and what is
1406 actually happening.
1407
1408 R: So it sounds like you're saying it's not fair to you and people like you, who've done the work,
1409 right? Do you think, is it, is it fair to them?
1410
1411 A: No, It is not fair to them. And the reason I think that is because they are being ordained
1412 because of their spouse's last name, they are now eligible to be voted in as general presbyters,
1413 presbyters, area leaders, and they don't know how conduct themselves in those places. And I'm
1414 generalizing. I understand that. There are probably women who know how to do all of those
1415 things.
1416
1417 R: Right, sure.

1418 A: But some of them, some of them...it's name recognition now. When you go to general
1419 council, or you go to district council, you may not know everyone who's being voted on now. So
1420 if you go to general council you're probably more likely to vote for that person. And so it has
1421 created this false sense that, "Oh! Look at all these women you have in ministry!" When in
1422 actuality many of them have ever lead a church or lead a ministry on their own.

1423
1424 R: Yeah

1425
1426 A: And so they're being promoted to places where they don't understand that...the level of, uh
1427 their competencies, their skills are not there with some of these women, and so then so the men
1428 around them, they falsely, but they do, put a stereotype on all female ministers.

1429
1430 R: Ah. Yeah

1431
1432 A: So that's why I get so passionate about that! [Laughs]

1433
1434 R: So I didn't Fiknow all of that. Um, that's really interesting. Wow.

1435
1436 A: And it's gone to, it went to the floor at general council this year, and we actually, and so when
1437 I found out about that exception and how they had made it this way, several friends and myself,
1438 who are all female lead pastors, we started a group called the "Preacher Girls,"

1439
1440 R: Uh huh

1441
1442 A: And we've been advocating and talking to, like we've been getting involved in all of the
1443 national stuff, because we feel like if we can't talk and speak to the people making the decisions
1444 then there's not gonna be any, we're not gonna continue to have women in ministry. And so we
1445 actually, not like in a suffragette way, but sometimes it comes out that way [laughs] you know?
1446 And so we, actually, I made a phone call to Jim Bradford, the general secretary, er general
1447 secretary?

1448
1449 R: Yeah, uh, general secretary.

1450
1451 A: General Secretary, yes. So he...he's awesome, and I love him. I appreciate and respect him so
1452 much, and so he's the head of the credentialing committee. So when we found out about this,
1453 originally that they had done this through the general presbytery, we're like, "Hey so...we're
1454 concerned about this! We think this is a problem." He said "We thought it was a good idea, more
1455 women," and that sort of thing. And so we had a phone call with him, a Skype meeting with him,
1456 and just asked him questions about what their thought process was behind it, and come to find
1457 out the exception originally, like back in the day the exception was made for spouses so they
1458 wouldn't lose their husband's pension when he died.

1459
1460 R: Oh, ok.

1461
1462 A: Yeah, and so that...I mean, I understand that, that's awesome, but that's not what's happening
1463 now. You know?

1464 R: Oh, I see. Interesting.
1465
1466 A: And yeah, I know women who are in their 40s, who are like, “Yeah! Now I can get my
1467 credentials.”
1468
1469 R: Hmm. So what was the result of that conversation?
1470
1471 A: Um, he took it back to the credentialing committee and they reevaluated it, they looked at it,
1472 and it did get to the floor at general council this year. And of course it got shot down because
1473 they linked in their the exception for people with disabilities, [laughs]
1474
1475 R: Ohh
1476
1477 A: Yeah, so it’s just a disaster. It’s on record. You can go, you can go see
1478
1479 R: Right, I can look it up, yeah.
1480
1481 A: Yeah, it’s on record, but I mean...if they can’t sit down and take a test, we want them to have
1482 an exception to be able to do what they need to do, like that’s not the problem!
1483
1484 R: Right, yeah.
1485
1486 A: But somehow it got jumbled in there, you know? So yeah
1487
1488 R: So, we’ve talked about a lot of stuff today
1489
1490 A: Yeah
1491
1492 R: And you really gave great response, I’m looking forward to, you know, diving into this more
1493 as I, as I analyze it and such, but so just as we wrap up then, is there anything else you’d like to
1494 add, or any perspective you’d like to offer, about any of the things we said, or just in general?
1495 A: Um, I think for me, specifically with the AG, and like our, like our actual denomination as a
1496 whole, [sigh] I’ve seen change, and I’ve heard language change, you know? The way we talk
1497 about things...you know, I’ve gone through those years and now it’s the pastor and their spouse.
1498 And those things matter! Those changes matter and I’m happy it’s happening, but we haven’t
1499 come as far as we think we have. And I think that’s the piece that I’m still trying to um trying to
1500 I guess fight for. I mean, we still have blind spots. Um, our executive presbytery, you know we
1501 have an under 40 female elected to the under 40 position, and she wasn’t elected because she was
1502 a woman, and I’m super excited about that. She was elected because she was young, but not
1503 because she was a woman. And so I know we’re making I know we’re making changes, and I
1504 know that we are large, and because we do allow that autonomy um to our local churches, we
1505 allow some teaching within our churches that shouldn’t be happening.
1506
1507 R: Mm
1508

1509 A: We would not be ok if we ever walked into an AG church and they said, “Um...Tongues
1510 isn’t, tongues isn’t the initial physical evidence.” Like no one, no leader in the AG would be like,
1511 “Yeah! Let’s have a weekend where you bring in someone who says that the Holy Spirit doesn’t
1512 even move through speaking in tongues today, like you know?
1513
1514 R: mmhm
1515
1516 A: Like no one would be ok with that. But we’re totally fine with pastors teaching contrary to
1517 women, um, women in ministry. And that’s the piece that’s not ok to me still. Like whole
1518 churches where they don’t allow women to do anything except for kids, and nursery. That’s the
1519 piece that’s not ok to me still.
1520
1521 R: Mmhm
1522 A: Like we’re no...across the board for all belief systems and theology and practices, we don’t
1523 hold them to the same standard.
1524
1525 R: So there’s been some progress, but we’ve still got a ways to go? Is that what you’re saying?
1526 A: Mmhm. And part of that just comes from the learning, like having to go through the classes
1527 and the um I think that should be required, that if we believe that so strongly that we ordain
1528 women and we call them to lead ministries and lead churches, and we see them as equal, then we
1529 should teach on those things too.
1530
1531 R: It should be more obvious, more, uh, curriculum or whatever you call it.
1532
1533 A: Yeah, I shouldn’t be the weird one in the room.

1 **ANNA: SECOND INTERVIEW**

2 **Ryan:** All right. So the first question I had for you is um one of the things that came up in the
3 first interview was that you um felt like what I've called a trailblazer. So you talked about how
4 you felt a responsibility to improve things for future women um in positions of you know
5 ministry or leadership. And I was just hoping you'd tell me a little bit more about that and I have
6 some follow up questions if we need them, but just you know if you could if we could start by
7 you telling me up or telling me about you know tell me more about that.

8
9 **Anna:** Ok. Um I think when you tend to be the only person in the room um that looks like you
10 um you know gender or race or culture background um even socio-economic status I think that
11 um you may feel a weight um that others are maybe looking to.

12
13 **R:** OK.

14
15 **A:** So I think there's a natural ... I have um, if you do like strength finders I'm naturally uh
16 responsibility's one of my natural um kind of talents and that can also lead to it being a challenge
17 for me as well because I I can take uh psychological ownership of things that aren't mine.

18
19 **R:** Oh, OK.

20
21 **A:** And so I've done up my entire life felt very, I was the first born and I followed the rules I did
22 all those things. And so um I think I naturally feel inclined to want to make it better for others
23 behind me...

24
25 **R:** Mmhm

26
27 **A:** ...to make sure that if I open a door and I walk through it or if someone opens a door for me
28 that I hold the door open.

29
30 **R:** Ok

31
32 **A:** Um and also that was reinforced by unfair statements I think made um to others around me or
33 at times in my presence like, "Oh we've never had a woman sit here. Um hopefully we don't you
34 know, it doesn't ruin it for others you know." Or.

35
36 **R:** Oh wow.

37
38 **A:** Or, "We had a really uh we invited a woman to speak one time and she did horrible. So we
39 won't do that again," you know or you know "really controlling pastor's wife at one point and um
40 so we just don't want to have women in leadership at our church." You know? So those things
41 you hear them and though they may not be pointed at you but they may be kind of anecdotal you
42 start to go OK. So I could really ruin this. I could really ruin this for someone behind me.

43
44 **R:** Hmm. So you feel a greater sense of responsibility then because of that kind of stuff?

45
46 **A:** Yeah, I think at times I did. Um I eventually as you grow you realize OK well one they're not

47 saying not the guys they're not looking at a guy who walks in and goes, "Oh we had a horrible
48 male speaker one time you should be really careful or we're never going to invite another guy
49 back," you know?
50

51 **R:** Yeah, yeah.
52

53 **A:** No one's going, "Oh we had a horribly controlling and manipulative pastor who was a man so
54 we're not going to have we're not going to hire another male at this church." You know no one's
55 ... no one does that. And and so I think that that naturally leads a lot of women to realize like OK
56 like it's it may be unfair, it may not be right. But I better I better be careful and I want and not
57 ruin this for someone behind me. So you know at times you point that out. I know I have friends
58 who have been invited to speak and had some things said to them like, "Oh we've never had a
59 woman speak so don't blow this," And they've said would you say that to a guy?
60

61 **R:** Oh
62

63 **A:** Let's not let's not that's not how to set me up for success.
64

65 **R:** Yeah
66

67 **A:** Like I don't need the world on my shoulders right now. I just want to preach a good message,
68 you know. And so I think yeah naturally I kind of was more inclined to try to make sure that
69 things were, uh but I was doing my best.
70

71 **R:** Ok
72

73 **A:** You know that when I was in the room I didn't feel like I failed. Um I think there are
74 definitely times where I put that pressure on myself and no one else was in the room going oh if
75 Anna doesn't do this well then we're not going to let another woman in this room. But I also think
76 that there were times that others were looking to me and saying, "Well, this is the first time we're
77 going to ask a woman to be here... Let's see what happens."
78

79 **R:** So it sounds like correct me if I'm wrong but it sounds like you're saying that the times when
80 it has been whether explicitly or implicitly said to you ...
81

82 **A:** Yeah
83

84 **R:** Has also affected you in the times when maybe no one was even thinking that except you?
85

86 **A:** Yeah. Oh yeah.
87

88 **R:** How and like how is that like ... I know it's a broad thing but has that um how was that
89 manifested like in you know in the way you engage situations like that?
90

91 **A:** Yeah I think especially when I was younger, first in ministry. I think I was more timid than I
92 normally would have been.

93

94 **R:** Mmhm

95

96 **A:** I think I listened [pause] I'm naturally a listener and observer anyways but I think that I was
97 less inclined to take risks of speaking for speaking out and asking questions maybe or pushing
98 back on things that maybe I didn't like or didn't agree with but I could go along with as long as I
99 was allowed to be in the room.

100

101 **R:** I see.

102

103 **A:** So I think there were times when I didn't speak up when I didn't say things when I didn't
104 correct you know jokes that were made or or things like that but not even the things that were
105 bad, just ideas, bringing my ideas to the table. There were times when I didn't volunteer to do
106 things because I just didn't want to either disappoint people or I was afraid that I would be
107 rejected.

108

109 **R:** Okay.

110

111 **A:** You know um and so the times that I did step forward the times that the people invited me
112 you know the people said oh Anna, you really should do this. Um they were all I mean
113 everything was awesome I mean it was it was great. They worked out. But um I think there were
114 probably moments in my life where I could have been more involved in you know broader
115 leadership than I was I had not been concerned about that.

116

117 **R:** Ok. So it sounds like you kind of, at least most of the time, changed your approach to that sort
118 of thing. So what I guess I should say. Would you say that you have? And if so what uh what has
119 been the result of that? So like if you were in that situation I know they probably differ in
120 different times but you know what I mean.

121

122 **A:** Yeah. So for me now I think I have just decided that one: it's foolish to believe and it's not
123 right or fair to believe that I if mess up I make a mistake that every single woman coming behind
124 me needs to bear the brunt of that.

125

126 **R:** Mmhm.

127

128 **A:** Um so I think that there are times when I just have to kind of say OK Lord this is, you've
129 called me to this. You've called me to be um prophetic in this way or speak truth in this way or
130 lead the way in this area and if I won't do it who will?

131

132 **R:** Mmhm.

133

134 **A:** And and if I don't obey you then that's where I fail. If I obey then I I'm not failing, you know?
135 If I'm faithful then I'm successful. And and so I have really kind of tried to shed that whole I'm
136 responsible for everyone. Now do I feel a weight or a passion to make way for other women?
137 Yes. If the door gets held open for me I want to widen it. You know? I don't want it to be
138 slammed shut because, well Anna's the only one um because we like her she's you know um I

139 don't want that to happen. I want it to be wide open for other women to come behind me and I
140 want to speak um to injustice or to sexism in the church. And I want that to go broader than just
141 the women. I've been exploring a lot about intersectionality and um women of color and how
142 they are perceived in the church. And um I just I feel like I have a responsibility to faithfully
143 follow Jesus into all the ways and in all the places he opens the door for me. And if I while I'm
144 going through the door I can hold it open for someone else I'm going to. But that doesn't mean
145 that I have to feel the responsibility of I'm representing because I'm not a representative. I am
146 me.

147
148 **R:** OK. All right. It's interesting.

149
150 **A:** Yeah I know that a lot of people in the room may think I'm a representative of all women but
151 I think very differently than a lot of other women. And so I wasn't elected by them to be in that
152 room. I was invited into the room or I was you know appointed onto the team or whatever. And
153 so just like other men I don't think that when you're invited on a leadership team for something
154 as guys, and I could be wrong, I don't think they think oh I'm representing all of my gender.

155
156 **R:** I can tell you we don't think that. [Laughs]

157
158 **A:** Yeah, exactly! And so I just I've decided that I just have to I mean in some ways like think
159 like a guy like if a guy's in the room he's not thinking, "Oh it's so nice they let me in this room."
160 Most most white males are not thinking that because they're invited into most rooms and so I just
161 I I have to kind of think that way.

162
163 **R:** Hmm.

164
165 **A:** And I also have to make sure that I don't put the pressure on other women. So if there are
166 women there are women who have gone before me there are women who are in leadership um
167 specifically in my denomination and they shouldn't have this kind of tokenism put on them
168 misrepresentation put on them. They have gotten there and put in those places because of their
169 expertise, their skill, their leadership and though they can open the door wider they are not a
170 representation of me unless I've elected them. Does that make sense?

171
172 **R:** Yeah, I think so. Um so I'm just curious and I don't know if this is a fair question but I'm
173 curious so I'm going to say it anyway.

174
175 **A:** Ok

176
177 **R:** And feel free to tell me it's a silly question if you like, but could you or are you able to assess
178 you know, so you've been in ministry for a while now. It sounds like you've changed your views
179 on some of what your responsibility is and you've been speaking out more when things are you
180 know not how they should be. Um what would you say, have you seen any results of that? You
181 know, positive or negative in-between, you know? Do you know what I mean?

182
183 **A:** Yeah. Um it's so hard because I've seen I've seen results because I've said OK I'm not going
184 to I'm not going to back down and apologize for who I am. I'm not going to apologize for

185 creating spaces where women who are in leadership will be able to connect and feel connected.
186 So um there's this whole argument about whether we should have special things for women
187 ministers.

188
189 **R:** Mmhm.

190
191 **A:** And I'm I'm on this fence around this because I've created groups and spaces for women who
192 were lead pastors because I needed that. And so I found something I needed. And I invited other
193 people in because I think that if I need it then someone else might need it you know. And it's not
194 to say that male lead pastors don't need community or networking, but a lot of the women I was
195 speaking to who are lead pastors were feeling very isolated very alone in their places because
196 they tried to do section events. They tried to go to their city Ministers Alliance whatever. And
197 unfortunately when you go to like an ecumenical thing there are a lot of especially if you're in a
198 conservative denomination. A lot of the ministers are probably coming from backgrounds where
199 they're reformed or their complementarian and so they don't even accept you as a minister in
200 their presence and don't treat you with respect in that way. And then if you are in your section a
201 lot of times it can be really off-putting us as well. And there are some sections that are better and
202 some are worse. You know. And so I found that a lot of these women like me felt isolated they
203 felt alone they felt like no one understood what they were walking through and not that another
204 pastor who was a male could not understand it, but that our peers who were male weren't trying
205 to invite us into space because there's all sorts of issues around, you know, genders being along
206 together and a lot of people have boundaries around those things. So um and so a lot of women
207 have found that they're isolated. And so I I believe that when I first started in ministry and I
208 started recognizing like being the only woman in the room and those things I I was angry. You
209 know? Injustice angers you.

210
211 **R:** Sure.

212
213 **A:** When you're called to do something and you're told that you're sinning just by being who you
214 are that's angering. Like there's there's some some there's some anger and some righteous
215 indignation that comes along with that. And I think that that's important [pause] but it's also
216 important not to stay in that. Um and so I felt like I had to move forward and so as I move
217 forward I said one thing to push in, you know? I'm going to stand here and say I'm the pastor I'm
218 going to be in this room, I'm going to make you uncomfortable if you're uncomfortable and you
219 know I'm going to act like I belong here because I do belong here. I have the same credential you
220 do. You know all those things. But I learned along the way that if I would have conversations
221 instead of shouting, that people listened, you know?

222
223 **R:** Ok

224
225 **A:** And so dialogue, dialogue changes things things, I think. I've been able to have a lot of
226 conversations with people who, um even in my master's course. There was a guy who's not even
227 from my denomination, he's from a oneness Pentecostal denomination. And so he was oneness.
228 So we had all that we just differed you know?

229
230 **R:** Yeah.

231
232 **A:** He didn't believe that women should be like, he was vehemently opposed to women in
233 ministry and in leadership of the church or outside the church at all.
234
235 **R:** Right.
236
237 **A:** So I mean literally one of the first things he said to me was like Jesus had twelve disciples,
238 what do you think about that? That were men. What do you think about that? I was like, he chose
239 twelve, like what are you what are you getting at?. Like I mean I knew I knew he didn't he was
240 trying to like bait me, you know over the course of like three years in our master's program
241 together we ended up like I just I prayed for him constantly because at first I was just angry with
242 him and he made me angry that sitting in class with him. And um then every time he would open
243 his mouth I was just like oh lord please help me to love him because I need to. [Laughs]
244
245 **R:** [Laughs]
246
247 **A:** Um but ended up like he became a good friend and we we all started going to dinner together
248 and you know when you're studying your master's courses and you're like in a cohort you can't
249 avoid each other.
250
251 **R:** That's right, yeah.
252
253 **A:** And after we graduated he asked me to coffee and he said I just want to hear about your
254 calling. And because he's Oneness they put a really strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit moving.
255
256 **R:** Sure.
257
258 **A:** And the Holy Spirit's call on your life. And so I explained to him my call and how I felt my
259 call and how I experienced my call and all of this. And he looked at me after and he said I just
260 don't know what to do with you. And I said why? He said because of what you described is
261 exactly how my call came to me.
262
263 **R:** Huh.
264
265 **A:** And he said and I can't deny that what you're describing is exactly what happened in my life.
266
267 **R:** Interesting.
268
269 **A:** And so I I was like OK OK so you know. So is he going to go to serve under a female pastor?
270 Probably not. But is he going to treat another female pastor the way you treated me when he first
271 met me? No. Because you got to know me and he knows that we're not all, you know, flaming
272 liberal, like sinners, you know?. And so that made a difference I think for him and so for me I
273 started looking out of just less of representation and speaking out against injustice or sexism in
274 the church. [Pause] Like outwardly to like the whole of the church and started really looking at
275 how can I make a difference for the people in my sphere of influence.
276

277 **R:** Ok

278

279 **A:** So I want to be an advocate. But if no one's listening at the national level then maybe you
280 need to advocate and be an advocate in my district or maybe I can be an advocate in my section
281 or maybe I can be an advocate with women ministers across the nation who just need to know
282 that we've all been there and we have answers to and we would gladly sit down with you and
283 have coffee with you, you know? So I think that I kind of wandered through it somehow. But I
284 think that's the results I'm seeing, you know?

285

286 **R:** Yeah, you answered the question. Ok so related to this um we've sort of been talking about
287 this but I'm going to be a little more specific. Um so the other thing that came up a lot which will
288 not surprise you is what I've called resistance. Right? And there was lots of different forms that
289 term for you and the other people.

290

291 **A:** Yeah.

292

293 **R:** But like you said you felt like your gender was a monkey on your back, you know. And uh
294 you talked about feeling segregated you know which we have been talking about already. And I
295 think even the one that stood out a lot was when somebody who wasn't even from your church
296 gave someone from your church a hard time because they went to your church, right?

297

298 **A:** Yeah.

299

300 **R:** And so I was just wondering I mean so some time has gone on since then. You know I don't
301 know how long but there's been a somewhat significant period of time. And so do you still
302 experience these kinds of things. And if so what forms do they take or how has been changed or
303 that kind of thing.

304

305 **A:** So um because I live in a city now, less attention is paid to the people my people my church
306 they accept me. You know we haven't had anyone you know it's like Oh if people come to our
307 church and are like, "Oh, I didn't know you had a female pastor!" Um I'm just we're just kind of
308 like we don't apologize for that. Like this is who we are.

309

310 **R:** Right

311

312 **A:** Everyone accepts that everyone loves it. If you have a problem with that then we may not be
313 the place for you. And we can point you to some really great churches in this city. You know?
314 Because I just I'm like why fight why fight with people who don't want to accept my authority to
315 get them to come to my church when there are tons of people that want to come. There are
316 people that want to be a part of our community and who actually value having me as their pastor
317 whether it's because I'm a woman or not they like me as their pastor. And so with the church
318 itself I I we you know we don't like preach like we do, I'm more of an expository preacher so like
319 right now we're walking through the book of Acts it's going to take us like two years.

320

321 **R:** Take you a while, yeah.

322

323 **A:** And yeah, [Laughs] so but when it comes up we talk about it, you know? So when we walked
324 through the book of Ephesians I actually asked um, it was one of the first times we were going to
325 something it was only time when we came to the household rules. My husband [name] is also an
326 ordained minister and so we actually team taught and talked about how the interpretation of it but
327 also how it lives out in our lives, talked about submission and all those things and talked about
328 living in an egalitarian um partnership is the way we look at our marriage um and really just
329 explored all of that together. But we don't like I don't do a whole series on why women should be
330 ministers. It's just accepted in our church.

331
332 **R:** Mmhm.

333
334 **A:** That's just everyone, equal opportunity man or woman. You can all serve. That's just the way
335 we are.

336
337 **R:** Right.

338
339 **A:** Where I find it the most, this resistance, is still um other churches and other church pastors
340 not wanting to meet with me. Not you know not really wanting to be, you know, um associated
341 necessarily in any way that way like you know, peers you know hang out get to know each other
342 and encourage one another um like the district level like watching um ... [pause] just noticing
343 that it's usually the same people being invited in. And part of that has to do with gender and and
344 political stance and all those things. Part of it's just family like people know each other.
345 Nepotism is a thing you know. Um and so but for me I think the resistance more is subtle. It's
346 just subtle it's it's it's actually kind of a little more insidious too in that it's, "We support women
347 in ministry, we're so forward thinking, we've always ... " my favorite is, "We've always ordained
348 women," you know um but then like there's no women. [Laughs].

349
350 **R:** Right.

351
352 **A:** Oh if you ask them their church would never hire a female pastor. And they've never had a
353 female board member. And oh my gosh we couldn't ever do that. And so it's a little bit more
354 insidious because it's like, "We've done this. We've dealt with this. We totally support that." And
355 in the reality and the practice it doesn't happen. And so and that's where it starts to come out that
356 resistance is you recognize like oh well you may say that it's a few accept me but you won't
357 really have a conversation with me about pastoral things you know. I mean to be honest with you
358 as a pastor it's really funny. In the assemblies we we you know support missionaries and
359 missionaries contact your church and want to talk to you. And when we transitioned from uh to
360 me as being the lead pastor, people would contact my husband because he had planted the church
361 before we were married and so they would contact him after I became the pastor. And he said,
362 Oh well Anna is the lead pastor now. And um this is her contact information and I'm sure she
363 wants to hear from you because we support missions like a lot. And he'd be like did so-and-so
364 contact you? And I'm like no. Missionaries literally would not call me.

365
366 **R:** Interesting.

367
368 **A:** They needed my money, but they would not call or email me to get in contact with me.

369
370 **R:** Huh. And did that happen a lot?
371
372 **A:** Yeah it happened several like, there are probably four to five missionaries that he would ask
373 about and they never contacted me.
374
375 **R:** Wow.
376
377 **A:** Um and then like for instance with the district, several district leaders um would just contact
378 him and say hey are you guys coming to this and he'd be like well I don't know anything about, it
379 I'm not the pastor of the church. Oh well [pause] why haven't you asked your wife? Why hasn't
380 your wife told you and he'd be like, because I'm not the pastor of the church and if you want
381 information you need to call her.
382
383 **R:** Interesting.
384
385 **A:** And they wouldn't. They would never, they wouldn't contact me to ask if I was coming or
386 invite me to things. And so I was like well I'm not going to go to your thing. [Laughs].
387
388 **R:** [Laughs] Yeah
389
390 **A:** If you're not willing to talk to me on the phone or email me. And so I've found other ways. I
391 found individual relationships I've found outside of our section, like minister networking and
392 stuff like that. And I have a lot of friends who are ministers across the nation, male and female,
393 who are a support system for me.
394
395 **R:** Do you um do you interact at all with uh pastors or churches outside of the AG? Or is ...
396
397 **A:** Yeah I do. Um the the minister at work here in [city] that my husband actually started called
398 [name]; a minister care network. And it's ecumenical. So we and my husband works in an
399 Episcopal church and so his uh priest at his church is actually good friend and she has become
400 kind of a pastor to us. She's been amazing and then we've become friends with other pastors of
401 the Episcopal church and um we have some real friends who are outside the AG; um different
402 denominations.
403
404 **R:** Do you experience the same kinds of resistant type things you know from people outside of
405 the AG too? Or is it almost entirely within?
406
407 **A:** Um its almost entirely outside the AG um because I don't really associate necessarily with
408 Baptists. [Laughs] I know that sounds terrible but like most Baptist pastors especially if they're
409 Southern Baptists, they do not believe that women should be in ministry and so they in fact for
410 all intents and purposes they believe that I'm in sin.
411
412 **R:** Ah, right.
413
414 **A:** So I would like that's not something that I go oh, you're baptist I don't want to hang out with

415 you it's just that usually we find out we start talking and then they're not really, you know?

416

417 **R:** It's kind of a non-starter, huh?

418

419 **A:** Yeah it's a nonstarter. So they never really have to say. It's just that you know it just doesn't
420 start.

421

422 **R:** But in that network you were talking about, in there it sounds like you don't really experience
423 that kind of thing?

424

425 **A:** No. Because we just made it clear that it's about relationships and um but we don't I mean we
426 don't sit down and say what your doctrinal beliefs, you know? So we have Pentecostals, we have
427 Charismatics, we have non dominational and we have, I mean, Episcopal.

428

429 **R:** Right

430

431 **A:** Well you know we have all sorts of different people that come and really it's about
432 relationships and so they don't care. They're not trying to figure that out. But the couples that
433 come most of them um either the female is the lead or the wife like they're both credentialed
434 ministers in some way, shape, or form.

435

436 **R:** Gotcha.

437

438 **A:** Um there's very few there's a couple couples that come that like the spouses like in a different
439 like we have a couple people who their spouses are nurses or um police officers that sort of stuff.

440

441 **R:** Ok. Um so was there anything else you wanted to say about that before we move on to the
442 next question?

443

444 **A:** [Pause] Um, I guess I just want to the one thing that I think is I think it's important to note
445 that even though I don't think I hold the responsibility for every woman I do still want to see
446 women in ministry and in leadership an equal equal representation in that way and so I try to
447 advocate whatever ways possible.

448

449 **R:** Ok. Ok. Um so when it came up and I'm sure this won't surprise you is you talked about a fair
450 bit about your experience of um you know your Pentecostal experience. Right. And if I recall
451 correctly you even talked about that um as part of your call narrative. So I was just wondering
452 um if you could tell me more about your Pentecostal experience and specifically like how does
453 that play your role in your pastoral ministry?

454

455 **A:** So I think I even talked about I know I talked about the fact that I didn't have like the normal
456 AG like baggage ...

457

458 **R:** Right.

459

460 **A:** Because I hadn't been raised the AG. And so um I think [pause] for me, experiencing the

461 baptism of the Holy Spirit and then walking out in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the
462 Holy Spirit and just knowing that that Spirit is a real presence every day with me that is infused
463 into everything. I'm one of those who when Paul says to pray constantly you know, pray without
464 ceasing, um I'm one of those who is just constantly talking to God you know and and and so that
465 is also I think infused in my pastoral ministry. I pray for my people a lot like I have prayed
466 constantly um for them. I let them know I'm praying for them I'm you know I'm inviting them
467 into conversations about what the Lord is doing in their lives. And I think that there is salvation
468 through Christ. And um then there's this call to righteousness that comes through the Holy Spirit
469 moving us towards being more like Jesus, you know? And some days we're better at that and
470 other days we're worse on that.

471
472 **R:** Right.

473
474 **A:** But I think that there's the Holy Spirit [pause] to me and the experiences I've had with the
475 Holy Spirit have always been ones of comfort. And um it's a gentleness but also a conviction a
476 strength. And so I tried to allow that to be how I minister. So I really truly believe that everyone
477 in my church knows I love them no matter what ever happened I would be present for them. And
478 I believe that that is the way the Holy Spirit is for us that no matter what happens the Holy Spirit
479 is present for us, is there with us, guiding, guarding, comforting, being gentle, but also kicking us
480 in the rear when we need it.

481
482 **R:** When we need it, yeah.

483
484 **A:** You know? It's like this is not going to be like orthodox Assemblies, but um I do think in a lot
485 of ways the Holy Spirit is feminine. And it has a feminine um, it sounds so, so new age-y, but
486 energy but energy, you know?

487
488 **R:** OK.

489
490 **A:** Like it sounds so so so new age-y. I'm so sorry.

491
492 **R:** Well, tell me more about it though because like ... so what do you mean by that?

493
494 **A:** Yeah I mean it's so bad because I don't tend to uh go towards like gender specific um
495 language because I'm not like all women and not all women are like me. Um but I think when the
496 Holy Spirit moves there is um [pause] a gentleness. I don't know how to explain that and I think
497 that most often we see that with mothers.

498
499 **R:** Ok

500
501 **A:** You know and most often. Not that fathers aren't gentle or not that fathers can't um operate in
502 that. And so it's just an interesting thing that I found I don't know exactly how to explain all of
503 that.

504
505 **R:** So, for you when you see the Holy Spirit move you would characterize it at least often
506 enough anyway, as being in like a motherly, gentle type way? Does that sound right?

507
508 **A:** Can you repeat that? You cut out for a second.
509
510 **R:** Oh, I said, so when you, for you, when you see the Spirit move, um you would often
511 characterize it as in like a motherly, gentle type way. Is that, is that what you're saying?
512
513 **A:** Yeah, yeah.
514
515 **R:** Oh, ok. That's interesting. And so, um so does that, or I should say, how does that show up in
516 your actual like...um I know you talked about how it affects your relationship with your people.
517 Does it show up like in your preaching or in the way you conduct your services or anything like
518 that? I mean in any of the stuff that we've ...
519
520 **A:** Yeah. My whole goal a lot of times when I'm preaching is I don't believe that God at all, God
521 the father, God the son, God the Holy Spirit would ever want to beat people up. [Laughs].
522
523 **R:** Ok
524
525 **A:** And so I try to, even when I have to say hard things I mean I try to allow gentleness and love
526 to um be what comes. The grace and the mercy to come even when you have to say hey you
527 know you have to recognize that we all have bias and can't be racist, like you know? When you
528 have to say hey you can't keep, Like if you, if you keep sinning all you're doing is is just proving
529 you're proving that you need grace more but you're also trodding on Jesus and his grace for you.
530
531 **R:** Mmm.
532
533 **A:** You know, um we have to say those hard things, [pause] you can stil say them [pause] with
534 an invitation. You can say an invit ... you can say a challenge with invitation which is come
535 here, come close. Don't when you're when you're convicted, or you feel shame and guilt. Don't
536 run away; come close.
537
538 **R:** Mmm.
539
540 **A:** And I think that maybe it's because my mom was often this way and that even though she was
541 upset, angry we did something wrong. I always knew that at the end of the conversation after she
542 had said, "No you're grounded. That was wrong you shouldn't have hit your brother." I always
543 knew what would end. And the way it would end would be with an "Ok, come here." And a hug
544 and a hold holding. And we would cry or we would you know even when I was stubborn and not
545 wanting it she often would just wrap her arms around me and say, "No I'm not leaving until you
546 have accepted that you're forgiven and you're loved."
547
548 **R:** Ok
549
550 **A:** And my Dad did that as well. But I think I don't know. There's just something about that. She
551 could literally correct us in one sentence and be like you just lied to me why are you lying? And
552 we could we would go uh uh you know the whole thing when you're caught and she go "You're

553 not, do you understand why you can't lie? That's wrong." And then in the next moment I'd be
554 crying and she'd be holding me, you know?" And I think I see the Holy Spirit that way.

555
556 **R:** Hmm.

557
558 **A:** When we preach the word it's not to beat people with it. The word is not a weapon. The word
559 is scriptures are there to guide us and lead us. And they're all supposed to point towards Jesus
560 and as if our messages don't point towards Jesus and his open arms and the Holy Spirit who is
561 this extension and this presence and this felt-ness; if we're not pointing towards that, if we're not
562 preaching conviction but also preaching invitation, then I don't, like what are we doing? We're
563 just beating people up and letting the enemy bring shame. That's not a kingdom tool, you know?
564 So I think restoration and reconciliation are Kingdom tools and [pause] to be loved and accepted
565 even when you have just slapped someone is a really big deal, you know?

566
567 **R:** And so do you link those ideals specifically to the work of the Spirit, or because I mean it
568 sounds like that's what you're saying. So I just so ...

569
570 **A:** I think I link those ideals both to God the Father the whole, the whole of God. So because I
571 believe that Jesus did the same thing.

572
573 **R:** Right

574
575 **A:** I mean Judas literally sat with him at the last supper and Jesus knew he would betray him and
576 he still served him.

577
578 **R:** Yeah.

579
580 **A:** He still washed his feet.

581
582 **R:** Right.

583
584 **A:** And so we can't we can't look at that picture and go, "Oh, no no no. You have to get yourself
585 right, you know?" And so there's something really powerful to me about God's the whole of God
586 and how the Father reveals himself through Jesus and is actively working in us through the Holy
587 Spirit now, you know?

588
589 **R:** OK.

590
591 **A:** And it's not like I don't they end. I think it's all together.

592
593 **R:** Right, yeah. No, I know what you mean. OK. Um so to move it a little bit differently. So I
594 wanted to give you a chance now to um have a chance to react or you know to clarify or explain
595 to discuss or whatever and so first thing I wanted to ask you was there anything in either the
596 transcript of the first interview or just remembering the first interview that you wanted to discuss
597 or talk about in any way.

598

599 **A:** Um I didn't really I didn't really read anything that I was like oh I feel like I should clarify or
600 discuss this. Yeah I mean I I felt like the first interview was I had a good time. [Laughs].

601
602 **R:** [Laughs]

603
604 **A:** It does feel like. I mean you know I'm talking about myself. So that feels awkward at times.
605 Yeah I didn't. I don't think that I guess I didn't see anything that was misrepresented or anything.

606
607 **R:** Ok. So I tried you know for that not to be the case but I always wanted to give you the chance
608 just yet especially given the topic and that I'm a man like researching women's experience you
609 know.

610
611 **A:** [Laughs] Uh huh.

612
613 **R:** So um then the other one I wanted to ask you was so given everything we've talked about,
614 first interview, this interview, transcript, your reading of it, your experience of it, reflecting on it,
615 all of that, Right? I was just or I would say, would you please summarize for me and I know this
616 is a big like a really broad thing but would you summarize for me your experience as a female
617 pastor in the AG? And you can do that any way you like, right? If, uh, you could tell a story you
618 could be succinct with one little statement and it's really open. However you would summarize it.

619
620 **A:** Um, [long pause] I think the best way to summarize it would be like [pause] you know at the
621 carnival they have that like hall of mirrors, like a funhouse?.

622
623 **R:** Ok

624
625 **A:** And I think at times you walk in and you know these mirrors are going to distort what you
626 look like and you're not going to be quite sure which way to go. It's like a maze you're trying to
627 figure out. But I think at times when you're in there you're often surprised at how much it distorts
628 you or it paints a picture of you that is not you. Um and then you figure out a way and you think
629 you're going in and you run smack into another like mirror that changes the way you look again
630 and eventually you make your way through. But that's after a lot of missteps and looking at
631 mirrors that make you look weird and make you feel weird about yourself and sometimes you
632 laugh at it and sometimes you're like, Hmm ... I don't know if I like that.

633
634 **R:** Yeah.

635
636 **A:** And I feel I feel like sometimes I feel like that is kind of how it is being a female pastor in the
637 Assemblies. You know you walk into you walk into a room and you think this is who I am. This
638 is what I look like, and then you're faced with other people and they say oh no that's not what
639 you should be or that's how you should be. That's not what you should look like. That's how you
640 should conduct yourself. Go this way. And so you start to try to go that way and then there's
641 another mirror that says you shouldn't do that you shouldn't be this you should be this other
642 thing. So go this way. And eventually you figure it out and you see your way out and you at the
643 end of it go OK I got through, you know? And I don't know if I don't know if I'm through. You
644 know I'm not through, through, but I feel like mirrors or at least starting to line up a little bit

645 more and I look a little bit more like myself and I'm able to be a little bit more like myself you
646 know.

647
648 **R:** Ok

649
650 **A:** And other people are saying to me that I shouldn't be something as often. Still there. [Laughs]

651
652 **R:** So you have to have seen change from where you started, though?

653
654 **A:** Yeah. I have. Yeah. I mean we [laughs] like just this week they um elected, so our general
655 secretary has left and they just elected and appointed um a female minister ...

656
657 **R:** Right.

658
659 **A:** ... into that place. And she I actually know her and um she's legit. You know I mean she's
660 she's not a token in any way shape or form she has the chops to do the job. And it made me so
661 happy because I may not agree with her necessarily like politically look or feel like she's more
662 conservative I'm a little bit more into the moderate uh section of life, you know. Um but I do
663 know that she loves the Lord, and authentic human being and that she is well-prepared to do the
664 job. And so that matters. But it matters that they looked outside of a white male because I'm sure
665 there are a ton of white men who were ready and able to do that job.

666
667 **R:** Yeah, mmhm. So you ...

668
669 **A:** And she's single. So that's a big deal too. And she's never been married.

670
671 **R:** So I mean I think I know why but you know for her sake of, why is that a big deal?

672
673 **A:** Um because it's the first woman single woman or single person actually to be on our
674 executive leadership team. And it means that a perspective that has not been there will be
675 brought to the table and it proves, it starts to prove it's moving that line of oh we promote women
676 in ministry and we allow women to be ordained. It moves that line to where we actually practice.
677 We're practicing what we say we believe. We have said forever that women are qualified and
678 able and should be promoted into these places. But we've never done that. And now we're putting
679 we're putting our literal like you know reputation, our money where our mouth is.

680
681 **R:** Right.

682
683 **A:** You know and that's it's one step towards that. And that makes me excited.

684
685 **R:** Do you see that as as helping as part of the process of like thinning out the funhouse mirrors
686 to use your, like that kind of stuff is part of it?

687
688 **A:** Yeah I do because now, now women who like I don't necessarily have a desire to serve in
689 national leadership but there are women, I have friends who I think should be district
690 superintendents. I believe that they are qualified and capable and would be amazing in that role. I

691 believe there are women that should be on the general presbytery and in all of those areas and in
692 every area of leadership in the AG. And I believe that they are called and they're qualified. And
693 now it shows that there might be the door's opening a little bit and the mirrors are getting thinned
694 out and now they might be able to see a clear path of who they are and where they could go. And
695 now women who are in college and getting credentialed. They can see, start to see that there are
696 women ahead of them who have done it. And it's not just reserved for certain people.

697

698 **R:** So are you uh in terms of like I know you can't predict the future and that's not what I'm
699 asking you to do. Are you optimistic are you pessimistic or are you somewhere in between?

700

701 **A:** So [laughs] I'm a natural cynic when it comes to things [laughs] and so like I like even just
702 saying like all I'm excited about this this is awesome the back of my head's like yeah, yeah
703 (Sarcastically). And so I just I I keep reflecting on the fact that um the Lord calls us to hope and
704 as long as I have said I'll be a part of this fellowship. I'm going to hope for this fellowship
705 because there's a lot of things that I think need to change. There's a lot of um and we have some
706 really deep-seated issues when it comes to racism and sexism in our own kind of like
707 ethnocentrism in our denomination. And I think those things, I'm hopeful that those things will
708 be changed and my peers who are around my age, I'm hearing them talk about change. I'm like
709 I'm hearing them talk in ways that I know that the change will come um as we start to see
710 generations change over as well.

711

712 **R:** OK.

713

714 **A:** And so I have hope but I'm still kind of a cynic. [Laughs]

715

716 **R:** I gotcha. That makes sense. OK. Um so just before we finish then. Is there anything else you
717 wanted to say, bring up, discuss, anything like that? I wanted to give you that opportunity before
718 we're done.

719

720 **A:** That's all I could think of. Thanks for doing this project and I'm excited to be able to read it
721 and see what happens with that. I can't wait to hear what your findings are.

722

723 **R:** Yeah, all right. I'm going to go ahead and turn off the recording.

1 **JENNY: FIRST INTERVIEW**

2 **Ryan:** Ok. All right. Are you ready to start then?

3
4 **Jenny:** Yeah. And it was three campuses, five faith communities.

5
6 **R:** Ok I've got that written down so, yeah. OK. So the first question like I said you can respond
7 to these in any way you want. Um ... The idea being uh that I'm just looking to understand your
8 experiences that these questions will bring up. So, um, the first question I had is I was wondering
9 if I was wondering if you could just tell me about your call to ministry.

10
11 **J:** Um, I was dedicated in an Assembly of God church as a baby and grew up in church.
12 My parents were the um there they were the lay people that that every pastor wants in their
13 church. That's there. Every time the doors are open ... volunteers you know they were they were
14 they found Christ as adults.

15
16 **R:** OK.

17
18 **J:** So they were they were all in and um so growing up in church. It was really just part of my
19 my life my experience. I looked forward to it. Sunday was my favorite day. Um I was more
20 introverted. And so I I just looked forward to Sundays. Uh when I was in junior high 13. My
21 parents moved from where we lived [in location] to where our church is currently in [location]
22 and my mom I would say that she's a zealot.

23
24 **R:** Oh yeah?

25
26 **J:** And is seeking more. And um it was a time in which we had the Jesus movement that was
27 really very impactful on our lives my life. And um also as my parents because they went from
28 you know wearing suit my dad wearing suits and ties to church to where ... And he still did that
29 till he passed away. But back to where you know where people come in in jeans in that day were
30 those adults that embraced those changes.

31
32 **R:** Ok

34 **J:** Because they embrace people being saved. So they're pretty passionate their whole their whole
35 adult lives everything centered around God first God the church and us as a family. Um
36 when they moved out here they could not you know they were connected to the church that I was
37 dedicated in. And uh when they moved in long term friendships they moved out here. They
38 didn't find a church and were looking and they couldn't find a church where they could connect.
39 And my mom and dad had already started holding holding prayer meetings in their homes in
40 [location] looking just seeking more of God and it was before people did that had small groups in
41 their homes.

42

43 **R:** Right

44

45 **J:** And the people who lived in that area of [location] you know really are not that suburb of
46 [location]. They were actually driving out to my folks' home every Friday night and after work
47 and they would be they'd be there till 1:00 in the morning.

48

49 **R:** Oh wow

50

51 **J:** And they'd be they'd have fellowship time and just intense prayer meetings and I was a part of
52 all of that in terms of being a kid and so forth. And really the church that I pastor grew out of
53 those prayer meetings.

54

55 **R:** Oh yeah?

56

57 **J:** And wasn't a natural thing for me to be that person. It was a long journey but I say that
58 because they had this small what I would say storefront church that was not Assembly of God
59 because they were just it was just very um [pause] just kind of grassroots rising up and um with
60 this group this small group and they're very very intense in terms of the [pause] experience of the
61 Holy Spirit and so forth. So they started this like storefront church they could be there was
62 already another Assembly of God church in town. And um it was small and very closed off and
63 cold to the spirit so that it wasn't a place they felt affinity to. And so this group formed this
64 church and that was a 1969. Just about a year after we moved out here and um they did it in a
65 storefront, I mean, very much a storefront on you know people drive past that would today I
66 probably never go to a church like that.

67

68 **R:** Right.

69

70 **J:** And that was where it started because that was formational for me uh that in that being part of
71 that startup and my the Jesus movement that was going. Now these groups at the very beginning
72 that the entire group of adults who were probably in their early 40s they felt such a desire to
73 reach young people that they started having um what they called back then coffeehouses.

74

75 **R:** Right

76

77 **J:** Which is basically you know where people carried out all the chairs all the kids set up the
78 floor. You had you know very contemporary Christian music which was brand new. I mean we
79 had many of the Maranatha groups that before they became big they were in our little tiny little
80 storefront. You know Friday Saturday nights.

81

82 **R:** Oh that's neat!

83

84 **J:** And we were all so immediately as a young person I was thrust into participation in leadership
85 and um especially with the Pentecostal experience and the manifestations of the gifts. And my
86 grandmother my mom my sister they all were used in the verbal gifts of the spirit. I mean and my
87 sister is seven years older than me and it was something that was modeled from my childhood
88 something. And so being in that at that age I know I graduated from high school went to a local
89 state university here and at um the age of 19. I I felt the call of God on my life. I just I always
90 loved church. Church was always my favorite thing it was the center of my whole world. And
91 even though I had friends at school and I excelled at school um that was my that was my base
92 that was my touchpoint and. And being so much a part of everything from the very beginnings.
93 And then at the age of 19 it was no idea who preached that Sunday morning. But I know that
94 there was a prophetic word that came out and um it was actually my grandmother that gave it and
95 I knew God was calling me. I didn't know how I didn't know what that looked like. I um my
96 younger sisters were identical twins and they stuttered badly.

97

98 **R:** Mmhm

99

100 **J:** And I picked it up as their older sister so I I speaking publicly was not something I wanted to
101 do Um. I didn't know the only place I saw women were in the mission's field.

102

103 **R:** Right

104

105 **J:** And I just didn't know, you know, what that was. I didn't feel a calling to missions. I just
106 called to God.

107

108 **R:** When, um ...

109

110 **J:** When I started.

111

112 **R:** Sorry, I was just going to ask when you said that your grandmother gave a prophetic word

113

114 **J:** Mmhm

115

116 **R:** um and you felt the call to ministry or where you felt a call in your life I think you said um do
117 you remember anything of what she said or um how you got from that to knowing that there was
118 a calling on your life?

119

120 **J:** It was a general prophetic word that went out to the whole congregation and the pastor asked
121 for a response and I responded and I can't tell you I can't tell you what the um or what to what
122 the actual words were but it was it was a call.

123

124 **R:** OK.

125

126 **J:** It was a call to surrender all of your life. And I knew that that's what God was doing.

127

128 **R:** Ok

129

130 **J:** So and so and at that time even though the church was was small it was probably 60 people.
131 There was a lot of you know a large portion of that maybe 70 people a large portion of that there
132 were people my age. OK. There were families with kids my age there was a sense of you know
133 so that and there was a number of I think young people that felt the call it was a very intense time
134 in terms of the Jesus movement. Um You know I mean it's we were it was it was just new, it was
135 starting and it was it was impactful um um in terms of just even this little local little we called it
136 the one way and on Friday and Saturday nights.

137

138 **R:** Hmm

139

140 **J:** And um our our attorney he had graduated from high school a year behind me and I don't ever
141 remember him attending but when we engaged him to become the church attorney about oh I
142 don't know. Um maybe 13 years ago he starts reminiscing of things that happened there, and I'm
143 like ... I don't remember you attending. And he goes oh changed my life.

144

145 **R:** Oh Wow. Um ...

146

147 **J:** Yeah. So it was like it was like this. It went on for a while. I would say for three or four years
148 at a very intense level on a small basis you know never more than maybe 50 kids. I think one
149 time we had like a hundred kids but it was all young people and there were the adults who were
150 just facilitating this experience.

151

152 **R:** Ok

153

154 **J:** And um it was like I said it was because we were part of that leadership it was it was pretty
155 intense and it was those memories. Um

156

157 **R:** So you said that you were I think at about nineteen when this happened.

158

159 **J:** Yes. Uh huh

160

161 **R:** OK. So you said that you didn't know that it was a call to pastoral ministry at that point and
162 you said that you'd only seen women in the mission field. So when did the call then um clarify or
163 when did you figure out that God was leading you towards pastoral ministry?

164

165 **J:** As I entered into education I transferred I stopped. I didn't know what I wanted to major and
166 so I went to two years and then I stopped University for a year and that was a very um trying
167 year um personally. And you know just directionally so that that at the age of twenty I would
168 never want to repeat that year. [Laughs].

169

170 **R:** [Laughs]

171

172 **J:** And and I ended up knowing I needed to go to uh transfer to a Christian university. And I
173 looked at Assembly of God schools and I compared it with [University]. It was pretty big then.

174

175 **R:** Right, right.

176

177 **J:** In terms of evangelical and charismatic circles. And I just I don't know. I can't even tell you
178 the decision making process why transferring there. I think I needed to get out of [state] for a
179 period of time to kind of rediscover who I was what God's call was and um. And also I just
180 looked at the comparison of other Assembly of God schools and I just got more bang for my
181 buck there.

182

183 **R:** Gotcha.

184

185 **J:** And um and so I I you know I believe it was absolutely divinely um directed. So I transferred
186 and started attending at um [university] my original intent was just minor maybe in biblical
187 studies and have a very practical major.

188

189 **R:** Mmhm

190

191 **J:** And my dad was and my parents were you know the greatest generation. So my dad was very
192 pragmatic and he's like OK you've got to get a job.

193

194 **R:** Right.

195

196 **J:** You got to have to support yourself. You never. There was never in my sisters in our
197 consciousness that we would get married and somebody would take care of us. And that was just
198 came from my dad being a pragmatist. And um and it was not like a opposed to marriage. It was
199 just like that that whole kind of at the time so many of my peers would have that's where their
200 thoughts would have been as a woman. It was just never my dad was the person who was going
201 to make us. You know he taught us how to change the tires on our car how to change the oil in
202 our car.

203

204 **R:** Right

205

206 **J:** You know we had to mow the lawns he had all girls. So and he did. We were tomboys but he
207 wanted us to be prepared to take care of ourselves.

208

209 **R:** Ok

210

211 **J:** He felt that was his his his ultimate job in raising these girls is that we could take care of
212 ourselves and have you know for him he never he didn't see college for any of his kids that was a
213 brand new thing for him. And um even though he was in the white collar profession he actually
214 got there to his wits. I remembered when my dad finished his high school diploma and after that
215 shortly after that he was supervising people with engineers with college degrees. And so my dad
216 was very smart man and very much at that stage where you could work your way up. World War
217 Two vet. Um So you know for him he made us think typing and shorthand and those skills that
218 he saw that women could use. He didn't think about people being educators or so forth. So I was
219 trying to think of something pragmatic and practical to major in but God had just pulled my heart
220 and I knew I couldn't do that. Once I transfer back to [University] I knew that educationally I had
221 to follow my call.

222

223 **R:** Mmhm

224

225 **J:** And so I switched to um Biblical studies teacher and as I really progressed down that road that
226 call became strengthened. Um I have a period of time in which I was there at the end of my
227 second semester there and I had to declare a major. Um And I remember having a struggle
228 because I was already at that time you know twenty going on twenty-one I felt so old compared
229 to all these freshmen and other people that I was. [Laughs] And and I just I use this I teach I
230 teach the Pentecostal theology class.

231

232 **R:** Right

233

234 **J:** And um about what a word of wisdom is. And because people have a difficult time defining
235 that I use this example is that I was really struggling because if I um could major they had a
236 major just English Bible with no language, no biblical languages.

237

238 **R:** Ok

239

240 **J:** And if I were all of the women went the direction of Christian education that was not me. I
241 have two sisters that are teachers. My husband is an educator; that is not me. And plus I think I
242 actually was repelled by the fact that that's where they steered all the women. [Laughs].

243

244 **R:** Ah, Ok

245

246 **J:** wasn't any age you're saying you're your biblical studies major are you a Christian education. I
247 just really kind of. You No pushback against that. And um plus it just wasn't it wasn't my calling
248 or gifting. And um anyway so I had to decide whether it's English Bible or if I could major in
249 Old Testament because I was already taking Modern Hebrew and take. It was nothing to go on to
250 take biblical Hebrew.

251

252 **R:** Sure

253

254 **J:** That if that if I if I did that it would add another year on that. And when you transfer and you
255 lose credits and.

256

257 **R:** I know that well, oh yes.

258

259 **J:** Yeah. And so I I I really struggle with that both time wise and financially what finance portion
260 of it. And I was praying and I was asking God to reaffirm his call on my life to to reaffirm that
261 this is what I was just be at [University]. And it was a time you know there was phone calls it's
262 all landlines they were very expensive for long distance. And um I just praying in my dorm room
263 and asking God just pounding the table. God I need to hear it from you. I got to know what's
264 going on. I don't know what to do. My next step as much of a crisis as that can be and you can
265 remember back. [Laughs]

266

267 **R:** Yes. Yes.

268

269 **J:** That it seemed a crisis. And I didn't. I left that place of prayer went down to the campus post
270 office picked up a a letter from my grandmother who um you know I was she was not a perfect
271 person. But she was a spiritual mentor. And um just reading her as she starts off talking about
272 you know baking homemade bread and just thinking about you how much you love it when I do
273 this and missing you. And then she begins to say but I know that God has a call on you Jenny
274 and that you are there at [University] to fulfill that call God has on your life. So you know two of

275 my three things were answered you know literally leaving my place of prayer picking up this
276 letter from my grandma who was that letters written you know three or four days earlier and just
277 that confirmation. So I made that really expensive long distance call to my grandma who only
278 went to the eighth grade.

279

280 **R:** OK.

281

282 **J:** In Arkansas. That's all that they had. And um but she was pretty well read. She had you know
283 that she was a person who read the classics to her kids. [Coughs] She wouldn't even have known
284 that they were called classics.

285

286 **R:** Ok

287

288 **J:** Because you know they were books and her mother who was educated gave her she just read
289 them to her kids and um [pause] called her up and I tried to explain to her you know Grandma
290 this is what's going on if I major in Old Testament. Then I get it in a minor New Testament. I got
291 to take Hebrew and Greek and that course of programs is going to keep me here another
292 additional year, so a total of three years. And I say I don't know what to do if I major in the
293 English Bible I can be done. You know the end of next year. And she doesn't have any concept
294 of what college is about none whatsoever no one ever you know not one of her grandkids the
295 closest we got was my brother in law who was graduated from seminary because he was going
296 into the chaplaincy. And um I explained it to her and she said Well Jenny she goes I can tell you
297 in her Arkansas way. I don't know. I don't know nothing about college and university but I know
298 this: that God could teach you the English Bible on your knees. But he had to send you to
299 university to learn the other.

300

301 **R:** Wow.

302

303 **J:** You know, like yeah. It was like I don't know nothing about the Greek and Hebrew but I do
304 know God can teach you the English Bible on your knees. But he had to send you to the
305 university to teach you that. So that was it. Case closed.

306

307 **R:** So your grandmother was definitely um I can see why you say she was a spiritual mentor then
308 because it seems like a lot of the major ways or times when your call was confirmed.

309

310 **J:** Right

311

312 **R:** Or you know redirected was through stuff she told you or when God, you know, um spoke
313 through her.

314

315 **J:** Right.

316

317 **R:** OK. So ...

318

319 **J:** And I had that opportunity and God used her in that. And so I pursued that. So I I you know
320 I'd be like there's two girls back then in the biblical Hebrew class you know nobody you know
321 there was literally the class I graduated, there were two women who majored in Old Testament.

322

323 **R:** Wow, yeah.

324

325 **J:** Um myself and my roommate [name of roommate]. One of his daughters.

326

327 **R:** Ok

328

329 **J:** So and um anyway that so we were you know that we were the only ones an in and I minored
330 in New Testament it was an easy thing to do take Greek. But I think through I was very
331 successful academically. It was it easy even though I did I consider my intelligence above
332 average but not you know you look at [my daughter] and that's how [my daughter] would
333 compare herself. And I know I'm not that bright but ... I would [laugh]. Yeah. And it's really but
334 it was like an affirmation. I would always get A's and all of those most difficult classes I would
335 get A's.

336

337 **R:** Right

338

339 **J:** And I've succeeded at that. And it was almost that affirmation that I needed because I didn't
340 come from a family that even understood I did back then I couldn't have told you what a master's
341 degree was. I had no idea.

342

343 **R:** Sure.

344

345 **J:** I didn't anyone who had a master's degree. So. Um it was it was that success just continuing
346 even though I couldn't see where I was at, I could ever see myself in a pastoral role. And then
347 you know when I came back to [state] after graduating I actually met my husband the last
348 semester of my senior year. And um he was a music major so that's why we never saw each
349 other. Um He was holed up in the music building and I was held up in the library. But um when I
350 moved back to [state] I got a job I had a good friend that graduated from USC and um got ... And
351 he worked that job and he took a managerial position for um back and it was [company].

352

353 **R:** Mmhm

354

355 **J:** One of the baby [company] and um I got a a clerical a really good clerical job through my
356 connections with him. And um and I was again I was young I was bright and you know go get
357 her so it was easy for me to kind of excel there. And I could have stayed there and they would
358 have promoted me they offered to prepare me for management. I had a bachelor's degree they
359 didn't care what it was in.

360

361 **R:** Sure.

362

363 **J:** And and to promote me, and that I knew that that wasn't the direction I knew I could do that.
364 But I knew that wasn't God's will. So I had no direction. I had no mentor but I just knew that I
365 had to pursue God's call on my life. I didn't know what that looked like. And so while I was
366 working and during this period of time so I graduated from [University] in 79. So um in January
367 of 80 my dad passed away. It was a big blow to all of us because we were you know, Daddy's
368 girls.

369

370 **R:** Right

371

372 **J:** And he was 65 and and so it kind of put us all in a tailspin. My older sister was married her
373 husband was a military chaplain in the Army and um they I forgot where they were. [Pause] I
374 think they were still in Germany at that point. But anyway. [Pause] So it put my younger sisters
375 and I kind of in a tailspin and my mom my dad had provided because he was you know
376 depression. He was and he was so he had made provision. My mom worked a a just in that
377 school district in the kitchens. But it was a good steady job gave her her insurance and it gave her
378 a group of women who had gone through the same thing she'd gone through. And so we
379 continued on going to our little church and um ... And I at that point I got married in 81 and I

380 was working at this time all this time I was working for [company] and after I got married I
381 wanted to I knew I wanted to pursue seminary. I didn't know why I had to. I knew I had to.

382

383 **R:** Mmm

384

385 **J:** I just you know. And so I had applied and was accepted at [seminary]. Um and I started
386 working. And God just blessed me I was able to work part time at [company], maintain all of my
387 benefits all of my health benefits my vacation time everything on a full time stature that worked
388 part time and go to school part time. So I commuted, and it's in [state]. So I commuted at least an
389 hour to an hour and a half one way to go to [seminary].

390

391 **R:** Ok

392

393 **J:** Um and did that. So I spread it out over a period of years and uh we were first married so we
394 were struggling. I but you know it was God's will. I mean God just provided. I had no
395 scholarships. I graduated with no debt from seminary. Um and I had my husband would just get
396 these extra opportunities and just the Lord provided for us to to be able to do this in that period
397 of time that period time we bought a house. I mean it was just over a period. I think let me see
398 when did I. [pause] Yeah over a period of six years, I think.

399

400 **R:** Right

401

402 **J:** And I think it was for me to spread that out. But the same thing that happens for my Master's
403 of divinity was I I and I didn't take an area of concentration that was kind of brand new back
404 then.

405

406 **R:** Sure

407

408 **J:** That wasn't a lot of women. There was more women because it was a Presbyterian seminary.

409

410 **R:** Right.

411

412 **J:** So there was more women and um they were [seminary] was very much on the um [pause]
413 Ahead of ahead of the curve in terms of using gender inclusive language. And it really made you
414 think about that. And I I was geared towards some of the more difficult classes and I again the

415 success in academics just met or reaffirmed it.

416

417 **R:** So ...

418

419 **J:** Then the last, go ahead.

420

421 **R:** Ok, so I was just going to say, and you can finish your thought there, I didn't interrupt you but
422 I was just wondering when ...

423

424 **J:** Ok, let me finish this one thought talking about the call to pastoral ministry.

425

426 **R:** Yeah, Yeah.

427

428 **J:** The same time I'm working at a church and um it was a pastor who didn't even didn't even
429 agree with necessarily wholeheartedly women in pastoral positions but it was Assembly of God
430 Church. And um my husband I were going to cause I was raised Assembly of God. And in the
431 midst of that I you know because of going to seminary he respected that and he'd let me preach,
432 and he would let me. He was still vacillating on how he felt about it all. Let me preach and and
433 help with that you know communion and weddings and burials and those sorts of things and I'm
434 just on a volunteer basis. I was still working. I was still commuting to school and um the very
435 last class I took I had like one class in the year that I graduated that I had to take. And it was with
436 Russ Fetlar who is um Assembly of God was one of the professors at [seminary] that there were
437 two that were Assembly of God and he was one of them and a former military chaplain and very
438 well respected at [seminary] and in the whole southern [state] area. And it was the first
439 Corinthians class and I took that with him and he I had not met with him. I was a commuter. I
440 did not network. I didn't. That was the biggest thing about not having a mentor was I did not
441 understand how to network how men would understand how to network. I never understood that.

442

443 **R:** Sure

444

445 **J:** So I just I just worked. I worked. I went to school and I worked hard. I just did. I worked hard
446 at church. That's all I do. [Laughs].

447

448 **R:** [Laughs]

449

450 **J:** And um and so here I am about ready to get my M.Div. And he's looking at me and he goes he
451 has this conversation. He's very military in terms of cut and dry. And he said what are you doing
452 getting a Masters of Divinity. You should go into the military chaplaincy. And I looked at him
453 and I go Hey I have a brother in law who's a who's an army chaplain and God has not called me
454 to do P.T. [Laughs].

455

456 **R:** [Laughs].

457

458 **J:** I can't do that, no. Now that's not that's not where God called me. And he said this to me. And
459 it just was a challenge I hadn't thought about what God had really called me. I mean I was just
460 working hard didn't know where that thought maybe associate pastor role something like that.
461 And he goes you know the AG is never going to give you a church.

462

463 **R:** Hmm

464

465 **J:** And I looked at him and I spoke a word of wisdom. It was a word of wisdom back to myself
466 and I didn't know it. And I said well it's a good thing that I'm not depending on the AG to give
467 me a church to pastor.

468

469 **R:** Well, yeah.

470

471 **J:** And yeah I became that was the moment in which I knew I was called to be a pastor.

472

473 **R:** OK, wow, that's really neat.

474

475 **J:** It was a very odd thing. I saw him years later but I was already pastoring and and a Presbyterian.
476 I said you know you won't remember me I was one of your classes and you said this, and he just
477 looked at me and he says well I'm glad I could help. [Laughs]

478

479 **R:** [Laughs]

480

481 **J:** I really I really had to you know that's that. There was like no one there who was saying this is
482 what you're called to Jenny. There was no one there you know steering me in a direction and I
483 find that with most [pause] not with women now, but with all women then, that there were no
484 mentors there was no direction. It was just the, that urgency. And uh after I became more

485 involved with [location] district council the assemblies I discovered women who have been
486 pastoring and most of our churches in our area of [location] the original Assembly of God
487 churches, I would say a good one third were planted by women in the 30s and 40s and 50s.

488

489 **R:** Yeah that was a common thing in AG history I know.

490

491 **J:** Mmhm, Yeah.

492

493 **R:** Um so how did you get from there then to your first pastoral position? And you know what
494 that was like?

495

496 **J:** I was um at the church that my husband I had joined in um [pause] as as newlyweds where I
497 was going through seminary and they had the pastor that he wasn't quite sure about it but he
498 came around he did like a 180 on women in ministry as I challenged him and and he gave me
499 opportunities, but when it came I was nearing the end of my MDiv. I had already um gotten my
500 credential. I had applied for Assembly of God credential. I applied for a license to preach and um
501 even that was very very austere in terms of here. We had a big room go to be interviewed by a
502 board of presbyters, they were drilling us. It was a very intimidating.

503

504 **R:** Sure.

505

506 **J:** And I was like one of the last ones to be interviewed and um I had and there was one on one
507 one pastor presbyter that did not like the fact that I did not go to any Assembly of God school.

508 [Laughs]

509

510 **R:** Oh, ok.

511

512 **J:** And um anyway here I was almost I was on the verge of getting either very close to getting
513 my M.Div. and they were all that like you he was like we wanted to give me a lower level
514 credential. I'm like No I you know I'm doing youth, I'm speaking. I have a week ... our youth as a
515 convalescent home ministry and preaching that once a month I meet all the qualifications for a
516 license to preach. It was really um on that board, there was a man a man whose son was going to
517 [seminary], another another pastor presbyter who was out in the desert you could have just
518 plucked him out of Oklahoma or Arkansas, you know?

519

520 **R:** Mmhm

521

522 **J:** You know and that's who he was. And and I was very Pentecostal in my expression. And what
523 I did what was I goal what did I want to do. I wanted to combine biblical knowledge with the
524 spiritual, the manifestations of the spirit that I did not see the mutually exclusive in the church
525 and that we had lost that dynamic. OK this is back in the 80s.

526

527 **R:** Sure.

528

529 **J:** We'd already lost dynamic of the spirit in the AG and. And um so he liked all that. He was
530 very you know classical Pentecostal and so really when I even in that perspective there was five
531 of them and then they they sent me out after the interview, my husband and myself. They
532 brought me back in and they said we voted for to five, four to one to give you this. And then they
533 all looked at the other guy.

534

535 **R:** [Laughs] so you knew which one, huh?

536

537 **J:** Um I think that they had a big argument over it yes. So that was all very and it's not very
538 intimidating now thank goodness, thank the Lord that it's not that way but it was and it was part
539 and that experience. It would have been much more intimidating if I had not had my education.

540

541 **R:** Sure.

542

543 **J:** Uh there was a number of women at the time who really hit huge obstacles in those
544 interviews. And our our superintendent did not know that until he was told that by a whole group
545 of women. [Laughs].

546

547 **R:** Yeah

548

549 **J:** Then things began to change in terms of those interviews. But anyway so as I um said so
550 anyway so I had already had I already had my Assembly of God credential. I was ... I had I was
551 finishing up at [seminary] and um and I was doing youth at my church and I had no training on
552 you even though my pastor had been a youth pastor he didn't mentor me or tell me how to do
553 anything. And I was still running you know 25 30 kids with nothing no understanding of how to
554 network with the district and all of those people. Um [pause] And I was the members of the

555 board were our friends. And I had two members of the board come to me with their wives and
556 say Jenny, Pastor Steve is going to hire a youth pastor. OK. I was working. I was ready to quit
557 my job. You know my husband had a job I would work for hardly anything. And um he's Pastor
558 he's getting ready to hire youth pastors and he's going to hire somebody else, he's not going to
559 hire you.

560

561 **R:** For the job that you'd already been doing?

562

563 **J:** For the job that I was doing and um doing and working and going to school. And yeah. And I
564 was devastated.

565

566 **R:** Sure, yeah.

567

568 **J:** Anyway but I was also on a very um I have a family that I would much rather confront then
569 sweep something under a rug, that just drives me crazy. So I'm not afraid. I have all sisters. So
570 you just bring everything out to the open. And so I went to him and I said and he didn't even tell
571 me. They told me and I went to him. I said how can you do this? I'm doing the job. You know
572 I'm preparing for ministry. How can you do this? And he goes he says well I I you know I just
573 can't have a woman. It just no one's going to hire you if it's only you on staff because you're a
574 woman and as a man it's just not safe, you know, for me to work with a woman.

575

576 **R:** Oh, ok

577

578 **J:** And I'm like I said every day you're here with your secretary downstairs how is this different,
579 you know? And and um I said it's not right and it's not fair. At that point when I was that age
580 when I would get really angry I'd start crying and I hated it. I started crying when I started
581 crying, he started crying.

582

583 **R:** Oh dear

584

585 **J:** And he is crying and he saying I know it's not right [pause] but it's the way it is.

586

587 **R:** OK.

588

589 **J:** And and so I knew that there was no future there. Now what had happened in the meantime in
590 the church that formed out of my parents' prayer meeting. My parents were just laypeople. They
591 never had no no sense of that they wanted to lead, preach, anything. You know that was not my
592 dad. It was you know my mom was a zealot she's the prayer intercessor. Um and anyway what
593 had happened was that church had because the where I was at my pastor his father was our
594 presbyter. He was eight and we had built a new building. So we're out of the storefront we're in
595 the building um that was built and I um his father his father was able to get our little church into
596 the AG. So this was a good thing. So they were no longer independent. They had gone through a
597 number of independent pastors. They always wanted to be Assembly of God they were able to
598 join the AG. They were able to work it through to get permission of the other church and and that
599 was a good thing for me to be at that church his father. I mean he helped me too that pastor
600 helped me and help my husband. But this was his [pause] big blind spot. He was not a bad man
601 he was not you know he was he would help in terms of you know. You know that was a good
602 time of formation of who I was and my calling and my gifts. And it was a church that - he was
603 afraid. He was a little afraid the manifestations of the gifts. And you know and I was used in the
604 gifts. And he he trusted me to do that. So there's a lot of ways in which he trusted me but he just
605 couldn't hire me in his own mind.

606

607 **R:** Ok, and he couldn't hire you specifically because you were a woman?

608

609 **J:** Huh? Because I'm a woman. Yes.

610

611 **R:** OK.

612

613 **J:** And he hired somebody with no credential and no education. Great guy, independent youth
614 pastor. But he had no credential and no education. And um it was very. Yeah. It was. That was
615 very hurtful. And we left there that we that we ended up with our little church that was planted
616 out of my parents' home had now had status as an assembly of God Church, Assembly of God
617 pastor. And I had my last year of seminary. And I just knew I couldn't stay there where I was.
618 But I also knew I needed to leave in a way that it did not um cause any disruption within the
619 body.

620

621 **R:** Sure.

622

623 **J:** My husband was leading worship by this point. I was doing youth I'm teaching the adult Bible
624 study on Sunday mornings about Sunday school class. You know I was teaching the older adults
625 so I had all in terms of all the influencers. You know the parents of the youth I had those people I
626 knew I could not I was not going to cause a disruption. Or bring to light [pause] that pastor's
627 error [pause] in that area um because I knew that if I did then that would follow me in my
628 ministry.

629

630 **R:** Right.

631

632 **J:** And I wasn't going to do it. And so we left there and we told everyone that I needed to do a
633 different internship. And we told everyone I was going back to my home church to do a different
634 internship. It was now Assembly of God. And the only people that knew why we really why we
635 left ... was those two board members and their spouses. Nobody else knew. And I mean nobody
636 else knew. There's a couple of the older people that kinda saw through things.

637

638 **R:** Figured it out, huh?

639

640 **J:** And figured it out. Yeah. And nobody knew.

641

642 **R:** Right. So um ...

643

644 **J:** When we came we came back and I I just came on board being part time associate volunteer.
645 And that's it. And at the church were you know this was planted on, you know my parents' home.

646

647 **R:** OK.

648

649 **J:** Now becoming the senior pastor was a whole new thing, but I'll let you ask your question.

650

651 **R:** Well, I was going to say, so the next question, then, is uh, where, like how did you get from
652 there to being a lead pastor. Um, and then what was that like in your first position as a pastor
653 somewhere.

654

655 **J:** I, um, so we came back the pastor that they had with the first year, they um [pause] He really
656 wasn't the person for the job. And so the congregation did not vote him back in. We had nothing
657 to do with that. And so there was a six month period of time that the struggling church because

658 the Church has struggled because it had been independent and the pastor the independent pastor
659 had embezzled money

660

661 **R:** Oh wow

662

663 **J:** Well and so they lost. It was down like 30 people. They went from like a hundred down to 30.
664 But they had a building building was brand new and and um anyway that man was not the man
665 to build the church. So they went through six months. We came back. We were here six months
666 of not having a pastor so it was six months. And I was um uh still going to seminary and working
667 and all the six months of me preaching when we didn't have someone who was um trying out for
668 the position. Um we you know are people building and I was preaching. I was doing all the
669 Wednesday night bible studies, and um, anyway during that period of time I would see these
670 people come through that were aspiring to be pastor. And I was just like. Oh my goodness. I
671 don't know anything and I could do a better job.

672

673 **R:** Right

674

675 **J:** But if you know and we have one retired pastor and he was 66. And everybody liked him he
676 was not demonstratively Pentecostal. He could have preached in a Presbyterian church but his
677 spirit and his wife we just loved him and um he just came to fill in. You know like you know he
678 was just being an interim you know interim space. And I remember going back going with the
679 head deacon, sitting down with the superintendent, the assistant superintendent and saying you
680 know you're saying to these people this that person. You know. And, and at the at the time the
681 superintendent that was there came into the meeting and said you need to just take somebody in
682 their 20s and irony of this group of people we're not going to take. I was in my 20s. They were
683 not gonna take somebody in their 20s. [Laughs]

684

685 **R:** [Laughs]

686

687 **J:** And, um anyway having that conversation and later on seeing our assistant superintendent and
688 I just said that he became that man was [name of superintendent] became our superintendent for
689 25 years. And so I remember as just as a seminary person and newly credentialed going to him
690 and saying Ray. We I think the church wants [pastor]. And he goes well you can't have him. The
691 district has plans to use him. And I said at this point I said I said I can do. I said I don't know
692 anything. And I know I could do a better job than the people that are coming through here.

693 [Laughs].

694

695 **R:** [Laughs]

696

697 **J:** And he's like No no no no. I will. And we need [pastor] and I need to have a relationship with
698 him at that time. But it was just like frustration. And so the Lord really spoke to [pastor's]'s wife.
699 And she was hungry just to settle. And again and it was a small church. She loved everybody and
700 they became our senior pastor for eight years. And that and I asked him he is. And he told the
701 board I'll come and do it because he'd worked hard. And he goes I don't want to work that hard
702 again so I'm only going to call if John and Jenny (my husband and I) promise to stay and help.

703

704 **R:** Hmm

705

706 **J:** And that you know give her a small stipend and so she can come in. And I went to him I said
707 OK this is what happened with my previous pastor. Why is it you ... and he had all sons he had
708 no daughters. And I said why do you feel that you can work with me. And well how do you feel
709 about having a woman. He goes I never liked taking Fridays and Saturdays off because I plan on
710 working on Friday and Saturday. You come in on Mondays and Tuesdays and he goes we don't
711 have a secretary will split it.

712

713 **R:** Yeah, ok.

714

715 **J:** And he literally meant split it. So he did all of the bulletins. I did all the other stuff and I you
716 know I did and I had portfolio with youth and visitation and [pause] Anyway it was during that
717 season that I was able to quit my job at [company]. I actually took a buyout. And um I had my
718 son. And my daughter during that period of time they're five years apart and it was eight years
719 and it was a very good eight years. He taught me how to do funerals, how to do weddings, how
720 to run board meetings. Um you know what are the practical things to do. It was the first time in
721 my life that I was that I was mentored.

722

723 **R:** Ok

724

725 **J:** And um you know I had graduated from seminary before I had my son. And so it was during
726 that period time that I could feel myself. And because it was a very [pause] classically driven
727 group of people, Pentecostal group of people, and he was not that he was never used in any of

728 the verbal gifts he told me he had prayed and prayed but his personality, it wasn't his. That
729 basically he just let my husband and I run the service until he preached and he was very he was a
730 person who was very [pause] comfortable in who he was and his abilities and that he could share
731 in ministry. He says I had worked that hard he was not a control person need not be a control
732 person. And he also things like don't try to raise up a ministry until someone's called, you know?
733

734 **R:** Yeah

735

736 **J:** And you know if you do all the stuff that simple church says it was already there in him you
737 know this is what although I'd probably that some of the mistakes I made. [Laughs].

738

739 **R:** [Laughs]

740

741 **J:** But he this was who he was because he was building a church and everyone said you know
742 he's too old in his late 60s. He's going attract people his age. That was so far from the truth. He
743 attracted people at that point. I was I was now in my 30s. You know. That he attracted people my
744 age.

745

746 **R:** OK.

747

748 **J:** He was a yes he was a young thinker. He because he just was like release people to do what
749 they wanted to do. You know, ministry, he didn't try to control it. He was a very biblically based
750 minister. Good sermons never preached longer than 25 minutes which was so um opposite of all
751 of his peers. Yeah

752

753 **R:** [Laughs]

754

755 **J:** And he was very open. And so we would have like you know the manifestations of the gifts of
756 the spirit in our services. And he just. It just flowed because God has gifted me that way. God
757 had gifted me to know and have sensitivity to know how to handle that situation. And so the
758 church flourished because we had stability. We had actual leadership that was stable. People just
759 loved him. His wife was a jewel. She built up his ministry most naturally affirming person I've
760 ever met in my life. Anyway it just everyone that came and there was all these people my age
761 young families and so that he that he built the church from 30 people to about a hundred people.
762 And so he broke the hundred barrier and he knew that we needed to do additional building and so

763 forth and um he really didn't want to go through a building program. And by this time now he's
764 up in his 70s and he's thinking he's willing to take it. He just caught us off guard and he just
765 resigned and none of us expected it.

766

767 **R:** Oh wow

768

769 **J:** We were all heartbroken. He was going to take a job in Oregon that he thought it was because
770 he never wanted to stop. Anyway but it just he there was no reason for him. There was no
771 conflict there was nothing. And literally everybody just cried um and everyone just looked
772 around. What are we going to do? You know the church was healthy there's all these new
773 families and relationships and ministries and it started and [pause] the church was growing and
774 and we're like and so I just knew I had to tender my resignation. When he resigned I had to
775 resign. That's the way it goes in the AG

776

777 **R:** That's the way it works, right.

778

779 **J:** Right. So and so the board what I'm telling the board. I'm giving them my resignation they're
780 just looking at us, here my husband's the worship leader. I'm doing so many of the ministries and
781 they're like what? You know and here's another thing too. He had people on the board in their
782 20s.

783

784 **R:** Oh wow.

785

786 **J:** I mean that's the kind of guy he was. You know he just really he knew how to just raise up and
787 trust people and see their gifting. So so he had the board was now filled with people. There was a
788 few you know that were that were older in their 70s that were the leaders of kind of the
789 influencers, but half of the board were in their 20s and 30s. And um [pause] anyway he the board
790 was just like what?! And and I just have to step back and pray and everybody had to have us stop
791 and think what do we want to do. And as they're stopping and praying and pastor had tendered
792 his resignation and um I went to one of the elder board members and I just um You know I
793 christened my husband I prayed and I said I think that it would break my heart to leave. I mean
794 this is a church founded on my folks but it was me being a part of this since the beginning was
795 no absolutely no guarantee for me to be the pastor because I was family.

796

797 **R:** Right, Sure.

798

799 **J:** And I'm the outspoken family and I'm the I'm the one you know that's you know that we have
800 a relationship of very much openness in our family and um You know it's like my aunt my uncle
801 was on the board and my uncle he would he had my parents were this way but my uncle, He
802 would say things that were not appropriate at times. [Laughs].

803

804 **R:** [Laughs]

805

806 **J:** It was a little bit you know a little bit racist that he was out like a little bit. And I would just
807 call him on it and I'm frustrated I frustrated him to death. I didn't do it in public. I would tell him
808 you cannot say that. You know this is the man that gave me away at the wedding because my dad
809 was dead and I'm very close to my uncle. I'd say you can't say that or no this is how it should be.
810 And he's a very he was a very strong individual so I was the one that clashed with him.
811 Everybody else church was afraid to. And I was like oh he loves me. I can clash with him all I
812 want to; he loves me! And you know and correct things that people were afraid to correct. And
813 um so it was no guarantee. And I just prayed and asked the board if I could submit it, submit my
814 name for consideration. And and so they discussed it and actually my uncle was on the board and
815 another um elder gentleman his age was on the board. And my uncle went to the other one and
816 he asked the question, "Marvin. Can a woman be our pastor?" [Laughs]. And then, "Can Jenny
817 be our pastor?"

818

819 **R:** Right, Right.

820

821 **J:** And it was like you know, they had it as they sat down and had a discussion about that whole
822 fact, that you know seeing gifting and all my abilities they love me they loved me and my
823 husband being there. But they had not sought, they had not looked at me as that.

824

825 **R:** They hadn't thought of it that way?

826

827 **J:** Yeah. Yeah. And Marvin Marvin was a wonderful supporter and wonderful soul.

828

829 **R:** Mmhm

830

831 **J:** And um he said yeah he was like. He goes I think God's calling Jenny to do this.
832
833 **R:** Ok
834
835 **J:** We love [pastor], but God's calling her to do this. And so when they had them you know when
836 they had the votes I think I had two against me or three or whatever it was you know I didn't
837 need it to be unanimous. I never considered anything nobody should ever think that things have
838 to be unanimous.
839
840 **R:** Right, yeah.
841
842 **J:** That are like I think maybe there was cheer that said no. But it was a new thing. And after that
843 I said you can ask the question there.
844
845 **R:** Yeah I was just going to say so did you experience any like I mean they all, most of them
846 voted to hire you as pastor.
847
848 **J:** Right
849
850 **R:** But afterward did you experience any direct or even passive resistance from people in the
851 church that you thought was based on your gender?
852
853 **J:** No.
854
855 **R:** Ok
856
857 **J:** No because I was in a place I didn't here they loved me. And even the ones who were more
858 gender biased. And this is what I think is that people will say this. What do they have to say?
859 They have to say that a woman isn't cold. They can say that kind of you know. [Pause] as they
860 are looking at it objectively you know subjectively as if to say that you know something they
861 believe.
862
863 **R:** Right
864

865 **J:** Until they come face to face not with me as a person. But with my calling. And my gifting.
866
867 **R:** Hmm
868
869 **J:** It's really hard for them to say that in the face of my calling and my gifting.
870
871 **R:** Interesting.
872
873 **J:** I have a man in church right now who has never joined the church. He's been coming here for
874 15 years. No let me see how long? [Pause] No I would say he's been coming here for 13 14 years
875 and He doesn't believe in women in ministry and pastoral leadership. But this is what he'll say
876 because his his granddaughter went to Vanguard and I had this discussion with him he say he'd
877 he'll say he doesn't believe women should be pastors in terms of what the Bible says. But he'll
878 say to me he goes but really you're the best pastor I've ever had.
879
880 **R:** Wow, that's interesting.
881
882 **J:** Yeah. So I just leave him alone, you know?
883
884 **R:** Yeah, [laughs]
885
886 **J:** I mean I was aspire to be a leader board member. They're just people that come, they pay their
887 tithes. They're there. Um they've gone through a lot of struggles in their families. And um they
888 just stick with it. And that's that's what he says. And he's always been. He had a hearing loss
889 when he was young. As soon as I found out he cannot hear me especially the tone of my voice he
890 has a difficult time. If you're talking to him he understands you but preaching. I started just copy.
891 I do all of my sermon notes. I do it word for word.
892
893 **R:** OK.
894
895 **J:** And um it expanded on church and I just copy them every Sunday morning. There's a sort of
896 set of notes with his name on it.
897
898 **R:** Yeah, yeah.
899

900 **J:** And he has a binders and binders of my sermons. [Laughs].

901

902 **R:** Wow

903

904 **J:** And I said to him because he used to come to Bible study it is very bad has really good
905 biblical knowledge. I said Jerry I'll give you these notes. But you have to promise me. You're not
906 going to ever look at something and say here see here you're wrong on this. [laughs].

907

908 **R:** [Laughs]

909

910 **J:** I said unless it's a theological difference. I said you can't tell me my petty errors. [Laughs].

911

912 **R:** Yeah, [Laughs]

913

914 **J:** And he's I said you promise me. And he goes I made him promise he has never once brought
915 it up. [Laughs] So I mean in terms of that here in our church no. Um they know who I am.
916 People come in and maybe have some questions. I think there's people who visit and never come
917 back because the pastor was a woman.

918

919 **R:** OK.

920

921 **J:** But they've never said it to me. There's people who have come in skeptical or never had a
922 woman pastor or a female in leadership. And that really that in in light of the leadership in the
923 ministry and the gifting means that some of those people who were on the fence have really
924 become my greatest supporters over the years.

925

926 **R:** OK.

927

928 **J:** So but my my big my biggest challenge would be is that going back to my basic being an
929 introvert basically and [pause] isolating myself so busy with the work here I never improved
930 myself first 10 years. I just. It was all I could do to get Sunday morning sermons Wednesday
931 Sunday night sermons Wednesday Bible studies and have two little kids. I was my kids were 7
932 and [my daughter] was two and a half when I became lead pastor.

933

934 **R:** Mmhm.

935

936 **J:** And my husband's a high school band teacher. Just my life was full.

937

938 **R:** Lots of stuff, yeah.

939

940 **J:** And I did 10 sectional meetings you know but I'd never connected. I never I never learned
941 how to network. I never utilized that. I'm not I I will read from my Bible studies in my sermon
942 preparation but I never had anyone open up like leadership things, organizational formation and
943 all that stuff that everybody is all into you know since John Maxwell.

944

945 **R:** Right.

946

947 **J:** I had no input like that in my life. Absolutely. And so there was that was a deficit to the
948 church growing um in many many many cases so I would say overall. But then God is always at
949 work and um he put you in positions where you have to expand yourself. So in [pause] The first
950 part of my past life I became the lead pastor in 1996 and in by 2000 I had the church was
951 growing. We were pushing, we were running pretty steadily. Up around 150 160. um But
952 everyone that came in again and they were pretty much my age. And you find that with I think
953 churches um and [pause] a lot of kids a lot of boys my son's age. But we have a lot of strong men
954 and I had a board. I had women on my board but I had a board full of very strong men and um it
955 was never really a challenge. They uh found that I was more of a team builder and um you know
956 they were involved in Royal Rangers and some other things and they liked and they liked that I
957 was a team builder. They liked to know they had their thing they did I let them do their thing
958 with Royal Rangers or men's ministries. And I didn't feel like I had to interfere, they were mature
959 leaders. So the church grew in that capacity, I've always had strong men in the church. Um really
960 I find it's like my husband's people. If people would think that my husband would be. You know,
961 I'm an A type personality. I'm A type personality and my husband's a super A type personality
962 [laughs].

963

964 **R:** [laughs]

965

966 **J:** And we're both very strong. But you know he grew up on a farm in upstate New York where
967 where his mom and his aunts work just as hard as his dad and his Uncle on dairy farms and you
968 know he never had that he never had the thought that his wife would never work or you know

969 when I was called to the ministry. He's like, "ok great!" He became a Christian in at the age of
970 like seventeen or something. So. I was always I had a strong father. I was always surrounded by
971 strong men. When [my daughter] was little before I became the lead pastor. I ended up had just
972 to, I don't even know how it happened but ended up leading a credential group of women
973 ministers in our district. So the first one that was ever formed. We've actually codified it into a
974 fellowship that um that became a model for many of the women in ministry groups around the
975 nation. I mean they contacted us and that was through myself doing it just doing it. I mean part
976 of what I do is just doing it just doing the hard work. But there are leaders, [name of
977 superintendent], who became superintendent said Hey Jenny you need to, you know, he saw the
978 need for a fellowship. Another woman brought it to his attention. She was there for a year and
979 led it. And then when she left she and Ray said OK Jenny, you're leading it. And I'm like [my
980 daughter] is a year old, what am I gonna do? [Laughs]

981

982 **R:** [Laughs]

983

984 **J:** And um but I let it for fourteen years. And that's where I met other women who are
985 credentialed in Southern [state] district. It was a very important to have that that networking.
986 And um then my networking on my sectional level I always went to [particular pastor] who
987 mentored me and said you make sure you show yourself and your present and your sectional
988 events you know don't isolate yourself there. So I always intended I as a youth pastor I I
989 supported whatever was going on the district level and the sectional level for youth. Um I never
990 purported to be a leader. I didn't network beyond attending things which is to my deficit. Um
991 there was a lot of things a lot of holes in my pastoral leadership because I just didn't know. And
992 what changed was um in 2004 we were going through a building program where we were
993 expanding our current building to add a second story and to it we need more classroom space.
994 And [pause] anyway in the middle of that. We had elections for Presbyter and there was a group
995 of two two other male pastors in my in my um district. My network, my section that had women
996 pastors as they were growing up and they were bound and determined to get me elected to
997 something.

998

999 **R:** OK.

1000

1001 **J:** And it wasn't because they were like they were like you know ten or fifteen years older than
1002 me. But it was just [pause] I think they just thought it was fun. I think they were just

1003 troublemakers in a way.

1004

1005 **R:** [Laughs]

1006

1007 **J:** And um this one I was right in the middle of my building process and we had our our annual
1008 business meeting for our section in a location that was not our normal, right? And um because
1009 that church was going through construction so we were at a location. And I think because a
1010 change of location and the people that were there all of a sudden I don't I can't even tell you how
1011 it happened. I was elected presbyter to everyone's shock and I literally mine included my mouth
1012 dropped because I'm like in my mind I'm thinking I cannot do this. In the middle of a building
1013 program.

1014

1015 **R:** Right.

1016

1017 **J:** And then concurrently I have to do this because I'm a woman.

1018

1019 **R:** Oh

1020

1021 **J:** I have to do this. You know this is I cannot turn this down because I'm a woman. I was the
1022 first woman elected and the only woman elected [in location].

1023

1024 **R:** So you felt that you had to do it then, like um, tell me about that. Why did you feel like you
1025 had to?

1026

1027 **J:** Cause I was a woman and no other woman had been elected.

1028

1029 **R:** Ok. All right.

1030

1031 **J:** I found out from our former superintendents one of our former superintendents that back
1032 [cough] in the 60s there was one woman that was elected and she turned it down.

1033

1034 **R:** OK.

1035

1036 **J:** And [cough] because she thought a man should serve in that position. Woman pastor. And so I
1037 knew I had to be. I was part I was leading the women in ministry group. I knew I knew I was on

1038 the um we had we changed our governance since then. Just let me take a drink.

1039

1040 **R:** Sure.

1041

1042 **J:** We changed our governance since then. But you know we had sectional Advisory Committees
1043 at that point and I was on the sectional advisory committee because I showed up to everything
1044 and you know so I was part of that group. And I remember the district had a meeting of all the
1045 sectional all of the staff members came and I walked I got there early because it's a commute in
1046 [location]. You either get if you're commuting some place you to get there early or late.

1047

1048 **R:** Right.

1049

1050 **J:** Because you know traffic's unpredictable and I walked in early and there was one presbyter
1051 sitting there that I had never met before his name is [redacted] and he go he turns to me and he
1052 goes, "A woman!" And I said, "Oh please don't tell me I'm the only woman that's going to show
1053 up!" I'm in my 40s now at this point. You know I'm gonna be the only woman and he goes,
1054 "Probably will be." I said, "You're kidding me." He goes, "No. I'll bet you you're the only woman
1055 here." And he was right.

1056

1057 **R:** Wow. OK.

1058

1059 **J:** And so I knew they elected me presbyter I knew things had to change.

1060

1061 **R:** OK.

1062

1063 **J:** It was it was definitely an old boys club. And um so I was like a presbyter in 2004. And um
1064 we had gone through a building program things that happened in the church. I think it brought
1065 some great success. We purchased we own a piece of property that right now is strategic. It's, it's
1066 right off the freeway. It is it's the prime piece of commercial property right now in our city. It is
1067 worth five million dollars. Bare land just under five acres right now.

1068

1069 **R:** Wow.

1070

1071 **J:** We purchased it for a hundred twenty five thousand dollars ...

1072

1073 **R:** Wow, yeah.

1074

1075 **J:** ... in 1999. We have not been able to build on it but this is God has I mean those things that
1076 only God does.

1077

1078 **R:** Sure.

1079

1080 **J:** Like God blessed us and um it's a longer story won't go into how that happened. But God used
1081 somebody who was 30 years old to do that. Not me. One of our board members but um it was me
1082 answering the phone and asking a 30 year old to go look into it. And he did. And it's a God thing
1083 but um bet so I'd be there was a lot of positive things that was happening within the church. We
1084 did our building program it was owner builder. So every Saturday in 2003 we were here. I had
1085 pictures of [my daughter] you know digging holes. [Laughs].

1086

1087 **R:** [Laughs]

1088

1089 **J:** This little little chubby [daughter] and digging holes in it. We had a slew of junior high boys
1090 they all every wall we had been the drywall has been put up by, by all of our congregants and a
1091 ton of thirteen year-old boys.

1092

1093 **R:** Wow

1094

1095 **J:** And there was such ownership but it was exhausting. And so when I said we were in a
1096 building program I just don't mean that we had a general contractor. I mean we were doing the
1097 building.

1098

1099 **R:** You were doing it yourself, yeah.

1100

1101 **J:** It was exhausting. Right. And so 2004 we are just on the tail end of that. You know our
1102 occupancy just before getting our occupancy. And when I was elected so I had to I even though
1103 all that was going on I knew I could not turn this down. This was a pivotal place for women in
1104 [our district]. So I I was elected to everybody's shock. You should've seen the look at all the
1105 district officials and they all loved me but they all are in shock and um especially some of the
1106 ministers in our section that were oppositional to that. And then the two guys they were just
1107 laughing, they thought it was funny. We are are you know [location] section because you know

1108 [location] they're always like Oh we're we're so sophisticated so tolerant, you know, all these
1109 things.

1110

1111 **R:** Right.

1112

1113 **J:** You know we're out here in [location] and always looked down on or whatever we're like it
1114 was just it was like hey they're going to say we're very Pentecostal out here and we're sending the
1115 Pentecostal woman to your presbyter meeting in any way. I began I walked into the presbyters
1116 meeting first time. And I'm telling you I'm still even though I'm over 40 I say over 40 women are
1117 no longer introverts they begin to not care what people think.

1118

1119 **R:** [Laughs]

1120

1121 **J:** But I'm still like intimidated. I don't know any of these men. Don't know and you know don't
1122 know any of them and. I know, I knew one. I had a friend that was elected presbyter of another
1123 section. So he and I stuck with him. And um so I go in and I would have men come up and say
1124 oh we're so glad you're here. It's like the first black presbyter, or something.

1125

1126 **R:** Oh, wow.

1127

1128 **J:** Some say that to me and I'm thinking Oh yeah sure you are [Laughs]. And it changed the I
1129 mean me just being in the room

1130

1131 **R:** Hmm

1132

1133 **J:** Just being in the room changed the dynamic and just being in the room and not talk as you can
1134 tell I got no problem talking to I grew up. Three Sisters. And you know when I discovered this
1135 on the board of women. They have an opinion and they're going to say it and they'll take your
1136 turn. But they don't think a friend of mine said this. Men will choose battles and they'll say OK I
1137 won this battle. I'll give you this when he goes women don't think that white women think that
1138 they really care about it then they're going to fight to win every battle.

1139

1140 **R:** Yeah

1141

1142 **J:** And this is true. Anyway so just being in the room changed the dynamic and then there was an
1143 issue that came up. I can't remember what it was. It was it was at a time where the entire
1144 presbytery had to review every credential every credential that was given. Big change that.

1145

1146 **R:** Right.

1147

1148 **J:** And and it it was something [pause] It had something to do with it our Pentecostal distinctive.
1149 Again I even though I'm a little intimidated I'm still an outspoken person and I was trying to
1150 moderate my comments and not make myself look stupid or anything else. But I remember
1151 something was said and I made a comment then why are you know they don't believe in our
1152 distinctive then why are they Assembly of God or I made so statement like that. [Laughs].

1153

1154 **R:** Sure

1155

1156 **J:** I don't know what it was. All I know is that it just demonstrated my classical Pentecostal core.
1157 And suddenly all of the honorary presbyters. These are all the old guys and um our
1158 superintendent. You know?

1159

1160 **R:** Yeah

1161

1162 **J:** Now he walks up to me and I know that he would not have had me in the room. I know that
1163 from the from the get go that he was not somebody that would have been inclusive for a woman
1164 but he walks up to me. And he says it's good to know that we stand in the same place.

1165

1166 **R:** Oh wow.

1167

1168 **J:** So we say that we we have it. I looked at him and I said, "What are you talking about?" He
1169 goes your classical Pentecostal stance. And I said Oh OK. And I discovered that that was
1170 something that they began to see me as something other than just the woman in the room and
1171 what is she gonna say? Plus I had an education which speaks volumes.

1172

1173 **R:** Sure.

1174

1175 **J:** Um I learned I I moderated what my comments I tried not to say stupid things. There were
1176 things I would sit next to a new presbyter and something was going on in my mind. And I'm like,

1177 "Is it striking you as stupid that we're even having this conversation?" [Laughs]

1178

1179 **R:** [Laughs]

1180

1181 **J:** He's like, "Yes!" I said, "Then say something!" He's like, "No." I remember that conversation.
1182 But. What began to change things was in my section everything had gone along pretty smoothly
1183 for about six years. Before I became presbyter. The first year I was presbyter I had like three
1184 churches over a period of eighteen months to two years have major issues. Financial
1185 mismanagement [pause] on all three of them.

1186

1187 **R:** OK.

1188

1189 **J:** And those are very difficult issues to deal with. Moral failures are pretty cut and dried; they're
1190 passed off to a committee.

1191

1192 **R:** Sure.

1193

1194 **J:** These were management issues. And I had to go into people who had been my friends and
1195 carry out boxes of their accounting and and see what they had how they had mismanaged the
1196 funds you know bordering on it was just mismanagement they hadn't put it in their pocket. But it
1197 was almost there.

1198

1199 **R:** Yeah.

1200

1201 **J:** And that happened over three times and it was huge issues that were discussed in presbyters
1202 meetings. I had my you know I had my assistant superintendent and the secretary treasurer
1203 calling me, "Jenny, are you OK?" Like you know they're they're calling their daughter, "Jenny,
1204 are you OK?" And I said yeah. "Are you sure you can are you sure you are you sure you're OK?"
1205 And I said absolutely I'm OK. And I finally said to them hey guys. I am my father's daughter and
1206 this confronting these I go I don't like it I don't like and I feel very badly that they went this
1207 direction. But confronting something is not my problem. You know I had an older what we
1208 called then an area director an elder gentleman that was with me but we dealt with these
1209 situations and so they come up in presbyter's meetings and so they'd say you know that now I
1210 was known as a section of the section the presbyter of the section with these problems and these
1211 issues that were being discussed. But I dealt with them all one by one and I discovered

1212 something in the midst of that first of all how to handle those situations and what to do with your
1213 finances. And also that I had strengths that other people I thought other pastors had.

1214

1215 **R:** Hmm

1216

1217 **J:** Other male pastors had. And I found that they didn't.

1218

1219 **R:** Ok

1220

1221 **J:** I found that I I had no problems dealing with difficult situations. Um And sometimes it kept
1222 me up at night to confront them. And to deal with them appropriately and to deal with them
1223 fairly. I didn't take like vengeance sides or ...

1224

1225 **R:** Right.

1226

1227 **J:** ... you know and and I looked around at my peers who are my men were men and they. Most
1228 of them did not have that strength. I can say that in terms of leadership not that they weren't good
1229 men or good pastors or they had they eclipsed me in far many other areas in terms of pastoring.
1230 But that was a strength I had. And that was pretty much immediately um grabbed hold of by my
1231 superintendent and who was [name of superintendent] then. [Pause] So that he began to utilize
1232 me um more and more on committees. And as you know not just you know I'm not just me the
1233 token woman.

1234

1235 **R:** Right.

1236

1237 **J:** But in terms of those those strengths and and walking through some very difficult situations
1238 and so I would get you know I would and I had an executive presbyter but there wasn't a
1239 hierarchy where I was under the executive presbyter. I I was answerable to my superintendent. It
1240 was made pretty clear that that's what I was supposed to do for these situations because I found
1241 myself pressed between a couple of people of influence within the district. And I finally asked
1242 for direction. I said OK who who do I call first. And I was told you either call you call the
1243 district first.

1244

1245 **R:** OK.

1246

1247 **J:** I said, ok, I guess that's what I'll do. So. So that was I was a presbyter for eight years until I
1248 told them that God had released me from that. So.

1249
1250 **R:** Um alright so just because we're getting close to uh well we've got a little time yet so you
1251 don't have to hurry but I just have two other questions I wanted to ask you and we'll just start
1252 with you mentioned this a little bit earlier um but I just wondered what your perspective was on
1253 these scriptures that people generally use to argue that women should not be in pastoral ministry
1254 and I'm referring, you know, specifically to First Timothy 2 and First Corinthians 11 or any other
1255 ones they may have used.

1256
1257 **J:** Um, in terms of the scriptures I am I I go to the perspective you know uh George Wood has
1258 written. I'm sure you read it.

1259
1260 **R:** Yes.

1261
1262 **J:** Very good position paper, he led a before he left the committee that wrote a very good
1263 position paper on women in ministry.

1264
1265 **R:** Right.

1266
1267 **J:** That address those. And so I think the one in Timothy is. We really can't answer it. We don't
1268 know the circumstances to which Paul was writing ...

1269
1270 **R:** Sure

1271
1272 **J:** Timothy but we have a right to see it in balance of his um relationship with a Aquila and
1273 Priscilla and with Priscilla and with um that that and that the other women that he that he he
1274 called his co-laborers.

1275
1276 **R:** Right.

1277
1278 **J:** That we have to find out in terms of balance. In First Corinthians I do the whole thing about
1279 the covering. I I think ideally I go back to some of the research I did in the early days of my
1280 actually in my seminary days in the early days of pastorate in terms of it being like a head
1281 spraying as opposed to um you know the covering kind of aspect and I had wrestle with that.

1282 That was very popular when I was in high school. That whole thing about the man being the
1283 covering for the woman I had already wrestled with that and with that particular scripture and
1284 then I found validation in some of the writings that I had read early on in the 70s that defended
1285 the role of women in ministry. In fact I had researched um BT Roberts. I always get it mixed up.
1286 I think he had. He's one of the founders of the Wesleyan church. I think I read that as I always
1287 get it mixed up but he had written in 1890 a really good article on defending the role of women
1288 in ministry and the arguments and the Biblical biblical theological arguments that he used are
1289 exactly the same that those who advocate for women's role in ministry today ...

1290

1291 **R:** Ok

1292

1293 **J:** ... are exactly the same. So I think that most of that you know that you deal with it and people
1294 have a perspective I think would first Corinthians chapter 11 it's it's in the middle of a chapter
1295 and it kind of pops up in an odd way you know and that the contents of the overall chapter are
1296 talking about the Lord's Supper and moving on to that. And I don't think you see it as a
1297 hierarchical as as much as giving life source that it was Adam who gave life to Eve.

1298

1299 **R:** OK.

1300

1301 **J:** And for that that's the direction and that's that that's the um apologetic argument that I had
1302 read and sided with over the years.

1303

1304 **R:** OK.

1305

1306 **J:** Would you believe that nobody's even asked me about those scriptures in probably 15 years.

1307

1308 **R:** Ok. So that's interesting then. Um alright that's that's good info on that. So then just the last
1309 question I had for you then is I mean we've talked about this a lot already. But if if you could just
1310 then you know tell me about or summarize your perspective on being a female minister in the
1311 AG fellowship.

1312

1313 **J:** Hang on, let me get a drink.

1314

1315 **R:** Sure.

1316

1317 **J:** I think that I have been very sheltered and protected [pause] um in terms of my experience.
1318 Part of it may be my personality. A lot of it I think is because I'm married to a man who is not in
1319 ministry.

1320

1321 **R:** OK.

1322

1323 **J:** As I said I I led a women in ministry group for fourteen years and every woman's story is
1324 different. I think women oftentimes become um their worst advers... their their worst obstacle
1325 because women tend to devalue their contribution. Even young women today are not seeing how
1326 they can enter into this role. Um As I researched it or talk to women who were a generation or
1327 two older than me and because I was presbyter I was able to interact with a lot of those women
1328 that when I was in my 40s they were in their 80s. That and how did they do it. They never
1329 thought about it. They just did it because God called them and they were compelled by the spirit
1330 just as Paul said that he was compelled to go out and do it. And um [pause] I think in the AG we
1331 have not done a good job educating or remembering our history. Um I remember in seminary
1332 under Mel Robeck he talked about this issue. He was one of our assembly got professors there
1333 [seminary]. And he really believed that when the AG joined the ... Oh my goodness.

1334

1335 **R:** The NEA?

1336

1337 **J:** The National Evangelical Association. Yes right. That that we wanted to legitimize. And part
1338 of the things that we compromised on was are women the role of women in ministry because we
1339 were a pioneer organization and women were pioneers in the holiness movement, women were
1340 pioneers in the Pentecostal movement and that these women as you know the very reason that we
1341 were even ordaining women is because they didn't originally give women that ordination to be
1342 pastors just to be evangelists missionaries they had to because it was already happening.

1343

1344 **R:** Right.

1345

1346 **J:** You know they had a good number of the churches already pastored by women. And because
1347 of the looseness and organizational and they just affirmed what was already God was already
1348 doing and um that that that was always that that sense and so women tended to. After this whole
1349 the National Association of Evangelicals. And that kind of I think just hovering over our Calling
1350 our our distinctive of the ministry gifts that where women excelled at that there was kind during
1351 the 70s, I think very much women in ministry in the 70s and 80s well 60s, no 70s, lost a huge

1352 amount of ground. [Pause] And so there were not women pastors. I mean I became a woman
1353 pastor. There were out of 435 churches in [location] district of the assemblies. Only 10 were
1354 pastored by women.

1355

1356 **R:** Hmm

1357

1358 **J:** And that number didn't change until recently with our new superintendent who is doing
1359 everything he can to get women and the pastorate.

1360

1361 **R:** OK.

1362

1363 **J:** Um most and we and we are it. And also it's coincides with um you know because [location]
1364 district. We just don't have a Spanish district here. You know our [district] we have a Spanish
1365 department in our in our [location] district. And we and we'd be identity just because there are so
1366 many so many of our churches had Spanish departments. So we have a whole network of
1367 Spanish are our fastest growing number of churches are Spanish churches and those churches
1368 tend to have female pastors more than English speaking churches.

1369

1370 **R:** Right, I noticed that in my research.

1371

1372 **J:** And that sounds almost counter-intuitive because of the machismo culture of the Latin
1373 America but what you find are is that there is pastor and pastora. Pastora has equal set footing in
1374 the Spanish Church with pastor and when the pastor dies, many of these women are stepping into
1375 the role. It's their job.

1376

1377 **R:** OK.

1378

1379 **J:** Because the perspective so we see we have more Spanish women who are pastoring not just
1380 so we know. I can think of two here that because their husbands passed away. But but the other
1381 ones are seen those are role models and so we have never a single or other women that are
1382 Spanish pastors there are fewer English speaking you know Caucasian English speaking female
1383 pastors. Anyway so all of that help all that much. So in terms of my role I see that we have um as
1384 I asked George Wood this once, we I had him speak for one of our meetings and when we had
1385 district council out here because we always got him out here because he's part of our district.

1386

1387 **R:** Sure.

1388

1389 **J:** So I asked him to speak on this address at an early morning session of the women in ministry.
1390 We had about 100 women there and um you know just how they started they changed their
1391 governance to legislate the under 30 or the people representative represented on the EP. And I
1392 was talking to you about that because originally I would say OK the calling makes the way but
1393 then there are certain, you know [pause] systemic things within our organization that keeps
1394 people from moving forward both young and and females.

1395

1396 **R:** Mmhm

1397

1398 **J:** And in and he said we need to change. We need to have representation. We need to change
1399 who's at the table. We need to make a seat. And so we had this discussion and I would say that
1400 my perspective in 2004 because I was elected a sectional presbyter changed during my tenure so
1401 that we enacted before changing governance. Right now we have people representative our
1402 executive Presbytery we no longer have presbytery, we have just EPs ...

1403

1404 **R:** Right.

1405

1406 **J:** ... over regions or self-governing and um you at one point it was the president of credentialed
1407 woman minister fellowship had a place in the presbytery and a female representative E.P. [Short
1408 sentence redacted to conserve confidentiality].

1409

1410 **R:** Right.

1411

1412 **J:** Um our Presbytery here became huge the governance was necessary but we had representation
1413 of ethnicities. We have representation of the under 40 we have representation of you know
1414 females and so you know seeing how the just our governance kept people out and that it was it
1415 was um necessary to do so. So that has changed my perspective has changed. Yes if you're
1416 called, the calling the makes a way. But there needs to be changes in our our having a I loved
1417 [name of superintendent]s; he was he was great to me. Um I was a Presbyter under him. Um his
1418 wife she says this every time she introduces me she goes this is my husband's favorite presbyter I
1419 was his favorite I will see you as favorite. I was one of his favorite because I actually did the job.

1420

1421 **R:** Right.

1422

1423 **J:** You know I wasn't afraid. And I had a personality a lot like his in terms of that that you know
1424 I could bug people and still do what needs to be done. But what I saw was I was the only. I was
1425 still the only female presbyter and a lot of the problems I saw is that women didn't attend their
1426 sectional events. We pressured every time. When we get together: are you attending your
1427 sectional events, are you networking? You know all those things that I didn't do well and I did do
1428 that. But you know just getting people to show up you know half the problem is just showing up
1429 just being present that fulfilling the roles that you're asked to fulfill. And then to do them with
1430 you know don't flake out, you know did you know to do them with integrity? Um do you know
1431 not to say you know and you understand that that you don't do this in a vacuum that um you
1432 know I would say that I would say that women who are called alongside their husbands to co-
1433 pastor have the hardest position because it's rare that that's recognized within um Anglo culture.
1434 It's recognized definitely within Hispanic culture and other ethnic ethnicities but not with an
1435 Anglo culture. So they had the hardest distinction. They asked me when I go to Vanguard and
1436 speak. They asked me well what about your husband he's not in ministry. And you know that's a
1437 big shock or disadvantage and I said that's a huge advantage. First of all I have a steady income
1438 so I don't have to worry about supporting the family. He's doing that and I said the other thing is
1439 nobody in our church looks to him as pastor. They look to me.

1440

1441 **R:** Right.

1442

1443 **J:** I don't have to fight. He doesn't have to. He doesn't have to you know is it ... Correct people,
1444 you know you have to go to Pastor Jenny for that. You know like in terms of the [unintelligible].
1445 Yeah I don't have to. You know I don't have to have that right. Everybody knows who's the
1446 pastor is. So I think that's a difficulty for women and um not that they're not there's wonderful
1447 husband wife teams that definitely complement each other and my husband and his gifting
1448 compliments me. But he has a whole other world you know that he does.

1449

1450 **R:** Right.

1451

1452 **J:** You know he has a career and um you know and I joked around that when they first elected
1453 me they elected me because he was a worship leader and you know that was half of their thing,
1454 you know if they lost me they lose the worship leader. And everybody thinks it's so funny
1455 because it's such a role reversal. But I would say that I I have benefited by having leadership

1456 district leadership that has supported me. [Name of superintendent] supported me. You don't
1457 know how many times I kept correcting them and say pastors and their spouses. [Laughs].

1458

1459 **R:** Yeah I bet.

1460

1461 **J:** He always he was the one that was the brainchild behind getting women representation on the
1462 presbytery beyond me. He's always supported me in whatever you know whatever was going on.
1463 When [name] became our superintendent he was the only person in our whole district that I ever
1464 heard preaching. This was back in the back in the 90s um and he pastored our largest church.
1465 And you know in the section back then when he began he was the only person that ever used
1466 gender inclusive language. It's been a part of who he is. And [um] we had our women in ministry
1467 group but no budget. I was no longer leading it. And he gave them a budget of money and he told
1468 them this is why one should do what he is he has put women on in strategic places when he can
1469 appoint a woman pastor into a network affiliated church. He will do so and he has done so. His
1470 biggest problem is there's not enough women who are stepping up.

1471

1472 **R:** OK.

1473

1474 **J:** Yeah. And that I will go to women that I sense God's got a call. Not everyone's called to be
1475 pastor ...

1476

1477 **R:** Sure

1478

1479 **J:** Man or woman. And I have one woman now that just became lead pastor as she was and she
1480 had a child and I said Listen I said, Jessica you know you're called to this. And I said just
1481 because you have a toddler doesn't mean you can't do this. I said because you have family here
1482 you have your in-laws you have support. And you know she has a husband who's working and
1483 you know it just like my husband he doesn't want to pursue a credential but he's he's always been
1484 involved in ministry um on a lay level and and so as soon as he could he pointed her into a
1485 church plant in [location]. Exactly what God's called her to do. And she's a great little speaker
1486 and um knows a whole lot more about organizational structure and leadership than I do. But you
1487 know she's in her ... how old is she now? She just turned 30. So you know he's doing more and
1488 more and advocating and and he has put out calls for women to step up to be pastors. So that has
1489 been a huge help. I like I said because of my education and the positions I felt I have been
1490 insulated from a lot of the discrimination that other women encounter. But I think that when I

1491 talk to other women at other districts so much hinges on the leadership at the district level and
1492 their perspective of women in ministry. They don't make it happen. The women have to make it
1493 happen. In terms of stepping up and following God's call and they can't you know like I said with
1494 [My professor] said that don't expect the AG to give your church. And I spoke about I don't
1495 expect the AG to.

1496

1497 **R:** Yeah.

1498

1499 **J:** That's that. That's true because we are congregational you know style polity where the church
1500 does the calling but to have district leadership that is supportive of women in ministry or
1501 advocating. I would say that under [name of superintendent]'s he was supportive. But under
1502 [name of other superintendent] he is advocating.

1503

1504 **R:** Oh, ok.

1505

1506 **J:** And there is a difference.

1507

1508 **R:** Right.

1509

1510 **J:** So um that makes a huge huge difference. You know he said the same thing for the under 40
1511 year or so that that is my perspective on this. I think the other thing that we can stand up is a
1512 wonderful history and I also think that women in ministry do better when you're into a classical
1513 Pentecostal structure where the manifestations of the gifts are in use and those gifting are are um
1514 seen [pause] and recognized because that's undeniable. It's part of who we are as part of our
1515 theology. And it's undeniable that this is a call this is a gifting and it really does. It creates its
1516 own platform for women as God calls you. So that helps.

1517

1518 **R:** Yeah it's a shame we're at the end of our time because I love to follow up on that more with
1519 you but maybe we will in the second interview much later.

1520

1521 **J:** OK.

1522

1523 **R:** Ok, well so well you've given me a lot of really great information today. I'm looking forward
1524 to you know going over it more and analyzing it in the next while. So I'm going to go ahead and
1525 turn off the recording now.

1 **JENNY: SECOND INTERVIEW**

2 **Ryan:** So the first question I had was so one of the things that came up a lot in the first interview
3 was what I have called resistance, right? So there's any number of ways that could have taken
4 place. But I'm talking about resistance to your, to you being in pastoral ministry largely because
5 of your gender. Right? You talked about like feeling like you had a lack of opportunities in their
6 early days in ministry and like your story about the professor who told you that you'd never get a
7 church. You know those kinds of things. And so I was just wondering if you could tell me more
8 about your experience of resistance and how that has affected your pastoral ministry, if it has.
9

10 **Jenny:** It has been a long time ago now. To stay. I just think that the ... when you have a church
11 such as the AG where the congregation calls the pastor.
12

13 **R:** Mmhm.
14

15 **J:** They have not really seen a female pastor and I think that in and of itself creates resistance.
16

17 **R:** Ok, how so?
18

19 **J:** Well they've not seen it modeled, they've not seen a woman in ministry in their contexts.
20

21 **R:** OK.
22

23 **J:** That's what [pause] I get all the time people said Oh I'm surprised there's a woman, even
24 people who are positive about that are surprised it's a woman.
25

26 **R:** Ok, that makes sense.
27

28 **J:** So it's I think that's what has been modeled or not modeled. And um so they are accustomed to
29 seeing a man in the pulpit or a man in leadership and that's a.. So there is resistance. I mean, we
30 just took some people in membership that's been coming to the trees for seven years. And he said
31 when he walked in the door he cheered. I had him share, when he walked through the door,
32 because it's just like three weeks ago, that he um was surprised it was a woman, thought he
33 needed a male pastor. But. You know, of course they stayed and it was the right place that God
34 wanted them to be, blah blah. But still even saying that all these, they've been with us for seven
35 years just now joined with official membership. But you know just making a statement still said
36 something to him an anomaly.
37

38 **R:** Mmhm.
39

40 **J:** And he's from Nigeria. So anyway.
41

42 **R:** OK.
43

44 **J:** That's kind of some natural resistance. And how does it impact me?
45

46 **R:** Yeah

47
48 **J:** I don't [pause] I think there's a lot of people who walk through the doors, tourist and visitors
49 that turn around and never come back because there's a woman in leadership.
50
51 **R:** OK.
52
53 **J:** But I never get those e-mails or negative feedback or anything like that I just assume that
54 that's probably or it could be or it could be a number of other things. It's one of the factors that
55 can be involved, you know, I mean, you have visitors visit your church and don't come back for
56 whatever reason right.
57
58 **R:** Right.
59
60 **J:** Those are not people that you'd necessarily get the feedback from.
61
62 **R:** True.
63
64 **J:** It's either the music style, worship or whatever. Um, the pastor, the preaching. So I just
65 figured that maybe in a female ministry is, there, is one of the factors. One of the factors in
66 people turning around and leaving.
67
68 **R:** Yeah
69
70 **J:** And it does play a small portion for some people staying, too. But um I think more the other
71 way. But then the other thing in terms of ministry is I I try not I hope I try not to [pause] put
72 stereotypes on people of my expectations, so so ...
73
74 **R:** Have you, have you felt like you had to change anything about the way you ministered to
75 people or your approach even to like new people or anything like that? Because of stuff like this?
76
77 **J:** Well I think I'm a little more mindful in my illustrations in my sermons, you know, to try to
78 reach across the gender lines. Just like, but that's I think all pastors [pause] should do that. I mean
79 ...
80
81 **R:** Yeah.
82
83 **J:** You know. You find in the gospel of Luke if I'm preaching on Luke, examples of women.
84 You know that I try to balance that out. I think that's how most preachers or pastors should be
85 doing that.
86
87 **R:** Yeah.
88
89 **J:** Um, how how else does it affect? Well I'm much more open and easy about going and visiting
90 people because you generally it's a woman at home and I'm not [pause] And I'm not going into a
91 territory where there's no place for a woman. And hospital visitations are easier even if it's a
92 man. Um I think, unless, if ... it depends on the crisis involved. I'll just get my male leadership to

93 go and they are receiving of that. If it's a circumstance because of whatever this kind of surgery
94 they went through or it's a single guy then. I'll I'll move and get one of my you know, and I have
95 female and male board members. I'll get one of my other pastors to go or something like that.
96 And they don't see that as less. But I I have no problem if somebody's had a heart attack and
97 they're in the hospital recovering, then I know what to expect or if they're in intensive care I go.
98

99 **R:** Right.

100

101 **J:** I think that I'm a little more free to go and especially for home visits than a man.

102

103 **R:** Ok so now I mean even like home visits with men you don't worry about that too much or ... ?

104

105 **J:** I don't think I've ever had a circumstance where it's a man at home alone.

106

107 **R:** Gotcha. OK.

108

109 **J:** And if it is, I'll just send a guy.

110

111 **R:** Ok, All right.

112

113 **J:** Another one of the pastors, or a board member.

114

115 **R:** Ok. So kind of related to that. It sounds well I'm just going to ask it this way. Have you seen
116 the kind of resistance that you've experienced has it, I mean has it changed in your years in
117 ministry or like from when you started until now?

118

119 **J:** Less resistance?

120

121 **R:** Ok.

122

123 **J:** I mean, I mean, I don't know. Are you asking me if there's less resistance?

124

125 **R:** I'm just asking you if it's changed any. So either less or more or maybe it looks different or ...
126 ?

127

128 **J:** [pause] I think, I think with Millennials it doesn't surprise them that much.

129

130 **R:** Ok.

131

132 **J:** Less resistance with Millennials.

133

134 **R:** OK.

135

136 **J:** It'd be equal or the same in all the other generations.

137

138 **R:** OK. All right.

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J: Yes. I'm also very maternal to Millennials. [Laughs]

R: Yeah. OK. [Laughs] Well so another thing that came up in the first interview that I thought was interesting was you mentioned a few times that you felt like you had a responsibility to improve things for future female leaders. And like you talked about some of the things you did even though they were difficult for you were because you wanted to improve things for women um who would come after you. I think you specifically mentioned like your election to being a presbyter as something like that. And so I was just wondering if you tell me more about that feeling of responsibility for other, do you still feel that today? Yeah that kind of thing.

J: Absolutely feel that way. That if there's ever a woman that's ordained, we have a lot of them more recently, but especially more early on, in the past, I want to make sure. I mean we all do. We have our network of woman ministers here in [location], formerly called [name] currently called [name]. I feel a great responsibility to celebrate the wins. To celebrate, you know, when someone is featured in Influence magazine coming out, or if it's someone who has been elected to a pastor, um a lead pastor role, or those those things. We try to intentionally, whether it's on social media, or at network conference which is district council. We make sure we celebrate those wins. And um like I mean I've served multiple times on [pause] the Parliamentary Committee for Network conference or district council. That means I have to sit on the stage during all of that.

R: Mmhm

J: And I don't, there ... it's rarely needed. [Laughs] So you are pretty much bound, sitting on that platform. And um so I've done that, I don't know, three or four times and it's it's like of these things I really don't, I'm saying yes for two reasons. First of all because my my network superintendent asked me.

R: Mmhm

J: And secondly, it's like yeah. A woman needs to be sitting in that position.

R: For visibility's sake, or ... ?

J: Yeah! Just have a woman.

R: OK.

J: That's a position of, "OK this is somebody who knows something," although I don't think, I don't know why they utilize me use me because I don't think I know that much in terms of parliamentary procedure. However, I have a much better memory than they do in terms of multiple things happening at the same time. [Laughs].

R: [Laughs].

185 **J:** So anyway, but but I think those little things whether it's, we impress them on other women.
186 Say yes when you're asked because if you don't they'll never ask you again.
187

188 **R:** Ok that's interesting. So, you feel like for women if they refuse an opportunity then they
189 probably won't get another one?
190

191 **J:** Yep. I think that's kind of true overall in terms of our denomination but I think especially so
192 for women.
193

194 **R:** Ok. Now has there ever been a time when like a woman that you have, I don't know if you
195 like officially mentored them but I mean has there been anyone like that? Or if not that has ever
196 been a time when someone has like um you know benefited somehow from your help or your
197 like have you helped them be more visible or do you know what I mean?
198

199 **J:** Sure. Yeah. Absolutely. It's been both. We went through a season where we had some official
200 mentees across the nation. I have done that kind of informally. I they wanted me to be a coach,
201 but I don't have time for that. So, if I see somebody I try to reach out to mentor mentor people
202 within our congregation. I have more guys. I mean right now we have a a woman who just
203 transferred in from [location]. And so, she already has her license. And some of the reasons that
204 she and her husband has chosen to come to our church is because I'm a woman.
205

206 **R:** Hmm
207

208 **J:** So, I immediately will take responsibility and say, "OK I'm going to mentor you," especially
209 get you to know [location] because she has a desire to be a church planter.
210

211 **R:** Ok. Ok.
212

213 **J:** Anyway, so yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. In our meetings I will bring encouragement. Um I
214 sit on the credentialing committee. Um I had when I was presbyter and also I'm on a regional
215 regional leadership team now that we moved different governance where [small detail redacted
216 to preserve anonymity]. So, I'm always I always the go to person on the credential committee
217 cause I've done it so much. And um so any time there's a female that's being um interviewed for
218 a credential that I'm going to be advocating for her, giving her encouragement suggestions a lot
219 of times [pause] Um women, I don't know why women do this, but they apply for the certified,
220 they have the educational requirements for a license but they'll apply for certified. I've always
221 asked that question, why are you applying for certified and not your license.
222

223 **R:** Hmm
224

225 **J:** I didn't know I could.
226

227 **R:** Ah, OK.
228

229 **J:** You know and it could just be where they're at. You know, their locale. Or they have not um
230 where guys would have been actually kind of mentored by their pastors and pastors would bring

231 direction. There's just nobody there to bring direction. It may not be they just may not be in
232 communication could be their fault that they haven't been in communication and discussed this
233 with your pastor.

234
235 **R:** OK.

236
237 **J:** I'm always going to be doing that. And I've done that multiple, multiple times. I'd encourage a
238 ton of women to be ordained, to move up the ranks in their credentialing. So because, you know,
239 and I challenge them and say how can you serve any position if you're not ordained?

240
241 **R:** Hmm

242
243 **J:** You know you want to see women in positions of leadership and if you're not ordained, then
244 you're not ready should God tap you on the shoulder.

245
246 **R:** Ok. All right. So the last one that's kind of related to that and then we'll move on um is would
247 ... based on your experience would you say that things for women in the AG have improved, or
248 gotten worse, or stayed the same or somewhere in between?

249
250 **J:** Oh, it's improved. George Wood was a great advocate for women.

251
252 **R:** Mmhm

253
254 **J:** Did you see the news yesterday?

255
256 **R:** I did, yes.

257
258 **J:** Yeah, so we have the general secretary who's a woman and executive leadership so obviously
259 Doug Clay is following the same example. And opportunities, you know, I mean from [location]
260 we're wondering why Bradford resigned before his term was off. Well and Bradford's also a huge
261 advocate for women, followed George Wood in every way from you know [location] to the
262 office of general secretary and so forth. So now it's pretty obvious why Bradford, to me, to me
263 my perspective, he resigned so that Doug could appoint a woman.

264
265 **R:** Oh, you think so? OK.

266
267 **J:** Oh yes, yes. If it was even thought that he was going to retire then the opportunities, if Doug
268 would have approached him and said I'm going to my plan is this. And and it might be, Am I just
269 being too speculative? I don't think so. Because this is how good that thought is. I mean that's my
270 thought from my perspective. So ...

271
272 **R:** Ok

273
274 **J:** She was somebody qualified. I don't know but I've known for a long time that she was an
275 elected geographic executive presbyter, you know not fulfilling a role like we have a female EP
276 representative in [location], but actually elected to represent a geographic area. Yeah, so.

277
278 **R:** OK. All right. So, uh the last thing I wanted to ask you about that came up specifically in the
279 first interview um was it seemed like uh based on a lot of the stories you told me and the
280 responses you gave me that you place a lot of importance on education, um and you talked a lot
281 about how your education really equipped you for ministry. And so I was just wondering if you'd
282 tell me more about that and like specifically again what role has your education played in your,
283 in your ministry.
284
285 **J:** Um, I think you know getting my biblical studies undergraduate and then a master's of
286 divinity, I think it has just prepared me to handle the text and to, to teach the Word.
287
288 **R:** Mmhm
289
290 **J:** And to proclaim the Word that you know balanced and and true and so forth. So I mean I
291 think that's part of it. I think it gave me tools in terms of just, any time you go through the
292 educational process you're given more tools in terms of communication skills, research, study
293 skills. Um and and on the other side of it in terms of I mean preparing me to, and I love to do
294 Bible studies and that's not necessarily a popular thing; do verse by verse Bible studies but I love
295 that, I love that level. And I love the Old Testament, I love the historical narratives. But um, you
296 know and in terms of preaching that that breadth of information in order to draw on makes it a
297 lot easier in terms of preparation. Sometimes it doesn't make it easy because I want to, I get too
298 bogged down in all of the weeds, that nobody else in my church is going to care about.
299
300 **R:** I know what you mean, yes. [Laughs].
301
302 **J:** Yes. [Laughs]. I think it also um prepared me for leadership in the fact that, you had a degree
303 and when people looked at you: "Wait a minute." You know it's one of the qualifications. So that
304 people begin to say, "Wait, well she must have something, she has her Masters of Divinity."
305
306 **R:** Ok
307
308 **J:** And a Master's of Divinity, you know, they even made a difference between a Master's of
309 Divinity and an MA at the time. So yeah. And coming from [seminary], it was before we had all
310 the online education opportunities. So, it was, you know, and it took a lot of work. And so that's
311 what, early on in my ministry that kind of gave me, it helped open the door a little bit more.
312
313 **R:** OK.
314
315 **J:** I think I just think, it helped me become a better pastor, um no they didn't teach me how to be
316 a pastor [laughs]. And it didn't teach me how to teach me how to deal with conflict um it didn't
317 teach me um character you already have to have character and let God work on that for you.
318
319 **R:** Right
320
321 **J:** But you know it does give you, just gives you tools.
322

323 **R:** It gives you tools. And tools, you said things like you know for sermons and knowledge and
324 that kind of stuff.

325
326 **J:** Yeah, exposition of the text. Rightly dividing the word of truth, ok? It helps you rightly
327 divide.

328
329 **R:** Yeah, yeah, I know I heard that from a lot of my professors too. Yeah. So, OK. Another thing
330 I wanted to ask you about um was one thing I noticed as I was you know going over our first
331 interview and the transcripts was that clearly um your Pentecostal experience plays a big role in
332 your pastoral ministry. You mentioned a lot of you know function a lot of things about
333 functioning in the gifts of the spirit. And so I was just wondering if you could tell me a little
334 more about that; again what role does that play in your ministry or if you like um you could tell
335 me about a time or times when you feel like operating in the gifts of the Spirit have really um
336 you know really changed the way you did your ministry or has really helped you be a better
337 minister or anything you like in that in that regard.

338
339 **J:** Ok. Um well let's see. Because I grew up very um very Pentecostal experience where there
340 was manifestations of the spirit um in operation it became something that was just part of my
341 entire Christian [pause] development. So, um it was you know by the time I was 16 years old. I
342 was I was being used in the Church for you know, tongues, interpretation, prophetic messages
343 because that's what was modeled.

344
345 **R:** Mmhm.

346
347 **J:** And it was it was encouraged and it wasn't something that was such an um off thing, you
348 know? You know what I mean it wasn't like well this is like this big mountain to climb, or ...

349
350 **R:** Right.

351
352 **J:** Or, or on the opposite side that it made you somebody; it was just something that was
353 normative. So, I was surprised um going out of my very tiny context into places where it wasn't
354 being manifested and used and sensing: "Oh my word. And that's what the spirit's waiting to
355 say," and and so forth. And so, I I never wanted that restraint. There's the restraint of the Word
356 but not the restraint of the spirit in terms of the Word restraining. You know, I would would I
357 teach this? I teach like manifestations of the gifts I teach first Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 and you
358 know standing on the context of which the manifestations or the gifts of the Spirit are to be in
359 operation is the context of love.

360
361 **R:** OK. Mmhm

362
363 **J:** So, if you read Chapter 13 and forget about, you know, marriage- that's where we always see
364 it, right?

365
366 **R:** Right.

367
368 **J:** Or relationship; it is about the relationship within the church that you know I don't have to

369 worry about if we're operating within the context of love then no one's going to get in the of the
370 middle of my sermon and start giving on a message in tongues because that's just rude. And love
371 is not rude.

372
373 **R:** Right.

374
375 **J:** And and so I mean and that so everything has to be for the encouragement, strengthening, and
376 comforting of the body within that larger context and I think that creates that atmosphere of care
377 and and the atmosphere of the miraculous and the atmosphere that I'm going to have this, it is
378 OK you know, I'm going to have an answer here today or you know, I'm going to come as a
379 seeker. And God will meet me at this place as I come together in community. And um I think
380 that's been important and it it just kind of covers everything in terms of all of my ministry. And
381 it's also not just what my ministry is, but the ministry of the church. The church has taken on that
382 characteristic. The ministry of the churches that we are parenting has taken on that characteristic.
383 Those that are under um my leadership are operating and flowing in the manifestations of the
384 gifts. I had a um we for a year ago we brought a Spanish pastor in the new church that we're
385 parenting and it was just like this opportunity came up that I think I told you we have these three
386 campuses.

387
388 **R:** Mmhm

389
390 **J:** Anyway, and I was looking for someone who was bilingual and called to, called to Spanish
391 Ministry. And um this one couple that I had taught at the school of ministry out here their faces
392 came before me in prayer and I consulted with the pastor where they were currently at. They
393 were kind of in a transition place and found that yes indeed they were called to Spanish Ministry.
394 I called them up and I went um in one of my conversations we had um I explained who we were
395 at [church name] in terms of um not just multicultural, but our perspective on evangelism is
396 people in all different contexts and cultures and that, you know just everything about our DNA.
397 And also the prophetic. And they already knew that because I they were in that class he was in
398 that class where I taught the introduction to Pentecostal theology. So he already understood that
399 about me and he goes, "But I'm not used that way." And I said "Do you have a problem with what
400 I've explained to you in class and manifestations in the midst of the church?" "No I don't have
401 any problems with that." And he goes, "But I've never been used that way." I said, "Oh, you don't
402 have to worry about that because once you step into that role you will be!" [Laughs] I said, I go,
403 "it's not, I go, it's because it's who we are. And you've now, God will now empower you because
404 you're stepping into a role and into a context where we make space and time and it's so
405 important." And um that is I mean it was like less than a month and he was already operating in
406 the prophetic.

407
408 **R:** Oh, wow. Ok

409
410 **J:** Yes because he just giving him the opportunity and and just developing him, I always have
411 him come to our prayer meeting, all the pastors come to prayer meeting and it's like [pause]
412 prayer meeting you could do anything, right?

413
414 **R:** Right

415
416 **J:** And you just pray for each other, prophesy, pray for healing, intercede, pray in tongues, do
417 whatever. Cry, whatever. That's what happens on our Thursday night prayer meetings and um
418 anyway [pause] so I think in terms of that, it impacts everything. It impacts your couns- my
419 counseling because [pause] I I consider myself um basically pastors or pastoral counseling is
420 intervention. [Pause] And if you don't solve what's going on in three sessions then it has got to be
421 referred on.
422
423 **R:** Right, ok.
424
425 **J:** To a professional counselor. It's really um I think most pastors, you can't go on. You've
426 become an enabler if you continue.
427
428 **R:** Yeah
429
430 **J:** But what happens in a counseling context with the manifestations or the gifts of the Spirit is
431 that's where the word of knowledge comes involved, word of wisdom so much. It's the, um
432 bringing that "Aha!" moment to people's lives.
433
434 **R:** Ok. And what do you mean? I mean I know what you mean by that. Can you talk a little bit
435 about what that what that might look like?
436
437 **J:** Word of Wisdom brings clarity or revelation to a situation where you don't know what to do
438 and it uncovers or reveals, I mean both word of knowledge does that, reveals things that are not
439 known.
440
441 **R:** Mmhm.
442
443 **J:** So that would give me, ok so let's say a word of knowledge. I'd give an insight. You know, I'm
444 listening to a couple or an individual and like the Holy Spirit speaks to me and said without any
445 indication. I mean we all have natural intuition and discernment, but without any indication there
446 has been childhood abuse in this person's life without them ever saying or indicating and I will
447 bring that conversation to a place where I will ask the question - Is this in the background? Um,
448 word of knowledge: dealing with somebody over an entirely different issue. And in my office
449 especially leadership, this has happened. Oh my. In the last two years at least three times. And
450 it's not a big leap to go here. But is it any entirely different context of what our discussion is, the
451 Holy Spirit has revealed to me that someone is really struggling with pornography.
452
453 **R:** Hmm.
454
455 **J:** And saying and just saying, "Are you dealing with pornography?" And then because it's this
456 root that's just not apparent in whatever else is going on and just, either there's dabbling or
457 something that's going on, I can't tell you. It's just like [pause] I had one of our leaders say, "Who
458 told you that?".
459
460 **R:** Oh, ok.

461
462 **J:** I said, "Nobody told me that." I go, "The Holy Spirit told me that." "No. Somebody had to tell
463 you that!" Yes. Exactly. That would not have happened it was so, so off base. And it was one of
464 our young leaders and that put that individual on an entirely different trajectory in terms of
465 mentorship and accountability and my direction with them, not that it was very, I mean, most,
466 there are so that are struggling in pornography, but this is a leader.

467
468 **R:** Right

469
470 **J:** And so, to be able to, I mean God just spoke to me, I mean God's not going to speak that to
471 me over every person that comes up and prays ...

472
473 **R:** [Laughs]

474
475 **J:** But this is a leader, I had this happen three times in the past two years just over leadership.
476 Entirely different circumstances. And that's, that's a word of knowledge. That brings that
477 counselling to a different place. Or, for them it was just uh [pause] you know it was just a
478 mentoring session for me because they were in leadership. I was just sitting down talking to them
479 about the ministry. Um another way is word of wisdom is if I've been counseling, God gives me
480 insight and wisdom as to whether they're saying all these things and then it's like the right word,
481 the word the word of wisdom that's being I speak to them.

482
483 **R:** Mmhm.

484
485 **J:** Um I can give you an example with another individual that's I mean it was obvious because of
486 their background coming from another nation. And some of the horrific um things they
487 experienced as a child within the nation that they were suffering post-traumatic stress and
488 abandonment issues as a person a middle-aged person. And I but the word abandonment didn't,
489 you could say it over and over again. The spouse had said it over and over again. I know I don't
490 have abandonment. And then the spouse would say one thing and the individual was just sitting
491 there and just like, you know, and they're both leaders, they're both spiritual leaders just, he just
492 had his arms crossed and ended the wife's saying, "Well, this happened and this, and this ... "
493 And I just looked at him and her and I go, "Of course he reacted that way. He's he's just waiting
494 for you to leave because everybody leaves."

495
496 **R:** Hmm, wow.

497
498 **J:** And he's just bawling. Bawling. I mean this is a guy who doesn't cry. He's sort of bawling. It
499 just broke it. Because at that point he realized that he was behaving the way he was behaving
500 because he was just bracing for, for her and the kids to leave. And so that's a word of wisdom.
501 And I said the word to him, and he received a word of wisdom from me and that broke it.

502
503 **R:** Ok

504
505 **J:** Now, did I leave it there? Did I continue? No. This is somebody who obviously going through
506 trauma after um the childhood experience and is just buried and kind of make things work in this

507 country. I, this, that's the point where I said OK now we take this you're going to I'm referring
508 you to a professional.

509
510 **R:** Right, right.

511
512 **J:** Who knows how to deal with post-traumatic stress and those issues. Um, still keeping them
513 accountable in terms of their leadership roles, but handing that portion off. But that's why in the
514 terms of the manifestations that happens within the counseling context, within the preaching you
515 know, you can be preaching a sermon, and all of a sudden, the Holy Spirit ... As you get this
516 new thing in the middle of your sermon and it just a, either a word of discernment or a word of
517 knowledge. And you're preaching, you don't stop and say this is the word of knowledge for
518 somebody. I'm not talking about that. I'm saying there are individuals here that are dealing with...
519 and then just this example and move on and within the context of my sermon.

520
521 **R:** Mmm

522
523 **J:** In addition to like we have our prayer team; all the people our prayer team. During a worship
524 service we have a call to the altar if they have needs. And everybody on that prayer team
525 operating can operate in the manifestations of the gifts. So they're praying for people and they're
526 praying for healing. They're praying for family problems and if God gives them a word, they're
527 giving, they're prophesying to them or they're giving them a word of wisdom. It's not being heard
528 by the whole congregation but it's happening within the context of community. So that becomes
529 a huge thing for people. People look forward to that opportunity. In fact, there was an article um,
530 you know, online Pentecostal Evangel just this week about a church, um, Discovery church in
531 California that they consider the manifestations of the gifts a huge draw and they are doing the
532 same thing but they're doing it in the at the end of the service.

533
534 **R:** OK.

535
536 **J:** And that's where the manifestations are being in operation through an individual. So, I mean it
537 does change everything.

538
539 **R:** Right.

540
541 **J:** And not being kind of being you know I don't have the sense, I mean we have everybody has
542 their schedule and how much time this is going to take, how long is my sermon, am I going to
543 get them out on time. And you see it all a planning center.

544
545 **R:** Right.

546
547 **J:** And this is why I say in my introduction to the Pentecostal theology. I said we don't want
548 perfect I said why do we want it perfect but people are messy? The perfect presentation, right?
549 That's what the that's not even a challenge anymore, that's just what's expected. And you know
550 that's good. We should have a plan. You know the worship team should have a plan, I should
551 have a plan, um we should have a strat- a strategy. We're going to play this video after this. But
552 sometimes if it just doesn't happen or it doesn't it work. God's doing something else you just stop

553 and think what God is doing. And church is messy. And God has called us to this messy world.

554

555 **R:** Yeah.

556

557 **J:** So sometimes, some mornings, it's going to be a little messy. So there's a message in tongues
558 and nobody interprets it. You get all panicked because it's not perfect. No you just wait. You just
559 explain. You just talk about it. You make it, the leader can make it [pause] comfortable and
560 open. And that really, I think that coming from that perspective of being the manifestations of the
561 gifts, it makes it much more that way for me.

562

563 **R:** And so would you say that that you know the manifestation of the gifts are central to your
564 ministry. Or how would you characterize that?

565

566 **J:** [Pause] Um I think the flow of the Spirit essential to any any good pastor's ministry. So, you
567 have to operate within the flow of the Spirit.

568

569 **R:** OK.

570

571 **J:** And uh when I grew up, you know you can imagine it, they thought it was the best service in
572 the world when there was no preaching and everything's... everything ...

573

574 **R:** Yeah.

575

576 **J:** Now, primacy of the Word.

577

578 **R:** Hmm

579

580 **J:** I mean rare. Twice in a decade occasion that I don't preach.

581

582 **R:** Right

583

584 **J:** Something happens in service, because however long that we're here, I may abbreviate my
585 sermon, but you're going to get the word.

586

587 **R:** Right. Right.

588

589 **J:** So one: I find that everything flows in and through the word that God gives you. So, I mean
590 the prophetic words, or the prayers or the directions. I mean, even if you're prepared, even if you
591 prepare a sermon series in advance, God's already got everything lined up, and so everything will
592 reinforce, even down to the kid's ministries. [Laughs]

593

594 **R:** Yeah

595

596 **J:** It's not just, it's like that's the flow of the Spirit. It's not just about tongues, interpretation, or
597 prophecy or healing or whatever the manifestations of the gifts or discernment, it's all of it works
598 to flow.

599
600 **R:** Right
601
602 **J:** As we come together, it should even be flowing outside the church.
603
604 **R:** OK. One sec real quick. I'm going to turn off the video because the connection seems to be
605 having some issues so many turn on video and see if that helps. So.
606
607 **J:** Ok
608
609 **R:** All right. OK. Was there anything else you wanted to say about um you know any of that in
610 terms of the gifts of the spirit or anything else we've talked about so far.
611
612 **J:** No. I could talk about the gifts of the Spirit forever, but I won't. [laughs]Let's get back to your
613 questions.
614
615 **R:** Ok well so one thing I wanted to ask you then as we transition a little bit um was was there
616 anything either if you were if you got a chance to read the first transcript or anything you just
617 remembered from the first interview. Was there anything that you wanted to discuss or explain or
618 um talk about or anything like that.
619
620 **J:** No.
621
622 **R:** No? Ok.
623
624 **J:** All I got from that as I reviewed it was, "Oh my. I talk too much." [Laughs] You go, Uh huh,
625 uh huh! [laughs]
626
627 **R:** [Laughs] Well no, actually. For one thing you talking a lot is good for this kind of research so
628 please don't worry about that. But also, you know it's interesting because just transcribing
629 something like that is a little difficult because none of us we all talk differently than we would
630 write, right? And so yeah. OK. Well so the last prepared question I had for you then was um and
631 this is going to be a pretty broad one but I want to do that on purpose.
632
633 **J:** Ok
634
635 **R:** So given the things all the things we've talked about. First interview, this interview. You
636 know like you said when you read the transcript and just in reflecting on your life experiences,
637 um I was wondering if you could summarize for me your experience as a female pastor in the
638 AG. And you can do that however you would like to.
639
640 **J:** [pause] Oh, summarize it. I don't know if I can summarize it representing myself merely as a
641 female because I don't know. Um my identity is not completely wrapped up in that.
642
643 **R:** OK.
644

645 **J:** So I would have to summarize it as Jenny and the AG. And I think it's something that could be
646 common for all women is that I mentioned is the lack of mentorship. Although I believe that has
647 gotten much better with the intentional mentoring of individuals. I think that the lack of
648 opportunities is something that exists and it doesn't just exist for women, it exists for anyone that
649 seems to be out of the norm rather than. Out of the norm, I'll just say out of the norm. Um and
650 then in terms of, but the other side of it in terms of ministry in the AG is I have found in our, in
651 [location] that the leadership has been gracious, open, and welcoming to me and affirming um
652 even those who were somewhat wondering about this woman in leadership that once they got to
653 know me and kind of shed some of their stereotypes of women that they that I was they were
654 able to embrace my ministry or embrace me as a leader whether it was uh uh a peer as a pastor or
655 as a leader, as a presbyter or whatever, you know, whatever role that I was in. But it also
656 prepared the way for other women to be embraced and and um truly to try to shed some of the
657 stereotypes. Um and I think if you were, I hate to talk about myself, but the thing that people
658 who have been around me for a long time and around me in leadership. I mean right now I'm at
659 the age, they say, "You've been such a pioneer in [location]." And I'm like when did I pioneer? I
660 felt like for 10 years I didn't know what I was doing in pastoring. And I learned so much from
661 other people. But I think what they are talk/speaking of is that the way I carry and hold myself
662 within the context of what was all male dominated, pretty much field [Laughs]. Whether it was
663 with being a pastor or on the presbytery or leadership or holding up some other role. Whether it's
664 just sitting on a committee that's that [pause] Just, just shedding some of the getting rid of some
665 of the stereotypes that, you know, 10 or 15 years ago men would have had about women in
666 ministry. I don't think they exist now as much among millennials just because of their generation
667 and um a lot of stereotypes have been shed. I think that they still exist in many parts of the
668 geographic context that in the AG in the United States.

669
670 **R:** Mhm.

671
672 **J:** But um [pause] I mean for me because I'm much more comfortable in a business setting. In
673 That kind of roundtable than I am ... you know maybe in some of the other contexts. I mean I'm
674 yet I'll give you a typical example. It's like I go to a presbyter's meeting and all the spouses you
675 know from different places where there was access to some kind of shopping. They'd all say ok
676 their wives are all going shopping and they would say or make some comment about shopping or
677 women going shopping and I just look at them I'm going I hate shopping. They look at me, "No
678 you don't ... " I go I have three sisters and we all hate shopping. That is such a stereotype. And I
679 said that enough times I've had other women say thank you please thank you so much for just
680 saying that.

681
682 **R:** Yeah

683
684 **J:** You know because it's like oh yeah women are just shoppers and no we aren't. You know that
685 that's maybe one thing. Whatever it's a chore it's a chore but that's a something typical. You
686 know I'm shedding a stereotype that women are always going to react emotionally or women are
687 um you know [pause] and I think that maybe affirming some good stereotypes women and that
688 women are great multitaskers. But you can take that outside the context and place that within a
689 pastorate or sitting on a committee and it's it's a great tool because we can we can begin to think
690 about something we can we can remember what's going on the past week we're on multiple

691 tracks at the same time. So. I don't know. It's I think that's part of being in the AG. Those are
692 some things that are said lot to me, um just tearing down the stereotypes and um but you know
693 people say you know pioneering the way I didn't pioneer the way I just who I was.

694
695 **R:** Hmm

696
697 **J:** And and or they'll you know I even have one of our female E.P. She's now she's the head of a
698 school of ministry, and she said, "But Jenny there's not too many people who are like you." I said
699 well that's true; you should be glad about that. [laughs].

700
701 **R:** [Laughs]

702
703 **J:** And it's not anything I I'm not smarter I'm not better, I don't have an edge in terms of
704 leadership. I just think it's I don't know. It's just that that's why I said you can't really think about
705 me as a woman as much as just me, just like anybody else. And the impact that they make in
706 their community or their church it's who God has called you to be. And he uses all of our, who
707 we are and our background our context and our giftings, so ...

708
709 **R:** Ok. All right that's good. So, before we finish the interview then is there anything else you
710 wanted to talk about. Anything else you wanted to add or explain or bring up. I just wanted to
711 give you that opportunity before we finished.

712
713 **J:** I think that. Um I might have mentioned this before. I think those in leadership, whether it's at
714 your church or you're you know you're the pastor of a church or you're the head of youth or
715 you're the [pause] you have some role in your district or network or you're on um you know the
716 general council level.

717
718 **R:** Uh huh

719
720 **J:** Leaders have to be intentional about affirming and advocating for women in ministry. Just as
721 they would for Minorities, minorities in places of leadership. That it it's not going to just happen
722 that we have to be very intentional. But once you're intentional then you'll begin to see a
723 perpetuation because people are not going to replicate what they do not see and if they don't see
724 women in a leadership role they're not going to replicate that. Young women aren't going to feel
725 called. Or they're not going to feel to follow their calling or um people are not going to affirm or
726 churches won't call women.

727
728 **R:** Hmm

729
730 **J:** So, I think that's probably one of the biggest things that's throughout these years really has
731 been a learning curve. I just felt your gifts would make room for you. And they do. As leaders
732 we have been called to make room for those who God's called and to mentor them and raise them
733 up and you have to affirm, you have to affirm those that are there. And you have to affirm and
734 make room for women. And then on the other side of it, women have to step up. When I speak to
735 a group of women I'm like you know are you are you supporting your pastor? Are you attending
736 all the leadership meetings? Are you going to your you know your sectional or regions you

737 know? Breakfasts or you know they get together the ministers get together. Are you going to
738 your district councils? You know, are you showing up?

739
740 **R:** Mmhm

741
742 **J:** And if you don't show up, then don't expect anything more. And that's the, two sides is you
743 know leadership has to advocate and place women in positions because what is not seen is not
744 going to be replicated, replicated. The same other side of it is that women need to step up.

745
746 **R:** Hmm

747
748 **J:** You don't have to be pushy they just need to show up. Show up and serve. That's what you see
749 throughout scriptures. And um you show up you show up to the meetings you show up to the if
750 you're a youth pastor and you're a woman. You are doing something in your district or your
751 region or your section, bring your youth group. Show up.

752
753 **R:** Ok

754
755 **J:** So, I think that maybe that makes a biggest difference.

756
757 **R:** Ok. Yeah that makes sense. All right well let me go ahead and turn the recorder.

758
759
760

MARY: FIRST INTERVIEW

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Ryan: Ok ready to start then?

Mary: Yep.

R: OK. So the first question that I have for you then is um would you please tell me about your call to ministry.

M: Ok. Uh Well I experienced it sort of later in life I guess compared to the kids who you hear at youth camp that they're supposed to be pastors. But um I was probably about 27 and was a stay at home mom and I was a writer and just really focused on continuing to pursue writing and uh get a graduate degree. Go to a writing workshop which I did and that's what my MFA is in. Um however like uh we were at a church a new church to us and we'd just gone through kind of a traumatic church experience uh at our previous church and spent a year at this new church just sort of healing and recovering and um during that time God just really healed my heart from the stuff we'd gone through. And I really started feeling very strongly like I wanted to give back. I wanted to um help this church grow. It was a church plant incidentally that we were a part of that we had found and um at a certain point during the first year I felt like God was saying you're pastoral and so um there was just a long process for me of really praying about that and feeling nervous about that and what that would mean because [pause] You know I didn't know if it would be appropriate to just walk up to my pastor and be like hey I think God is saying this and I really feel like I'm supposed to be part of your leadership team meetings and help and I was serving a lot at that point and I had a history of serving a lot in the church since I was a teenager. But it was sort of like this new concept uh of being a pastor and looking back I think I always was very invested in the spiritual well-being of people around me, I just didn't give it that language. So um anyway uh I did have a conversation with my pastor after about uh 9 months of just kind of sitting on it and praying and wondering um and I don't know if I'm giving you too much information ... is this all good?

R: No, feel free. Yeah, this is all good.

M: All right. OK. And do you know his response was "Well, Mary, that's great. We'd be glad to have you be part of our team." Um and that didn't really bode well with everyone else on the

34 team because I didn't have the right [laughs] credentials or anything like that.

35

36 **R:** You were how old at this point?

37

38 **M:** What? I was like 28 at that point maybe? .

39

40 **R:** OK.

41

42 **M:** Yeah. So he like he was just inventing you know as he went along just to make things work.

43 And here was somebody saying hey I feel like God's calling me into this. And so I ended up

44 being called an associate pastor right away. And um [pause] I didn't really have any experience

45 in doing that. Um just felt a call and loved God and loved people. And then while I was an

46 associate pastor at [Church] I went through a credentialing process and got certified and licensed

47 and then um in 2016 I was ordained. And that was right after my church released me to plant

48 [current church].

49

50 **R:** Ok. So as an associate pastor like what kinds of things did you do at that church then?

51

52 **M:** I did everything. [Laughs]

53

54 **R:** Everything? [Laughs].

55

56 **M:** Yeah. I mean again since it was a church plant everything was always in progress and under

57 development and a lot of flexing all the time so I probably handled more my official stuff was

58 like discipleship stuff.

59

60 **R:** Mmhm

61

62 **M:** Training small group leaders teaching classes figuring out what classes we're going to teach,

63 mentoring teachers to teach those classes. I also sort of just inherited a ton of communications

64 stuff and calendaring and organizing at different times. I was sort of just uh filled in where there

65 were gaps. A lot of times so Sunday mornings I was you know walking around at one point we

66 had three services. And you know I was just putting out fires and trying to help and make sure

67 everything ran well and occasionally I would preach and occasionally I would lead worship. And

68 um yeah, I didn't do kids.
69
70 **R:** Ok.
71
72 **M:** And I didn't do youth.
73
74 **R:** Ok. Um so how would you describe then your relationship with the lead pastor at the time I
75 mean I know you were working for him as his associate pastor but so what was that like?.
76
77 **M:** Yeah. It was ... We have a great relationship today. But it was very rocky at different times.
78 And I think that's because [pause] we're both very different. And he came from a ministry model
79 that was very different that didn't include women and I remember him saying to me that 10 years
80 before I came to him he probably never would have thought about having a woman on the team.
81
82 **R:** Interesting.
83
84 **M:** Yeah. Yeah. And so I give him a ton of credit for just listening to the Holy Spirit and being
85 willing to be in new situations people who are different and Um [pause] I think that [pause] uh
86 what do I want to say about that? Um it would be rocky because there would be
87 misunderstandings. And so I was frequently misunderstood by him or by other people on the
88 leadership team and it usually meant that I ended up crying [laughs] and felt kind of beat up ...
89
90 **R:** Mmhm
91
92 **M:** ... by everybody and then. We but I would I would continue to push through and be like hey
93 you know what's going on like this is how I'm being responded to. This is not what I was saying
94 or what I meant and we would sort it out and if they were in the wrong they would apologize and
95 he would apologize and um repent really for if he made assumptions or whatever it was so um it
96 was painful. But all relationships are painful. And if you're going to go deep with people you're
97 going to encounter that stuff. So I think like [pause] the best thing I can say is that we have a ton
98 of respect for each other. He's been a huge cheerleader for me in planting. And um we're glad
99 those days are behind us. [laughs]
100

101 **R:** Ok. So those uh you said it was rocky and that kind of stuff. Was that just because of
102 personality and like leadership style or do you think there were other things involved there too?.

103

104 **M:** Well. I mean [long pause] you can never prove anything, right?.

105

106 **R:** Right, right.

107

108 **M:** You can never say oh it's because of this that there's this pattern of behavior right. So you
109 can't say that. All you can say is what you uh suspect or like how you're interpreting events,
110 right? I do know that when I started I was super insecure. I didn't really know what my place was
111 in these meetings or um whether it was OK to have a loud voice. I do feel that when I would uh
112 make strong statements it wouldn't be received as well as if the guys would make strong
113 statements.

114

115 **R:** OK.

116

117 **M:** Um so there's that. Um [pause] yeah and there was also there were some times where it
118 almost seemed like there was sort of like a groupthink mentality about Mary maybe having a
119 feminist agenda and we need to like just end that.

120

121 **R:** Interesting.

122

123 **M:** Yeah And that was all just made of some assumptions and ultimately like the three guys
124 involved ended up like repenting and apologizing and saying they were out of line. But it was
125 particularly a situation where two guys got offended they went and talked to our lead pastor two
126 guys on a leadership team went and talked to our lead pastor. Um the conversation had been
127 [pause] I actually thought it was a really interesting conversation. I didn't know it was going to
128 push buttons. Um but I and another woman in the church were just sitting around chatting with
129 these two male leaders. And we were talking about you know like [pause] how a female leader in
130 the church had said there are several women in the Church who feel like they just don't know
131 how to relate to the male pastors and um just don't really know how to approach them. And so I
132 sort of brought that up as like that's an interesting dynamic you know like I wonder you know
133 what do you guys think about that? And I think it triggered some defensiveness for them
134 probably feeling like they're doing something wrong. And which wasn't my intent, I just thought
135 it was gosh I wonder what you know I wonder what we can do like if we're mindful that if there's

136 anything to be done. Um so any way one of them is just annoyed because it just felt like probably
137 like a feminist agenda or something but I think that was just code for um I feel really
138 uncomfortable with a topic. [Laughs].

139

140 **R:** So they called it a feminist agenda?

141

142 **M:** You know what I don't know if he did or like if my our lead pastor did when he called me on
143 the phone a little while later. So they like went and found him at a coffee shop and one of them
144 just went along with the other. And one of them was just like venting about how annoyed he was
145 about this subject and it's always whatever I think he was just [pause] didn't have the maturity to
146 respond to it. But how it was presented then to our lead pastor was that [pause] I had a feminist
147 agenda, right? And that was more important than Christianity and Christ.

148

149 **R:** Wow

150

151 **M:** And so he called me on the phone and he was like really upset. And was like challenging me
152 and saying, "Are you sure that like you don't just have some pet agenda? Because that's not what
153 we're here for. That's not what our church is all about. Like you know I don't care about special
154 agendas or whatever." And I was just like what on earth is going on. I have no idea what you're
155 even talking about. And um at a certain point I just started crying and started asking him like
156 What did you hear like what do you think I said and was able and apparently like he was talking
157 to me from a church office and the guys were like in the background hearing him talk to me.

158

159 **R:** Oh wow

160

161 **M:** And in the course of that conversation he realized that he had made some assumptions and
162 backed down and apologized. But it was still kind of like what the hell just happened, you know?

163

164 **R:** Yeah

165

166 **M:** And he told me later he hung up and he said to the guys who were listening you know what
167 guys I think we really just messed up or I just messed up or something like that. And like I think
168 Mary probably really feels ganged up on right now. Um so it would be situations like that so
169 when you ask is it just personality, I think like what I was aware of and brought to the table in
170 terms of like subjects which had to do with [pause] which like coincided with the fact that I was

171 female and I was talking about men and women leading in the church. I think that pushed on
172 some sensitive places.

173

174 **R:** Ok, yeah

175

176 **M:** And um I don't think that anyone would describe me a militant. I don't. [laughs] I don't think
177 that I ever came across as angry or anything like that. But I think it was a really uncomfortable
178 and I think because of it um [pause] Yeah I think it was me being a woman which was difficult.

179

180 **R:** Were there other things like and you don't have to tell me about them. You can if you want to.

181

182 **M:** Yeah

183

184 **R:** But were there other things similar to that that happened there or was that kind of an outlier?.

185

186 **M:** Um I think that was the only [pause] That was the only thing that I think is typically ... Well I
187 think there would be double standards and that those sorts of things would happen. So like we
188 once had a conversation and I wouldn't want you to reveal these details publicly because then
189 everyone would know like if they read it. But we had a conversation about what we were naming
190 the new children's minister ministry and what the guy who was the kid's pastor who was playing
191 around with the idea of [term with problematic connotations] and all of the other kids class
192 names had to do with trees. And so this one was [term]. And so if you are from the south or you
193 know what [terms] were used for.

194

195 **R:** Oh, Yeah.

196

197 **M:** Yeah it immediately brings to mind these negative connotations right. So I had a couple
198 conversations just saying that seems like it could be you know a little weird or just have negative
199 connotations and a couple other people in the church had reacted like when they had heard it.

200 And so at a team meeting I just brought up I said hey like where are you guys at in your process

201 about deciding on the name and the children's pastor said who's a good friend of mine um said

202 Well we've decided to go with [term] and then the lead pastor is like well why why are you

203 having this conversation, you know? Like what what's going on? And so then it came out that

204 like there'd been conversation about this name and um and that like it had some negative

205 connotations and then the children's pastor said basically called me out for bringing it up in a

206 meeting because it made him feel disempowered and like [pause] like I was like strongarming it
207 or something so that then he couldn't make the decision on his own because now like our lead
208 pastor like sided with him and was like Yeah you know, Mary, you shouldn't bring these things
209 up or blah blah or whatever. And like we've never had any sort of like boundary setting
210 conversation in the past and these sorts of topics had always been topics that would come up,
211 right? And so uh [pause] like that was another situation where it was like everyone was angry at
212 me for bringing something up and asking about it because but then out of that I guess they were
213 trying to make like a new rule. Oh we don't ask these questions right. But nobody's ever done
214 that with the guys who had brought up stuff, right? So it just felt a little vicious. And so I mean
215 there was a point in the meeting where I just said I actually told our lead pastor I felt pretty mad
216 at him like you're talking to me as if we have some kind of understanding that we don't talk about
217 these things then and if you want to do that like that's great but I feel like I'm being vilified here
218 for something that seemed like a pretty normal thing to ask about. And so he ended up
219 apologizing and there was a follow up conversation. And you know it would get kind of like ugly
220 and tense like that from time to time and almost like just like reactive or like defensive. And um
221 and then there would be repentance. But it was so painful. It's it's painful like talking about it.

222

223 **R:** Sure

224

225 **M:** Even just thinking about it. So I try not to think about it very often. [Laughs] Because we
226 could work through it you know.

227

228 **R:** Yeah.

229

230 **M:** And had good could follow up conversation.

231

232 **R:** Ok. What I will probably do by the way is I will include that part but I edit out the name of
233 the program. Is that all right?

234

235 **M:** Ok yeah that's fine.

236

237 **R:** Ok. Um All right so you went from there then to you said you know you said they released
238 you to plant a church, right?

239

240 **M:** Mmhm

241

242 **R:** And so how did that happen and then what's it what has it been like to be the actual lead
243 pastor at this church then?

244

245 **M:** Yeah. So you want to know about the transition first? Like where I'm going?

246

247 **R:** Yes, uh huh.

248

249 **M:** OK. So I really felt like God was calling me to do this at a certain point. I shared that with
250 our lead Pastor right away. He was totally supportive understanding because he's experienced the
251 same thing in his life. And so he and I talked about it for for three quarters of a year um until I
252 was like really sure. And he didn't want to talk to the board yet because he wanted to make sure
253 that I was sure and he was sure.

254

255 **R:** Right

256

257 **M:** So he had made some assumptions he made some assumptions about how the board would
258 respond to this news um because we were going to see if they would be like a partnering church
259 or like a parent church. And it would have just been at the time it seemed simple for me to be
260 like a daughter church to them. Um but we he talked to the board and they were sort of freaked
261 out. They uh some of them felt a little upset that I wanted to go so close uh to a nearby city uh to
262 plant a church. And I ended up doing like a little presentation with the board. And two of them
263 were sort of openly hostile to me and they're two people I would have considered like incredibly
264 supportive. Um through the entire time I'd been at [church] and cheerleaders for me and um one
265 of em said uh well because we didn't have to move for this church plant because we were going
266 to a nearby community. Um One of them said church planting for you is a hobby. There's no risk
267 involved. You know and like you know uh another one was like. Well if somebody else on staff
268 wants to plant a church are we supposed to support them too? [disbelieving laugh] like he was
269 just like they were just like pretty openly distressed. And I think really lacked a kingdom vision
270 for what we were doing and so even our lead pastor was like frustrated but he wasn't going to
271 strong arm them you know. So you had to have a few more sessions to talk through things with
272 them and ultimately they decided you know I think two of them are really arguing for ... We
273 don't really understand what she's doing or why she's leaving but [Lead pastor] like you want us
274 to support her so fine, we'll give her thirty thousand dollars or like whatever the money is. Um

275 but then they were arguing from me to leave you right away.

276

277 **R:** Oh ok.

278

279 **M:** It was almost like this like she's resigned now so we need to pack up her boxes and escort her
280 out. So I and of course like that wasn't like our pastor's vision or heart for that at all. So I had
281 been thinking this was in December and I've been thinking I'll stay through like June or July and
282 then plant like the following fall or spring.

283

284 **R:** Right.

285

286 **M:** Yeah. I was over so much stuff that we needed like a good lead time for transition and all
287 that. Um and so [pastor] I made that clear. Like what I was hoping for. And then our pastor went
288 in and he was lobbying for that. And another board member supported that as well. Um But it
289 was a compromise that I left at the end of February because I think two of them wanted me to
290 leave right away.

291

292 **R:** Ok, wow

293

294 **M:** So I'm so it was two months later was my last day. So that was very painful. Like just like the
295 yuck surrounding that. Um and just the immaturity there um of being territorial or whatever it
296 was. Um

297

298 **R:** So what's your perspective on that then. And I know it's just your perspective and you know.

299

300 **M:** Yeah.

301

302 **R:** But I mean like do ... What do you think was involved in that from them or was it just
303 defensiveness or was there other stuff?

304

305 **M:** Yeah, I I think part of it like one of them is incredibly loyal and he's a small business owner.

306

307 **R:** Uh huh

308

309 **M:** And so I think probably a little bit of the mentality is, well our church has a corner on this
310 market and so why would we support you to be our competitor in the next town over, right?

311

312 **R:** Oh, OK.

313

314 **M:** So I think that was part of it. Um I don't think like any of them like had open or conscious
315 feelings of, Hey like she's a woman so she shouldn't be doing this or we don't respect her for that.
316 However, it's really hard for me to imagine them saying that to a man like the whole like church
317 planting is a hobby for you. There's no risk involved. Like I just like can't imagine that
318 happening. Yeah. And and even like in my ordination interview which happened several months
319 before that um when the people interviewing me asked if I ever thought about being a pastor and
320 I said well as a matter of fact I've been talking to the district supervisor, superintendent about this
321 about planting a church. I expected that they would say that's great! You know like tell us more.
322 Um But instead they sort of like launched into a lecture about how my husband had to be on
323 board too and um sort of as if they were worried that he wasn't and we'd come to that interview
324 and I'm like dropping a bomb or someth ... I don't know what they thought.

325

326 **R:** Huh

327

328 **M:** Um and it also led to like all this concern and hesitation of like oh man how are you going to
329 work that out in your marriage, Mary, if you're the lead pastor. And you know and your husband
330 is the leader at home, like how will you figure that out. Like I don't know. And like we just kind
331 of looked at them and laughed and just said we've never done our marriage that way where like
332 one person decides everything you know like that's just not how we operate. So again like I don't
333 think they would have said all those things to a guy.

334

335 **R:** Mmhm

336

337 **M:** They obviously wouldn't have because they were directed at me as being a woman.

338

339 **R:** Right

340

341 **M:** So yeah. So I mean there are situations where I feel like it was disrespectful for him to say
342 this is just a hobby for you. [laughs]

343

344 **R:** Right, yeah.

345

346 **M:** Um And I just I don't think he would he would have said that to somebody who had been at
347 that church serving in that capacity that I was for that long.

348

349 **R:** If he were a man?.

350

351 **M:** If he were a man and yeah that's just my hunch.

352

353 **R:** Ok. Um So you got sent out from this other church and it sounds like it was difficult

354

355 **M:** Yeah

356

357 **R:** But so then um so did you start the church that February or did you take some time or how
358 did that all work out?

359

360 **M:** No I didn't start out that February because I was still doing everything I needed to fundraise.
361 So basically a good time around here to start a church is not February.

362

363 **R:** Or anywhere really, yeah.

364

365 **M:** So no. Basically I sort of started visiting churches in our target area just to see what was
366 there. And then I would check in at the mothership at our church. You know every couple of
367 weeks and attend the service but I didn't go back much because it was just [pause] it would have
368 been like confusing and weird [laughs] you know?

369

370 **R:** Sure, yeah, yeah.

371

372 **M:** Like everybody on Sunday morning would come up to me and ask me questions about stuff I
373 couldn't answer them anymore. And you know anyway um anyway in May of that year we just
374 started having house church meetings so all the people who really felt moved to come along with
375 me basically just started gathering at my home and we did that through the summer. And then
376 three times during the summer we once we had like a practice set up at our rented facility on a
377 Sunday morning and then we did um two prelaunch services that summer as well. And then we

378 launched on September 11th 2016.

379

380 **R:** Ok. All right. Um alright So you are the lead pastor of the church at that point.

381

382 **M:** Mmhm.

383

384 **R:** So what are you feeling, thinking, you know, about that at that point.

385

386 **M:** It's great. [Laughs].

387

388 **R:** [Laughs]

389

390 **M:** You know. It's really great. Um It's kind of funny but there's so much drama when you're an
391 associate pastor.

392

393 **R:** Sure

394

395 **M:** I mean people do not come to the church because of you. You know they come from
396 somebody else. And a lot of times you are an annoying person standing in their way of
397 something that they want or you know what I'm saying? Like

398

399 **R:** Mmhm

400

401 **M:** There are a lot of other wonderful things about that role but there's also just a lot of stuff you
402 have to deal with, you know? Where like people would rather not deal with you. And so it's a
403 lovely because I don't have that kind of role anymore.

404

405 **R:** Mmhm

406

407 **M:** Where like people are coming in with expectations about what I should be doing or you
408 know how I should be responding to them or what I should be letting them do. Um it's more like
409 we're in this phase of like I and my team are setting the culture right now and people don't have
410 expectations because you know it's a new thing right?

411

412 **R:** Right

413

414 **M:** Oh in ten years it will be totally different. I'm sure. Yeah. So that's been great. And if people
415 don't like me or they don't like what we're doing they just don't come back you know?

416

417 **R:** Right

418

419 **M:** And so it's not like there are the same kinds of challenges. There are a lot of challenges but
420 there are different ones.

421

422 **R:** Sure OK. Um Did you uh did you ever feel I don't know reticence or were you nervous about
423 being the lead pastor because of your gender or did that not really occur for you?

424

425 **M:** Uh in our location it's kind of a bonus. I mean we live where our church is it's a very liberal
426 city. Um [pause] It's like the high one of the highest per capita LGBTQ populations in the nation.

427

428 **R:** Mmhm

429

430 **M:** People love diversity. So for where we are with the unchurched it's a great total bonus. Um I
431 don't know how everybody in the district perceives me. I know that there are leaders in our
432 district and presbyters in our district who aren't too comfortable with the idea of women as senior
433 pastors even though we're in a movement that affirms that.

434

435 **R:** Right

436

437 **M:** So in general like the people who matter in our district have been super supportive and
438 resourced me and helped me do what I need to do. So I feel like I have allies in all the right
439 places for this.

440

441 **R:** Ok. All right. Um so it sounds like I might know the answer to this but I'm going to ask
442 anyway.

443

444 **M:** Ok

445

446 **R:** Have you ever experienced any resistance from the people in your church to your leadership.
447 I mean specifically because of your gender.

448

449 **M:** Uh No I can't say that I have, yeah.

450

451 **R:** That's what I expected you would say given what we talked about. But um ...

452

453 **M:** Yeah. And I just think people wouldn't stick around. And like if they had a problem with it
454 you know.

455

456 **R:** Yeah OK. Um So then the next question then is uh you can either tell me about a specific
457 time or just in general um how do you think your gender affects your pastoral ministry and that
458 could be positively, negatively, a mix of both. I mean it's really open ended there. And what I
459 said whether it's specific experiences or just in general.

460

461 **M:** Sure. Yeah I think [pause] I think that I just probably have developed sensitivities to things
462 that I wouldn't have if I hadn't been uh minority in a majority group.

463

464 **M:** Ok

465

466 **M:** You know? So being like an associate pastor and a female on a group and a team of all men
467 for many years [pause] Um [pause] yeah I think I've just [pause] learned what that that feels like.
468 And so I feel like I sort of sympathize with the person and minority uh and whatever the minority
469 status is. Um

470

471 **M:** Gosh, there was something else I wanted to say. There are a lot of I things I want to say. Can
472 you rephrase or restate the question?

473

474 **R:** It's just like Tell me about a time or times or just in general how you think your pastoral
475 ministry was affected by your gender. So either good or bad or mix, either way.

476

477 **M:** Yeah. Yeah. Ok. Good or bad. OK. So I do know that one thing I observed early on is that
478 [pause] Oh gosh I just yeah. Um I'm trying to think of a good way to say it. [laughs] Um it's easy
479 for like people you know birds of a feather flock together right.

480

481 **R:** Mmhm

482

483 **M:** So like men in pastoral ministry who work together often develop good friendships, correct?

484

485 **R:** Right.

486

487 **M:** Women in pastoral ministry who work together, they'll develop close friendships so, um, a
488 lot of times with what comes out of those friendships is opportunity for leadership development
489 right. Specially if like your friends with your lead pastor.

490

491 **R:** Like mentoring kind of idea?

492

493 **M:** Yeah, kind of mentoring and like hey I have to go to these district meetings would you like to
494 come with me?

495

496 **R:** Sure.

497

498 **M:** Hey I'm going to have lunch with this other pastor in town. Why don't you come with me.
499 Well I noticed right away early on that that wasn't the kind of relationship I was having with our
500 lead pastor and I'm sure it had to do with discomfort about being seen with a woman 15 years
501 younger than him ...

502

503 **R:** Oh

504

505 **M:** ... around town meeting up with another pastor who doesn't know him very well and might
506 wonder because a lot of people in that age bracket still you know sort of subscribe and younger
507 too like still subscribe to, you know, practices where they don't ride in a car with a woman who
508 they're not married to or whatever and or eat lunch with her or have coffee or whatever. So
509 [pause] I'm sure because of like how that would reflect on him with his peers and like the
510 question that it would pose that was probably too uncomfortable to probably really think about.
511 So um I do huh I do happen to know like one because I was told this, that he was looking for like
512 a third person to go with us somewhere at one point. He just didn't want to show up alone with
513 me.

514

515 **R:** Yeah

516

517 **M:** And not because I mean because he and I talked about that sort of thing frequently. But it
518 wasn't because like there was a weirdness between us in that way or like our spouses would have
519 been uncomfortable but simply you just because of the judgment probably of the community and
520 of the like pastors that we'd be meeting right and what it would look like. So anyway it totally
521 impacted me in the sense that I just didn't have as much opportunity for just like rapport
522 building, I would say. And then a lot of times in those road trips a lot of great brainstorming
523 things would happen and um ideas would be formed and so you know I would hear about it at a
524 meeting when it was already like sort of halfway developed, you know?

525

526 **R:** OK, yeah.

527

528 **M:** And like wasn't really part of the process so I would say that certainly affected me um or just
529 like I think just like yeah just like not getting invitations and not getting included.

530

531 **R:** So he was sounds like he was worried about the appearance that it gave off like the whole
532 Billy Graham rule kind of stuff.

533

534 **M:** I think so but I think it was only in certain contexts because eventually I mean we would
535 meet for coffee at coffee shops because we didn't have church offices so we would meet and
536 have like our weekly one on one at a coffee shop or something like that. So I think it was
537 probably like hey we're going to a sectional meeting and there's going to be a ton of pastors there
538 and they would probably never show up with like ...

539

540 **R:** Right

541

542 **M:** A female associate pastor so he didn't say that to me. But it's what I picked up through one
543 guy who just doesn't have a good filter just

544

545 **R:** Oh

546

547 **M:** Made a comment one time you know.

548

549 **R:** So were there things then that you didn't go to because of that or like events you couldn't
550 attend?

551
552 **M:** I'm sure there are things that I didn't go to because of it. I just it was so long ago. Because at
553 a certain point I just started driving myself and I was engaged in the network or our team grew.
554 And so we had like a ton more people to go and so then I'd be in a car with like four guys you
555 know or three guys. So I know early on there were things I just wasn't invited to. What was the
556 second part of your question?

557
558 **R:** I mean it was just so you know if there are any experiences that were affected by your gender
559 or really it was how was your pastoral ministry affected by your gender?

560
561 **M:** Yeah. OK. So I think like just like just a lack of opportunity in leadership development and
562 mentoring and stuff like that and networking with other leaders. Um it's not anymore, I wouldn't
563 say, because I pretty much just stand on my own and have the relationships and connections I
564 need. But I think like [pause] Yeah I think everything I went through and just seeing the
565 homogeneity of teams and how it's so easy to like just pull people in who are like you ...

566
567 **R:** Mmhm

568
569 **M:** ... And not be aware of the people who are not like you um that have something to contribute.
570 I think. For me I get really excited when I can pull people in who are different and put them up
571 front like people with maturity and character um but to just be able to be like yeah like this is my
572 friend from South Africa and he loves God and he's really great at emceeding our services, you
573 know? Or you know whether it's like ethnic, or um yeah. Mostly it's just racial diversity at this
574 point. I mean there are a lot of guys up front at our church. Um I'm a woman who's regularly up
575 front every Sunday.

576
577 **R:** Ok

578
579 **M:** Um and I don't know if there was or not. Was there ever a time where you felt like something
580 happened either with the person in your church or some type of ministry type situation where
581 you said or you felt like um it's good thing I'm a woman because it would not have turned out
582 well if I were like has anything like that ever happen?

583

584 **M:** What do you, what do you mean by that? Like I would have punched em or something?
585

586 **R:** No, I mean like where you thought I was able to get through to this person in a way that I
587 would not have ...
588

589 **M:** Ohhh
590

591 **R:** Or was able to affect you something like that. That make sense?
592

593 **M:** Yeah I don't Yeah. [Pause] I don't know if I've ever said oh thank god I am a woman because
594 that happened. Um I definitely think I was able to have the kinds of conversations that our lead
595 pastor wasn't able to have. Um but I I also think it's because of his gift mix and his skill mix as
596 well.
597

598 **R:** OK.
599

600 **M:** So I wouldn't chalk that up to him being male and me being female. Because He actually
601 went a lot of hard places with people and people were willing to be vulnerable.
602

603 **R:** Ok alright so so is there anything else you want to say about that then? There might not be,
604 I'm just saying, I just wanted to give you
605

606 **M:** About the pastoral ministry?
607

608 **R:** Yeah before we go to the next one.
609

610 **M:** Um I think like I think uh it took a long time to gain confidence.
611

612 **R:** Ok
613

614 **M:** Because of the lack of opportunity and to be honest like I had more opportunity than most
615 people and I had most more you know open doors and pats on the back than most women
616 probably get.
617

618 **R:** Mmhm

619

620 **M:** So it's not like I'm complaining or anything but [pause] there definitely was like a lack of
621 confidence with feeling left out a lot or just feeling like not included or like the men at district
622 council like pretty much wouldn't acknowledge me for a really long time um or if they did they'd
623 look at me like literally one time I was riding in the car with our pastor and another another
624 pastor who's riding to lunch with us. And he was just talking a mile a minute the whole time
625 didn't introduce himself to me or talk to me and when we got out of the car I was like 8 months
626 pregnant and he just looked at me and he was like Oh [lead pastor - Not Mary] Are you going to
627 have another kid?

628

629 **R:** Oh, wow.

630

631 **M:** And so like that was sort of the kind of like level of engagement I received for quite a while.
632 And I you know I think people are growing and maturing a little bit. But I think that was hard
633 like just lacking confidence because you don't feel like you have all the people like in the same
634 way that I saw [my pastor] having all the people like to network with and call right up and be
635 like hey this is really hard. How do you do this and so I think you just took a lot longer for me to
636 be able to make those connections.

637

638 **R:** Has that improved or is that still about in the same place?

639

640 **M:** Yeah, no it's improved tremendously. It probably happened as soon as I became a church
641 planter.

642

643 **R:** Oh

644

645 **M:** Because everybody's excited about church planters. Even when they're ... Right?

646

647 **R:** Uh huh

648

649 **M:** So and I don't think anyone like in our district's memory remembers the last female church
650 planter. So as soon as I was a church planter I was suddenly in conversations with the district at a
651 much higher level um with like the superintendent himself who is my board member, right? And
652 so he's advocated for me. He's talked about what I'm doing with our Presbytery. I've had

653 presbyters who've never said anything to me just walk up and be like, We're so glad you're doing
654 what you're doing so and I never talk to them about it. So um I think that just like elevated me to
655 a position of visibility in a way that nothing else did.

656

657 **R:** Ok

658

659 **M:** Not that that was the goal. But like [laughs] you know it just it just did. It was a byproduct of
660 it.

661

662 **R:** It was directly linked to your status as a church planter then, that changed it.

663

664 **M:** Definitely, Yeah.

665

666 **R:** Ok, alright. Um So I've been asking this in every interview too because this is always
667 involved and I'm always interested to see what the response is.

668

669 **M:** Yeah

670

671 **R:** I just wondered what your perspective is on the scriptures that people traditionally have used
672 to say that women shouldn't be in pastoral leadership um this usually refers first Timothy 2 or
673 first Corinthians 11.

674

675 **M:** Mmhm

676

677 **R:** But any of them really and I just wondered what your perspective on those is.

678

679 **M:** Mmmm ... I should've done my uh gotten my notes together. [Laughs]

680

681 **R:** You don't have to give me a long like Like you know research paper type thing, I just

682

683 **M:** No, yeah, ok so yeah I do have some resources I fall back on when people ask me that
684 question but um generally I read [pause] certain situations as cultural

685

686 **R:** Mmhm

687

688 **M:** Cultural prescription um for the dynamics that are occurring uh in the particular social
689 contexts. You know when Paul says he doesn't permit a woman to speak or teach, and then we
690 have him commending a female apostle in another letter as foremost of all the apostles or you
691 know one of the best. You know that what he was saying in this specific context couldn't have
692 been meant universally, right?

693

694 **R:** Ok

695

696 **M:** And so um so I think there's a lot of work we need to do to understand, ok, it seems like
697 there's a contradiction but women were teaching, Priscilla was teaching um Junias uh Junia,
698 sorry. Junia was leading and teaching. Um now do you know the story about Junia and Bible
699 translations?

700

701 **R:** So I do but if you'd like to relate it for the transcript that would be great.

702

703 **M:** Well Sure. But I think around I don't know I could get my dates wrong but I think around the
704 third or fourth century the name Junia started being translated into the male version which is
705 Junias. So in a lot of your I think even in the NIV I think it's Junias right now.

706

707 **R:** Mmhm

708

709 **M:** But even like early church fathers recognized that she was female. So I don't remember
710 which ones were writing about her but it was recognized widely that this was a female apostle
711 and then um probably due to you know misogyny, fear of women in leadership. Probably some
712 translator at some point was just like that can't be. [laughs].

713

714 **R:** Mmhm

715

716 **M:** You know that must have been a mistake.

717

718 **R:** Right

719

720 **M:** And so it's just been translated that way ever since and now different translators are trying to
721 you know go back to the original. But um anyways so I feel like there are just so many examples
722 of women leading and teaching in scripture and that what Paul says if you look at the rest of the

723 Biblical witness doesn't make sense if you try to apply it universally. And so I think you have to
724 figure out how to how to make sense of it in the context.

725

726 **R:** Ok. Um has anyone you know at any point ever brought those up specifically to tell you you
727 shouldn't be in leadership?

728

729 **M:** Um I think they brought them up to my pastor when I think he didn't feel confident enough to
730 tell me himself. Along with some like conjecturing about who I might have voted for in the
731 election season. And I don't know just like a whole bunch of weirdness but yeah I think
732 somebody brought that up to him at one point. Um I don't ... you know, there was a point in
733 which I was I was doing some writing online and a young man who um was study ... was in
734 college and was pursuing ministry who I I knew through our church but he moved away um and
735 is now a leader in our district. Um he responded to like an essay or a blog post I had written and
736 you know was very sweet in saying like I'm open to whatever the scripture teaches. But I think
737 the scripture teaches that women shouldn't be senior leaders.

738

739 **R:** Ok

740

741 **M:** They shouldn't be lead pastors. I'm all about women in leadership but like they shouldn't be
742 have the final say on anything. And so we sort of like dialogued a little bit politely online. He
743 had no power over me or influence over my life, you know.

744

745 **R:** Right

746

747 **M:** And I shared with him like a resource that was helpful to me and like thinking through some
748 of those difficult passages. Um but he was very adamant. And um then what do you know, like a
749 few years later um it's announced that I'm a church planter and we're in the same district and he
750 is classified as a missionary. So I would run into him from time to time and I've heard that his
751 views have changed but he's never told me.

752

753 **R:** Ok

754

755 **M:** And it just always seems like super awkward whenever we're around each other. So I just try
756 to be super friendly.

757

758 **R:** Yeah.

759

760 **M:** [Laughs]

761

762 **R:** [Laughs] that's interesting, yeah. Um Ok. Well that that's a good perspective on that. So then
763 what is...? I mean you've mentioned some of this and like with district stuff ...

764

765 **M:** Yeah

766

767 **R:** ... And you know that kind of thing. So what's your perspective then or what has it been like
768 to be a female minister in the AG specifically so that can be at any level right it could be locally
769 it could be you know district it could be national like you like how what has that been like? And
770 what's your perspective on that.

771

772 **M:** Well as a church planter [pause] I would say as a female church planter I'd say [long pause] it
773 has been a mixed bag but there has been a lot of empowerment and a lot of resourcing and a lot
774 of encouragement which I'm super thankful for. Um, the question was what's it been like to be a
775 female pastor in AG?

776

777 **R:** Right.

778

779 **M:** OK. So as a church planter nationally, locally, regionally. Lot of encouragement. Lot of um
780 cheerleading resources. So that's been great. Um training events uh at like our launch training
781 which is put on by the church multiplication network.

782

783 **R:** Mmhm

784

785 **M:** Lot of really awkward moments where you know they were talking as if they were just
786 talking to men.

787

788 **R:** OK.

789

790 **M:** Or or like [pause] they would like break up a session and all the wives would go do
791 something else while like the men were the church planters were being trained.

792

793 **R:** Oh Wow

794

795 **M:** And so of course I was there with my husband because spouses need to attend. And so I
796 would get like I think at one point I was like invited to the wives thing which was supposed to be
797 about even though they knew I was a church planter.[pause] And I think the wives thing was
798 supposed to be more about like how do you deal with you know being in the spotlight that sort of
799 thing. Like when your husband is you know running the show or whatever.

800

801 **R:** Yeah

802

803 **M:** So I mean it was just a little awkward because that and I think they're getting better at this
804 and I think they're getting better at saying like this is what we're offering as a support to wives of
805 pastors right? Um but yet I feel like there's often been a lack of clarity especially at our regional
806 level about what is for pastor's wives and what is for women in ministry. And so I've actually
807 been helping our district think through that and um we're in the process of forming a network for
808 women in ministry so that it's really clear what sorts of resources we're giving to which women.

809

810 **R:** Ok

811

812 **M:** Because um sometimes I would [pause] go to events. You know as a woman in ministry not
813 as a pastor's wife and not not just because I wanted to know about women's ministry which is
814 another thing that gets very confused in this whole [laughs] this whole bubble in this whole
815 world is like there's just I would say the national levels really good about sorting that out.

816

817 **R:** Uh huh

818

819 **M:** But like our regional level is still working on it and that's fine. But um but that would be
820 confusing a feeling like I'm in the wrong place like I want to go to this thing but we're just
821 swapping like event ideas for like women's connection gathering you know. And I was looking
822 for something else or this is being offered to me while the men are listening to the keynote
823 speaker.

824

825 **R:** Oh

826

827 **M:** And so I would need to make a decision like do I want to do that? Do I want to go with the
828 men? There is a point like very early on in the beginning when they were really not good about
829 recognizing that there were female ministers where basically the invitation to like a conference
830 basically said [pause] here's this guy who's coming to speak it's going to be awesome and all the
831 women will be having lunch at this other place.

832

833 **R:** Oh wow

834

835 **M:** At certain while he speaks in this one session and I just remember like I was so weirded out
836 by that because the way it was stated was stated as if all women would want to do that. And in
837 that like you almost had to. And so I just didn't go because I was like well that's going to be
838 super awkward to me. I'm going with my team. And they're all going to be with the speaker, you
839 know? So um so that's been weird. And again it's like a work in progress in the last couple of
840 years have been more conversations locally about that or regionally about that in our district. So
841 I'm really pleased with where it's going but I really think there's just been a lack of understanding
842 about how to navigate sort of the changing the changing climate and there so many more female
843 ministers and a lot of women who are saying I don't, I'm not just a pastor's wife I've actually been
844 in ministry and I see myself as a minister um and not that there's anything wrong with just being
845 a pastor's wife; it's totally fine. It's just figuring out who are we ministering to and who are we
846 equipping and what do they need. I think it's been confusing um back to national launch, uh there
847 was a speaker I went to two launch trainings.

848

849 **R:** OK.

850

851 **M:** So I feel like this is horrible. I I'm sorry. There are so many things I hated about the launch
852 training. Uh

853

854 **R:** Please tell me about them. [Laughs]

855

856 **M:** What did you say?

857

858 **R:** Feel free to tell me about them.

859

860 **M:** Yeah, ok. So there was a speaker at the first launch training I don't even know who it was.
861 But like several times during his talk he just went on and on about how hot his wife was and like

862 and how he's so glad God gave her to him because God knew he needed a hot wife. Or like just
863 like it was really like probably the worst the worst instance of anyone talking like that that I've
864 ever heard. And it was so uncomfortable it was so uncomfortable because here we are in mixed
865 company, right? And we there are lots of wives in the room right who maybe aren't feeling so
866 hot, whatever that means ...

867

868 **R:** Right

869

870 **M:** ... to to him right? It just felt super objectifying and there was just like no it seemed like no
871 awareness of the impact of that language on the people in the room and frankly I don't think it's
872 super helpful to the men in the room either because it just reinforces uh really stupid mentalities.
873 And so anyway like my husband was very annoyed by that. Um and and it felt degrading and uh
874 I'm sure he had no idea. But I did leave feedback so hopefully [laughs] that was helpful for the
875 future.

876

877 **R:** Did um any of the people besides your husband that went with you. Or was it just you and
878 your husband there.

879

880 **M:** That was just me my husband at that one so ...

881

882 **R:** And did anyone else beside you bring that up that you know about?

883

884 **M:** I don't know because I didn't really know anyone else at my table other than just for those
885 few days.

886

887 **R:** Right, gotcha.

888

889 **M:** So I have no idea. You should ask CMN.

890

891 **R:** [Laughs] Yeah

892

893 **M:** Anyway and then the second launch training I went to I went to with three people on our
894 launch team and not my husband because I wanted them to have the experience to just know
895 what they were getting into. And [pause] I [pause] I Yeah. So I feel like a lot of the models that
896 are paraded for us to learn from are theory like they're all sort of the same right now like in terms

897 of church planting and discipleship. And I think it's really good that they're trying to get people
898 to think about how are you going to disciple people and did you know that you need someone to
899 like count your money and you need a bank account or you need to raise funds and so like I think
900 we're really trying to get people to walk through the steps with their teams of thinking through
901 how will we handle this. Like how do we want to do X Y and Z, right? Um I don't even
902 remember what all the areas are but I mean one thing that's really trending right now and has
903 been trending for many years is discipleship classes that are sort of like track based, right?.

904

905 **R:** Right

906

907 **M:** Like 1 0 1 2 0 1 3 1 Boom you're a mature Christian by the end of it.

908

909 **R:** Right

910

911 **M:** So um I knew that that was not going to work in my context. I'm in a context where only like
912 66 percent of people even claim a religious affiliation and most of them probably do not go to
913 church or even have an active spirituality.

914

915 **R:** Mmhm

916

917 **M:** So by any definition. And so I also knew that people don't want programs where we're at.
918 They don't want to go to classes they're not into doctrine like there's got to be another way. Um
919 anyway I kind of already had that sensibility about where we were planting and kind of knew
920 like we were just going to have to wait and see how this how this works. And just go with the
921 leading of the Holy Spirit. And I had done all that track based stuff at the church I was at before I
922 developed the classes for the church. I'd run them I'd taught them they were not super fruitful.
923 [Pause] So we had a table coach who had a really hard time with me not wanting to embrace that
924 model. And so I would say it was to the point where he just seemed to seem like he wasn't
925 listening and that it was more like he knew better and [pause] yeah like I think he just [pause]
926 didn't have any sense that I had thought through my own thoughts you know and like had been
927 thinking about this and there was a reason why I was saying and a good reason why I was saying
928 I didn't think that would work for us and that we needed to think about it differently. And so
929 there is a lot of like when I say I clash with people I don't yell at people or anything but like there
930 is a lot of me sort of like having to be pretty direct ...

931

932 **R:** Mmhm

933

934 **M:** ... you know about hey this is why I'm saying this. And um it it seemed like he was a bit
935 patronizing and um yeah all my words are failing me but it wasn't good.

936

937 **R:** OK.

938

939 **M:** And so and even my the launch team with me all [laughs] observed it. And they all were just
940 like oh this is weird. And um by the end of like the two or three days that we were there when he
941 had finally like asked he finally started to ask questions because he hadn't asked me any
942 questions. But when I wasn't backing down from what I was saying then he started asking me
943 questions. And by the end it really seemed like he actually had developed a respect for me and
944 for some of the things I've been thinking and really stopped trying to give advice and basically I
945 think you know probably affirmed something I was saying because he understood it better. Um
946 you know I was able to tell him like hey I've actually done all those classes like I've developed
947 them that I've taught them and here's why um I don't think it's going to work where we're going
948 and still by the end he was just like Hey I just I just want to be a resource, so if there's anything
949 you need like you know feel free to call me or whatever but um I don't know if they would have
950 treated a guy like that. If he had had eight years of pastoral ministry you know um I think I
951 probably looked young and I probably looked inexperienced and my husband wasn't there at this
952 one and so I'm sure all of the above like it just looked like I didn't know what I was doing.

953

954 **R:** Hmm

955

956 **M:** And it's not like I know everything, right? But I just didn't feel like he gave me the benefit of
957 the doubt. Like most people would. And then there was another guy who's another coach. And I
958 think he's just like this in general. I don't know but he would just like randomly walk up to us
959 while we were talking. And just like hear one word that I said or somebody else said in a group.
960 And just go on like a random tangent that had nothing to do with what we were talking about.
961 And [pause] and it felt like it was just weird. And so I don't know if that had to do with like me
962 being a woman because I didn't hear what he was saying to everybody else.

963

964 **R:** Right.

965

966 **M:** If he felt like he needed to correct something that he heard us saying I don't really know. I
967 think he was a guy who felt a need to be needed. [Laughs] So he was offering a lot that we
968 weren't asking for. But anyway yes. And I would also say like the there were not women
969 represented as church planters at either of the launches so there was a woman there like
970 representing pastor's wives but not a woman representing church planters.
971

972 **R:** Hm
973

974 **M:** And so I think again like that's a situation where it would be great to see diversity. And so I
975 think that they were working hard I think there are some African-Americans on different panels
976 but no women at the ones that I was at.
977

978 **R:** Ok so it sounds like it was it was kind of it's been kind of a mixed experience for you.
979

980 **M:** Yeah. Yeah.
981

982 **R:** Yeah. So you had some support and some the opposite and yeah some of it's more it's more
983 some of it's more implicit, some of it's more explicit, you know?
984

985 **M:** Yeah. And nothing's like gotten in my way. Do you know what you mean? Like nothing has
986 stopped what God has caused me to do, it's just been awkward and uncomfortable at times.
987

988 **R:** Ok. Hmm. Well um so that's actually the last of my prepared questions and so I just is there
989 anything else you wanted to elaborate on or anything else you wanted to say at the end of the
990 interview or anything like that?
991

992 **M:** Mmm let me think [pause] see if I can think of any more relevant stories. [Pause] Well do
993 you have any interest in how women respond to female pastors?
994

995 **R:** Yes and actually that would fit in with the um Yeah definitely.
996

997 **M:** Ok. Um what I what I experienced and I don't know if this is just my experience or not but I
998 was the single female pastor on our staff for a long time so I was often a go-to person for
999 women. But I was also overseeing our women's ministry. And so I don't know if it was a church
1000 environment where like hey women can be empowered here because it was like the opposite

1001 problem in our church that you see in a lot of sort of like conservative AG churches today where
1002 like you sort of have to like push women and encourage them and say hey no like you should use
1003 your gifts. You do have a voice right blah blah blah.

1004

1005 **R:** Right

1006

1007 **M:** Um we had no problems with that at at our church. And in fact it seemed like the opposite.
1008 So we had a lot of women sort of like angling for power like all the time like this few of them
1009 and like just um and so and often I would be [pause] not not our lead pastor but I would be the
1010 one that they were coming to trying to align themselves or criticized me or times where like like
1011 I never had any men say this to me in our church. [Laughs] But there was a woman I hardly
1012 knew who wanted to who like had come to our church like three times and wanted to help her
1013 sister start a ministry at the church. And I was on my way out so I had just said I was on my way
1014 out of my role and I just said I think that's awesome. I think you need to sit with the new
1015 women's ministry person coming in um and talk to her. They had took my comments as sort of
1016 like carte blanche to do whatever you want and so when they realize that's not what it meant that
1017 I was just excited for them but you still need to talk to someone and make sure that this fits with
1018 the mission of our church and all that stuff. Um they called the meeting and at this meeting they
1019 just felt very free to tell us that they thought we were terrible leaders and they could give us
1020 some resources on where you know my friend who was going to be the new women's ministry
1021 leader can learn how to be a better leader. And um were just incredibly rude but felt totally free
1022 to basically like completely tear us to shreds and like [laughs] criticize all of our leadership
1023 decisions ...

1024

1025 **R:** These were other women who were doing this?

1026

1027 **M:** These were women. Yeah. These were women. So it was the context in which [pause] is
1028 probably like the more dominant sin the group of women was um a lack of humility rather than
1029 um insecurity and fear, right? And not, yeah. And so I I would be curious to know if the study
1030 could ever be done to find out if like where you have like strong healthy female leadership. How
1031 how did that like how does that impact the culture of women in the church.

1032

1033 **R:** Interesting.

1034

1035 **M:** I would be curious about that. Um the other thing that I noticed there was often a common
1036 theme and what I talk to women about the women who would confide in me about this is that
1037 they often felt like they had to fight for a place at the table because there weren't going to be
1038 enough places for them, right? So somebody else got the microphone at this event and I didn't or
1039 like I see so-and-so getting promoted to be a little thing in this thing and I haven't been asked to
1040 do that. What does that mean like will I ever get promoted? Will I ever get a microphone? And
1041 and all this like self-worth and identity. Totally tied to like what they were being given um ...

1042

1043 **R:** And were they asking you or looking for you to be like an advocate on their behalf or that
1044 kind of thing?

1045

1046 **M:** So here's the thing. Women other than myself for a very long time weren't given a
1047 microphone in our main services. So this was all like just within women's ministry. So they were
1048 looking to me. But but the ones who were like who are dealing with this stuff who I think had a
1049 prayer of being healthy were saying listen I'm struggling with this because I feel jealous, you
1050 know? And I I really want that opportunity and I know I help me understand why this person got
1051 it. But so I had to do a lot of like talking through with people like why they weren't asked to do
1052 something, right? There was another woman who is not healthy at all and would flatter me all the
1053 time to my face she was the leader she was one of the leaders in women's ministry, flatter me all
1054 the time to my face and then um talk about me behind my back about how she wasn't getting the
1055 opportunities she wanted to get, right? It was like it was like the corporate world and like
1056 everybody was like not everybody but like some very loud voices were were just like struggling
1057 with the fact that they wanted to be in control of some things. And when I made the
1058 announcement that I was leaving and who was going to be replacing me uh as a women's
1059 ministry leader, one lady just kind of went berserk and lost it and was just like so upset. Um, a
1060 very unhealthy person just brought a lot of problems. But anyway I don't know. I'm really
1061 rambling now.

1062

1063 **R:** It's ok, it's ok.

1064

1065 **M:** Whatever whatever use it is to you ...

1066

1067 **R:** So I was just going to ask like so you said they brought these things up to you and you
1068 noticed these things. Did they do the same thing or did they bring up those things to like the

1069 senior pastor at all or was it just with you?

1070

1071 **M:** No, it was just with me. [Laughs] No no not at all. They would not have done that. I'm sure
1072 they wouldn't have done that because they would have been afraid to do that.

1073

1074 **R:** But they thought they could get what they wanted from you easier? Is that what you mean?

1075

1076 **M:** So I think maybe they saw me as more like a softer presence or like maybe maybe they could
1077 push me or something. I mean my general response to women when they were direct enough
1078 about that was to like talk to them about their own identity and where they were placing their
1079 self-worth. And listen I hear that you're feeling insecure but like I didn't choose so-and-so to do
1080 this thing because she's more valuable than you. But she has a proven track record in this area.
1081 Her character is good. She has experience. That's why I chose her. It didn't have anything to do
1082 with you like when I made the choice, right? So I would usually just tell people like this is a
1083 great leader. That's why I gave her the microphone or that's why I asked her to oversee this. And
1084 yeah like you know it sounds like what you need to work on is learning how to be okay and
1085 confident in who God's called you to be whether or not you have a microphone or whether or not
1086 you'd get that opportunity or whether it takes you know a year or two or whatever so yeah. So
1087 there are women who would come to me and basically say that stuff but they wouldn't go to [lead
1088 pastor].

1089

1090 **R:** Ok, huh. Did any of did they receive that well when you would tell them that or did that
1091 probably varied by the person, right?

1092

1093 **M:** It varied by the person and the degree to which I think they were willing to pursue health. So
1094 there was one who was able to see to you that that was her issue. And it continued to be her
1095 issue. And it was really hard but she stuck with it and God continues to speak to her about it. Um
1096 she actually came with me to my church plant.

1097

1098 **R:** Hmm

1099

1100 **M:** And then there was another woman who could not receive it like I would say probably had
1101 more of a like a full blown personality disorder.

1102

1103 **R:** Sure.

1104

1105 **M:** And and like we couldn't even say stuff to her without her like just flat out denying that she
1106 said or did something that she said or did so that that was much harder.

1107

1108 **R:** OK. All right.

1109

1110 **M:** But the woman who replaced me continues to experience the same dynamics.

1111

1112 **R:** Oh, so they hired another woman after you left? Oh, you mean in women's ministry.

1113

1114 **M:** Another woman in women's ministry continues to like experience the same dynamics with a
1115 handful of people.

1116

1117 **R:** Sure. Sure. Ok. Well um I think I've got like you gave me a lot of really good stuff in here.

1118

1119 **M:** Well good, ok! I think a lot about this stuff so it's not hard for me to talk about it.

1120

1121 **R:** Ok, I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording there.

MARY: SECOND INTERVIEW

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Ryan: All right. There we go. OK. So, uh the first question I have for you is one of the things that came up a lot in your first interview um was that you've experienced a great deal of what I've called emotional difficulty in your ministry, right? And you said that you thought that while your gender was not the only factor in some of that that it was definitely involved at least in some of those cases.

Mary: Yeah.

R: Right. You talked about being misunderstood, feeling beat up. You even said traumatic once or twice you know. And so I was just hoping you'd tell me more about that and specifically like how has that emotional difficulty um how has that has that affected your pastoral ministry or has it you know and if so, how?

M: Well it has in many ways made me be very happy to be the lead pastor. [Laughs] So, I mean I actually mentioned this before for a different reason, but it's very freeing, I think, and it's not like I don't have accountability or a pastor over me, who's our superintendent but there's just a lot of freedom. I'm not running into those same issues anymore. Because I don't I don't have that same situation where I had a lead pastor who maybe had a lens or some baggage or some other guys on the team had a lens or some baggage and it just seems like the guys who are joining me now wouldn't be joining me if they had the same kind of issues that are like really in their face. You know what I mean?

R: Right. So, it sounds like you're saying that you being the leader, um it almost kind of like would you say kind of weeds out problems before they happen in that sense.

M: Without problems, yeah, yeah. Uh I think the way it affected me before this was I think I felt like I had to just always modulate my responses to almost everything.

R: Hmm

M: And it felt like I had to be very careful. That I didn't step or trigger point or landmines. Or things that were just in the past, caused um like male staff to like react. You know? So, I think because it had been so painful, I was just super careful about that. Now somebody who doesn't have my constitution, you know, or maybe they wouldn't have tried so hard to like sort of avoid those things. But um [pause] yeah, I feel like I was walking a little bit on eggshells some of the time. And that is not to say that I was conflict-avoidant, though. So, I'm not trying to say that. Because whenever I felt like there was an issue or somebody was responding in a harsh or inappropriate way. I did I did what my friend calls crossed the pain line and talked with them about it.

R: Yeah

M: But it just made it interaction like staff meetings or um group discussions a little less safe-feeling for me.

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R: Ok

M: And I do, when I think back on that I think I was always just feeling like, you know, I need to be like not talk too much and I need to be careful about saying this and really diplomatic about this or that and really there's just like the degree to which you know, you're always doing that stuff but I think probably felt it more because of those painful experiences.

R: Ok. So, you sort of I mean maybe you just talked about this but like um can you think of any examples or like a time when you did have to modulate your response somewhat like you were talking about?

M: Yeah, it just feels like it was like it was a posture that I had like all the time.

R: All the time, huh?

M: It's hard to, it's hard to point out anything specific. I think it was just pretty much always that way for me.

R: But you don't feel that way now?

M: I don't feel that way now. No.

R: And that's mostly because like you were saying earlier probably because you're you're kind of setting the tone for these things now?

M: Probably. Yeah. I don't feel, I think it's because I'm setting the tone, you know? So, it's it is an apples and oranges so it is kind of hard to compare, right?

R: Right.

M: There's a power differential, you know, when I'm on staff uh as a staff pastor versus now like it's a flipped situation with other people, right? So, it could be just as easy for me to like repeat some of the same mistakes that you know were made, right? So, it is very hard, I think, to compare those things. But. Yeah. Remind me what your last question was, sorry.

R: Well I think I just said so you don't experience that now or at least you don't feel that way now in your interactions with your staff.

M: I don't feel that way. At the same time, I don't actually we're such a small church plant, and there aren't a ton of people who have a lot of ownership over a lot of big parts of it, and so I don't know if it would be different. [Pause] I'm sure it would be different if I had like part time paid staff and full-time paid staff, which I don't have right now.

R: Ok

92 **M:** However, I don't think I would feel threatened.
93
94 **R:** You felt threatened before?
95
96 **M:** I ... I mean yeah, I mean it's kind of a loaded word but I guess like I'm saying I'm safe. I don't
97 think I would feel unsafe. Cause I know, I know like I have influence and the power to shape the
98 culture and shape the tone of the conversation probably more than anyone else, and if somebody
99 was sort of acting aggressively I would just know, well they don't have power to like [laughs]
100 shut me down just because they're acting aggressively. And so, you know I could just approach
101 them about their behavior and not necessarily feel like, "Oh I have to be quiet now or um people
102 are just going to misunderstand me like it's just, it's just different.
103
104 **R:** So, do you think then that um do you think that your experiences from before kind of
105 prepared you for things like that that may happen even if they haven't yet? You know, um do you
106 think they have kind of prepared ... I mean I know you can't envision everything before it
107 happens but I guess what I'm getting at is how do you like do you think it's prepared you for
108 potential things in the future. And you know if so, um, yeah how?
109
110 **M:** Yeah. I mean one of the things I think it really taught me was the importance of crossing
111 those pain lines with people or having, having a straightforward respectful conversation about
112 things that don't seem right. And um learning how to do that in a way where another person isn't
113 feeling defensive or on their guard. I do feel like I have learned to do that really well. And yeah,
114 it's so funny. I'm thinking about all the ways this will be transcribed as I talk [laughs]. I can't
115 form a coherent sentence now! [Laughs]
116
117 **R:** [Laughs] As much as you can try not to worry about that. I know you're gonna some but just
118 because we all talk like that you know?
119
120 **M:** Ok. I know, it's so funny. But I'm trying to like be clear, and it's, I can't, yeah, I can't stop
121 myself from saying like and um. So, let's see. It's the kind of thing yeah, I do feel like I faced the
122 fear of having those hard conversations enough that I know I won't be destroyed if I have to keep
123 having them. And that's I think there's a greater confidence in me now to know that when I sense
124 that something is not right it's probably not right and it's probably good to talk about and so just
125 even when, even today I had a conversation with our superintendent. Because there was just kind
126 of a weird dicey awkward situation I had been put in that related to something someone else said
127 that related to him, and you know, other people in the network and I just knew like that I was
128 going to be unsettled unless I had a conversation with them, you know what I mean? I did feel
129 fear about it, actually, I was feeling a little nervous, like, I don't know how to have this
130 conversation and there's all these like competing interests going on and this is awkward and I got
131 thrown into it. I mean it went really well which is great. But um I think it's just made me more
132 willing to pursue those things. And I think part of that is because I did get to a good place with
133 my relationships at my old church. And I appreciate so much the fact that when we're willing to
134 humble ourselves and talk about these things and talk about conflict and we value relationships
135 more we value just getting stuff done that something very beautiful can happen on the other side
136 of it.
137

138 **R:** Hmm
139
140 **M:** And so, I think it's just made me and be kind of [pause] it's not fearless because sometimes I
141 feel fear, but just like undaunted, you know, about having those conversations.
142
143 **R:** So, willing to cross that pain line even though there may be pain there.
144
145 **M:** Yeah. Yeah.
146
147 **R:** It's interesting yeah. It's something we all have to learn in ministry I think. Yeah, I know what
148 you mean. OK. Was there anything else you wanted to say about that topic? You know,
149 emotional difficulty, before I ask you the next question?
150
151 **M:** And how it made me a better pastor?
152
153 **R:** About how it affected your ministry, yeah.
154
155 **M:** I don't think so.
156
157 **R:** OK. All right. So, another one, another topic that came up a lot, and I don't expect that this
158 will surprise you to hear is what I call you know because I had to go through and categorize
159 everything and all that stuff. And I came up with the term resistance, right? Now that took a lot
160 of different forms but most of the time that was some kind of gender based resistance, right? So,
161 it was things that happened to you or experiences you had where you had people resist you or
162 you know based on the fact that you were a woman and pastoral ministry. And uh the two most
163 prevalent ones for you seem to be this idea of double standards and feeling like an outsider. So,
164 you had significant stories that you told that seemed to communicate that and then you had that
165 one instance where you talked about uh sexual objectification at that event you went to. I think it
166 was the CNN event.
167
168 **M:** Yeah.
169
170 **R:** So, it's kind of the same thing as the first question, and they're related, I know, but um how
171 has that or what role has that played in your ministry going forward?
172
173 **M:** Hmmm. Resistance. How has that resistance ...?
174
175 **R:** Yeah. Resistance either in general or if you want specifically things like double standards or
176 feeling like an outsider or you know those kinds of things.
177
178 **M:** And how it impacts my ministry?
179
180 **R:** Yeah.
181
182 **M:** I mean I've said this in the last interview but one way I think it has impacted my ministry is
183 just being aware of how a lot of different minority groups feel like outsiders in the white

184 evangelical church and so it really is a delight to me when I do have someone with integrity and
185 maturity to put them behind a microphone, and someone look different than me is what I'm
186 talking about.

187
188 **R:** Right.

189
190 **M:** So that people who are there are able to feel like, "Hey, I'm identifying," like, "I can see
191 myself in this community. I can see myself represented here. There is a place for me," that sort of
192 thing.

193
194 **R:** Mmhm

195
196 **M:** I really appreciate that and I'm really aware of that. Um our church is small, there's a limited
197 amount of that that I can do.

198
199 **R:** Sure.

200
201 **M:** Not everybody who is in those groups should be placed in front of a microphone. So ...

202
203 **R:** True.

204
205 **M:** Yeah. Uh how has resistance impacted my ministry? [Pause] I think like on a broader, you
206 know not just within my local church. I think I'm still trying to figure out how to respond to
207 resistance. My involvement like in the network or like in the national - not that I have like a big
208 part in whatever happens nationally - but um I have had some interactions, you know. And so I'm
209 just trying to figure out what [pause] like what what should my role be, like what should I speak
210 to? Uh because I know that will be more resistance if I speak. So um I think there's a piece of me
211 that while I feel like I will do anything to maintain good relationships and I don't mean conflict
212 avoidance or anything like that. I don't mean like, you know, avoid conflict at all costs. I mean I
213 will, I will deal with conflicts to maintain good relationships. Yeah, I do that. Um I feel very
214 ambivalent about the broader AG movement. Um, in terms of like being proactive about
215 speaking to things that I see because I don't necessarily have relationship or well-established
216 trust with people who are in power. If you wanna, if I can just say that. And so, I think I'm
217 always concerned about being perceived as critical or having an agenda. I mean it's probably like
218 all the stuff I felt at my old church like there there's just like a nervousness.

219
220 **R:** About being in similar situations?

221
222 **M:** Yeah, I think about being in similar situations or bringing up a concern that you know, I am
223 misunderstood. Where I'm misunderstood in that process. Of bringing up a concern, or being
224 labelled as, you know, something that I don't really think that I am and ... So, I think there's
225 ambivalence there. Like I do really want to, I do see a lot of things that I would love to see
226 change and I just suspect that some people just haven't heard the perspective that I and maybe
227 some other women share about the way things are structured or like how events happen, or
228 whatever. Culture. But I feel very cautious about you know, sharing any of that stuff. So, I think
229 what I have done instead is try to look for ways where I can connect in a positive way and serve

230 and see if then like there are opportunities for relationships to develop. Because I feel like
231 whatever I might have to share or say, uh is going to be better received if people know me, you
232 know? I kind of had this experience at General Council last year. Uh where I just felt really
233 convicted about my ambivalence and just sort of like I feel like on one hand I'm like I love what
234 God has called me into, and I am right I'm supposed to be. But there is another side of me that's
235 like I don't want to engage too much in this movement. I don't want to engage too much in the
236 AG because it's painful or there's resistance. And I was listening to [a speaker at GC] speak
237 about his own version of that at some point in the past. And God really convicted him about just
238 being all-in and saying how can I serve? And so, I just really felt like you know that's really how
239 any change that needs to happen will happen is if people are serving and that's their attitude. And
240 I care about this movement. So, if I care about this movement, like I have to start there. And so I
241 actually email to [person in AG leadership Mary asked not be identified]. Just because you know
242 I'm a church planter and he deals with that; he's over like everything, uh whole areas. Um I hope
243 the poor man doesn't burn out. Um anyway I sent an email and just said, you know, he already
244 knew who I was because [redacted for confidentiality]. He knew who I was but we had never had
245 any sort of significant interaction.

246
247 **R:** Ok

248
249 **M:** And so I just said something like. I just want to let you know I would like, you know, I'm
250 here and I'm in to serve our denomination in whatever way that I can and uh here's kind of like
251 what my skillset is and my giftings. And I mentioned editing and writing and um just like what I
252 was passionate about and he just wrote back and was like that's awesome, you know, like a
253 blessing to get your email, and then said what do you think about writing an article for Influence
254 magazine? And so I did. And they published it. And so, um that was where I could serve, right?
255 And it was a when I was invited to be part. And so, I think it's just, you know this if you've been
256 on pastoral staff, that like it's a lot easier to receive feedback from people when you've invited
257 their feedback than it is when people can just walk up to you after your sermon and be like did
258 you know that you misquoted that?

259
260 **R:** Yes. [Laughs].

261
262 Yeah! So, And, and I and I'm not just saying like I sent that e-mail out of like this ulterior motive
263 cause I have this agenda or something, it was more about it's just the right place to start if I care
264 about this. And I just don't feel like it was right for me to have an attitude that was sort of like
265 Mary, Out. You know like I'm not I'm not in this you know ...

266
267 **R:** You're not looking to mic drop, huh?

268
269 **M:** Yeah. So that's kind of where that's been at. And then recently I feel like God has just maybe
270 created other opportunities to be invited to speak to some things. So like um CMN, I don't know
271 if they do this every week or every month, but they like their internal team and their interns and
272 of some of their staff, not everybody, um do this sort of like get to know a church planter. And
273 so, a couple of months ago we uh video chatted just me and their team about all kinds of things.
274 And what's it like to be a woman pastor, and like what have been some of the challenges within
275 our network, even. Or you know been like within the AG so I was like wow I can share the

276 positive stuff but I could also share some of the stuff that wasn't so positive. And um they were
277 very invitational. And it's just like a great opportunity. So, I would much rather have those kinds
278 of conversations than me like offering unsolicited feedback, you know? [Laughs].

279
280 **R:** Yeah.

281
282 **M:** At the same time, I mean there's a level of [pause] you know fretting that I do over certain
283 things.

284
285 **R:** Like, like what?

286
287 **M:** Like things that I don't feel like I have an invitation to respond to. And so, let me think. Um I
288 know I know. I've heard, through the grapevine (and not a very long grapevine) someone who
289 sits on our presbytery. Um that there are several of our executive presbyters in our network who
290 are not in favor of women leaders, like women pastors, like lead pastors, and yet we're in this
291 denomination that is supportive of that. And so, it's concerning to me thinking about like what
292 kind of culture are we able to foster? When maybe you know I don't know, a third to half of
293 these very senior like experienced long-time pastors that everyone respects wouldn't mentor a
294 woman into that role. Or wouldn't like necessarily think in terms of, "Gosh we should get women
295 involved on a decision-making sort of guidance level in the network so I think I fret a little bit
296 over things like that. Um I've fretted a little bit over ... Oh no, I mentioned this like we had some,
297 I didn't say it so specifically in my last interview I guess, but there was like a young guy who
298 was appointed as a Chi Alpha missionary in our network. And he had very firm, strong beliefs at
299 the time that women should not be senior leaders when he was appointed.

300
301 **R:** Ok

302
303 **M:** And so that makes me fret a little bit about the kind of culture that can develop in a Chi
304 Alpha ministry where you're like mentoring women and men like young women and men and
305 what's going to happen to those young women who are saying I feel a call to ministry, and is
306 there gonna be like a place at which they are like well hands off, you know, I'm not going to be
307 involved in this. So um that concerns me um [pause] at General Council I went to social or um
308 an event that was for the network of women ministers. And [laughs] I would say just between
309 you and me, but I know a lot of people are going to be reading this ...

310
311 **R:** Well, at least 5, anyway. [Laughs]

312
313 **M:** Right. Well it felt like it was poorly done and I felt like it was a poor representation of
314 [pause] women like me. I guess. And not everybody's like me and that's fine. But it felt like it
315 was very light or shallow on content and very heavy on the giveaways. And what do I mean by
316 the giveaways?

317
318 **R:** Well yeah, what do you what do you mean by giveaways?

319
320 **M:** Well, at all the women's events, there are always freebies.

321

322 **R:** Like swag, huh?

323

324 **M:** Like swag, well yeah. So probably a half an hour was spent giving stuff away. You know,
325 and a lot of it was not [pause] ministry related.

326

327 **R:** OK.

328

329 **R:** Some things were. I think like an apron was given away that had the words, "I preach like a
330 girl" or something on it and it felt just a little, I mean it's women designing this stuff, you know,
331 so I don't know what to think. But it felt a little like patronizing or like I don't know like it's just
332 not it's just not what I hope to be engaged in with other women ministers like to be spending my
333 time on stuff like that. And it's not like people can't appreciate that, or I'm judging them for
334 appreciating that but like it just felt like gosh we should really focus on what unites us. Like what
335 are core concerns and what are core issues for credentialed women in ministry. How can we
336 resource them, what are the important things that need to be talked about? And it just felt like
337 that really missed, it missed the ball so badly and like yeah. And the people involved were
338 lovely. But I just didn't feel like it was even structured very well or organized very well and it
339 was super rambly and I don't want to say anything much more about that.

340

341 **R:** Ok, yeah that makes sense. All right. OK. So, um was there I mean so we talked about a lot of
342 things there and that's good but like I said I always want to give the opportunity before we move
343 on. Was there anything else you wanted to talk about in terms of resistance in any form and how
344 it affected your ministry?

345

346 **M:** Mmm I probably do, so just give me a sec.

347

348 **R:** Sure

349

350 **M:** I'm just thinking positive things because at the same time that I do have ambivalence and fear
351 in some situations I feel like it also has given me like a thicker skin.

352

353 **R:** Ok

354

355 **M:** For dealing with people that are just hard to deal with. You know? And just like kind of
356 letting stuff roll off me or learning what sorts of things I should let roll off me. And what sorts of
357 things are not about me and what sorts of things are for me to engage with more. So, I feel like
358 that's been good. I got done preaching on Easter and we have a guy who's been coming to
359 church. And he is probably a combination of demonized and mentally ill and alcoholic and the,
360 the whole time I was preaching he was like a leering at me and smiling.

361

362 **R:** Oh dear.

363

364 **M:** And afterward he was like, "Hey what are you doing after this?" And I just said well I'm
365 going out with my family. And he's like, "Do you want to go to the bars with me?" and I'm like.
366 And so for me I just feel like some stuff that I can just take it in stride and just be like No; I'm
367 hanging out with my family. Just kind of like kind of like just roll like with weirdness of other

368 people sometimes and just not get too upset, that, you know, there's a guy hitting on me after
369 Easter. [Laughs] So this is not really resistance, but I feel like it just kind of like a thicker skin to
370 like the social awkwardness or weirdness of other people or inappropriateness of other people.

371
372 **R:** Well and I mean it's it's a different kind.

373
374 **M:** Yeah

375
376 **R:** But it's very similar to the sexual objectification you talked about, right?

377
378 **M:** Yeah, yeah, thanks for pointing that out. That is true. And I there was a guy, a homeless guy
379 I was trying to help find an apartment, he was living in a homeless shelter. It was a year ago.
380 And I I was sharing the gospel with him. And making phone calls for him, and trying to find
381 housing and his texts just got like more and more sort of clingy, like and I'm literally explaining
382 the gospel to him over text. And then He was like, "Can I ask you a personal question? Are you
383 married? And he had come to church like four or five times, my husband plays in the band and I
384 talk about my husband and I was like, uh, yeah for almost 20 years now and he was like, "Oh I
385 just made some assumptions." And then never came back. He never came back to church. I never
386 heard from him again.

387
388 **R:** Interesting.

389
390 **M:** Yeah. And so, there's that stuff too, which I did feel really sad about, but I feel like I felt sad
391 that like that had been misinterpreted. And sort of got in the way of things but who knows if he
392 would have stuck around for any other reason. I don't know.

393
394 **R:** Right

395
396 **M:** But yeah, like some of that like maybe like people projecting their romantic feelings or just
397 like hey, do you want to hook up after Easter Sunday? Like that stuff. [Laughs] That stuff feels a
398 little easier to deal with. [Laughs].

399
400 **R:** I guess so! [Laughs]. Well yeah those are quite the experiences there.

401
402 **M:** They sure are.

403
404 **R:** But I mean it sounds like, and you can say if I'm wrong here, but it sounds like the stuff you
405 experienced early on like you said has in some ways really prepared you to deal with with that.

406
407 **M:** Yeah ,yeah. I'd say so.

408
409 **R:** OK. So, the next thing I wanted to ask you about was something I had hoped to bring up in
410 the first interview and then we just never got to which was more my fault. But so, um you and I
411 are part of a denomination that's Pentecostal, right? And so, what I was hoping you would tell me
412 about is your Pentecostal experience and you can interpret that however you like. Right. And
413 really so like what has that been for you? And as we've been talking about how has that played a

414 part in your in your ministry.

415

416 **M:** Ok so not necessarily gender related but just like how does being Pentecostal ...

417

418 **M:** Yeah, I mean maybe, right? But yeah more like it depends. But more I'm getting that yeah
419 how is how is your Pentecostalism, right, how has that affected your ministry?

420

421 **M:** I think we need a new hashtag; #mypentecostalism. [Laughs] Yeah, yeah that's good. So for
422 me there's just an ever deepening, ever-growing sense of needing to be rooted, and intimacy with
423 the Holy Spirit and really um walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

424

425 **R:** Right.

426

427 **M:** Um I don't have a church, though, that looks obviously Pentecostal if you walk in on a
428 Sunday morning and that is by design, right now.

429

430 **R:** Mmhm

431

432 **M:** Um, however, here's the deal. I'm I didn't grow up. AG. I grew up in a charismatic, in
433 charismatic churches though. So, I would say like my experiences with God, Jesus, and the Holy
434 Spirit are and my understanding of scripture is what causes me to be Pentecostal, right? And not
435 like I'm Pentecostal and therefore this is how it affects my ministry. So, does that makes sense?

436

437 **R:** I think so, but maybe tell me what you mean by that.

438

439 **M:** What do I mean by Pentecostal?

440

441 **R:** Or like you said I think you said that your experiences ...

442

443 **M:** With the Holy Spirit. Yeah, yeah. So, um I think I'm just, from a very early age, just very
444 stirred to want to experience uh some of the more dramatic spiritual gifts like experience hearing
445 from God, understanding God, being led by the Spirit. And so, I I am a dreamer, and God speaks
446 to me through dreams quite a bit and a lot of times they're prophetic dreams about other people.
447 So, when I say that you wouldn't know necessarily if you walk in on a Sunday morning, because
448 you know somebody doesn't stand up and speak in tongues maybe, you know.

449

450 **R:** Right.

451

452 **M:** It doesn't mean like it doesn't mean that the gifts of the Holy Spirit aren't operating in our
453 community. So, like for example: Um I've been on this journey with God to like learn how to
454 handle these prophetic dreams and share them with people. But. Recently there was a couple
455 that's living together who comes to our church and he's kind of like on the fence like, he's all
456 about the church, but doesn't really believe God can forgive people and you know so he's just
457 kind of and he's just a mess in life. And then, the fiancé, the female fiancé's uh you know, raised
458 in a really legalistic environment. Doesn't want to walk away from God, doesn't really want to
459 talk to God, but they come, you know. And so, in a series of like two weeks or three weeks I had

460 a prophetic dream for him and a prophetic dream for her. And in the dreams, they were telling
461 me things about their lives that I didn't know like I didn't know about these things and um. So, it
462 was with a degree of like fear and trembling and prayer that I, you know, prayed about how to
463 handle that or have a conversation with them about it. It seemed like God just wanted to create
464 kind of a pastoral experience right, to like bring some stuff to light. And so, um for him is was
465 more like I think, uh his fiancé said it freaked him out. As in like God might be trying to talk to
466 me and I don't know how I feel about that. You know?

467
468 **R:** Ok

469
470 **M:** And for her, she started crying and said wow I can't believe this is coming up. I've been
471 thinking about this lately and it ended up leading to a conversation on my couch, you know, in
472 my living room where you know we're talking about her relationship with God and what it's is
473 pulling her back and praying for her to experience the peace of God. And I'm praying for to have
474 courage to deal with some unhealthy issues in her relationship. And so that really impacts my
475 ministry and my ability to pastor people, for sure. Um I have had several dreams about the
476 church and about planting the church and even the timeline of planting the church. Like you
477 know they year before I planted I had a dream where a friend knelt down and like touched my
478 stomach because I was having like a lot of pregnancy dreams around the time that I gonna plant
479 the church.

480
481 **R:** Mmhm

482
483 **M:** And he whispered to me and said um your new ministry will start in September in the east.
484 [Laughs] [Location]'s just east of where we are.

485
486 **R:** Oh, ok.

487
488 **M:** And it turned out that's when we started like that's the time it made most sense to me after all
489 these things transpired. Um and so there have been several dreams like that that have just been
490 like reassuring to me. And helped me sort of like stay the course even when it kind of looks not
491 great to my natural eyes. Like this church plant is not growing as fast as it should or whatever.
492 One of the other dreams I had that had that was really significant was um I gave birth to twins
493 and I knew this was about the church. And the twins were premature and they were like 20
494 weeks. But they were super strong and super sturdy and they were almost like cabbage patch
495 dolls, have you ever seen those things? [Laughs].

496
497 **R:** Yeah, uh huh.

498
499 **M:** Like they're ugly, they're ugly, they're like super sturdy and like they weren't going to fall
500 apart. And they both had, they each had a name and they had a prophetic name that came from
501 the Bible. So like God was just encouraging me through it and I've come back to it a lot, like. Ok
502 these babies were born sooner than I thought. Which is true. I mean the church started a little
503 sooner than I was ready for. I had to leave my church sooner than I was ready for. But this
504 promise of like it stirred me there's going to be like a stability to it cause God is in charge, right?
505

506 **R:** Hmm

507

508 **M:** That has really, really affected my ministry and really affected like my level of hope and my
509 level of confidence in God and in what he's doing. So that you know when we have 14 adults on
510 a Sunday morning show up and it's not a great attendance day there's uh sort like a falling back to
511 remembering what he's told me.

512

513 **R:** Hmm

514

515 **M:** And that you know we're doing the right thing and sometimes these things take time to grow,
516 and premature babies have a lot of catching up to do. So, um anyway uh so I think so that's one
517 thing. Uh just those kinds of experiences. I've also had some um physical experiences with the
518 Holy Spirit. You know kind of hard to classify. I've had gold dust, for lack of a better phrase, on
519 my body before and um I've felt drunk in the Spirit before. And um [pause] had some like other
520 really bizarre encounters with God. Um but that were like super um pivotal for me in my walk
521 with him.

522

523 **R:** Mmhm

524

525 **M:** And I and in understanding what he was directing me to do. And so because I had all those
526 things happen to me and I just I just know that those kinds of experiences with God are possible
527 and that God wants that sort of thing, that level of intimacy with us. I just I think it affects my
528 pastoring because I sort of feel this like strong urgency and desire and longing for the people I
529 pastor to experience that level of intimacy with God. And to like be hungry for that, like to just
530 even know like this is what God is like, this is how he wants to interact with you. And um just
531 pray, I pray all the time for people who just don't have that level of awareness or knowledge um
532 of how real God is, you know? And how present he does want to be in our lives. And so I think it
533 affects my pastoring because I'm often like bringing application back to um hungering for God or
534 looking to God or listening to God or experimenting with making space for God in your life you
535 know like little exercises you can do. Or different, different way you can think about your
536 relationship with God and try this and let me know how it goes you know that sort of thing. Um
537 And I think that it's all because I know there is more.

538

539 **R:** There's more. And are you saying like in your sermons you're doing this or just ...?

540

541 **M:** In my sermons and also like as I'm just interacting with people who are struggling with stuff.

542

543 **R:** Ok

544

545 **M:** But a lot of the time in my sermons.

546

547 **R:** Um I'm not entirely sure how to ask this question.

548

549 **M:** Oh, what?

550

551 **R:** I'm not looking for a timeline. But I mean so you talked about these events like dreams or you

552 know gold dust or any of these things you've experienced. Are they tied, like are they all ... so
553 you mentioned like with your dream about twins, right? Or how that was connected to your
554 church plant.

555
556 **M:** Yeah

557 **R:** So would you say that all or most of these experiences are tied to some significant event that
558 happens or not necessarily?

559
560 **M:** Not necessarily.

561
562 **R:** Ok.

563
564 **M:** But the church plant was a significant event. And I really needed to know God was leading
565 me through that. So, there were several things related to that journey uh where I felt like God
566 spoke through dreams or spoke through other people or he spoke through a situation. That was
567 pretty dramatic. Um but no the dreams happen like pretty frequently/regularly.

568
569 **R:** So, like even like still currently?

570
571 **M:** Yeah.

572
573 **R:** OK. Yeah, I think I will ask. So, you can tell me the story or not but what is it like, especially
574 early on, when you say you know you have this dream that's prophetic for somebody and I
575 imagine it was probably difficult to share that at least it first, right?

576
577 **M:** Yeah

578
579 **R:** What was that process of being more confident in that like?

580
581 **M:** That is a great question! I have been talking about that lately. So, I've always had like I've
582 always tried to steward the dreams that I have and so what I mean by that is take them seriously
583 enough to write them down if I think there's something to them and it's not like a pizza dream,
584 right?

585
586 **R:** Right

587
588 **M:** I may not understand what it is. But I'll just kind of have it and I'll come back to it. And I'll
589 pray about it and I'll just kind of wonder to God. Like over the years I've I will just wonder to
590 God: "What does this mean? Is there anything, anything you want to tell me about this?"
591 Sometimes it becomes clear later on. And so, whenever it becomes clear later on and then there's
592 confirmation of what it means, that builds my confidence. OK?

593
594 **R:** OK.

595
596 **M:** So that has been kind of like, it's been kind of like a low-grade level of of that. Like probably
597 for the last ten or so or more years. Um however in the last three to four to five years there has

598 been more specificity to the dreams and more of like a direct understanding like immediately in
599 the dream about what it means. Um well I'll tell you this story. Um recently, this was at the
600 beginning of the year, I had a dream that some good friends of mine had houseguests who were
601 chain smokers.

602
603 **R:** Ok

604
605 **M:** And in the dream they were just so befuddled about what to do. They hated cigarette smoke
606 but they wanted to be good hosts and just felt really bad about the situation that they were in.
607 And so I've gotten to this point now in my walk with God where I'm like you know, these are
608 people I know really well and this might be super out there, but I'll just say it, I'll tell them as if
609 it's like a funny dream, like a funny story. And I won't preface it with like, I think there's some
610 meaning to it." But I felt like I should test it and I'm just like I'm just putting it out there in case it
611 means anything, right? Well I actually texted it to the wife and she wrote back. Like, "OMG, did,
612 did [the person's husband] talk to her about this? We had house guests last week and this friend
613 of mine brought her mother. Oh shoot, I just answered a phone call and then I hung up on them.
614 Um, yeah. And she brought her mother and her mother smokes like crazy and I hate cigarette
615 smoke and I didn't know what to do with them. And we just felt so awkward. So it was like so
616 specific that I was like and it was so specifically translatable to real life.

617
618 **R:** Yeah

619
620 **M:** I was like OK there's like no other there was nothing discernible that I could figure out that
621 had eternal value about this dream other than perhaps God was helping me to recognize when a
622 dream was from him.

623
624 **R:** Hmm

625
626 **M:** Even with that level of specificity, right? So, it was shortly after that that I had the dream
627 about the guy at our church and in the dream told me something about his life that I didn't know.
628 And again, I was like I feel like I need to see this to him. But I also know where he's at in his life.
629 So I'm just going to be like, you know, "Hey, you've heard me talk about dreams before," cause I
630 have, I've talked about dreams, prophetic dreams that God has given me. And you know, "I don't
631 know what this will mean to you." But um and then I shared with him. We dialogued about it
632 over text. And uh and then just learning that what was the content of that dream was actually true
633 for his life. Um that built confidence in me. And I've had things like this along the way, they just
634 haven't been as frequent, you know?

635
636 **R:** Sure.

637
638 **M:** And I feel like I'm starting to learn that like when people speak to me in dreams or there's
639 like words or texts or emails that I see in dreams, or I'll see scriptures like, that's a [pause] a
640 higher level of specificity that I take a lot more seriously. So, it was just a couple weeks later that
641 I had the dream about his fiancé and she also was talking to me about her testimony and how she
642 got free from something that I didn't know she needed to be freed from.

643

644 **R:** Oh wow.
645
646 **M:** Yeah. And so, um because I've had those other two experiences just like close together. I feel
647 like there is just like a real ... It's not like I didn't share it with kind of like a real like you know
648 like reverence for God like I do not want to screw this up and I don't want her to be screwed up.
649 But there's a much greater sense of I can't ignore this, like I need to talk about it. I think God
650 gave it to me for a reason.
651
652 **R:** And that's developed over time it sounds like?
653
654 **M:** Yeah, it's just it's developed over time by having things confirmed, you know? For sure, for
655 sure.
656
657 **R:** That's very interesting.
658
659 **M:** Yeah.
660
661 **R:** That's neat. Yeah. OK. So, to move it to a little different spot um, I wanted to next give you a
662 chance to sort of start responding or reacting yourself. So first like, so you read the transcript of
663 the first interview.
664
665 **M:** I read it today. The edited one today.
666
667 **R:** Ok. And was there anything in there that you wanted to discuss? Or, you know, bring up
668 more talk more about any of that kind of thing or even just in general about like transcript or
669 really I mean it's up to you. I just wanted to give you that opportunity.
670
671 **M:** Yeah. Well I remember you, I for some reason I thought you had said you wonder about my
672 response it. So, what I noticed was not necessarily like correcting content or adding to content.
673 But I did feel sad when I read it.
674
675 **R:** And what did you feel sad about?
676
677 **M:** So like when I read about some of the situations I described where I felt kind of ganged up
678 on or um misunderstood. Like it did make me feel sad.
679
680 **R:** Just because you were remembering them happening or ...?
681
682 **M:** I think just like remembering the pain of it you know and just yeah, it's it's weird. I mean like
683 I don't know [pause] I'm just a human being so I don't know how this stuff works, right? But like
684 I'm at a good place in my relationships with these guys. But there is a degree of like shame that I
685 felt being misunderstood or characterized like harshly. And so, I think just the memory of that: it
686 stings still.
687
688 **R:** And you said you felt shame as like it was your fault? Or just ...
689

690 **M:** Yeah, like you know and who knows. You know we're all I think more sensitive to things
691 due to our families of origin, right?

692
693 **R:** Right

694
695 **M:** So, for me, having somebody like mischaracterize me and or like accuse me of something
696 that wasn't true. Instead it like my my typical response would be probably to just feel shame
697 about that.

698
699 **R:** Hmm

700
701 **M:** As if like, "Oh! I hope that's not true!" You know, as opposed to like, "Yeah, you asshole!"
702 Or whatever you know? Like that's not that's not my typical response when somebody's coming
703 at me. So, um yeah. So I hope, does that clarify what I mean?

704
705 **R:** Yeah, no. I see what you mean there. Yeah. Ok. Yeah. So like I'm trying to think if I have a
706 follow up question about that. I mean was that pretty much the main thing that you'd experienced
707 from that?

708
709 **M:** Yeah, that's the main thing I noticed. Like I could feel tears kind of coming to my eyes and
710 just kind of, you know, just like a heavy feeling. At the same time, like I had a great conversation
711 with my old pastor like an hour later, you know? And there's not anything with him or toward
712 him that needs to be resolved or cleared up, like that's already done. But I think just pain at the
713 wound of it, you know? That just ... yeah.

714
715 **R:** So, it sounds like, and correct me if I'm wrong, it sounds like you're saying that you know the
716 wound happened and you remember how it feels and it maybe still affects you somehow.

717
718 **M:** Yeah.

719
720 **R:** But it's not it's not like it's not been ignored or it's not. It's not healed in any way. You know
721 like it's not not healed, I mean.

722
723 **M:** Right.

724
725 **R:** Ok.

726
727 **M:** Right, like everything that needs to be done relationally is done and good. And I don't walk
728 around feeling discouraged and horrible about it. But if I do recount this story I feel sad about it
729 you know?

730
731 **R:** Right. I mean that makes sense right. Well was as we talked about earlier it was difficult for
732 you.

733
734 **M:** Yeah

735

736 **R:** So yeah. Did you want ...?
737
738 **M:** I wish it hadn't happened. [Laughs]
739
740 **R:** Right. Oh yeah, no, I understand. It's always a tough question with that kind of stuff because
741 it's like I wish it hadn't happened but I did learn a lot from it.
742
743 **M:** Yeah.
744
745 **R:** Did you want to talk anymore about like just you know how that's affected this interview or
746 you know thinking about how you talk or anything like that. If not that's ok I just you know.
747
748 **M:** I'm just trying to think if I have anything to say about that. [Pause] I mean there is a level of
749 fear that I feel about people recognizing who I am from this interview.
750
751 **R:** Hmm
752
753 **M:** Which I know that I'm not saying that because I'm worried about the steps that you're taking
754 to conceal my identity. But saying all this stuff and being this candid, um it does create a bit of
755 anxiety in me. That if people figured out who I am that I would somehow be disqualified in their
756 minds for having criticism or critique. Or um you know I've mentioned some people by name,
757 I've mentioned national events, you know what I mean? So ...
758
759 **R:** Yeah, I get that. Yeah, I can say like you noticed like I don't think I left anybody's actual
760 name in. Now the national events of course those are you know.
761
762 **M:** Yeah
763
764 **R:** But ...
765 **M:** I think if you, can you change when you change it [names of two people Mary wanted left
766 out] name? So you can just be like, "Name of leader," or something like that?
767
768 **R:** Yeah, I can definitely do that. I'll just say like "name of leader" or you know "AG leader" or
769 something like that.
770
771 **M:** Yeah, but I think that I'm only saying it because you're curious about sort of how reading
772 about that affected just sort of how I feel about this interview. I was. So, I feel like there's that
773 that is something that came out.
774
775 **R:** Ok. Yeah, no that makes sense. And you know also because there's a bit of a side note, if you
776 see anything or think of anything that you want me to change based on like you know
777 confidentiality type stuff. Just let me know and we can find a way to do that.
778
779 **M:** Yeah, um a story about a ministry name, for a children's classroom and you had put, "Insert
780 racist word." But it actually was not a racist thing. But I'm ok with you leaving it that way so no
781 one knows what it is. So. I don't know how you can do that with integrity.

782
783 **R:** Well I know, I remember the one you're talking about maybe what I'll do is just say
784 problematic term.
785
786 **M:** Yeah, why don't you do that. Yeah.
787
788 **R:** Because I want, you know. Yeah.
789
790 **M:** Yeah, that would be better.
791
792 **R:** I'll fix that. All right. Yes. Anything else you wanted to say about that? Or even like you
793 know maybe not just necessarily the transcripts maybe even the experience of the interviews
794 themselves?
795
796 **M:** Yeah. Um it's been kind of nice to be candid. [Laughs] I think pretty deeply about a lot of
797 these things. And it's nice to just do an information dump or processing dump without having to
798 worry so much about you know how is this person going to respond, or that person. Or like will
799 they perceive it this way? And you know, am I jeopardizing like ministry relationship by talking
800 about this, you know? So, it is kind of nice to just be able to get it out there.
801
802 **R:** Ok. Well yeah, I mean that makes sense. I could see that. All right. Um so the last question I
803 have for you is is a very broad one but it's that way on purpose.
804
805 **M:** Mmhm
806
807 **R:** But I would just say it this way. So, given all of the things that we've talked about over the
808 two interviews and as you've reflected on it and thought about it and you know the transcripts
809 and everything all put together. Would you please summarize for me your experience as a female
810 pastor in the AG? And like I said, that's a big question. But it's that way on purpose because I
811 want to give you the chance to summarize that rather than me being the only one who does.
812
813 **M:** Ok. Do you want like something succinct?
814
815 **R:** I mean that's up to you. I mean you can be succinct, you can ... I mean we got plenty of time
816 left so it's entirely up to you.
817
818 **M:** Yeah. OK well I would say it has been an experience that has been [pause] very challenging.
819 If we're talking about being a female leader in the AG, a female pastor.
820
821 **R:** Right
822
823 **M:** Um it's been rewarding. But I I wouldn't say it's been rewarding because I'm a female
824 minister, do you know what I mean?
825
826 **R:** Ok
827

828 **M:** I don't feel like because I'm a female minister that [pause] there are more good things that
829 have come about of that than I would have been if I was male. Does that make sense?

830
831 **R:** That makes sense, yeah.

832
833 **M:** So, while it has been rewarding in many ways I wouldn't say it's because I'm female. I would
834 say it has been challenging in many ways because I'm female.

835
836 **R:** Can you tell me more about that?

837
838 **M:** Yeah. Um I mean just you know all the different things that we have talked about before
839 such as just working with people with uh resistance to me. Experiencing painful situations
840 because of being misunderstood because of my gender or being perceived as having an agenda,
841 um feeling like I need to be super careful about what I say when and how so as not to be
842 perceived a particular way. [Pause] Um yeah so, I think all those things are challenging. Feeling
843 overlooked or outside as you mentioned before. That's been challenging. Being left out of things
844 that like maybe all guys would do or networking things that might just be easier for the guys to
845 go to because they've developed more of a buddy buddy friendship than um something that
846 would be just like easy to be like, "Oh you come along like this was in the earlier days." It's more
847 challenging for that reason. So yeah, it's a lot of things that we talked about already that have
848 been challenging. So I do appreciate that there's been a lot more conversation about women's
849 involvement on the national level. So that's been great. And we just saw Donna Barrett was
850 appointed to fill Dr. Bradford's role on the Executive Presbytery which is really great.

851
852 **R:** Right

853
854 **M:** I think it's the first time that we've ever had a woman on the Executive Presbytery is what I
855 heard from somebody. That's exciting. That had to have been a very proactive move. Um I could
856 be wrong about that. But still it was proactive to consider a a female who probably didn't have a
857 chance of being voted into that role for now. So that it's encouraging. I appreciate all that stuff
858 but I wouldn't say it's rewarding to be a woman. Except like probably the only only thing I could
859 say there is that the reward may be in the fruit of pioneering some things, you know what I
860 mean? [Laughs] Like in the positive things that come out of being a first to do some things or
861 have certain conversations or kind of like lead the way maybe for other women in our network
862 who don't really know where to go for resources or for support or connection. I feel like I mean
863 it's rewarding in that sense. Um yeah.

864
865 **R:** So, do you see, it sounds like you see yourself as a kind of pioneer?

866
867 **M:** Well a little bit. I mean I and another woman are just spearheading our own chapter of a
868 credentialed women ministers network in our in our network. And so, and that's with the
869 approval of the presbytery and um in conversation with our superintendent. So, it's gotten me to
870 be able to have conversations about some of this stuff that you know nobody else is having yet.
871 It's gotten me to a place where I'm able to like help facilitate those conversations. So, I feel like
872 it's pioneering kind of in that sense, at least that that situation. And then I think because I'm a
873 pretty persistent person and in theory I don't I don't want to cower and I didn't want to hide even

874 if stuff is scary. It does cause me to reach out and have conversations with people that I think like
875 other people, other women might avoid because it feels intimidating or they haven't really
876 figured out how to navigate those waters yet. And so, I think because I do that it's gotten me
877 more relational rapport with people. And so, I have been invited to be part of things that
878 traditionally women haven't been asked to be part of. So, um I was part of interviews for
879 credential candidates. And that's usually just the presbytery, like our executive presbytery, that
880 does that. And often it was just like other male pastors they would pull in but somebody got the
881 great idea that they should involve some ordained women in those interviews and ... Been able to
882 be a part, last year I was a part of an ordination ceremony um and just praying for female
883 credential candidates and that's kind of a new thing, of, you know, making sure that there are
884 women involved in that which, I'm not in control of those decisions making sure women are
885 involved. But I'm one of the people who's having the opportunity to do those things.

886
887 **R:** Ok.

888
889 **M:** So I think like other women because of like spearheading the credentialed women ministers
890 network and just being more visible in that way. I think other women are kind of looking at me
891 like there's somebody that I could go to if I have a question about this. Also, I'm a female church
892 planter, and [redacted for confidentiality] and we hardly have any other female lead pastors in
893 our network. So, I think a lot of eyes are on me because I am pioneering a church, you know.

894
895 **R:** Mmhm.

896
897 **M:** That just stands out. And it's and so well one woman messaged me like nine months ago. A
898 woman I just don't know very well; she's kind of quirky, bus has an um is in children's ministry,
899 and she just said, "You know, I just wanted to let you know because you talked to me and asked
900 me about my ministry. It encouraged me so much that like I decided to like stay in ministry or
901 stay in the AG because I was just feeling so discouraged." In our network, I think it specifically
902 had to do with our network, and not, not just with ministry in general. So I mean, and to me that
903 interaction was like so minor, I didn't, I didn't think it was going to be so impactful, you know?
904 But I think uh just because of how I'm perceived probably among some other women. I probably
905 look like a pioneer a little bit.

906
907 **R:** And how ... so do you feel about that? I don't know if it's an image or a role or like of
908 "pioneer," I mean.

909
910 **M:** Um, [pause] it's kind of fun. [Laughs].

911
912 **R:** Ok

913
914 **M:** I guess I mean so that is rewarding like it's finally being able and it's it's rewarding to have
915 the opportunity to have these conversations that are about culture setting. Or they're about like
916 how we're gonna, and how we're gonna go forward as a network in some areas. I mean I'm not
917 invited to speak to everything, you know?

918
919 **R:** Sure. OK

920
921 **M:** But it is rewarding to have those conversations and I'm ... my strength-finder strengths are all
922 in the strategic uh sector are you familiar with Strength-finder?
923
924 **R:** Yeah.
925
926 **M:** Yeah. So, they're all in strategic except for one which is like in the executive section. Um and
927 then it changed recently and I actually got one like top strength that was a people skill, so that
928 was exciting.
929
930 **R:** Yeah
931
932 **M:** It just felt wrong that didn't have it. [Laughs]. But, so yeah, I love strategy. I love thinking
933 about big picture stuff. Um, learner input stuff that's all me. And so, I love talking
934 philosophically about this stuff um when I had the opportunity and when there's an invitation.
935 So, when I say fun, I think I think it's fun because I just enjoy talking about ideas.
936
937 **R:** Hmm
938
939 **M:** And exploring ideas with people. But I also feel like I take it very seriously. That I am being
940 watched, do you know what I'm saying? And I don't mean that in a creepy way. I am being
941 watched and I am being assessed and it's by people who maybe are not leading in the same
942 capacity that I'm leading in yet. It's also by people who have been in leadership a lot longer and
943 are people at the higher levels of leadership in our network. And what I have heard like I have
944 heard several comments from people who are kind of like at the core of our network expressing
945 that there have been some less than integrous women who have tried to grab power, I guess. I
946 don't know how much truth there is to that or if that's a perception, right?
947
948 **R:** Mmhm
949
950 **M:** But have tried to like maybe grab power or asserted influence at the expense of the network.
951 Or at the expense of like relationships with people in leadership in the network. And so you
952 know there was a woman who did the announcement on Facebook or sent an email at Network
953 council and said, "We're having uh a luncheon for all of the credentialed women." And it was
954 perceived as if she was doing that on the network's behalf. And when in fact she wasn't.
955
956 **R:** Oh, ok.
957
958 **M:** It was just her wanting to get some women together and she said some very like degrading
959 things to our network's to our superintendent's wife about the events that she puts on for women.
960 And was like, "I don't do teas," which is like I don't want to just have get-togethers for tea and
961 cookies. It was just, it was kind of like rude. And dismissive. At least this is what's been reported
962 to me. And even our superintendent, who was awesome, I just love him, also expressed a bit of
963 nervousness about, you know, women in leadership like representing other women or getting
964 women together and being just a little, you know, concerned that it's handled with lots of
965 integrity. And, you know, concern over situations in the past where it seemed like people may

966 have been gossiping or had a bad attitude. So, so I have been approved to make this happen and
967 facilitate something more official. But I know I'm being watched and I know that like, gosh
968 there's all kinds of room for misunderstanding or misinterpretation. And so it's like um I'm trying
969 to just be very wise about how I handle myself in the kind of conversations that I have and who I
970 have them with. And it's not so much because I'm not trying to say that I lack integrity in a lot of
971 areas my life I'm just trying to hide that. That's not what I'm saying at all. [Laughs].

972 **R:** Right

973

974 **M:** Just like to be really careful about any perception of like a lack of integrity, right?

975

976 **R:** Sure.

977

978 **M:** So just like going out of my way to make sure that I'm talking to all the right people about
979 things and not the wrong people. And being really judicious about what information I'm sharing
980 with whom and because I have insider information and that sort of thing. So, um [pause] some
981 days I just feel like I'm out. I don't want to do this anymore. There's like all this drama that
982 doesn't even involve me and um I don't know that I care that much. You know, and so there are
983 other days where I'm like OK whatever. I'm just going to get over that. And I'm just gonna keep
984 going cause God's given me the favor and he's given me the opportunity to I think make a
985 positive difference.

986

987 **R:** Ok. Yeah that's interesting. All right. Well we still have a little time left. So, you know again
988 you have the opportunity if there's anything else you want to say about that or really anything
989 else because like I said I do want to do as much as I can. I want to give you a chance to do that.

990

991 **M:** Yeah. Um well, uh I'll tell you this. Like when I had that um "Get-to-know a church planter"
992 meeting with people at CMN.

993

994 **R:** Right.

995

996 **M:** He did ask me about challenges, about being a female church planter, and I think even even
997 invited me to speak to how what I thought of like some of the trainings.

998

999 **R:** Mmhm

1000

1001 **M:** And I was candid with him and with them I share with them the positives and what I found
1002 challenging and especially um the comments like the sexually objectifying comments and maybe
1003 a couple of other things. And they, my my feedback was just really well-received. Like they
1004 were just really gracious about it, and thanked me for sharing it, so I thought that was really cool.
1005 Um, any other questions come to mind?

1006

1007 **R:** Those are I think that's all the ones that I had ahead of time and like I said I just if you had
1008 anything else you want to share but if you don't that's fine. I just want to give you the chance.

1009

1010 **M:** Oh, thank you. I mean I'll probably think of something tonight like.

1011

1012 **R:** At like 2:00 in the morning, right? [Laughs]

1013

1014 **M:** Yeah.

1015

1016 **R:** Yeah. OK. Well I'll go ahead and stop the recording there.

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 - Advisor – Rev. Dr. Tony Cook
 - Dissertation – “A Narrative Inquiry into the Lived Experience of Three Female Assemblies of God Lead Pastors”
- Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO, 2009 – 2012, Master of Divinity
 - Cum Laude
- Central Bible College – Springfield, MO, 2005–2009, Bachelor of Arts in Bible and Theology
 - Summa Cum Laude

Conferences and Presentations

- St. Louis University ATLAS Conference, St. Louis University, St. Louis MO, 2013
 - Presented a poster on “An Ethnographic Examination of Global Perspectives on Education

Teaching Experience

- Concordia Seminary, Teaching Assistant, Emerging Christianity, Winter 2013
 - Assisted with weekly lectures and discussion questions, graded exams and quizzes
- Concordia Seminary, Teaching Assistant, Biblical Hermeneutics, Winter 2014
 - Assisted with weekly lectures and discussion questions, graded exams and quizzes
- MiddleTree Church, St. Louis, MO, Executive Pastor, 2016–2018
 - Created and delivered sermons and teachings, prepared yearly teaching calendar, church bookkeeper

Research and Professional Experience

- Introduction to Qualitative Research, St. Louis University, St. Louis MO, Winter 2016
- CITI Course Certification: Ethics in Research with Human Subjects, 2016
- CPE Chaplain
 - St. Louis University Hospital, May 2018 – August 2018
 - Provided pastoral care in a Trauma-1/Acute Care setting
 - Lutheran Senior Services, September 2018 – May 2019

- Provided pastoral care in a Long-Term and Dementia/Memory Care setting

Languages

- Biblical Greek, two years, Central Bible College
- Biblical Hebrew, one year, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
- Theological German, passed exam, Concordia Seminary
- Theological French, passed exam, Concordia Seminary