

# Research Essay

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Pastoral Theology (P9696)

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Are accredited female pastors and ministry leaders being limited in the scope of their ministry in the Baptist Churches of WA and in what ways are conflicting views impacting on their possible roles within local churches against the official denominational theological position?

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## **ABSTRACT**

A debate relating to women's ministry founded on fundamental differences between complementarian and egalitarian views has existed in the church for many years. Significant changes to women's rights and roles in Australian society has also impacted the church by challenging the traditional view in praxis. Therefore, the debate continues to play an important role with respect to how the church and the gospel message is conveyed and perceived by society.

Baptist Churches WA (BCWA) officially adopted the egalitarian view and permitted women to be fully accredited as Baptist pastors in 1995. This position was also supported by Vose Seminary as the official theological training institution for Baptist churches. However, while provision for women to fully enter the pastorate has been made, the number of women in this role remains disproportionately small. This paper, then, addresses the question:

*Are accredited female pastors and ministry leaders being limited in the scope of their ministry in the Baptist Churches of WA and in what ways are conflicting views impacting on their possible roles within local churches against the official denominational theological position?*

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## **1. Introduction**

This study has been prompted through my personal experience as an accredited female pastor in a WA Baptist church, which led to the following question that is being addressed in this paper:

Are accredited female pastors and ministry leaders being limited in the scope of their ministry in the Baptist Churches of WA and in what ways are conflicting views impacting on their possible roles within local churches against the official denominational theological position?

As the topic of women in ministry is highly sensitive this study has been approached in the context of God's salvific plan that has been established through Christ (Jn 3:16–18; Rom 4:25, 5:8; 1Pet. 3:18). This sets my story within the broader context of God's sovereignty and goodness, which helps to remind me of my need of God's forgiveness, grace and mercy so that I do not judge others (Matt.7:1–5). For the purpose of transparency, my personal story is included in this paper to provide both a context for readers due to its relevance to the question being addressed and because it provides additional insights into my personal biases and presuppositions, which are factors to be considered. I have deliberately tried not to draw any conclusions based on my story alone.

In order to ensure that, as far as possible, my ability to be objective was not hindered, I underwent an interview with a trained counsellor and psychoanalyst to uncover any personal prejudices and biases resulting from my experiences to which I may have been blind. With the help of my counsellor, I was able to accept that I had been traumatised and my childhood experience of patriarchy had been a contributory factor. This had impaired my emotional capacity to speak up without fear of being rebellious or disobedient. Life experiences both in

and out of the church community had re-enforced a sense of abandonment. Therefore, my presupposition was that I had little or no support that I could trust—other than God—and if I spoke up, there would be disciplinary action.

My choice of submitting myself to academic theological discipline was, therefore, an intentional response on my part based on what I have previously found to be helpful. Academic studies have provided appropriate time and challenges to process my thinking and motives while also providing accountability and supervision. As a result, the disciplined cognitive approach has provided me with a framework and safety net for my emotions so that, as far as possible, my biases, prejudices and presuppositions have not influenced my conclusions.

## **2. My Story**

I was privileged to be invited to serve in a WA Baptist church as the Pastoral Care Pastor in 2015 and started officially in February 2016. Before my call as a pastor was realised within a church congregation 20 years later there had been many obstacles to overcome, so I gratefully embraced the opportunities of this position to preach, provide complex pastoral care and develop ministries under and beyond my portfolio. I was heartened by the grace and freedom I experienced to learn and grow. I was conscious of the many hours that people gave voluntarily. Coupled with my desire to honour and serve my Lord, I was happy to work more than my employment contract while balancing self-care and family life. Although the debate about the role of women in ministry had been at the back of my mind when I accepted the position, I did not see it as something I needed to address. I was happy to be allowed to work under a highly experienced male Senior Pastor and there appeared to be no obvious hindrance concerning my gender.

When I unexpectedly received a call from the BCWA accreditation team asking why I had not applied for accreditation as a senior pastor because I met all their requirements, I faced the question: Was God calling me to become a senior pastor? As I formulated an answer to that question, I realised that the negativity surrounding female pastors in Baptist churches that I had previously encountered, had sufficiently changed for it to be a real possibility. After discussing the issue with my husband and spending the weekend in prayer, we decided that I should apply, however, I informed the Senior Pastor and Business Manager that I did not intend to explore the option at this time because I was happy with my current position.

I was accredited by BCWA as a Category 1 Senior Pastor. My Senior Pastor, church members, family and friends came to support me. I knew that I was in my fifties, but everything seemed to point to this being God's timing, and it was a milestone event. My Senior Pastor greeted me in church the next morning with a high-five and "morning Rev" and we laughed. I had already been invited to do more preaching the following year and had been encouraged to apply for a licence to conduct weddings. I had responded by enrolling in an additional advanced preaching unit at PBC, was preparing to enrol in another mission's unit at Vose Seminary and I was continuing to do as much professional development as I could.

Shortly after my accreditation, God impressed a picture upon me of a torpedo hitting a ship, which I perceived as representing our church and I heard the words "stabilise the ship and re-structure". I sensed that it concerned our Senior Pastor whom I was aware needed additional support, so I raised it with the Business Manager and offered that in the event of a re-structure and a change in the Senior Pastor's position, I would like to offer to help by taking on more responsibility even if only for a short time. The response took me by surprise because, while

my preaching and pastoral skills were fully affirmed, it was expressed that the church would probably not endorse a female senior pastor.

As I later evaluated the discussion, I reasoned that if I had been told that my preaching was poor, my skills and experience were inadequate for what was required, my self-esteem would have taken a battering but at least I would have still had the option of being able to work on those areas, whereas the prospect of being rejected on the basis of being female left me nowhere to go, powerless and with no defence. I could not change my gender any more than a white person can become black.

A short time later, the church was informed that our Senior Pastor had accepted a full-time ministry position elsewhere. He was, however, not leaving and would continue in a voluntary support role. Although the church was assured that nothing would change, things had changed and I had some deep concerns, which I raised.

Within a short time, the pastoral team was informed that the Senior Pastor was no longer overseeing the pastoral team. Aware that I was now the only fully accredited staff member on the team, I again offered to help and was told that my offer would be presented to the governance council. This never happened, and the change in the Senior Pastor's position had raised the debate about women in ministry in the church.

I contacted a BCWA representative for advice and explained that I was regularly subjected to hurtful comments such as, "I can see he will be our next pastor, oh and of course you will be asked to support him"; "We must start praying for God to raise up the right man". In this new scenario it felt as if all my experience, training, education, leadership gifts and accreditation

were invisible. My offers to assist seemed to be interpreted as if I was trying to gain power over others or that I was acting out of selfish ambition. The BCWA representative responded by saying that while they would like things to be different, unfortunately, each Baptist church is autonomous, the gender issue was well known, and I should not be surprised.

I decided to seek clarification from my church to see if there was an intention to appoint a new Senior Pastor, and if there was any reason why a woman could not be considered. After learning that a woman could be considered and that they would be calling a new pastor, I asked to be considered when the position became available. I knew that it could only be confirmed by the vote of the congregation.

To be transparent, I met with the Senior Pastor, but on learning of my intent and possibly due to all the gaps in communication, unfortunately, from my perspective, our meeting did not go well. I learned that he had never seen me this way, and he didn't think my age was appropriate. It was also implied that because I was a woman, my aspirations were misplaced, and it would be unlikely that I would be offered a senior position anywhere. So, if I had ministry aspirations, I should consider doing a PhD.

Even though it may not have been the intention, the conversation impacted me greatly and resulted in feeling a sense of shame for being female, bringing my core identity before God and others into question. I was left to face the implication that I had acted inappropriately and disobediently. What now became clear for me was that the disparity between the official BCWA position on women in ministry and the view of the Senior Pastor and the church was greater than I had thought. The autonomous nature of each congregation and the Baptist distinctive of



liberty of conscience does not require it to be otherwise. I was left with many questions, and my ministry and health were negatively impacted, which impaired how I was able to function.<sup>1</sup>

I did not want to cause a problem for the congregation I had come to love, so I resigned. The experience left me feeling crushed, displaced and in need of re-discovering my core identity in Christ in order to move forward. Shortly after my resignation, the Senior Pastor formally resigned, and a call committee was formed to seek a new senior pastor. As far as I am aware, I was not considered.

Pain is never comfortable, but God can use it for his good purposes when we are submitted to His Lordship, and God continues to demonstrate His faithfulness. Yet, like Grenz, I believe that the church cannot afford to ignore the issues surrounding women in ministry in the hope that they will simply go away; therefore, we have been given a responsibility to speak up when we believe that the Gospel is being compromised.<sup>2</sup>

However, a dilemma faces women who are being impacted by the women in ministry debate: How to raise concerns about the gender barriers they face without being seen as women trying to fight for their own cause? This paper aims to overcome this dilemma.

### **3. The debate**

A debate regarding women in the church has been on-going for a very long time. When West Australian Baptists entered the debate, the Christian church in Australasia, Europe, America,

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<sup>1</sup> Dolezal, L., Lyons, B., 2017

<sup>2</sup> Grenz, S.J., with Muir Kjesbo, D, 1995, p.142

Africa and Asia had already been debating women's ordination and theological education for 150 years.<sup>3</sup>

In light of the longevity of the debate and realising that some may ask, "Why continue", Grenz offers an insightful response:

We are convinced that the question of women in ministry cannot be abandoned because it is central to the gospel. Positions taken on this issue reveal one's deeper theological understanding or fundamental vision about the nature of God, the intent of God's program in the world and who we are as the people of God.<sup>4</sup>

While we may not wish to engage in the debate, Grenz reminds us that the church cannot afford to ignore it.

The debate reflects two fundamentally contending theological views: the traditional or complementarian view and the egalitarian view. The issues involved are complex and have created tension within the church that extends beyond denominational boundaries and remains un-resolved in praxis. Belleville describes the debate as resting on four basic questions:

- "Does the Bible teach a hierarchical structuring of male and female relationships?"
- Do we find women in leadership positions in the Bible?
- Do women in the Bible assume the same leadership roles as men?
- Does the Bible limit women from filling certain leadership roles?"<sup>5</sup>

I will not endeavour to answer all these questions in this essay, and my interest is in the praxis, but I will comment on the first and fourth questions within the context of this chapter to frame the research.

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<sup>3</sup> Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds) 2013, p.120

<sup>4</sup> Grenz, S. J., with Muir Kjesbo, D., 1995, p142

<sup>5</sup> Belleville, L. L., in Gundry, S. N. and Bexk, J. R., (Eds.) 2005, p.24

### **The Complementarian/Traditional View**

The complementarian/traditional view teaches a hierarchical structuring of male and female relationships. Petterson explains that the complementarian view is grounded in the understanding of God's creation order based on Genesis 1–3 where loving responsibility and authority was given to Adam (man) before the fall to lead his wife (Eve), and God's punishment frustrates the created order.<sup>6</sup>

This argument is substantiated by God speaking to Adam alone (2:17) to prohibit eating from the tree. Therefore, it was Adam's responsibility to convey God's command and protect Eve. Thus, when God's command was disobeyed God spoke to Adam first (3:9–12). When Eve became the first human to sin by being the first to eat from the tree (3:6) it is therefore only the serpent and the man who is accused of doing wrong (3:14, 17). While both the man and woman are involved in doing wrong and Eve receives her own punishment, the implication is that the man was responsible for his wife before the fall and so he failed because he listened to his wife who was deceived (3:6).

The consequence of sin was that the woman, who was created as a subordinate helper for Adam, desired to rule over her husband while her husband, for his part, will endeavour to assert his rule.<sup>7</sup> Blomberg points out that this is not because the woman had no desire for her husband before the fall, but rather that her desire had been corrupted, which distorts their relationship.<sup>8</sup>

While the equality of both male and female being made in the image of God is acknowledged, the complementarian view believes that the unity of the husband and wife relationship after the

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<sup>6</sup> Petterson, A., in Murphy E. and Starling, D., (Eds.), 2016, pp 15-24

<sup>7</sup> Petterson, A., in Murphy E. and Starling, D., (Eds.), 2016, p.21

<sup>8</sup> Blomberg, C. L., in Gundry, S. N. and Beck, J. R., (Eds.), 2005, p.131

fall is based on God's created order according to the sequence in which God creates (1 Tim. 2:11–15). Eve (woman) fulfils her part of God's commission to the human race by offering Adam (man) willing assistance.

Complementarians also argue that Eve was created by God to resolve Adam's aloneness by providing help and support (2:18) as a remedy for Adam's deficiency (1Cor 11:9). That Adam's authority and responsibility are again emphasised through his naming of Eve (2:23; 3:20) and that the name Adam gave her stuck, justifies this argument.

Keener points out that "the most common view on women's ministry in the history of the church has been that women could not minister God's word to men ... because women are more easily deceived than men and ontologically inferior to men, at least in those gifts most necessary for the practice of church leadership and doctrinal scrutiny".<sup>9</sup>

Some who hold a complementarian view also believe that women should still be permitted to preach, teach, prophesy or hold a leadership position. However, they still argue that Paul prohibited women from exercising their gifts and talents in a manner that indicates that they have authority over men because this would violate God's created order.<sup>10</sup>

It is, therefore, only appropriate to allow women to practise these ministry gifts if they are authorised by men or are submitting to male headship (1Cor. 11:3–10). Validation of this argument is based on their interpretation of 'head' (*kephale*), meaning authority, whereas egalitarians understand head in this context to mean 'source' or 'origin'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Keener, C. S., in Gundry, S. N. and Beck, J. R., (Eds.), 2005, p.243

<sup>10</sup> Schreiner, T.R., in Gundry, S. N. and Beck, J. R., (Eds.), 2005, pp.307-316

<sup>11</sup> Blomberg, C. L., in Gundry, S. N. and Beck, J. R., (Eds.), 2005, p.155

However, there has been inconsistency in many complementarian contexts where women have been allowed to minister to men as missionaries in non-western settings. Tucker writes that "this inconsistency was easily tolerated, because at a distance of thousands of miles women were out of sight and out of mind, and thus could be dismissed by church leaders". Tucker surmises that it could have been "because they were teaching and preaching to "natives", not real men—so went the understood rationale".<sup>12</sup>

Starling has written an interesting chapter about women preachers in Australian history and concludes that history (including the history of Australia's first female preachers) reminds us that where human beings are involved, the defining lines between the complementarian and egalitarian views in praxis cannot always be drawn neatly: "taking the time to understand the men and women of the past in all their difference and complexity can help us learn the grace and patience that we need to understand our brothers and sisters today".<sup>13</sup>

Concerning the first question that Belleville raised, complementarians argue that the Bible teaches a hierarchal structuring of male and female relationships, however as Starling points out, the hierarchal view has been problematic to prove in praxis because women have served in the church as leaders, preachers and teachers. The point of contention seems to be concerning how the nature of authority is understood and exercised in praxis between men and women under God.

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<sup>12</sup> Tucker, R.A., 1992, p.182-3

<sup>13</sup> Starling, N., in Murphy, E. and Starling, D., (Eds.), 2016, p.262

### The Egalitarian View

Belleville explains the egalitarian view by arguing that while Adam and Eve were created distinctly male and female, and that propagation was part of God's purpose, sexual diversity was not the primary purpose.<sup>14</sup> He argues that the primary purpose according to the Hebrew concept of "one flesh" is more about that which is mortal or human being joined (Gen.2:24; Matt.19:5–6; Mark 10:7–8; Eph. 5:31), and that, for Paul, the oneness of male and female is a type of union between Christ and the church (Eph.5:32). Hence, the primary thrust of Genesis, according to Belleville, is the sameness of male and female. Belleville reasons that Adam and Eve were formed from the earth (*adama*), created in God's image and God called them *adam* (Gen.5:2), and Adam was used in a gender-inclusive manner (Gen 1:26, 27; 5:1–2). This is further substantiated by the references to Adam as 'them' and 'they'. This view is also held by Giles who explains that Gen:27 "is a threefold Hebraic poetic stanza and therefore Adam must mean humankind. Hebrew has no word for humanity other than 'Adam', and so this refers to God creating one species, humankind, in two sexes".<sup>15</sup>

Egalitarians argue that both male and female were created equally in the image of God (1:27) and both were commanded to exercise dominion over the earth and to rule over and subdue it (1:26, 28). The interpretation is therefore found in the sequence of ideas, rather than a hierarchal order, namely that male and female were first made in God's image so that, second, they could rule and subdue the earth. Both are given joint responsibility to bear and raise children and to enjoy the fruit that the land produced. Both are created as spiritual equals and are blessed (1:28), both relate to God and are held accountable by God (3:9, 13, 16–19).

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<sup>14</sup> Belleville, L. L., in Gundry, S. N. and Beck, J. R., (Eds.), 2005, p.25-103

<sup>15</sup> Giles, K., 2018, p.55

In contrast to the complementarian view that Eve was created to serve Adam in a subordinate role by offering assistance, Belleville argues that the word *ezer* (helper) should be understood in the light of other uses of the word in the Old Testament that indicate assistance being given by one of strength to one in need. "The woman is nowhere commanded to obey the man (not even her husband), and the man is nowhere commanded to rule the woman (not even his wife)".<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is about the joining of one human with another (Matt.19:6; Eph. 5:32).

Egalitarians also argue against the idea that women are more easily deceived than men because Eve led Adam into sin. 1 Timothy 11–14 is, therefore, a strong point of contention for complementarians. However, egalitarians contend that Eve's desire was for knowledge and Adam followed because of a similar desire, so both were disobedient, and both paid the price. Zodhiates, Baker and Kemp contend that in an age where women were downgraded, Paul was urging women not to usurp the authority of their husbands and take "their freedom as "fellow workers" in Christ beyond the relationship limitations of the marital relationship that God intended".<sup>17</sup>

Bilezikian argues that Eve admitted that she had been deceived and therefore God did not give her a heavier sentence and although there were terrible consequences, no curse was put upon her, God cursed the ground which became man's own curse (Gen.3:17–19).<sup>18</sup> Jones argues that Paul's repeated acknowledgement of women's ministry being equal with men elsewhere (i.e. Rom.16) indicates that 1Tim. 2:11–15 relates to a particular circumstance.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Belleville, L. L., in Gundry, S. N. and Beck, J. R., (Eds.), 2005, p.31

<sup>17</sup> Zodhiates, S., Baker, W., Kemp, D., (Eds.), 1996, pp.1393-1394

<sup>18</sup> Bilezikian, G., 2006, p.40

<sup>19</sup> Jones, H., in Murphy, E., and Starling, D., (Eds.), 2016, pp.148-153

Egalitarians argue that there is no gender definition to the authority that Jesus gave to the church to exercise power. The authority to bind and loose, to test and weigh arguments and to appoint those from among them as their representatives and work on their behalf was given to both men and women. Egalitarians also argue that Christ gave both men and women as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph.4:11–16) which is demonstrated by the women who have ministered in these roles.<sup>20</sup> They furthermore assert that the "clergy symbolise Christ in his humanness, not in his maleness"<sup>21</sup> and the incarnation recorded in the New Testament emphasises that Christ became human (Jn1:14) not that he became male. Grenz argues that "when Paul speaks of Jesus Christ "being born in human likeness" (Phil 2:7), Paul uses the general Greek word *Anthropos* (human) rather than the gender-specific *aner* (man)".<sup>22</sup>

Lee-Barnewall concludes that at the heart of the debate, the question is whether there are restrictions for women in ministry and if there is a unique way that women are to submit to their husbands in marriage. Therefore, the themes of authority and equality are critical, which raises the question of whether some positions are only for men in the church and in the home.<sup>23</sup>

In response to these questions, Lee-Barnewall argues that maybe the debate will never be resolved unless one appreciates how Jesus promoted inclusion on the basis of faith. Giles also points out that Jesus only ever promoted servant leadership where power over others is not involved and that it is imperative to maintain a Christ-perspective.<sup>24</sup> Although I understand that both the traditional view and the egalitarian view can be argued biblically, I believe that Giles makes a vital point in the debate: both men and women must do what they do as unto the Lord

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<sup>20</sup> Mowczko, M., in Murphy, E., and Starling, D., (Eds.), 2016, pp.58-59; Grenz, S. J., with Muir Kjesbo, D., 1995, p.205

<sup>21</sup> Grenz, S. J., with Muir Kjesbo, D., 1995, p.205

<sup>22</sup> Grenz, S. J., with Muir Kjesbo, D., 1995, p.206

<sup>23</sup> Lee-Barnewall, M., 2016, p.66

<sup>24</sup> Giles, K., 2018, p.90



in worshipful response to God (Col.3:23). The authority of Jesus trumps all human authority and power, and it is only in this context that men and women in the church can function as fully human image-bearers in Christ as God intended.

#### **4. Baptist Churches WA Official Position on Women in Ministry**

In response to the debate, the Baptist Union Council of WA established a task force to address the issue of women in ministry in November 1991. The task force was directed to particularly consider the positions that women could appropriately hold within Baptist churches. Two recommendations of this task force were presented to the Annual Assembly in October 1992, at North Beach Baptist Church. The first recommendation was that nominated women should undergo normal voting procedures, the second being a further task force should be established to investigate replacing Ordination with Accreditation. Among other things, it was recommended that when a woman was nominated for a denominational position, normal voting procedures should be followed. This recommendation was accepted at the Spring Annual Assembly in 1995 and has since been the practice in Western Australia.

Based on the resolutions of the 1992 Baptist Assembly a commitment was made to the following practices and was adopted in a statement by the BUWA Council on 7 April 2014.

- "To provide opportunity for ministry based on giftedness and character, without regard to gender.
- To pursue the kind of purity and loyalty in relationships between genders that led New Testament writers to describe them in terms of family: "brothers and sisters".
- To use sensitivity in language that reflects the honour and value God desires for maleness and femaleness and to encourage the use of translations of Scripture that accurately portray God's will that His church be an inclusive community.

- To be intentional where appropriate in overcoming sexist elements of our culture and to offer encouragement to women in areas where their giftedness has been traditionally discouraged.
- To teach and model these values to members of our community, to the Baptist churches Western Australia, and to the world at large".<sup>25</sup>

However, it is noted that within the report of the task force dated October 1992, in which over 70 per cent of churches responded, there was only a 4% difference between those who supported or opposed women in leadership generally (local and denominational). The task force observed there was "considerable diversity in how Scripture is understood, and in general attitudes to the issue of the ministry of women and the largest group hold a position in-between".<sup>26</sup>

The same report found 46% of churches had encouraged women to lead for the first time in the previous 5 years in recognition of women's gifting. However, 54% of the responding churches reported that women were opposed on biblical grounds and, therefore, over the past 5 years had not served in leadership roles. It is also interesting to note that 89% of respondents opposed women being sole pastors in the local church<sup>27</sup>. It was concluded that resistance to women in ministry was directly related to "the extent to which a particular position is thought to involve the exercise of authority".<sup>28</sup>

In recognising the contentious nature of this and other issues, it was concluded that while diversity is appropriate, the focus for WA Baptists should be on working together in unity,

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<sup>25</sup> Baptist Churches WA, Statement on Women and Men in Ministry, Adopted by the BUCWA, 7 April, 2014. P.2 (see Appendix 1)

<sup>26</sup> The Ministry of Women in The Baptist Churches of Western Australia Report of The Task Force, Winter Assembly, August 8, 1992, p.5 (see Appendix 2:2, Observation 2)

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 2:1

<sup>28</sup> The Ministry of Women in The Baptist Churches of Western Australia Report of The Task Force, Winter Assembly, August 8, 1992, p.5 (see Appendix 2:3, Conclusion 1:5)

however only in the context that "fundamental truth is not compromised".<sup>29</sup> It was also stated, "that when our churches make a decision, through the processes of Assembly, we need to accept that decision and work together in unity".<sup>30</sup>

So, while aiming for unity in diversity is commendable, it still leaves the issues of the debate and ethical and moral responsibility unaddressed. A confusing message has been conveyed to women who find themselves caught between the official Baptist position and the outworking of praxis in local congregations. Women are therefore enmeshed in the tension where complementarian views remain the majority in Baptist Churches yet are authorised by the denomination to pursue the full scope of their calling. As a result, they face the dilemma of either being seen as disobedient for following their call based on a traditional understanding of Scripture or misled by those who have encouraged them.

In response to the debate within Baptist Churches WA, Pastor Mark Wilson (Director of Ministries) wrote a paper entitled "Women in Leadership". It focussed on churches transitioning to release women for leadership 1998. Wilson used the issue of slavery as an example of how hermeneutical intent had been established within the Scriptures to argue both a traditional and egalitarian view. He pointed out that Scripture was able to be used for both advocating and abolishing slavery, and the movement for abolishing slavery was driven by a predominantly moral Christian force. The antislavery people said, "Look at the preponderance of evidence, the direction of Scripture, it is quite clear".<sup>31</sup> Therefore, Wilson reminds Baptists to interpret

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<sup>29</sup> The Ministry of Women in The Baptist Churches of Western Australia Report of The Task Force, Winter Assembly, August 8, 1992, p.5 (see Appendix 2:3, Conclusion 1:4)

<sup>30</sup> The Ministry of Women in The Baptist Churches of Western Australia Report of The Task Force, Winter Assembly, August 8, 1992, p.2 (see Appendix 2:4 G )

<sup>31</sup> Wilson, M., 1998, p.4

Scripture in light of its entirety to determine the passage's intention. He also reminds Baptists of Paul's dictum in Galatians 3:28: "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free".

In a recent decision, Baptist World Alliance (BWA) passed a resolution "recognising and affirming the calling of women in the church" and called Baptists to repent from the teachings and practices that have prevented women from flourishing as human beings created in the image of God and full members of the body of Christ, and to be open to the Holy Spirit's power to provoke transformation so that Baptists might affirm the God-given calling of women for service in the church".<sup>32</sup>

Yet in spite of much work being done in support of women in leadership by BCWA, the number of women in senior pastor positions in WA Baptist churches remains disproportionately small, and women may continue to be limited in the scope of their potential ministry. It is also worth noting that there is only a very brief statement that both men and women can be accredited in the BCWA Accreditation Policy.<sup>33</sup> There is no recommendation or requirement for candidates to agree with it, which potentially means that a fully accredited female could be serving under a fully accredited male pastor, but her accreditation is not endorsed.

Given that even outside the church the world recognises "there is a difference between having equal rights in theory and being able to exercise them fully in practice",<sup>34</sup> if there is no requirement for churches to uphold the official Baptist position on the role of women in ministry, then maybe in practice the Baptist official position holds no authority. Therefore, neither does the Accreditation Policy, which raises further questions about the nature of the

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<sup>32</sup> Cartledge, T., 2019, p.1

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 3:5, point 3.1.9

<sup>34</sup> National Museum of Australia and Ryebuck Media, 2002, p.7

spiritual role and purpose of denominational endorsement for women across all Baptist congregations.

WA Baptists acknowledge that there have been some exceptional female role models and pioneers who have challenged and overcome many of the limitations they encountered. Moore dedicated a chapter to women who served as missionaries both overseas and at home, identifying Carrie Brown as Western Australia's first Baptist missionary in 1897. In his conclusion, he acknowledged the limitation that has been upon women throughout history, noting that as late as 1985 a motion was passed not to ordain women.<sup>35</sup>

Siggins has provided further helpful insights in a publication celebrating 50 years of Vose Seminary, which examines some of the shifts in the church and theology.<sup>36</sup> Siggins notes, for example, that although women represented 20–30% of the student population at the Baptist Theological College in the 1980s, there was no clear intent as to how or where these women could serve in leadership as a result of their theological education.

Siggins recalls how, in the 1990s, Jennifer Turner served for 9 years as a Baptist pastor, but resigned when "senior positions remained unavailable in the face of gifting and call".<sup>37</sup> Siggins cites Grenz that "a newly declared practice of accreditation along with the accepted recommendations of duly appointed task forces, often remain a rather shallow declaration of equality at denominational level until such time as these practices and recommendations have the practical endorsement of local churches".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Moore, R., (Ed.), 1991, pp.244-252

<sup>36</sup> Siggins in Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds.), 2013, pp. 120-139

<sup>37</sup> Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds.), 2013, p.132

<sup>38</sup> Grenz, S. J., with Muir Kjesbo, 1995, p.32

Given that Siggins was writing as recently as 2013, it is also poignant that Siggins argues for change at the congregational level for women to be able to operate fully as pastors and leaders. She writes: "a sort of benevolent sexism has been fostered and against this, we need women who will not remain silent simply to avoid making a fuss".<sup>39</sup> Siggins noted that Jennifer Turner expressed a view that women pastors must be publicly supported by pastors and denominational leaders rather than treating the issue as optional.

Recent statistics obtained by BCWA reveal that of 194 local church pastors (as advised to BCWA) there are only 16 women:

- two children's pastors
- two chaplains
- eight specialist pastors (women's, connecting, care, assistant, associate).

Of these, only three are accredited: Two are senior pastors and one a specialist pastor. Women represent only 8% of pastors, which is significantly disproportionate.

At the time of writing this paper, three women (myself being one) are accredited but have no official position in the local church. One other woman has completed a B. Min degree and fulfils all the requirements of pastoral duties, but her position is not considered to be a pastoral position by her church as they do not endorse female pastors.<sup>40</sup>

Based on current statistics, it is apparent that the decisions made through the BCWA General Assembly in 1992 and affirmed in 2014 have only been embraced in practice by a few churches. The statistics seem to indicate that it is unlikely that any significant change will happen soon and that the issue of women in ministry will continue to be a point of contention for BCWA.

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<sup>39</sup> Siggins, K., in Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds.), 2013, p.138

<sup>40</sup> Smoker, J., 2019, 28 March, email communication

The statistics provided by BCWA reveal a reality that cannot be ignored and raises the question: Where and how can women who have been accredited, find their place and exercise and explore the full scope of their leadership potential within WA Baptist Churches?

As a woman, accredited for ministry by the Baptist Union of WA, I concur with Grenz who argues that the debate relates to the centrality of the gospel and how we understand the nature and person of God and his intent in the world.<sup>41</sup> It is my contention that if women are being limited and contained by the impact of complementarian views, then the church and God's kingdom mission is also being limited.

## 5. Ideal Theory

My ideal theory exists in the context of the mission of the church that both genders and all races are called to by Christ (Matt. 28:19-20), and men and women equally share the responsibility of being both disciples and disciple-makers. As the body of Christ, men and women are called to serve together in a spirit of unity and oneness in Christ (1 Cor. 12: 12–27). When the church is identified as one of the three pillars of society where male dominance is observed, a missional disadvantage exists,<sup>42</sup> particularly given that current global issues emphasise an uncertain future and the church is responsible for sharing the gospel in the marketplace.<sup>43</sup>

McKnight writes:

Kingdom mission always has been and always will be contextually expressed: there is no "universal" context-less kingdom; kingdom is a people, and that means kingdom mission is about forming the people of God. That is, kingdom mission forms a kingdom people and that kingdom people in the present world is the church. This means kingdom

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<sup>41</sup> See footnote 2

<sup>42</sup> Stilinovic, M., 2017

<sup>43</sup> Australian Academy of Science: <https://www.science.org.au/learning/general-audience/science-climate-change/7-what-are-impacts-of-climate-change>

mission is all about forming and enhancing local churches as expressions of the kingdom of God in this world.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, if our presentation of the Kingdom in our churches is not in line with what God has done and given by His Spirit to all people for the building up of His church, then we are out of step with the doctrines that the Baptist Church has taken pride in building itself upon.

A recent study in the UK conducted through the Sophia Network demonstrates that Baptist Churches in WA are not alone in their struggles with gender bias.<sup>45</sup> However, Jesus provides a higher objective; in reflecting on Isaiah 12:2-6, Brad Chilcott wrote:

Looking at the life of Jesus, I see an anticipation of the deeper enemies that will be defeated and give cause for praise. Cultural enemies like materialism, bigotry and exclusion. Globally systemic enemies like violence, poverty, inequality, greed, colonialism and patriarchy. Personal enemies like insecurity, pride, selfish ambition and unforgiveness.<sup>46</sup>

To summarise, my ideal theory is established on an egalitarian theology that equally encourages men and women to be trained, equipped (2Tim.2:15) and prepared for the personal cost associated with discipleship to lovingly serve others under God and with each other. Ideally then, Baptist churches are communities of believers where gender roles are not stereotyped, and there is preparedness for recognising and embracing the gifts of the Spirit that Christ has given without bias (Eph. 4:11-16). More emphasis is placed on what we have been restored to in Christ rather than what we have been delivered from.

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<sup>44</sup> McKnight, S., 2014, p.123

<sup>45</sup> Walley, R., Thompson, V., 2017

<sup>46</sup> Chilcott, B., 2018



Grenz writes:

"In short, the church is marked by people, the Assembly of those who have been called out by the proclamation of the gospel to belong to God through Jesus. As such, they are to be a people with a special consciousness of covenant and community. Conscious of their standing under the lordship of Christ as those who confess that "Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father", they share a common commitment to one Lord, to one threefold purpose and to one another. In this body, recognition is given to the foundational status of the early leaders (apostles and prophets) and to the importance of the guidance of contemporary leaders as appointed by Christ".<sup>47</sup>

So, while Baptist distinctives of liberty of conscience and the autonomy of the local church are good, they have the potential to be rigid edicts that fuel contention and disruptive spiritual behaviour. Ideally then, the issues that have led women to fight for equality and legal rights through Australian law will not be evident within Baptist churches.<sup>48</sup>

Ideally, Baptist congregational leaders are those who are willing to engage in a healthy discussion about how men and women can work together better.<sup>49</sup> Any training required to overcome any lingering gender bias would be incorporated explicitly into Safe Church Policies and Procedures. Events such as annual Baptist Pastors retreats would become ideal opportunities to provide training in this area. Each WA Accredited Baptist pastor and congregation affiliated with Baptist churches would willingly sign a policy affirming that they uphold and support the official BCWA position on women in ministry in praxis.

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<sup>47</sup> Grenz, S. J., 2002, p.24

<sup>48</sup> National Museum of Australia and Ryebuck Media, 2002

<sup>49</sup> For example, Nancy Beach, 2019, "Leading Well Seminar" (see Appendix 4)

## **6. Research Methodology**

The method I used to answer my question was to invite women who are either accredited by BCWA or who are in the accreditation stream to participate. Recognising that this can be an emotional topic, a structured qualitative questionnaire was sent to each of the potential 12 women inviting them to participate. Assistance was provided by BCWA so that all potential participants were able to be contacted by email and invited to participate. All were given one month to complete the questionnaire. Of the 12 potential participants, 9 agreed to participate. Of the 12 potential participants, one no longer holds a current accreditation certificate and one is retired. Given the low number of accredited women that could be invited to participate and given their experience, the participation and responses of the retired minister were welcomed. One participant serves in a cross-cultural ministry.

In order to obtain a balanced perspective, an official representative of BCWA and Vose Seminary, the official theological training body for BCWA, were also invited to participate. A similar but different structured qualitative questionnaire was sent to both of these parties, which took their respective contexts into account. They were also given one month to complete the questionnaire and were both very helpful and supportive. Two questionnaires were completed via telephone due to time and language constraints. Both of these conversations were recorded and later transcribed.

After receiving the responses from each participant, information was clarified either by email or telephone that was unclear. The main points from the responses of the individual pastor/ministry leaders were then recorded in tables. Keywords, concepts and ideas were then noted to see how they overlapped. The common responses were then collated underneath the tables in dot point form, which then became the main points. These were grouped according to

the purpose and theme of the questions.<sup>50</sup> The main points were then compared with the ideal theory operating within BCWA and Vose Seminary and the theology operating in BCWA churches in order to obtain an understanding of what was happening in praxis in relation to the official BCWA position.

## **7. Analysis of data**

Outlined below are the conclusions I have reached based on the information provided. Other than the first question, all other questions have been grouped, correlated and analysed according to the theme and purpose of the questions.

### **7.1 Role and Title**

The first question related to the participant's main role description to ascertain if their title corresponded with their capability and potential.<sup>51</sup> Of the participants, it was established that only 2 currently hold the title of Senior or Lead Pastor. There is one woman who is fully accredited as a Senior Pastor but who does not hold this title in her church, yet she certainly fulfils all the requirements in the way she serves her congregation. This is balanced by one other participant who serves as a Senior/Sole Pastor, but who has not yet completed the accreditation process and so, therefore, has not been officially endorsed by BCWA. Therefore, the title awarded by BCWA may or may not correspond to the position held by pastors or ministry leaders within local congregations.

BCWA is aware of many female Associate Pastors within their churches who hold titles such as Associate Pastor, Young Adults Pastor, Youth Pastor, Children's Pastor and Family Pastors,

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<sup>50</sup> See appendix 5-10

<sup>51</sup> See appendix 5

etc. It would appear that these women are the 16 referred to earlier in this paper.<sup>52</sup> However, BCWA is aware that the Ministry Centre may not be informed when there is a new appointment within individual congregations. While these numbers offer encouraging signs of change, they also highlight an interesting point concerning the role and purpose of the accreditation process, particularly in the light of the time, commitment and cost it takes to attain full accreditation.<sup>53</sup>

While examining the role and purpose of accreditation is beyond the scope of this study, it may prove worthwhile to ask why these women are not seeking accreditation and what role local Baptist churches play in promoting women to be endorsed by BCWA at a congregational leadership level. If women who officially hold the title and act in the official capacity of Associate Pastors in Baptist churches are not seeking accreditation or completing theological education, one wonders if an alternative path into professional ministry is developing for those who may not desire or appreciate the reasons for the traditional path of theological education.<sup>54</sup>

According to the information received from BCWA Ministry Centre, there are currently only 3 accredited female Senior/Sole Pastors that hold positions in Baptist churches, and there has only been an increase of 2 in the last 10 years. The first female Senior Pastor was appointed in 2008 and accredited in 2010, one was appointed in 2010 and accredited in 2011 and one appointed in 2019 and accredited in 2009. It can be concluded that if a large number of women hold the official title of Associate Pastor, yet currently only 4 women are in the accreditation stream, 3 of whom are included in this study, then there is an anomaly between what is happening officially and unofficially in Baptist churches. Although more positions may become available to women in general, it appears that it is still highly unusual or unlikely for an accredited female

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<sup>52</sup> See footnote 42

<sup>53</sup> See reference to BCWA accreditation policy (Appendix 3:2)

<sup>54</sup> Haddad. M., 2019

to be endorsed as a Senior/Sole Pastor in Baptist churches in WA, which reflects the findings of the 1992 task force.

The number of women not being able to find positions in WA Baptist churches may be one of the factors that have resulted in an unexplainable decrease of female students studying at Vose Seminary in the last three years, compared with 10 years ago when there were more female students. Although some female graduates have done well, it is possible that others have reasoned that they were unlikely to find a ministry position despite the studies.

Nevertheless, high initiative, capability and flexibility were noted in all of the participants in their current roles and all have continued to develop their leadership ministry potential. When the opportunity to serve using their gifting and potential has not been forthcoming within their churches, all have embraced opportunities to serve where doors have opened in order to use their gifts and talents for the building of the church and the kingdom of God. Five participants shared the extent to which they have embraced the opportunity to serve in honorary or voluntary positions. All demonstrated a desire to bless others through the gifts they have received, and all participants expressed appreciation for opportunities they have been given to serve either under, over or alongside supportive male pastors. None displayed any evidence that they have any form of selfish ambition even though historically things have been difficult for women in Baptist churches.<sup>55</sup>

I, therefore, conclude from these findings that the value of theological education and the accreditation process does not translate into praxis in Baptist churches for women in the same

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<sup>55</sup> Siggins, K., in Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds), 2013, pp.131-134

way as men, due to the low number of churches where female accreditation is fully endorsed. Therefore, accredited women are more limited than men.

## 7.2 Aspirations and Call

The second, third and fourth questions related to the aspirations of the female participants: How their aspirations related to their 'call'; how their call was being realised, and how encouragement or discouragement had influenced them.<sup>56</sup>

All participants had a clear sense of their call, which they perceived they had either fulfilled or were in the process of completing as part of a God-ordained journey that had led them to where they are now. One participant expressed that her leadership aspirations had been crushed, but she did not assume that her gender was the reason for rejection and was external from the Baptist denomination. One participant believed that prior learning might have influenced her aspirations and subsequent ministry choices as opportunities in chaplaincy opened more readily to her.

I noted that the aspirations of all the participants had grown in relation to what they were encouraged to believe was a real possibility. None had set out to be pastors, and they had received their call within the context of their life. In all cases, men in positions of influence had stood firmly with them, for them and had advocated for them. For one participant, this was in the form of church planting with her husband, which has now led to her work and gifting being endorsed in an established congregation.

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<sup>56</sup> See appendix 6

Without exception, every one of the participants acknowledged that without the support and encouragement that men (including their spouses) have given them, they would not be in the positions they are today, which indicates that even for women who have been endorsed as Senior/Sole Pastors the complementarian view of authority and headship still mainly stands in praxis. Therefore, it appears to be helpful for women who aspire to become Senior/Sole Pastors to be fully endorsed by a significant male in their congregation or to serve alongside their husbands.

All expressed the view that any discouragement they encountered has not diminished their sense of call. In one case it helped to confirm her call as it forced her to examine her theology in a deeper way. However, one participant in response to a later question explained that, at times, attitudes and behaviour she encountered within the denomination has been sufficient to cause her to question and doubt her call. Two other participants felt sufficiently mistreated and rejected that they left the churches in which they were serving.

Another interesting point raised by a participant conveyed the difficulties that can be encountered in churches when two Senior Pastors hold different views, one who is encouraging, the other discouraging. This can work both ways, of course, but it also highlights the additional vulnerability of women when there are changes in church leadership.

My observation is that all of the participants are game changers in their own way and have all been pioneers in women's ministry. All have a high range of gifts, appear to think in Kingdom terms (i.e. beyond the boundaries of local congregational ministry) and appear to have demonstrated humility and flexibility in how they have served. All of which has enabled them

to understand their perceived sense of call in a manner that extends beyond the local congregation and by necessity has encouraged them to be Kingdom mission orientated.

The issue which stood out most in relation to each participant working out their call within the context of their local congregation, is finding endorsement of their gifts and talents by a church, Senior Pastor or ministry position, and the freedom and encouragement to exercise their perceived call and explore growing aspirations. All the participants expressed their gratitude for the encouragement and support that they had received through the BCWA accreditation process and Vose Seminary, which appears to have played a significant role.

Vose Seminary confirmed that female graduates find it far more difficult in general to get positions in Baptist churches than men. While they have had some successful placements in the past, women seem to require more talent and resilience than the average male graduate to find a placement. Therefore, a philosophy seems to exist in Baptist churches that requires women to possess above-average qualities in order to be considered for pastoral leadership positions. Yet, if an egalitarian denomination holds an underlying acceptance of what constitutes equality for accredited women based on a philosophy that women have to be extra talented or extra resilient in order to be equal, then the denomination's perception of what constitutes equality is flawed, which will limit women in praxis and discourage their aspirations.

While there is no denying that all of the women who have become Senior/Sole Pastors and ministry leaders are talented and resilient, none of the participants attribute their talent or resilience as being the reason for being offered a position. Instead, the participants were all able to identify at least one significant, influential male in their lives who had endorsed and advocated for them so that when positions became available, their merit was able to be fully



considered. This was further clarified by the response of one participant who expressed the belief that she seriously doubts that her current role would have been endorsed by the church if she been serving under a different Senior Minister or in a different church. That view echoed by two other participants.

In conclusion to these questions, it is evident that when women are in an environment where they are encouraged and supported, they rise to the challenge and the demands of senior ministry in a way that is God honouring and respectful of their male peers. The participants demonstrated that aspirations grow and translate into praxis where there is freedom to step into their call. None has attempted to snatch what has not been freely given, which indicates that these participants are all mature servant leaders. However, it appears to be the case that accredited women may not only be more limited than men in finding a position due to complementarian views, but they are also disadvantaged because of an underlying philosophy that requires women to be superior to men in talent and resilience in order to be equally recognised as Senior/Sole Pastors.

### 7.3 Theological Views

Questions 5 to 7 concerned the participant's theological views, the role that their theological education has played and how their views have translated into praxis.<sup>57</sup>

All women said that they hold an egalitarian view, although one indicated that she would not want to be seen to be pushing her view. All participants expressed an awareness of the official BCWA position, which one participant had become aware of through attending a Baptist Assembly in the 1990s and another as a student at Vose Seminary at a similar point in time.

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<sup>57</sup> See appendix 7

One conveyed the view that the Baptist distinctive of liberty of conscience means that there is no one Baptist position on this subject. The BCWA Ministry Centre, however, has confirmed that along with all other states (apart from Queensland), plus Australian Baptist Ministries and the global Baptist World Alliance movement all are affirming as egalitarian, which is also supported and acknowledged by Vose Seminary. However, I received conflicting information from participants regarding specific teaching they have received on the BCWA position and egalitarianism and complementarianism. BCWA and Vose Seminary are of the understanding that training is provided while 7 of the 9 participants indicate they have not received any. Numerous factors may be the reason for this.

For example, Vose Seminary has noted that more females are now undertaking the graduate degree as opposed to the full three-year degree, perhaps explaining why some may have inadvertently missed the teaching. There may be others in the accreditation stream who have not studied the Baptist Distinctives unit yet. However, at least one participant who has completed Baptist Distinctives cannot recall receiving any specific training on this topic as part of the unit. Therefore, it would seem that gaps in education may have occurred for both men and women. The two participants who said they had received specific training on egalitarianism and complementarianism identified the period between 2005 and 2010 at Vose Seminary when it had occurred within the theology units they studied. Both of these women went on to fulfil Senior/Sole Pastor positions and expressed how helpful this specific training had been for them.

As a theological institution, Vose Seminary acknowledges it must present both views fairly and actively support the BCWA position theologically, despite taking a neutral stand on some theological issues such as pre-millennialism. Both Vose Seminary and BCWA also model egalitarianism in the number of women that they appoint to leadership roles and opportunities

they both provide for talented women based on their merits. The only leadership role not yet filled by a female at Vose Seminary has been the principal. However, it needs to be appreciated that only three men have been appointed to this is the role in the last 50 years. Vose Seminary is aware that the gender topic comes up fairly frequently and, as it is an ethical issue, will sometimes do something specific that addresses issues females may face. For example, in the preaching classes, they will give attention to issues that might arise if not everyone thinks a woman should be preaching. As far as they are able, Vose Seminary also tries to pastorally support and equip women better for engaging practically in ministry.

BCWA has also taken the initiative to appoint a State Women's Leadership Pastor in January 2018 with the purpose of releasing more women into their God-given gifts in the hope of seeing more women entering theological education and then into the pastorate as Senior and Sole pastors. However, in view of the decline in the number of female students enrolling in Vose Seminary in recent years and the responses of participants, it seems that in order for the purposes of BCWA to be realised a more significant commitment to the theology and purposes of BCWA is first needed from within local churches.

I concur with the participants who have all expressed gratitude and thankfulness for the encouragement and teaching that they have received through Vose Seminary and BCWA. However, as "theology is the study of God which is useful for understanding what is happening in our everyday lives", more specific theological education in this field and a review of the effectiveness of current praxis may prove helpful.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Turner, J., in Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds), 2013, pp.212-217

I, therefore, conclude that all participants hold a theological view that is in line with the official Baptist position and therefore, their theology has not limited them. Seven participants are self-taught, which may indicate that there is a need for offering more specific theological education in this field.

#### 7.4 Aspirations to be a Senior/Sole Pastor

Questions 8 and 9 were for establishing if they had specifically considered becoming a senior or sole pastor and if they were in churches where the constitution supported it.<sup>59</sup>

Some crossover with responses to these questions and the second, third and fourth questions addressed earlier were noted. However, these questions served to identify some underlying reasons why some participants have not aspired to this role, even though all of them appear to be or have been well placed and have demonstrated sufficient talent and giftedness.

Some participants mentioned gaining the relevant experience in their churches has been a difficulty, which has been a limiting factor for some as it can lead to a chicken and egg scenario. Therefore, no matter how potentially gifted or talented women are, they find it difficult to gain the experience that Baptist churches may be seeking. This would partially explain the response to the question of how many Baptist churches may currently accept women preaching and or teaching; an initial guess of 60% was offered. However, no more than 25% is regarded as a generous figure when further clarification was provided. So, while congregations may indicate that they are open to having female preachers and teachers, a much smaller number actually

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<sup>59</sup> See appendix 8

does so and even then, not necessarily with the same regularity offered to men, which is also reflective of what the Task Force findings were in 1992.<sup>60</sup>

Having been on staff at a church I am aware many factors other than gender can be the cause of why women are not invited to preach in more churches more often, such as availability, congregational stability and time pressures, however those reasons do not change the reality that opportunities and spaces provided for women to gain preaching experience appear to be far more limited. The lower figure concurs with the information and impression received from participants and Vose Seminary, including an example one participant offered of being ungraciously and explicitly rejected because of being female after responding to an advertisement for pastors to preach in their congregation. Vose Seminary concurred that unfortunately some Christians feel very strongly about their views and will sometimes express them in very tangible ways.

BCWA acknowledged that they are also aware there has been a lack of opportunity for some gifted women due to their gender, which has hurt them deeply. This has been deeply disturbing on a personal level for both the Director of Ministries and BCWA. Of course, there are exceptions and some participants are already established in Senior/Sole pastoral positions serving as leaders. However, based on the information I have received, within the context of the overall number of Baptist churches, these situations remain highly unusual. While it is always important to acknowledge progress, a moral and ethical responsibility remains to ensure that women who may be considering theological education and who may aspire to pastoral ministry in Baptist churches or who may seek accreditation, are fully aware of the statistics.

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<sup>60</sup> The Ministry of Women In The In The Baptist Churches Of Western Australia Report Of The Task Force Winter Assembly, August 8, 1992, ( appendix 2:3, Observation 10)

For some, knowing that being a female Senior/Sole Pastor continues to be such a contentious issue, they have not aspired to the role. It is noteworthy then that in three cases, their aspiration changed when they knew they would be considered. Other negative factors seem to be due to a mixture of rejection and the general observation that males are still favoured. However, it should also be acknowledged that some women who have entered the accreditation stream do not necessarily feel called to be Senior/Sole Pastors and aspire to be involved with other areas of ministry.

I therefore conclude that while BCWA has provided opportunity for women to aspire to become Senior/Sole Pastors, the contentious nature of actually stepping into the role in reality, coupled with the inability to gain an equal level of experience, appears to have had a limiting effect upon some women, which points to inconsistency between the official position and the views of the majority of churches. It seems clear that limitations will only be able to be overcome as theological views change and more positions are offered to women in the particular field of ministry they are called to.

### 7.5 Overcoming limitations

Questions 10, 11 and 12 related to limitations the participants had experienced, how they had attempted to overcome the limitations, and what changes they would find helpful.<sup>61</sup>

There are noticeable differences in how participants have experienced a sense of being limited, yet all were able to identify gender as a specific factor even though they had an awareness that men are limited too. One participant shared how her male peers were more cautious of physical touch being misinterpreted, such as placing a hand on a shoulder.

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<sup>61</sup> See appendix 9

It is therefore essential to clarify that none of the participants appeared to have an unrealistic expectation of the demands and requirement of pastoral ministry. Some things go with the territory and need to be accepted whether we are male or female, in the same manner as any other profession or vocation. It is essential to clarify that the limitations that the participants identified explicitly concerned being female and encountering gender bias in addition to all the usual aspects of limitation one might expect to encounter in pastoral ministry.

Four of the participants reported that exercising their gifts and call had been limited within their churches, whereas two others reported the limitations they faced have been in the context of not being invited into the wider pastor's network. They also raised the point that there has been an assumption that all spouses are female, which can lead to uncomfortable interactions for male spouses. If husband and wife are in joint ministry, it may not be so noticeable, but it seems to be a fair comment that an additional tension exists for female pastors and their spouses due to not being the accepted traditional norm.

It is therefore understandable that these women convey views on how they would like to have more women within their denomination who are in similar positions within the Baptist family of churches. This may also be a contributing factor to why some have expressed a desire that they would like to see more egalitarian theology taught and more churches becoming egalitarian in practice, because while female pastors remain so few many of the standard network interactions and relationships that have traditionally occurred between male pastors are more challenging to achieve.

Two participants also raised how challenging it has been when there has been very overt and tangible rejection on the basis of gender. One participant voiced the observation that at times it has been sufficient to make her doubt both her call and worth. She described her journey in terms of a bitter-sweet experience having had some great encouragement and known empowerment through the support she has received, but there have also been times of extreme disappointment and discouragement as a result of rejection based on being female. She expressed that this has been most painful when those holding positions of power and authority have not challenged, spoken out or taken action on her behalf.

In order to appreciate the weight of her statement, it needs to be appreciated that all of these women to a larger or lesser degree have been pioneers at the cutting edge of ministry. Three of the participants have, at some point, stepped into roles that had not previously been available for women at a time when the opportunity had only just opened. For one of these three participants, it has been harder to distinguish broad life experiences as a woman from those within the church and a broader ministry context. She describes the gender biases she has faced as being like one long continuous battle. However, for the other two, their experiences have been firmly within the context of the Baptist church. It is also important to remember that the denomination has lost some highly talented women because of the gender bias they have faced.<sup>62</sup>

Two participants identified personal limitation as a result of juggling family, financial restraints and pastoral responsibilities. For one, limitation was in the context of her dual responsibilities as a mother and a minister. However, one participant identified cultural expectation as a limitation and observed she was still expected to do all the domestic chores as well as work

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<sup>62</sup> Re: Jennifer Turner in Siggins, K., Hobby, N., Olley, J., O'Neil, M., (Eds), 2013, p. 132



full-time which she found very hard. BCWA also conveyed an awareness that there can be more restrictions for women in cross-cultural churches.

All of the participants portrayed great initiative, courage, faith, humility and resilience in order to overcome some of the significant challenges they have faced. Along the way they have learnt that sometimes it is necessary to move churches, plant churches, learn how to let go, be patient, forgiving, loving, to wait, be silent, respect different views, and embrace different ministry opportunities.

In conclusion, self-limitation, or any implication that women are not sufficiently rising to the challenge of pastoral ministry, is not sustained by evidence in this study. It is apparent that the participants are able to clearly discern between personal limitations (which they accept) and limitations placed on them as a result of their gender. Therefore, their expressed desire to see a greater acknowledgement of the official Baptist position in churches and to see more specific challenges made to the complementarian theology held by the majority of Baptist churches is valid because of the limiting impact it puts upon them in praxis.

#### 7.6 Historical, Cultural and Social Factors

The purpose of questions 13 and 14 was to find out if there are cultural or social issues that should be taken into consideration and if there was anything else participants wanted to add.<sup>63</sup>

The cultural and social considerations raised by participants were all very much in line with their responses to previous questions; however, what they shared also appears to offer a summary. There is no doubt that the participants all recognise the importance of Baptist

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<sup>63</sup> See Appendix 10

distinctives of liberty of conscience and the autonomy of the local church. However, when combined and held too tightly, they appear to cause harmful collateral damage even while protecting dearly held values.

Unfortunately, the experience of some participants indicates that trying to move or even speak up has left them in a disadvantaged and powerless position against the defence of the combined distinctive. One participant voiced an opinion that when complementarian views are challenged, the defence line is even more fortified. I, therefore, concur with a participant who expressed the view that unless action is taken, we will continue to become more out of step culturally and socially with those Jesus has told us to love <sup>64</sup>. A weariness was perceived in most of the participants who indicated that they are tired of the same issues coming up and yet are still such a long way from being resolved. One participant voiced frustration that these issues have been going on for too long.

Historically, the patriarchal traditions are considered a factor concerning women's roles as well as the length of time that complementarianism has been taught. Neither Vose Seminary or BCWA contributed anything contrary to these views except to add that, historically, Vose Seminary has always been open to women and the seminary has always been a safe place for women. While that may not seem unusual nowadays, it was unusual in the 1960s. Yet, within the history of Vose Seminary and BCWA, a complementarian theology is held by the overwhelming majority of Baptist congregations. It can be argued, then, that the focus needs to shift to the safety of women within Baptist churches in the light of Baptist distinctives and the autonomy of the local church; BCWA and Vose Seminary both have a significant role to play in moving this forward.

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<sup>64</sup> See footnote 42

I conclude from these responses that women are limited from both a historical and cultural perspective due to an underlying theology practised in the majority of Baptist churches. There appears to be overwhelming evidence that it is time to challenge the combined status of liberty of conscience and autonomy in the light of the Gospel and what is happening in Baptist churches and in society in general.

## **8. Conclusion**

As a result of investigating my research question, I have sadly concluded that women are limited in the scope of their ministry in Baptist churches in WA, directly due to the complementarian views that are held and practised within congregations. Although there have been and are encouraging signs of change in some areas, statistics and the findings of interviews with the participants of this study make it clear that complementarian theology is the primary theology in Baptist churches in WA, and this is significantly impacting women who may aspire to become sole or senior pastors in Baptist congregations.

Possibly the most significant finding is that complementarian views impact the worth and value of completing theological education for career purposes. The complementarian view claims that God's order in the church requires that women sit under male authority and headship in the church. The impact is broad and diverse, from the expectation that women must still carry the full domestic load to being restricted from using their gifts and talents to serve within the church. In some cases, participants have needed to relocate to different churches; for others the impact of discouragement has been significant enough for them to question not only their call but also their worth. A fresh look at what passivity affirms as acceptable is as crucial as those things that are unacceptable.

The significant change of position from a complementarian to egalitarian view adopted by BCWA and affirmed in 2014 appears to have failed to take into consideration the gravity of the Task Force 1992 report which revealed a high resistance among Baptist churches to women becoming Senior Pastors. The decision to retain unity and hold tight to Baptist distinctives, while commendable in intent, has now become a confusing situation that women are being invited to serve in. Also, a flawed understanding of egalitarianism appears to have been absorbed by the denomination, which adds further complexity for women who may aspire to enter the pastorate. Even if women overcome an apparent gender bias that requires women to be more talented or resilient than the average male and are endorsed by their congregation, the women continue to encounter gender bias in the broader body, which hinders their networking potential.

The fact that there have been female participants to study is evidence that among Baptist churches in WA, a significant change has taken place despite so much resistance, must be acknowledged and celebrated. However, the evidence points to a need for further significant and timely changes to come into effect. Given the complementarian theology held by the majority of Baptist churches, this will require that men in the denomination who are in positions of power and influence speak up again and take further action. The tiny proportion of current Senior/Sole Pastors in Baptist churches coupled with the prolonged growth rate (i.e. two female pastors in 10 years) indicates that no matter how much encouragement women get to undertake theological education or gain accreditation, it will never be enough if more Baptist churches do not endorse the official Baptist position. Women are waiting and ready to be released, but they do not hold the keys.

The evidence reveals how the aspirations of women grow and respond to encouragement when they instinctively know they are in an environment that is safe and in which they can flourish. Currently, the slow growth rate and the small number of women who are Senior/Sole Pastors conveys a message that women who may wish to consider entering the pastorate in Baptist churches cannot ignore. Women who are already in /Senior/Sole pastor/ leadership positions are severely disadvantaged from making more significant inroads for the sake of others. As it currently stands, everything points to Senior/Sole Pastor positions in Baptist churches being only for a few and the elite. I contend that this is neither a good biblical model nor a good representation of the egalitarian view. Therefore, a confusing message is being communicated not only to the church but also to the community.

A multi-faceted approach is therefore recommended for further significant change to be realised. In addition to the provision of more specific egalitarian theological education, much greater freedom for women to preach in more churches is needed. So, a clear distinction needs to be made between personal liberty of conscience and the collective liberty of conscience that exists in the context of being part of the BCWA. I quote again that "when our churches make a decision, through the processes of Assembly, we need to accept that decision and continue to work in unity"<sup>65</sup>

It is through the democratic vote at the Baptist Assembly that God's will can be determined for the overall benefit of BCWA. Therefore, when an individual does not respect and honour the official Baptist position on any issue, it implies the Assembly has not obediently adhered to the Word of God, or the Assembly has become a humanised voting system that does not recognise that God has revealed His will through the priesthood of all believers.

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<sup>65</sup> The Ministry Of Women In The Baptist Churches Of Western Australia Report Of The Task Force, Winter Assembly, August 8, 1992 (Appendix 2:4 G)

While there must always be grace, patience and the consideration for each other, leadership also requires that decisions must sometimes be made for the greater good. In the light of this study, I therefore argue and urge BCWA for the sake of the Gospel and the greater good, to carefully review the outworking of liberty of conscience and autonomy in praxis, in order to make Baptist pastors and churches be more accountable for actively encouraging and making room for women to use their perceived gifts for God. This will go a long way to ensuring that all may be invited in more significant measure to serve the church in line with their gifting and call.

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## Appendix 1.



## Theology

We believe the Bible teaches that men and women were created by God and equally bear His image (Gen. 1:27). God's intention was for them to share oneness and community (Gen. 2:23-24), even as the Godhead experiences oneness within the Trinity. Each had a direct relationship with God and they shared jointly the responsibilities of rearing children and having dominion over the created order (Gen. 1:26-28). However, human oneness was shattered by the Fall. The struggle for power and the desire to "rule over" another is part of the result of human sin. Genesis 3:16 is a prediction of the effects of the Fall rather than a prescription of God's ideal order.

However, God has acted in Christ to redeem the human race, and to offer to all people the opportunity to be part of the New Community, His church. It is God's intention for his children to experience the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son (John 17:11, 20-23). This means that old divisions and hierarchies between genders and races are not to be tolerated in the church, where all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

In the formation of the church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on women and men alike, as had been predicted long before the coming of Christ (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:18). In the New Testament, women as well as men exercise prophetic and priestly functions (Acts 2:17-18, 1 Cor. 11:4-5, 1 Peter 2:9-10). Further, the Spirit bestows gifts on all members of the New Community sovereignly, without giving anyone preferential treatment based on gender (Acts 2:1-21, 1 Cor. 12:7, 11). Every believer is to offer her or his gifts for the benefit of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Peter 4:10-11). To prevent believers from exercising their spiritual gifts is to quench the work of the Spirit.

In all attempts to understand and put into practice appropriate relationships between genders in the body of Christ, our sole authority is the will of God as expressed in Scripture. A few isolated scriptural texts appear to restrict the full ministry freedom of women. The interpretation of those passages must take into account their relation to the broader teaching of Scripture and their specific contexts. We believe that, when the Bible is interpreted comprehensively, it teaches the full equality of men and women in status, giftedness, and opportunity for ministry.

## History

In 1991 Bentley Baptist nominated Valma Manning (a member of the Union Executive from 1990) to the position of the Western Australian Baptist Union President. By October of that year the church had withdrawn its nomination citing the best interests of the Baptist denomination and strongly requesting the establishment of a Task Force to deal with the issue of women in ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The Baptist Union Council duly established a Task Force in November 1991 giving it a twofold brief. First, to address the issue of women in ministry with particular reference to which positions women could appropriately hold within the denomination. Secondly, the Task Force was instructed to consider

how best to deal with issues of contention within the denomination in order to maintain unity while embracing diversity.<sup>2</sup>

The resulting recommendations were presented to the Annual Assembly in October, 1992 with the Task Force recommending, among other things, that when a woman is nominated to a denominational position, normal voting procedures should be followed.<sup>3</sup>

A move that went hand in hand with both the appointment of the Task Force and its final recommendations was the establishment of another Task Force to investigate replacing the practice of Ordination with Accreditation.<sup>4</sup> The Task Force presented its report, *Baptist Churches of Western Australia Task Force on Ordination and Accreditation. Revised Final Report* to the 1995 Spring and Annual Assemblies, making the recommendation to cease ordaining pastors and practice accreditation only. This recommendation was accepted by the Assembly and has since been the practice in Western Australia.

## Practice

Based on the theological position described above and the resolutions of the 1992 Baptist Assembly we are committed to the following practices:

- To provide opportunity for ministry based on giftedness and character, without regard to gender.
- To pursue the kind of purity and loyalty in relationships between genders that led New Testament writers to describe them in terms of family: "brothers and sisters."
- To use sensitivity in language that reflects the honour and value God desires for maleness and femaleness and to encourage the use of translations of Scripture that accurately portray God's will that His church be an inclusive community.
- To be intentional where appropriate in overcoming sexist elements of our culture and to offer encouragement to women in areas where their giftedness has been traditionally discouraged.
- To teach and model these values to members of our community, to the Baptist churches Western Australia, and to the world at large.

For further study and more complete discussion of the key scriptural passages pertaining to this issue, we recommend:

Biezikian, Gilbert, *Beyond Sex Roles*, Baker  
 Barton, Ruth, *Becoming a Woman of Strength*, Shaw  
 Hull, Gretchen, *Equal to Serve*, Fleming H. Revell  
 Keener, Craig, *Paul, Women, Wives*, Hendrickson  
 Ogden, Greg, *The New Reformation*, Zondervan  
 Spencer, Aida, *Beyond the Curse*, Hendrickson

Statement Adopted by The BUWA Council: 7 April 2014

<sup>1</sup> Task Force Concerning The Ministry Of Women: Recommendations to Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Western Australia, October 1992. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Task Force Concerning The Ministry Of Women: Recommendations to Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Western Australia, October 1992. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the 96th Annual Assembly. 16-17 October, 1992 held at the North Beach Baptist Church. 19. At the 1992 Annual Assembly Bob Clark moved that a Task Force be set up to investigate the practice of Accreditation and its relationship to Ordination. .

Appendix 2.

1.

QUESTION 9: CURRENT WOMEN'S MINISTRIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Figures below refer to percentage of responding churches for Question 9.

1-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100
pastor 7	treasurer 25	serve communion 53	offering 61	pray in worship 82
elder 2		lead worship 49	deputation 63	read Bible in worship 91
secretary 18		studies for all 49		women's studies 98
preaching 19		ushering 56		teach children/youth 98
		deacon 51		testimonies 81
				lead singing 81

Observation 3: At the local church level, women currently exercise many ministries, with some ministries being exercised in almost all churches, while other ministries are exercised in very few churches.

Observation 4: Ministries less commonly exercised by women are probably perceived to involve greater degrees of authority and/or teaching in relation to men. It is interesting, however, to note that in 49% of responding churches, women lead studies with men present. This contrasts with the figure for preaching (19%).

QUESTION 10: ATTITUDES TO WOMEN'S MINISTRIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The following table groups opposition and support for various ministries in the following way:

strongly oppose	% opposition is at least 20% more than % support
oppose	% opposition is 10-19% more than % support
evenly divided	% opposition and % support are within 0-9% of each other
favour	% support is 10-19% more than % opposition
strongly favour	% support is at least 20% more than % opposition

% opposition and % support for each ministry are shown as follows:  
Example: treasurer 38/44 means 38% opposition and 44% support for women in this ministry

Strongly oppose	Oppose	Evenly divided	Favour	Strongly favour
elder 67/22	pastoral team 48/34	serve commun. 43/42	deacon 37/55	pray in worship 14/64
sole pastor 80/10		secretary 43/40		teach children, youth 3/90
preaching 67/27		lead studies for all 45/38		offering 18/54
		treasurer 38/44		ushering 10/61
		lead worship 40/41		lead studies for women 1/95
				deputation 18/57
				other speaking, testimonies 5/82
				lead singing 13/68
				read Bible 6/76

Observation 5: Attitudes to the exercise of various ministries by women at the local church level show considerable diversity.

2.

The study material sent out by the Task Force was used widely in the responding churches by:

the leadership	42%
distribution to members	61%
home/Bible study groups	33%
special meetings	16%

Over 90% of responding churches made some use of the material [based on responses to Q.5].

Over 95% of the responding churches studied relevant Scripture passages [based on responses to Q.4].

In its analysis and presentation of the data collected in the survey, the Task Force wishes to acknowledge the very considerable assistance of Mr Geoff Wilson of The Lakes Baptist Church.

We have chosen to report only on those items of data that our analysis suggests do, in fact, contribute to meeting our twofold brief from Union Council. However, we have also studied other matters, such as whether church size or location seemed to have much bearing on attitudes of the churches. Significant differences did not emerge.

QUESTIONS 6, 7: DIVERSITY

Question 6: General attitude of church to women in leadership ministries (local and denominational)

	%
oppose/strongly oppose	33
support/strongly support	37
strong/mild division	16

Question 7: General conclusions from Scripture about leadership of women (local and denominational)

	%
strong opposition	37
OK with male team leader	12
OK in most situations	36
strong support	13
combined =	48%

Observation 1: Within our family of churches there is considerable diversity in how Scripture is understood, and in general attitudes to the issue of the ministry of women.

Observation 2: There is both strong support for leadership by women and strong opposition to it. But the largest group holds a position somewhere in between.

WSP 2

3.

WIMs 5

4.

- Task Force WIM p.2



## Appendix 3.

1.

Form 0AP

**THE BAPTIST CHURCHES WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
GUIDELINES FOR THOSE SEEKING ACCREDITATION  
AS ACCREDITED PERSONS IN MINISTRY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Baptist Churches Western Australia (BCWA), in co-operation with local churches, seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit to recognise those whom God has called and given to the churches to serve as Pastors. The evidence of their calling is seen in:

- the attestation, by those who know them well, that their lives conform to New Testament standards for leadership, and
- their personal sense of a call to the ministry, and
- their diligence in equipping themselves for the ministry needed by the churches.

BCWA has agreed that formal public recognition of pastors is subject to candidates fulfilling specific requirements appropriate to the ministry for which they are to be recognised, and that candidates' credentials shall be examined by the BCWA Accreditation Team (comprised of the Director of Ministries, Vose Seminary Principal, Church Health Pastor, Church and Leaders Pastor and other co-opted persons). Accreditation as a pastor requires the approval of the BCWA Council, on recommendation from the Accreditation Team. Those accepted by Council (and hence members of Assembly) will be presented to Assembly at a later date.

BCWA, both through local churches and its Council, also seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit in discharging the responsibility of de-accrediting those who are no longer to be recognised as pastors of Jesus Christ and the Word of God in our Baptist Churches. It is therefore necessary to carefully set down in these guidelines the requirements and processes to be followed in de-accreditation.

The following guidelines should be useful to:

- candidates for the ministry - outlining what the churches expect from them and what credentials they must present to member churches;
- churches - indicating what they should look for in those whose candidacy they support;
- the BCWA Accreditation Team, and Council, as they evaluate the evidence presented to them; and

- accredited pastors of the BCWA setting out the grounds upon which their accreditation may be withdrawn.

In line with the BCWA Relationship Agreement, persons appointed to pastoral ministry within constituent churches and ministries should apply for Accreditation within 12 months of their appointment.

**2. ACCREDITATION**

**2.1 MEANING OF ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation is an act of dedication by which a person is set apart to an ongoing ministry centered on the Word of God, the care of people and the equipping of God's people for service (Ephesians 4:11-16; Acts 6:2-4).

Accreditation involves the certification of people as suitable for ministry within or on behalf of BCWA. It gives recognition of their having met specific requirements and that they possess appropriate qualifications and credentials for such ministry.

**2.2 MEANING OF THE WORD "PASTORS" IN WHAT FOLLOWS**

In the broadest sense, all Christians are ministers. A narrower sense would limit the word "Minister" to those fully accredited to a pastoral role. The position is complicated by the use of the word "Pastor" as a personal title and also as a description of a function.

In common usage, "Pastor" and "Minister" have been regarded as practically synonymous.

In this document, "Pastor" is used to describe church leaders who have been recognised by the denomination after receiving a sense of calling prescribed study and practical experience.

For the purposes of this paper a "Senior Pastor" is one who is leading a pastoral team and/or staff either paid or unpaid. It does not refer to age or experience.

2.

**Details**

The Accredited Persons in Ministry Policy has clear parameters for Accredited Pastors.

The process will usually take a minimum of two (2) years full time equivalent from commencement to completion.

All people, men and women, seeking Accreditation as a Pastor in a Baptist Church that is a member of BUWA will:

- Demonstrate attestation of their Call
- Meet requirements for Baptism by immersion and local church membership
- Demonstrate consistent and successful involvement over at least two (2) years in Christian ministry
- Have successfully demonstrated relevant personal leadership characteristics including relevant training as well as psychological, psychosexual, personality and aptitude assessment.

Currency of Accreditation as a Pastor will vary between 1 year and 3 years.

All Accredited Pastors will be required to demonstrate active professional development and training, as well as engage satisfactorily with independent supervision.

Grounds for de Accreditation include

- Moving from ministry in a member Baptist Church in Western Australia
- Investigation of allegations of serious moral or ethical misconduct being proven
- Failure to comply with discipline recommendations

Accreditation requirements of other persons, including Celebrants, are similar to those for Special Accredited Pastors.

**Review**

The Council reviews the criteria for Accreditation and the process for maintaining Accreditation from time to time.

## Appendix 3.

3.

## Form OAP

THE BAPTIST CHURCHES WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
GUIDELINES FOR THOSE SEEKING ACCREDITATION  
AS ACCREDITED PERSONS IN MINISTRY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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BCWA has agreed that formal public recognition of pastors is subject to candidates fulfilling specific requirements appropriate to the ministry for which they are to be recognised, and that candidates' credentials shall be examined by the BCWA Accreditation Team (comprised of the Director of Ministries, Vose Seminary Principal, Church Health Pastor, Church and Leaders Pastor and other co-opted persons). Accreditation as a pastor requires the approval of the BCWA Council, on recommendation from the Accreditation Team. Those accepted by Council (and hence members of Assembly) will be presented to Assembly at a later date.

BCWA, both through local churches and its Council, also seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit in discharging the responsibility of de-accrediting those who are no longer to be recognised as pastors of Jesus Christ and the Word of God in our Baptist Churches. It is therefore necessary to carefully set down in these guidelines the requirements and processes to be followed in de-accreditation.

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- the BCWA Accreditation Team, and Council, as they evaluate the evidence presented to them; and

- accredited pastors of the BCWA setting out the grounds upon which their accreditation may be withdrawn.

In line with the BCWA Relationship Agreement, persons appointed to pastoral ministry within constituent churches and ministries should apply for Accreditation within 12 months of their appointment.

## 2. ACCREDITATION

## 2.1 MEANING OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is an act of dedication by which a person is set apart to an ongoing ministry centered on the Word of God, the care of people and the equipping of God's people for service (Ephesians 4:11-16; Acts 6:2-4).

Accreditation involves the certification of people as suitable for ministry within or on behalf of BCWA. It gives recognition of their having met specific requirements and that they possess appropriate qualifications and credentials for such ministry.

2.2 MEANING OF THE WORD "PASTORS" IN  
WHAT FOLLOWS

In the broadest sense, all Christians are ministers. A narrower sense would limit the word "Minister" to those fully accredited to a pastoral role. The position is complicated by the use of the word "Pastor" as a personal title and also as a description of a function.

In common usage, "Pastor" and "Minister" have been regarded as practically synonymous.

In this document, "Pastor" is used to describe church leaders who have been recognised by the denomination after receiving a sense of calling prescribed study and practical experience.

For the purposes of this paper a "Senior Pastor" is one who is leading a pastoral team and/or staff either paid or unpaid. It does not refer to age or experience.

4.

## 2.3 Accredited Pastors

Those who have satisfied the requirements for accreditation as pastors as determined by the BCWA Council, and have requested that they be set apart to the ongoing work of the ministry will be recommended for accreditation by the Accreditation Team.

Senior, Sole Pastors and Specialised Ministry Pastors will be entitled to use the title "Reverend" but may choose to use the title "Pastor".

The BCWA recognises two (2) categories of accredited persons for ministry in its constituent churches, agencies and ministries. A person will be accredited in one of the following categories based on their suitability to lead ministry in one of the following functions:

- **Category 1, or '4 Year' accreditation:** Sole Pastors and Senior Pastors who have fulfilled the requirements to be accredited to lead a church.
- **Category 2, or '2 Year' accreditation:** Specialised Ministers will have fulfilled the requirements for accreditation to fulfill roles in such areas as chaplaincy, youth, children, worship etc.

See Appendix 1 for the details of the different academic requirements for each of these categories of accreditation.

Accredited pastors will also be granted a status:

- **Interim accreditation:** For people working in a Baptist organisation but not attending a Baptist church. It is necessary for persons to meet the normal requirements for accreditation. Accepted applicants will be granted interim accreditation status on a yearly basis via review by the Accreditation Team.
- **Provisional accreditation:** For people who are transferring credentials from another State or Denomination, have completed a programme of theological study, or have not yet met the normal requirements, but that the Accreditation team has special circumstances for recommending Accreditation. The conditions for Provisional Accreditation will be determined by the Accreditation Team, and reviewed annually.
- **Full Accreditation.** For people who have fulfilled all the normal and usual requirements.

## 2.3.2 Accreditation Candidates: Pastors in Training

Are students of Vose Seminary, or who are studying an equivalent approved course of study who have applied and been accepted by the BCWA as a candidate preparing for Accredited Ministry. While completing the required studies and in conjunction with discharging ministerial responsibilities in a local church, the student becomes a BCWA "Pastor in Training" and is given the title "Pastor".

The preferred course mode for Pastors in Training moving towards accreditation is completion of an approved course of Study (at least 2 years full time or equivalent) which includes Denominational Distinctives, and satisfactory supervised pastoral service.

To ensure that satisfactory supervision and study arrangements are in place, Pastors in Training should apply to the Accreditation Team during their studies and within 12 months of their first pastoral appointment for acceptance as an Accreditation Candidate.

## 2.4 APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION

It is the responsibility of those who have satisfied all the conditions for accreditation in these guidelines, as determined by the BCWA Council, to apply to the Accreditation Team for accreditation six (6) months prior to the proposed date of their recognition, and within 12 months of the commencement of pastoral ministry.

## 2.4.1 Transfers

Persons who commence pastoral ministry in a BCWA constituent church or ministry, and have previously been Accredited with another state or denomination, can apply to have their credentials recognised, and will need to meet the normal requirements as determined by the BCWA Council.

A person seeking a Transfer who does not meet the ordinary qualifications, may be accepted as an Accreditation Candidate.

Provisional Accreditation may be granted subject to particular conditions determined by the Accreditation Team.

## Appendix 3.

## 5.

Neither divorce (with or without remarriage) nor marriage to a divorced person will be treated as an automatic bar to accreditation, but as a serious matter demanding careful consideration, particularly with reference to evidence of the applicant's commitment over a period of time to the Biblical pattern of marriage. No decision concerning one applicant will be taken as a precedent when considering another.

**3.1.5 Training**

An approved course of study that includes Denominational Distinctives shall be required of all applicants for accreditation. Consideration shall be given to applicants to enter the Accreditation Process of Discernment if they have commenced their approved course of training.

**3.1.6 Support**

A person's care and capacity in financial matters is assessed by the arrangements the applicant has made to ensure viability through any initial training period, and the applicant's dependability in matters of finance, as evidenced by the ability to be an example in this area of life.

**3.1.7 Personality and Aptitude Assessment**

Applicants for the ministry will be required to submit themselves to such professional examination for psychological (including psychosexual), personality and aptitude assessment as the Accreditation Team requires.

**3.1.8 Supervision**

Applicants for the ministry will be required to actively engage in professional or pastoral supervision by an approved and suitably trained person that is reasonably independent from a pastors' place of ministry. The Accreditation Team will make available a list of approved Supervisors.

**3.1.9 Men and Women in Ministry.**

The official position of the BCWA is that both men and women are acceptable to apply for accreditation.

**3.2 ACCREDITED PASTOR**

The following conditions apply to persons who seek accreditation to the ministry of Jesus Christ and the Word of God:

**3.2.1 Candidates for the Ministry**

**3.2.1.1** Candidates for the ministry must complete:

- an approved accreditation course of study at ~~Vosa~~ Seminary (See Appendix 1 for sample) or an equivalent course of study, and
- a period, immediately prior to accreditation, of continuous and satisfactory supervised pastoral service, as determined by the Accreditation Team. Normally such pastoral service is to be at least two (2) years full time equivalence.

**3.2.1.2** The prescribed application forms which include:

- a letter of recommendation from the church in which they are serving.
- A reference from the pastor they most recently served under.
- referees as outlined in the application forms
- evidence of spiritual, physical, psychological and vocational suitability.

**3.2.1.3** In lieu of the above, in rare cases, a person upon application and recommendation of the Accreditation Team may be accredited on the basis of a lengthy period of continuous and outstanding pastoral service.

**3.2.2 Qualities and Responsibilities in Respect of Candidates**

The qualities looked for in potential accredited pastors are:

- a sense of call to ongoing ministry,
- maturity in Christian experience and family life,
- evidence of personal spiritual growth,
- a basic understanding of biblical doctrine,
- the potential to lead,
- some experience of church life, and
- the academic pre-requisites as currently set out in Appendix 1.

## Appendix 4.

How good and pleasant it is when brother  
(and sisters) live together in unity!  
Psalm 133:1

**Questions to consider:**  
(from Ruth Haley Barton, *Equal to the Task*)

1. What biases and generalizations do I make about the other sex? For example, do I assume that men do not have feelings or that women are so relational that they cannot make tough decisions?
2. What "buzzwords" or emotional reactions are associated with these generalizations?
3. Is there anything in my behavior or in the culture of my organization that would make members of the other sex feel uncomfortable, unwelcome or discriminated against?
4. Do I ever use labels, make jokes or display cartoons or pictures that might offend members of the other sex?
5. Do I ever schedule work-related events that exclude members of the other sex, such as all-male golf outings or women-only lunches?
6. When I have asked for input only from members of my own sex, do I assume that I have gotten all the input I need, or do I actively seek contributions from both men and women?
7. Am I significantly more comfortable with members of my own sex than with members of the other sex? Why? Am I willing to push beyond my discomfort so that I can be more at ease?

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**Questions for listening sessions:**  
(Male leaders asking women leaders)

1. What kinds of opportunities have you found in our organization? Do these opportunities line up with your interests and passions?
2. How safe do you feel on teams with men in our organization when it comes to expressing your point of view? Do you feel heard?
3. What kinds of limitations have you sensed here for the full use of your abilities?
4. Have we clearly articulated our position on women in leadership in a way that makes sense to you?
5. Do the male leaders and communicators here ever say things that are less inclusive than they should be, or sometimes hurtful even if we don't intend for them to be so? Have you experienced any joking around that has felt derogatory or inappropriate to you?
6. What else is important for me to know?

Imagine a setting where respect for fellow human beings is so vibrant and so real that it feeds people's souls. What kind of person would you be if we're to treat others as though they were sacred and precious? What difference would it make if women and men were to approach each other with this kind of wonder and care? Though it may sound simplistic, there is a real possibility that if women and men learned to respect each other deeply - to see each other as the ones through whom God is made present among us - little else would be needed. (Ruth Haley Barton, *Equal to the Task*)

Two Key Steps From Southridge Community Church - Pastor Jeff Lockyer

- + Disproportionate investment into developing female leadership
- + Disproportionate invitation for females into leadership

Just because you don't intend to exclude doesn't mean you intentionally include.  
(Ellen Duffield)

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## Appendix 5. ( 1 / 4)

Question 1: Please describe your ministry: i.e. the tasks that you do to fulfil your official role and any additional things you do to serve Baptist Churches WA based on your unique mix of gifts, talents, training, ability and availability.

Purpose: To establish if their role description and title reflects their capability and potential

Main Role / Title	Local Church Role Tasks	Additional / Ministry Main Role Tasks	Additional Ministry
Chaplain / Aged Care Different denomination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On leadership team (volunteer)</li> <li>Safe church officer</li> <li>On music team</li> <li>Preach occasionally</li> <li>On board of Community care management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support/ families</li> <li>Supervise &amp; Mentor Chaplains/ counselling students</li> <li>All aspects pastoral ministry. i.e. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, communion, preaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sessional bible college lecturer in pastoral care, missions</li> <li>Bible College board member</li> </ul>
Pastor	Co-pastor with husband (Equal shared role). Bi-Vocational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sermon series planning &amp; delivery</li> <li>Worship leading</li> <li>Facilitating worship team</li> <li>Church governance &amp; church leadership</li> <li>Secretarial duties</li> <li>Liaising with Baptist financial services</li> <li>Organising rosters</li> <li>Leading bible studies</li> <li>Pastoral care</li> <li>Mentoring and counselling</li> <li>Safe church responsibilities</li> <li>Liaising with other local pastors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervising YouthCare chaplains</li> </ul>
Associate pastor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preaching</li> <li>Team leading</li> <li>Service co-ordinator</li> <li>Worship ministry co-ordinator</li> <li>Pastoral care</li> <li>Discipleship</li> <li>Baptisms, funerals, communion, weddings</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 5. (2/ 4)

Main Role / Title	Local Church Role	Additional / Ministry Main Role Tasks	Additional Ministry
Women's leadership pastor BCWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worship ministry leader</li> <li>• Leads Communion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor women in pastoral and ministry roles</li> <li>• Preach</li> <li>• Give talks at women's ministry groups</li> <li>• Facilitate training</li> <li>• Leadership and administration of annual women's conference</li> </ul>	
Retired Hospital Chaplain		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral care</li> <li>• Communion</li> <li>• Leading Chapel Services</li> <li>• preaching</li> <li>• Funerals</li> <li>• Grief counselling</li> <li>• Conducted weddings</li> <li>• Baby dedications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative of Baptist churches counselling</li> <li>• Cross denominational ministry</li> </ul>
Associate Pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading women's ministry</li> <li>• Leading women's prayer group</li> <li>• Leading women's worship</li> <li>• Pastoral care, home visitation</li> <li>• Leading bible study</li> <li>• Preaching x 2 every three months</li> <li>• Has taken communion twice</li> <li>• No experience with weddings &amp; funerals</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of women's Christian Chin Council</li> <li>• Director of global federation</li> <li>• On international Chin mission team</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5. (3 / 4)

Main Role/ Title	Local Church Role	Additional / Ministry Main Role Tasks	Additional Ministry
Pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preaching</li> <li>• Pastoral Care</li> <li>• Spiritual oversight</li> <li>• Administrative tasks</li> <li>• Conducting Baptism, Funerals, Weddings, Communion.</li> </ul>		
Local Senior Pastor in a co-pastoring context and denominational church health pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preaching</li> <li>• Strategic planning and development</li> <li>• Board member of incorporated community services ministry Ex-officio Elder, staff development and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseeing Safe church for denomination</li> <li>• Response to the Royal Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assisting leadership teams and pastors in understanding and implementing policy governance.</li> <li>○ Responding to Safe Church queries</li> <li>○ Resourcing leadership teams</li> <li>○ Providing training and pastoral reviews</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Accrediting pastors</li> <li>• On-going accreditation</li> <li>• Professional standards and complaints</li> <li>• Church Governance Training</li> <li>• Oversee staff</li> <li>• Baptist World Aid representative</li> </ul>	
Lead Pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully engaged in all areas of Senior Church minister ministry including preaching, doing baptisms, taking communion, weddings and funerals.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisor for pastoral Candidates Vose</li> <li>• Teach preaching classes at Vose</li> <li>• Conference speaking</li> <li>• Contributed to written publications</li> <li>• Chair of Baptist Union</li> <li>• Converge member</li> <li>• Member of Catalyst</li> <li>• Radio talks</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5. ( 4 / 4 )

## Question 1. Main Points:

9	All women expressed a freedom to preach, lead communion, take funerals and do baptisms and weddings. However, there were two women for whom they had no experience in taking funerals baptisms and weddings as yet, but they were open to it in the future. 2 of the women had fulfilled these roles within chaplaincy.
4	Serve in the church in the context of a broader denominational role. 1 as their only main role, 3 in the context of a split or extended church role.
2 2 2 2	Serve the church in the context of a co-pastoring role. Serve/d in the context of chaplaincy. 1 continues to serve, but not in the Baptist denomination. Serve primarily in the context of ministry specifically to and for women. Serve as associate pastors, one of which has a role primarily to and for women.

## Appendix 6. (1 / 4)

Question 2. Do you have any aspirations concerning your perceived call, and what would you like to be doing in five years?

Purpose: To establish if there are any underlying aspirations.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
To be an academic, a speaker and author.	To be in fulltime ministry with husband and be equally paid.	To plant a church.	To continue the same.	To continue the same.	To be an author and write books.	No. Has a clear understanding of my gifts and contribution to the kingdom.	To work part-time and be involved with representing the local church through possibly a para-church organisation.	There were but they were crushed trying to obtain a higher level of leadership. Now focus more on family life.

Question 3: Please describe what you perceive your 'call' to be and how this is being fulfilled in your current role?

Purpose: How is their perceived calling being realised?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
In part. Working in the area of her passion, but still very burdened to do more. Yet was discouraged and has re-focussed.	Being fulfilled through a flexibility in current role to use gifting and talents in diverse ways.	Call has always been clear to "equip his people" Eph. 4:12 which is fulfilled in using different gifts in different situations.	Perceived call to teach & love and serve the church is being worked out in simple acts of service.	My 'call' took me by surprise and was fulfilled because it was greater than my own expectation.	I don't know what my 'call is' I just do what God has enabled me to do.	Perceived call is to challenge status quo which is being refined in current situation for next season.	'Call' is to live a life that empowers others to live in a way that that reflects the transforming power of Jesus.	My call was clear to feed God's sheep. That is what I am doing.

## Appendix 6: ( 2 / 4)

Question 4: Please describe any affirmation or discouragement you have experienced, which has influenced your perception of your call.

Purpose: Has their calling been affirmed and what role does encouragement/ discouragement play in their perception.

1.	2.	3.	4.
<p><b>Encouragement:</b> Greatest encouragement was receiving protective support from a male Lead Pastor who played an instrumental role in enabling her and equipping her to continue in her calling.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b></p> <p>Knowing and experiencing that the 'old issues' still exist.</p>	<p><b>Encouragement:</b> A Senior Pastor provided opportunity and facilitated call to ministry.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b> No recognition or provision for male spouse at conferences. Assumption that all spouses are female.</p> <p>Open &amp; public rejection on the basis of being female has been very hurtful.</p>	<p>Has been discouraged but did not specify how. She did not see it as sufficient to make her question her call.</p>	<p><b>Encouragement:</b> Has been able to be accepted in context of partnership with her husband.</p> <p>Current church is affirming but cautious.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b> Has been equally trained but has experienced being completely disregarded.</p> <p>Gifts and calling were affirmed in ta church but not allowed to function, which meant either staying and stifling gifts or moving.</p>

## Appendix 6. (3 / 4)

## Question 4. Continued:

5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
<p><b>Encouragement:</b> Being accepted by the denomination.</p> <p>Being encouraged by a few influential men.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b> being side-lined in her congregation and being told that she was intimidating.</p>	<p><b>Encouragement:</b></p> <p>Being able to get ordination in Australia and work as a pastor.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b></p> <p>Being marginalised as a woman in her country and culture.</p>	<p><b>Encouragement:</b></p> <p>Being encouraged to take leadership roles in her church as a young Christian and being led to believe she could be whatever she wanted to be.</p> <p>Finding a church where her gifts could be exercised without controversy or causing others to stumble.</p> <p>Being encouraged by two Senior pastors to consider preaching and explore church leadership and being invited to step into a Senior position to gain experience. People being honest.</p> <p>Supervision</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b></p> <p>Long standing Christian missionary heritage within the family that demonstrated seemingly anomalies in their theology.</p>	<p><b>Encouragement:</b></p> <p>Has felt affirmed when encouragement has come from those in authority.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b></p> <p>Biggest discouragement has been being unfairly criticized and or rejected because of gender knowing those who could have spoken up have remained silent.</p>	<p><b>Encouragement:</b> Through accreditation process.</p> <p>Other Senior pastors providing opportunity and encouragement to explore potential and provide practical experience.</p> <p>Senior ministers and men in influential positions affirmed her call through their actions.</p> <p><b>Discouragement:</b> Transition into church-based ministry and prior leadership experience not acknowledged, so not able to exercise gifts, experience, capability or explore potential.</p> <p>Not given appropriate authority or resources to do the role she was assigned to.</p> <p>Not able to be called pastor.</p> <p>Was very restricted, resulted in leaving the church. Affected her confidence and sense of self-worth.</p>

## Appendix 6. (4 / 4)

## Question 2, 3 4. Main Points:

9	All had some form of aspiration, even if it was to continue doing what they were already doing.
8 8	Have a clear perception of their call. Believe they either have or are in the process of their call being fulfilled.
7	Expressed a measure of surprise that they were now in the position they were, and their aspirations had appeared to grow in accordance with the opportunities they had been given.
3 3	Have experienced not being acknowledged in title in their churches and have experienced acute differences in levels of acceptance depending upon who was the senior pastor at the time. Have had their confidence crushed through church leadership upholding complementarian theology which they found very damaging.
2 2 2 2	Women have left a church due to being mistreated and their 'call' not being affirmed. Expressed that their call seemed to find them. Expressed disappointment at not receiving financial equality. Have avoided most of the 'gender related' issues than the other seven women. This appears to have been largely due being in churches from an early point in their life where they have always been affirmed and having been led to believe there was no restriction.
1	Having aspirations crushed had resulted in re-focussing her time and energy on her family.



## Appendix 7. ( 1 / 4)

Question 5. Please describe your personal theological views on women in ministry and how your theological views have translated into practice.

Purpose: To learn how their theology influences their perceived call in praxis.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
<p>Men and women are equal in the sight of God.</p> <p>The church is best served when all voices are heard.</p> <p>We are all to submit to one another in love.</p> <p>Mutual respect in the home as well as in the church.</p>	<p>God has equally given gifts and talents to men and women to enable them to work with him in ministry with his people.</p>	<p>God is sovereign and character is as important as calling and both genders are to interact in an equally submissive, servant hearted way towards each other seeking to serve and elevate the other without fear and prejudice.</p>	<p>God has equipped each person uniquely to fulfil the purpose God has for them.</p> <p>God calls men and women to service. Should be appointed according to call and gifting, not gender.</p>	<p>God has gifted men and women equally and gender should not be an issue when appointing leadership roles in the church.</p>	<p>Women and men complement each other in ministry.</p> <p>Would not want to push the egalitarian issue.</p>	<p>Egalitarian and was trained as a pastor in response to that theological view.</p>	<p>God gifts his people and we are called to use the gifts that God has given us.</p>	<p>Jesus has dealt with all the cycles of violence that we practice in our relationships so that instead of relating to one another as victims and perpetrators. Jesus enables us to relate through love, forgiveness and justice.</p>

## Appendix 7. (2 / 4)

Question 6. Within your official theological training have you received any specific training on complementarian and egalitarian views and how these views may translate into praxis in Baptist Churches? If so, please explain the nature of your training and the unit it was incorporated into.

Purpose: To establish if they have had balanced theological training and the role and effect of theological education upon potential ministry and sense of call.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
I have not received any specific training.	Cannot recall any specific training.	I think the view of Baptist church is Egalitarian	Little education on this and have little understanding of what they are	It was dealt with in the context of foundational theological units and there have been some PD's.	No, all self-taught.	I have not received any specific training on this. It has been mentioned briefly in one unit.	No, not in any of the units I have done. However, I chose to study the topic for myself.	Through Vose – and a unit on Trinitarian theology as we explored the subordinate debate.

## Appendix 7. (3 / 4)

Question 7. Please describe your understanding of what you believe the official Baptist position on women in ministry and how you became aware of this position?

Purpose: To establish if they know the position and if women are informed.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
There is no one Baptist position to which all Baptist Churches are required to adhere. However, BWA (Baptist World Alliance state that men and women are equals and should be actively encouraged and welcomed into traditional roles that have been held by men.	Officially it is that BCWA affirms women in ministry.  However, there are frequently assumptions that are made by BCWA that have left me feeling alienated.	The official position is that BCWA are affirming of women, but many churches will not consider women in leadership.	BCWA hold an egalitarian position and became aware of it as a student.	The official position is that churches should provide opportunities for ministry based on giftedness and character without regard to gender.	I think it is egalitarian	I believe it is that Women are equally accepted in BCWA, but it is not the same in all churches.	BCWA hold an egalitarian stance, however many churches do not practice that position and some openly oppose it.	That all people regardless of gender or culture, should be able to lead according to their gifting.  First became aware in 1990's when accreditation was discussed at an Assembly.

## Appendix 7. (4 / 4)

## Main Points: Questions 5 -7

9	All aware of the BCWA official theological position and also expressed an opinion that many churches do not support it.
7	Have not received specific theological training on complementarianism or egalitarianism and are self-taught.
5	Hold a specific egalitarian view and used words such as equal or equally in their responses.
3	Referred to God as being the One who bestows gifts on men and women equally, therefore gender should not be an issue.
2 2 2	Specifically used the words submit / submitting to each other in their understanding of egalitarianism. Specifically voiced that the theology they practice in the church is also practiced in their home. Have received specific training at Vose between 2005 and 2010. 1 of those women also mentioned that there had been some workshops at Vose in this area
1 1	Expressed that men and women are complimentary to each other, however, she would not want to advocate for an egalitarian view. Responded by pointing to the need for Jesus to be kept central to all theology as through Jesus we are able to relate to one another through love, forgiveness and justice and overcome all the cycles of violence we practice in relationships.

## Appendix 8. (1 / 3)

Question 8. Have you ever considered becoming a Senior or a Sole pastor and what are your reasons for pursuing or dismissing this role?

Purpose: If women are considering this as an option and why or why not.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Yes, and acted in that role as a church planter.  Now in an associate role in an established Baptist Church.	No, and expressed that rejection has played a role.  However also expressed not being clear about how and if gender was the reason for rejection.	Yes, if the opportunity arose.	No, and has witnessed both men and women acting inappropriately in this regard to try to press their case and so has chosen not to pursue.	Open to it, but don't feel called to it at the moment.  Want a greater level of freedom to explore other avenues of ministry.	Yes, and is currently a Senior Minister, however, sees her position as unique and doesn't think she would have been appointed in a different church.	No because our community only truly respects male pastors.	Yes, but did not aspire to this as she realised it was such a contentious issue.  She is where she is now as a result of God's provision.	Did not consider, but where she found herself.  Had not pursued.

## Appendix 8. (2 / 3)

Question 9. Does the constitution of your church include the possibility for a woman to become a Sole or Senior Pastor and what is their position and what is their position on women teaching and preaching to both men and women? i.e. how often would you have a female bringing a sermon?

Purpose: To find out if their church supports the BCWA position.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Constitution allows for it.  Women are encouraged to preach.	Constitution allows for it.	Constitution allows for it.	Constitution allows for it.  Women are allowed to preach but not encouraged as much as men.	Constitution allows for it but very much doubt that it would be realised within our church in the foreseeable future.	Yes, but most men are not educated and don't like women who are, so doubt that it will happen.	Yes, and women preach regularly	Yes, women are invited to preach and teach regularly.	Yes, at least one third of sermons are delivered by a woman.

## Appendix 8. (3 / 3)

## Main Points to Questions 8 - 9

I noted that the responses were very mixed, also that the women who are Senior/Sole ministers in their churches offer opportunities to other women to preach. :

9	The constitution in their respective churches allowed for the possibility of a female Senior/ Sole Pastor.
4	Indicated they had considered and 2 of the 4 expressed that they had not aspired to it, but it was where they found themselves.
3	Indicated no because of the tension it would draw them into, for 1 of the 3 rejection had played a role.
2 2 2	Open to considering becoming a Senior/Sole pastor, but not necessarily see it as their call. Stated that while they have females preaching in their chuches, it is not encouraged in the same way as it is for men. Expressed that while the constitution of their churches allowed for a female Senior/Sole pastor they doubt that a female would be appointed.
1	Indicated that they were clear about wanting to explore alternative ministry options other than Senior/Sole pastor.

## Appendix 9. ( 1 / 5)

Question 10. Have you ever experienced a sense of being limited in your ministry and if so, please explain what that has meant for you and how you have been impacted?

Purpose: What limitation looks like from their perspective and how it has impacted them.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Not really.	Yes, have felt very limited. However, it has been used for good in that it has helped to crystallise my calling and identify my gifts.	Yes, particularly from other male pastors and being excluded from conversation and ignored.  It impacts and reduces networking opportunities.	Yes, I was stalled for over a decade and it impacted my confidence. I experienced a lot of pushback.	Yes, there was a lot of limitation initially, but it is improving as people have got to know me.	Experienced limitation both in external ministry and church ministry in different ways. Gender is not often an explicit reason for limitation. There are often unspoken limitations since gender discrimination is deeply imbedded within our culture. Also mentioned being limited in Q.4 directly as a result of gender.	Yes, I have mostly felt stifled in the local church except for the time when I had a supportive senior minister.  Outside of the church there was more freedom	Yes, have had people walk out, boycott and I find it disheartening and offensive and makes me doubt my personal worth, call and ability.	Yes, she felt limited when given a token role rather than being invited to be involved in a more significant way.



## Appendix 9. ( 2 / 5)

Question 11. How have you overcome any challenges related to being able to exercise the full scope of your ministry potential?

Purpose: To find out if lack of personal effort plays a factor.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
<p>Overcame by leaving the church that limited her.</p> <p>Obstacles have been minimized by working alongside or under her husband's leadership.</p>	<p>Has overcome by learning to speak up when she has been mistreated.</p> <p>Has found being a mother and a minister challenging and being accredited costly financially and in time.</p> <p>Has overcome by reasoning that she is called to be both and being able to exercise the full scope of ministry may be at a later point in time.</p>	<p>Has not had to overcome any significant challenges and has only experienced being able to do what she has wanted.</p> <p>Has not worked in a woman-hostile environment .</p>	<p>Has overcome by forgiving male pastors and showing them love and kindness.</p>	<p>Greatest challenges have been with other male ministers, outside her own church.</p> <p>Overcomes by focussing on what she is called to do within her own congregation and let go of things that she cannot control.</p>	<p>Has learnt to overcome by accepting the leadership decisions of the church stemming from a belief that one should not cause controversy.</p>	<p>Has overcome by waiting patiently.</p> <p>Resisting offense.</p> <p>Respecting the views of others.</p> <p>Ministered where she has been welcomed.</p>	<p>Overcome with good support from a few good people.</p> <p>By engaging in supervision.</p> <p>Learning what to stand against, what to let go of and what to do anyway.</p> <p>Taking opportunities that are not commonly offered to women even if they don't fit her well.</p>	<p>Has had significant obstacles to overcome all her life.</p> <p>Educationally, regionally, Financially.</p> <p>First in family to do tertiary education which was not supported by her father.</p> <p>Entered male dominated industry.</p> <p>Endured inappropriate male behaviour and attitudes</p> <p>Has learnt to persevere.</p>

## Appendix 9. ( 3 / 5)

Question 12. If there were one thing that you could change to make your role as a woman in ministry easier what would it be?

Purpose: what do women in ministry see at the most important things to change?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5	6	7	8	9.
Assumptions about women's roles in society in general.	To no longer have menstrual health issues.	To have more women leaders around for the purpose of support.	To have more churches being open to women leading according to gifting and character without regard to gender.  To see more men, make room for women.	Having to justify my existence and ministry.  To be able to lose the fear of complementarian Responses.	Normalising pastoral challenges.  To have a common understanding, open, honest discussion without being defensive or excluded.	To have more egalitarian theology taught in the same way that complementarian theology has been for so long.	To have more women in senior roles and to see more local churches actually living out the denominational theological position.	To see more churches become accepting of women and make room for their abilities.

## Appendix 9. ( 4 / 5)

Question 10, 11, 12, Main Points:

9	Expressed that their personal experience of limitation has in some way made things particularly difficult for them.
9	Demonstrate that they have put in much personal effort to overcome the limitations they have experienced.
8	Expressed that they have experienced being limited.
4	Would like more churches demonstrating a truly egalitarian theology.
3	Identified that they had overcome limitation by accepting invitations to step into roles that have previously only been done by men.
2	Specifically identified juggling family responsibilities and finances limiting.
2	Expressed that negative behaviours toward them had promoted a sense of limitation and had made them doubt their call and sense of value and worth.
2	Have overcome limitation by leaving churches where their gifts and call was being tangibly limited.
2	Acknowledged that receiving support from people in influential positions helped them to overcome ministry limitations they faced.
2	Had overcome limitations by learning what to stand against and what to let rest.
2	Would like to see more women in senior leadership roles.
1	Did not identify experiencing any significant limitation in ministry, but she identified a limitation she has faced in another question.
1	Concluded that the rejection of her gifts and talents had led to a good outcome because it caused her to examine her theology more deeply and gain more confidence.
1	Found it hard to separate their church experience from the limitations they have experienced in ministry and life in general as a female.
1	Overcame challenges by choosing to serve under and alongside her husband.
1	Overcame limitation by remaining silent in the church and seeking ministry opportunity outside.
1	Overcame limitation by resisting offense, respecting all views, waited patiently and only ministered where she has been welcome.
1	Overcame by forgiving male pastors and showing love and kindness.
1	Would like more specific teaching about egalitarianism in theological education.
1	Would like to be free of the fear of complementarians expressing their views to her.
1	Would like less assumptions about women's roles in general.

## Appendix 9. ( 5/ 5)

Question 10, 11, 12, Main Points Continued:

1	Would like to be free of her menstruation/ hormone related health issues.
1	Would like a common understanding of pastoral ministry and more honest open discussion.

## Appendix 10. ( 1 / 2)

Question 13. From your perspective, what historical, cultural or social factors may need to be taken into consideration concerning the research question?

Purpose: To find out if there are any historical, cultural or social factors that need to be considered.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5	6	7	8	9.
<p>The Baptist distinctive of liberty of conscience is very important.</p> <p>However, it means that there is no “Baptist Position on women in ministry” as Baptist churches and individuals can choose to believe whatever they want.</p>	No response	No response	Complementarians have seemed to sometimes dig their heels in response to being challenged.	No Response	Women have traditionally been assigned the responsibility for domestic duties and looking after the children.	The patriarchal system has not been challenged enough in our churches leaving us with a disadvantage culturally from a wider and social perspective.	<p>The Baptist autonomy of individual churches is an important distinctive but needs to be held less tightly as we are now culturally and socially out of step with our neighbours.</p> <p>We have been pioneering in this space for too long. Women are now getting tired.</p>	<p>Historically women have been viewed as the weaker sex and subordinate to men.</p> <p>People are now becoming too busy to even think about spiritual matters.</p> <p>There appears to be an antipathy between denominations and gender does not have the same importance as it once did.</p>

## Appendix 10. ( 2 / 2)

Question 14. Is there anything else you may like to share that is not covered in the above questions? If so, please identify?

Purpose: Anything else they may like to share:

There was only one response to this question which has already been covered in a previous question.

Main Points in response to questions 13, 14:

3	Offered no response.
3	Stated the patriarchal traditions that historically related to women's roles.
2	Stated that Baptist liberty of conscience / autonomy is important, but it has created a tension.
1	Stated that complementarians sometimes make her life harder when their view is challenged.
1	Stated that there has not been enough theological education on egalitarianism.