

**A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE MARGINALISATION OF
WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP IN THE PENTECOSTAL TRADITION
IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I declare that this dissertation has not been submitted to any other institution or university before.



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ABSTRACT

This practical theological study sought to explore the reasons for the exclusion of women from the overall leadership positions of the church, the consequences of this situation, and how women feel about it. The value of the study is that it reflects on women's experiences and gives a voice to marginality. It adopted a qualitative approach where the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten randomly selected participants from the Assemblies of God Back to God denomination. The findings indicated that women were excluded through the church practices, scripture, the African tradition and the African culture. Contradictory voices showed progressive support for women. Furthermore, the findings also highlighted the unfavourable practices encountered by women as well as a stagnant and unprogressive church.

KEYWORDS

Pentecostalism, patriarchy, African culture and African tradition, ordination, marginalization, leadership,

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this dissertation to two beloved people who have meant and continue to mean so much to me. I dedicate this work to my daughter, Vuyolwethu Vanessa Thabisa Jacobs, who encouraged me to pursue my dreams and finish my dissertation. This work is also dedicated to my late brother, Nelson Skwatsha, for his love and best wishes for me. Although he is no longer in this world, he has been a great support to me and has always given me wonderful encouragement. May his soul rest in peace.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Research title

A practical theological study of the marginalisation of women in religious leadership in the Pentecostal tradition in South Africa

1.2 Introduction

This was a study on the role of women in church ministry and their lived experience and the resultant impact of that on church practice. The study aimed to explore the reasons for the prohibition of women to the senior leadership positions of the church, the consequences of this, and how women feel about it. According to Osmer (2016:6-7), practical theology takes the human experience seriously. Importantly, it reflects theology in the activities of the church and its interrelationship with the practices of the world, and the purpose is to ensure and empower to participate faithfully in God's ways, and the world. The practical theological value is that it tests and demonstrates religious processes to understand the theology that is practised in the church. It also provides knowledge and the ability to understand situations in the church and how to deal with them. Therefore, it describes the relationship between theology and the research that is being conducted and the experiences and needs of the Christian community (Osmer, 2008:4). Amadiume and An-Na'im (2000:90) assert that marginalisation is a technique that makes someone powerless and incapable of influencing any decisions. This research is crucial because, although extensive research has been done on gender marginalisation in different denominations including the mainline and Pentecostals around the globe, little or nothing has been done to explore the gender disparities and the marginalisation of women in the Assemblies of God - Back to God (AOG-BTG) denomination.

The issue of women in the church leadership remains a controversial issue and currently, a gender gap is created by gender disparities that need to be bridged. In South Africa, while many people enjoyed independence from colonialism (which included political and

economic domination and the subjugation of one people to another); and freedom from the apartheid system, which was overwhelmed by racial segregation, the same cannot be said about Pentecostal churches as women find themselves discriminated against based on “dogmas and creeds” (Swanson 1998:504). The marginalisation of women has drawn significant attention and has sparked social debate regarding the rights of women even in the political spheres wherein women have been calling for justice and have overcome some barriers to rescind patriarchal tendencies, while still fighting others. These cases of injustice are overlooked and are never mentioned, which could be the reason Hadabe (1999:41) asserts any form of injustice aimed at women is often considered a private matter.

In the churches, the culture of contempt for women is viewed as an indication of the social stigma attached to material things, and it is a source of concern and hindrance to spiritual growth (Lartey, 2003:29-31). The issue of culture is problematic because it is not just an open-ended way of life, but rather a map plan or blueprint for living that is in the process of formation and adjustment and a system of survival and success (Neely, 1995:4). Kenneth Gergen perceives culture as a “process by which people “come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live,” while Tom Andrews declares that culture affects the nature and construction of knowledge and the way it transpires and gives meaning and the implication it has in society (Smit & Chetty 2018:7). Vivien Burr declares that “we construct our versions of reality as a culture and society within specific historical contexts” (Smit & Chetty, 2018:9) but the significance and practices of the church need to be communicated for the community of the church to realise transformation (Calahan, 2005:72).

1.3 Background to the research question

Discrimination against women is a reality that we live with every day in South Africa. This is also reflected in the statistics of abused women daily. The problem of discrimination in the church is manifested through the exclusion of women from positions of power and their non-ordination and this problem is evident especially in Pentecostal churches. The

ordination of women in the ministry is one of the key issues in this study because, in many cases, their restriction from the overall church leadership positions is due to their non-ordination. Customarily people who have been elected to the top tier leadership positions are ordained ministers and are predominantly men. This automatically excludes women from entering these positions of power. Although some women would be allowed to participate as preachers, they are not considered legitimate pastors since they are not ordained.

This study is based on the Assemblies of God Back to God (AOG-BTG), which is part of the Pentecostal tradition in South Africa. The AOG-BTG denomination is located in black communities in South Africa and other countries on the African Continent. This denomination is one of the churches that still do not ordain women and, therefore, do not have women in the senior leadership of the church since the top-tier leadership is comprised of ministers. According to Chetty (2009:4), the word “Pentecostal” originates from the Greek term signifying the Jewish Feast of Weeks; and Pentecostal spirituality emphasises the importance of the Holy Spirit in the church (Gyadu, 2013:17). Pentecostalism is “a journey with church and spirit” (Duck, 2013:281) because it is a form of worship that is built on the day of Pentecost where the Holy Spirit descended on all the people that were present in the meeting. Pentecostalism emphasises the direct experience of God through the Holy Spirit (Migwi, 2016:10).

The Assemblies of God in South Africa came into being after the 1935 decision by Pentecostal churches to accept missionaries and churches operating between whites to be under the Assemblies of God as the umbrella body (Watt, 1991:30). After James and Mary Mullan” of the Full Gospel Church joined the Assemblies of God, they negotiated with Hubert Phillips of Emanuel Mission in 1938 about having a connection and relationship with the AOG (Watt 1991: 83). Nicholas Bhekinkosi Hepworth Bhengu, who was working with Phillips at the time, joined the AOG with the Emmanuel Mission (Watt 1991: 83). In 1944 Mullan moved to Port Elizabeth and called Bhengu to join him. Bhengu followed in 1945 and started the Back to God Crusade (BTGC), preaching in black townships, but the greatest and most historic revival was in East London the same year, and this is how AOG-

BTG came about (Watt, 1991:83). Bhengu's aim was to propel the gospel of Jesus throughout the African continent leading “Africa back to God” and using the slogan “from Cape to Cairo” (Watt, 1991: 83). This slogan is what AOG-BTG women use during their fund-raising projects. This money is used to carry out lifesaving revivals as part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). While Pentecostalism is the core belief of the AOG -BTG, the church does not include all its members in its leadership in terms of their spiritual gifts and the fivefold ministry.

According to Lephoko (2008:124), “Bhengu did not ordain women as pastors, elders, and deacons because the time was not ripe.” He, however, worked with women and men indiscriminately, and at some point, there was one woman in the Assemblies of God, Back to God Executive even though she was not an ordained pastor. In time, especially after Bhengu’s death, women could no longer be found in the top-tier structures of the church, but are only involved in women's subdivisions. Some of the women that are in the current women’s leadership are professionals. They hold diverse professions from different universities and colleges, including the Nicholas Bhengu Theological Seminary (NBTS) at Henley-on-Klip, however, they are only recognised as “women organisers.” An organiser is a person who acts as a facilitator or coordinator in church groups, such as fathers, mothers, girls, and youth. Except for the youth, the distinction between these groups is made up according to gender. For the past few years, the principal of AOG-BTG College was a woman even though she was not a pastor. There are also powerful women evangelists at the AOG-BTG who are not acknowledged as full members of the Back to God Crusade team but only get invited as guest speakers.

The discrimination of women in the church is a setback not just to women but also to the church as a whole, and the factors that influence this attitude seem to be scripture-related, hermeneutics, and cultural perspectives, the concept of ‘gender, patriarchy, and power.’ These intended effects leave the church soiled with acts of perpetrating injustices on women by silencing them, creating predominantly male-dominated hierarchical structures (Wachege, 1992:93). In this context, leadership refers not only to the *kerygma*, which denotes (evangelisation, preachers, teachers, pastors, apostles, and bishops), but would also

include lay leadership, *Diakonia* that is (a service, administration, worship, prophets), and catechesis, which is the process of communicating the Gospel, accepted, understood, lived, conveyed and celebrated by the community (Phiri & Dongsung, 2014: 252-255). According to Swanson (1998:26), Christianity remains witnessed by the Christian lifestyle and their policies regarding who qualifies to be accepted and who does not qualify to be accepted.

In South Africa, for example, transformation reforms and anti-oppressive movements have been happening in many denominations, with women being ordained as leaders, but the same cannot be said about the Assemblies of God – Back to God (AOG-BTG). Gundry (1987:5) asserts that, while other churches were progressing and allowing women into leadership, other groups were still contemplating whether they must even start a discussion about this issue. The majority of the churches that have already gone through a transformation in South Africa are the Protestant churches and the focus of the discussion will be mainly on the three that I will shortly discuss and that is the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and the Anglican Church. These three churches have set the standard for all to follow, particularly when it comes to liberating women and giving them a platform and an opportunity as leaders in the ministry. According to Oosthuizen (1990:2), these denominations are also advanced in terms of the ordination of women not just in “Ministry of Word and Sacrament,” but in other leadership positions as well.

This section will attend to the development of the above-mentioned Protestant churches. In the Methodist Church, the first woman to be acknowledged by the movement was Susanna Wesley (Oosthuizen 1990:2). Susanna was the mother of the founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley and she became the first documented female that was ordained as a deacon (Oosthuizen, 1990:2). In South Africa the first woman to be ordained was Sister Theresa in Johannesburg in 1890, followed by Sister Evelyn Oats in Durban in 1894 (Oosthuizen, 1990:83). At that time women were prohibited in the ministry of Word and Sacraments, but when the resolution was passed to ordain women, several them left the Deaconess Order and migrated to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. The first black woman to be ordained was Mavis Mbilini in 1985 (Oosthuizen, 1990:83).

At the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa (BPCSA), Charity Majiza was the first woman to be ordained. Majiza was licensed by the Presbytery of Ciskei on 08 January 1978 [and] was sent to do her probationary period in the Gooldville congregation in Venda before being ordained on 13 May 1978 (Duncan 2019:4). This was not without challenges as the General Assembly criticised the Presbytery of Ciskei for continuing to promote Majiza, citing that there was no provision for the training and ordination of women. The matter was then forwarded to the presbyteries under the Barrier Act (BPCSA 1975:43). The General Assembly forwarded Majiza's name to the Church Extension and Aid Committee for appointment after she completed her qualification, and this was where the matter of the ordination of women elders was also raised even though a decision could not be made (BPCSA, 1976:23). Only in the following year, the BPCSA General Assembly "took the momentous decision to 'admit women to the offices of elder and minister having the same status as men'" (BPCSA 1977:28). In the Anglican Church in Southern Africa (ACSA), the ordination of women as deacons started in 1985 (Pillay 2017:11). In 1992 three women were ordained to the priesthood and, in 2012; three women were consecrated as bishops including Ellinah Wamukoya as the Bishop of Swaziland (Pillay, 2017:11). This advancement of women in Protestant churches highlights the extent to which AOG-BTG church has lagged in terms of leadership appointments (Lephoko, 2005:50).

1.4 Research problem statement

Christianity has been viewed as a mixed blessing for African women due to the struggles, they still go through (Edet & Ekeya, 1988:7). Christianity has been used as a vehicle to perpetuate the marginalisation of women even though the concepts of culture, gender, patriarchy and the lack on hermeneutics and exegesis are the key concepts that are often the root cause of the marginalisation of women. Although women at BTG have been given the responsibility to exercise leadership but it is limited to overseeing their affairs only. This has generated an interest in discerning that which qualifies them to lead women, but not to be regarded as leaders in the broader community of the church. It has also raised questions regarding the reasons behind the distinction between men leaders and women

leaders. Cultural involvement has been perceived to be the root cause of this problem as Klingorová and Havlíček (2015:2) state that the association between religion and culture is mutual because the status of women in religion also reflects the status of women in society as a whole. Klingorová and Havlíček (2015:2) state that this may be due to the interaction between religious processes and social norms and social organisation patterns, still, the church ought to engage in liberating hermeneutics of '*Missio Dei*' (the mission of God) and '*Imago Dei*' (the image of God) which appear to be the missing link in the church and a sincere prerequisite. According to Fikkert and Rhodes (2017:104), the '*Homo Imago Dei*' (humans in the image of God) motif should be understood as an affirmation of human dignity and the highest priority of all creation. This is alluded to by Osmer (2011:5) who declares that the mission of the Church is located within the mission of God and God reveals himself as the one who loves the world (Pieterse, 2001:113). In problematising this research, mention will be made of the cultural perspectives, the concept of 'gender, patriarchy, power, and hermeneutics' as the key concepts.

Firstly, cultural factors are those issues that reflect society, including culture, lifestyle, and values. Culture can be defined as a system of beliefs, values, traditions, material elements, rules of social behaviour, and social interaction attitudes, a meaningful symbolic understanding of the symbols and antiquities shared by members of society (Meng, 2010:341). In addition to the cultural factors, are the socio-cultural stereotypes that are concepts resulting from the day-to-day lives of men and women, which mirror a social experience of a certain culture and society (Zahra, 2014:117). Culture differs from society to society because the ideas that influence culture are constructed by humans and socialised in people according to the rules of a particular culture (Ramsay 2004:70). In these stereotypes, masculine physical appearance including their social status, psychological strength that involves beliefs, and anti-feminine behaviours tend to dominate. According to Zahra (2014:117), the social value of a man has been determined by his income, career success, and the promotion of professional growth; and, most of the time, the problems of women's vulnerabilities are caused by "cultural oppression" (Ramsay, 2004:73). The issue of culture has been unfair practices that attach certain perspectives on women and the focus has been more on "relationships instead of roles," which includes "religious

marginalization and oppression” (Eliason *et al.*, 2017:13). At the same time, traditionalists have also been experts at advising women on how to be less and making one fail to trust one’s self, since they specialise in the inner violation, crushing one’s self-esteem and making her fail with making value judgments (Gundry, 1987:61). The sad part for women is that they have been socialised and conformed to this situation and men have affected their self-understanding and men's perception of women profoundly (Bellis, 2007:3). This suggests that a great deal of damage has been caused to women and to save them, they need support and knowledge to recover from this ordeal (Gundry, 1987:8).

The second is the concept of ‘gender.’ While culture is a major factor in the inequality of genders in the church, the irony is that the denominational practices have also provided the necessary impetus in fueling the struggle. Gender can be observed as masculine habits of differentiating men and women concerning socio-cultural perceptions through sex rather than roles (Eliason *et al.*, 2017:13). According to Candace West and Don Zimmerman, gender is the product of social doings of some sort that are assigned to men and women (Smit & Chetty, 2018:9). In gender-charged contexts, it is common for men to endorse themselves as trendsetters and leaders, while women are perceived as followers or facilitators and are treated as such. In his five different kinds of courage, Aristotle indicates that men’s courage is that of leadership (Swanson, 1998:4). As gender is not just an African culture problem, therefore, the side-lining of women in leadership roles and the exercise of leadership structures cannot necessarily be thought to be an “undiluted biblical pattern” (Van der Ven, 1993:21). Bellis (2007:26) attests that in the past, women were rather fictitious, or equated to slaves, as a result, they were recognised through male folks. Stephenson (2011:1) argues that religious authority is one of the reasons women are also allowed to participate as ministers in Pentecostal churches but have still been forbidden in the governing authority. Stephenson adds that due to restrictions on the governing authority, it was rare to find women endorsed as skilful leaders even though they had equivalent determinations to pursue their gifts and careers. As revealed by various authors, gender has been at the root of women’s discrimination.

Researchers are working hard to unravel the problem in the church and the underlying causes, but men are trying their best to come up with excuses that would make women seem unfit to hold leadership positions. According to Mengel *et al.*, (2019:536), the exclusion of women is not because of their incompetency, but there is a hidden gender bias and criticism that condemns them as appropriate leaders and this is due to the different evaluations that cannot be explained by objective differences. Gundry (1987:59) states that there are perceptions by men that women are not intellectual beings within the church. The absence of women in church leadership has indicated that women have no place in all decision-making structures, which also signifies that their voice is not heard, and their role is played subject to the interest and power of men. Kretzschmar (2013:26) refers to this as spiritual abuse because women have been treated in a spiritually harmful way, as a result, their relationship with God or that part of them that is still capable of having a relationship with God has been wounded or scarred. Kessler (2010: 546) recommends that for the church to succeed, the people who participate in leadership must come from all members of the church because participative leadership is a form of leadership that develops the vision of the people as responsible people.

The third key concept is patriarchy or ‘the rule by fathers,’ which Hulley and Kretzschmar (1998:180-182) describe as the socio-economic, religious, legal, and political legitimation of male sovereignty. Plaatjies Van Huffel (2011:3) perceive patriarchy as the promotion of hierarchies by the social system and the granting of economic, political, and social power to one privileged group over others. Leadership cannot exist without power, but it is difficult and disturbing to bear by those that are subjected to it (Kessler, 2010:527). The belief by Thomas Aquinas was that “the power of rational discernment is by nature stronger in man” and alluded to Aristotle’s conviction that a woman “is defective and misbegotten” (Swanson, 1998:125). Having been the prominent figure in the history of Western thought, Aquinas had exercised as much influence on the shape of medieval thought and had played a key role in bringing Aristotle's philosophy into harmony with Christianity (Stump 2008). The command to rule over other people normally leads to supremacy, and the abuse of power by men results in gender inequality because patriarchy is a contamination that can be psychological, physical, relational, institutional, or cultural (Swanson, 1998:133).

According to Penner (1998:147), women were gradually barred from leadership positions to guard against “heresy.” Women’s struggle has been characterised by many incidents and perceptions, and that their experience of God has been declared through culture, theology, church structures, and rituals (Swanson, 1998:505); and Swanson has encouraged feminist theologians to develop new dissertations to encounter sexist dogmas and creeds. The selfishness of depriving women of the opportunity to preach, teach, or administer in the church while they are in the majority, has been questioned (Penner, 1998:146).

Patriarchy has been observed as the provocation of problems for both those that are affected and the church at large (Stoddard, (2014:18). The biggest challenge with the issue of power that men have concerning women especially has been the lack of justice since Christianity has been viewed as something that has been propagated by women in private to fight the patriarchal religious and social structures of the masculine sex (Swanson, 1998:133). Swanson does not remove the issue of patriarchy from culture and states that, traditionally, men have always been privileged through cultural power, while women remained disadvantaged. According to Ramsay (2004:67), it has been a traditional culture to use power to authorise certain groups’ access to physical, psychological, and social resources without considering those that are side-lined. This has been the "natural order" with women having been viewed as vulnerable, less able, irrational, emotional, and weak, both physically and mentally, and as not contributing anything to the world of meaning (Penner, 1998:142). King and Beattie (2005:176) suggest that for transformation to happen, men must enter into commitment engagements with feminism to resolve the problem of patriarchy.

The fourth and last key concept is hermeneutics and exegesis, which concerns the interpretation of the biblical texts (Van der Ven, 1994:79). The theological interpretation of scripture in Pentecostal churches has been perceived as another contributing factor to the exclusion of women in leadership positions. Women have been restricted from entering the “gendered spaces” of power and privileges by using the scriptures. Gabaitse (2015:4) has warned against what he calls ‘unarticulated Pentecostal hermeneutics,’ which are developed by Pentecostal members by shaping and developing an exegesis during their

services. In the book of Acts, Apostles Paul and Peter defied the demands of some members of a religious party of Pharisees stating that [they] were all saved by faith (Heb 11:1). The hermeneutics paradigm deduced here was the role of the community that came together to interpret the situation under the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Martin, 2013:84-85). According to Gabaitse (2015:4), there is a danger in Pentecostals taking and understanding the Bible at face value.

This also affects their understanding as Ballard (1995:119) explains four sources of understanding which are: "the tradition, the personal experience of teachers and students, the community of faith and the real context within which we work". Ballard, observes that, due to these challenges, biblical hermeneutics has come under the spotlight with liberation theology dominated by calls for theologians to correct the African anthropology (Ballard 1995:119). Hermeneutics and exegesis become crucial in the sense that a message could be comprehended and interpreted in different contexts and could also become distorted if a misinterpretation affects the next person negatively. Van der Ven (1994:79) has identified three phases of the hermeneutical processes, namely, "participatory understanding of the text and context concerned," "the explaining of text and context" and "the discernment, the results of the scientific analysis, and the explaining of text and context which leads to objectification." The objective of hermeneutics has been to try and get as close to the actual meaning of the text following the intended message of the biblical writers (Köstenberger, 2006:60-66). According to Gundry (1987:5) "Biblical evidence for women's place and participation has long been clouded by medievalist interpretations of Bible passages concerning women." All these arguments above show that the gender problem is very complex and needs to be studied.

1.5 Main research question

At AOG-BTG, leadership positions are open to all groups such as men, women, girls, and youth leadership, but the top tier leadership is exclusively for men only. There was hope for a change when for the first time the Teaching Team informed the 2018 annual conference that women were also eligible for election as deaconesses. So, for the first time,

the church leadership opened leadership opportunities for women. There is however a sentiment that women are still locked out of senior church leadership positions. In this study, the emphasis on senior leadership is closely linked to full ordination because senior leadership is only possible if one is ordained, so inadvertently this study is motivating for the ordination of women as ministers. Anything less will not truly empower women, for the reasons that will be explained in this dissertation, women must be given a chance at all opportunities and not selected opportunities. Women need to be able to access ordination if they are going to be empowered. In essence, the denomination does not ordain women; accordingly, this study seeks to understand what is going on in terms of women's marginalization and the extent of the marginalisation in the church because currently they are not ordained. Thus, the research question of this study is:

What are the reasons for the prohibition of women in the senior leadership positions of the Church and the consequences of this and how do women feel about it?

To achieve this research question, the focus will be placed on the following research objectives:

1. To determine the reasons and consequences of the prohibition of women in senior leadership positions in the Pentecostal tradition
2. To describe fully the lived experiences of a woman in key areas of ministry.
3. To gain an understanding of the consequences of the prohibition of women in senior leadership on church practices.

The first objective was to unpack the various and many reasons behind excluding women from leadership roles. These reasons could include cultural reasons, because of the patriarchal culture or they could include denominational traditions and interpretations of the Scriptures. It could be gender power issues outside those outlined above.

The second objective established what was going on in the lives of women within the church and the extent to which this impacted their identity, faith, and their continuing membership of the church. Women may feel like second-class believers in the church and

the view appears to be that they have no spiritual gifts. The researcher wanted to establish whether this idea was their experience and whether this kind of conduct truly disempowered them in the Christian ministry.

Regarding the third objective, the researcher attempted to understand the consequences of an all-male leadership on church practice/s and whether this approach empowers women in the ministry. The focus here would be the theological consequences, the sociological and the relational impacts. Altogether, it was hoped that the three research objectives would answer the main research question coherently and comprehensively.

1.6 Rationale for the research

This research was worthy of study because the marginalisation of women has placed women on the side-lines. Marginalisation is the source of financial, political, and social inequality in society. This inequality is the root cause of women's abuse witnessed daily in South Africa. In Pentecostal churches, this research was worthy of study because women's voices in the church have been marginalised even on decisions that involve them. These women are obliged to listen to the gospel preached by men who discriminate against them. Due to this marginalisation, women do not have opportunities to acquire leadership skills. Their desire to answer God's call to the ministry has been tarnished, and there is no hope of seeing transformation happening any time soon. Thus, there is a need to break gender stereotypes that discriminate women from leadership to support complementary church ministry. This research would also add to scholarship on Pentecostal churches because gender issues at BTG have never been dealt with which is the gap the researcher has identified and desires to fill.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study conveyed a new perspective on the issue of discrimination against women in the Pentecostal churches, especially in the African cultural context, which would add to the existing literature. The study could also add value by challenging the BTG philosophy

on the role that women can play in the senior church leadership and God's mission. This research would help the church to undertake its analysis by examining its procedures and how it contradicts the Scriptures and other churches with similar beliefs. It could also help the church to address the issue of women's experiences of discrimination. This would fill the gap that needs attention and contribute to new knowledge.

1.8 Contribution to practical theology

This study was rooted within the discipline of “practical theology” (Osmer 2008:4). “Practical theology is a critical, theological reflection on the practices of the church as they interact with the practices of the world, to ensure and enable faithful participation in God’s redemptive practice in, to and for the world” (Osmer, 2006:6). This study intended to determine the role played by women in BTG, and to understand whether women are acknowledged as appropriate leaders and contributors to the mission of God from the participants’ perspective.

1.9 Definition of terms

1.9.1 Marginalisation

Marginalisation is the process or results of making somebody feel unimportant in terms of the fact that they cannot influence any decisions or events (Amadiume & An-Na’im, 2000:90). In this study, this definition will be used because it points to the deliberate disempowerment of women by putting them in a disadvantaged position politically, economically, and socially by those that are in power.

1.9.2 Leadership

Leadership is a process during which one acquires followers that understand the way one thinks by influencing their reasoning to achieve a common goal (Northouse 2010:3). Every leader has authority vested in them to make rules that must be obeyed by the community of the church and taking decisions on behalf of “others.” However, the integrity of a leader

is based on setting a clear, constructive, and way of achieving righteousness in the church. This definition will be used to highlight the influence of leaders concerning this study.

1.9.3 Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is the belief in baptism by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe more in being spirit-filled than in being scholarly and they are more dedicated to the “intimacy with the transcendental, empowerment by the Holy Spirit and protection in the blood of Jesus” (Meyer, 2020:243). The first personal encounter of the baptism by the Holy Spirit was on the day of the Pentecost (Migwi 2016:10). I will use this definition as a working definition for this study since it is the belief of Pentecostal churches which is the case study.

1.9.4 Culture

Culture is a self-preservation system that is determined by shared beliefs, values, customs, and behaviours constructed by members of a society to survive with their ecosphere and with one another (Schneider et al 2014:370). Culture is not scholarly but is an awareness that is learned from families, peers, institutions, and media and the process of learning culture is known as enculturation (Corcoran & Clark 1984). The church culture is the way the church is governed and the way its services are conducted. These are shaped by the church's rules and procedures. This is the definition of culture that has been utilised in this study to explain its impact on the conditions of discrimination against women.

1.9.5 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a gender-based social organisation where men exercise authority over their families through to the wider community resulting in vulnerability and discrimination against women. Neuenfeldt (2015:20) defines patriarchy as a system that operates by creating privileges and oppression. This rule by fathers results in the socio-economic, religious, legal, and political legitimation of male sovereignty (Wood, 2010:21). These definitions were used to explain the role played by patriarchy in this study because the

unequal distribution of power in society often leads to the lesser value of women, their subjugation, and obligatory submission to the power of men.

1.9.6 Ordination

Ordination is a rite of dedication and the appointing of ministers. This important ceremony includes the laying on of hands by the ordained minister upon the head of the one being ordained with prayer for the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the grace required for the carrying out of the ministry. In most cases, this service also includes a public assessment of the candidate as well as a sermon or charge concerning the responsibilities of the ministry (Britannica, 2017). The ordination of a church member ensures that the individual is called to the service and that that person is eligible for election to any leadership position in the church. This was the operative definition of ordination in this study to explain the significance of ordination in the church.

1.10 Research methodology

The research paradigm for this study is interpretivism, “also called constructivism, social constructivism, or qualitative research paradigm (Makombe, 2017:3363). In this study, the research paradigm helps to develop socially constructive knowledge, also aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the topic under study as well as engaging in-depth assessment studies to obtain high-quality answers.

The research approach used was qualitative. A qualitative study is systematic and involves interpreting as a natural way of engaging in its content (Swinton & Mowat, 2016:28). Importantly, a qualitative study is inductive and strives to discover and understand the events, development, perceptions, and worldviews of the participants and the meaning they impart to their experiences (Liu, 2016:129).

The method that the researcher used was the practical theology of praxis using Osmer’s core tasks of practical theological interpretation, which include descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks (Osmer, 2008:4). Practical theology has been useful in investigating the

lived experiences of women in the church (Theron, 2011:9) because it is a reflective theory (Pieterse, 2010:6). Osmer's (2008:33) descriptive-empirical task attended to the question of "what is going on" in the community of the AOG-BTG church. To understand what was going on, the researcher interviewed participants to obtain their accounts of their lived experiences and their reasons for not allowing women to assume senior leadership positions in the church, and the impact of this on women. In other words, the descriptive-empirical task helped the researcher with the gathering of information through the interviews the researcher conducted with the chosen sample of five women and five men from the AOG-BTG. This helped the researcher to determine the respondents' overall attitudes towards the topic under study and in consequence, the descriptive-empirical task helped her to discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, and contexts (Osmer, 2008:33). The interpretive task attended to the question of "why is it going on," by highlighting the reasons these things are happening in the church. To understand and explain these patterns and the dynamics involved, this task helped the researcher to draw on the theories of the arts and sciences, such as practical theology that helped to challenge the researcher's way of thinking as it is fundamentally aimed at understanding the truth (Osmer, 2016:10). These two tasks are underpinned by the requisite standards and norms, while the interpretive task requires "sagely wisdom" that encompasses the characteristics of "thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment" (Osmer, 2008:82). According to Osmer, "thoughtfulness" is to be considerate or to be careful not to inconvenience or harm others (Osmer, 2008:82). According to this study, that would have to do with how men treat women in the church. These steps were followed because, in qualitative research, the researcher ought to study phenomena in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Osmer, 2016:28). The significance of the "theoretical interpretation" is that it reminds individuals that only God is perfect and that, unlike God, their knowledge is flawed (Osmer, 2008:83-84). The capacity to interpret episodes, situations, and contexts transpired through "wise judgment" in three interrelated ways. The first one was to note the relevant details of specific events and situations. The second was to discern the ethical principle and the third was to determine the most effective means of achieving these ends

considering the limitations and a chance of a particular time and space (Osmer, 2008:83-84).

1.10.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this research was grounded in the work of Mercy Ewudziwa Amba Eduyoye, who has been extremely expressive when it comes to the issue of gender, especially concerning culture and patriarchal experiences (Gathogo, 2010:16). Gender issues have been explored by many writers around the globe, but Oduyoye presents the gender subject with considerable involvement based on the community, the church, and the organisational experiences highlighting the violence and oppression against women under patriarchal systems as African women (Gathogo, 2010:16). Oduyoye (2001) focuses on the troubles of women and their wish to have a liberated theology and justice and her perspective is presented against the backdrop of the “lived experiences of African women.” Oduyoye (2001:38) states that "African women's theology is developing in the context of global challenges and situations in Africa's religious-culture that call for transformation." Through the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), Oduyoye has borrowed from both the principles of biblical and cultural hermeneutics as she expresses doubt about Christianity helping to solve the socio-cultural challenges faced by women in Africa.

1.10.2 The sample

The sample for this study is the Assemblies of God - Back to God (AOG-BTG) denomination. To answer the main question, the researcher used a selective sample that comprised ten participants, namely, five men from the overall leadership of the church and five women from women’s senior leadership. They all have extensive knowledge of the ministry in the church.

1.10.3 Data collection

Ten semi-structured one-to-one interviews with five men and five women were conducted to probe this complex topic and to access rich personal data and gain a detailed picture of a participant's perceptions of the topic at hand (Baškarada, 2013:8). In the process, open-ended interview questions were used. This type of interview gave both the researcher and the participants' flexibility as she was able to identify and follow through the interesting strands that emerged during the interview while the participants were able to express broad views when interviewed (cf. Baškarada, 2013:8).

1.10.4 Data Analysis

The type of analysis that was used in this study was thematic analysis (TA), which is "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes from the collected data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:6). Thematic analysis can be used with a wide range of research questions and can be applied to analyse different types of data (Clarke & Braun, 2013:3) to reflect reality (Braun & Clarke, 2006:14). It is also useful in "the conceptualizations, meaningful knowledge production, and key constructs such as themes, as well as for analytic procedures" (Braun & Clarke, 2021:1). The method that was used to explain and interpret the qualitative data was Atlas.ti, which is Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS). Patterns of meaning were identified across a dataset through the process of data familiarisation, data coding, and generating themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013:2) and also provided an answer to the research question. This was the process of open coding of data whereby the segments that gave meaning to the transcripts and field notes were identified and labelled by reading and re-reading the data and that were broken into parts to form the basis of analysing data in a research report (Clarke & Braun, 2013:3). Codes and encoding were used as a way of indexing or identifying data types. Coding is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana 2009:3). The data were then categorised by moving from the range of data to the shapes of the data because category and formation embody the core of qualitative data analysis (Saldana, 2009:11). The practical evidence and intellectual ideas were then brought together to see whether new ideas and theories had been created

(Schurink *et al.*, 2011:409) The six stages of thematic analyses that were followed were: familiarisation with the data and this included the transcripts of the verbal data, initial codes were then generated, followed by searching for themes, after which the themes were reviewed, defined and named and, finally, a report was produced (Braun & Clarke, 2006:16-23)

1.11 Ethical issues

Ethics “is a set of morals that are suggested by an individual or group and are widely accepted, and present rules and behavioural expectations to employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students” (Strydom, 2011:114). Ethical guidelines are “the basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his or her own conduct” (Strydom, 2011:114). The ethical clearance for the study was given by the academic department and the College of Human Science (CHS) at the University of South Africa. The research permission to conduct the research was attained and the university research ethics application was completed (see Appendix A). Consent to conduct the research was also acquired from the BTG church leadership. Ethics also concern the dignity of the participants which ought not to be violated. For this study, the participants provided their informed consent before taking part in the study. The researcher was open and truthful with the participants and informed them about the purpose of the research; what it was about and what they could expect (Strydom, 2011:115). She also ensured that there was informed consent with the times and the dates of the planned interviews. She built trust between herself and the participants and maintained that relationship until the end of the study. Participants were guaranteed the confidentiality of the collected data so that it would not be leaked (Strydom, 2011:117-118). The researcher also had a moral obligation to protect the participants; therefore, all the participants were interviewed at their place of choice (Strydom, 2011:115). Participants were informed that their willingness to participate in the interviews was not compulsory and that they had the right to withhold information at will, and would be allowed to withdraw whenever they wanted to (Strydom, 2011:116). This approach demonstrated the sensitivity and flexibility of the researcher. The researcher also made the participants aware that they had a right to the completed research should they

wish to see it (Strydom, 2011:119). These interviews were conducted in December 2019 and in January 2020 before the onset of the Covid19 pandemic in South Africa, the researcher was not distracted by the pandemic and did not have to adhere to the Covid 19 regulations. Therefore, she was able to travel to the various regions to conduct interviews with all the participants without any interruptions. Accordingly, the researcher maintained the moral and ethical principles of the academic institution as well as those of the church.

1.12 Role of the researcher

For “dependability” and quality research Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) recommend that the researcher must remain subjective and refrain from prioritising his or her interests or opinions, suggesting that in case of any vested interest, this has to be explained during the whole study. This researcher is a member of the BTG and, as a black African woman; gender discrimination is something she has encountered, so she is personally invested in this topic although she also respects the professionalism of being a researcher. It was therefore important for her to be neutral, open, and hear what the participants had to say. For this reason, the researcher needed to rely on the sample to get a new perspective on the issues under investigation. Lincoln and Guba (1985:300) emphasise credibility, neutrality, dependability, and transferability as the vital criteria for quality in qualitative paradigms. The only way of ensuring reliability and validity is to discover the truth (Yin, 2009:40) and there can be no validity without reliability and no credibility without dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:316). The researcher was involved with the participants on a continuous and intensive basis that comprised a variety of strategic, ethical, and personal issues (Creswell, 2009:187) and there was no compensation for active participation in this study.

1.13 Outline of chapters

1.13.1 Chapter 1

Chapter one comprised the introduction, background of the research question, the research problem statement, the main research question, the research objectives, the rationale of the research, the significance of the study, the contribution to practical theology, the definition of terms, the research methodology, the theoretical framework, the data collection process, the data analysis process, ethical issues and the role of researcher. This chapter also identified the essential background and the drive for this study. It explored the reasons for the discrimination of women in the AOG-BTG denomination since women are not eligible for being elected to senior leadership positions nor are, they ordained. The key terms that were used within this study were also defined.

1.13.2 Chapter 2

Chapter two was the introduction of literature that explained the key concepts that influence the marginalisation of women in the Pentecostal tradition in South Africa. They are the socio-cultural factors, patriarchal tendencies in the Christian church, leadership and the abuse of power, and hermeneutics and exegesis. African women's theology grounded in the work of Mercy Oduyoye was also highlighted. In addition, women in ministry, including the ordination of women as well as Pentecostal women in ministry, are also part of this chapter.

1.13.3 Chapter 3

This chapter dealt with the fieldwork, which included the research design and methodology which was qualitative. The methodological inquiry pointed to the methods and procedures that would make the inquiry possible. The method that the researcher used was the practical theology of praxis using Osmer's core tasks of practical theological interpretation, which are the descriptive-empirical and the interpretive tasks respectively. The sample was selected from members of the Assemblies of God – Back to God. The relationship between the research paradigm, the research methodology, and the design was highlighted to reflect

a clear understanding of the research process, which was inductive. Furthermore, the data gathering, and data analysis processes were discussed.

1.13.4 Chapter 4

In this chapter, the focus was on summarising and creating arguments on the findings, also taking cognisance of the key concepts of the literature review. These included the results and discussions of the results that entailed the analysis of the data and the concluding interpretations.

1.13.5 Chapter 5

This chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings, the academic scholarship, the contribution to theology and the research limitations were also indicated.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISING WOMEN'S POSITION IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a literature review that Fink (2014) defines as a wide-ranging summary of previous research on a specific topic that entails providing the reader with the background to the research topic as well as the extensive reference to the related research and theories. A literature review acknowledges the work of previous researchers, and in so doing, reassures the reader that the work being done is designed properly. A literature review also gives the reader a full understanding of the developments in the field as its record, defines, summarises, evaluates accurately, and elucidates the preceding investigation.

The conceptualisation of this chapter is; firstly, the socio-cultural perspectives are unpacked as well as the patriarchy in culture and how women become gender-stereotyped. The second part looks at patriarchal tendencies in the Christian church. Because this study focuses on religious church positions, issues of leadership and power will be reviewed and the role that biblical hermeneutic and exegesis makes in stereotyping women in particular ways. The third was the African feminism studies and this is critical because women have had to develop their theology to express themselves in the church, and the key theorist in this regard is Mercy Amba Oduyoye who was also the theorist in this research. Oduyoye has played a key role in promoting the role of women. Finally, it was considered how leadership positions exist in other traditions. All this literature will provide background information for this research.

2.2 Socio-cultural perspective

The first key concept is the 'socio-cultural factors. "Culture" is an encompassing term that is used to refer to a certain way of life that is determined by a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, and behaviours constructed by members of a society to survive with their ecosphere and with one another (Schneider *et al.*, 2014:370). Culture is also viewed by

societies as an action system for existence and for success in life which Kenneth Gergen defines as processes by which people “come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live” (Smit & Chetty, 2018:7). “There are cultural values that come up with myths that portray women’s image negatively leading to negative perceptions of their performance and denial of opportunity to participate in church activities” (Wachania & Ndengwah, 2017:426). The participation of women in religious ceremonies is a case in point because individuals have advanced arguments based on traditional African culture (Mombo, 2019:7). This would also mean that a man’s social value is determined by their social status, which comprised his income, career success, and impulse for professional growth (Zahra, 2014:117).

The accumulation of cultural behaviours could differ from society to society or one ethnic community to another because it could be affected by the development of culture and the communication of ideas since culture is created and socialised in humans by humans according to the rules of a particular culture. Socio-cultural perspectives are attributes of a setting that are acquired cumulatively over time during an individual’s lifecycle, which, in turn, shape the humans' behaviour through the combined efforts of the society (Schneider *et al.*, (2014:370). Because these aspects are transmitted from generation to generation through learning, they are perceived as a symbol for action for survival (Pillay, 2017:2). Culture could however be utilised on a more positive note for the society than on the downside, as Vivien Burr asserts that people have built their real forms of reality as a culture and society within certain historical contexts (Smit & Chetty 2018:9). There was also a perception among some people that women were not fully developed as humans. Aristotle, for instance, saw a woman as less than a fully formed person since he referred to women as half-baked, a “misbegotten man” and a “monstrosity” (Weitz, 2016:248). According to the “Platonic and Aristotelian advice of dominance” women, children, and slaves are characterized by a multitude of different desires and pleasures and pains and they deserve to be controlled (Winter, 2016:9). Aristotle reasoned that subordination was a matter of ability and that hierarchical authority is bestowed according to one’s capacity of rationality and therefore according to him children, women, and slaves lacked this (Winter, (2016:9).

The male masculine physical appearance and psychological strength that involved beliefs and behaviours that opposed womanliness also had a direct influence on the sidelining of women as women were perceived to have a weaker physical appearance and were regarded as uneducated. However, Alexander and Bowers (2018:72) believe that the education of a woman would not change the situation; instead, she should be expected to “stay in her place.” According to Jacobs (2019:8), the culture of marginalising women as an expressive form of the social and material life practices, that is a worrying factor that limits spiritual growth. The discrimination against women and gender is not a new phenomenon as is evident in the writings of the Greek and Roman authors. Accordingly, in the male-dominated societies of Israel, the attitude where women were regarded as inferior was found frequently (Bellis, 2007:25). Most of the time, women were associated negatively with religious roles but were instead associated with procreation (Kretzschmar, 2001:45). These negative connotations were sometimes empowered by scriptures that connected women with uncleanness (Lev 15).

The research shows that male dominance in the study of religion in Africa was carried over from Europe to Africa and resulted in religious studies missing an opportunity to develop a different outlook in Africa (Dube, 2017:145). In this regard, Dube (2017:145) views “the Bible [as] a Jewish book that models different gender constructions, according to their cultural, religious and economic understanding”. Women would be registered as part of their father’s property until they get married and they would be transferred to their husbands as part of their property (Weitz, 2016:248). Their laws protected the legitimacy of man as the king of the house and in Babylon law; rape was treated as a form of property damage requiring a rapist to pay a fine to the husband or father of the raped woman (Weitz, 2016:248). However, in Africa, the issue of women's oppression emerged as a problem of starvation in some areas. During a drought in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, families marry their daughters early to reduce the size of the house and the number of people who need to be fed and to use the dowry provided by the groom's family as a source of income (Le Masson *et al.*, 2016:10). The African women whose challenging struggles were instigated by cultural oppression reflected the many possibilities of violence including verbal and

emotional abuse (Le Masson *et al.*, 2016:7). Tom Andrews stated that culture is concerned with the nature and construction of knowledge and the way it transpires and gives meaning and the implication it has in society (Smit & Chetty, 2018:7).

2.3 Patriarchal tendencies in the Christian church

Patriarchy influences the marginalisation of women in the church. Patriarchy is a belief system that endorses the supremacy of males (Van Klinken, 2016:30). According to Hendriks *et al.*,(2012:105), males are recognised in the lineage and inheritance that leads to women and children oppression, and it divides humans according to gender and their distinct roles, rules of behaviour, characteristics, and activities. According to Candace West and Zimmerman, “gender is the product of social doings of some sort,” assigned to men and women (Smit & Chetty, 2018:9). African culture has a great deal of influence on the religions that were established in Africa by emphasising the divisions under which discrimination is practised against women who are relegated to participating in lesser roles (Wachania & Ndengwah, 2017:426).

The patriarchal tendencies validated men as legitimate owners of authority that must remain in supremacy, while women must obey them; besides, women have generally experienced sexism and patriarchal oppression (Van Klinken, 2016:30). According to Wachania and Ndengwah (2017:426-427), since men have endorsed themselves as trendsetters and leaders, women are therefore seen as followers or helpers and are treated accordingly. As such, it was rare to find women endorsed as skilful leaders even though they had equivalent determinations to pursue their gifts and careers. African culture has a great deal of influence on the religions established in Africa by emphasising divisions by discriminating against and being made to participate in lesser roles. Furthermore, African women were denied an opportunity to study by the systematic and deliberate colonial policies (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:72). As a result, men's disrespect for women increased, both in terms of the way they lead their homes and their marriages using authority and violence (Van Klinken, 2013:248). Women were perceived as lacking leadership skills, but Wachania and Ndengwah (2017:426) cite marginalisation as the basis of the problem since

women lacked opportunities to learn leadership skills. Importantly, Van Klinken (2013:250) believes that this male domination and attitudes of superiority over women are the “distortion of manhood.” Regarding all these obstacles, Fiedler (2016: 33) states that research shows that women's greatest aspirations are gender equality and equal access to power and knowledge.

2.4 Leadership and the abuse of power

The third key concept was ‘leadership and the abuse of power.’ According to Northouse (2010:3), leadership is “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” On the other hand, “power can be regarded as the ability to act conclusively with intention regardless of the contest coming from those who oppose the intents” (Ramsay, 2004:65). The term “leadership” is regarded as interpersonal by Kouzes and Posner (2011:1) who view it as “a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow.” According to Kouzes and Posner (2011:1), followers give their preferred leaders power. “[Power] is a contamination that can be psychological, physical, relational, institutional or cultural, but the command to rule to power over other people normally leads to supremacy, resulting in gender inequality” (Jacobs, 2019:9). has established that power has contributed considerably to the male supremacy in the religious spaces so much that those that possess power are reluctant to share it with “others” and a relationship of power would play the part of an adversary, target, and support or handle power relations (Le Masson *et al.*, 2016:7). Hendriks *et al.*, (2012:90) allude to the fact that with all the chain of command, the church has a great deal of power that constructs positions of power and the problem is that those in power no longer want to share it. These positions of power are normally occupied by men, from the minister or pastor, the executive leadership, the elders, and the deacons (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:90). Due to these power dynamics and potential threats to power, any effort at promoting those who are traditionally marginalised would encounter retaliation from the powerholders (Le Masson *et al.*, 2016:7).

It is understood that God gave power to humankind to rule as both man and women were created in the image of God, but power struggles erupted with “one side seeking to hold on to what was perceived as rightfully theirs, while the other struggled to acquire the same (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:85). The “difference in men and women’s experiences is understood as a difference in social position and power: Men are in command and women are to obey” (Van Klinken, 2016:30). Power is seen as something forceful and where there is power, there is resistance. From time to time, power is the motive for the selective application of scriptures, an apparent weakness in hermeneutics (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:90). Wachege (1992:93) points out that discrimination does not only hurt women, but the entire church, and that there is an impression that the factors that led to this attitude were power-related and were layered with elements of Biblical scriptures and the denominational doctrines (Bellis, 2007:25). These intended effects left the church soiled with acts of perpetrating injustices on women by silencing them, creating predominantly male-dominated hierarchical structures (Wachege, 1992:93). In turn, the absence of these women in the telling of the story pointed to subordination and oppression that is still applicable in the church today (Kobo, 2018:2).

2.5 Hermeneutics and exegesis

Our fourth and last key concept was ‘hermeneutics and exegesis.’ Hermeneutics is defined as the interpretation of biblical and other texts, while exegesis is described as the act of drawing the meaning out of a biblical text and a critical explanation or interpretation of a text (Bleicher, 2017:1). According to Hendriks *et al.*, (2012:86), the Bible continues to be an extremely commanding guide for Christians, and the objective of hermeneutics is to get the closest interpretation to the actual meaning of the text following the intended message of the biblical writers (Köstenberger, 2006:60-66), but how we relate to and interpret the Bible are part of the challenging processes. According to O’Sullivan (2015:2), the “texts do not speak for themselves but have to be interpreted, a reader has to choose principles of interpretation and inner dispositions that can unlock the text’s meaning concerning his or her purpose in reading it.” Accordingly, there should be a balanced interpretation of the

Bible, which demands that the interpreters remember the context since the Bible is written by diverse writers from varied socio-cultural settings (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:108).

According to Duncan (2019:1), the leadership of women in the ministry cannot be discussed without taking the biblical and historical hermeneutics of women's lack of power and authority into account. Duncan cites conservative gospel or pietistic hermeneutics, which promoted the verbal reliability of the Scriptures as one of the problems in variable ways. Hendriks *et al.* (2012:137-138) encourage a liberal interpretation that transfers the authoritativeness of the Word to the context. According to Hendriks *et al.* (2012:85), the Scriptures bear witness to the patriarchal tendencies that held that women existed differently in society and these assumptions were maintained and are still operational in different churches today due to differing hermeneutics. That is why women are perceived as trying, by all means, to usurp power from those who see themselves as the rightful owners of the power (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:85). It is assumed that the scars of women's oppression that are observed in our communities emanated from those who based their views on Paul's letters that propagate that women should submit to their husbands as a justification (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:101). These passages enforce women to submit themselves not just to their husbands, but to men in general, underlining the type of behaviour expected from a good wife (Laguzia, 2017:5).

Hendriks *et al.* (2012:135) warn against the temptation of eisegesis which means reading into the text what one would like to see, especially when dealing with controversial issues. Hendriks underscores the significance of the original context and takes cognisance of whether the texts are proscriptive or descriptive. The Pentecostal scripture interpretation is perceived to promote female domesticity as well as the subordination of women, which Gabaitse (2015:30) regards as the definitive characteristics of patriarchy that disguise the authentic roles of women. Gabaitse (2015:3) states that instead of devaluing male dominance, Pentecostal churches were adding salt to the wound, and were reinforcing it by promoting the literal reading of the Scriptures that undermined women, while promoting the female submission and the headship of the male. According to Fidler (2016:28), the African culture hermeneutics and power relations between men and women in the African

context relational hermeneutics is critical of the liberation of women in society. The rationale of these researchers is acknowledged by Schreiter and Jørgensen (2013:13) who believe that St Paul summed this misperception up in the book he wrote to Eph (1:10) and Col (1:19-20) in which he states that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. This does not mean that men and women are identical physically, but that God reconciled everyone to himself through Christ, and has given everybody the ministry of reconciliation (Schreiter & Jørgensen, 2013:13). The issue of interpreting the Bible has been perceived as a dilemma by Letty Russel (1985) and Duncan (2019:2) who suggest that it is the Bible that needs to be liberated from its captivators.

2.6 African women's theology

Undoubtedly, the issue and position of women in the Christian ministry have been displeasing and a cause for concern for far too long, and, historically. it has created an interesting field of study for many theologians (Duncan, 2019:1). This subject presented the position and status of women in the church and the connotation attached to it. It was grounded in the work of Mercy Ewudziwa Amba Oduyoye, a Ghanaian Methodist theologian who is well respected for her work in African women theology and her greatest interest has always been on the cutting edge of developing African women's theology (Van Klinken, 2016:30). The reason the work of Oduyoye was preferred was because of her extensive experience in the field of women's theology, especially African women's theology and her ideas link up directly with the research question underpinning this study which points to the marginalisation of women in religious leadership positions in the church. In her published books and articles, Oduyoye has addressed numerous subjects, such as the doctrine of God, the Bible, folklore, African culture, the church mission, and spirituality (Pui-lan, 2004:7). African women's theology has demonstrated among other things on how theological issues, such as the creation and Christology have impacted African women's daily lives to theology (Oduyoye, 2001).

“Christology is the branch of Christian Theology which studies the person and work of Christ investigating who he was (or is) and what he did (or does) (Christie, 2016:1),” One

of Oduyoye's central concerns has been the ways the African religion and culture shaped and influenced the experiences of African women (Pui-Lan 2004:7). While women are determined to express their views in theology, the culture is affected strongly by the impact of gender discrimination on the church.

Oduyoye has been extremely expressive in her work on gender-based discrimination issues especially in one of her published books *Introducing African Women's Theology* (Van Klinken 2016: 30). According to Hendriks *et al.* (2012:105), gender is the division of people into male and female with their accompanying socially constructed roles, rules of behaviour, activities, and attributes. Gender issues have been explored by many writers around the globe, but Oduyoye approaches the gender subject with a considerable emphasis on the community, the church, and organisational experiences as an African woman. Oduyoye's perspective on gender issues is presented with the backdrop of the "lived experiences of African women" as gender problems affect society at large, with the church not being exempted either. According to Phiri (2004:17), African women theologians have been rallying to make it known to their black African theologians. that women's issues were being side-lined. Women have spoken out about the fact that they formed the majority of the oppressed, having experienced colonialism, apartheid, and the many cruelties that were unique to Southern Africa because their oppression was accompanied by the denial of justice based on gender.

Oduyoye notes that the social exclusion of women is the reason their voices and experiences of life have not been integrated into theology and that the restriction and prohibition of women were a result of the influence of religious traditions (Van Klinken, 2016:30). Oduyoye (2001) refers to both the principles of biblical and cultural hermeneutics and highlights the troubles of women and their wish to have a liberated theology and justice. Accordingly, Oduyoye challenges the limitation of women's leadership to women's affairs as women also desire to be involved in the decision-making regarding matters that involve the church as a whole (Oduyoye, 1995:183). Women yearn to be given a chance to serve to their fullest capacity sharing "a sense of call" and "fulfill their call and vocation" (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:28); using their gifts of the Spirit

(Alexander & Bowers, 2018:90). The desire for women is to defend the Gospel and be “bearers of the gifts of the Spirit” that were awarded to them and to be affirmed since they both bore the image of God (Alexander & Bowers 2018:28). However, the African culture has put women in an inferior position that branded them intellectually less than men, assuming that women depended on the men’s rationality and that women were expected to support that (Frahm-Arp, 2015:4).

According to Dube (2017), Oduyoye envisaged compassion and solidarity for women, hence she established the “The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians” in 1989, which is a union of African women theologians whose aim is to review their position as women of faith within the confines of religion, culture, politics and socio-economic spheres (Ayanga, 2016:1). Its objective is ‘to write and publish theological literature written by African women from their own experience of religion and culture on this continent’ (Ayanga, 2016:1). Women’s voice and experiences were initially not integrated into theology and women’s exclusion on so many levels whether it was in the church or theological education. Even when one would go to the library, there would be no research on African women’s experiences of life. Accordingly, this gap gave birth to the Circles stating that women needed to speak in their voices and those voices were going to be the starting point of their research (Oduyoye, 2001). The Circle grew and became interdenominational. Oduyoye reconstructed theology to make it liberating for women because most of the people in the church were and are still women. Therefore, it has been a circle of women (Oduyoye, 2001).

The story of the Circle of Concerned African Theologians marks an exciting moment for some African women theologians as it is associated with the Bible story of a woman who had suffered from the issue of blood for years until she received healing through touching the garment of Jesus Christ (Njoroge, 2004:32). This group of women is acquainted with this piece of scripture as they sought healing from the deepest wounds of being immersed, silenced, ignored, and humiliated by men (Njoroge, 2004:32). Through this Pan-African multi-religious academic association, Oduyoye strived to encourage women to speak in their voices and to express their experiences in writing on how religions affect their lives

(Dube, 2017:146). Oduyoye (1995:183) doubts if Christianity has contributed to the cultural challenges facing women in Africa as she leads the readers to the sources of African women's theology (Van Klinken, 2016: 30). Importantly, Oduyoye (2001:12-13) believes that women must stand up for what is right because “there is no authenticity in life and culture and no naked truth in human affairs”. Furthermore, Oduyoye (2003:4-5) perceives culture as repeatedly being used as a way of protecting actions that need investigation and a polite way of protecting actions that require their analysis and interpretation to transform this culture. Audre Lorde (1984:43) summarises the vision and function of the Circle by saying: “And where the words of women are crying to be heard, we must each recognize our responsibility to seek those words out, to read them and share them and examine them in their pertinence to our lives.”

According to Oduyoye, the issue of culture requires humans to be rational and deliberate about it as a matter of fact so that all can change it, but the domestic cultural practices at that moment were holding on to the power to prevent these confrontations (Oduyoye, 2001:13). Oduyoye (2003:4-5) asserts that in the African culture, a “free woman spells disaster,” therefore a woman was expected to have a superpower in a form of a male, so much so that women who were able to manage their affairs were considered an insult to patriarchy. Thus “African women's theology was developing in the context of global challenges and situations in Africa's religious-culture that called for transformation” (Oduyoye 2001:38). Much as women were determined to express their views on the subject of theology, the culture ignited the forces of power and influences the immorality of the marginalisation of women in the church (Oduyoye, 2001:13).

African women theologians also intended to address and transform patriarchy (Van Klinken, 2016:30). In most instances, the cultural issues result in pain and brokenness and are frequently driven by the notion of patriarchy, which is exacerbating the problems (Stoddard, 2014:18). Oduyoye realised the divergences of not just women from the African Continent, but from outside the continent itself. This became evident especially when she tried to comprehend the viewpoint of African women theologians’ experiences regarding theology where she experienced a challenge with explaining their position as a unit. Oduyoye realised that there were many Africas – “the Africa of the rich and the Africa of

the poor; the Africa of men who command and that of women who obey; and all of them were experienced differently” (Van Klinken, 2016:30). Through the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), Oduyoye continued her efforts to highlight the violence and oppression against women under patriarchal systems and structures not only within the church organisation. “EATWOT is a network of theologians mainly from Africa, Asia, and Latin America which focuses on liberating the poor by creating a theology that is relevant for their contexts of seeking freedom, gender co-responsibility, and racial and ethnic equality (Joseph, 2015:x).

Oduyoye (2002:96) reveals that Christian writers and preachers lacked faithfulness to their African languages; whereas faithfulness is the one quality that would end uncertainty and translate into the inclusion of both women and men with humanity. According to Oduyoye, those African theologians who had used liberation models to express the church’s faith were preoccupied with these “structures of justice, analysing class “economics and race skin colour” and had ignored the gender challenges in the process (Oduyoye, 2002:96). According to Oduyoye (2002:96,) “African theologians had not related their God-talk to issues of justice” and she rejects the idea of women who view themselves as victims; instead, she encouraged them to continue to fight to change the circumstances (Oduyoye, 2001:37). According to Stoddard (2014:18), it is confusing how those that are patriarchal see Jesus who is associated with the poor and the weak as the head of the church when they are doing the opposite.

2.7 Women in Christian ministry

After reflecting on the religious teachings of African women, the focus will shift to women in the ministry. This subject entails how women are understood in the Christian ministry and their positions in the ministry. The transformation processes that have taken place in different mainline denominations, such as, the Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches are highlighted including the initiation and development of women ordination.

2.7.1 Ordination

Ordination is a sign that those ordained are fully-fledged workers in the church and this means that ordained women also fall into this category. Yet, the issue of the ordination of women in Pentecostal churches is the most significant matter that is at the heart of this study. According to Macy (2007:7)

Three of the earliest Greek rituals, uniformly one in agreement, hand down to us the ordination of deaconesses, administered by almost the same rites and words by which deacons [were ordained]. Both are called ordination. Both are celebrated at the altar by the bishop [...] liturgical space. Hands are placed on both while the bishop offers prayers. [...] the chalice full of the blood of Christ was placed in the hands for them to taste.

The worldwide progress of the ordination of women in Christian churches and the challenges they have faced is highlighted.

2.7.2 The global ordination of women in ministry

The local church cannot escape the impact of globalisation, since the successes achieved through the transformation and anti-oppressive movements concerning women have been occurring in all spheres of life, including denominations universally. Many denominations that have seen improvements about transformation are the mainstream or mainline churches and they are continuing to make inroads in changing the rigidity in church leadership positions. While denominations such as the United Methodist Church, the Anglican, the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, and many other churches have been allowing women into the ordained ministry, other groups are still thinking about whether they must even start a discussion regarding this issue. The issue of women in the church leadership remains a controversial one, though and there is a need to close the gender gap created by these inequalities; however, religious ideologies and institutions are forces opposing transformation (Van Klinken, 2013:253). Professor Basset of the Christianity Nazarene Theological Seminary asserts that ordination in the ministry is no one's right, but that ordination is a matter of the discernment of a call to preach and the discernment of gifts and graces (Bassett, 1993:12). According to Fiedler (2016:57), there would be no difference between the behaviour of men and women when women take over leadership

positions. Fidler postulates that if women could get an opportunity to occupy the center, they would do exactly what men are doing and oppress others, but that could not be the reason to prevent women from getting leadership positions.

The ordination of women in ministry in diverse denominations was explored by starting abroad.

2.7.3 The ordination of women in ministry in different denominations abroad

Women ordination is not an unfamiliar thing as in denominations such as the Church of Nazarene and the mainstream churches like the Methodist, the Anglican, the Presbyterian, and the Lutheran Churches respectively. The Church of the Nazarene supports the rights of women to use their God-given spiritual gifts within the church and has ordained women in all offices of ministry in the church from its inception in 1908 and their USA/Canada Region 25% of its ordained ministers were women (Sanchez, 2010:17).

In the Methodist church, the first woman to be acknowledged by the movement was the mother of John and Charles Wesley, Susanna Wesley whom the Methodists refer to as the “Mother of “Methodism” (Dlamini, 2017:3). The Methodist church was founded by John Wesley within the Anglican Church of England and was referred to as the Methodist Church by Wesley’s haters due to the emphasis he placed on systems, organisation, and discipline on the life of a Christian (Kretzschmar, 2005:101). Importantly, Susanna was a spiritual and theological mentor to her children and groomed them in Christianity even after their father Rev Samuel Wesley had died in 1735 (Dlamini, 2017:3). Other early Methodist preachers were Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher, and Hester Rogers (Jensen, 2013:113). According to Troxell (1999:119), in the “modern” beginnings for the United Methodist Church, women in the ministry were elected as laywomen. These women took their baptism seriously and showed commitment by learning the stories of women from the Bible and secured them as a foundation to teach other women. They started evangelising and raised funds to support other churches overseas until they went there as missionaries themselves. “With the formation of The Methodist Church, in the Methodist

Protestant Church in 1939, women were given full clergy membership to join with the Methodist Episcopal Church (which ordained women still but did not grant conference membership” (Troxell, 1999:124). It was in 1956 when the General Conference of the Methodist Church decided for voting for the full access to the "itinerant ministry" which included women with their appointments guaranteed. This did not happen without a fight as women had battled to be recognised, with the *Women's Division of the Board of Missions* now the *Board of Global Ministries* has written several petitions since it started in the 1940s (Troxell, 1999:125).

In t the Presbyterian Church, the ordination of Margaret Towner in the Northern Presbyterian Church (United Presbyterian Church in the United States of American) in 1956, was seen as the rise of women in the pulpit. According to Rose (2021), the ceremony was held at The First Presbyterian Church Syracuse in New York.

At the Anglican Church, women were first admitted to the Congregational Union Assembly in 1892. Even though they were already serving as deacons in many churches, a turning point in the Ministry of Women came when Constance Coltman was ordained in 1917 (Kaye, 1990:107). However, a great advancement took place in 1964 following the change of the wording of the Canon Law regarding the status of deaconesses. The St Louis General Convention changed the status from ‘appointed’ to ‘ordered’ “which meant that ordaining women as deaconesses conferred on them what is referred to as holy orders” (Holmes & Min, 1987:1).

According to the Lutheran World Federation (2016:12), the first women to be ordained were Eleonore Volz and Carlotte Essig in 1968. However, Else Beuning, Elisabeth Mack, and Frieda Sauter were installed through the laying on of hands in 1937 in the Central Western Europe Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg.

2.7.4 Ordination of women in the ministry in different denominations in Africa

Christianity in Africa is the product of different Christianities from all over Europe since some denominations are known to be the Roman Catholics, the Anglican, the Dutch

reformed, the Methodists, the Lutheran, and the Presbyterian, amongst others. Many churches are still struggling to make sense of the situation and are struggling to accept women as appropriate leaders and, therefore, do not ordain them. Female theologians, such as Oduyoye have been attempting to grapple with these challenges and have been trying to find out whether the problems that are confronting the Church are social, traditional, cultural, and hermeneutical liturgical, or patriarchal (Oduyoye, 2001). Men did not care that women were in the majority; instead, they were constantly pressuring them and keeping them silent in the pews. Nonetheless, women have been the silent forces driving the success in their denominations and they kept on sustaining them with their unceasing devotion, even though they continued to be perceived as second-class believers (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012). Their needs are regarded as insignificant and therefore, they were ignored (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:99). On the other hand, the few male church members are given priority to take officially recognised leadership positions regardless of their expertise. Men hardly fellowshiped, and in most cases, they were late for church, as Murrow (2005:51) attests that “women attend the church in greater numbers than men.” During the week, most people that were working in the church were women, while men were occupied elsewhere (Murrow, 2005:91). On Sunday men would play golf, softball, watch television, mow the lawn, and slept (Murrow, 2005:iv).

Different denominations in Africa have seen transformation and the empowerment of women taking place during different periods in history. For more than three decades, Africa has seen ordained women in both the clergy and the laity, while these women worked in different leadership positions as deacons, priests, and ministers in various denominations (Mombo, 2019:198). “Through the ordination debate, women had begun questioning their positions and some of them had been ordained and appointed to key positions in their churches” (Mombo, 2019:199). Because of these efforts by women, the ordination of women has become the norm in many denominations, especially in the mainline churches, which started in the late 1970s, even though some of the churches have not started with the ordination of women in their churches (Mombo, 2019:199).

Concerning the Anglican Church in Africa, the Anglican Church has several different provinces, which are grouped and known as the Conference of Anglican Provinces in Africa (Mombo, 2019). Since 1978 the Anglican Communion has seen many changes, but the transformation in Africa was observed after the Lambeth Conferences of 1988 (Mombo, 2019:216). According to Mombo (2019:216), the ordination of women differed from one province and diocese to another and this was sometimes due to cultural beliefs and sometimes due to a lack of not just theological education, but basic education, as a result, there are still a few women priests compared to men. In Kenya, for example, there were 125 women priests in the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) in 1988 and the first woman to be ordained as a priest was Lucia Okuthe in 1983 and in January 2021 ACK announced that Rev. Emily Onyango was their first female bishop (Masai, 2021). According to Masai (2021), Onyango is the deputy bishop of Bondo and is expected to assist Bishop David H. Kodia in the training of the clergy. Her occupation also includes programming for women's ministry and gender issues (Masai, 2021).

Mombo (2019:216) states that in Burundi, there are four women priests. The Episcopal Church of Rwanda, which has nine dioceses, has 19 women serving in the church and ordained the first women in 1996. According to *The International Anglican Women's Network* (2021), the Democratic Republic of Congo formerly known as Zaire has five ordained women and 11 women evangelists.

In the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the first woman to be ordained as a minister in Kenya was Rev. Nyambura Njoroge in 1980 (Gathogo, 2019:5). According to Gathogo (2019), women in Kenya have been ordained since 1980, but the Reformed Church of East Africa has not started yet. According to the Lutheran World Federation (2016:9), the first woman to be ordained in Africa was Dr. Bekure Dhaba from The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) in 2000, followed by Jeannette Ada Maina, Halema Rita Dewa, and Eliane Nock Djobdi of Cameroon in 2012. In Nigeria, there still seems to be problems with women ordination, especially in the Anglican Communion and the Methodist Churches respectively. In Nigeria, women were ordained for the commencement of the permanent vocational Diaconate Ministry but were still not allowed to be ordained

as priests (Mombo, 2019:216). In 1993, Bishop Haruna, who was the head of Kwara State Diocese of the Anglican Church, ordained three women, but this was annulled by the House of Bishops. The same happened at the Methodist Diocese of Kwara and Kogi States in 1994 where the synod decided to ordain women, but which was rejected by the headquarters of the church (Ademiluka, 2017:2). While it has been the case, the challenges of women and ordination in Africa have been no ordinary battles and the reality of this matter is far from the theory.

2.7.5 Ordination of women in the ministry in different denominations in Southern Africa

When it comes to the mainstream denominations, such as the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Anglican Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa have been trendsetters concerning the ordination of women, while the Pentecostal church is still a space where women are discriminated against and excluded from leadership positions. Most of the churches that have already gone through a transformation in South Africa are the mainline churches, however, it was not an easy process to initiate. These churches, which include the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and the Anglican Churches, respectively, to mention only a few, have set the standard for all to follow, particularly, when it comes to acknowledging women and giving them a platform and an opportunity in leadership in the ministry.

The mainline churches are advanced in terms of the ordination of women not just in the “ministry of the Word and sacraments” but in other leadership positions as well. At the Methodist Church in Zambia, England-born Peggy Hiscock was the first woman to be ordained in the then Northern Rhodesia in 1968 (Kangwa, 2020:324). In South Africa, the first documented female was ordained in Johannesburg in 1890 as a deacon because women were prohibited from the ministry of the Word and the sacraments (Kangwa, 2020:324). According to Dlamini (2017:1), the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) Conference of 1976 ordained Rev. Ziphozihle Siwa as the first woman to the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. In 2019, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa made history again as Reverend Purity Malinga became the first woman in the history of

the church to be elected as the Presiding Bishop and the 100th to be elected by the church. In Zimbabwe, by 1997, women in the United Methodist Church were appointed to the full-time ministry (Masengwe *et al.*, 2019:307).

According to the now Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (BPCSA), the first woman to be ordained was Charity Majiza in 1978 (BPCSA, 1975:41). Licensed by the Presbytery of Ciskei at the beginning of that year, Majiza was appointed for a probationary period in the Gooldville congregation in Venda (Duncan, 2019:4). This was not without challenges as the General Assembly criticised the Presbytery of Ciskei for continuing to promote Majiza, citing that there was no provision for the training and ordination of women (BPCSA, 1975:41). Although her name was forwarded to the Church Extension and Aid Committee for an appointment, a decision to admit women to the offices of elder and minister and to have women sharing the same status as men were only made the following year (BPCSA, 1977:28). Majiza did not stay in the church but left for Australia and when she came back, she became the first woman to become the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). However, she only completed one term of her appointment and returned to Australia (Kobo, 2018: 6).

The Anglican Church in Southern Africa (ACSA) started ordaining a woman as a deacon in 1985 (Pillay, 2017:11). However, the motion to ordain women was only passed in 1992 (Mombo, 2019:215). Three women were ordained to the priesthood and, in 2012, three women were consecrated as bishops including Ellinah Wamukoya as bishop of Swaziland (Pillay 2017:11). The ordination of women was prompted by voting results of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa regarding the ordination of women in September of the same year (Pillay, 2017:1). According to *The Voice of Global Orthodox Anglicanism in Mozambique*, the first women to be ordained were Joana Chilengue, Lina Maria dos Santos and Fatucha Rosemary in 2020. According to Mombo (2019:213), the Church of the Province of Central Africa, which includes Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, is among the three provinces that still do not ordain women in Africa (Mombo, 2019:213). Theoretically, the Anglican Church in Botswana allowed women to be ordained, but in practice, prevented them from establishing ministries

without permission (Dube, 2014:323). Mombo (2019:213) asserts that, in 1988, Bishop Ralph Hatendi of Zimbabwe declared that the ordination of women poses a risk of seeing the church membership declining as well as a risk of protests by men. According to Koloti (2021:5):

At the beginning of 2021, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa's Provincial office announced the official list of names for those nominated as episcopal candidates for the then-upcoming Elective Assemblies to be held in the diocese of Lesotho, Zululand, Kimberly and Kuruman, and Natal. The total numbers of candidates were as follows: four Elective candidates, 19 candidates, and one woman.

This shows that while things may seem to be going well for the mainline churches in the advancement of women, the reality is that these women are having to overcome challenges and obstacles. The focus will now be turned to the Pentecostal churches, which is the gist of this study as this research is based on the Assemblies of God Back to God (AOG-BTG) which is part of the Pentecostal tradition in South Africa.

2.8 Pentecostal women in the ministry

The fourth topic on the ordination of women in the ministry is Pentecostal women in the ministry. The definition and the ideas associated with Pentecostalism were observed. The popularity of the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches was observed at the beginning of the 21st century but during the third wave of the early 1980s under the influence of the Charismatic and Evangelical movements that spread rapidly throughout Sub-Saharan Africa that this phenomenon was observed (Frahm-Arp, 2015:2). Pentecostalism can be defined as a personal experience of the baptism by the Holy Spirit as in the day of the Pentecost and Pentecostals still believe in this experience even today (Acts 2:1-13). In South Africa, Pentecostalism was introduced with the arrival of the missionaries in 1908. It grew rapidly and Africa became one of the prime sites of Pentecostal expansion, gained momentum, and reshaped the face of the Christian religion (Hackett, 2016:249). This gave birth to many "classical" Pentecostal churches, such as the Assemblies of God, the Faith Mission, the Full Gospel Church, and others (Kgatle, 2019:xiii). The study of Pentecostalism also became a well-established study of human societies and cultures and

their development (Van Klinken, 2013:242). However, unlike as is the case with the mainline churches, it is rare to find women pastors in Pentecostal churches. Most of the time in Pentecostal churches where women are ordained it would be because the church pastor is the founder of the church and the wife would also be ordained as the co-pastor. It will also be that the constitution of the church is drawn by them as co-founders to allow the ordination of women not only as pastors but to other leadership positions. Masengwe *et al.* (2019) state that Pentecostals believe that women should be silent in the church. It is also a common practice for church positions to be held by men, while women are relegated to the pews and expected to focus on women's issues. In essence it could be argued that Pentecostal churches are patriarchal and are opposed to gender transformation. The problem with Pentecostalism is the harmful patriarchal African traditional and cultural setting (Wood, 2019:5) that seems to make it difficult because of their ancient beliefs on certain aspects of their culture (Idang, 2015:107).

South African women are no different from those in other African countries as far as enduring discrimination and inequality in the Pentecostal church are concerned, as Mupangwa and Chirongoma (2019) attest to the same experiences in Zimbabwe. Mupangwa and Chirongoma (2019:2) perceive the church to be an unsafe place for women as its hierarchical structures tend to discriminate against women. According to Fiorenza, “women are [the] church and they have always been [the] church” meaning that they are equal citizens of the body of Christ and that their voices must be heard (Watson, 2002:1) but the issue of women empowerment in the church has been an extremely sensitive issue (Lenkabula, 2008:7). Due to a lack of moral behaviour, the church is exposed to all kinds of evilness and Manqoba claims that morality is a way of expressing gratitude to God, and the reward is that God provides protection and guidance (Meyer, 2020:240). In these churches, women feel completely sidelined, discriminated against, looked down upon, and judged, which makes them feel as if they are not part of the community of believers (Mupangwa and Chirongoma 2019:2). Reliance on the direct interpretation of the Scriptures by the Pentecostals has played a vital role in the discrimination of women. Meyer (2020:241) asserts that “[the] theology inherent in Pentecostalism is highly contextual, is of value in understanding its globalisation power and influence on believers

as globalism, and its immense power in influencing the spiritual narratives on an individual level.”

Men have used the Scriptures as evidence of the principle that God wants the church to follow, and for a long time, women have been subjected to this unfortunate situation, because they have been convinced that this is an acceptable position for them. Women would be told of their insignificance where a theology of womanhood is preached (Watson, 2002:2). These hermeneutics and the exegesis of Pentecostals have promoted a theology of injustice and inequality with women being pushed to the margins, while men occupy the centre of the church to rule it relentlessly. This has led to the inevitable change in the self-esteem of women due to this “specific context” in which they find themselves and the way they interpret both the joys and the sufferings they have to endure (Meyer 2020:240). This also has a damaging effect on women’s identities and spiritual lives and Erikson (1962) affirms that “a healthy identity development pertains to the nurturing of spirituality”, the development of a “spiritual identity” and a “spiritual self” (Meyer 2020:244), and the Christian believer translates into the success of the mission of God in the church (Meyer, 2020:244). According to William James, the spiritual nature was intended to mean the sense of personal agency that is influenced by the belief in self-sufficiency, and that [women’s] skills and experience are dependent on humanity (Meyer, 2020:246). Besides, religion is viewed as a ‘feminine’ phenomenon’ because although men tend to occupy the positions of power, they are less participatory during religious activities and gatherings and tend to be less devout in their beliefs (Meyer, 2020:259).

There are however concessions in some Pentecostal churches where women are ordained and permitted to engage in leadership activities, but there is still a gap compared to the leadership activities of men. In the spirit-controlled indigenous churches, women-only participate in the marginalised roles of wives (Masengwe *et al.*, 2019:307). It is believed that if the church is to continue to differentiate between the roles of men and women, it will be necessary to test the extent to which this distinction will be made (Harrison, 2011:5). Mupangwa and Chirongoma (2019:2) suggest that the Church must adopt a feminist ecclesiology that reclaims the Church “to rebuild it as a meaningful, open,

sacramental space where everybody's presence is celebrated” (Watson, 2002:102). This would make the Church an inclusive space with a religious doctrine that empowers women and assists them to “name and define the church,” where everyone feels safe and at home (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2019:2). Watson (2002:54) advocates the development of values for listening to women's experiences of being a Church and for restoring the Church to discourse. For now, this is not the case, because the Church is gendered and the lack of love and embracing each other prevents the feeling that makes it a place of the community (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2019:3)

2.8.1 The Assemblies of God Back to God (AOG-BTG) Church

The evolution of women ordination by different denominations in Africa takes us to our next topic, which is the establishment of the Assemblies of God - Back to God (AOG-BTG) Church as it is our case study. Like many other Pentecostal churches in Africa, the AOG-BTG is a product of the Azusa Street revival through the missionaries that came to South Africa in 1936. One of the leading churches of the time in South Africa was the Emmanuel Mission that was led by Hubert Phillips, a missionary from the UK (Watt, 1991:4-8). Phillips had a positive impact on the establishment of the Assemblies of God Back to God (AOG-BTG) Church, since its founder, Nicholas Bhengu, became a prominent figure in the campaign of the gospel. This was after Bhengu joined the Emmanuel Mission in 1938 to gain the freedom to continue his work as a crusader for Christ because, at that time it was not easy for Black people to start a church (Watt, 1991:4-8). According to Watt (1991:30), in 1935, a decision was taken to admit missionaries and congregations working among whites to the fellowship under the banner of the Assemblies of God. The leaders of the Full Gospel Church, James Mullan, and his wife, and Mary were the first to join the church. Mullan then negotiated with Phillips about the possibility of linking up fellowship with the Assemblies of God (AOG) Church and, at a general conference that was held in Nelspruit in December 1938, a decision was taken regarding the nature of the association between the Emmanuel Mission and the Assemblies of God Church (Watt, 1991:38).

It was through this development that Bhengu joined the Assemblies of God along with the Emmanuel Mission and the AOG emerged as an umbrella body with various missionary groups under its wing (Watt, 1991:83). Mullan moved to Port Elizabeth in 1944 to start the work there and the following year, Bengu followed Mullan to work in the black townships. Bhengu's work grew exponentially, as the aim of his crusades was to plant churches and he was determined to lead Africa back to God, by spreading the Gospel "from Cape to Cairo" (Watt, 1991:83). "Cape to Cairo" is used by the "mothers" (married women) of the AOG-BTG Church as a slogan in their endeavour to raise funds for the church. The purpose of raising funds was to engage in revivals as part of the Great Commission (Mathew 28:16-20). Mullan and Bhengu's teachings followed St Paul's epistles to the Ephesians (Eph 4:11). Mullan created a little book called *Gift Ministries of the Ascended Christ* with viewpoints that were shared by Bhengu (Watt, 1991:85). These ministry gifts to the church were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The definitions would vary with a teacher that had the aptitude to inform the church through the Word of God and also help the church to know, understand and live in truth; while an apostle would plant churches and preach, a prophet encourages the church; an evangelist wins souls to faith in Christ. In addition, the pastor shepherds the flock by giving a sense of security and unity, and yet in all these leadership positions, there was not a single woman.

The AOG-BTG Church has always been characterised by patriarchy because all these gifts that are cited appeared to be embedded more in men than in women. According to Lephoko (2008:124), "Bhengu did not ordain women as pastors, elders, and deacons [then] because the time was not ripe." In the BTG Church, women supervised women, but Bhengu felt that besides supervising other women and girls, women fulfilled a "special need arising out of the black culture." He used women as evangelists and church planters. According to Van Klinken (2018:243), Pentecostalism embodies the experiences of Acts chapter 2 and the results of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. According to Hendriks *et al.* (2012:17), thus far men have not shown any fairness to women, but have rather pushed them to the lower echelons of the church, while they form the majority of the church members and are extremely active in the church.

Much as Pentecostals believe in empowerment by the Holy Spirit, the empowerment of women in the church is still seen as a violation of the tradition (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:93). In Christian theology, baptism with the Holy Spirit has been interpreted by different Christian denominations because of the different cultures and traditions of the diverse societies that influence their doctrines of salvation and ecclesiology (White, 2016:254). The conviction has been that the Holy Spirit is all-encompassing and encourages all to participate in activities in the Pentecostal church to break the barriers that limit others from engaging in specific church activities such as being in the leadership (Migwi, 2016:10). Dube (2014) cites the tensions between the theological space of the Word and the democratic space of the Spirit and maintains that the space between the Word and the Spirit is where the perpetual battle for gender justice is fought.

CHAPTER 3: FIELDWORK

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the reasons for the prohibition of women in the senior leadership positions of the Church, the consequences of this, and how women feel about it. This chapter defines the procedures adopted to arrive at the research findings and emerging themes. The field in which the research was conducted is discussed; and the theoretical framework within the qualitative approach is explained using a case study design, which is an in-depth study. In addition, background information is provided on the sample of the Assemblies of God - Back to God (AOG-BTG) Church and the study participants who comprised the church leadership which consisted of men only as well as women leaders. The research process included data obtained from the interviews with each participant and the researcher also describes the process of data analysis and the presentation of the data, the reconceptualisation of the data, and the development of the research themes.

3.2 Sample

This research was based on the Assemblies of God Back to God (AOG-BTG) Church, which is a predominantly black Pentecostal church. The AOG-BTG Church emanated from the Assemblies of God Church, which developed as an umbrella body with various missionary groups (Watt, 1991:83).

The target sample for this study was ten participants, five men, and five women. These participants were chosen intentionally from the leadership members of the AOG-BTG Church, that is, from the senior church leadership, which consisted of men only and the women leadership (both married and unmarried women). The five men participants provided responses that covered the first objective of the study, which was to understand why women were not allowed to be elected to leadership positions. The purpose of this research question was to address the reasons why women were prohibited in senior church leadership positions. The women participants responded to the second objective describing

their lived experiences in ministry as the question sought to understand the impact their exclusion had on their identity, faith, and their continuing membership of the church also determining whether such behaviour truly disempowered them in the Christian ministry. The third objective sought to understand the consequences the prohibition of women had on church practices. In addition, the aim was to determine the effect of all-male leadership on the church practices and whether the approach empowered women in the ministry. Responses were received from both men and women.

3.2.1 Research participants

The participants came from the church leadership which is men only and women's leadership. Their answers responded to the aim of the study which was to explore the reasons for the prohibition of women to the senior leadership positions of the church, the consequences of this, and how women feel about it.

3.2.1.1 Male participants

Male participants one to three (MP1-MP3) were men who were senior members of the church between the ages of 55 and 80. They had been in Executive Committee (Executive) which is bestowed with the highest decision-making function. They have been in senior positions for more than ten years and in the church leadership for more than 20 years. They had a sound understanding of the church's "dogmas and decrees," and rules and procedures. Male participants four and five (MP4 and MP5) were middle-aged men between the ages of 40 and 49 and had been members of the church for more than 15 years. They had been in the leadership structures of the AOG-BTG youth for more than ten years and were in the men's leadership positions however their experience was not as extensive as the older men. All five men had a good educational background with varied qualifications. Some were ministers in the church having graduated from different tertiary institutions including the Nicholas Bhengu Theological Seminary (NBTS) at Henley-on-Klip, Johannesburg while others held senior positions in state-owned companies. The reason and importance of the interviews with these men were because they were the current leaders in the church.

3.2.1.2 Female participants

Five women took part in the study. female participants one to three (FP1 to FP3) were between the ages of 55 to 70. They were in the women's leadership and had been serving alongside men. Female participants four and five (FP4 and FP5) were younger and in their early 40's. The five female participants were active members of the AOG -BTG and had been with the church for more than ten years. They all had extensive knowledge of the ministry and were spiritually mature. They were all professionals with a good educational background. The reason these women were interviewed was that the side-lining of women also affected them; besides growing up in the church, they witnessed the exclusion of women happening before they experienced it.

The selection of these men and women was because they were the best source of information. After all, the topic was about the interaction between men and women. These participants were from the different provinces of South Africa and both groups had to give their perspectives on the issue.

3.3 Research process

For this study, a qualitative research approach was chosen, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted (see appendix D for the fully transcribed interviews). People were contacted randomly and those that were willing to participate confirmed their availability. The core tasks of practical theology involving the descriptive-interpretive task were used (Osmer, 2008:4). **Firstly, the researcher had permission to conduct the study and completed the University of South Africa research ethics application.** The AOG-BTG Regional Council Committees (RCC) of the different provinces of South Africa where these members' fellowships were contacted to request the contact numbers of the local churches where these men and women engaged in fellowship. The RCCs are the central offices to which the local churches in each province report. After acquiring the contact numbers, all the anticipated participants were contacted individually and were requested to participate in the study. An explanation regarding the general purpose of the research and the role that the interview would play in the research and the approximate time required

was provided (Greeff, 2011:350). Consent was obtained and their availability for interviews on the scheduled dates and times was confirmed. Individual appointments were made with the participants, and, in turn, the participants gave their preferred locations where the interviews could be conducted. The interviews were conducted in different provinces on the confirmed dates.

3.3.1 Data Collection

The data collection method that was used was semi-structured interviews, also called in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews use open-ended questions and are a strategic way of retrieving rich data or detailed information about the research problem which in turn, becomes a “conversation with a purpose” (Greeff, 2011:348). The purpose of using in-depth or unstructured interviews was to understand participants’ experiences and their descriptions and meaning of those experiences (Greeff, 2011:348). The participants expressed their views of and approach to their learning experiences through natural conversations (Liu, 2016:132). The length of the interviews varied, and this was because open-ended questions permit follow-up questions whenever necessary and because the participants handled the interviews differently; some took about 60 minutes, while some went over an hour. For purposeful interviewing, a hard copy of an interview guide was used. Participants were interviewed in different safe locations as per the agreement, to ensure their confidentiality and safety. Some interviews were conducted from home, some in the mission houses, and some in the church offices. The interviews involved asking questions, listening to the participants, and writing detailed field notes. At the end of each interview, a summary of the most important points was made. Two tape recorders and a smartphone were utilised for the recording and a backup (Greeff, 2011:359).

Before the start of the study, a pilot study was conducted with a small sample of participants. Different interview schedules were prepared to test if the questions were understandable and whether the answers given were achieving the objectives of the study. One man from the senior leadership of the church and one women leader were used as participants. Both were identified through the tasks they performed in the church

(Baškarada, 2018:431). The two participants were also selected based on their subject matter expertise, availability, and willingness to participate in the study. Each participant answered eight carefully drafted semi-structured open-ended interview questions respectively, to gain a detailed picture of each participant's perception regarding the topic at hand (Greeff, 2011:351). The pilot study helped with the elimination of unclear questions and the production of valuable feedback on the structure and flow of the interviews (Vosloo, 2014:343). After the completion of the pilot study, adjustments were made to the questions of both the men and the women (also see appendix C for the interview questions).

3.3.2 Interview questions for the study

To collect my data for this study, the questions for the male participants were:

- 1) How is leadership elected in the AOG-BTG?
- 2) Please, can you share why your leadership is all male?
- 3) What role does the church culture play in affecting women's roles?
- 4) What role does the African culture play in determining leadership choice?
- 5) How do you appreciate the contribution of women in ministry?
- 6) Is there openness towards female leadership?
- 7) What is the consequence of female leadership exclusion from ministry?

And the questions for the female participant were:

- 1) What is the overall role of women in the church?
- 2) Are you aware of any women leadership in the senior church leadership?
- 3) What qualities do women bring to enhance the current decision-making of the leadership?
- 4) How do you think men and women should relate in the ministry?
- 5) Do you think it is important for society that women should be in leadership positions?
- 6) What do you think the challenges are for men?

- 7) What have your personal experience in leadership been?
- 8) How has the consequence of exclusion from the ministry affected both your spirituality and you, as a person?

3.3.3 Data analysis procedures

The data analysis method for the study was thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Thematic analysis was suitable as a 'basic' method since it can handle a wide range of research questions and can be used to analyse different types of data, from secondary sources such as the media to focus groups or interview transcripts as well as to produce data-driven or theory-driven analyses (Clarke & Braun, 2013:3). Data analysis is the process of organising the data and giving meaning to the complicated mass of qualitative data (Swinton & Mowat, 2007:57). The data were then analysed and coded to determine the emerging themes. The recorded interviews were reviewed, transcribed, and grouped into parts and they formed the basis of analysing the data in the research report (Schurink *et al.*, 2011:409). The data were linked from the data to the idea and from the idea to all the data on that idea (Saldana, 2009:8). This was the process of open coding of data whereby the segments that gave meaning to the transcripts and field notes were identified and labelled by reading and re-reading the data, to become immersed and intimately familiar with its content (Clarke & Braun 2013:3). The data were categorised by moving from the range of data to the shapes of the data because category and formation embody the core of the qualitative data analysis (Saldana, 2009:11). The six stages of thematic analyses that were followed began with the familiarisation of the data and this included the transcripts of the verbal data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke 2006:16-23). For the transcripts see Appendix D.

3.4 Reconceptualisation of the data

The purpose of this section was to show how the data were reconceptualised into themes or findings. A total of 33 codes were identified from the data of ten interviews and were

clustered into ten categories, which totalled six themes; refer to the code list in Appendix B. From the interviews the researcher had conducted with the men, the frequent ideas that dominated were: “conforming to scriptures,” which signified that the church follows the Bible teachings with 25 frequencies, the “influence of the African culture” with 19 frequencies, “denominational culture” with 21, and “regulative structure of the church” with 23 frequencies. These were some of the codes that emerged, but all of them could not be used. The same pattern was followed with the second objective, which described the lived experiences of a woman in the ministry with questions directed to women. The third and last objective was to understand the consequence of women's exclusion in ministry. The relevant codes that would explain the reasons women were prohibited from leadership positions were reflected.

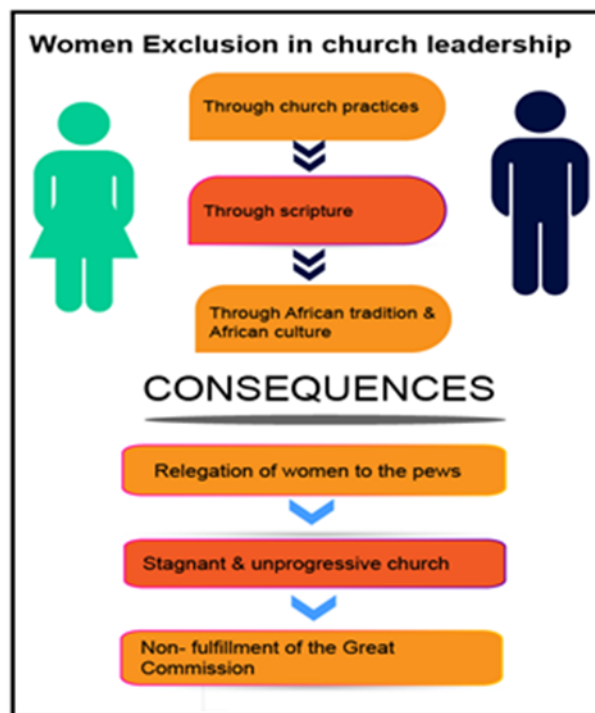


Figure 3.1: Diagram representing the themes that display how women are excluded in the church and the consequences of their exclusion

3.5 Emerging themes

The main aim of this study was to explore the reasons for the prohibition of women from the senior leadership positions of the church, the consequences of this, and how women feel about it. In this section, the themes that emerged from the data collected are presented.

3.5.1 Findings to objective one

This objective was to understand from the current church leadership why women are not allowed to assume leadership positions.

This question was posed to the male leadership and sought to determine the reasons for the omission of women in church leadership positions. From the data collected, four themes emerged, that is, women are excluded in church leadership roles through church practice, through scriptures, through African traditions, and the African culture, and there were also contradictory voices.

3.5.1.1 Theme 1: Women exclusion in church leadership roles through church practice

In this section, it was explored how women are excluded in leadership positions through the church practice. Church practice is a systematic way of doing things in the church. It is the practices the church engages in over and over to ingrain in its members on how the church operates. Most often, the church practice follows the doctrine or constitution of the church, which is the written body of teachings of the church that are generally accepted by the church and must be followed. The doctrine of the church is guided by the church constitution and includes the church procedures from worship to administration. In the AOG – BTG, there are church practices, such as, leadership positions and the doctrine of the church that stipulates who qualifies to be in the church leadership. From the interviews conducted, it would seem that the AOG-BTG church practice excludes women from being voted into church leadership positions.

The participant's response below provided evidence that the church practice indeed prohibits women from being involved in church leadership and that they are discriminated against.

MP3: *In as far as acknowledging the absence of female leadership in the Back to God Executive **that is the current state of affairs.*** (MP3L432-433).

In the above response, the participant displayed that the church is obligated by its doctrine because it is a generally accepted document that must be followed as stipulated. The above response demonstrated the power of the church practice, which seemed to be an irreversible state of affairs. The situation seemed to be challenging as it may be acceptable to some while oppressive to some. This response showed that the regulative structure of the church was binding.

MP2: *It's only that **they are bound by the procedures, by rules, by the constitution, that they can't but the Bible does not bind them.*** (MP2L310-312).

The above response indicated that the doctrine of the church is designed in such a way that it does not allow women to participate in the ministry nor be included in the senior leadership. Because of this, women could not do anything to change the situation because they could not surpass the perimeters stipulated in the church doctrine. In other words, the practice of the church in conjunction with the church's uncompromising constitution concerning women is more binding than the Scriptures. Having a constitution may not be a bad idea for a church because the document is designed to keep the church organised, and to function effectively and transparently so that the church can meet the needs of its members, but it is created in such a way that it becomes an obstacle to women.

The church constitution of BTG did not allow women to enter into positions of power. This participant described the BTG Church as a conservative church that follows certain rules that cannot be violated.

MP1: ***Before they can enter that administration, they must first be spiritual leaders and they are precluded from that, so automatically they cannot be elected***

here because the requirement is that they must be pastors. Now women are precluded from being pastors, so they cannot find themselves on the other side, while they have to go via this side. This means that for you to be in the administration you have to be in the spiritual.”(MP1L134-136).

MP1: it is the founder that came with the idea that the Executive body must be elected from the ministers. We found it like that and we followed that trend, we never heard a complaint about it, that is the arrangement by the founder we are following the pattern that was left by the founder. (MP1L110-113).

The quotes above explained the complexity and influence of the denominational culture for one to qualify to be in the church leadership. It implied that to qualify to be voted into leadership is a process that requires one to go through certain stages. The unfortunate part is that the denominational culture disqualified women from being spiritual leaders, which made it impossible for them to be incorporated into the ministry. What is interesting is that this participant pretended not to know that the church had female pastors, but then the implication was that these female pastors were not recognised as legitimate pastors since they had never undergone the probation period and they had never been ordained which were the stipulated requirements of the church rules and procedures. This was even though they were pastors and held a pastor’s credentials. According to the Rules of Procedure of the Assemblies of God Back to God Gold Book (2016:21) for ministers to qualify to be elected into the Regional Committee, one must have been two years ordained and must have served the Assemblies of God (BTG) as a minister for at least six years including the period he served before one’s ordination. This means that the fact that these women were not ordained meant they were not eligible to be voted into leadership positions. In other words, the denominational culture, (not ordaining women) and historical reasons were the catalysts for the gender gap and, were, therefore, obstacles.

In the BTG Church, there is a perception that women are not competent or capable of holding leadership positions and that they do not have the necessary skills to be leaders in the church and that is why they are not eligible to be church leaders.

MP3: *I am saying **there is a psychological issue maybe the capacitation that everything we have except of what the Bible clearly says how we do things in our church [...] and go around.*** (MP3L299 & 310).

MP3: *I am a pragmatic, practical person but I always look for the real things so that when I solve a problem I do not complicate it. Taking from human sciences, the approach would have been let's liberate them but **is it really meeting this need because like I am saying what we need is capacitation and empowerment.** After we have found out **what it is that makes them quiet in a meeting and talk outside, [...]and you ask them what are your challenges the fathers, and the youth will state their challenges and when you ask mothers, they will say they are fine.** I am talking about when you now confront them it is one thing to ask them in the meeting **then you ask what do they say and they will say they are fine with everything.*** (MP3L314 - 324).

In the above quotations, women were portrayed as people lacking determination and the ability to be skilful leaders. Women were also regarded as having ulterior motives or being conniving because, while they did not participate in the church meetings when they were alone, they would share ideas. This depicted women as passive beings that did not value crucial church activities such as meetings since they were perceived as people who were not participating in or contributing to the meetings. This implied that women did not demonstrate that they had the strength of character. On the other hand, men were presented as people who wished women well and wanted them to adopt Esther's character and courage. Men were also portrayed as trying to assist these undetermined women who did not want to work or be pushed. The eagerness of men to assist women sounded like a wonderful idea, but their attitude towards women due to their mistrust, disregard, and lack of support concerning women could be the real obstacles.

The BTG Church appeared to be a caring and protective church towards their women in terms of the response below. As a result, threats to family unity, and duties that were considered to be life-threatening were rather given to men.

MP3: *For us, we can send you to go and pastor in Lesotho and your children are here and your husband is here and now as a wife, you must be in Lesotho and now **there will be confusion and a division in the family.** While you are in Lesotho you serve one, two years and you realise that your gift is needed in Cofimvaba (Eastern Cape), and the way we work we rotate your gift. **If it was a lady, it would be highly burdensome, however, under this current structure of them serving more as organisers and supervisors, they can go do what they do and come back, [...] because abobaba (fathers) will not follow after women. [...]**Because of how we are made up, **the mother from the makeup even the hormonal system, the making up of the mother, they are relational, they are loving and they nursing and so for the family they have a particular role.** (MP3L160-171).*

In the above quote, this respondent identified issues that could be a challenge for women if they were to be allowed to be ministers. The rotation system whereby pastors are changed from one locale to another and sometimes from one province to another every five years was one of those mentioned. The rotation system could keep pastors away from their families and spouses for a long time. This respondent anticipated that men might not be eager to follow their wives every time they were transferred. This respondent was concerned about the fact that that could result in the breaking up of families and that children might be unstable about their schooling which could hamper their education progress as well. Another issue that the respondent brought up was the danger of travelling at night after their long meetings. This participant sounded sincere and compassionate towards women as he explained that the current leadership had looked at the practicalities of the role and realised that it would be physically and emotionally strenuous for women. This respondent mentioned sensitive issues that concerned the wellbeing of women that were a priority to them, especially as women were often victims of violence in our country. One could commend this participant as being sincere for considering the practical realities, however, these reflections could also be used as obstacles for women whose wish was to be included in the church leadership.

In the BTG Church, there were still gender differences. Yet, there were tasks that men were expected to perform but that were not performed by women. Some duties were specifically

assigned to women and according to the participant, one of them was to raise funds for the church.

MP3: When baba B got the vision of how to sustain the Back to God Crusade financially, the Lord showed him in a vision, a woman in a doek (scarf) and said to him those are the people who can sustain this work financially because they have a womb, when we are talking about a burden for souls that are lost they will hear it [...] but go and teach them to work with their hands so that they are able to provide for their families [...] So it was a divine wisdom for him to say train, pour yourself into five women including your wife. (MP3L346 - 358).

The indication from the above quotation was that there was a task that women should focus on in the church. In other words, women were expected to give priority to their responsibilities. Because women were the ones that raised children most of the time, they were taught to do handwork to be able to put food on the table. For the church, these funds would be used to support and run revivals to save lives and this was perceived as an important role because it was part of the fulfilment of the Great Commission. This historical prophetic tradition may have been extremely significant in its vision since the church did not have sponsors, but it could also be used as an obstacle to exclude women from the senior church leadership.

The BTG Church remained dominated by culture and tradition and prevented women from entering into positions of power. However, there was also a problem of the lack of consistency in the church system according to this respondent.

MP4: It differs from region to region. Gauteng is still backward while you see places like the Eastern Cape and some other places in the KwaZulu Natal region moving swiftly. [...] Gauteng is not progressive and there is no openness towards female leadership. This goes back to these church structures that is where these traditionalists culturists are who when even see that this time, we were supposed to turn left but still be stubborn and say not here. (MP4L126 - 138).

The above response demonstrated a lack of consistency in carrying out the church policy. At the BTG Church, there was a kind of leadership called the Teaching Team (TT). The Teaching Team function as the Apostolic body as the custodian of the organisation's doctrine and one of their duties was to visit the churches to teach them the church doctrine. It was not clear whether it was ignorance of leadership in general or a violation of these procedures by the leadership or whether they felt that these procedures did not work for them in some regions, but it had been established that the provinces work differently. Some provinces did open doors for women and were at least included in the local church leadership and were also allowed to preach in the main service on Sundays but in other provinces, women were inhibited. This indicated that the Teaching Team was either lacking the capacity to do its task as the watchdog of the church doctrine or they did not educate the leadership of the churches about the church constitution. This implied that the church constitution was sometimes significant and sometimes not, which created a problem for the church. These inconsistencies became obstacles because there was no clear indication of which direction the church was taking.

3.5.1.2 Theme 2: Women exclusion through scripture

This theme showed that there were scriptures that were used in the church to exclude women from leadership positions. The Scriptures are the Christian sacred writings contained in the Bible that are used by Christians who believe and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. Under this theme, one category which was the biblical basis of church practice emerged, and it was made up of two codes that were: “conforming to the Scriptures” with 25 frequencies and “traditional hermeneutics of the scriptures” with 20 frequencies. The responses of the leaders showed that the scripture was understood and followed, following the way they were written without considering the hermeneutics and exegesis, and this harmed women and the church.

The BTG Church supports their choice of biblical leaders as they pride themselves on following the scriptural principles. Furthermore, as these participants state that the election

of women to certain positions would be flawed because according to their church if it was not in the scriptures, it was against them.

MP5: *Then when we do the election of elders and deacons the Teaching Team usually emphasizes when **they talk about the conduct and the character referring to that verse that it must be a man of a noble character and a man with one wife (1 Timothy 3:2).** Unfortunately, I have never been in a local church where the women were elected either as elders or deacons if there is anything like that. (MP5L35 - 38).*

MP4: *They refer to the Bible as it mentions that the church must elect deacons and elders. They also decide on directives that must be followed according to the Bible, that it must be a man of one wife, **must be able to give commands** in his house and **he must be respectful as in the standard of the Word of God.** (MP4L5 - 8).*

The above quotations indicated that when the church elected leadership it referred to the scriptures. Emphasis was put on the command of St Paul's epistles as the most critical and doctrinal writings to lead the church into discriminating against women. This respondent believed that when the Bible mentioned, church leadership it referred to menfolk as in masculinity. That demonstrates how the Pentecostal churches interpret the Bible. As a conservative denomination, the AOG-BTG took the teachings of the Scriptures literally and this was used as an obstacle for women about getting leadership positions.

It appeared that BTG men saw women as weak and disloyal. For these men, there were roles that women could play without being involved in leadership.

MP1: *The Bible says **it was not Adam that was tempted but Eve. Genesis (3:6) states that she started by using her eyes and forgot what God had said. She departed from the scriptures and made her own assumptions. Paul uses the argument that a woman cannot teach and have authority over men** whereas in the scripture that concerns women it says **older women must teach the younger ones***

how to love their homes. So, I think we followed that scripture and when we followed it, we saw it correct. (MP1L74 - 79).

*P1: The second reason is that **Adam was not deceived but Eve was deceived**. My inference is that **deceit** enters easily in women. (MP1L55 - 56).*

The above response implied that the church had done nothing wrong by excluding women from leadership positions because the Scriptures are against women's leadership. According to their understanding, the Scriptures only allow men to be leaders. Yet, they also believed that women were not strong-minded. This quote showed that besides the issue of hermeneutics and exegesis the element of patriarchy was dominating in the church.

*MP1: but as far as I know I am **satisfied** with the **current position** because, according to the **church history** from **Jesus** up to the **apostles**, **no woman** was ever used as a **minister** or a **pastor**. **Jesus was a male**, **St Paul** that would **teach** about **elders** and **deacons** that it should be a **man** with these **qualities** that is how I understand it and it does not mean that women are being **undermined**. But somewhere, he does lay reasons out that might not augur well with women, but it is **biblical**. In **1 Tim (2:9)** it declares that, **“I do not allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man.”** He then would **justify** or **motivate** by stating that because **Adam was formed first**, these are **St Paul’s reasons** and I agree fully with **them**. (MP1L47 - 54).*

The above response implied that women were unreliable and misleading persons and that they were weak and vulnerable. They believed that they could not be led by persons that abandoned the Scriptures. The Scriptures were cited as proof that women were not allowed to cross the line that the Scriptures have set for them. It was rare for women to be in the leadership of this church, something that pleased some of the men. Hermeneutics and exegesis and dominance of patriarchy were the main obstacles according to this response.

3.5.1.3 Theme 3: Women exclusion through African tradition and African culture

This theme was identified in the references of participants that cited the influence of the African tradition and the African culture in excluding women from leadership roles in the church. African culture normally defines the role and place of women and men and this is often used as an argument against women's leadership in the church and the church culture would be defined as a set of principles common to the members of a particular church, managed by the church leadership and, like any other culture, these behaviours are normally transmitted from one generation to another (Smith & Chetty, 2018). According to Merriam Webster, "traditional culture is "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behaviour (such as a religious practice or a social custom)." Here we discovered that the church had embraced particular views in the African culture that discriminated against women in leadership positions. As a result, the congregation had continued to follow these traditional customs. The historical tradition of the AOG-BTG is that the founder of the church, Bhengu, "did not ordain women as pastors, elders, and deacons because the time was not ripe" (Lephoko, 2008:124). However, Lephoko asserts that if Bhengu were still alive, he would have changed the situation for the better and adapted to let women hold leadership positions and to let them have a real impact on church life.

It appeared that BTG was caught up in conflicting individual cultures. There was a belief that the misperception in the BTG Church was because the church was diluted by the different cultures that people brought to the church. These people brought their different habits from where they came and this had a detrimental effect on the daily operation of the church because these lifestyles harmed the operation of the church.

MP2: People may come with that from their backgrounds and come to the church with that. And there are still people amongst us, especially the older people, they have got that problem, "uyintoni umfazi wena maan - what is a woman after all", [...]. And it takes time for people to change from their old habits, from their old cultural behaviours and habits; it takes a lot of time. You will hear them speaking and you will know that the problem is culture, it's giving us a hard time. He tries

to be modest, he tries to be civilised but when things happen then you realise, oh “intsila yesiko ikhona laphaya – dirt still exists here. That we cannot help because it happens on its own, we depend upon the working of God in our lives. (MP2L180-192).

The above response indicated that culture was a complex entity due to the many factors that can influence it. These may include the different backgrounds of people and the way they were brought up; as well as the beliefs of different societies and the way people behaved which varied from place to place. This implied that people brought their different beliefs and practised them in the church, which influenced the way the church operated. Another implication was that there was a generation gap that caused problems. The conviction was that the elderly people had a different conception from the current generation regarding certain concepts, sometimes due to their beliefs and how they were brought up. Elderly people had difficulty seeing a woman leading in the church. The church leadership was concerned that the misperceptions in the church could be resolved easily. According to this respondent, the requirement was that the leadership must educate the church community so that it could be equally balanced. For the church to obtain common ground, this sounded like a good idea from the leadership, but it is also possible that these are delaying tactics that are used by the leadership as obstacles.

The level of understanding remained a problem in the BTG Church. There was still an imbalance problem in the way members of the congregation reasoned regarding the issue of educating the church community.

*MP3: yet when you came to us, women have been in leadership from the beginning and the birth of Back to God, but as we moved and developed, we could not, if we were to reach the society we could not come in such a manner that for them we say we cannot. **To this day actually with the enlightenment that is there, you still have to operate with sensitivities, not with the concepts, but with the audience we are reaching, so we tried carefully with balance.** (MP3L109 - 114).*

This response implies that the issue of women's exclusion is not because the current leaders do not want to include them, but that there is a problem with the church members who will

not accept it, as it has never been done before. Therefore, as leaders, they are being sensitive to the situation and are trying to be cautious not to divide the church. One could commend the leadership for being rational, however, this could be an obstacle if one has to ask a question such as for how long? In other words, the leadership is reluctant to commit itself and is adopting delaying tactics. Again, male dominance and resistance to transformation can be seen as obstacles for female leaders in the ministry.

It looked like one of the problems with the BTG Church was that, as the African church, it had not been able to distinguish between the African culture and the Christian way of life. According to the next participant, the church had not disassociated itself from their African beliefs, which perceive a woman in terms of a certain perspective.

*MP3: I would not know there will be many reasons probably **those reasons area rising from how one looks at the whole picture, but from where I am sitting it has been the background where we come from as the church, as an African church, if you like, e the indigenous church or contextual church.** We have also grown with the development of the society. Our society there were times when women could not be in leadership. (MP3L105 - 109).*

This response suggested that the church was confused because Africanness has swayed the church towards Africanism and, as an African church, it had developed these beliefs from the society that women should not be involved in leadership issues. This implied that the traditional church's understanding of both historical aspects and practice were obstacles and these included male dominance since the leadership had confessed that they could not divorce themselves from their traditional culture because it was an inherited, customary pattern of thought and behaviour.

It seemed that the problem concerning the neglect of women would persist at the BTG Church because the church continued to reflect on their African culture as a way of closing the gaps whenever there was no clear explanation from the Scriptures.

MP3: *In areas where it is not a cut and dry issue, since we are within the space of culture and the Bible does not say whether if you do this then you are going to be accepted in terms of Godly standards or if you do this you are lost. There is no prescription should I say for the sake of understanding of being understood we try to come as close to the culture as possible.* (MP3L183 - 187).

This quote indicated that the problem of side-lining women was far from over since the BTG Church was reliant on the African tradition and the African culture to solve certain issues on Pentecostalism that believes in the power of the Holy Spirit, the church should ask him for guidance rather than leaning towards the African culture and tradition or mixing the two. This shows that a conservative church like the BTG Church was struggling to break free from habitual habits and that makes it a barrier.

The participant's response below confirms the views of the preceding respondents that the African tradition and the African culture have an influence in the current state of affairs in the church as he testified that these practices were brought about by people whose intention was to implement them in the church.

MP4: *Mh, this is very difficult, I am sure, Nonie, that in this part that only men are in the leadership, I do want to say that maybe it has got something to do with tradition. Perhaps let me not say tradition as such, but culture, because you know when you grew up in a place seeing certain things done in a certain way, people get used to that and then it would look like it is the right way of doing things.[...] problem to us.* (MP4L22 & 32).

This quote implied that growing up in a society and seeing certain things being done in a certain way has made people accustomed to them thinking that it was the correct way of doing things. This demonstrated how the African tradition and the African culture have been promoted in the church and their effect on the exclusion of women in church leadership positions at the BTG Church.

It is so unconventional for women to be qualified clergymen or be church leaders in that BTG Church that male domination and women's submissiveness was an observable and normal thing.

MP1: I think it is an erroneous idea Biblically speaking. I would be disappointed if one of them can be transferred to our local church. You can judge my attitude towards that. I would be very much disappointed because we would be deviating from the Scriptures. (MP1L234 - 236).

MP1: I am convinced that, at the moment, we are the most honourable but we will look like the rest of the nations if we do as Israel did – they said they want to be like other nations and they said that they want a leader. They then became weak and they were overpowered and they became slaves of someone. God said your children will become slaves of the man who wants to be a king. We pray that God helps us not to conform to the standards of this world (MP1L252 - 256).

The above response shows that female clergy was an unacceptable phenomenon at this church. Accommodating women in leadership were viewed as foreign and this respondent preferred that the *status quo* should remain. This response reflected the orthodox mentality of men who clung to traditional ideas. This reflected male dominance as an obstacle, as preference was given to the established ideologies that only favour men for leadership. This kind of thinking points to a traditional church understanding.

3.5.1.4 Theme 4: Contradictory voice (Positive voices of men)

In contrast with the disapproval, criticism, and offending of women by some leadership members, the leadership responses below proved that they demonstrated progressive support for women whom they felt were unfairly bound by denominational culture. These were the views of men who reasoned differently from those who discriminated against women. Furthermore, these were the contradictory voices of men who supported the cause of women. Importantly, these leaders believed that the addressing of the issue of women's participation in the church's top leadership was long overdue and it was up to the church

to decide exactly what they wanted to do. Moreover, these men expressed concern with the current status in the church.

MP2: Ja, they are not given their rightful place, actually and we owe it to them and God so that the full church should be operating [and be] part of the church. We need to let the church free, to operate as the Lord leads us. Let's use every material that is in the church. (MP2L312 - 315).

MP2: But usually according to the Scriptures, people should be able to minister according to the measure of faith given to them as members. The analogy of the body, Jesus calls his church the body. Now if you take the issue of the body, every member must function so that the body may work well. If any member doesn't function it affects the whole body, [...] a role to play. (MP2L100 - 104).

MP2: Man has a tendency to grab God's things and make them his, as a common thing ... in. (MP2L142 - 143).

MP2: So in other words that should be in our minds that we are dealing with something which is not man made. (MP2L135 - 136).

MP2: The author of the church is not man, He may be using men, but it is not a man's business. You imagine God wanted to have a church and then just pass it on to men to do whatever they like as they are doing right now. God has His own pattern for the church which need scrutiny, which need study, which need people who are serious about God and go to God - how do we deal about this issue of the church; the Scriptures are there to guide us as to how to build the church; how to lead the church; how to guide the church (MP2L137 - 141).

The above response indicated that this leader is ashamed of the way men treat women and that they have usurped God's church and have made it their own thing. The respondents believed that for the efficient operation of the body of Christ, women must be given an opportunity. The implication was that it was not just women who were captivated in this

situation, but the church as a whole. The respondent believed that the situation restricted the church and it was unable to function according to the will of God. This respondent demonstrated a desire for transformation. The understanding was that the church was bound and misused, and in return, it hindered its progress.

Discrimination at the BTG Church entailed that women were regarded as inferior to men. This respondent stated that the BTG church did not appoint people to leadership positions according to their gifts. He declared that what the church had done was to close the minister's door to women and, instead, they find themselves in a place they thought would be suitable for them so that they do not converge with them.

MP2: One thing that we did which was not correct is when women who were called by God, we moved to be organisers instead of ministers, so they hold the credentials for organisers. So, in other words, they are not holding the same office as ministers. So that's why they cannot be appointed or elected into these regional committees where ministers would be appointed. (MP2L261 - 263).

MP2: God has no problem; you go to Genesis when God took Adam and gave him Eve to be together. The Bible says when God speaks to them, He made man both male and female and He said to them, rule the earth, be leaders of the world together. They were c- created in the beginning, Eve was not small or even lower than Adam because she came from Adam, and she was on the same par with Adam according to God. He commanded both of them; do this, rule the world together. (MP2L238 - 243).

P2: So, it's only man-made theories and teachings which turned to lower the dignity of a woman and raise the dignity of man which has been a problem up to now. It is giving us hard time now. The country is called a femicide (the killing of women) country right now because of that, so we need to understand that. (MP2L246 - 249).

This respondent indicated that women were treated unfairly as they were inhibited from using their God-given gifts and it also demonstrates layers of male domination and the dominance of patriarchy that discredited women and saw them as second class believers and these obstacles contributed to the delay and lack of women's progress in the church.

In the response below, we find that certain verses were used to obstruct women. This participant highlighted that men used the Bible for their benefit while this relegated women to the 'other' category.

MP4: Another thing is that when we read the Bible before worship in the mornings at church, we skip that verse that says women must keep silent in the church, but when it suits them they use it to silence women. Let me say it but not say it as well that they do know exactly in which context Paul said that verse which makes it irrelevant right now. (MP4L143 - 146).

These responses above revealed that men were in control. They are presented as sitting at the centre and have vested all the powers in themselves. They controlled everything while women were pushed to the periphery and were powerless. It seemed that there was nothing these women could do to change the situation. It also meant that while the Scriptures were meant to be a building instrument for the church, other people have turned them into a tool to empower themselves. This was an obstacle to women who had a desire to be allowed to use their gifts. If the same scriptures they want to use for the benefit of the church community were against them doing the work, it meant that there was no need for them to be concerned.

As some leaders have quoted the teachings of St Paul as the reason for the exclusion of women in leadership positions, the answer below indicates that there is a problem with the misinterpretation or direct misinterpretation of Paul's letters, by the BTG church. According to this response, the church did not take the various situations into account that the Apostle Paul faced, yet the BTG is reluctant to use women as ministers and in other positions of power.

MP4: There were women that followed Jesus. We hear that Paul arrived at Priscilla and Aquila. Obviously, Paul realised that this woman has something, and he made use of them. So, we as BTG movement have failed to recognise women. (MP4L57 - 60)

MP3: If you are contextual, as a preacher, you will be judged on certain points, such as not be saying the things that are similar, Paul would make a disclaimer on that, he would say to the Jews I became a Jew, to the Greeks I became a Greek so that by all means I can win them. [...] He was dealing with distinct contexts. Before we can say he was confusing, when he put the points together, we need to give him the benefit of accessing him in each particular context (MP3L190 - 198)

MP2: Now the mistake is that, offices are reserved for males because they are males and I don't think that is correct, it must be God who puts them there to do that particular job, not because he is a male. (MP2L236 - 238).

The responses above imply that men must realise that the same St Paul they quote when they exclude women did not oppose working with women. This response also demonstrates that men deliberately bar women from assuming positions of power and not because of Apostle Paul's letters. According to these participants, there was no need for the church to be afraid of using women because the role of women in the church is not a new thing and is not unscriptural. It seems as if the epistles of St Paul are used as obstacles. This indicates that the church has lost its purpose and that there is a need for the restoration of the church. Therefore, the feeling is that men should abandon their patriarchal practices and get their hermeneutics right so that the church can be restored to God's pattern.

Under the leadership of Rev. Bhengu, the BTG Church was always extremely popular, and its women were respected for the way God used them, but those women were no longer visible and no one knows what happened to them or to where they disappeared.

MP4: Pastor N would say "there were women and girls that were used by God tremendously in this movement and if the movement allowed them to continue,

“this movement would be far” but the tradition that feels that God only abides in men only has ignored the plan of God about this movement because it has stifled the move of God in the movement. If only the leadership endorsed women, because it is quite obvious that there were women that were capable (MP4L52 - 57).

MP2: So, we should understand the issue of people in the body of Christ as members of the body, which are supposed to function because if they don't function the body will become weak. It fails to fulfil its duties, it's unable to present the life of Christ to the world because the members are not functioning, it should be understood that we are not supposed to depend on ministers only. Ministers have a role; members have a role to play so that there's a balance. (MP2L110 - 115).

The response above indicated that men had allowed the African tradition to dominate them by regarding their position as superior and seeing themselves as the only vessels that God could use. The leadership had quenched the Holy Spirit in the church because God's regulation was replaced by human administration. What once attracted the attention of the people to the church is no more and the BTG Church is no longer seen as a movement. According to this quote, the dominance of patriarchy, the influence of the African culture and the African tradition, and the denominational culture appear to be an obstacle, not only to women but also to the progress of the church.

3.5.1.5 Summary of all the themes concerning objective one

In summary, concerning research objective one, four themes emerged and they were: women exclusion through the church practice, through the Scriptures and the African tradition and the African culture, and the fourth theme, was the contradictory voices of men and they were summarised in this way:

The first theme was exclusion through church practice. The church practice is the daily work of the church. The key issues that were raised were the practicalities of the ministry, the historical reasons, and the issue of the ordination of women, the rules of the

constitution, inconsistencies, and the capacitation of women. The leadership mentioned that the reason women were not involved in leadership is that they were concerned about their safety and were protecting their families. The rotation system of pastors, the attending of late meetings, and avoiding the breaking of families, were cited as the main issues. Another key issue was the historic prophetic tradition as in the vision of the founder that women would raise funds for the church. It was cited that it was the founder who decided that the senior leadership of the church must be elected from the ministers, and that is the traditional requirement that excludes women since they are not ordained. The church procedures were seen as creating gaps between men and women. In addition, the inconsistency in following the church procedures by the different regions was an issue.

The second theme was exclusion through the Scripture. This theme showed how the Scriptures were used as an obstacle. The Pauline epistles were mainly cited by the leadership to substantiate their position. Another key issue was the denominational culture since the church procedures have adopted much from Paul's teachings. This theme revealed the leadership's understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures regarding the position of women in the church. Hermeneutics and exegesis emerged as the problematic areas of the Pentecostals.

The third theme was women's exclusion through the African tradition and the African culture. The church culture in this study showed that the historic tradition in the church was an issue because the church founder never ordained women as pastors, elders, and deacons. However, Lephoko (2008:124) justified this by saying that the time was not ripe. Some participants blamed different indigenous cultures introduced by members to the church, which has led to conflict and confusion in the church. The age gap was also revealed to be a problem because older people wanted things done following the way they had been raised. To them, a man ought to be respected and therefore see men as the leaders according to the African culture and the African traditions. These practices conflict with the Bible's view of spiritual gifts, which do not discriminate based on gender. The leadership declared that it would be difficult for them to change promptly because the church, as an African church, had grown up with these beliefs from the society but

acknowledged that there is a need to educate the church to break the imbalances without hurting the people they lead. Significantly, the leadership declared that they still use their culture as a reference whenever they cannot find guidance in the Scriptures. As men have become accustomed to being in power, it was not easy for them to relinquish this power; as a result, they present various arguments as justification to hold onto it. The key issues that were raised as obstacles under this theme were the historic reasons, the denominational culture, the upbringing of individuals and the habits and beliefs, and educating the church as delay tactics.

The last theme of this research question one was the contradictory voices. These were the voices of men that were in support of women. These men sympathised with the cause of women and were against the current church practice that discriminates against women. In addition, they revealed that the use of scripture was not sincere, because it was utilised for men's convenience at the expense of women. It was revealed that the African tradition and the African culture that displays male dominance and the dominance of patriarchy is not a fair practice.

3.5.2 Findings to Objective two

This objective is to describe the lived experiences of a woman in ministry. This question was posed to the women leadership of the church. These women were leaders even though their leadership was limited to leading other women only. The purpose was to reflect on their lived experiences in the ministry, the daily operating of the church, and the positive and negative impact this had on them. This research question had one theme which was:

3.5.2.1 Unfavourable practices encountered by women in the church

This theme had two categories which were: relegating women to administrative church matters and the emotional and psychological distress of women. The first category had five codes that were:

“women as second class believers” with 20 frequencies, the “power struggle” with four frequencies, “women restricted to leading women-only” with six frequencies, the “submissiveness of women in the church” with eight frequencies, and the “lack of spiritual maturity of leaders” with three frequencies. The second category was: the emotional and psychological distress of women and it had two codes which were: The “lack of love and unity between women” with 13 frequencies and “women feel hurt” with 11 frequencies.

In their responses, these women referred to the challenges they have come across in the church. As it was common for church leaders to be men, so was the honour given to them. This made women less valuable than men and the responses below showed that women felt undervalued by men.

FP1: My personal experience is that being a woman in leadership, sometimes you are being undermined that you are a woman sometimes you get discouraged, and sometimes you are even excluded in some of the issues but what keeps me going is that it never worries me. I just stick to what I know is right. (FP1L160 - 163).

This quote indicated the unhappiness and distress of women regarding the mistreatment, as well as the unpleasant and unacceptable practices they experience in the church. What this quote also indicated was that women were hurt, but they had no intention to either accept the *status quo* or leave the church. They made a way to work for God even if they did not use the church platforms and they intended to stick to what was right. Their experience was that women were treated as second-class believers and felt consequently, they hurt.

It was not that women had done something wrong to be perceived as worthless, but the negligence and mistreatment of women was something some men think was trivial or did not see anything wrong with it. The response below showed that this attitude deprived women of their dignity, and, as a result, their role in the church community was affected.

FP1: If we go back to our houses, there are men who have negative thoughts about their own wives, they do not believe in a woman at all. In order to let someone, do something you have to believe in that person. For God to let Mary carry Jesus, God believed in Mary, (FP1L193 - 195).

This quote affirmed that some men did not believe that God could not use a woman or use a woman more than them. This showed that the challenges that women faced started in their homes and reached their peak in the church. And the inequality and disrespect in the home also had a bearing on the church morality; as a result, women were confined to leading other women only. These women felt that their dignity was being dragged down by men who did not believe in women, hoping to keep them subservient. This revealed the lack of spiritual maturity on the part of leaders because as leaders they needed to inspire women instead of disheartening them. This displayed the emotional and psychological distress of women. These women were hurt and felt that they were treated like second-class believers since their relegation from the administrative church matters and being confined to leading women only.

The BTG Churchmen were viewed as being afraid of women with spiritual gifts because they thought they were competing with them. The response below indicated that a gifted woman was always under surveillance because men undermined gifted women even though Pentecostalism was aligned to Acts chapter two.

*FP2: My personal experience is that **if you are a woman that is used by God, men undermine you. Men are always watching you whether you are an aloof person that is full of pride, how you act towards them and whether you do acknowledge them. They are always looking for something they can use to spite you and drag you down. In my view, they do not believe that God can use a woman more than them. They undermine women. On top of that they feel threatened.*** (FP2L51 - 57).

This quote showed that there was a great deal of negativity and competition concerning women in the church. It seemed that the church had forgotten about the fivefold ministry and that these gifts were meant to complement each other. This meant that the church had lost track which could be the reason for its lack of progress. The consequences were resistance to church transformation by preventing women from answering God's call and the unfair treatment of women due to the dominance of patriarchy.

The job of women leaders in the BTG Church was to lead other women and raise funds. In addition, they felt that the senior leadership was interfering in their women's matters.

FP3: The executive still decides when it comes to the overall convention. For example, they suggested that the girls' convention have speakers in all the services, but the executive refused and allowed the girl's speaker to preach only once, in the morning service (FP3L29 - 31).

The respondent indicated that the executive committee regards women as incapable since some of their decisions were subject to change. The top-tier leadership had the power to reverse their decisions whenever they felt it necessary to do so. This demonstrated a lack of confidence in women's leadership skills as the top-tier leadership imposed their will on them. These women felt belittled and that they were not being given a chance to run their affairs entirely. This demonstrated the dominance of patriarchy and the unfair treatment of women.

The mistreatment of women reveals that there was a lack of love in the congregation. The two quotes below illustrate the subject of humility and purpose.

FP1: Even to the very same person, who undermines you, who writes you off as if you are non-existent, but when you see him, you just give him that respect. To be submissive and love is the other thing that can keep you going; you just love all of them (FP1L163 - 165).

FP1: "So in the society it is important that women should be in leadership, but I will always advise women that if you have been given a chance to be in leadership you must ask God to give you wisdom and a mind that respects other people. In other words, that is where submission comes in, to even submit to your husband or wherever you lead, you need to be submissive because there is one thing you need to understand that even though you are in leadership but there are those that are in the pews that can lead better than you. God has just chosen you; not because you are the best but because God's finger has pointed at you. (FP1L123 - 129).

FP3: *Sometimes you would feel that **men are belittling us as women**, but we will not say anything and **sometimes we are e rescued by another man**.* (FP3L114 - 115).

The above responses demonstrated the emotional and psychological distress of women, that there was a lack of humility, love wisdom, appreciation, and respect for one another in the congregation. This also revealed that when some people got into leadership positions, they became selfish. This showed that people must concentrate on performing well because their term in the office was short. Furthermore, the response also indicated that when someone is elected, they should see it as an opportunity and should seek wisdom from God and be accessible to people who voted for them and not undermine them.

In the BTG Church, women work hard and are expected to do so even though there is no appreciation for the work they do. The responses below showed that women were the source of resources for the church.

FP1: ***Women are like slaves**, most of the time **when it comes to important business**, **men do not take women seriously**.* (FP1L90 - 92).

FP5: *And the overall work of women is to **raise funds for the Assemblies of God**, **BTG work of the Great Commission**. [...] **So, the women's duty is to teach each other married and unmarried about things that concern women**.* (FP5L2 - 11).

What these respondents indicated was that they were not regarded as leaders because men had negative opinions of them. These women felt that they were only recognised when they had to make money and after that, they were disregarded and had no say on how the money should be spent because of their relegation to administrative church matters. The responsibility of women raising funds is a historical prophecy of the late Bhengu's vision to preach the gospel from 'Cape to Cairo.' To this day, these women raise millions towards fulfilling Bhengu's vision, but Cairo seemed to be getting farther away. This has become more of an obstacle to the women even though they enjoy doing it. These women indicated that their exclusion from the senior leadership of the church was hurting them and that they

were treated unfairly and were regarded as second-class believers. This dominance of the patriarchy was viewed as an obstacle.

The exclusion of women at the BTG Church seemed to be a cause for concern. These women felt snubbed and asserted that the unfair treatment they were experiencing bothered them.

FP4: It is not a good thing; it is really hurtful. (FP4L124).

This respondent explained that the BTG women were depressed and saddened by the indifferent way the men treated them. This demonstrated the emotional and psychological distress of women.

Women in BTG were treated differently from the way men were treated and struggled to get anything done because of the limitations imposed on them. In the responses below, it can be seen that the respondent stated that men had put undue pressure on them as women and had done their level best to impede God's mission for them.

FP4: They advise me that I must study [theology] so that it can help me to work universally, but this kind of treatment does not augur well because we resist certain things, there are certain things that we are reluctant to do. We must always remember that we are women and, therefore, I have to know my boundaries because if I happen to jump over them, it will seem as if I am putting myself in a position that I do not qualify for. It is definitely not pleasant to such an extent that God spoke to me to go and start a crusade I also said to God I am unable to go start a revival, because I am a woman because this is exactly what men told me when I relayed the message to them: "Do you understand that you are a girl"? And I said "I do understand that I am a girl. (FP4L112 - 119).

This respondent implied that women had to work twice as hard compared to men to prove themselves. This indicated that women were subjected to unnecessary pressure and they were expected to put in double the effort of men, as this participant was encouraged to

study further while there were pastors who did not possess any kind of qualifications. This indicated that some male pastors were approved and were allowed to work even though they did not have the necessary qualifications. This revealed the kind of boundaries and frustrations with which women had to contend as they were restricted from doing certain things based on their being women. Another indication from the above quotation was that men felt threatened and intimidated by the gifts God had bestowed upon women and decided to prevent them from getting an opportunity to display their gifts by preventing them from having access to ministerial positions. This had automatically relegated women to administrative church matters and confined them to leading women only. All these things have led to the emotional and psychological distress of women.

The problem of positions in the church seems to be a threat to its values due to compromises that have to be made. According to the following response, some leaders appreciated positions over the work to which they had been called.

FP2: We are marginalised, we are being overlooked. No matter how spiritually gifted you can be especially when God uses you (FP2L58 - 59).

FP2: Men's challenges are that they want to be loved by everybody. They want to be preferred, they like favouritism, so in the end, they sell the truth. In the days of our lives, they have been overwhelmed by the spirit of loving positions. The spirit of adoring positions automatically diverts you from leading truthfully, because now you are worshipping the position. Maybe there is nothing wrong with loving positions, but you must know the objective of the position. You must know why you are in this position, the purpose you are being in this position. You must know what you are supposed to achieve. (FP2L43 - 49).

These three responses above indicate that there was a power struggle in the church. The desire for office had led some men to compromise the truth because they wanted to be preferred candidates in the run-up to the election and this affected the morality in the church. Another implication was that those that were in positions were no longer willing to relinquish power as they would canvas for support that created factions in the church.

People had failed to stand up for justice out of fear of losing support due to the ongoing power struggle in the church, which is one of the reasons why women find themselves in the throes of a lack of advocacy. This suggested that women's spiritual gifts were useless or unnecessary and that made them not only feel neglected, but they were also treated unfairly.

At BTG, women seemed to have given up on the issue of their prohibition from being elected to the ministry. It is an issue that has not been addressed nor discussed and no one seems to inquire about it, especially women.

FP3: Those are some of the reasons we have decided to sit down and keep quiet and worship God because we have come to God and God can hear us. That is why women are quiet; we go to God because it is not easy to talk to men and it will not be easy to see transformation in our church. (FP3L187 - 190).

FP5: Actually, we do not necessarily want to rule as women but we just want to be heard you see, we just want to be able to advise where we can; and we need to be heard. Now the problem is that they feel intimidated and they feel small. (FP5L94 - 95).

It was mentioned that women cannot make a positive contribution, because they did not even participate in meetings and did not contribute anything, however, this quote does imply that the silence of women was deliberate and this could be due to displeasure because they felt that everything they recommended fell on deaf ears. This revealed the unhappiness of the women who were being restricted. These women felt that the church suffered because of the preferential treatment given to men. Even though these women understood the church procedures and what ought to be done, but they felt relegated to the pews due to their womanhood, and were, accordingly, treated as second-class believers.

3.5.2.2 Summary of themes to objective two

In summary, the theme of unfavourable practices encountered by women in the church was our fifth theme and it demonstrated women's lived experiences and how they felt about

their situation. The issues that were raised by women as their lived experiences, were discouragement, men's negative thoughts about them, power struggles, imposed submission, feeling hurt, manipulation, marginalisation, being overlooked, compromise, favouritism, the lack of love, intimidation, being silenced and love for positions. The list was endless. These women cited that their responsibilities in the church were limited to dealing with women's issues and raising funds for the church. They were excluded from the overall church administration. What hurts them the most was that they worked hard but they were not appreciated, instead, they were made to feel that they did not deserve to be in leadership by being treated differently and this offended them. Women were prevented from doing God's work and were treated as second-class believers. They felt that they were not in a good space even though they had no intention of leaving the church. The above are all the unfavourable situations and unfair operations encountered by women in the church

3.5.3 Findings to Objective three

This objective aimed to understand the consequences that the prohibition of women in leadership has on church practices. This research question included the responses of both men and women, and it contributed to one theme, which was a stagnant and unprogressive church. This theme provided participants' perspectives on the consequences the prohibition of women in leadership had on the church system. Its significance was that it offered rationality to the main question of the study.

3.5.3.1 Stagnant and Unprogressive church

This was the only theme under this objective, and it had two categories; the first one was the non-fulfilment of the Great Commission, which was made up of three codes. The first code was "dominance of patriarchy" with 18 frequencies, "women inhibited from answering God's call to vocation" with 15 frequencies, and "resistance to church transformation" with 12 frequencies. The second category was the relegation of women to the pews and had one significant code that was "unfair treatment of women demonstrated in

various ways” with 35 frequencies. This was the consequence of excluding women from being voted to church leadership positions.

The first consequence of the prohibition of women in leadership was that the church was not growing. The second one was that the Holy Spirit was stifled. This participant felt that the Holy Spirit must be given a chance to operate so that there can be progress in the church.

*MP4: I cannot remember who I was talking to, but we were having a conversation in Thaba Nchu, namely that, **if this church can recognise and acknowledge women, this movement will go very far. But until the Holy Spirit transforms men from the local level up to the executive office, the BTG movement will move very fast because there are capable women in this movement, who would raise the bar and enhance the quality. Even when women have meetings, men will come in numbers because they know that women will deliver, but let it be us, men, you would not know if we were moving forward or backward.*** (MP4L109 - 115).

Although Pentecostal churches believe in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there seems to be a problem with following this belief in the BTG Church. This meant that the church is not consistent in its beliefs as a Pentecostal church. The church leaned more on its denominational culture. The BTG leadership had also indicated that it conformed to the Scriptures and, especially Paul’s epistles, but seem to have missed the instruction by Paul not to quench the Holy Spirit. Some participants complained in theme four that the Holy Spirit had been stifled and that the church had been held hostage by men. This showed that, much as the church leadership had retained its rules and procedures, it had committed mistakes when it comes to God's commands about the church as Jesus’ bride. The quenching of the Holy Spirit indicated that the church was no longer God's business but the men. This demonstrated that the church was lost and needed to get back on track by being emancipated so that there could be progress. Due to the ongoing struggle not just between men and women, but also between the men and the Holy Spirit, the church remained in a stagnant and unprogressive state, and this had hampered the evolution of the Great Commission. The consequence was the dominance of patriarchy in the church which inhibited women from answering God's call to vocation by resisting church transformation.

The congregation was in dire straits. This was due to the problem of non-consensus among members of the leadership especially in the matter of accepting women into the leadership of the church. The responses below declared that the dissension of the leadership in certain matters was the cause of the stagnancy of the church.

MP5: [...] there are people who would not accept anything from anyone whether it is bringing progress to the church as long it is not the way they perceive things. So, they create a big crack because people become frustrated. For instance, I work with preaching points and I work with women, because if there are no men what should one do? (MP5L350 - 353).

MP5: I recall that ma Q's subject was such a big issue; as a result, her impact was minimal because she was one woman amongst men in the leadership. In other words, it puts that woman in a very difficult position because whatever she wanted to say, if she is alone then it won't work. Otherwise, she will use other avenues that are available like the mother's structures to voice her views properly, so, if for instance, the decision needs to be taken and she is alone, it becomes very unfortunate. So, if we intend to put only one woman among men, she will not have any impact (MP5L140 - 145).

This response implied that the church was not just a holy place as many thoughts, but that conspiracies were also perpetrated in the church. It also demonstrated that some people had their interests at heart, which explained why women encountered so many difficulties. Due to the negativity of some men towards women, they collaborated to ensure that women failed in all their endeavours. This response demonstrated how the dominance of patriarchy combatted the transformation in the church which resulted in the unfair treatment of women. These squabbles were the reason the church was stagnant and unprogressive.

The BTG Church is in distress due to the opposed advancement of women by excluding them from entering leadership positions.

MP2: That when ladies said God is calling me to do His work, then we decided, no we do not want women here then diverted them to organisation *even when they doing this organisation that these are preachers, you feel that that woman is powerful, she is only shackled by the organisation because there are rules and conditions there; you must not do this and you must not do this.*” (P2L131) “That when ladies said God is calling me to do His work, then we decided, no we do not want women here then diverted them to organisation. (MP2L268 - 269).

MP2: *One thing that we did which was not correct is when women who were called by God, we moved to organisers instead of ministers, so they hold the credentials for organisers* (MP2L261 - 263).’

The above responses reflected how much the church suffered due to the relegation of women to the pews. One participant mentioned that during the time of the late Bhengu, women preached in the Back to God crusade and people were accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, but those days are past and that is no longer the case. The evident consequences are the non-fulfilment of the Great Commission and this consequence harms society. This showed that this was due to the dominance of patriarchy that resisted the progress of women and the church transformation.

The BTG Church is declining both in terms of numbers and also spiritually. BTG was known for its healing power as people would be brought in sick, and they would be prayed for and be healed. Waite (1977:60) asserts that Bhengu made no pretext of saving the body. The next respondent was concerned that the church's choice to exclude women from the leadership not only harmed women but the church as a whole.

MP2: *In fact, we are failing ourselves because in every situation, in every local church, there are more women than men, it's always the case. I have argued time and again about the very elders and deacons. Men are fewer, women and young people are in great numbers, and they are not involved in church governance. And they are governed by a couple of men whether they do the right things or not,*

but they are there they know that we are the leaders and they tell people. Now, it's not fair for women, [...] the majority of the people are there, where you could get people so that you can get the feeling, the mind of the people. The mind of the people is where the majority of the church is, it is where the feelings of the church are. So, it has not been happening very well. (MP2L284 - 295).

MP2: *Sometimes you elect a man, he doesn't come to church, and he comes to church on Sunday. These ladies are here the whole week in the services. These men come once in two weeks and he is an elder, and you call that an elder* (MP2L298-300).

This response implied that because women were in the majority in the church it was important that the church knew what women thought so that there could be progress in the church. In other words, ignoring women's opinions would hamper the church. Lephoko (2005:124 suggests that those responsible for leading the BTG Church must think seriously about creating a place for women, especially because they make up sixty to seventy percent of the church membership. Although women had shown support for the church by their presence in the services and fundraising there was still a gender bias that resulted in their relegation to an inferior position in the church, regardless of their efforts. These patriarchal injustices towards women proved to be disastrous to the church's progress.

The BTG Church requires to be transformed. This respondent stated that what would help the church was the willingness of men to share and collaborate. She thought that men were smart enough to think because they could not be told what to do. Men as church leaders should ask God for direction and must allow the Holy Spirit to guide them.

FP1: *You cannot force a person to believe in you that is why, if you are a woman and you know that God has called you, that is enough; God will make a way for you, He has his way of doing things* (FP1L156-158).

FP1: *Women have a role to play, you see this in the book of Esther, when Mordecai realised that it was getting tough in his squabble with Haman, he required her*

daughter Esther who was the queen at the time to be involved to rescue the Jews. But when it comes to this issue, it depends on a person, a man or woman, because it is not all of them who are Mordecai's, it depends on the Mordecai. If Mordecai did not have the spirit of sharing, the due date of their demise would have arrived, and all the Jews would have died. The reason Esther was able to assist it was because she was involved, Mordecai included her. (FP1L65-71).

This response suggested that a major disaster could arise in the congregation if the authorities did not change their thinking. She asserted that the book of Esther was a lesson that showed that women should not be treated with disregard, lest they become a response to the stagnant and unprogressive church.

Women's leadership was neglected by the BTG leaders, especially pastors. Women leaders and especially unmarried leaders of girls did not get support from the local church pastors. Some of the pastors refused to allow the girl organisers to enter their churches and do their work. As can be seen in the next response, this woman explained the misery they were experiencing from their fellow pastors especially when they had to visit the local churches to teach and elect the girls' committees.

FP5: I work as an organiser for girls and my personal experience in leadership is that women are not given a chance, instead they are being oppressed. When it comes to visiting girls locally, I encounter problems. Whenever I have to visit the girls, I have to beg the pastors of the locals and yet this work that I have to do to these local venues will assist them. If I go to girls in that locale, I am going there to organise the girls so that they can behave well, but you will find that he will tell me that this is my local church you will come in my own time, as a result, sometimes they do not open doors for us at all, we are victimised (FP5L114-120).

FP5: This is also killing the work of God. We are failing this Gospel of Jesus and we are failing ourselves. One does not get to be properly positioned, that is why we feel like we are oppressed. (FP5L162-164).

This response highlighted the dominance of patriarchy that affected women in the church. It also reflected the oppression and the unjust treatment of women in the hands of ministers. This indicated that some of the ministers defied the church constitution because much as they were aware of the women organisers in church, but they continued to obstruct them from doing their work. Their actions have led to some of the inconsistencies in the church practice. The consequences are the dominance of patriarchy, which inhibited women from doing their work, and the unfair treatment of women.

3.5.3.2 Summary of themes to objective three

In summary, research question three regarding the consequences that gender marginalisation in leadership had on church practice was dominated by negative outcomes. There was proof that indeed the church had become stagnant and that the women were relegated to the pews and the Great Commission was not being fulfilled. The responses showed that there was resistance to church transformation caused by the dominance of patriarchy, which also led to the inhibiting of women from answering God's call. Some of the words and phrases that were used to show the consequences were "men are failing the church," "men do not believe in women," "killing of the work," "women are overlooked," "women are denied the opportunity to do the work," "women are not appreciated," "women are exploited," "women were put under pressure," "women are undermined" and "women are harassed," These sentiments that translated into a stagnant and unprogressive church came from both men and women.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This is a study of the marginalisation of women in the Assemblies of God Back to God (AOG-BTG) Church, which is a Pentecostal church located within the black communities in South Africa. The study explored the reasons for the prohibition of women being selected to senior leadership positions in the church, the consequences of this, and how women feel about it. To interpret the findings Oduyoye's theoretical framework was used as a lens on African women's theology as well as the outcome of the literature review. The findings of this study were consistent with Oduyoye's concept that marginalisation of women is contextualised around the issues of the Bible, culture, and church "dogmas and creeds". Anderson (2015:1362) explains that:

Gender is a 'crosscutting issue' that "may refer to the exclusive male leadership in the church hierarchies, restricting women's participation in church decision-making forums at the national level - it may also refer to the institutional proscription against the ordination of women [which] denies women the right to occupy a formal role in the spiritual ministry of the church.

This chapter will discuss the findings in the light of the existing literature to show how women are restricted from entering the "gendered spaces" of power and privileges. This discussion will involve an analysis of the themes identified in the findings. The discussion will focus on three main areas that include (1) the marginalisation of women, (2) the experiences of women in the ministry, and (3) the consequences of gender marginalisation.

4.2 Summary of the overall findings

- Research objective 1: Four themes emerged and those were: women exclusion in church leadership roles through church practice, through the Scriptures, through the African tradition and the African culture, and contradictory voices. From the first three themes, four critical discourses emerged, and they are: Bible teaching, church rules and procedures, the African tradition and the African culture, and the conflicting practice of leadership

- Research objective 2: Three critical discussions that describe the lived experiences of a woman in the ministry: women are restricted to leading women only and women feel hurt and women are second class believers.
- Research objective 3: Understand the consequence that gender marginalisation in leadership has on church practices and one theme, which is a stagnant and unprogressive church, emerged. Four critical discussions: Resistance to transformation, women's gifts are not recognised, women feeling unsupported, unfair treatment, and the dominance of patriarchy.

4.3 Marginalisation of women

The findings are that without any doubt women do feel marginalized since they have these experiences. However, moving forward it is hopeful to see the movement towards the ordination of Deacons. This is a very positive sign because it shows that there is some openness towards women and that hopefully in time full ordination of women will happen.

The marginalisation of women in the church has to do with the exclusion of women from positions of power. This concept is consistent with other theories of marginalisation that Oduyoye has emphasised in her writing. Importantly, Mercy Amba Oduyoye is regarded as an advocate for African women's theology because she was able to give women a voice, a platform, and equal consideration in the Christian Theology, by highlighting the role of African women in theological studies, exposing the injustice of men collaborating at the expense of 'others' (Oduyoye, 1995:88). Many reasons are cited by researchers for the fact that women are marginalised. One of the reasons mentioned in the literal interpretation of the Bible and proof-texting. Proof texting refers to the ability to use and organise a few Bible texts to support any discussion without looking at how those texts relate to the Bible as a whole (Gabaitse, 2015:3). Hendriks *et al.* (2012:135) criticise the literal interpretation of the texts by Pentecostals because the rest of the Bible and the contexts within which these texts are written are disregarded. It is believed that the verbal reliability of the Scriptures weakens the text (Duncan, 2019:2) and the scars of women's oppression that are observed in communities are believed to have emanated from those who emulate the

restrictions in Paul's epistles (Hendriks *et al.*, 2012:102). Another reason is patriarchy which is dominated by doctrines that oblige women to be submissive while supporting male headship. Female domesticity and subordination are the typical characteristics of patriarchy, which are reinforced and maintained in the church as biblical and godly using selective passages from the Bible (Gabaitse, 2015:3). Culture is another problem that has been cited by many scholars because culture portrays women as weak and passive (Wachania & Ndengwah, 2017:428). Historically women have not been recognised in the leadership of the Pentecostal churches in the African context and discrimination against women reflects the male domination that is perpetrated based on sex, which prevents their recognition (Lubaale, 2020:9). The study demonstrated that the influence of the African culture gives priority to men and silences women (Lubaale, 2020:9). Cultural beliefs have permeated the church and that is why women are denied the opportunity to participate in socio-spiritual roles to their full potential (Wachania & Ndengwah, 2017:428). It was however interesting to realise that from the majority of men who supported the exclusion of women from senior leadership positions, there were a few contradictory voices that supported the cause of women.

These reasons were linked to the findings of the first objective of the study regarding why men do not prefer to have women in leadership positions. The findings were: exclusion through the Scriptures, exclusion through church practices, exclusion through the African tradition and the African culture, and contradictory voices and the reasons below are linked to these findings and will be unpacked as follows: Bible teaching, church rules, and procedures, the African tradition, and the African culture, and the conflicting practice of leadership, respectively.

4.3.1 Bible teaching

The concept of 'Bible teaching' is consistent with Oduyoye's assertion that men have used the Bible to exclude women from power. According to Oduyoye (2001:26), women are taught to adhere to the religious requirements by recognising that they are thus adapting to the source of their lives. The Pentecostal churches have a conservative way of interpreting

the Scriptures with men believing that the Bible only supports them as leaders. When men claim their superior status over women, they refer more to the Pauline epistles so that women can conform to their subservient roles. According to Alexander and Bowers (2018:40-41), the traditional conservative view of men when it comes to the inclusion of women in church leadership is that it is a violation of God's law on homes and communities. Men always view themselves as legitimate leaders and believe that the Bible supports this conviction since Paul instructs the church to “pick out from among the church members, men of good repute” (Acts 6:3) as leaders. This method of interpreting the Scriptures makes women feel marginalised. This calls for the church to come up with a strategy regarding the interpretation of the Scriptures because direct interpretation creates divisions in the church. The resistance of the full empowerment of women as church leaders comes with the belief that male leadership is biblically sanctioned, but it is concerning how the Bible is interpreted by the Pentecostals (Oduyoye, 2002:92). According to Alexander and Bowers (2018:xx), Pentecostals have a history of preventing women from participating in critical areas of leadership. Gabaitse (2015:4) warns against taking and understanding the Bible at face value and the “unarticulated Pentecostal hermeneutics,” which the Pentecostal members develop by forming and advancing an exegetic that suits them during their services. Van Klinken (2013:248) elevates the “‘equality of personhood’ and an ‘equality of status before God’” as all the people are made in the image of God. Oduyoye (2002:92) is concerned about the way Christians use the Bible in Africa and attests that Africans seem to rely on one form of interpretation of the truth, which makes her question naïve when reading the Bible texts, knowing something about the accuracy of their many translations. Oduyoye (2002:92) believes that the biblical interpretation and Christian theology in Africa have an impact on the marginalisation of women’s experiences. Oduyoye (2002:92) longs to see the clergy rather emphasising love, honour, and care rather than subjugation for love, which could mean security for both and “no loss of face.”

Alexander and Bowers (2018:31) state that university-trained biblical scholars have called for an interpretation that takes the diversity of the whole of a scriptural witness into consideration, saying others have expressed interpretations with an appeal to the larger

Christian and Pentecostal tradition. Still, others have voiced literalistic interpretations focusing on Pauline texts that would, if taken at face value, seem to exclude women from leadership positions (Alexander & Bowers 2018:31). Significantly, people do not overreact to St Paul's epistles that silence women, but rather consider the places and the reasons Apostle Paul made these pronouncements because these scriptures have proven to be more than controversial over the years due to the literal interpretation attached to them, especially by the Pentecostals. Gabaitse (2015:5) considers it essential for readers to dig deeper and try to read beneath the surface of the biblical texts. If one was to follow this interpretation it would mean that women must be silent when they enter the church gate and this would be contrary to 1 Cor 11:5, where St Paul announces that a woman who prays or prophesies must cover her head to honour her head.

One other finding regarding Bible teaching was that men proclaim some scriptures for their convenience to the detriment of women. An example of a verse that states that women must keep silent in the church is sometimes skipped, but when it suits men, they use it to silence women. Yet, this process has led to rhetorical and unanswered questions and Nadar (2000:28) feels that

The patriarchal and oppressive culture in which the Bible was written provides opportunity for people to use it for their own oppressive purposes. What we need to do is to draw out the liberating norms which the Bible set for us and use them as a basis to counter the oppression that people justify.

Oduyoye (2002:37) is concerned that women are to be restricted from having authority, and consequently, institutional power. Furthermore, Paul himself has written these scriptures but some of them depict him working with women, as in the case of Phoebe, who was a deaconess in the church at Cenchreae, as well as Priscilla and Aquila who trained and enlightened Timothy on some of the things. From the onset, the Pentecostal eschatology attempted to fulfill the prophecy of Joel, which states that consequently, God would pour his spirit out upon all flesh and the sons and daughters of men will prophesy (Joel 2:28). In using the scriptures as an obstacle for women, it is therefore important to comprehend whether the Bible is about the supremacy of men or about worshipping God, and about glorifying Jesus Christ, as the head of the church. It is also crucial to understand

the benefit of the church from having an exclusive all-male leadership and the exclusion of women in these positions. If women were to be silent, God would never send a message through women, especially a message to His disciples that he has risen (Luke 24:10). In essence, women deserve to be given a chance to impart the messages that God has put on them. However, in the appropriation of the African religious culture, women have developed cultural hermeneutics, which has provided a platform for reflection on the meaningful will of God in women, yet they “share the liberation of hermeneutics and feminist critique of dominant cultures” (Oduyoye 2001:18). Women no longer agree with the view of men because they are now doing their reading and, therefore, depend on their understanding and interpretation (Oduyoye, 2001: 18).

4.3.2 Church rules and procedures

The theoretician followed in this study states that it is common for the Bible to be read from an African cultural perspective (Oduyoye, 2001:19), and the church constitution advocates that men alone should be the leaders of the church. According to Alexander and Bowers (2018:8), the issue of recognising men only as leaders is a stained-glass ceiling that prevents women from having an impact and direct access and influence on the decision-making processes of the church. In other Pentecostal churches, some local assemblies are led by women pastors, but under the limitations of their ministerial rank, these women are not qualified to be appointed to senior leadership positions (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:9). The difference between these women pastors and their male counterparts is that they never served the probation time and were never ordained and are therefore not recognised as fully-fledged ministers.

According to Alexander & Bowers (2018:5), the church rules and procedures exclude women from leadership even though women believe that within the scriptural boundaries, they are qualified to serve in high positions (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:33). They affirm that a female deacon is gifted to do work that is similar to that of a deacon and the church should appoint her to exercise such qualities because she is qualified and feels the call to the work as indicated in Rom 16:2 and Acts 6:3. The female pastors have credentials that

affirm them as pastors and should therefore be treated as fully-fledged pastors irrespective of the virtually parallel views of men and women (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:26).

4.3.3 African tradition and African culture

Oduyoye (2001:13) believes that women are deliberately subjected to men who are privileged due to the culture that always protects their actions that she believes require analysis. This is in line with her thoughts as she believes that the church image has been tainted due to its tardiness to confront violence against women (Oduyoye, 2001:13). Oduyoye sees a need for an “intercultural dialogue and cultural transformation” (Oduyoye, 2001:13) because, in the African culture, men often value themselves highly and insist on being valued by others, while they devalue women and keep them in a disadvantaged position (Kanyoro & Oduyoye 2006:4). Some leaders believe that the current situation in the church needs to be maintained, as a result, any gender dialogue is viewed as an “instrumental tool aimed at destroying [the] African culture” (Tietcheu, 2006:116). Church members’ opinions regarding the involvement of women in leadership differ as some members do not see any error in the way the church is governed. Some are aware of the situation but believe that the *status quo* should remain because the considerable influence of the African tradition and the African culture has led to some of the leaders preferring to view the situation in a positive light and regard things as normal even though they are not because these are communal habits (Van Klinken, 2013:248-250).

According to Oduyoye (2002:92), there are visible developments in the African culture that influence the church tradition. Thus “a major obstacle to women being considered for appointment to leadership positions is the implicit and, often, explicitly expressed sexism regarding the role/s of women” (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:79). Even though the biblical heritage of the Bible and the condemnation of the prophecy have worked well for Africa, the oppressive threads of the Bible alone strengthen the oppressive culture of women (Oduyoye, 2002:92). “Pentecostalism ‘represents a critique of African culture’ and what is seen as its tradition of sexual inequality that favours men and disrespects women” (Van Klinken, 2013:248) According to Kanyoro (2001:36-37):

In the African indigenous thought system, culture and religion are not distinct from each other. Therefore, culture and religion in Africa embrace all areas of one's total life. There is no sphere of existence that is excluded from the double grip of culture and religion. The presence or absence of rain, the well-being of the community, sexuality, marriage, birthing, naming children, success or failure, the place, and form of one's burial, among others, all come under the scope of religion and culture.

This means that, as Africans, their God is integrated into various aspects of life and is not isolated. In other words, their belief in God does not replace their cultural beliefs. The problem has been that "Christianity has converted the African people to a new religion without converting their culture" (Oduyoye, 2002:93). Such undertakings of men's supremacy status are renounced because they are believed to be responsible for the moral and social conditions facing African families and communities (Van Klinken, 2013:248).

Sometimes the African tradition and the African culture is an issue connected to their background and upbringing as some leaders submitted, and Kobo (2015:1) asserts that the persistent attitudes arise from "a complex interplay of cultural practices, which have succeeded in dislocating black women from what is perceived to be black men's sites." Kobo contends that over the years, the African culture has taught women to be confined in a certain space, which was thought to be suitable for them until women also believed that they belong in it. In this regard, Kobo (2020) states that "*Umfazi akangeni ebuhlanti emzini*" which means "a kraal is a place for men and not women." A kraal is a place where the men in the rural areas sit and discuss important matters. This means that there are demarcated areas for women; while the places where the men meet, women are not allowed to enter. Therefore, concerning the issue of teaching, gender is feared because it can break their African traditional culture down.

Laguzia (2017:5-6) explains that injunctions about the subordination of women in the Scriptures were cited to discourage women from assuming leadership positions in the church. Women were encouraged to submit to their husbands as to the unfulfillment of their womanhood. In this vein, Oduyoye (2002:95-96), posits that the Church in Africa must take part in the western debate over the masculinity of Christianity and share our traditional way of understanding democracy in which the Director-Council can only proclaim "good" after consultation at all levels and reach an agreement on how the whole

community should go. Although culture is not fixed on issues affecting women, it is slow to transform it and is often used as an argument against women's leadership in the church (Attoh, 2017:158). Cultural and historical developments, the geographic setting, and the religious customs predominant in society have given rise to inequality between men and women, and this is also affecting the religious communities (Wood, 2019:1).

4.3.4 Conflicting practices of leadership

The conflicting practices of leadership declare that there is a lack of consistency that is evident in the leadership due to the conflicting discernments of leaders. This is consistent with Mercy Oduyoye's principle on marginalisation and the status of African women, whereby men are always favoured and women are subjected to men deliberately, which makes women want to understand "men's shift and their continuing adherence" (Oduyoye, 2001:13). The issue of the conflicting practice of leadership creates the element of the "other" as men have positioned themselves at the centre, while women are at the periphery. These are obstacles that lead to the exclusion of women from leadership positions because some cite the very constitution and procedures that are often broken by the leadership. Ferraro, Etzion, and Gehman (2015) pronounce that stakeholders with fundamental value differences must engage in a dialogue because being inclusive requires a process of evaluating beliefs.

Even though it would be a challenging task but "by purposefully juxtaposing competing worldviews and demands, leaders can work through tensions and this would mean breaking through the gridlock that labelling groups as "us" and "them" (Schad & Smith, 2019:57). This has created a great deal of compromise and has created obstacles for women who are yearning to be recognised as part of church leadership. The biggest problem with the conflicting practice of leadership is that some leaders adopt things outside the organisation and introduce them to the church and Phiri (1998:199-200) states that external influences harm the building of the church.

4.4 Lived experiences of a woman in key areas of ministry

In this section, the focus is on the lived experiences of women in key areas of ministry. The major findings of the research revealed that there are unfavourable practices encountered by women in the church. This is in line with Oduyoye's assertion that it is an injustice for women to implement decisions they did not help to make and it is an injustice for them to struggle to have their humanity recognised and treated as such, and that all of this becomes "the context of struggle reflected in women's theology" (Oduyoye, 2001:37). The Pentecostal church is still under patriarchal rule and patriarchy is interpreted as anti-women and oppressive and always supports male domination and male power (Wood, 2019:6). These women depend on the power and authority of men who are privileged to hold all senior leadership positions, which puts women in an inferior position. The happenings in the church harm the lives of women and the church as a whole and the findings indicated that these women are hurt due to mistreatment. Robinson affirms that "violence against women is a health issue and a development issue. It also flies in the face of God-given human dignity and is, therefore, an urgent Gospel issue" (Wood, 2019: 7). This exposes the Pentecostal church as a church that contradicts itself as it proclaims a liberating ideology, while it is simultaneously unjust to women (Gabaitse, 2015:2). These women are forced to be submissive. They have to sit in the pews and listen to their oppressors preaching to them. They feel obliged to be silent and to watch men do everything, such as even taking decisions on their behalf. Three critical discussions describe these findings and they will be dealt with in this order: (1) women are restricted to leading women only; (2) women feel hurt and (3) women as second-class believers.

4.4.1 Women restricted to leading women only

This view that women are restricted to leading women only, is in line with Oduyoye's belief that the compatibility theory plays an undesirable role and creates a gap for women in civil society and churches if the roles to be played need to be shared based on gender (Oduyoye, 2001:94). Although women have the opportunity to lead other women, they are prevented from participating in the senior leadership of the church and this is an obstacle to their inclusion in church leadership positions. The restriction of women to leading women only

has been an indisputable obstruction for women since they are downgraded from administrative church matters. Women are restricted to leading women only because some men claim that Jesus was a man and he worked with men only. However, this assertion is controversial because there are scriptures that prove that even though women were not among the first twelve disciples, they were still present. According to Dube (2017:90), some women arrived in Jerusalem with Jesus (Mark 15: 40-41). Even though women are precluded from being leaders in the church, Jesus saw them as capable candidates to do his work. Texts such as the Book of Acts are viewed as evidence regarding Jesus working with women. Women were sent by Jesus to go and deliver the ‘Good News’ of his resurrection to his disciples. Among those who followed Jesus, these women were the first to testify that he had been raised from the dead. These women were the proclaimers of the Gospel, sent by Jesus (Luke 24:10). There is a standard of discipleship that was set by Jesus. According to Dube (2017:90), Jesus singled out a widow's gift and allowed her to anoint him. It did not end there but Jesus proclaimed that wherever the gospel is preached this woman's name should be pronounced because of what she did. Dube (2017:90) asserts that the church has ignored this command to honour this woman.

The existing local churches' pastor's posts are reserved for men alone and due to this prohibition women have often been unable to use their gifts and they cannot speak as pastoral leaders (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:xxi). Women feel that they share a common call with men and that is why women want to be included in the church leadership so that they can serve their church to their fullest capacity (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:xxi). Meanwhile, there is a belief that much as women resist patriarchy, they promote it simultaneously by voting men into leadership positions (Chisale, 2020:3). This results in men dominating the church leadership positions and women being repressed systematically and institutionally.

4.4.2 Women feel hurt

The findings showed that women feel hurt because of emotional abuse. This is in line with Oduyoye's understanding that apart from the fact that the African myth states that “the

future” is related to God, but that does not mean that God is represented in any way because relationships presuppose either a man or a woman and not the abstract of gender (Oduyoye, 2002: 95). A gender line is drawn between men and women and this has caused the emotional and psychological distress of women. According to Dube (2017:103-104), the discrimination against women started when the church came to embrace the values of the Roman Empire as its own. According to Dube, the Roman Empire adopted the family as the basic unit for the church, and women were seen as subjected to their husbands. These patriarchal tendencies were the foundation of ill-treatment and silencing of women and slaves as. Dube (2017:103-104 assets

[The] church leaders were consequently urged to run the church like they ran their homes, keeping their children and wives under control (1Timothy 3:1-7). Slaves were no longer told that Christ had set them free or that they should be steadfast in maintaining their freedom. Instead, they were told to obey their masters and to serve them regardless of whether they were cruel or not (1 Peter 2:18; 1 Timothy 6:1-2). Unlike in 1 Corinthians, where wives and husbands were seen as equal, wives are clearly defined as being subordinate to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1-7). This led to the restructuring of the church so that it resonated with the political frameworks and family codes of the Roman Empire.

Some men perceive women as natural caregivers, not just in their homes, but in their communities and, therefore believe that if women get into leadership positions, they will embrace everyone even when they must be assertive. Swinkels (2017:9) asserts that men view themselves as hard-working, industrial, rational, assertive, independent, and proud, and none of these qualities are connected to women, whom they regard as domestic, devotional, moral, gentle, kind, graceful, and beautiful. The emotional and psychological distress of women in the church is instigated by the kind of treatment women receive which leaves them with questions about their brotherly love in Christ. On the other hand, women, especially women ministers, hold conservative views on family roles (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:24).

Women feel hurt because the power possessed by church members differs; some possess a great deal of power while some must be subservient. This inequality has led to unnecessary disputes and when inequality is planned, it harms the target audience. Women’s offence is that they are women and, therefore, do not fall into the same category of humans as those who discriminate against them and Oduyoye (2002:95) asserts that “[women] cannot wear

beads that suggest we are made by men.” These disparities are created by the same people that are calling the church community, children of God inclusively, but ironically, treat them as the “others.” Oduyoye (2002:95) states that “while the African myth of ‘destiny’ is related to God, it is not said to mirror God in any way and, if it does, [...] the relation is with the individual woman or man and not with the abstract of gender”. Patriarchy and male domination have distorted the relationship between women and men and Oduyoye (2002:106) believes that “just human relationships can survive only when the equal value of all persons is upheld.”

4.4.3 Women as second-class believers

Oduyoye has commented that women are considered second-class believers and in African Women Studies, she focused on the doctrine of communism aimed at transforming diversity to create unity and equality between men and women (Oduyoye, 2001:17). Women as second-class believers mean that they are downgraded from the position of central believers and do not share equal status with men. They do not qualify to be part of the administrative church matters and this is an obstacle to women’s wishes of seeing themselves in the church leadership. The research confirms that most members in any church are women (Cox & Diamant, 2018) but this has not made much difference in the male-dominated church despite being a minority (Falola & Amponsah 2012). The idea of having men alone in the leadership is unsettling not just to women but to the church (Wachania & Ndengwah, 2017:428).

If men were to be granted their wish of being the only ones in leadership, many churches would be closed as there are only a few men in many local churches. This would also mean that there will come a time when some local churches will be run without any leadership or not run at all since men seldom come to the services (Murrow, 2005:91). However, women have remained faithful to the church even though the church has failed to be supportive of their cause (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:xxii). Mombo (2019:198) indicates that the overwhelming presence of African women in the churches demonstrates that the church is sustained by women’s unceasing devotion; even though the need for women to be approved as leaders is sometimes viewed as a worldly desire (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:47).

Some men have been too comfortable in leadership positions that they will not relinquish. They have demonstrated their satisfaction with the *status quo* by having watched the injustices that have been happening to women without intervention. However, Alexander and Bowers (2018:49) assert that a clergyperson called by God does not need man's approval. One important, but ignored fact is that in many churches, women are the ones that raise funds. This means that many churches are sustained through their resources, but men can hardly recognise them for the work they do. No church can survive without funds and if women can do this work successfully and also lead other women successfully it would mean that they do have the potential to lead and all they need is the opportunity men deny them. What these women desire is for the church to take them seriously and acknowledge them as equals in the workmanship as if their ministry matters (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:xxii).

4.5 Consequences of gender marginalisation

Through her work, Mercy Oduyoye provided Christians with information on the importance of taking the aspects of gender, culture, and religious diversity into account. Oduyoye (2001:13) used women's experiences and backgrounds to articulate issues of global and African Christian theologies. She believes that “the strength of a woman is in her tongue” (Oduyoye, 1995:88). “Gender is a ‘crosscutting issue’ that “may refer to the exclusive male leadership in the church hierarchies, restricting women’s participation in church decision-making forums at the national level” - “it may also refer to the institutional proscription against the ordination of women [which] denies women the right to occupy a formal role in the spiritual ministry of the church” (Anderson 2015:1362). Gender discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of men and women in the congregation which leads to constrained gender equality. Women are still not allowed to participate fully in all roles in the congregation (Wood, 2019:5). Their prevalence in the church did not change the dominance of a few men and their invisibility and the lack of involvement in church affairs, such as leading the services. These differences are the result of undesirable processes that affect women and the overall church environment negatively. According to Wood (2019:5):

The church in South Africa positioned women in inferior ways; man was viewed to be created in the image of God; Adam was created first and then Eve from Adam's rib, and not only was she guilty of tempting Adam, but she also was weaker and lesser than him and she became the cause of the Fall. The church upheld these stereotypical beliefs and regulated and assigned a subordinate status to women.

The consequences of gender marginalisation in the church were directly related to the third research objective which produced the major finding that the church is stagnant and unprogressive. The stagnancy and unprogressiveness of the church meant that the church is not developing and that it is not in favour of implementing communal reforms, which contribute to women's misery. This major finding is summarised under five critical discourses that emerged and will be discussed in this order: (1) the stagnant and unprogressive church, (2) resistance to transformation, (3) women's gifts are not recognised, (4) unfair treatment of women demonstrated in various ways and (5) the dominance of patriarchy

4.5.1 Stagnant and Unprogressive church

Oduyoye believes that a church that does not acknowledge the gifts of all its members is bound to be stagnant because the church needs to develop different ministries to achieve its goal around the world. After all, its power comes from the Holy Spirit (Oduyoye, 2001:86). However, the source of influence of the stagnancy of the church appears to be its foundation, which is often conservative because it is normally composed and entrenched in social groups and as such resists change (Hadaway, 1982:372). One of the church leaders in this research mentioned that an old church has gone through many stages, such as birth, being nurtured reaching a plateau, and starting to decline. One of the reasons he cited was the interpretation of the roles and responsibilities, which he maintained to have an element of servanthood during the initial stages from the people who are elected as facilitators, conveners, coordinators, trainers, and organisers; but over time, it turns into positions, then it becomes about the benefit that comes with the position and, eventually, they lose interest in training and empowering people. Hadaway (1982:372) asserts that as housing ages and residents age and move away and are replaced by newcomers, the whole neighbourhood may undergo a drastic alteration and these changes affect the church because they reflect the changes occurring in the population pool from which it draws its members.

4.5.2 Resistance to transformation

Resistance to transformation has been one of the findings of this study and one of the concepts that Oduyoye has raised in her writing. Oduyoye (2001:86) posits that:

If koinonia is a community of sharing and participation, then in its operations, women too, should find the power to exercise their charisma for the general health of the community and especially for the church, but unfortunately, the experiences of African women suggest that the church in Africa is not ready to do anything towards becoming a true koinonia.

The stagnancy and unprogressiveness of the church mean that there is resistance to transformation. “[The church] refuses to fully recognize, accept, and welcome women – called by God, anointed by God, wanted by God, and used by God. These women are unwelcomed within the hierarchical and full ministry of [the church]” (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:46). This goes even further, as there is a miscarriage of the fulfilment of the Great Commission which does not only affect the church but the society as a whole. The failure to fulfil the Great Commission denotes that the church is failing its duty to make disciples, which is the commandment given by Jesus (Matt 28:18-20) before he ascended back to Heaven.

The church rules have become obstacles put in place just for women to avoid them overcoming the boundaries set for them. On the other hand, the women intend to answer God’s call to a vocation, which when it miscarries, fails the whole church. The church entity is spiritual and does not require people who see no further than their noses. President Magwidi of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe stated that the church enters a time when it will allow all members of the church to participate in the "shared process of listening to the word of God and understanding His guidance, so that [they] can find, and collectively, [their] responsibility to be the right church [...]@ (Masengwe & Chimhanda, 2019:4). **Allowing all church members to participate in God's mission would demonstrate their discernment of God's purpose for each believer.** According to Masengwe and Chimhanda (2019:3), when a new committee was appointed to deal with the transformation in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe one of the leaders stood up and declared:

We are entering into a phase of the leadership of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus was here, he would tell us what he similarly told Peter at the confession, ‘not by your moral intelligence are you moving with the spiritual call but the quickening of the spirit of God.

God has placed His trust in His church that it will do its job and that people will come to know the truth, but the church is busy expressing a sense of contention and testing the power of opposing arguments. However, all this confusion is holding the church back and is preventing it from moving forward. Such conflicts delay the church from being transformed and the removal of the obstacles that bind women.

4.5.3 Women’s gifts are not recognised

Oduyoye has expressed concern about the issue of neglected women's gifts and suggests that the church should use its position as a community empowered by the Holy Spirit to produce a variety of ministries to fulfil its mission on earth (Oduyoye 2001:86). She states that “the quality of our church-as-family also depends on the quality of our women-folk, be they members of institutes of the consecrated life” (Oduyoye, 2001:86). The lack of recognising women means that there is no leadership opportunity for women. Furthermore, the chances of women being in leadership are tarnished every day as women are perceived to be persons who deserve to sit in silence in the pews. “Women could be recognized as charismatically gifted and could speak prophetically from the pulpit, and could even serve as pastors of local churches, but have no voice in the ‘business’ leadership or administration of the church (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:7). Most Pentecostal churches often prohibit women from being a part of the very conversation that determines their present and future participation in the church (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:91). Women have always felt obliged to serve in leadership positions and also to answer God’s call since they have planted and pastored local churches (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:xxi).

Ordaining women as leaders and pastors should not be seen as a privilege beyond recognising the gift that God has given them. This means that they should not be observed as women in a gendered form rather than possessing a gift to edify the church so that they can be considered worthy of the appointment. Although women are eager to see themselves in the leadership structures of the church, there is little or no hope due to some clauses of

the church constitution that obstruct women. These fundamental principles constitute the valid basis of the church policy and every time women raise their concerns; they are referred to these doctrines. According to Dube (2017:105), “there is ordained inequality between women and men in the church [...]”. Perhaps there could be a concession if leaders can converge and make constitutional adjustments and, if possible, to relax certain laws that bind women and open these closed doors. The reality of women's life experiences invocation reveals the widespread inequality that prevails for women ministers, and the impact it can have if it is not addressed through professional and diligent preparation (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:85).

It is significant to contemplate the future of “affirmation, placement, and advancement for the next generation of women in the ministry” (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:85). Furthermore, it is unfathomable that God will create people and categorise them with some being regarded as more significant than others. That is why when God poured out His Spirit on people on the day of the Pentecost (Acts 2), did not discriminate against women and children. What matters most is the fulfilment of God’s purpose for humans and achieving each one’s assignments. Believers should be anxious about how to get the church back to its rightful position. The scriptures do not agree to what is happening in the church for “If [men] say that [they] have no sin, [they] deceive themselves, and the truth is not in [them]” (1 John 1:8), so women cannot be seen as sinners alone as one participant in this research assumed that women cannot be trusted. Everyone has sinned and has fallen short of the glory of God (Rm 3:23-24), so women’s gifts should be recognised.

4.5.4 Unfair treatment of women demonstrated in various ways

Oduyoye has pointed to the fact that African women have been treated unfairly and this has been demonstrated in various ways in the church community. (Oduyoye, 2002:100) asserts that the only way women have survived the oppressive notion of the church is by looking on the brighter side and that sometimes “[women] must laugh to keep from weeping.” Women feel despised by some male clergymen who often see them as competitors instead of training and supporting them as their peers. One of the experiences by women is that they

feel unsupported by the leadership; as a result, they are unable to unleash their full potential. Women are still barred from primary leadership positions and are unable to prove their worth. In other words, they have not been tried and tested to see their effectiveness or ability because they do not get a chance and the necessary support from the church leadership (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:39).

Oduyoye (2002:94) asserts that “in debates of the ordination of women to the priesthood, it has been argued that the maleness of Jesus of Nazareth and his twelve disciples precludes women from representing Christ at the Eucharist.” However, men appear to be underhanded because they make these excuses to circumvent women while God has gifted them with special gifts. Jesus' disciples never knew that Jesus had risen until women told them that he had risen. The message of Jesus' resurrection came from the women who had been sent by Jesus and this consistency of information in the four Gospels (Matt 28:5-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-8 and John 20:1) are significant in demonstrating the prominence of the event knowing that women's testimonials were less complex. In this case, Jesus took those who were seen as feeble, those whose word in society was not trustworthy, and made them the most reliable witnesses to the greatest event in the history of Christianity even to his disciples.

According to Alexander and Bowers (2018:93-94), women need support where they can succeed, instead of being discouraged. These women need people who will be role models and, for active participation in the ministry and denominations. They need to feel respected and welcomed with open arms through the use of inclusive language and the portrayal of women in leadership roles in denomination publications. The problem is that the full recognition and the validity of women's ministry and the full acceptance of their calling are never dealt with in conferences, as a result, the church continues to lose the ministerial potential of women because of the church's attitude towards them (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:46).

In this research, one Female Participant stated that the thing that kept her going was that she did not have to worry about the situation but clung to what she thought was right. This shows

that the situation would be hopeless for women if they were to wait for men's support for their cause because men in the church have raised their superiority by putting every weapon relevant to back up their agenda and to achieve their goals.

4.5.5 Dominance of patriarchy

According to Oduyoye patriarchy is a practice that has made women feel distressed for long periods in the church because it is a system that operates by creating privileges and oppression (Neuenfeldt, 2015:20). Oduyoye (2002:94) has pointed out that "Some women have awakened to the fact that they have to surrender not only to a 'man'-made world but also to a 'man'-made God who has decreed their isolation from public life and sentenced them to serve in obscurity and silence." According to Merriam Webster, the term "patriarchy" is a social organisation marked by fatherly or family supreme status and the legal dependence of women and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance on the male lineage. This is largely controlled by men who share power excessively. The patriarchal Christianity was brought from the West, rooted in the power of man in African traditional societies, led in a paradoxical sense of hegemonic masculinity (Meyer, 2020:257). It is the system of patriarchy that gives power to men and it warrants the oppression of women. "Some women have awakened to the fact that they have to surrender not only to 'man-made the world but also to a 'man'-made God who has decreed their isolation from public life and sentenced them to serve in obscurity and silence" (Oduyoye 2002:94). Patriarchy is something that cannot exist without women because the oppression of women is what preserves patriarchy as it empowers men and justifies the domination of women in every sphere of society. According to Meyer (2020:256), men do not start by being leaders in the church, but they start to show their responsibility at their homes where they are generally viewed as spiritual leaders because it is men's responsibility to be responsible. When men take care of their families they are regarded as godly men and this is a mandate that is directed to Christian husbands and fathers, addressing the loyalty of men (Meyer, 2020:256). The reason the man is referred to as the spiritual leader of the family is the direct result of the Christian teaching system, which commands women to

submit to their husbands, thereby authorising the man's authority over the woman (Meyer, 2020:257).

“Men are the church” (Oduyoye 2002:100) because they are in charge of everything, they sit on the official boards to direct the affairs of the church, and women and the youth are represented so their presence in the pews will not be, ignored altogether (Oduyoye, 2002:100). The problem that the church is experiencing is what Meyer refers to as the masculinity of men. Mama (1995) defines masculinity as multidimensional, dynamic, fluid-filled, and transgender, and self-identifying (Meyer 2020:256). The men's feelings of masculinity are believed to entail being organised against their feminine ideas (Meyer, 2020:256). Patriarchy was originally used to describe the position of the man as the head of the family, but gradually it has been used in the system of male sovereignty versus feminine subordination (Chisale, 2020:3). Chisale asserts that this provides beneficial advantages for men; while at the same time, placing heavy barriers in their way, concerning women's roles and responsibilities and various ways of ensuring compliance with the defined gender roles. When it comes to addressing the issues of gender equality in the church, church leaders are always afraid that approving the gender inquiry of the church structure would change the *status quo* even though they are aware that the structure prejudices women and they would “resist gender analysis by hiding behind the Bible” (Chifungo, 2015:148). Therefore, the oppression of women is a social system that is “male-identified, male-controlled, male-centred” and will unavoidably attach worth to males and their male characteristics over femininity and feminine traits (Becker, 1999:22). In the African Pentecostal church, the existence of patriarchy is cultured by the domination and emphasis of masculine interests and the interpretation of scriptures that are gender biased (Chisale 2020:3).

Men's domination in the church is like the root of a tree which can be said to represent the essence of patriarchy and the care of power in which man's leadership and control are given priority (Wood, (2019:2). It is believed that the African masculine mindset was built largely on the status of African feminism and Western masculinity and the roots show where the power of complex man-control is difficult to change (Meyer, 2020:257). It has

become a common issue in gender segregation in our communities from the social structure of expectations and the barriers associated with those identified by gender. These can be socially created differences between men and women when both sexes do not have the same share in the decision-making and wealth of a society (Wood, 2019:1). According to patriarchy, the church as the body of Christ is male, while women are subservient and unimportant and are, therefore, excluded from leadership roles (Wood, 2019:1).

Much as there are women pastors in some Pentecostal denominations, they do not participate completely in the 'primary leadership positions of power and authority and are never given responsibilities that would familiarise them with the administrative work. The biggest obstacle for women regarding being recognised in leadership positions is that it is often defined in terms of gender and gender role/s (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:79). It has been observed that there is the underlying attitude that if a woman is present, she is the one qualified to take notes and make coffee as men will give the job of a secretary to a woman (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:79). This promotes the oppression of women effectively who are mothers and compels them to be economically dependent on men while preventing them from advancing in their profession (Frahm-Arp, 2015:1). According to Klingorová and Havlíček (2015:3), one of the reasons for women's lack of leadership opportunities is that all the world's religious organisations reflect the values of the patriarchs and maintain male social dominance within the societal structures. This affirms that there are still places women cannot enter as they have 'limited access to it' (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:49). Men are still privileged by all means since they still hold and dominate the primary roles of power and authority. Those that are in power are holding onto it and are maintaining their dominance, while women suffer the unjustness.

According to Dube (2017:99), "Christ has broken the social barriers that separated the Jews from Gentiles, the circumcised from the uncircumcised" through baptism in Christ. In other words, there is supposed to be freedom in Christ because all are justified by faith. According to (Dube 2017:108), "Jesus and the early church challenged existing social divisions and announced a new egalitarian community of faith - one which disregarded gender, ethnicity, class, and age". The church has become the laughingstock of the world,

especially to some of those who are unbelievers, and this can make it difficult for Christians to preach the Gospel to them. Oduyoye (2002:43) declares that the issue of power makes women unhappy even though they act as if all is well. Power “[...] is not merely intoxicating but when slipping away, it is the root of terror” (Oduyoye, 2002:43) and change brings more fear, especially change that threatens the loss of power and control (Oduyoye, 2002:43). Wood (2019:1) posits that patriarchy must be resisted and subjugated because it stands for oppression and injustice. For the church to regain its power, it must be in the interest of the church leaders to pursue a church agenda that will not be compromised by sexual orientation rather by the church.

4.6 Conclusion

This discussion was focused on a Pentecostal denomination and showed the view of male leadership. These findings are consistent with Oduyoye’s concept of the ‘marginalisation of women’. This study is typical of many other denominations where marginalisation is common practice. The study has identified the real challenges of women and the future of the church if these practices and views of men are perpetuated. It revealed the obstinacy of men and that men need to be the ones to acknowledge their shortcomings so that it is easier to amend the situation in the church. If men have not yet recognised their inadequacies, it may be difficult to see transformation transpire in the church. Conclusively, these findings revealed that the dominance of patriarchy is hurting women and the church is not progressing. It has emerged that what will help the church is the cooperation between men and women. Men should value women as equals and women must work hard to improve themselves and reach the same standard as men and close the existing gaps.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This was a practical theological study of the marginalisation of women in religious leadership in the Pentecostal tradition in South Africa. The study focused on the complexities of gender discrimination and the oppression of women by preventing them from assuming leadership positions which resulted in the diverse opinions of believers. The research assumed a qualitative descriptive-interpretive approach.

In this section, the main conclusions from the findings of the study, the recommendations regarding the marginalisation of women in religious leadership in the Pentecostal tradition, Pentecostal theological scholarship for women, the contribution to practical theology, aspects of further research, and limitations will be unpacked.

5.2 Key findings from the study

The findings discussed in this study reflect several interesting points concerning the marginalisation of women in religious leadership in the Pentecostal tradition in South Africa:

- **Finding 1:** Three factors have been identified that contribute to the marginalisation of women. The first is church practice which is governed by church rules that prohibit women from being elected to certain leadership roles. The second one is scripture. This is due to the application of a literal and unambiguous interpretation of the Scriptures by Pentecostals that justify and legitimise the prohibition of women and most of these texts that are used are St Paul's Epistles (Gabaitse, 2015:6). The third factor is the African tradition and the African culture. In both the African tradition and the African culture, women's human element is reduced, women do not have a voice and they do not have freedom of choice. They are neglected, oppressed, and intimidated (Kretzschmar, 2010:572). Although these reasons have emerged, some leadership participants expressed disagreement with the above reasoning.

- **Finding 2:** Women feel neglected and unsupported by leaders. Even though they are aware that they possess spiritual gifts, they feel worthless because they are regarded as insignificant, leading to unhappiness and emotional hurt. What hurts them the most is that no matter how hard they try, their efforts are not appreciated?
- **Finding 3:** The findings have confirmed that the church is not flourishing, and the leaders are not cooperating. Women see themselves as second-class citizens. Accordingly, transformation is slowly happening and hopes for church reform are shattered.

5.3 Recommendations based on the findings

The key idea is to realise the development of leaders without discrimination, to ensure gender equality, and to determine how culture has affected the Pentecostal church in South Africa. Recommendations will be presented in this order:

1. Leadership development for men and women
2. Gender justice with the church
3. Exploring how culture has impacted the church

5.3.1 Leadership development for men and women

The marginalisation of women in some Pentecostal churches is something women face daily with no hopes of a solution especially in denominations where the topic is not touched.

To improve the role of women, the recommendation to the Pentecostal church is that more room should be made for women. Opportunities for women empowerment must be opened and women should form part of the senior leadership so that they can be part of decision making (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2020:1). This would eradicate the culture that diminishes the role of women.

Another recommendation is that men must unlearn some theologies they have absorbed and reorientate themselves to see women as equals.

It is also recommended that the constitution of the Pentecostal church should be amended and that the ordination of women should be taken seriously as a way of affirming women because “ordination is all about serving” (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2020:2). The regulative structure of the church needs to be re-evaluated to ensure that women make significant progress and that they are not compromised. The church should take advantage of women's talents and gifts to improve church growth. Imparting practical leadership skills to women for their advancement to leadership as part of empowerment can be a great start. This would make the church a place where men and women communicate with each other and with God, while God is a living source (Oduyoye, 2002:100).

Another recommendation would be that the church should have a common goal and equip every trained person on the importance of cooperating in God's work because the hierarchies that are found in the churches are not depicted in the Bible; instead, the disciples of equals are presented (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2010:3).

Regarding the dilemma, of the scripture interpretation, it is also recommended that the church should consider organising Bible studies and workshops at a local level to study all St Paul's letters including those where he incorporates women and analyses them to get their real meaning, otherwise the Bible is depicted as contradicting itself (Letty Russel, 1985).

The involvement of Bible scholars to church programmes is essential for guidance from a theological point of view. The revision of the training of pastors' needs must be prioritized to combat the direct translations of the Bible and to align them with hermeneutics and exegesis.

It is recommended that forging a relationship with advanced Pentecostal churches on women empowerment would be critical in engendering the interpretation of certain scriptures that are marginalising women.

5.3.2 Gender justice within the church

Since women have struggled to gain equal opportunities in diverse areas of life, from home to work to the church, particularly regarding the positions of leadership; gender transformation is recommended in this study. The church should become an “empowering community of practice (Nel 2019:3) and the consistent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Christianity that keeps segregating women in leadership positions should be avoided by allowing equal status and access to senior leadership roles within the Pentecostal church. The power that God gave to humankind to rule should be shared by men and women since both are created in the image of God. The book of Genesis, chapters one and two, are used to establish male and female equality (Fiedler, 2016:72) and affirm that women and men are both created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), made one in Christ (Gal 3:28), and called and equipped by the spirit to proclaim the good news of God’s saving grace (Acts 2:17-18), seeking first the righteousness and justice of the kingdom of God (Matt 6:33). However, power struggles have erupted in the church with one side seeking to cling to what they have perceived as rightfully theirs, while the “other” struggled to achieve what they also feel is rightfully theirs (Hendriks *et al.* 2012:85). Women are demonstrated as longing to be given a chance to regain the dignity that God affirmed through the complete ministry of Jesus Christ. They long to be empowered to grow skilfully so that they can have access to leadership positions and leadership structures. Gender justice would be essential in the transformation of the church, its health, and the well-being of individuals. It is therefore recommended that the church should give women a chance to serve to their fullest capacity and defend the Gospel as “bearers of the gifts of the Spirit” (Alexander & Bowers, 2018:28) because their absence in the telling of the story points to subordination and oppression (Kobo, 2018:2).

The profession of leadership in Pentecostal churches and the work of leadership have neglected women leading to the one-sided veneration of men as spiritual leaders. Fundamentally, many of the Pentecostal movement believers were theologically illiterate because they believed in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which they saw as a blessing (Anderson, 1979:77) According to Nel (2016:2), Pentecostals themselves have confirmed their strong anti-intellectual, anti-academic preconceptions, leading to them being stereotyped. A gradual change was however observed in the second half of the 20th century with more professional scholarly publications appearing in the 1960s (Nel, 2016:2), nonetheless, women received very few opportunities in this regard, perhaps since they were not part of the leadership. It is therefore a necessity that women pursue academic scholarship for the advancement of their education, to equip them to sit on the governing bodies confidently and direct the affairs of the church when the opportunity arises. From the beginning, they could be used extensively in the parachurch ministries as part of their training. According to Naidoo (2013:2), theological education becomes a comprehensive universal tool that ensures that ministerial candidates are “properly formed” so that they can serve as the forerunners of communication and the survival of the Christian tradition. This would create a balance and ensure that women participate faithfully in God's ways and the world because practical theology takes human experience seriously (Osmer, 2016:6-7). The spiritual growth of Christian women leaders needs to be addressed throughout theological training. A critical education of church leaders should ensue to broaden their understanding of theology. This education should encompass both a historical and Biblical analysis arising from a Pentecostal tradition (Benvenuti, 19197:7). Men must also be trained in gender and religion so that men and women can interact in the context of the family and church (Ambrose, 2012:74).

5.3.3 Exploring how the church culture and African culture have impacted the church

The cultural diversity of each church reflects its culture. Importantly, the church culture is the way the church does things as a church system. It is a way of keeping and refining the beliefs of the church that are regarded as sincere and practical. These ideas are approved by the leaders and are what keep the church running. However, the impact of culture in the

church explains how the Christian church has adapted to a non-Christian cultural background. Accordingly, the community integrates the church and culture resolutely (Onwubiko, 1992:171) and culture represents the locus of a people's setting and is characterised by the cultural contexts (Bate, 1994:106). There is an assertion that cultural issues have permeated the church since Jesus was born into the Jewish tradition and assumed its religious worldview. Some of these cultural practices were observed in the early church through the Acts of the Apostles with some Jewish Christian elders demanding that the Gentiles, who followed Jesus should adopt their Judaism culture by being circumcised. However, the Apostles intervened and told them to abstain from culture because the message of Christ was not tied to culture, but that those who accepted Christ were pleasing to God.

Yet the cultural influence does not seem to have ever ceased in the church because it is believed that the uniqueness of a specific community of faith is essentially manifested through their culture (Bate 1994:105). This indicates that the African culture has also infiltrated the church due to this belief because it is believed that the Christian faith can only exist in a cultural form (Kurgat, 2009:92). According to Duncan (2014:3), culture has the potential to adapt, as well as to resist, but core values continue to persist, despite many outward manifestations. Such churches incorporate Christian principles and African traditions because despite telling their new members to abandon their traditional beliefs, “ancestor worship,” or traditional practices, but they continue with them; as a result, the church is embracing such practices. Roest Crollius argues that “enculturation” entails the dynamic relationship between the local church and the culture of its people and it makes culture a theological category that indicates the nature and praxis of a local church (Bate, 1994:99). Bate (1994:107) however argues that if the inculturation process leads people and churches to deny unity it needs to be questioned regarding its grounds.

5.4 Contribution to practical theology

This study was rooted within a qualitative descriptive-interpretive approach within the field of congregational studies within the discipline of practical theology. The study has

contributed to the theoretic understanding of the impact of gender and the personal experiences because practical theology signifies praxis (Pieterse, 2010:6) and praxis is a “designate[d] creative action, inspired by the critical reflection that gives both change and insight” (Maddox, 1991:166). Significant value was placed on women, while seeking interventions for transformation, according to the values of God’s kingdom (Pieterse, 2013:9). This study adopted a new approach from a cultural perspective. It also gave a reflection of the role of the church practices and the ministry. This study has the potential to bring a new perspective on the issue of discrimination against women in the Pentecostal churches, especially in the African cultural context. It can also help with the analysis of the practices in the Pentecostal church by examining its procedures and how it contradicts the Scriptures and other churches with similar beliefs. This would fill the existing gap that needs attention and could contribute to new knowledge.

5.5 Aspects for further research

The study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons for the marginalisation of women in senior leadership positions in the Pentecostal tradition. This study was conducted because of theories based on congregational studies on gender and women's liberation in the Pentecostal tradition. The following aspects provide opportunities for further research:

- More research needs to be done on the indigenous culture – on how the indigenous culture affects practices in the church. The indigenous culture appreciates culture, values, and religion. On the other hand, indigenous churches believe that they can respond to the existential and spiritual needs of their followers in ways common to them (Masondo, 2014:2). These ideas may conflict with Christian beliefs.
- More research on the empowerment of men should be conducted to challenge the prevailing social norms that lead to gender imbalances. To understand the mission of the church and the way it is shaped by its members, one should understand men’s spiritual development and experiences. Christianity must, therefore, put much emphasis on the change in behaviour through a change in mindset. Accordingly, the church must focus on

changes in partiality and the effectiveness in motivating for the total reformation of the human mind.

- Research should also be done on the influence of ethnic groups, tribalism, and ethnicity in the church. Apart from the church being plagued with gender-related challenges, there is another layer of division that has been observed in the church fraternity. Ethnicity and tribalism conflicts have been rampant in African churches. While the value of Christianity is expected to promote unity and self-identity, from time to time, Christianity seems to have provided a convenient place to meet where ethnicity and tribalism clash.

5.6 Limitations

- As a female researcher, it was challenging to collect the data with men. Some men were extremely reluctant to engage in the research. If a male researcher had assisted this researcher, this could help me I would have had a better quality of results.
- Another limitation was that younger people in leadership, comprising both men and women should have been considered in the sample because they are the future of the church.

5.7 Conclusion

Based on the study of Oduyoye, this is what this researcher concludes. The marginalisation of women in senior leadership positions experienced in Pentecostal churches does not only affect women, but also the church at large because this hampers spiritual growth. The church should give women a chance to practise their talents and display their skills within the church. This study recommends the enculturation as well as an emphasis on the priesthood for all. The outcome of this study can assist the Pentecostal churches to develop programmes to assist women with performing their spiritual roles, leadership roles, and administrative roles that would lead to church growth. Lastly, this study can also guide the government to formulate gender policies that provide equal opportunities for all.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNISA RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Applicant: Principal Researcher

Full name in Print:

Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs

Signature:



Date signed:

20 September, 2019

Approved by supervisor (if applicable):

To my knowledge the student has addressed all aspects in his/her application for research ethics approval set forth in the University of South Africa's Policy for Research Ethics. I confirm that the form is complete according to Appendix A. I will ensure that the student notifies the committee in writing of any changes to the research are proposed that may affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants such as methodology, sampling, questionnaire, interview schedule, etc. Subsequently, I approve the submission and recommend that approval be granted for the research.

Full name in Print:

Signature:

Date signed:

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD-BACK TO GOD PERMISSION LETTER



Assemblies of God Back To God

1922 Regatta Road Henley on Klip, P.O. Box 957, MEYERTON, 1960, RSA
Tel: 016-3661913 Fax: 016-366 1048
Email: secretary@aogbtg.org.za

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD BACK TO GOD CHURCH LEADERS CONSENT LETTER

376 Anatu Place
Menton Road
Richmond
10th September 2019

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
STUDY IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (BTG).

Dear Sir

My name is Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs. I am a Masters student studying Practical Theology with the University of South Africa. I hereby seek permission from the leadership of the AOG (BTG) to conduct a research thesis to explore the role of women in the Assemblies of God. The aim of the study is to examine whether women are acknowledged as appropriate leaders and contributors in the mission of God, also to investigate the factors that influence their positioning. My intention is not to interfere or judge the AOG (BTG) church dogmas but to understand the predominance of the women's place in the church and also to comprehend church members' feelings about the role women play.

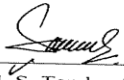
Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely

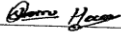
Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs
Student, University of South Africa

Below, please indicate whether you wish to grant me the permission to go ahead with the study.

I grant Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs permission to proceed with the study in our church.



M. S. Tembe: Secretary of the AOG/(BTG



O.B.M Hleza: Chairman of the AOG/BTG

INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

Ethics clearance reference number:

Research permission reference number:

20 September 2019

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY STUDY

Dear Participant

My name is Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs. I am conducting a research on EXPLORATION OF THE MARGINLISATION OF WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD DENOMINATION for Masters study at the University of South Africa (UNISA). My supervisor is Professor Marilyn Naidoo from the Department of Philosophy, Practical, & Systematic Theology. We would like to invite you to participate in the aforementioned study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information describe the lived experiences of women, and raise awareness of the gender disparities and hierarchies in the AOG.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

As part of the seasoned leadership in the AOG, your input is valuable to us to understand the vision, the mission, the values and policies of the church regarding women. We are curious to discern the criteria that are followed when electing the leadership in the church.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves semi-structured interviews that will record on tape and also taking notes. The time duration for an interview will be more or less 30 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Your participation is voluntary, and this means that you are free to withdraw at any time.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The highest benefit is that you will liberally provide the true reflection of the circumstances at the AOG that will bounce an insight of the matters. This could be an eye opener and a new dawn to all of us because for us to grow as humans we only realize the importance of some issues when we effectively communicate.

HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

None of the information will be divulged outside the study. You will be given a pseudonym and your real name will not be disclosed nor recorded in our data and no one will be able to trace the information. All the information that you provide will be coded which means, that it will be given a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative. This assurance will be confirmed by a Research Ethics Review Committee to ensure that we stick to these guidelines.

HOW WILL YOU SECURE THE DATA?

We will keep the hard copy of this research for a period of five years in a secure filing cupboard in case the institution need to publish the findings as already shared. After five years, hard copies will be shredded and soft copies deleted. Beyond this period if this information is still required, we will have to involve the Research Ethics Review Committee for authorization.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

According to the UNISA policy 2.8 we are not allowed to offer incentives to participants and their participation is on purely voluntary terms.

IS THIS STUDY APPROVED BY ETHICS COMMITTEE?

Yes, this study has received written approval from the ethics committee of UNISA and can be shared with you anytime you request for it. In case of inquiry, you can contact research ethics chairperson of the Ethics Committee, Prof EL Kempen on 011-471-2241 or kempeel@unisa.ac.za.

HOW CAN I ACCESS RESEARCH FINDINGS?

You are allowed to contact Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs on +27 83 389 0425 or nonz19jay@gmail.com. For more or detailed information regarding this research you may

contact the supervisor in charge of this study, Professor Marilyn Naidoo on
Naidom2@unisa.ac.za or +27 12 429 4547

We appreciate that you have taken time to read through this very important information sheet
and for agreeing to participate in this study.

Thank you.

Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ confirm that the researcher has explained everything with regards the research concept.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand my voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw.

I am aware that findings of this research may be published but my personal information is secure.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname

Participant Signature..... Date

Researcher's Name & Surname Pumeza Cordelia Nonie Jacobs

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

APPENDIX B: CODE LIST

Table 1: List of the codes of the study

Code	Male Participant 1 (MP1)	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	Female Participant 1 (FP1)	FP2	FP3	FP4	FP5
Compromising by adopting foreign ideas	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conflicting discernments of leaders	0	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Conforming to scriptures	5	4	5	4	7	0	0	0	0	0
Denominational culture	4	4	4	3	6	0	0	0	0	0
Desire for transformation	0	3	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dominance of patriarch	8	3	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0
Efficiency in the body of Christ	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exclusive spiritual/prophetic leadership (ministers and pastors)	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
God's pattern of the church	1	16	6	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Historical prophetic tradition	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Influence of African culture in the church	1	4	4	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of consistency in the implementing of church procedures	1	0	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
Male dominance	2	6	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	0
Need for conscientization of the church community	0	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Need for the restoration of the church	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Organization leadership of the church	0	1	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Power struggle	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Regulative structure of the church	4	9	3	1	6	0	0	0	0	0
Resistance to church transformation	1	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0

Submissiveness of women in the church	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	3	0
Traditional hermeneutics of the scriptures	12	0	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Transformation in progress	1	4	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Unfair treatment of women demonstrated in various ways	1	3	0	4	2	2	3	8	3	9
Vision of the founder	3	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Women as second class believers	0	0	0	0		4	3	5	6	2
Women feel hurt	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	2
Women inhibited from answering God's call to vocation	0	2	0	0	0	2	3	1	8	1
women restricted to leading women only	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview

Date: 20 September 2019

Questions to the male leadership:

Question 1: How is leadership elected in the AOG-BTG?

Question 2: Please can you share why your leadership is all male?

Question 3: What role does the church culture play in affecting women's roles?

Question 4: What role does African culture play in determining leadership choice?

Question 5: How do you appreciate the contribution of women in ministry?

Question 6: Is there openness towards female leadership?

Question 7: What is the consequence of female leadership exclusion from ministry?

Questions for the female participant were:

Question 1: What is the overall role of women in the church?

Question 1: Are you aware of any women leadership in the senior church leadership

Question 1: What qualities do women bring to enhance the current decision-making of the leadership?

Question 1: How do you think men and women should relate in ministry?

Question 1: Do you think it is important for the society that women should be in leadership positions?

Question 1: What do you think the challenges are for men?

Question 1: What have your personal experience in leadership been

Question 1: How has the consequence of exclusion to ministry affected your spirituality and as a person?

APPENDIX D: Transcribed interviews

Appendix D1: Interview with Male Participant 1 (MP1)

1 **Researcher:** How is leadership selected in the AOG?

2 **Male Participant1:** The word select does not work because we do not select but we elect
3 leaders. Ballot papers are given and members from the chairperson to treasurers will be
4 elected. At local level, according to our procedures when we elect elders and deacons; I
5 was one of the first elders to be appointed, by them I was in Johannesburg, in Dobsonville.
6 We were not elected, we were appointed because the Bible says let the elders be appointed
7 – they are not elected through the ballot according to the bible. But as time went on it
8 changed and they are now elected having laid their reasons to do so. Selected was better
9 because it is an element of appointing. Before they could I appoint the men who qualify
10 have to go through an interview with the pastor who would also motivate them. After that
11 the teaching team would assess whether those men do qualify. Unfortunately that system
12 no longer exists and that is erroneous, according to the Bible elders and deacons are not
13 supposed to be elected.

14 Again when it comes to the RCC our procedure says we elect. Our approach becomes
15 democratic because we do not really know the pastors from the different locals. In that a
16 ballot paper is used, names would be nominated and from the nominated names an election
17 would be done. I have no problem with that. That is not covered Biblically because
18 regionalization did not exist. The same applies with national even there the election system
19 is followed. For national elections we entirely depend on the regions because sometime we
20 have little information about the different pastors from the different regions. It's the regions
21 themselves that know their pastors, so we entirely depend on the regions and the names
22 they have nominated. There are no qualifications needed, once his name come up we
23 become satisfied that the region is quite content about him. This is how the leadership is
24 elected. And all these different groups are comprised of man. This also applies to groups

25 in the locals as well, that is fathers, mothers, girls and the youth- all are elected through
26 ballot as well and this is because the groups are not covered biblically.

27 It is an Assemblies of God- Back to God format. I have reservations with the term
28 leadership though because according to baba B, the founder of the church,- I speak under
29 correction because it has been more than 35 years since Baba B passed but he passed on
30 22 years after my convention so I am quite acquainted with many of his teachings. Baba
31 B would say whatever portfolio one has been appointed to, is not a position but is an
32 opportunity for one to serve in the church. And therefore we are senior to nobody, in fact
33 we are subservient to the church but because as time goes on heads arise until wrong a head
34 emerges, that would talk positions until they fight over these positions. However the
35 original teaching that I grasped from baba B was that you do not become a leader but a
36 servant. We are all the same but we have just requested you to act in this portfolio.

37 **Researcher:** Please can you share why your leadership is all male?

38 **Male Participant1:** Let us start with the local where we only have men as leaders, which
39 are deacons and elders. Baba B was a very biblical person even though you would realize
40 that he had adopted some other things from other denominations and used them to build
41 because he had appreciated them as useful. Some of them are anti-scripture but then he was
42 a founder so the foundation is not like the roof. He was laying a foundation. It is good now
43 that we have people that do research to see if we are still on the right track because I listened
44 to baba B who said the church is not led by one's mind is led through the bible no matter
45 how intelligent that person might be, if the things he pronounces or doing are not scriptural
46 they should not be used. That is how it was decided on how to choose leadership.

47 The bible states that it must be a man and then it would describe what kind of a man. A
48 man with one wife and all the qualities, so that is where we are holding on. In ministry
49 maybe pastor can respond for themselves but as far as I know I am satisfied with the current
50 position because according to the church history from Jesus up to the apostles, no woman
51 was ever used as a minister or a pastor. Jesus was a male, St Paul that would teach about
52 elders and deacons that it should be a man with these qualities that is how I understand it

53 and it does not mean that women are being undermined. But somewhere, he does lay the
54 reasons that might not augur well with women, but it is biblical. In 1 Timothy (2:9) it
55 declares that, “I do not allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man.” He then
56 would justify or motivate by stating that because Adam was formed first, these are St Paul’s
57 reasons and I agree fully with them.

58 The second reason is that Adam was not deceived but Eve was deceived. My inference is
59 that deceit enters easily in women. This is my assumption. If I may make an example about
60 the Seventh Day Adventist church, I read one of their booklets with a title *The great*
61 *controversy* and I also read another one I am not sure but I think it says *The Adventist your*
62 *friend* I think it was about four blue booklets. I expounds on how the Seventh Day
63 Adventist was formed. It seemed I am subject to correction because it is a long time now
64 since I read them. I think it was formed by a Mrs. Ellen White and when they started they
65 were the Adventist and this lady would teach them that, they can calculate and validate the
66 date in when Jesus would return, so they made calculations and reached to a date of the
67 second coming of Jesus Christ.

68 They were called the Adventists and they were scintillating Christians because they were
69 awaiting the soon coming king. They were up to date in preparation for the advent of the
70 Lord. In their preparation they missed one portion of scripture that states that no one knows
71 the time and hour when the Lord will come, but the calculated. A slight mistake threw them
72 off the rails. When you are going to disintegrate you start gradually. So they waited for the
73 day and when that day approached they gave all their belongings away and only bought
74 white robes and they waited for the Lord and the Lord did not come.

75 That is why they have a title that like *The Great Disappointment* (not sure) - in that *Great*
76 *Controversy*. The misleading source was a woman’s leadership. I am not saying women
77 are misleading but it is in the same track that once they lead there is something- not because
78 it is said by us but it is from the Bible. The Bible says it was not Adam that was tempted
79 but Eve. Genesis (3:6) states that she started by using her eyes and forgot what God had
80 said. He departed from the scripture and got to her own assumptions. Paul uses that
81 argument that a woman cannot teach and have authority over men whereas in the scripture

82 that concerns women it says older women must teach the younger ones how to love their
83 homes.

84 So I think we followed that scripture and when we followed it saw it correct. In my view
85 even not it is still precise that leadership should be male if we want to stick to the scriptures
86 but people have this temptation that we want to be like the rest. Do you still remember is
87 1 Samuel 5, when they approached Samuel saying we want you to put for us a king so that
88 we may be like other nations. There is that temptation that look at Methodist they have a
89 female bishop. If the motive is that we want to be like other, then it is dangerous because
90 it means that you have to deviate from the truth, from the scriptures.

91 **Researcher:** Follow-up question – If I may ask which gender has got which gift according
92 to the scriptures

93 **Male Participant1:** Here we are talking about leadership, the leadership's job is not to
94 edify. The job of the leadership is to serve the church not even by gifts. The edification of
95 the church should be locally exercised. There is no gift for the chairman, I will not say in
96 the Bible because I will deny it today and then find it tomorrow I am afraid to say it is not
97 there but I have not come across the chairmanship, the secretary- the scribes issue and
98 treasurer except for Juda Iscariot (laugh). What I mean, these positions from the leadership
99 are not spiritual position, they are administrative, and they are there to serve the areas that
100 are not concealed in the spiritual gifts. We cannot expect that when we read 1 Corinthians
101 14, that the chairman demonstrates his gift, but it is open for everybody – male and female,
102 complement one another and edify the church. The church is not expected to be edified by
103 the executive.

104 The church does not expect to be edified by the Teaching Team. I may be wrong I have
105 said everything I say is subject to correction, it is my opinion. But when we get to this area
106 it is open for everyone that whichever gift one holds they should edify the church. Nobody
107 is precluded from using their gifts that is where gifts complement each other. At the
108 conference there are no gifts working because the business there is democratic it is not
109 theocratic for the purpose of administration. In fact the Executive is an administrative body.
110 If we were would take a structure of a cooperation we would talk of director, CEO, COO,

111 secretary, to help on certain matters of the firm but they are not the ones that perform the
112 spadework. The same principle work even here, the Executive cannot come down to the
113 local church and do 1 Corinthians (14:26.)

114 **Researcher:** Follow-up Question - Is it advisable to have spiritual people running the
115 affairs of the church as administrators which are elected by people when they are already
116 selected by God as spiritual people and ministers?

117 **Male Participant1:** Whether it is advisable or not I am unable to say but I have said it is
118 the founder that came with the idea that the Executive body must be elected from the
119 ministers. We found it like that and we followed that trend, we never heard a complaint
120 about it. That is the arrangement by the founder. We also ask sometimes as well as to why
121 is the Executive not inclusive of the laity (elders and deacons). So the answer that get is
122 that we are following the pattern that was left by the founder. There was also a question
123 that was raised in the conference as to why there is such an exodus of ministers and in my
124 view that is where this exodus originates; that when am I going to reach there (laugh)
125 because it means that you must have been a pastor for so many years in service and that
126 time the young pastors want to see themselves there in the Executive and they decide to
127 leave and form their own ministries and continue.

128 **Researcher:** Follow-up question - When people are interested in positions more than the
129 calling, can we continue and call it a calling anymore because as man's election versus
130 God's appointment

131 **Male Participant1:** Not versus – complementary to (laugh) I am now protecting (laugh).
132 Okay let us be honest, these ministers when they are elected to administration, they are not
133 relieved of their spiritual duties; they remain ministers in their local churches. There is no
134 clash; they only serve there at certain times. Some even give up these positions if they were
135 to be relived, that is my opinion because some are so attached to their locals to an extent
136 that if they were to choose I am sure they would choose to resign. So these two are not
137 verses one another but they are supplementing one another.

138 **Researcher:** What role does the church culture play in affecting women's roles?

139 **Male Participant1:** Well, I think, we also follow the same pattern of Paul because
140 administration is understood, rightly or wrongly to be some authority which Paul says
141 women should not have over men because once they are there they have authority over
142 men, so that is my view, I may be wrong. Before they can enter that administration they
143 must first be spiritual leaders and they are precluded from that, so automatically they cannot
144 be elected here because the requirement is that they must be pastors. Now women are
145 precluded from being pastors, so they cannot find themselves on the other side while they
146 have to go via this side. This means that for you to be in the administration you have to be
147 in the spiritual.

148 **Researcher:** Follow-up question - What do you think of Paul calling Phoebe a Colleague?

149 **Male Participant1:** Well, you are my colleague, he said a fellow worker. Well some
150 versions are very??? You know. I am very skeptical especially about these modern versions
151 because they are written by people who are already influenced by the notion that women
152 are erroneously precluded. Now in so far as Phoebe is concerned, I do not think Paul was
153 saying she is an apostle with him. What I think is that, it could be something that can be
154 said by the Chairman of the Executive to one of the women supervisors, who is not
155 necessarily the member of the executive. She is a coworker because she works together
156 with the executive towards that goal of spreading the gospel. So this makes her a coworker
157 with the chairman not necessarily that she is an apostle. That is how I understand. We do
158 not have to pull it and say she was a pastor. A coworker could be a coworker with different
159 functions, so it does not mean she was a pastor. Paul would be contradicting himself when
160 he says he does not consent a woman to teach but allow Phoebe to be a pastor colleague.
161 So inferring from that thing that he does not permit a woman to teach, he would have not
162 allowed Phoebe unless he had already succumbed to someone's influence.

163 **Researcher:** Follow up question - what do you think of your hermeneutics when it comes
164 to Paul Epistles?

165 **Male Participant1:** My response to that, I am not sure if I am responding to your question.
166 The problem with the interpretation of the bible – that is why we have so many
167 denominations, because I come with my interpretation which differs with your

168 interpretation and we cannot go together. I want to apply my doctrine and you want to
169 apply your doctrine according to your interpretation that is why we have many
170 denominations. Denominations are brainchildren *of our hermeneutics and exegesis*. Once
171 we start interpreting and we differ.

172 I remember one day I met a fellow from Seventh Day Adventist who said he is troubled by
173 people. This guy was introduced to me as a preacher and I praised him that he is doing a
174 good job by preaching the Word. Then he says he has a problem with people because
175 people say – we go to Heaven. And I said leave the people you are not sent by people - you
176 are carrying you own message from your God. Preach that message. Can you see there is
177 already a division between him and those that say we go to Heaven and him saying we are
178 not going to Heaven? Those two will form two denominations. So when we get to
179 interpretation that is where we separate, you come with your denomination and I also form
180 my own denomination when we reason and do not take the Gospel as it is

181 Coworker does not mean to be a pastor only as I have said; even here at home we do have
182 coworkers that are not in business. For instance there are men without position but are
183 coworkers with us because he does banking even though he is not a deacon. Let us start
184 here, there were women in the bible even from the time of Jesus who were serving but it is
185 said that their area as we also do in the organization, they were serving Jesus with their
186 resources. So they were coworkers with Jesus because they were responsible for resources
187 but they never ministered with the Word. There is a chapter that says Jesus was walking
188 somewhere and there were also women who were serving. And I have already said service
189 is not necessarily a minister.

190 He was not appointing Deborah as the leaders of the army, in actual fact he led the army.
191 He may had reasons because the woman was a prophetess and he needed some spiritual
192 support maybe to pray that is my assumption but as far as the leadership of that army is
193 concerned, it is Barak who led even in victory it is Barak who led and Jabins wife. If she
194 refused he would not have gone. I do not know what the position was then, in so far as
195 women soldiers are concerned but in today's setup women are members on an army. But

196 Deborah certainly was not the member of the army. There is no role that is recorded in the
197 Bible that she played in the army. But I do not know why he wanted company.

198 **Researcher:** What role does African culture play in determining the leadership choice?

199 **Male Participant 1:** I do not think I will be able to say African culture plays any role in
200 so far as the present situation is concerned because in African culture women are leaders
201 even at present we do have women kings, women chiefs. You remember the Queen of
202 Sheba; she was an African and also Candice of Ethiopia. So in Africa women do lead so
203 that has not influenced us. African culture may have influenced the Pentecostals but not
204 us. We would be having women in leadership if we were following African culture. African
205 culture does not preclude women from leadership so it does not play any role in BTG.

206 **Researcher:** How do you appreciate the contribution of women in ministry?

207 **Male Participant1:** They are very highly appreciated because it is the women's
208 organization that brings in money to evangelize and they are recognized as the wagon and
209 they being appreciated. I was disturbed about something that one father once told me that
210 – you remember that mothers during the Easter Convention in the morning they preach, I
211 heard that some pastors were arguing that if only women preach, when will we preach. I
212 was so disturbed that this is the work of the mothers- now these are people of culture, even
213 that is not African culture but an individual culture of some questionable source- umbango.
214 That was uncalled for because these women are bringing their work and they are preaching
215 to each other. They are encouraging one another. We do appreciate what they preach. Their
216 work surpasses what would be done by men in that regard. And I have noticed that baba B
217 indeed anointed women for this ministry.

218 This is a ministry because it is a service. And the word ministry does not necessarily mean
219 a Bishop or a pastor – it means a servant. Their work is good. It is appreciated by the
220 leadership and the whole church and they are very successful in it. They do not fight with
221 anyone and there are many people who attach it. These women do not even try to defend
222 themselves, some attack them from the pulpit and they would just keep quiet. Sometimes
223 they would just pray and say we thank you God for advising us through your servants –

224 they know that Thursday you will not be there and they are going to work. I commend
225 them for the work they do. You see if the organization did not come through baba B it
226 would have been terminated. There are leaders that are very much opposed to it but it was
227 done by God with some anointing. No matter what people can do, even if people can say
228 mothers must no longer meet here at church, they will meet somewhere else. And you will
229 hear them say we met and we made R2000, 00. I appreciate their work and I think it is
230 widely appreciated in the BTG.

231 **Researcher:** Since he acknowledged the absence of female leadership, is there openness
232 towards female leadership?

233 **Male Participant1:** Well in my view, they are precluded from that. There is no openness
234 towards female leadership. Scripturally speaking because of what Paul has said and
235 because of the scriptural culture. Biblically speaking there is no openness

236 **Researcher:** What is the consequence of female leadership exclusion from ministry?

237 **Male Participant1:** They are given their role which they play excellently well. If they are
238 marginalized – then it is the scripture that is marginalizing. We cannot alter the scripture
239 unless we want to write our own bible. But if we want to do God’s work according to God’s
240 prescriptions nobody is marginalized. Like I was saying to you – we have a question why
241 are elders not legible appointments as members of the executive. That does not mean they
242 are being marginalized, they have their role to play. They have their duties; they are
243 shepherds of the church especially locally. I cannot be a member of the executive because
244 the requirement is that one must be a pastor with so many years. I do not think anybody
245 has marginalized not even women.

246 **Researcher:** Follow-up - What does baba think of the fact that the AOG – BTG has some
247 female pastors?

248 **Male Participant1:** I think it is an erroneous idea Biblically speaking. I would be
249 disappointed if one of them can be transferred to our local church. You can judge my
250 attitude towards that. I would be very much disappointed because we would be deviating
251 from the scripture. As far as I know this church, it is scripturally based. Baba B said stick

252 to the Bible and you will not have problems. Up to now, we have stuck to the bible
253 otherwise we would have liked other churches to point guns to each other but because we
254 are still sticking to the bible God is being merciful to us. But I am afraid as we already have
255 these pastors, I think they have adopted that from other churches, they think other churches
256 are already advanced. They call it advanced – but I would call it disadvantage because, not
257 that women are not capable but they are precluded from these positions because we are
258 scripturally based. Otherwise one day you will find me being a chairlady of the mothers.
259 And it would be quizzed that – he is a man, how come he is the chairlady for women. We
260 become ruffled up because of adopted styles. In our church these days we call people
261 honorable and that is not our language. They are adopting these things. We do not copy
262 things from outside and bring them here because those outside look honorable than us
263 whereas they see us as more honorable than them but we do not see that. That is dropping
264 from the standard; because the bible says do not conform to the standards of this world. If
265 you try to conform to any standards of this world whether it is church standard or whatever
266 – you have dropped.

267 I am convinced that at the moment we are the most honorable but we will look like the rest
268 of the nations if we do like Israel did – they said they wasn't to be like other nations and
269 they told that they was a leader. They then became weak and they were overpowered and
270 they became slaves of someone. God said your children will become slaves of the man who
271 want to be a king. We pray that God help us not to conform to the standards of this world.
272 Recently there are women deacons that have been elected. The teaching team alluded to it
273 and he said we have put women because it is not in .the Bible that they cannot be deacons.
274 Now if we are going to look for things that are not in the Bible, I would just smoke one
275 day (laugh) – you would tell me one day where is it in the bible that says I cannot smoke.
276 We cannot back up something by saying it is not in the bible that we cannot do it. It is like
277 polygamy it is not in the Bible that we cannot perform polygamy.

Appendix D2: Interview with Male Participant 2 (MP2)

1 **Researcher:** How is leadership selected in the AOG-BTG?

2 **Male Participant 2:** When we come to leadership, it depends which sphere of leadership
3 we speaking about because we can start from the local church with so many groups which
4 have leaders, committees, different committees, and different levels. When we elect people
5 for leadership, actually we try to look at whether the people are able to fit them in that
6 situation because it's not just putting people into the office, its putting people in the office
7 who will be able to do the job and able to fulfill their appointments, so usually we try to
8 elect or select people according to their ability so that's how we go about although at times
9 they select people who should not be in leadership do go to leadership but as they grow in
10 the leadership they go to an extent of coming better leaders if they are learners.

11 So we elect them in a local church, we elect elders and deacons. Elders are spiritual leaders
12 of the church as we elect them with the scriptures and deacons, the same they are elected
13 according to the qualifications that are found in scriptures so that we get people or almost
14 exactly as the scripture says so we appoint them, we elect them and we have among the
15 elders we always have men and up to now they are still men, among deacons we have men
16 but we have gone to an extent of appointing ladies now in the deaconship because of what
17 we see in the scriptures appearing that we are involving the scriptures and we realizing that
18 we need to have ladies in the deaconship.

19 So we those two types of leadership in the local church, then we have these committees for
20 mothers, when it's mothers it's all the mothers, when it's youth it's both young ladies and
21 young men who are elected into the office among young people, among the girls it's all
22 the girls and mong men they have their leadership. All the groups there are leaders that are
23 leading all the groups. Now we grow on and grow on, we come to monthlies, quarterlies,
24 conventions and people who lead convention come from people particular to that
25 convention. So we don't have men leading women in the organisation. When it comes to
26 young people they are all young. So we actually trying to build the situation for the culture

27 that says they are both young people, girls and young men, they are all young people, so
28 they continue to lead young people.

29 **Researcher:** Please can you share with us why your leadership is all male?

30 **Male Participant 2:** Leaders of the regions, is usually ministers who are ordained
31 according to rules and procedures and the constitution, they are going to lead us as far as
32 leadership concerned.

33 So we've got pastors who have passed probation, gone through probation and are fully
34 fledged ministers who are no longer on probation and who have been there in the ministry
35 for some time because they are going to be responsible for the wider body of the church.
36 They are going to deal with the issues of the whole denomination. So they must be people
37 who are matured, people who have proven themselves, who know what is expected of
38 them. That is how we are doing things when we elect leaders. In the functioning of the
39 body of Jesus Christ, it is a different case, why do I say so because the body consists of
40 members, all equal in the body of Christ, we are all saints.

41 Another thing I want to say with pastors is that we have adopted what was being done in
42 other churches whereby anybody who comes to the ministry called a pastor. But when we
43 go to the bible that's a different case because biblically we don't have pastors only, we
44 have other ministries that were given by Jesus Christ to the church. So when we come to
45 the spiritual side of the church not administrative part because these people are doing
46 administration, all these I've mentioning are doing administration but people who are doing
47 spiritually work mainly start with apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors. This
48 team of ministers, this calibre of ministers that is what we should have according to the
49 scriptures and the New Testament. We should have these five calibre ministers to be
50 ministering the church abroad, now seemingly we copied something somewhere I don't
51 know where. We call everybody who says he is called by the Lord and we call him pastor.

52 **Researcher:** Follow up - How do they differ?

53 **Male Participant 2:** Pastor is a shepherd even if he can't shepherd the flock we call him
54 pastor because he has been called to the ministry and that is just like in other denominations

55 when they call them (*abefundisi, izicaka* and all that), but we are realizing that we are not
56 doing the right thing to accept every minister as a pastor, it's not a title it's an office that a
57 person operates in. even if he's an evangelist we call him pastor, he is a teacher and so
58 forth, so we have come to a point where we realized that we need to differentiate between
59 these ministries so that people operate in their places of calling. When they operate in their
60 places of calling I think they will be more effective than now, because you find yourself
61 being a pastor but you are not good at pastoring and you fail; and we say you are a failure
62 because you couldn't do the work of a pastor. So we need to correct that in the present
63 church where we appoint people according to their gifts, where we give people work
64 according to what God has ordained them to be.

65 Actually when we ordain people, we are not starting anything afresh in that person, what
66 we saying we acknowledge what God has given him or her, that's what we are doing when
67 we ordain people we don't make them, it's God who makes them whatever He wants them
68 to be. So in other words I differentiate between administration and the ministry office.
69 There's a ministry and there's an office of a man who is doing administration. For instance
70 the Bible speaks about administrators; they are called by God to be administrators only that
71 we don't recognize them as such, because we don't use people according to their gifts, we
72 miss them and make them pastors instead of making them administrators.

73 In fact using people who are administrators to lead the church is starting to fail because,
74 you can't be an administrator and lead the church as an apostle would do, as a prophet
75 would do and the other ministries. These ministries that are given to the church are for
76 equipping of the saints as Paul says. This gentleman may be very good in administration
77 but be unable to equip the saints. So we are putting him in a wrong place. There's a lot to
78 be done here to differentiate between an office of an elder and the office of an apostle. An
79 apostle is different from an elder, quite different. An elder can be an elder here and he
80 cannot be an elder over there. So the apostle is more or less a roving ministry that belong
81 to all the churches, it doesn't belong to one church while elder belongs to one church, he
82 can only be an elder in a particular place, otherwise he cannot continue to be an elder in
83 another church when he moves to another region or district or city for that matter.

84 So we need to make a difference between leadership that is appointed by us and the
85 leadership that is appointed by the Lord. People who are put into office and the people who
86 are put by the Lord in the office are different spheres, are different roles, and are not the
87 same roles. We can't make the people who will minister the church; it's only the Lord that
88 gives people. According to the New Testament pattern, every member in the body of Christ
89 is a believer priest. The issue of making ministers, that's the clergy. Most churches have
90 the clergy and the laity, when they have the clergy and the laity they talk about - leave
91 those things to the professionals. The professionals are clergy because they have gone to
92 school and studied theology and all that but that's a different thing all together. It's good
93 for them that they have studied but when God uses the people in the churches, he uses His
94 body, He uses every member without exception.

95 So one of the things that we should be able to grasp and understand is that we need to know
96 where God has fitted us in the body before we can do anything. What God has given you
97 to minister with, because according to scriptures every member is given by the Spirit some
98 measure of faith or some measure of gift so that he or she should minister to the body and
99 manifest the presence of Jesus or the Holy Spirit in him or her? Now that area is not yet
100 clear, it is not functioning where the members of the body are participating members of the
101 body of Christ. Now it would not be correct to wait for position to be used of God. Positions
102 come as you continue to minister and people identify you because of what God has given
103 you and then they ask you to serve them there. But usually according to the scriptures
104 people should be able to minister according to the measure of faith given to them as
105 members. The analogy of the body, Jesus calls his church the body. Now if you take the
106 issue of the body, every member must function so that the body may work well. If any
107 member doesn't function it affects the whole body, so the analogy of the body must never
108 be left behind if anyone of us has a function has a part to play, a role to play. Now when
109 the members of the body of Christ function because of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the
110 Holy Spirit is here to make us function, to make us manifest the presence of God in our
111 lives. We are not expected to do anything else other than manifest the presence of God in
112 us.

113 And that is seen in our ministry to one another, ministry to the church or ministry to other
114 people outside as the call may be for you. So we should understand issue of people in the
115 body of Christ as members of the body which are supposed to function because if they
116 don't function the body will become weak. It fails to fulfil its duties, it's unable to present
117 the life of Christ to the world because the members are not functioning, it should be
118 understood that we are not supposed to depend on ministers only. Ministers have a role;
119 members have a role to play so that there's a balance. When we in our denomination talk
120 about the clergy, we were to sit there and listen to those who are talking and do nothing
121 whether we understand it or not, whether they are leading us astray or not but we had to
122 listen to them because they are supposedly the professionals but here its' different thing,
123 every one of us has a ministry that's what Peter says, let us minister to one another
124 according to the gifts given to us individually. In other words every member has some form
125 of work to do, leads in a certain way, you may not be in front, you may not be leading in
126 the front, be seen all the time on the platform but there's somewhere where you lead as
127 God wants you to. So it's important to discover that for every one of us to discover what
128 area has God put me so that I can impact the church and live a life that is helping other
129 people whether in the church or outside the church.

130 So the leadership that we appoint is there for a temporal time, for a short time. For instance
131 it has been for two years, from the RCC it has gone up to four years and the executive four
132 years but eventually you get out there because that's the appointment made by man. People
133 should aspire for God's appointment which is theirs for keeps, you always there when God
134 gives you something He gives you, He gives you and they won't be taken away from you
135 by anybody. So that we should understand, in other words people who are in office are
136 there for the duration of time and are out others come in, it depends on the votes. You are
137 there because of votes. God would not like His church to be led by the voted people only
138 because the church is not just an organisation, there's an organism it has its own type of
139 life. Organizations are governed by men, they are made by men, they come from the minds
140 of men but the church is more than an organisation, it has an organism like a body of a
141 human being. So in other words that should be in our minds that we are dealing with
142 something which is not man made.

143 The author of the church is not man, He may be using men but it is not a man's business.
144 You imagine God wanted to have a church and then just throw it to men to do whatever
145 they like as they are doing right now. God has His own pattern for the church which need
146 scrutiny, which need study, which need people who are serious about God and go to God
147 - how do we deal about this issue of the church; the scripture is there to guide us as to how
148 to build the church; how to lead the church; how to guide the church. Man has a tendency
149 to grab God's things and make them his, as a common thing. Many people have been sent
150 by God to do something, have a clear vision as to what is supposed to do and a clear
151 direction to take that church but somehow along the way man takes detours and does that,
152 improve what God has given him which cannot be improved by man. You can't improve
153 something that is from God that is the problem we have.

154 That is why our churches, our denominations are changing the way they are changing
155 because we people we want to take glory so that we may be known that we have done
156 something at least. We can do something here in the world but not in the church because
157 we don't use our power, our wisdom and the architect of the church is Jesus Christ not
158 anybody else. We have a problem right now in our churches things are going just that way
159 and that way because we have adopted many things that we find from people. It's easy
160 when the church is still new but once it grows especially when you get people from other
161 churches, they come with their own background of church, they come here and somehow
162 they influence even those who started the church to move in a certain direction and lose
163 the vision which they were given by God. So it's something like that, that's how I see the
164 issue of leadership.

165 We need leaders who are appointed by God as the scripture says. We can have our leaders
166 for administration organisational purposes. Now the leaders that we appoint for
167 organisational leadership are not thee people because we need people who hear from God,
168 who will always sound a warning when we go astray, who will always tell the people the
169 Lord says this, the plan of the Lord is this so that we can go and be safe from being eroded
170 by things that are coming from outside. That's how I see leadership.

171 **Researcher:** What role does the church culture play in affecting women's roles?

172 **Male Participant 2:** Well we have been brought up in the way that we should not look
173 down on any human being, male or female. Our fathers taught us not to do that because
174 it's ungodly. It doesn't go with the bible, so it may happen somewhere as we go along in
175 our churches it may happen, at times it does happen because man is man when he is not
176 under the control of God and he is not ruled by God, he does things that you can't believe,
177 so we don't have a culture of raising the status of other people. We are supposed to read
178 the scriptures and practice it; we suppose to comprehend correctly the scriptures.

179 When we talk about man we are not talking about man male, the Bible says God made man
180 in His image. In that image there's a woman, there is a man. Its' not only a male that is
181 created in the image of God, so Eve is part of Adam; in creation she is like Adam. So the
182 image of God is in both of them. So you cannot separate them; somebody said a woman is
183 a man with a womb otherwise we would not have people on earth. They are equal, they
184 have got same status and they are both showing the goodness and the wisdom of God. God
185 could have created people on His own way to say 14 boys this side, 15 girls this side but
186 He did not do that, He created man so that he can produce other people of the same calibre.
187 So in our doings we do not have that issue of women.

188 People may come with that from their backgrounds and come to the church with that. And
189 there are still people amongst us especially the older people, they have got that problem,
190 "*uyintoni umfazi wena maan* - what is a woman after all", this thing is still there and it will
191 take time. That is why one will be concerned about the position or the state of the church
192 spiritually because if people are maturing spiritually, those things drop off. If they are more
193 to the Word of God those things are cast down and you will find people behaving correctly
194 because you can't look down upon anybody if you are a child of God. So, we do not have
195 it in practice but it does happen, because people come from that background. And it takes
196 time for people to change from their old habits, from their old cultural behaviours and
197 habits; it takes a lot of time. You will hear them speaking and you will know that the
198 problem is culture, it's giving hard time. He tries to be modest, he tries to be civilised but
199 when things happen then you realise, oh "*intsila yesiko ikhona laphaya* - cultural issues
200 still exist here. That we cannot help because it happens on its own, we depend upon the
201 working of God in our lives, changing us because the Bible says we must be changed into

202 His likeness. It doesn't take a short time, Paul speaks about Christ being formed in us, and
203 it takes a lot of time. It depends on me whether am I committed to that.

204 **Researcher:** What role does African culture play in determining leadership choice?

205 **Male Participant 2:** Culture has an effect, because we all come from that background, we
206 may not be doing it purposely but somehow it does happen on its own because we have
207 been living that way; we grew up in that way; we built that way; we were fed that, to
208 understand life to go that way, but actually when a person sits alone with God he knows
209 that, that is not correct. It does affect us in a way to have that background, that type of a
210 culture that women are of a lower standard; they don't belong to there with men. Up to
211 now that still persists, worst of all it is promoted by women even when we try to teach,
212 especially senior women, senior women are very good at that. That is one thing that divides
213 the elderly women and young women, young women who are married for instance, that's
214 where they clash.

215 So the younger people want to live a free life connected to their husbands and the wives.
216 They want to live with their wives in their own way, different from how their fathers lived
217 with their mothers. But these old ladies keep on reminding them "*ungumfazi* (you are a
218 woman) *as if ukuba ngumfazi isigwebo* (as if to be a woman is a sentence). that is why I
219 always talk to them and say don't oppress young women, don't oppress these girls and
220 when they get married they panic because they do not know what is going to happen there,
221 what this young men has been taught, he is going to be a lion in the house to intimidate
222 you.

223 We are trying to help them scripturally, not from our own minds. We try to teach them
224 scripturally, that the scripture says this and this; how to live together as Christians and be
225 able to glorify God even in your families. Now the background is very powerful, it's going
226 to take time because of where we come from. The older generations are waning off, we
227 hope there's a new generation that will mix the Bible properly and do the right things. This
228 is how they grew up, they were fed that, so they do what was done to them; they teach what
229 was taught to them. Usually we talk to young people and young couples that you are not
230 building the same family that your father built, you are not going to use the same rules that

231 your father used because he was in a different era; different understanding; brought up in
232 a different sphere.

233 So you are brought up in a different sphere, a sphere where God rules, so you should show
234 godliness; you should show how God treats people because when you are in a family, you
235 are representing God both male and female they are representing God, how God treats
236 people; how God deals with people; how God does things with his people, so leave that
237 old life you saw in your father because some of the things that happened in your house, in
238 your family you did not like them, so cut off, start your life with God.

239 **Researcher:** How do you appreciate the contribution of women in ministry?

240 **Male Participant 2:** We have gone to an extent of appointing ladies now in the deaconship
241 because of what we see in the scriptures, appearing that we are involving the scriptures and
242 we realizing that we need to have ladies in the deaconship. God is not a respecter of
243 persons, He can use anybody, in fact in times back God used ladies in a tremendous way
244 in starting the churches. They built churches and they founded churches which were given
245 pastors to look after them, because they were more evangelistic, they were groundbreaking
246 that what God has given them. We have ladies who have done a lot of work, miracle
247 working, healings and all those things. So we need to respect that, when it is done by God
248 through anybody whether female or male.

249 Now the mistake is that, there be offices reserved for males because they are males and I
250 don't think that is correct, it must be God who puts them there to do that particular job, not
251 because he is a male. God has no problem, you go to Genesis when God took Adam and
252 gave him Eve to be together. The Bible says when God speaks to them, He made man both
253 male and female and He said to them rule the earth, be leaders of the world together. They
254 were co-origins in the beginning, Eve was not small or even lower than Adam because she
255 came from Adam, and she was on the same par with Adam according to God. He
256 commanded both of them; do this, rule the world together. I believe it's only when man
257 changed things around and raised the superiority of man somewhere there and men became
258 greedy and the woman was pressed down, degraded up to the heathen regions where
259 women were badly treated.

260 So it's only man-made theories and teachings which turned to lower the dignity of a woman
261 and raise the dignity of man which is a problem up to now. It is giving us hard time now.
262 The country is called a femicide (the killing of women) country right now because of that,
263 so we need to understand that.

264 **Researcher:** Is there openness then towards female leadership at BTG?

265 **Male Participant 2:** There's a possibility, there's nothing that is impossible. It's a matter
266 of time when people open up their minds and open up their eyes and see the need that has
267 been there but because of that situation we found ourselves in and the way we are brought
268 up, the way we believe things, we kept them outside leadership. We will have them in
269 leadership, I believe because it's necessary, they are part and parcel of the church. They
270 can contribute to the church because what we do is to make sure that people who are in
271 leadership contribute. We may not all be there but everything starts gradually and as things
272 happen they see the results and see that after all women are doing a good job then people
273 will start to loosen up and accept that because it's a new thing where women will be in
274 leadership.

275 I think the first thing that must happen is that, according to the constitution of God, is that
276 female workers should be able to hold credentials, minister's credentials. One thing that
277 we did which was not correct is when women who were called by God, we moved to
278 organizers instead of ministers so they hold the credentials for organisers. So in other words
279 they are not holding the same office as ministers. So that's why they cannot be appointed
280 or elected into these regional committees where ministers would be appointed. Because of
281 the way we set our constitution, but it was a mistake that was done some time back not by
282 the old man (B), but by us who remained after him.

283 That when ladies said God is calling me to do His work, then we decided, no we do not
284 want women here then diverted them to organisation You will note that even when they
285 doing this organisation that these are preachers, you feel that, that woman is powerful, she
286 is only shackled with organisation because there are rules and conditions there; you must
287 not do this and you must not do this. So you pity them, that's what sometimes I talk about
288 them, you pity them, they are not in the right place. They are wrongly placed and that is

289 not right before God, when God says the person must go there and people say no, no, no
290 don't go there, we want you there.

291 Now that person up there will not perform up to the mark because he or she is not in the
292 right place. Even young men, the men who are called pastors are not qualified because we
293 push them to look after a church and when they fail the church and the church goes down
294 and we say this man is a failure, he must go home. It is not so, we allowed him to do a job
295 that he is not qualified to by God. He is wrongly placed. It's just that women are there who
296 are called by God, who are used by God they take organisation. No they are not fully
297 acknowledged they just do what they do because God has called them but not
298 acknowledged by church.

299 **Researcher:** What is the consequence of female leadership exclusion from ministry??

300 **Male Participant 2:** They are not eligible according to our way of doing things, and that
301 makes them as if they are not able to do what God wants them to do. In fact we are failing
302 ourselves as a church because in every situation, in every local church there are more
303 women than men, it's always the case. I have argued time and again about the very elders
304 and deacons. Men are fewer, men and young people are in great numbers and they are not
305 involved in the church governance. And they are governed by a couple of men whether
306 they do right things or not but they are there they know that we are the leaders and they tell
307 people. Now, in fact, it's not fair for women, you have got 200 women in the church and
308 add young people there, they are led by men. Men are thirty in the church and you elect
309 from this minority and make leadership out of them whereas the majority of the people are
310 there where you could get people so that you can get the feeling, the mind of the people.

311 The mind of the people is where the majority of the church is, is where the feelings of the
312 church is. So it has not been happening very well, we have just been talking with my
313 colleagues as we go around appointing elders that we should get to these senior sisters into
314 the leadership because they are very strong, they are very staunch and they do all things
315 that are done in the church. They are true members of those local churches. Sometimes you
316 elect a man, he doesn't come to church, and he comes to church on Sunday. These ladies

317 are here the whole week in the services. These men come once in two weeks and he is an
318 elder, and you call that an elder.

319 We have been talking about these things that we should do something about it as far as
320 electing leadership in the local churches. We must get ladies even unmarried ladies to lead
321 in the church in deaconship and so forth so that we strengthen the local leadership, we
322 strengthen the working of the people because they are very zealous for the work of the
323 Lord. Some men come late to church, ladies are already there but the men are not there. So
324 we have been discussing about that, so, we want to introduce it to the entire leadership so
325 that we can see if its' working. We have started with deacons we are electing ladies now
326 to be deacons. We are starting gradually; we do not want to do things once at the same
327 time.

328 Gradually we are getting there and we believe in due time God helping us; we will be
329 getting ladies who are lady preachers who are leading crusades because they are there. It's
330 only that they are bound by the procedures, by rules, by constitution, that they can't but the
331 Bible does not bind them. The bible is very explicit; God uses every member of His body.
332 Ja they are not given their rightful place actually and we owe it to them and God so that
333 the full church should be operating not part of the church. We need to let the church free,
334 to operate as the Lord leads us. Let's use every material that is in the church, let them know
335 that they are part and parcel of what God is doing not as if it belongs to men. It belongs to
336 the whole church.

337 When the church for instance the local church is prosperous it should be an effort of
338 everybody, not some people so that we are going to take the glory that we have done this,
339 No it should be God working through the church that is what I believe. In fact these last
340 days, God is not using a particular man. He is using His church. The revival that He wants
341 to initiate is to be done by the whole church, every member *njengeskhonyane* (like the
342 pests), walking together all of us, doing its job of consuming and destroying. The church
343 needs to be like that, if it has to be successful especially this time whereby things are not
344 going well. The world is like this as we perceive so we need the whole church. It must be
345 the whole church, taking the whole gospel to the whole world not a couple of guys going

346 around and when they are tired they go home and sleep whereas there is a number of
347 people that are available who could take over and continue with the work.

348 So we need to release our ladies because they are not bound by God, they are bound by our
349 rules and our constitutions and all those procedures and as I said, other women are
350 oppressing other women, for instance they don't allow women to preach on Sunday as if
351 Sunday is a holy day as if it is set aside for certain people. I was talking the other day; in
352 the quarterlies, they use the table for women. I was asking - why do you remove the pulpit
353 when it's women you place the table, what is about this pulpit? It's like in the Israelite time
354 where high priests go alone into the holy of holies, there's no holy of holies here. That
355 podium was made for any person who is going to preach; so they use tables for women and
356 when it's the preacher, a pastor they bring the pulpit. That thing is not right.

Appendix D3: Interview with Male Participant 3 (MP3):

1 **Researcher:** How is leadership selected in the AOG-BTG?

2 **Male Participant 3:** From the time of its formation around 1945 and flowing out of that I
3 think it was first the youth organization as Baba B called it. That was first organized and
4 structured with clear objectives and also procedures how we do, what to do. If we could
5 zero in on the youth, the way in which the leadership was to be selected, there were qualities
6 that would be looked at including if the person is saved, including the person is filled with
7 Holy Spirit as we are Pentecostals including the fact that the person is committed to the
8 work, showing the fruits of the Spirit, showing a good character. Going back to the
9 commitment, showing that this person can take the work forward has the capacity and
10 potential to influence people of his or her age into the gospel and the great commission.

11 **Researcher:** Follow up - From the local level what qualities are observed for someone to
12 qualify and what kind of people are they supposed to be selecting or electing?

13 **Male Participant 3:** Moving from the youth, then the mother's organization was formed.
14 From out of the youth again the mothers and youth organization are more like independent
15 original formations because when Baba B structured the youth it was based on the
16 challenges he was seeing of young people in the church that are not being met, the same
17 with the mothers and partly with the mothers it was also connected with the need to sustain
18 and the financially support to Back to God work. Going and preaching the gospel and
19 establishing people into assemblies so that they can be cared for spiritually and they taught
20 and matured in the faith to the level where they can go up to and also minister. When people
21 are assembled together as the church that is where they are trained and one is the
22 characteristics of Christ, the character of Christ likeness is what we look at beyond
23 salvation and beyond the baptism with the Holy Spirit and beyond the commitment and
24 dedication. Then we work on the character that is what we focus on every week when
25 people come to church.

26 That is why we have group meetings from the church. On Wednesdays we have girl's
27 unmarried ladies meeting together by themselves. In some churches we have got working

28 mothers who can only meet after work hours so they also do meet on Wednesdays. On the
29 Thursday morning we have elderly mothers and those who are not committed to work,
30 ladies coming together to serve, to be taught, to work, and meet the objectives of their
31 particular organizations. So the qualities is clearly salvation, a person must be filled by the
32 Holy Spirit because as they lead they will need guidance from the Holy Spirit. There will
33 be issues that will arise and that person will need to hear from God what they are doing
34 and how they are leading people going forward in-line with the purposes of God so that is
35 what we look for and we train people for that through our weekly services. If you boil it
36 down to unpack the characteristics, firstly when we are talking about Christ-likeness we
37 are looking at person who will have the compassionate and caring love of Christ because
38 a person who is in leadership they must love, they must care for the people they are leading
39 all of them as it is inscribed in our procedural documents.

40 Aims and objectives, first of all amongst the different groups is that we must teach love
41 amongst one another and therefore the leaders must be the ones and also it must be a person
42 who is able to unify others than separate pick and choose and have some on his left and
43 some on his right, it must be someone who can bring people together. We also look for a
44 heart of humility a person who is able to humble himself, empty himself even if they are
45 educated or at their workplace they are of a high stature or in the community or in any other
46 way but when they come to church we are all Christians bound by the same saved in the
47 same way, neither Greek nor Jew, male or female so when we come to church we are the
48 same we are the children of God. So we look for people who even in church they would
49 assume leadership as a means of serving and promoting the great commission agenda. We
50 also look for righteous life, living a holy life, living an upright life, being a person of
51 objectivity, not a person who will pick and choose. We desire to have people who even if
52 they would a miss-stepping by the same person or someone close to them, the standards of
53 assessing what has happened must not change because there is a relationship between the
54 leader and a person who has done whatever they have done. So we look for holiness and
55 also the standard and the quality of life where we have a person who upholds the standard
56 of godliness as opposed to a person who lives anyhow, in the world, they are into the world
57 and living anyhow and do things anyhow and they coming to the church they are in front
58 leading.

59 So we look for the standard of holiness, we look for the standard of righteousness that will
60 also include a person of justice that will be done with divine justice. We also look for
61 integrity, this is very important so that we have a person who lives the same life regardless
62 of where they are found; a person who will say the same thing during the day and the same
63 thing during the night; a person who will be the same thing when they are in Johannesburg
64 and the same when they are in Durban, same in Cape Town or in any other place. This
65 person is like their own soldier to watch over themselves, we look for that quality. We also
66 look for a quality of a servanthood spirit not only should a person be humble but also we
67 would like to have a person who has a spirit and disposition to serve others not a person
68 for whom it will be about them when they get a responsibility of leadership they must
69 know, just like Christ washed the feet of His disciples. Lastly, I think the six principles
70 sum up the multitudes of the characteristics into six. The last one is truth, truthfulness a
71 person who would speak the truth, stand for the truth regardless of what the majority would
72 say but a person who has the guts to speak what is in-lined with the mind or heart of God
73 as testified to them by their conscience this is what happened and this is how it is and the
74 inner voice to them says this is it.

75 A person of truth will still say as honestly as I knew things to be and the factors and the
76 variables that are in front of me, this was position but now I have seen this position
77 therefore for me the big picture and the complete picture is this, unlike a person who can
78 for situational conveniences in any situation and under a particular pressure move a
79 particular direction and then change the other day and other day. In leadership we would
80 love to have people like that, that means it is people who are matured, people who are
81 grown up in the Lord, and it will also include people of prayer, of reading the Word so that
82 their character is not just anchored on having a particular natural character but one that is
83 anchored in the word and also in prayer.

84 **Researcher:** Can you share with me why the senior leadership of AOG-BTG is all male?

85 **Male Participant 3:** I think it is connected with where we come from and as you will know
86 our leadership does not come to us, prepared from somewhere. We are the people who
87 choose the type of leaders to have in place and also by virtue of having different

88 departments; we have mothers, fathers, youth, and girls. We have our people to choose
89 from local level, as a result, I first alluded to the fact that we have different groups. You
90 have mothers led by mothers, you have girls led by girls, and then you have youth it is a
91 mix because young people are both male and female as far as we still consider them and
92 then you have the men and their leadership will be the men, then we have ministers.

93 In the local assembly, the leadership is comprised of both ladies and gentlemen as we have
94 heard the teaching team as we speak electing deacons, deaconesses. There could still be a
95 question around elders which I think coming from the background, if we study the bible,
96 we are still reading sometimes it is called a progressive enlightenment but in our reading
97 of Bible I think so far when it comes to elders we have not yet found an elder lady, we have
98 seen deaconesses and our church is like that we grow with the times. Coming to the RCCs,
99 the RCCs are fed by the ministers, the pastors, and historically we have heard our ladies
100 taking more the organizer aspect of leadership to some extent it has some pastoral elements
101 but come to RCC itself so far we do not have ladies in leadership. The Teaching Team
102 itself we do not have ladies and coming to the Executive we do not have the ladies.

103 **Researcher:** Follow up - Do we have lady pastors at the AOG-BTG?

104 **Male Participant 3:** We do have lady ministers, pastoring churches, leading crusades,
105 preaching.

106 **Researcher:** Follow up - Are the lady pastors different people from the Evangelists that
107 are doing the crusades

108 **Male Participant 3:** We have people like organizers, we also have people whom you go
109 to the local assembly and say who is your pastor and they say my pastor is sister so and so.
110 These lady pastors do have credentials and they are also acknowledged as pastors.

111 **Researcher:** Is there a reason that there are no ladies in the RCC at the moment?

112 **Male Participant 3:** I would not know there will be many reasons probably those reasons
113 are rising from how one looks at the whole picture but from where I am sitting it has been
114 the background where we come from as the church, as an African church if you like the

115 indigenous church or contextual church. We have also grown with the development of the
116 society. Our society there were times when women could not be in leadership yet when
117 you came to us, women have been in leadership from the beginning and the birth of Back
118 to God but as we moved and developed, we could not, if we were to reach the society we
119 could not come in a manner that for them we say we cannot. To this day actually with the
120 enlightenment that is there, you still have to operate with sensitivities, nothing with the
121 concept but with the audience we are reaching so we tried carefully with balance.

122 **Researcher:** What role does the church culture play in affecting women's roles?

123 **Male Participant 3:** I think every organization of people will have a particular culture,
124 written or not written and to a larger extent influenced by their environment, that is why
125 certain things it will be hard to endorse as a culture when it has been a reaction by the
126 people as I said the church has remained sensitive and try to maintain the particular critical
127 balance so that the society that they are reaching they always not misconstrued and
128 therefore the gospel they are bringing being treated as coming from foreign concept to the
129 audience that is why I said we moving at pace but keeping the Bible as the guide that takes
130 us through. Coming to the senior leadership we have heard in the RCCs before it was called
131 DCCs, our churches when we started even in the local assembly we used to have what we
132 called committees, local church committees. They would come to a place preach the gospel
133 and who are the people who would always respond; it is the ladies.

134 As a result, we have heard local assembles not the mothers organization but the local
135 assemblies sometimes made up of ladies only, sometimes male and female, all of them mix
136 together, we have heard that. A particular region when it was started, one of the members
137 of DCC was a lady. Ladies have been a part of that and then in the AOG – BTG Executive
138 nothing come to mind but the AOG-BTG the executive is not the ceiling in terms of the
139 protocols, we have got Assemblies of God General which now combines the different
140 houses, the Assemblies of God Group which used to be predominantly Whites and the
141 Assemblies of God Association which was the Indians and Coloureds and we, the
142 Assemblies of God formally Africans, in our days we use Back to God. In the times of

143 mama Q, she at some point was a member of that Executive and as we speak currently
144 there is a member of the General Executive.

145 **Researcher:** Follow up - What is the bible guide when choosing the leadership?

146 **Male Participant 3:** When you study the early church and you look at the leadership
147 beginning at the Apostles that Jesus chose, there is patterns you begin to see you carry on
148 from there you look at the churches highlighted from different places like the church in
149 Ephesus when Paul met the disciples from Ephesus, the pattern lays itself. You go to when
150 they held the meeting in Acts chapter 15 in Jerusalem counsel, you still try and discern and
151 decipher, the pattern still unfolds and then you come to Paul whichever way one may want
152 to interpreting in the book of Corinthians there are things in highlights about conducting
153 the church about who should do what and how should it be done. Of course in the culture
154 of Corinth to the extent that he utters words that “I do not allow woman to speak” or to
155 stand before men. And then you rake through his books, you will see even the people, the
156 teams that he worked with and going forward when you study that.but the same Paul is
157 where you will see lady deacons. I think even lady ministers Priscilla and Aquila, they
158 seem to the way they are presented by Paul seem to be ministers. If you study the scriptures
159 deeply as we say it is progressive revelation you will realise that the mentioning order also
160 imply something, Priscilla was a lady and Aquila, who Paul indicates as fellow workers
161 in the field. Along the way, you will see them training and enlightening Timothy in certain
162 things so there is a mix which as I have said progressively and moving with the society so
163 that we do not rush too fast and we have people that will say we do not understand these
164 people what they are bringing to us because the gospel is in built-in a culture. It could also
165 if the element of culture comes in; the way we do ministry in our church, you will find that
166 if you are in full time that is why for now the tendency is that we have ladies who are not
167 married who are in the ministry. Partly it will be because of the particular dynamics.

168 For us we can send you to go and pastor in Lesotho and your children are here and your
169 husband is here and now as a wife, you must be in Lesotho and now there will be confusion
170 and a division in the family. While you are in Lesotho you serve one, two years and you
171 realize that your gift is needed in Cofimvaba (Eastern Cape), and the way we work we

172 rotate your gift. If it was a lady it would be highly burdensome, however, under this current
173 structure of them serving more as organizers and supervisors, they are able to go do what
174 they do and come back, go as far as Namibia, and come back. if you are a pastor and you
175 move from one region to another and even from one country to another umama sees ukuthi
176 wenza njani or uyakulandela or uhlala ekhaya emana ukuzokubona or wenza njani, is it
177 because abobaba will not follow after women

178 or he can say she is there I must follow her or is it because of that? It is the decision of
179 individuals to say I am following my wife or not. Because of how we are made up, the
180 mother from the makeup even the hormonal system, the making up of the mother, they are
181 relational, they are loving and they nursing and so for the family, they have a particular
182 role that if you change even if you can say swop roles men would be unable to easily fit
183 into, as much as the same way, the lady may not easily fit in to those into the male's
184 responsibilities.

185 It could be connected with the culture, originally men will leave their homes and come and
186 work in the mines for two months and go back home and women will be left raising the
187 children caring from the home, looking after the property, and making sure that things
188 happen and the fields are plowed and the man is deciding to come home. It has nothing to
189 do than with the culture of the church than a culture of the people.

190 **Researcher:** What role does African culture play in determining leadership choice?

191 **Male Participant 3:** It plays a very big role as I have said we are a contextual church, we
192 lift the Bible higher and then we check the context in terms of the culture so that what the
193 Bible says even if it is not obtained in the culture we try to lead to the ideal of the Bible.
194 But if there is a context where the culture is radically opposed to the Bible, we stay with
195 the Bible. In areas where it is not a cut and dry issue, since we are within the space of a
196 culture and the Bible does not say whether if you do this then you are going to be accepted
197 in terms of Godly standards or if you do this you are lost. There is no prescription should
198 I say for the sake of understanding of being understood we try to come to as close to the
199 culture as possible.

200 **Researcher:** Follow up - Would you say that Paul is leading some other people's
201 translations to some kind of confusion when they read his different books?

202 **Male Participant 3:** If you are contextual as a preacher you will be judged at certain points
203 not to be saying the things that are similar, Paul would make a disclaimer on that, he would
204 say to the Jews I became a Jew, to the Greeks I became a Greek so that by all means I can
205 win them. Now if we take what he has done when he come to the Jewish culture, where
206 there is more scriptural prescription or as he says I have received it from the Lord and he
207 has no word from the Lord, he will be guided by the spirit of God if a guide, in this context
208 which may be different from. He was dealing with distinct contexts. Before we could come
209 and say he was confusing when he put the points together, we need to give him the benefit
210 of accessing him in each particular context.

211 Let me highlight Timothy, he ministers and Timothy gives his life. Timothy is mothered
212 by a Jewish lady; I think the father is Greek. Timothy by the time he meets with Paul and
213 he received the Lord and he is passionate about the gospel and working for the Lord and
214 Paul takes him, Paul is going to be walking with Timothy amongst the Jews and later on
215 leave him to minister and what does Paul do; for the Jews culture of circumcision is thee
216 thing. He takes Timothy at a very old age and he circumcises him and he will indicate that
217 it has got nothing to do with him putting circumcision as a spiritual biblical requirement
218 that a person who is saved is to meet but Paul does it so that when he presents Timothy and
219 walks with Timothy amongst the Jews they can receive the gift from Timothy. The same
220 Paul, when there is the Acts 15 conference, what is key problem; it is the circumcision with
221 the gentiles. The gentiles are coming into salvation but they are not circumcised, they say,
222 they are not saved like us so we cannot trust their genuineness. Paul is there to defend that,
223 in fact probably even while the conference is called it is because of him going around and
224 preaching and then the Lord through his own wisdom takes Peter to a few instances so that
225 when Paul is making his presentation, Peter would also stand up and say what he is saying
226 is true. In terms of the spiritual confirmations that they are saved, I have seen it with my
227 own eyes and it has happened outside of the requirements of our law. He would say Paul
228 why do have to circumcise Timothy when you know this is nothing, is your hermeneutics
229 trying to lead some astray and some ... no, Paul will say in this context if I am to win, this

230 is how these people understand this for them to be taken away from diverting and
231 digressing issues, let me open the way so that I am able to get to the core.

232 He will deal with the peripherals later, so is the same Paul who the standards, when it
233 comes to food offered to idols and he will look like the requirement is that you cannot eat
234 food that you have bought from those temples. What does Paul do, he writes one time and
235 says even the idols themselves are nothing but if my eating of that food which I understand
236 rationally is offered to nothing, if they put it in a room and say we leave it overnight and
237 say the spirit of idols will do something in front of the idols and tomorrow they start eating
238 and their belief that thing has been offered; Paul says that idol is a nothing, literally is a
239 nothing, of course, there could be the spirit behind it, but Paul says so that I don't offend
240 the one whose conscience says the idol is something.

241 He says when I am amongst those who are free to eat I will bless the food and eat but if I
242 am amongst those whose conscience is not strong I will not eat I will throw it away so that
243 I don't wound the conscience of my brothers. That would be a Paul's exegesis and
244 hermeneutics it will be always based on his context and therefore looking at what he was
245 looking to achieve because for him it was the most important goal.

246 **Researcher:** How then do you appreciate the contribution of women at BTG?

247 **Male Participant 3:** Beginning with the fact that in their own context and organization
248 and in pursuit of their aims and objectives it is led by them from the beginning to the end.
249 There is no interference; there is no trying to be over them it is all in their hands. You go
250 the girls work, you go to the mothers work from A to Z, on top of that in the BTG for the
251 few years of my life I have been in the BTG whenever a gift shows itself that can fit; I have
252 seen that gift whether it is in a man or a woman, I have seen that gift serving at all the
253 platforms if you would like and say our highest platform is Thaba Nchu I have seen those
254 gifts featuring and dishing it out at levels like Thaba Nchu that is how we honour and
255 recognize the gifts amongst our ladies.

256 In the last general conference, there was a lady who was presented I think it is sister T
257 whom the Lord appeared to her and she is from Transkei region. Transkei is the local

258 assemble that make sure every month they are taking care of her as a worker or a minister.
259 She started working in Johannesburg and guided by the Lord she is ministering, people are
260 giving their lives to the Lord at the highest level of meeting of our church, she was given
261 a platform to stand up and say what is happening, what is the Lord saying to her and how
262 did it all come about. That is the recognition and there is no inhibition, there is no hindrance
263 that I am aware of, should there be any in those circumstances that is when the attention of
264 leadership would have to be called in. We have heard now the late sister C, she has started
265 churches not one in the region of Limpopo, we still continue to have she will not like to be
266 locked in local assembly because of her gift, that is how we recognize her, Mrs. B. We
267 have three lady pastors in the Eastern Reef region so we recognize the gift and give the
268 platform.

269 **Researcher:** Follow up - How do we get the representation of women in your decision-
270 making structures?

271 **Male Participant 3:** As they do have their forums they submit what they would like to be
272 done in their organization and ultimately through them, through the whole church and they
273 have the four supervisors who are the overall and have direct access to make presentations
274 on what they would love to have in their work, unhindered they can table anything to the
275 leadership and it is considered.

276 **Researcher:** Follow up - Why is our leadership not mixed, why don' we have both males
277 and females in our leadership

278 **Male Participant 3:** I hinted earlier because our leadership as they will know it is not
279 handpicked, we all come together in meetings where from a demographic assessment every
280 conference has more ladies than men, those are my thinking it is not the textbook answered
281 to your question but it is my personal view of this thing. We have more ladies at conference
282 one and possibly two the culture and historic background over societal culture, let me make
283 an example to explain the shared light what I mean by a societal culture.

284 In many cultures when the husband dies who are the people to get there then say this
285 woman must have their hat and must wear black and must not be seen in public and been

286 covered with the blankets and be in the room for some thirty days; or more and in some
287 cultures even the night before the burial they bringing the corps; leave it in the room and
288 only the wife and everybody else sleeps wherever they sleep. And she is to be with this
289 dead body in a casket the whole night and the answer I am driving to a question to, who
290 are the people enforcing all that, it has not been mainly men it is the women. That is the
291 element of culture; people come with the cultural things when coming to the church.

292 **Researcher:** Follow up - Do you think that women in your church need to be liberated
293 from culture?

294 **Male Participant 3:** Let us come to the meeting side, in instances where I have worked
295 with the local churches, you come, you say we have a problem financially in the local
296 assembly and therefore let us work on strategies to improve the giving. Our mothers are
297 the highest givers but over time the strategies seem to weigh heavy on a few those who
298 will only go to the mothers' services and when it is those times of raising funds vigorously
299 even that number reduces but on Sunday we have many of them.

300 And then you say let us develop a strategy that will ensure that every member in the church
301 participates, you come into a meeting you call the mothers committee, you call the girls
302 committee, you call everybody and if you have organizers in the assembly you call them
303 in and if you have supervisor in the assembly you call her in, the elders, the deacons, you
304 call every committee in the assembly. How is the reaction of mothers going to be, it will
305 sound like if we change the JJ even now it is now in terms of its output to us but it is like
306 it came from heaven, and therefore most of the time when you are touching on, such issues
307 of transformation.

308 I think we also need to be transformed. What I am saying is from an example I know, we
309 went together and the people who were violently opposing this and then because the
310 majority has accepted, the ladies through their leaders after that they talk amongst
311 themselves when we giving church according to that system of giving, you do not give
312 your money, you will give when we go to quarterlies. Down the line that method of giving,
313 made sure that when we go to mothers quarterly the target is R10 000 and we give to the

314 mothers. And when we go to men's quarterly the target is R7000.00 we take from what
315 everybody has put hands into so

316 I am saying there is a psychological issue maybe the capacitation that everything we have
317 except of what the Bible clearly says how we do things in our church, is the strategy that
318 worked at some point and no one has locked that it cannot work going forward but the
319 psychology I have read from what you are saying we going to the meeting where our
320 mothers and sisters will be quite, only they talk outside and when they talk outside normally
321 it is going to be standing against that whereas when we were in the meeting where they
322 could ask and today's world you do not just talk to convince you present the figures if this
323 is how we were working this is what it was giving us.

324 But if we begin to work like this, how many are we if we then say what is the budget we
325 are looking for and therefore each one of us could give so much and others can give, even
326 more, that works. What I have seen is that maybe the liberation that is needed out of is that
327 people will say we have never done in that way, we want the JJ, up and down and go
328 around.

329 **Researcher:** Follow up – Is there any openness towards female leadership?

330 **Male Participant 3:** I am a pragmatic, practical person but I always look for the real things
331 so that when I solve a problem I do not complicate it. Taking from human sciences, the
332 approach would have been let's liberate them but is it really meeting this need because like
333 I am saying what we need is capacitation and empowerment. After we have found out what
334 it is that makes them quiet in a meeting and talk outside, what it is that makes them, even
335 if they have their own forum like I am taking it down to a local church where you are going
336 to have all committees meetings next week; or in so many days weeks to come by that you
337 are saying let all the committees go to their meeting groups. Let them look at the things
338 they will need the assistance with, help, new strategies to work on. And our ladies will go
339 and when they come back and you ask them what are your challenges the fathers, and the
340 youth will state their challenges and when you ask mothers, they will say they are fine. I
341 am talking about when you now confront them it is one thing to ask them in the meeting
342 then you ask what do they say and they will say they are fine with everything.

343 The younger ladies complain that if they say anything in the meeting they get reprimanded
344 by the older ones. If this is the vicious cycle within and the same people would say when
345 we try to intervene, I do not care for those they do not know what it is to be a woman. They
346 are coming in to destroy our work. We have seen that. Now if you approach it the political
347 way, you stand a chance of being misunderstood and well you may have the revolution,
348 you may have it now with like in the political parties. And now being positioned for The
349 Great Commission, then it becomes an issue, you may end up not a church existing to
350 continue the work of the Kingdom of God but now duplicating only in an ecclesiastically
351 way the formation is out there. So it is a question probably we need to focus on but again
352 I do not know whether it is a philosophical approach to it, that does it then now mean to
353 our salvation is a package that lacks giving that boldness.

354 The boldness that Esther would stand after she had been provoked, of course, she was one
355 with the key to the livelihood of the Jews in the whole country, she was at best place but
356 what did she think, we do not know, she kept quiet and was holding back until Mordecai
357 said your life is in danger God may just bypass you and use somebody else. It was only
358 then that Esther stood when there was then the threat of death. Does it mean the only strong
359 mobilization would be if the motivating factor for Mordecai to bring Esther it is not because
360 there is a decree; it is because there is a vacancy there. Mordecai is the security in the gate,
361 Mordecai promotes Esther.

362 **Researcher:** Follow up - You have mentioned something and I think it is important, you
363 have four supervisors that are the leaders of mothers and girls. Pastors go on pension, why
364 do supervisors not go on pension, and secondly what is the need for supervisors

365 **Male Participant 3:** When baba B got the vision of how to sustain financially the Back to
366 God Crusade, the Lord showed him in a vision, a woman in a doek (scarf) and said to him
367 those are the people who can sustain financially this work because they have a womb, when
368 we are talking about a burden for souls that are lost they will hear it but go and teach them
369 to work with their hands so that they are able to provide for their families and then out of
370 what they make also give as an offering. So he went to them again guided by the Holy
371 Spirit. Baba B is the one with the vision and in that time he was the leader of the Back to

372 God but you cannot reach women effectively as a man because as you stand in front of
373 them whatever you say then know there are certain things that are strictly feminine and the
374 makeup and the physiology and many other things and the way they think, whatever you
375 would say you are coming from another planet to try and get to them.

376 So it was a divine wisdom for him to say train, pour yourself into five women including
377 your wife; pour yourself the vision that God has given you and that they are in a better
378 position even to uphold marriages. Women in the married situation are in a better position
379 to still keep it together better than men, of course, it is man who jump around that goal but
380 the person ultimately who has that power to hold it together is a woman and man cannot
381 do it. One of the things is that they have been taught to keep their marriages together
382 because part of was divorce, as early as the late early fifties was already beginning to grow
383 amongst the married in the church and therefore the training. Both sides are trained but
384 effectively when you train the women what you have given stands a better chance to
385 success.

386 So he started with the five women, one of them passed on very early in the beginning of
387 that process and then they were four, and for some reason, he did not replace the fifth and
388 they remain four working with mama B. When they had anything administratively needing
389 an intervention and so on they would come to Baba B. When they started ruling out the
390 women's organization after his training of them because at some point it was at church

391 we are told that he would go and sit in the meeting and these ladies would stand up and
392 teach them about women in the bible, teach on love, teach on unity, understanding one
393 another,

394 taking care of homes, loving children, knitting the family unity together, and keeping their
395 homes tidy, working with their hands, and also capacity building for them to run their own
396 organisation because it could have as early as that time, he could have said those men who
397 were working with me let them be the committees for this but he raised the ladies.

398 **Researcher:** Follow up – I am interested to know as to why are supervisors not changing
399 like committees?

400 **Male Participant 3:** I think it would be because of the historic background at their
401 formation there was no manual to sail there would be a rotation or a change and that also
402 went for the organizers. The document of 1960 or 1970 when he trained quite a number of
403 them in Standerton before supervisors were already there, he had not died by that time in
404 1967 and when he trained the good number in Standerton, two years came and he lapsed,
405 he did not act. So they became permanent in that sense and they do not get retired. Much
406 of it now comes from them, you will remember that baba B passed on in 1985 some of the
407 issues were not issues at that time. Issue number one, when he passed on these ladies were
408 vibrant and their mid-life strong, no one could have at that time thought at some time these
409 ladies will be eighty and above, they will get tired and unable to process things mentally
410 and physically rush here and there. It could not be foreseen.

411 The church our age is the church that has been through birth, it has been through growth,
412 and it has been through maturity and then to plateauing and after that plateauing, it begins
413 to decline.

414 Some of the things that make it to decline is the re-interpretation of certain roles and
415 functions for instance initially as we spoke about the qualities of a leader, people who were
416 elected into being organizers or given birth to so that they become organizers which is to
417 say, leaders, conveners, coordinators, trainers, facilitators were people who passing the
418 Christian side of things, salvation, the Holy Spirit and commitment. There was the element
419 of servanthood that the people did this thing mainly out of service. But with age of the
420 church, it then became positions, "I am an organizer", then became about the benefit that
421 comes with being that organizer or that position and then came down from being the person
422 who is interested in training and capacitating these people on handwork.

423 Skills development would further use a contemporary concept. Baba B started that even
424 before the concept was there in any manifesto of any leading party. Handwork was a skills
425 development so that these people could leave and we have testimonies of people from the
426 past who came to the church I know of a lady she is retired now and no longer doing the
427 work but she came to church and she was taught how to make curtains, slowly she bought
428 those old Singer machines, started working overtime. This lady was curtaining houses of

429 big men and overtime she dedicated in her house a full room to this work. She would wake
430 in the morning doing her house chores, going to that room and produce and people were
431 buying.

432 Somewhere we lost it because of our age at a church.

433 Now I was saying the whole church, we have come to a place where we need what the
434 restoration of God's original intent that is about going back to when we used to have girls
435 meeting, what was the original intent? It was to bring them together, do what when they
436 are together? teach them to work with their hands, so that even those who do not have work
437 they have something to do with time we have seen advances in the skills, you and I have
438 witnessed it as participant observers in our church. Some will come with biscuits and say
439 this is my handwork but we are lacking the motivation and the promotion of those things.
440 Therefore we still go to buy from shop buy in a large packet made by someone. But those
441 things today could be done by us. The handwork that we raise in Thaba Nchu from our
442 monthly, quarterlies, and mini conventions all the way to national level or transnational.

443 People have found a way of circumventing the process whereas the process by virtue of
444 making that individual appearance. It was so that even if people will say I don't need these
445 things but somehow you have a reason to learn it. and at the local level part of the work
446 from the organiser down to the committee, it is to make sure everybody at least learning
447 something, there is development, there is progression. Physically and spiritually but with
448 the age of the church we have come to the time where we need; I personally do not think
449 it is impossible, it is going to be a costly, it will be a demanding work, it may be an
450 expensive work but I still believe renewal, revitalization, restoration, and transformation
451 from what we are today, it is possible. They are very tired with closed doors to accept
452 anything. We need to have workshops so that we can discuss these things.

453 **Researcher:** Having acknowledged the absence of female leadership in the senior
454 leadership, is there openness towards female leadership?

455 **Male Participant 3:** In as far as acknowledging the absence of female leadership in the
456 Back to God Executive that is the current state of affairs, coming to the question of

457 openness, I have said it from the beginning I will repeat it that we are a church that works
458 on gifts as soon as the gift appears and also in our study progressive revelation of the
459 scriptures, there is absolutely and open door as we go forward, yes. So one day you will
460 see a female somewhere in the RCC's and the Executive. For me as long as there is biblical
461 evidence to support it, why should one stand on the way. As long as it can be structured
462 for the Great Commission to the best understanding, the interpretation of the scriptures and
463 there is a benefit rolling itself out in the outworking of the Great Commission.

464 **Researcher:** What is the consequence of female leadership exclusion from ministry??

465 **Male Participant 3:** There is no policy in place; there is no intentional practical exclusion
466 to women being in any leadership structure in the AOG-BTG.

Appendix D4: Interview with Male Participant 4 (MP4)

1 **Researcher:** How is leadership selected in the AOG – BTG?

2 **Male Participant 4:** I want to start by saying at the AOG, there is local leadership, there
3 is regional council committee (RCC), there is the teaching team and there is also the
4 executive. The local leadership is elected by the Teaching Team. What they do, they send
5 two of their members to a local to come and teach for a week. They refer to the Bible as it
6 mentions that the church must elect deacons and elders. They also put directives that must
7 be followed according to the Bible, that it must be a man of one wife, must be able to give
8 command in his house and it must be a respectful as in the standard of the Word of God.
9 Consequent to the teachings the church then elects those members that are going to serve
10 as elders and deacons by voting using small papers.

11 The papers are then counted to see who has more votes than the other, starting by the
12 chairman and his deputy on both elders and deacons. That is for the local. Then, the RCC
13 is elected by the general (RCG). During this election all the group structure leaders, that is
14 men, mothers, girls, and the youth organizers are invited including locals' leadership,
15 delegates from the locals, pastors, and pastors' wives. During this election, a ballot is used
16 but I am not really sure I will be going there for the first time. Then when the executive is
17 elected there are also delegates from different churches from all the regions and it is
18 normally done in Thaba Nchu which is our centre where we hold our conventions and
19 conferences of this magnitude. All the different group leaders are invited, that is men,
20 mothers, girls, and the youth organizers, pastors, and pastors' wives. During this election,
21 they use a secret ballot.

22 **Researcher:** Please can you share why your leadership is all male?

23 **Male Participant 4:** Mh, this is very difficult, I am sure Nonnie that in this part that only
24 men are in the leadership, I do want to say that maybe it has got something to do with
25 tradition. Perhaps let me not say tradition as such but culture, because you know when you
26 grew up in a place seeing certain things done in a certain way, people get used to that and
27 then it would look like it is the right way of doing things However when there are people

28 that can challenge that, in this case, “why should it be men only” as if there are no other
29 people with leadership qualities that could benefit the different leadership structures that
30 we elect. This goes back to something that was raised by pastor Z in his sermon recently,
31 saying it is so unfortunate that in our movement we have advanced so much with things
32 that are not biblical. But the structures are created by us and when you perceive the way
33 we continue right now in the movement, these structures have become a problem to us.
34 Some of the people now are no longer willing to relinquish the power; to them, these
35 portfolios have become permanent positions, it is no longer about serving instead they have
36 become managers. I would like to say traditionally that is how we have progressed. I have
37 heard that during the time of pastor B, the late Mrs Q was once working with the Executive
38 committee and another lady called sis N was in the finance team.

39 **Researcher:** What role does the church culture play in affecting women’s roles?

40 **Male Participant 4:** The AOG-BTG culture does not embrace women, it does not
41 welcome women. That is the culture of Back to God, but I do want to say, that is not the
42 culture of pastor B. This culture crept in after pastor B died because we hear that pastor B
43 worked women like the late mama Q, the late sis grace, Mama TE, mama T, sis N, mama
44 Ski, sis G Etcetera. We had women that were not necessarily pastors; women have never
45 been recognised as pastors but as workers or evangelists but pastor B opened the doors for
46 women to operate. Mam T for example was one of the significant workers at that time
47 wherever she conducted a revival she made a mark by changing people’s lives through
48 evangelism. God has also used the late sis Grace tremendously. There was another lady
49 which pastor M identified. God spoke to pastor M to go to the place where this lady was.

50 I understand that the said lady was a pure prophet and it was like pastor M had he ignited
51 fire, God used that lady in a remarkable way. So in the earlier days of this movement during
52 the times of pastor B, the ministry of women was recognized but of late possibly after the
53 passing of pastor B things changed. In his last recorded sermons, pastor B does mention
54 that many were saying he must die so that we can change this thing. Some of them were
55 threatened. Pastor N would say “there were women and girls that were used by God
56 tremendously in this movement and if the movement allowed them to continue, this

57 movement would be far” but the tradition that perceives as if God only abides in men only
58 has terminated the plan of God about this movement because it has stifled the move of God
59 in the movement. If only the leadership endorsed women, because it is quite obvious that
60 there were women that were capable. There were women that followed Jesus. We hear that
61 Paul arrived to Priscilla and Aquila. Obviously Paul realised that this woman is having
62 something and he made use of her. So we as BTG movement have failed to recognise
63 women.

64 **Researcher:** What role does African culture play in determining leadership choice?

65 **Male Participant 4:** According to my assessment, this question is not even supposed to
66 come up because the church does not belong to a man and the church has an owner. And
67 if things were done appropriately in the church, they should be done biblically not in the
68 fashion we are doing them right now. Unfortunately, this is how things are done. Culture
69 has dominated to the extent that in the current leadership structures we created, we have in
70 the long run put people that have nothing to offer spiritually and they have become very
71 comfortable in these positions because they know that they can be perceptible but when
72 we comes to the matters of the Spirit they are deficient. So for example, if you and I and
73 another would be elected to the committee as friends, having the same understanding and
74 speaking the same language, it goes without saying that we will mislead the masses because
75 we are a cabal with its own interests.

76 Now it will go back to the Bible, to 2 Tim (4:3), where the Paul declaims that “For the time
77 will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own
78 desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching
79 ears want to hear” not what God wants and I think that time has really arrived but God will
80 prevail. If Barak said to Deborah if you do not go with us we might as well stay but if you
81 go with us we will go, it means there is a potential in women and it means there must be a
82 paradigm shift in men to realise that it is not about a trouser but about the gifts that God
83 has awarded to people. This culture thing is not just in the leadership choices only but even
84 the way we conduct ourselves. If a woman goes to church with her head uncovered you
85 will not be allowed to preach and that is not biblical.

86 If we follow that biblically according to 1 Cor. (11:15) it says the hair is a cover of a
87 woman's head but the black culture states that a woman must cover her head with
88 something. In other words, if a woman has not covered her head, that disqualifies her
89 already in the leadership role. Our culture says a woman's job is to cook and obey her
90 husband. No man will go and listen to what a woman has to say. So our culture dominates
91 and influences. Yes biblically we should have biblical culture that says there is no woman
92 and there is no man but in reality that is not what is happening. Women are judged even on
93 the way they dress-up but men even if they can have tight pants on, or shorts or long hair
94 which the Bible disputes, it is okay and that be influencing who must be in the leadership
95 or not.

96 **Researcher:** How do you appreciate the contribution of women in ministry?

97 **Male Participant 4:** Oh my God, eeah tjo, that one of appreciating for sure is zero percent.
98 The church only appreciate women because of their money otherwise there is no
99 appreciation and some of the men are even threatened by the ministries that have been put
100 by God to women. As men, we can announce that, hey thank you mothers blah blah, only
101 because we know that they are resource of this church. If mothers can ram and go on strike
102 just once or demand their rights that we want A, B, and C, and if not we won't budge. Just
103 that mothers are soft hearted, they are very compassionate. Another thing is that mothers
104 are well taught and even though pastor B is no more they keep on referring to his teachings
105 that he once said. I have seen that in the Eastern Reef where it was decided that the money
106 will no longer go to Thaba Nchu because they wanted to build a centre. The mothers stood
107 and said we will never do that – we are holding on to pastor B's vision that the money must
108 go to the feet of the apostles so we will not deviate. So what I am saying is that we only
109 recognize the mothers because they are the engine of the church otherwise if it was not that
110 there wouldn't be any recognition. On the other hand sisters as women, just because they
111 do not have this bundle that the mothers have they are regarded as nonentities as a result
112 they are often neglected. As a result, when the church speak of women they mainly refer
113 to mothers and not unmarried women.

114 **Researcher:** Since you acknowledge the absence of female leadership, is there openness
115 towards female leadership?

116 **Male Participant 4:** I cannot remember who I was talking to but we were having a
117 conversation in Thaba Nchu, but if this church can recognise and acknowledge women,
118 this movement will go very far. But until the Holy Spirit transforms men from local level
119 up to the executive office, the BTG movement will move very fast because there are
120 capable women in this movement who would raise the bar and enhance the quality. Even
121 when women have meetings, men will come in numbers because they know that women
122 will deliver but let it be us men you would not know if we are moving forward or
123 backwards. With women it is different, they would be sitting down there and they do not
124 talk a lot but you would feel the move of the Holy Spirit. So if our church can acknowledge
125 women and if there could be openness towards female leadership who are holding God's
126 thing.

127 Pastor N laments that if we can go back and remove all these stumbling blocks – as if God
128 sits in a skirt or trouser. If we can go back, you would hear the reputation of this church.
129 The reason God has taken the back sit is because we have put tradition in the forefront
130 before God. On the same breath, there are rumours, actually, before that, there are already
131 churches that have female deacons but I am not sure of the criteria but biblically there were
132 female deacons. For me that show that there is acknowledgment. Dr G would say we have
133 utilizing men who' stomachs are full of mealie meal when there are people so I would want
134 to say even though it is not clear yet that there is openness towards female leadership.
135 Again it differs from region to region. Gauteng is still backwards while you see places like
136 the Eastern Cape and some other places in the Kwa Natal region moving swiftly. In
137 Limpopo, The Venda people have a lot of respect for women. So this culture issue is more
138 problematic here in Gauteng, you would notice that when there are meeting, it is very rare
139 that a woman is given a chance to preach on a Sunday even if she preached the whole week.

140 They will have to convene first and debate whether to give her or not. This is unlike places
141 like the former Transkei and some areas in KZN. The problem is in Gauteng but I am not
142 sure which tradition or culture because you find different tribes and ethnic groups and races

143 in one church so I am not sure which tradition or culture maybe it is a black culture but
144 there is a disturbing thing in Gauteng. Gauteng is not progressive and there is no openness
145 towards female leadership. This goes back to these church structures that is where this
146 traditionalists culturists are who when even see that this time we were supposed to turn left
147 but still be stubborn and say not here. Pastor Z was once requested to preach in one meeting
148 on a Sunday and he stated that he is a victim of tradition.

149 He said 'I am not supposed to be standing here, the person who is supposed to be standing
150 is this lady that was preaching in this whole meeting' but because I am a victim of tradition
151 I am standing'. Another thing is that when we read the bible before worship in the mornings
152 at church, we jump that very that says women must keep silent in the church, but when it
153 suits them they use it to silence women. Let me say it but not say it as well that they do
154 know exactly in which context Paul said that verse which makes it irrelevant right now.

155 What I can say is that our leadership is captured by the culture and tradition which Jesus
156 talks about in Mathew (23:4) that "they crush people with unbearable religious demands
157 and never lift a finger to ease the burden". They want people to do things that they would
158 not even do, they are full of oppression. If I may say this about Xhosa's, they do have this
159 tradition issue but once God help them they release you when they see that the gift of God
160 exists in someone. Here in Gauteng, it is a confusion that goes along with tradition and
161 culture. All in all, men need to be transformed. I have said before that God has been
162 disappointed by the old people of this church and as God reveals it to me right now, the
163 people that will reinstate this church to where God want it are the grandsons and
164 granddaughters. This is what Phinehas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron did when Moab
165 seduces Israel when the Israelite man brought a Midianite woman into the camp.

166 He took a spear and drove it into both of them, and then the plague against the Israelites
167 was stopped. Our church been infiltrated by foreign things and it will not be brought back
168 by the old people. They are like that generation that walked with Moses, all of them died
169 in the wilderness but the generation of Caleb and Joshua entered the promised land. That
170 generation did not have a skirt and a trouser. It is in that generation that God revealed
171 women with good reputation, women that turned the world upside-down. This is where we

172 see women like Deborah in the book of Judges. I believe there is a transition that is
173 approaching as God is also revealing people like you with this thesis that you doing. This
174 is the time because God will not have a formula when he wants to restore His church. He
175 will use everything that will provoke those that are in the comfort zone with something that
176 is stagnant.

177 **Researcher:** What is the consequence of female leadership exclusion from ministry??

178 **Male Participant 4:** There is not even a door that is being opened, not even a window. I
179 see the issue of deacons and all that but the youth comprise of both girls and boys and their
180 leadership from local to quarter also is comprised of girls and boys or young women and
181 young men but all the youth organisers are male. Then we go to the RCC it is only males
182 so is the Executive. Why can't we think of putting a person like mama TE and mama T,
183 sis N etcetera, in the Teaching Team? They were there during the time of pastor B. They
184 are one of those who walked with him. She knows and understands the procedure of this
185 church very well. Some of those that are in the teaching team right now they were not even
186 there during the time of pastor B, they never even saw him but when they graduated from
187 the executive they went to the teaching team but women that started with pastor B are
188 overlooked. They are instead keeping the women supervisors to look after the women's
189 work and to me, it is another way to compensate them for failing to recognize them. They
190 are the only supervisors; there are no supervisors for men so it is another way to silence
191 them.

192 This supervisor thing is not genuine, why would we have only four supervisors. All the
193 others are late and the other one had just been born or joined the three that is left. So they
194 are placed there strategically, for instance, the money raised by the mothers if for revivals
195 "Great Commission but when last did you hear that there is a revival tent. You know
196 December they used to call people all the new converts from all the regions to come on
197 stage and that is no longer happening. So that means that we are no longer doing the core
198 business, we are just doing our own thing.

Appendix D5: Interview with Male Participant 5 (MP5)

1 **Researcher:** How is leadership selected or elected in the AOG-BTG?

2 **Male Participant 5:** I think the way we have been doing it and the way we are doing it
3 mostly we actually refer to the scriptures. We have got two ways for instance we have the
4 organisation and the organism. In the organization we have got groups, we have got
5 mothers, we have got fathers, we have got youth and we have got girls from a local level
6 and then we have got the local church. We have got the church structures so we have the
7 leadership all there and it is elected at a certain point in time. So if we look for instance at
8 how we do it with the organization, we usually base our election on the scriptures, we read
9 on the book of Acts and referred to how they did there, in Chapter 6: 1-7. With the
10 organisation, for instance, if it's youth that's where we do combination of both males and
11 females in the youth committees.

12 Then with the girls, it will be girls only and mothers it will be mothers only, same applies
13 with the fathers. And I think because that supports actually our church financially and from
14 the organizational point of view even though not financially only. Then in organisation we
15 do it in two ways, the nominations and on the nominated list then we elect or we just go
16 straight to the election and then we elect among ourselves. Those who qualify according
17 to the criteria they use, perhaps the preacher will be clarifying according to the scriptures
18 in the book of Acts chapter 6. That is depending on what group that is being elected,
19 secondly it is not only based in the book of Acts, it has also the rules and procedures that
20 we use as Assemblies of God Back to God that deal with the election with office bearers
21 which are referred to as the task team, for the RCCs to the regions.

22 So basically in the local church, we have got the church board even though now it's not
23 common, we have the church board that has been elected in the church, and then we have
24 got the elders and deacons that get elected also by the church. Also, it is in the rules and
25 procedures election that has prescribed by the Teaching Team. I think the difference now
26 is that the church board can be done by the pastor, the elders and deacons can be done by
27 the Teaching Team. If it's the committees of the organizations they will be done by

28 organizers or a pastor. The local pastor also is regarded as an organizer. So those are the
29 people who can lead or facilitate the elections; with the local church then we usually refer
30 to the scriptures with the elders and deacons. With the ladies also we usually refer to Acts
31 6, the same one.

32 It's easy with the committees because if it's youth it will be ladies and young men. With
33 the church leadership then, when it comes to the deacons or the church board, it is mixed
34 across the board; everybody can be elected into that structure as long it is done by the
35 church to fulfil whatever duties because there is no biblical structure, that's how we refer
36 to biblical structure to elders and deacons.

37 Then when we do the election of Elders and Deacons the Teaching Team usually put the
38 emphasis when they talk about the conduct and the character referring to that verse that it
39 must be a man of a noble character and man with one wife. Unfortunately I have never
40 been in local church where the women were elected either in elders or deacons if there is
41 anything like that but as far as I am concerned the elders from the biblical point of view is
42 only for males, in terms of the office.

43 Then I think the teaching team has already started putting the mothers or women when it
44 comes to the deacons' office, referring to some of the women that the Bible refers to them
45 as the deaconess. Perhaps before I can go there as far as the local church, then we have the
46 RCC's that is the Regional Council Committees which is the sub-structure of the Executive
47 Committee so those are the administrators. The RCC's is looking into the affairs of the
48 church in their respective regions. So the RCCs also in terms of our rules and procedures
49 they are elected by the Teaching Team. We use the same scripture reference that we use
50 with the organization, elders, and deacons elections. They actually emphasise the issue of
51 the character and conduct and also the qualifications of the people that should be there. So
52 we just read the Word first because we believe in whatever we do we should read the Word
53 of God first and then we elect, the forum and the council to elect the structure that it the
54 Regional Council Committee.

55 In terms of our rules and procedures that's where it is narrated that we need somebody who
56 is not a probationer, the current procedure say it must someone who is five years in the

57 ministry after probation so those are the things that we then follow but it must be somebody
58 who is already serving in the ministry that is the pastor. Maybe by default or design maybe
59 in other provinces, so in most of the regions we don't have women who are pastors and I
60 think I support that one.

61 **Researcher:** Can you tell me why your leadership is all male?

62 **Male Participant 5:** I think the reason it's all-male, perhaps as far as I understand, is that
63 they take it from the scriptures and I think I have already said that in some of the structures
64 for instance in the local level, the deacons we have noticed that we either need
65 transformation. We have noticed that what we were doing maybe was marginalization
66 maybe I am not sure what came to the minds of the leadership when they decided that let's
67 include women in the side of the deacons. I know that in some regions for instance there
68 are some pastors who are women. Actually, we did get some applications from women
69 who wanted to be in ministry and the Teaching Team was requested to provide guidance
70 on that one. Before the founder of the church passed on, he left the work to the Teaching
71 Team and I believe that is the leadership that carries the doctrine and the Executive are the
72 administrators.

73 The Teaching Team actually should be the people that are holding back our cultures as the
74 leadership of Back to God, the things that they have received from the founder that is the
75 priority. Number two, from the scripture I just wonder why was Jesus born as a son not a
76 daughter of God, secondly when Jesus chose the twelve, he didn't put any women there,
77 and does that mean that women are not important? not at all but it was just the distinction
78 with the roles of assignments that is the people who were expected to perform because
79 women actually played a very important role in Jesus ministry, the supporting role that
80 men actually would not do. There is a lady in the Bible that is known by what she did of
81 the alabaster jar and expensive perfume, well when it comes to men we don't hear anything
82 that Jesus said, what she has done will be talked out all over the world. So that says to me
83 that is a ministry that is what she was doing.

84 So coming back to the issue of leadership, the books that we were referring to, of Titus and
85 the book of Acts when the apostles were electing people including what is being said in

86 Titus is that they want a man they don't say we want woman. The Bible says there is no
87 more Jew, no more Gentiles, no more male nor female but when it comes to the roles and
88 responsibilities there is still that distinction. So I, therefore, believe that our church actually
89 they are taking it from the Bible may be in all these structures for instance we have got the
90 elders so I have not seen a scripture says maybe a church so and so there was an elder who
91 was a woman. So it only talks about men when it comes to elders, and then when it comes
92 to deaconess it does mention, there are exceptions in other areas so it talks about women
93 that were involved as deaconess and when it comes to the RCC for instance and the
94 Executive and Teaching Team which they are all male-dominated.

95 Well with those structures in terms of our rules, it's our rules and procedures those are the
96 things that we agreed upon to the conference. We only put on the Regional Councils the
97 ministers and if our belief or maybe our perception or we go with that school of thought
98 and say the women cannot be pastors that means we only have pastors who get elected into
99 the RCC as well as the Executive because in terms of our rules and procedures it says
100 clearly that it must be a minister who is in the ministry for so many years. Somebody who
101 is going to be in the RCC is somebody who is going to be in the Executive Committee and
102 somebody who is going to be in the Teaching Team. Then I think therefore with the
103 Teaching Team, I don't know what was in the mind of the founder but I believe there were
104 women but perhaps it is my belief that when he saw the roles and the responsibilities maybe
105 he decided that this one it must only be done by male; and that is the Teaching Team as
106 well as Executive because it must be among the pastors.

107 If then we have got for instance some women who perhaps might qualify I think it will be
108 a problem because I don't think she will be accepted even to get nominated to be either in
109 the RCC, just in the region. Maybe if it can be in the region maybe she can't go to national
110 or she can't get votes to national because of this perception and understanding, we believe
111 that Jesus was a man, He was not a daughter of God. But I think it's in terms of the roles
112 that they need to play from the biblical point of view they have been allocated to men if
113 we look at the history. So that does not necessarily say that women cannot perform or
114 maybe they are inferior.

115 **Researcher:** Follow up – What was the role of Maria in Jesus life?

116 **Male Participant 5:** I think on that one it comes to the issue of the roles that when looked into
117 the woman. I believe that man and woman are equal before God but God just decided that
118 in terms of these roles perhaps this one must be played by this one and this one must take
119 that responsibility. So I believe that the reason Jesus was born and natured by a woman
120 was for Jesus to be reached by everybody and so that there can be nobody who is going to
121 say, no we do not fit into this plan that God had of salvation because women are not
122 featuring in anywhere in God's bringing of Jesus to earth. But they both had to play
123 different roles because it was Joseph who had to take his son and his wife to Egypt to
124 escape what Herod was doing when he ordered the killing of boys. Everyone must see his
125 or her role and importance in God's plan. If John didn't play his role maybe Jesus would
126 not be grown up because he had to take them out of Bethlehem. If Marry had not been born
127 Jesus, maybe Jesus would have not been brought to earth because Joseph for that matter
128 cannot boast that he bore a son. We all could not have qualified for the salvation so I think
129 God wanted to balance things so that everybody could be able to fit into Jesus

130 **Researcher:** What role does the church culture play in affecting women's roles?

131 **Male Participant 5:** Yes, the BTG culture plays a big role because we have got our beliefs,
132 we have got things that we have agreed upon as the church that here at AOG BTG we will
133 do things this way. Even if for instance some of them were just commanded by the founder
134 that we do things this way but some of them are not, we adjust as the church grows. Then
135 it becomes our culture. I think our culture plays a big role because we have got our rules
136 and procedures that say this is the criteria that will be used when we elect leadership, any
137 structure whether it's local or it's a Regional Council or it's national or Teaching Team.
138 So these are the things that are agreed upon as church. And also as much as I have said
139 previously that my belief is that mostly that culture stands from what the bible says as far
140 as I am concerned, in terms of the roles.

141 **Researcher:** Follow up - I understand that previously whilst the founder was still around that he
142 elected Mama Q in the senior committee so what might have changed?

143 **Male Participant 5:** I don't know, perhaps if we can be honest and a cultural influence, I think
144 this is my thinking she was put there as an elderly person to guide the work. You see some of the
145 things when the work is still new you will ensure to get people that will be able to carry
146 the work so that it should not fall apart and you will do certain things even if you think this one
147 is a temporal structure so you will try to protect the work from being ruined. I supposed umam Q
148 perhaps was there for that, especially when the work was still preliminary, and coming to
149 the issue of fundraising strategies, you will require people that understand your vision,
150 people that will drive it, for it to progress. I recall that ma Qs subject was such a big issue
151 her impact would be minimal because it would be one woman amongst men in the
152 leadership. In other words it puts that woman in a very difficult position because whatever
153 that she wanted to say, if she is alone then it won't work. Otherwise she will use other
154 avenues that are available like the mothers structures to voice her views properly so if for
155 instance the decision needs to be taken and she is alone, it becomes very unfortunate. So if
156 we intend to put only one woman among men she will not have any impact.

157 **Researcher:** What role does African culture play in determining leadership choice?

158 **Male Participant 5:** Perhaps without being specific but I think in our church, not that much
159 because if you look at our church we are more from a Western culture if you look at how
160 we do things, how we do the elections is not like we do in African culture and also you
161 will look at how we dress, so emulate the Western culture. So I wouldn't say the African
162 culture actually plays a big role in determining our leadership choice but to a certain degree.
163 I think it is what the people want. It is the people's choices. In this case, it is what the men
164 want because it is men who decide at the local, it is men who take the resolutions in the
165 regional structures, its men who will do whatever campaigns, it is men who will do the
166 nominations, actually, it is not only men who do the nominations because it is the regions
167 in terms of the rules and procedures but when it comes to the regions we have got women
168 if actually, we look at Regional Council forums, it is made of everybody so we have got
169 women there even though the committee is male.

170 But we have quite a few women, we have got the organizers, we have got the deaconess.
171 Even if they are not ministers but they are allowed also to voice or to say who they choose

172 but only men because we don't have female ministers. So they don't have much choice or
173 choice that is wide enough. We have the groups under AOG and we have got the BTG we
174 don't do their way so I can say it is African culture. It does actually play a big role in how
175 we do things and how we choose the leadership we do not do as white people do. Let us be
176 honest we still have that mentality of men. I think for us to grow the work we need to use
177 the gifts not the office because the church is built through gifts, the church needs gifts so
178 that it can grow, not the office. The office is there to guide but the church needs the gifts.
179 If then we take matters and do them in men's approach then we will miss the point because
180 we will look at a certain point of view which is biblically incorrect. So that is what actually
181 will tell us that we have missed the point, you will see the results.

182 **Researcher:** Follow up - What do you mean missed the point

183 **Male Participant 5:** So we have quite a lot of cases like that as we have mentioned and
184 perhaps not necessarily because it's male-dominated but I think if people who are in
185 leadership have no vision, some of the things that have crept in now we have got corrupt
186 leaders, we have got people who have lot of favouritism, they will say who is this oh no
187 we can give this person whether he or she does qualify, he or she will help us somewhere,
188 we will take him and put him there so that we can groom him until he or she become
189 knowledgeable but in the meantime utilize the person where we need them.

190 This is something that has captured us in our church. It does not belong here and it does
191 not belong amongst brethren because, for instance, the work of God interchanges with
192 prayer, you cannot transfer the gifts without prayer because you need God's guidance that
193 when we transfer somebody that side we put aside our own issues and our procedures but
194 look at the gift that is required by the church and the person that perceives what the church
195 needs is God. Then we need to do it prayerfully but things have happened, we need to
196 consult the owner of the church. But if we have claim we have consulted the author of the
197 church how can we push out a gift that is meant to edify the church and embrace a gift that
198 will not build the church because it will destroy the church. That on its own displays the
199 type of leadership we have and I think that is unfortunate that we have something like this.

200 **Researcher:** How do you appreciate the contribution of women in ministry?

201 **Male Participant 5:** I do not know but the vision Baba B got about women was, he must
202 go to women they will assist him with funds. So through their organisation, they have been
203 doing a great job with regards to raising funds. They are actually the spine of the church
204 and the church is very grateful when they bring that money in the convention in Thaba
205 Nchu because they give cheerfully. Besides that women are not involved in anything
206 especially in leadership issues, not even in managing the finances they raise. That on its
207 own displays the type of leadership we have and I think that is unfortunate that we have
208 something like this.

209 I firmly believe it's what baba B meant when they said let him die so that we can change
210 this thing. Baba B was open to women leadership. He had women evangelists during his
211 time. Some women were in the Executive Committee. He appreciated gifts, not man you
212 can see that most of the people have got their own agendas and they try to push them by
213 all means, you will see the results. Most of people are not for what we are here for. They
214 want actually the ways of how they can enrich themselves so to benefit through this work,
215 most of the people have tried to change everything and actually make the church to be
216 under them to conform to their own standards which is the unfortunate.

217 The Bible also says that we have got a lot of people who have crept in who do not belong
218 here, who are here for their own ulterior motives. It is a lot of them and unfortunately they
219 are in leadership positions because they qualify according to the male sovereign.

220 **Researcher:** Since you acknowledge the absence of female in leadership, do you think
221 there's

222 openness towards female leadership?

223 **Male Participant 5:** I think we are not open to do that may be to do it purely except to put
224 women because we want to use them because for instance if I may refer to the structures
225 that where women have just included, when you listen then you will find that things are
226 not good because if we take you here and we put you in leadership and the two of you who
227 have got a pastor who is male, we will talk with the pastor that you are not clued up with
228 the things that how things are done here, you will find that mostly it is us, men who know

229 how do we do things, we will actually tell you that, this is how we do things here. You will
230 be taught by us and that actually confines you because you can't say whatever that you
231 want to say and you cannot correct us when we do things that are wrong, that's where you
232 will realize that maybe women should not be put in these portfolios. Somebody has made
233 sure that they will not achieve their goals. I am glad that you are doing a thesis however
234 the problem might be that when we start looking at it we might already have a bad
235 impression about the women who are in leadership Because we might think that they were
236 put there perhaps to make sure that they will help to achieve a certain objectives.

237 **Researcher:** Follow up question - What do you think needs to be done to resolve this problem

238 **Male Participant 5:** If for instance, we can look at the vision of Cape to Cairo, when we
239 establish a local church, we expect the local church now to evangelize its own community
240 in other words biblically the fivefold ministries are the in the local church. We should have
241 all these gifts in the local church so that the local church can be able to propagate itself. So
242 we don't need to wait for other man so that the vision can continue, we can continue once
243 we have established the work and then let the gifts work in building the church there. So if
244 perhaps we sit on other gifts then he church is going to struggle because once the local
245 church struggles everything becomes stagnant. And once we suppress the gifs we will just
246 play merry-go-round because those gifts can actually assist us and give us the direction.
247 Then if those gifts we don't give them a chance to operate in the local churches so there is
248 nothing going to happen nationally and we will not get to Cairo. Even though we have
249 strategies, you see the problem is that the work of God does not grow because we do not
250 use the people who have good skills to do the planning. It needs prayer and the proper
251 utilization of diverse gifts because there is the enemy that is fighting against the progress
252 of the work. Then if those gifts do not get a chance we will plan and put our strategies in
253 place, that by this year this is how we are going to move but the vehicle can hardly move
254 because there are gifts that are suppressed.

255 **Researcher:** Follow up - What is your take on the interpretation when it comes to the letter to
256 the Corinthians and the Titus text?

257 **Male Participant 5:** It all goes with maturity in the Lord, how we do things, our level of
258 understanding biblically, how do we take the Bible, and do we see what Jesus was here on
259 earth for then we need to get to that stage of maturity. That is where the church actually
260 will be able to function properly without being jealous of each other's gifts because the
261 Holy Spirit has provided everything for the progress of the work of God. And also to avoid
262 dying on the path but if we do not get to that maturity then that is how we end up because
263 we are caught up in our own selfishness that is not important to the Kingdom of God and
264 that does not help the church. The result of this is that we swivel in one place with no
265 progress, actually by the way we are not assisting one another because if we do not get to
266 that maturity we will point fingers to one another. What we are doing, we are conforming
267 to the standards of this world. This leads us to treating the church like a society, a group of
268 people who just meet with same ideas and philosophy; which is a problem, we can call
269 ourselves a church but in essence, it is a society which is unfortunate.

270 **Researcher:** Follow up - I hear you but what about the locals whereby you will find that there
271 is only one man and the rest are women.

272 **Male Participant 5:** Maybe one thing we can do on that is the benediction. Benediction must do
273 by a man I don't know in other areas. For example, let us make an example with Holy
274 Communion where a church has maybe two men and you need to conduct a Holy
275 Communion and now you have got women and Holy Communion is something that needs
276 to be done according to the bible by Christians. If we have got this mentality that it can
277 only be done by a man because that would mean that we will limit certain things that should
278 benefit Christians that is going to disadvantage the church. I think then there are local
279 churches like that and they do conduct the Holy Communion and the team is all women
280 because there is no man.

281 **Researcher:** Follow up - Have they broken the protocol or God has not taken into consideration
282 the service they were doing because they are women?

283 **Male Participant 5:** No, not at all, when women do anything you see with the church there is
284 one thing that God needs if people must be used in the house of God, and that is anointing. So you
285 must be anointed, if you are anointed in the house of the Lord then God will use you and

286 people will be blessed. Then doesn't God anoint women? He does, therefore use women
287 for any service if somebody knows what she is going to do. Protocol is how we cover
288 ourselves, so in the churches that have no men we use women and the Holy Communion
289 is something that needs to be done according to the bible by Christians, we have to remember
290 Jesus. It is not God's thing that you must not use women otherwise I will disregard your
291 service. I think also one of the things that contribute to this male chauvinism is that we
292 have got very humble and obedient women in our church that is my view.

293 I would say women keep silent for the sake of the progress of the work of God not because
294 perhaps they do not see or they cannot challenge men but they just let go just for the sake
295 of peace as well but there is no advancement in the church. One example that I have noticed
296 in other regions is that if we have got a speaker (from another region) especially if it is a
297 lady speaker for girls or mothers when it comes to preaching on Sunday main service, that
298 person will not be given the pulpit on Sunday. Men will say, we cannot allow a woman to
299 stand before us on a Sunday. But this very speaker when it comes to ministry service, she
300 stands and edifies us, she comes with edification in praise and worship, even though she
301 has that potential but we refuse to give her pulpit to present the message. Those are our
302 own shenanigans because sometimes we allow them depending if we like that person then
303 we say this one comes from very far or this one is famous, we do it for people because
304 people demand this person or is powerful and not that her gift is working. In other words
305 it has got nothing to do with God, it's our protocols, and these are the limitations that set
306 for ourselves.

307 **Researcher:** Do you think this can be referred as the marginalization of women in
308 leadership church positions?

309 **Male Participant 5:** Partly this can be referred to as marginalization of women in
310 leadership church positions and partly cannot. It is to a certain extent, yes it is
311 marginalization which causes the church to suffer because we are doing our own things
312 which goes back to your question of the African culture, I think it goes with the African
313 culture I think whether its tribalism to a certain extent but also if you look at other regions
314 there are things that happen to specific regions. You will find that they promote the ministry

315 of women e.g. Transkei region. They promote them in participation in what they do. Maybe
316 you go to another region, for example, KwaZulu Natal and you find that they do not do
317 that and you go to another region you find that they have their own perception, so these
318 things work differently in different regions and it is not common practice as AOG BTG.
319 For instance to come that one of preaching on Sunday as a woman you cannot allow women
320 to preach but in other regions, they do not have a problem with that.

321 There are no conditions for women; men would tell a woman forthright that you will preach
322 on Sunday because some other people that were absent on Saturday wish her to continue
323 on Sunday and because of that they will not have any problem. That is why I say it is
324 tribalism. The only thing that can help us there is the Teaching Team because they are the
325 custodians of the doctrine of the church. It is their responsibility to visit the local churches,
326 teaching that, this is where we stand as the AOG BTG; and they know these things. They
327 know that we have got these issues that are happening in our church that are not our values
328 and which are not biblical. The teaching team have got the authority to correct all that. So
329 if they can go and visit all the local churches or issue circulars then things can be corrected
330 because you will find that this is one of the burning issues in various regions, as well as
331 the, is lack of information.

332 Now if people do not know our philosophy, for instance, we have got the rules and
333 procedures and we have got things that we commonly believe in, we have our constitution
334 and we have got the main constitution which is the Bible which is our standard. So what
335 happens is that you find that we put all these documents aside and follow the habits of how
336 things are done in our community. These things need to be corrected and the only person
337 who can do that in terms of the authority is the Teaching Team. They must correct them
338 biblically.

339 **Researcher:** Follow up -Do you think there is an age gap problem in your church if so in what
340 way?

341 **Male Participant 5:** Another issue is the age gap and it is a big one. We respect our fathers
342 even though they see things their own way. For instance our slogan, "From Cape to Cairo"
343 which is the vision of BTG, we can make it very simple using the current technology with

344 telecasts and all that, but when it comes to the church procedures that must be followed,
345 you will find that you cannot even get a blessing from leaders.

346 Just to ask to go and start preaching somewhere, unless you submit yourself to the fathers
347 first, and inform them of your intentions; but if you bring people reporting that you have
348 started preaching somewhere you will be strongly reprimanded. But then you ask yourself,
349 what is it that we contending about because we just need to complement each other. We
350 are still pathetic in those areas and that is delaying us when it comes to the issue of progress
351 because while some are pushing forward some are pulling us backwards. At times when
352 other people attempt to derive strategies that will help the church to realize our slogan
353 “From Cape to Cairo” some of us think that they are making means to find ways to
354 embezzle the church coffers. Now we have got the younger generation that is pushing the
355 ideas that will help us move swiftly towards God’s original intent using our slogan.

356 Yes it is true we need the older people so that they can guide us because an elderly person
357 is like a golden treasure because of the distance they have covered in life. But now as the
358 youth is trying to accelerate the progression other elderly people are applying brakes. Let
359 us be honest it does not really matter who has brought transformation and achievement to
360 us, we should not discriminate and suspect others to be having a different agenda,
361 otherwise, we will always argue among ourselves and the time is moving on and those who
362 had ideas when they realize that the fathers are rejecting their ideas they leave the church.
363 Many have left the BTG to start their own churches, and some their work is flourishing.
364 Big as it is, our church has neither a radio nor TV station.

365 Many people come to us seeking the fundraising strategies and they go and use them in
366 their churches and they reach more people and when you drive in your car you listen to
367 their radio stations but us zilch. As an old church is it because we could not do this, couldn’t
368 we reach Cairo quicker if we could do the same? We cannot even get our church to TBN,
369 it happens once in a blue moon. It is just the difference to the level of understanding.
370 Instead, they will say, you want to change their church and you will never change it as long
371 they live. There are people who would not accept anything from anyone whether it is
372 bringing progress to the church as long it is not the way they perceive things.

373 So they create the big crack because people become frustrated. For instance I work with
374 preaching points and I work with women, because if there are no man what should one do.

375 You find that the preaching point is growing and it is growing with women until men also
376 come. Some other people arrive and you could see that there are things that God has laid
377 to this person to be a blessing in the church. Instead, as the time goes on this person gets
378 contaminated by the spirit of church politics, the next thing you find them struggling. God
379 has set His own times not ours, it is just like when God utilizes someone, God has His
380 special gifts that work at a set time but if we are slow and take our own time, thinking that
381 God will wait for us we will miss it. That is where we fail in the church. So the youth desire
382 that the church improve but some other people are delaying the progress because they do
383 not see that this thing will be an eye opener.

Appendix D6: Interview with Female Participant 1 (FP1)

1 **Researcher:** What overall role do women play in the Assemblies of God Back to God?

2 **Female Participant 1:** When you look back at the vision that the Baba B had while he was
3 overseas, God revealed to him a vision to organize mothers so that he stops begging funds
4 overseas. The aim of Rev B was to preach the gospel through revivals. God revealed to
5 him that the money that he was looking for is in Africa and not overseas. God said if he
6 can get women abathwele iqhiya (women with head wrap), they are the ones that can help.
7 Overall, by the mere look of things sometimes you would think that they are not strong but
8 it is very strong. women are the backbone of Assemblies of God Back to God.

9 But what I love with Baba B, he didn't only want women to generate money because even
10 if you can give, if you are not saved, not being the child of God, without teachings that will
11 not sustain you. You need to have God, that is why there are specific teachings that when
12 we meet as women we make sure that we teach one another because another thing is that
13 God revealed to him was the rate of divorce as it is nowadays, of course, divorce is caused
14 by women who do lack teachings sometimes. There are teachings that we were given to
15 teach each other whenever we meet as women, even though sometimes they sound outdated
16 but they do help.

17 Most of our kids grow up in homes with helpers who do all the house chores and even look
18 after them and when they are done with matric some go universities and stay at the
19 university hostels or residents and you find that some are not familiar with cooking,
20 cleaning or doing laundry. This is the reason why when we meet even on Thursdays we go
21 back and teach each other things that are necessary for women to know. When you teach
22 you are not by any means criticising anyone, you are just teaching. That is why when it
23 comes to cooking when we teach about how to cook we need to demonstrate. For instance,
24 if I teach about baking I have to bring some baking ingredients so that I can exhibit how
25 we mix, this goes the same with salads and everything else.

26 We teach about cleaning homes because cleanliness is next to godliness. Another thing that
27 mostly boosts our church in our conventions even in Thaba Nchu is the handwork that we

28 see. One can start by making small things and as God helps you, you can start a business
29 because the aim of handwork is that the handwork must first help you – to scare away
30 hunger. The scriptures in Psalms 144 allude that blessed is the Lord who taught my hands
31 to fight war and my fingers to fight. How do we fight, we fight the poverty and also fight
32 lacking. In Deuteronomy (28:12) it says the Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of
33 His bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands.
34 You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. God says I will bless the work
35 of your hands that is why we emphasize the handwork because according to baba B when
36 God made a revelation to him, He never saw women working in isolation but saw women
37 in factories, that at the end of the day we are going own factories.

38 **Researcher:** Follow up - Is that vision happening now in which places?

39 **Female Participant 1:** In some places, it does happen even though there is something
40 lacking which is the issue of working together but in Assemblies of God you can find
41 women who are doing great businesses some would say, I have built myself a house
42 through this handwork, I have helped my children finishing up the education through this
43 handwork some even buy cars, it helps a lot. Maybe we need to have a school or whatever
44 maybe in one of our places at Henley on Klip, in Thaba Nchu where we can have women
45 who are advanced to come and teach other women. Women do different handworks and
46 bring the samples and the end product to Thaba Nchu during the convention.

47 I think if we can come together or be a consortium we can end up having companies like
48 Home-Choice. Besides we give unto the church according to the Word of God, I don't
49 know why know babe B emphasised the teaching emulating the women that are in the
50 Word of God. The Bible teaches about a woman whose name was Deborah, a prophetess,
51 she was a judge, she was a wife of Lapidoth, so we can say she manned about four offices,
52 she never had a proper structure to operate as she judged Israelites under a tree. What does
53 it mean? This means that when women have offered themselves to work for God, they are
54 not looking at being honoured but women can go all out that is how God has made us. This
55 includes preaching and any other thing we have to do.

56 **Researcher:** Are you aware of any women leadership in the senior church leadership?

57 **Female Participant 1:** So far, no I don't know any women.

58 **Researcher:** What qualities do women bring to enhance the current decision-making of
59 the
60 leadership?

61 **Female Participant 1:** I think if women can be given chance, they can help a lot but as it
62 is at the moment women cannot intrude, they cannot just push in to anything. I will liken
63 this to a daughter-in-law, who is in the mercy of the in-laws to be involved in the matters
64 of the family whereby it depends to them if she must be invited to a family meeting or not.
65 So as women if we are not included or men are not involving us, there is nothing that we
66 can do. Sometimes you could see that things would have worked better if women were
67 involved. But because we are shut out there is nothing we can do to enhance any decision
68 for now.

69 **Researcher:** How do you think men and women should relate in ministry?

70 **Female Participant 1:** Women have a role to play, you see this in the book of Esther,
71 when Mordecai realized that it was getting tough in his squabble with Haman, he required
72 her daughter Esther who was the queen at the time be involved to rescue the Jews. But
73 when it comes to this issue it depends in a person a man or woman because it is not all of
74 them who are Mordecai's, it depends to the Mordecai. If Mordecai did not have the spirit
75 of sharing, the due date of their demise would have arrived and all the Jews would have
76 died. The reason Esther was able to assist it was because she was involved, Mordecai
77 included her.

78 Women are very influential, even when you read 2 Kings 4 it shows the Shunamite woman
79 as an influential woman, Sometimes women are afraid to just jump into things, if you
80 remember Esther was very reluctant to approach the king because she was following the
81 protocol of not seeing the King for 30 days unless the king calls her not necessarily that
82 she forgot who she was. She must have been afraid because she was bound by the law. She
83 was submissive in a wrong way that is why she finally said when she gave her last answer,
84 she said go and call women and all the Jews must fast for me for three days and three nights

85 and I will also do the same with my girls. Then she said if I perish, I perish. In other words,
86 I say I trust in God. Sometimes by Gods favour and by God’s grace, I believe that He is
87 God who opens doors. Then she said if I perish, I perish. In other words, I say I trust in
88 God. Sometimes by Gods favour and by God’s grace, I believe that He is God who opens
89 doors. Like the door of Esther, it was opened by God because there was Vashti there. And
90 Mordecai told Esther never to mention that she was a Jew because since they were slaves there,
91 they were not looking for slaves they were looking for Susa girls. What made Esther to develop
92 this bravery to give instructions to me is that she was commended by men. Once a woman
93 gets the necessary support, she performs. Remember that we as women cannot sidestep
94 men in churches; the reality is that they are in charge and unfortunately we cannot bulldoze
95 our way through but for us to succeed we need to be incorporated in the affairs of the
96 church. But by Gods favour and by God’s grace, I believe that He is God who opens doors.
97 Like the door of Esther were opened by God by removing Vashti the queen and replacing
98 her with Esther. Women are like slaves, most of the time when it comes to important
99 business, men do not take women seriously.

100 Look Esther was a slave too in Susa but Mordecai told her never to mention that she was a
101 Jew since they were slaves there. To qualify to contest for the queen position, they were
102 not looking for slaves; they were looking for Susa girls. But in general, I love what Job
103 once said because when the time comes no one will stand before God’s timing. Job (42:2)
104 says “I know that you can do all things and that no plan of yours can be thwarted”. So when
105 the right time comes no one will prevent women from doing the work of God.

106 **Researcher:** Do you think it is important for the society that women should be in
107 leadership positions?

108 **Female Participant 1:** Yes it is important because as I have mentioned before that women
109 are very compassionate persons, that is why Debora said in Judges (5:7), till I Deborah rose
110 as a mother of nation so it important that a woman should be in leadership in the society.
111 Sometimes the challenge we have is that it is us women that have a challenge of accepting
112 other women. Some would accept other women but there women who would prefer to

113 support men than support another woman. Women whose mentality envisions men but
114 there are women also whose minds are flexible.

115 **Researcher:** Follow up - What might be the reasons they behave like this

116 **Female Participant 1:** There are lot of things that works around women, some they don't accept
117 another women because of jealousy, "who is she to can do that, I can also do it". We sometimes
118 forget that, like when you look in the story of Elizabeth and Marry, according to my
119 understanding, even Elizabeth I can say was the right candidate to conceive Jesus because
120 she stayed too long without conceiving but God never chose her instead God chose Marry.
121 For that matter even Marry herself was not a free virgin because she was engaged. That is
122 why when Joseph heard that the woman she was to marry was pregnant, the Bible says
123 Joseph wanted to divorce her privately; But what I love with both of them is that when they
124 met, Marry felt that I am no longer welcomed in Nazareth let me go to Elizabeth She
125 wanted to go to where she would be welcomed, and when they hugged each other; that
126 love of accepting one another was evident even to their unborn babies. What I am trying
127 to say is that women need to love each other and women need to support each other.

128 Women must learn to stand together. When I preach I would say, your issue of healing will
129 never come from the preacher, your healing comes from you. When you accept the
130 preacher then automatically you get healed. So in the society, it is important that women
131 should be in leadership but I will always advise women that if you have been given a chance
132 to be in leadership you must request God to give you wisdom and that mind to respect other
133 people. In other words that is where submission comes in, to submit even to your husband
134 or wherever you lead you need to be submissive because there is one thing you need to
135 understand that even though you are in leadership but there are those that are in the pews
136 that can lead better than you. God has just chosen you; not because you are the best but
137 because God's finger has pointed at you.

138 Many serious issues that our government is facing at the moment include women and child
139 abuse and the issue of the killing of women, especially by their partners. Our government
140 fails to take a firm decision on this as a result it continues even though some perpetrators
141 are jailed. Some are pardoned by law through parole but when they come back to our

142 societies and they continue to rape and kill. If someone who is compassionate with children
143 and women, someone who knows how it is to go through labour pains would not be very
144 tolerable about such offenses. *This comes from notes after the recording*

145 **Researcher:** What do you think the challenges might be for men that women are not
146 included? or involved in leadership?

147 **Female Participant 1:** The challenges might be that of lacking respect for men because
148 biblically a man as the head of the family they need to be respected that is why if you are
149 a woman if you lucky enough to be in leadership with men even with women just show
150 them respect and stay humble. 1 Peter (5:6) says “humble yourself therefore under the
151 mighty hand of the Lord that he may exalt you in due time”. I think their main fear is
152 disrespect, even with the story of Vashti; the main concern of the men was that if their
153 wives can hear what the queen has done then all women will disrespect their husbands. So
154 they had a fear that women will take over. But not all of the men think and behave the
155 same, those were just few. In our church, Baba B, he never had a problem with women that
156 is why there were women in leadership during his time the issue of lacking respect and to
157 undermine others and pride is the main problem with women; women have the problem of
158 talking too much when you talk with the man you have to count your words, even if he is
159 not your father but you have to show him a respect.

160 Respecting men will open your ways to be in leadership. God says He is a father to the
161 fatherless and a husband to the widows. Sometimes we have wrong information about men;
162 in some places for instance there are pastors who are keen to use a woman. If we go back
163 to our houses, there are men who have negative thoughts about their own wives, they do
164 not believe in a woman at all. In order to let someone do something you have to believe in
165 that person. For God to let Marry carry Jesus, God believed in Marry, you cannot force a
166 person to believe in you that is why if you are a woman and you know that God has called
167 you that is enough God will make a way for you, He has his own way of doing things

168 **Researcher:** What have your personal experience in leadership been?

169 **Female Participant 1:** My personal experience is that being a woman in leadership
170 sometimes you are being undermined that you are a woman sometimes you get discouraged
171 and sometimes you are even excluded in some of the issues but what keeps me going is
172 that it never worries me. I just stick to what I know is right. Even to the very same person
173 who undermines you, who writes you off as if you are non-existent, but when you see him
174 you just give him that respect.

175 To be submissive and love is the other thing that can keep you going; you just love all of
176 them. That is tough but it does happen by the grace of the Lord. That is my personal
177 experience. Submissive and the other thing that can keep you going is love, you just love
178 all of them. It happens by the grace of the Lord. For instance, when we prepare for the
179 women's conventions as organizers and supervisors we are only involved in our side
180 especially in our mothers' side. Sometimes when we want to inform the executive or
181 teaching team about something, we request them to the meeting, that's how we work.

182 **Researcher:** How has the consequence of exclusion to ministry affected your spirituality
183 and as a person?

184 **Female Participant 1:** Sometimes it affects me but what helps me is to stick to the Word
185 of God and believe in God in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

186 **Researcher:** Follow up - In this situation what will the word of God say?

187 **Female Participant 1:** Sometimes it comes in two ways; sometimes God is trying to teach
188 me something like humbleness to myself. Well, one way or the other you become affected
189 but I do not know how God works, if sometimes you feel down or whatever, He will just
190 show you a sign that He is with you that's how God works. God has got his way to comfort
191 us. Because whatever I do in this ministry I do it for God so I believe all the glory and
192 honor belong to Him. Sometimes with regards to the identity or whatever, God is trying to
193 help you as a person. The Bible says "we are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed;
194 perplexed, but not in despair;" so just - give all glory and honour back to him and you will
195 remain as you are. I will always refer you to the spirit of Mordecai, in other words,
196 according to the gospel in ministry you don't push things unto your own favour but you

197 push things unto God's favour. At the end, it is those who persevere that will see the
198 Kingdom of God.

199 **Researcher:** Follow up - As I'm doing this research I heard about your slogan "From Cape
200 to Cairo" when do you intend to reach Cairo,

201 **Female Participant 1:** According to my understanding I can say, we are moving forward. It
202 depends like in regions; it depends in which region you are in. I will also go back to spirit of
203 Mordecai, it depends how you feel about women. As you have said before that we had wrong
204 information about men, and that depends in those few men because in some places there are pastors
205 who are freely to use a woman. If you go back to our houses, there are men who have negative
206 thoughts to their own wives, they don't believe in a woman. In order to let someone like for God
207 to let Marry carry Jesus, God believed in Marry, you cannot force a person that is why if you are a
208 woman and you know that God has called you that stands that I know that God has called me, God
209 on His own way will open ways for you. My prayer is to see change in our church; God says
210 at the end He will pour out his spirit upon all flesh; and sons and daughters shall prophesy.
211 Even now there are female servants and male servants, what is left is to action it. My prayer
212 is to see change in our church for God's sake especially when it comes to women i.e.
213 mothers and girls, What we need to do now is what Paul says in his letter to the Philippians
214 that we must not worry about anything but pray about everything Women must take their
215 position and remain in prayer but I would like to say women are in a comfort zone for me
216 women are like locked out. There must be a certain Esther saying bring the women to pray
217 for me

Appendix D7: Interview with Female Participant 2 (FP2)

1 **Researcher:** What overall role do women play in the BTG?

2 **Female Participant 2:** They teach other women and they also teach unmarried women or
3 girls praying for the church, even though there are other areas that they have not reached
4 as women. We find them in leadership but they have not entered the same way as men as
5 the Bible leads since it does not classify people according to gender that is where they lack
6 otherwise in many things they are there. We only miss them when it comes to leadership
7 because there are still limitations.

8 **Researcher:** Are you aware of women leadership in the senior church leadership?

9 **Female Participant 2:** As I have said that women are missing in leadership. Yes we did
10 have women in the Executive before but it was not many of them and it is seldom to find
11 them in top positions. Yes there are others that lead like we have female organizers that
12 lead other women on issues that have to do with women and on how the work is supposed
13 to be done by women but generally we are short of women in leadership. And according
14 to my observation women have a skill and they stand for what they believe in and for
15 whatever they do so we do need such people in the senior leadership. So in other words we
16 do not have women in the senior leadership of the church.

17 **Researcher:** What qualities do women bring to enhance current decision-making?

18 **Female Participant 2:** Women are trustworthy they stand for what they do. If women were
19 in leadership there was going to be trustworthiness and reliability and credibility in the
20 church. Women do not buy face, they do not favour certain people, to them favouritism
21 does not work. Because of that, there was going to be a big change even the church was
22 going to be powerful. Another thing is that women do not just stand for what they believe
23 but they pray for it. Women are very powerful when it comes to prayer. I think
24 trustworthiness is the most important thing and they are not biased when it comes to taking
25 decisions, they do not cover up the truth, they are not secretive. They were going to be
26 truthful leaders. The church has deviated so much from what it used to be. We have even

27 lost many of the good things that we used to do as a church and women would reinstate
28 those things and put the church back to the position where God wants it.

29 **Researcher:** How do you think men and women should relate in ministry?

30 **Female Participant 2:** I believe in the sharing of ministry between men and women, as I
31 have said that when God looks at a man and a woman he does not see different people. To
32 him, gender does not materialize. So I believe that in the same way God is using men he
33 can also use women. I can quote Deborah, Deborah was brought at a time when the church
34 was in trouble but God revived his people through a woman.

35 **Researcher:** Do you think it is important for the society that women should be in
36 leadership positions?

37 **Female Participant 2:** Yes, it is important for the society that women should be in
38 leadership positions. They must be there because first and foremost women are the eyes of
39 the community. They are the first to notice things. They are the first to hear things. Women
40 have contractions. They are quick to act. For instance, when a mother sees a child about to
41 be hit by a car she would throw herself into the road trying to protect this child. So,
42 women are needed because they are quick to act because they are sympathetic. They are
43 mothers.

44 **Researcher:** What do you think the challenges are for men?

45 **Female Participant 2:** Men's challenges are that, they want to be loved by everybody.
46 They want to be preferred, they like favouritism at the end they sell the truth. In the days
47 of our lives, they have been overwhelmed by the spirit of loving positions. The spirit of
48 adoring positions automatically diverge you from leading truthfully because now you are
49 worshipping the position. May be there is nothing wrong with loving positions but you
50 must know the objective of the position. You must know why you are in this position, the
51 purpose you being in this position. You must know what you are supposed to achieve.

52 **Researcher:** What have your personal experience in leadership been?

53 **Female Participant 2:** My personal experience is that if you are a woman that is used by
54 God, men undermine you. Men are always watching you whether you are an aloof person
55 that is full of pride, how you act on them and whether you do acknowledge them. They are
56 always looking for something they can use to spite you and drag you down. In my view
57 they do not believe that God can use a woman more than them. They undermine women.
58 On top of that they feel threatened.

59 **Researcher:** How has the consequence of exclusion to ministry affected your spirituality
60 and as a person?

61 **Female Participant 2:** Yes we are marginalized, we are being overlooked. No matter how
62 spiritually gifted you can be especially when God uses you. It is God that helps you to push
63 while they side-line you, for you can carry on with God's work, because that thing holds
64 you, even when you desire to work for God, you can literally see that you are tied, it is not
65 easy. Indeed I can say it is not easy to be used by God when you are a woman here. Firstly
66 you know that there are limitations for women, so when God uses you in such a way that
67 you jump the boundaries, some of the women even them get amazed as if you are doing
68 something wrong because we are bottled up.

69 Now you look like you are doing something disturbing on the other hand the Holy Spirit
70 wants you to do this thing. It is not easy to work but God helps us to push. Even when you
71 push challenges attack you. There are always challenges. This makes it difficult to do the
72 work of God. You are repressed. You always feel threatened. You do not feel free. It is not
73 good between you and your Spiritual life because you know that you are supposed to do
74 this. That is the reason I say I survive by being assertive and after doing the Will of God I
75 am at peace never mind the challenges. When I have done the right thing that God wants
76 me to do I become at peace, I feel good but these challenges will always be there until
77 certain things or areas are rectified. For instance here at home, there are no female pastors.
78 Maybe when we have arrived there is when even everybody will feel free because the doors
79 would be open.

Appendix D8: Interview with Female Participant 3 (FP3)

1 **Researcher:** What overall role do women play in the AOG BTG?

2 **Female Participant 3:** For now the role that I can say women at the Assemblies of God,
3 Back to God play is that of organizers and supervisors. We have organizers for girls and
4 organizers for mothers. Then we have four supervisors that oversee both the work of the
5 mothers and girls. They are also the backbone of the Great Commission through
6 fundraising. Besides raising the funds, we do have some of the women that are given a
7 chance to preach in revivals as well but only when they have been invited. The organizers
8 are then invited to come teach and guide women in churches in general. They are invited
9 to teach in the new preaching points or locals after the revival, as you know that we have
10 organizers for different groups, which are mothers, girls, fathers, and the youth.

11 **Researcher:** Are you aware of women in the senior church leadership?

12 **Female Participant 3:** No, when it gets to the leadership of the Executive, Teaching Team,
13 and Regional Council Committees we do not have women. As I have said, women are
14 involved in the mother's and girl's work. Though we do not have them in those positions,
15 I cannot say they have been barred from being part of these committees but we as the
16 church we are to blame because we are the ones that do not put them to positions. A case
17 in point, during election time for the Executive we bring the names from our locals even
18 though we elect from the pastors but we have never raised or put the names of our female
19 pastors.

20 **Researcher:** What qualities do women bring to enhance the current decision-making?

21 **Female Participant 3:** Our supervisors become part of the preplanning team together with
22 the Executive when they prepare for the girls and the mother's conventions Supervisors
23 get invited for the planning sessions but they only discuss issue that have to do with girls
24 and mothers only.

25 **Researcher:** Follow up - Are they invited to have an input in the girls' and mothers part or

26 the overall convention?

27 **Female Participant 3:** No, I am not sure how they do their planning but as we were preparing
28 for the recent girl's convention I heard them saying we were planning ensuring that things
29 are done according to plan and the Executive would also have an input. In other words, they
30 do have an input, they are part of the discussions but they are not part of the decision-
31 making when it comes to the whole convention. The Executive still decides when it comes
32 to the overall convention. For example, they suggested that the girls' convention have
33 speakers in all the services but the Executive refused and allowed the girl's speaker to
34 preach only once, in the morning service, so the fact that she preached again in the late
35 service was because the girl's national committee and supervisors had to fight for that.

36 **Researcher:** How do you think men and women should relate in ministry?

37 **Female Participant 3:** We are all saved and we are all the children of God and we are
38 baptized by the Holy Spirit. The Word of God allows us to share. As organizers, we share
39 ministry when we teach women in the church. Our gifts are not the same, some their
40 ministry is singing, others, it is praying; and others could be interceding for the church but
41 if you talk about preaching I will again say yes I do believe. Look when God gave the
42 spiritual gifts over His children He did not choose men only. I believe that is why in our
43 church, women are given a chance to take part in ministry but I think it depends in different
44 regions. As an organizer unlike pastors, it depends in the regions; there are regions that I
45 have visited whereby I would be allowed to preach even in the main service on Sunday.

46 **Researcher:** Follow up - So you are saying different regions take different decisions

47 respectively, so do you think it is an overall church policy problem?

48 **Female Participant 3:** Do not think this is a matter of the church procedure because if it was it
49 would not be done at all but it is done. The reason I say it depends on the region or on the pastors
50 that are there at the time for instance during the quarterly meeting is because occasionally in a
51 quarterly meeting the decision of who will be preaching in the main service on Sunday is taken by
52 the pastors that present at that time. Sometimes it depends on the pastor of the local where the
53 quarterly meeting is held and the pastor decides that he will be preaching in his local church. In

54 our local church, it is believed that the pulpit belongs to the pastor, but when the leadership
55 realizes that you do have a gift they sit down and discuss whether to give you a chance as
56 an organizer to preach in the main service on Sunday. So I have been one of those lucky
57 one's but as I have said it depends on the region, some regions do not have a problem but
58 some are very strict For example we had a speaker for the mini-convention and when the
59 pastor introduced the speaker he said as pastors we have decided that it would be unfair if
60 we do not give the girls' speaker a chance to finish off her work.

61 **Researcher:** Follow up - But do you think could be the reason women are not fully allowed or
62 accepted in the ministry?

63 **Female Participant 3:** No, I do not know why they are doing that but I do not think they have a
64 problem. Even the chairman of the Executive does allow us, organizers, to preach in his local
65 church on Sunday. It all depends on how we want to do things in different regions because what I
66 have observed also is that when it is a quarterly meeting or a mini-convention for girls, after the
67 service on Saturday the pastors would convene and decide. For example, we had a speaker for the
68 mini-convention and when the pastor introduced the speaker he said as pastors we have decided
69 that it would be unfair if we do not give the girls' speaker a chance to finish off her work. He did
70 not say the Assemblies of God, BTG says but he said we as pastors that were here yesterday we
71 convened and agreed

72 **Researcher:** Do you think it is important for the society that women should be in
73 leadership positions?

74 **Female Participant 3:** It is very important because there are certain things that you feel
75 need women. So when it is only men in leadership they cannot handle them. There are
76 certain things that need women. Women are sympathetic. We have street kids in South
77 Africa. We have orphans, sometimes they cannot even get IDs because there is no one to
78 stand for them.

79 **Researcher:** Follow up - Is that not the issue of social workers

80 **Female Participant 3:** Yes Social Workers are there but most of the time these children
81 and old people struggle and no one gives them attention. We have cases of rape and

82 sometimes perpetrators roam the streets without fear and the police are doing nothing.
83 Sometimes they are arrested and then are released again. What about this child. She is
84 going to be traumatized. Either the parents keep her indoors for her safety or she is exposed
85 to rape again. That is not fair to the child, besides the life of this child changes forever.
86 Some incidents happen within the family. Right now we have an issue of our sister here in
87 church. This lady has an abusive son who stays with the grandmother in the rural areas.
88 This guy treats his grandmother so badly, he even beat her the last time; an old lady, and
89 there is nothing his mother can do because she is also wheelchair-bound. Police arrest this
90 boy and release him again. Tell me what that is. These days we cannot even put our trust
91 in police. We also have an issue of women abuse, women are beaten or killed every day
92 and the government is relaxed. As women we do not feel safe, so yes it is important that
93 women should be in leadership positions in the society. Yes, we do have women in
94 government but they must put them in the right positions – like minister of police, even a
95 female president because women are powerful and influential. If women agree not to
96 comply, and they say this thing should not be done they know how to resist.

97 **Researcher:** Follow up - What do you think the challenges are for men not to include
98 women in leadership?

99 **Female Participant 3:** There are challenges and they are countless but I do not think it is men
100 that are resistant towards women's inclusion in leadership, it is rather women who do not
101 have self-confidence, they look down upon themselves. For example when we nominate
102 people for the conference; we know that there are female pastors in our region but we do
103 not raise their names, we only honour men. Another thing that I have observed is that we
104 women keep silent in big conferences like the RCC meetings and other conferences, but
105 the truth is that it is not easy to talk in these meetings because some of the older women
106 get shocked to hear a woman say anything in a meeting, so we just go there to listen at men
107 talking.

108 **Researcher:** Follow up - What do you think is the reason for that?

109 **Female Participant 3:** I think it is because they are not used to that because even if it is
110 the regional meetings if you stand up the mothers get shocked; they look at you as if you

111 have committed crime and I am not sure why that. I just feel that even attending those RCC
112 meetings is a waste of time, because we will go there, say nothing, get out again, have a
113 meal, and go home.

114 **Researcher:** Follow up - If I may ask, why you won't you speak if you feel there is
115 something you want to say.

116 **Female Participant 3:** What makes me to keep quiet is that I find women organizers silent
117 so if you now get there and you want to talk to them you are like insensitive. I find things
118 like that; we arrived to this situation so if I was to voice something now they would say I
119 am nosey so I am afraid more than anything. I would call that a culture because culture is
120 something that people are accustomed to. Sometimes you would feel that men are belittling
121 us as women but we will not say anything and sometimes we would be rescued by another
122 man.

123 **Researcher:** Follow up - So you are saying you are being your own oppressors?

124 **Female Participant 3:** Yes we are our own oppressors because men would sometimes go
125 to an extent of appealing us to talk, saying mothers and sisters please show up because we
126 are like hiding But sometimes you find that we do have something to say because you
127 would see us gossip amongst ourselves but no one is brave enough to stand up and say
128 anything. I am thinking about the recent conference we attended there are two ladies from
129 Katlehong who voiced their concerns and another mother from Alexander was very
130 unhappy with that as if they have done something very wrong. Look another issue might
131 be that sometimes women lack politeness, and a manner of approach, they just talk anyhow
132 because even those two ladies spoke carelessly, they had no proper manner of approach
133 and that was an embarrassment to women. Maybe women lack the manner of approach.

134 **Researcher:** Follow up - Do you think women have got a problem, what is wrong with women?

135 **Female Participant 3:** We have a lot of intelligent women maybe they are afraid to talk
136 in the church because we get to these conferences they keep quiet. Sometimes you find that
137 when we go to the conference, we go there with a report and we request one of the women

138 to be a scribe and she would write minutes and having that opportunity she would even add
139 whatever important information as she speaks on behalf of women.

140 **Researcher:** Follow up - What are women scared of?

141 **Female Participant 3:** I do not know but we are all afraid or we are afraid of each other as
142 women or we are afraid of what we do not know because sometimes when we meet as women
143 harsh words are said. Maybe we think that when we talk we will be reprimanded.
144 Sometimes you ask yourself are these people still children of God. Are we still saved by
145 the blood of Jesus? And are we still going to Heaven? But we would like to get things in
146 order.

147 **Researcher:** Follow up - What do you think can help women going forward to show their
148 leadership skills?

149 **Female Participant 3:** The whole problem needs women themselves and they need to be
150 bold because we do have women that do have a potential to be in the senior leadership.

151 **Researcher:** Follow up - Do you think women are jealous of each other?

152 **Female Participant 3:** No, our problem as women is that we found an Executive that
153 encompasses men only to some of us everything looks normal, it has not clicked in our
154 minds that a woman can also be in the Executive. There is a woman that is in the General
155 Executive. I think even in the BTG there are women that will enter as time goes on. This
156 lady was also elected by people; we will elect another one for BTG again. There has been
157 a lot of transformation thus far at the BTG because when I got here deacons were only
158 males. Today we have deaconesses another problem is that we have few female pastors.
159 Women do not want to be pastors, maybe they are afraid or they are not called. There was
160 a lady by the name of G, she is now late, and she was a pastor. We do have women pastors
161 but they are very few. Though they are pastoring some locals but they are evangelists.
162 There is another one that was pastoring another local but she was taken out to go back to
163 the tents.

164 **Researcher:** Follow up - So what do you think it can be a moral boost for women, to trust
165 themselves and to be sure of what they want to do?

166 **Female Participant 3:** I am not sure what can be done to boost their morale, maybe we
167 can vote them in and see if the leadership can approve. Perhaps we are scared of the
168 unknown. Another thing maybe we can look at the unmarried women or girls because it
169 would not be easy for married women. You would hear an Executive member sometimes
170 saying he was travelling from the centre at Henley on Klip in the Vaal at about eleven at
171 night. Now you can imagine whose wife would be driving that time of the night. Another
172 thing is that pastors are not working they offer themselves because it is a calling. So if I
173 join them or they choose me and I am working I will not have time. It means that if you
174 are going to be a member of the Executive you surely have to resign at work because the
175 Executive would convene for a full week, where would you be when the company needs
176 you at work. So pastors are full-time in the work of God.

177 **Researcher:** Follow up - But does God not say He takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servants
178 Psalms 35:27? Does this mean that women do not trust God?

179 **Female Participant 3:** I understand that God says He takes pleasure in the prosperity of
180 His servants but women do trust in God but the problem is that women lack self-confidence
181 and I know that women do trust God but the problem is that women lack self-confidence.
182 We doubt ourselves too much. For an example in my local church when they lay hands on
183 the sick in my church, sometimes, something would say I must also go and lay hands on
184 the sick but I would be terrified to take a step And when I see this person going out not
185 healed, something would say but I have told you to go and lay hands on him or her. This
186 is because most of the time you would hear the announcement that elders are called to
187 come and lay hands on the people, then you look at yourself and conclude that I am not an
188 elder.

189 Another problem is not being sure of your gift but you are bound by the church procedures.
190 I would sometimes take a chance when the sick is a woman then I would go in front and
191 pretend as if I am supporting the person while the elders are laying hands on her whilst I
192 know that I am actually doing the job that God wants me to do our problem is that we are

193 afraid. It does not even help if you think you can influence the fathers because it is not
194 easy, it's like you talking to stones. I will make you an example I have fought with the
195 fathers because they would omit the main song of the church which is part of the procedure
196 of the church. I even told them at some stage that I will not be led by someone who does
197 not know the procedure of the church. I have even advised them to call the Teaching Team
198 because you can see that they are deviating from the church procedures themselves being
199 leaders. That is some of the reasons we have decided to sit down and keep quiet and
200 worship God because we have come to God and God can hear us. That is why women are
201 quiet; we go to God because it is not easy to talk to men and it will not be easy to see
202 transformation in our church.

203 **Researcher:** What have your personal experiences in leadership been?

204 **Female Participant 3:** They are so many; as an organizer, even writing a letter to a certain
205 local pastor asking him to come and elect girls committee is a mission. If they do not want
206 they do not want, they will refuse. Sometimes girls in a local need organizers to elect a
207 committee because some ladies have backslidden or some got married and sometimes
208 because it is election time. To your surprise, the pastors would either not give your letter
209 of request to the deacons. When you talk to the committee they will tell you that they did
210 not receive the letter that you have written to them the pastor and church leadership would
211 block you from coming to elect the committee.

212 **Researcher:** Follow up - But then the pastors are reporting to the RCC so can't you report to the
213 RCC?

214 **Female Participant 3:** You can't even report the pastor to the RCC because you avoid to
215 sit in church hearings, I just leave them, but we do inform the RCC that we have a problem
216 of being obstructed from the locals like now the RCC stated that they do not want to hear
217 that an organizer has written a letter to come and organize and has been obstructed from
218 doing her work. Right now we are going to write letters to the locals and we know we will
219 not have access to all locals.

220 **Researcher:** Is your girls' leadership aware of what you are going through and how they can help
221 you?

222 **Female Participant 3:** The girls' leadership (senior organizers) is aware; they themselves
223 encounter the same problems. Most of the time when we get to this meeting, you realize
224 that you are either worse or better than them because they are old and some pastors reject
225 them because they say they do not want aged people in their local churches because they
226 have teenagers, so their problems are worse than ours. This problem is everywhere at the
227 BTG because if you can observe all the girl's national committee members are over 70
228 years of age and you can imagine what is it that they can do because they are tired. They
229 do not think like girls think. They think like grandmothers so they cannot put themselves
230 in our shoes. When you talk to them they claim that the supervisors are also old. However,
231 if you look the difference between them and the supervisors is big because supervisors do
232 not visit the locals, and even when they are here in Thaba Nchu they do not observe the
233 work but the National Committee validates our monies. In Thaba Nchu they go on stage
234 and rush us to finish the lifting of our handwork because they are tired, they want to go to
235 bed early. But if you go to Thaba Nchu during Easter you see the work of the mothers
236 done graciously even if they can finish 12 midnight they do their thing without haste. The
237 girls' handwork is displayed unimpressively and no one can really see it properly.

238 **Researcher:** How has the consequence of exclusion to ministry affected your spirituality
239 and as a person?

240 **Female Participant 3:** I feel very bad and do not know what we can do but honestly it is
241 difficult because even the organization does not want us to give birth to young organizers
242 because they say they will get married just after being promoted to be organizers. In other
243 words, they believe that when you have joined the organisation you will not get married.

Appendix D9: Interview with Female Participant 4 (FP4)

1 **Researcher:** What overall role do women play in the AOG BTG?

2 **Female Participant 4:** Women are preaching the Word; some of them are involved in
3 revival as it is the case with me. In 2012 God instructed me to start a revival, preaching in
4 tents where I had to church plant in Cofimvamba, in a village called Qhitsi. I started
5 preaching there and God instructed me to build them a church. God then said we cannot
6 leave them with nothing (e.g. instruments) so we started doing handwork which is
7 something we are taught and encouraged to do in our denominations to raise funds So much
8 as I am involved in revivals in different churches, I am also used by the girls' department
9 to encourage girls in different locals by doing crusades.

10 In 2019 I was invited by the church at Orange Grove Assemblies of God in East London
11 in a revival. Again this year I was invited by a church at Kye Mouth in East London,
12 preaching for a week. So girls are being used by Back to God in the Transkei region. I also
13 have a tent of my own so that when God instructs me to go somewhere to start a revival
14 then I know that it is just a matter of making a request to the local leadership and my pastor
15 to go and start a crusade and the whole church supports me. Some help me with chorus
16 leading, some doing follow-ups on the work that has been already done. I have formed
17 teams that would make follow up also working together with my local leadership. So since
18 I am a woman before I put down the tent, I invite the leadership including the pastor to
19 introduce them to teach and introduce them to the Holy Spirit.

20 **Researcher:** Are you aware of any women leadership in the senior church leadership?

21 **Female Participant 4:** No I don't know any person but one of the fathers from
22 Ngqamakhwe Assemblies of God said that they want to put me in the leadership of fathers,
23 so I do not know what that means. I was asking myself why, since I am a woman. Even
24 when I started these revivals I had many unanswerable questions to myself that how can I
25 start a revival being a woman.

26 **Researcher:** Follow up - If I may ask, why do you think as a woman you cannot do that, is it a
27 problem of being socialized, or is it a problem of inferiority complex since you think you are a
28 woman?

29 **Female Participant 4:** It is a problem of gender stereotypes, but I think it is getting
30 resolved because wherever I go they even give me the platform to preach in the main
31 service on Sunday. They even allow me to lay hands even though I was resistant at first
32 because as a woman I am not used to this but the leadership and fathers in the locals allow
33 me and they would stand behind me. There are still mixed feelings about it as some do
34 understand while some do not. I think though that I do not have a choice because the work
35 of God is demanding me. In my local, I only fellowship one week and another week I am
36 invited somewhere else. So many people are influencing me to resign at work and continue
37 with the work of God but I am not yet certain about that because I am a professional besides
38 God has not said anything like that to me. Some pastor even call me by a pastor and the
39 other pastor said I must make a decision because the work of God is demanding me but it
40 is not an easy decision for me.

41 **Researcher:** What qualities do women bring to enhance current decision-making?

42 **Female Participant 4:** There is a lady who used to preach at Ngangelizwe, Umtata area in
43 the Eastern Cape. She used to be a worshiper but God revealed another evangelistic gift.
44 She started slowly as a preacher in Umtata but her problem was that she was not getting
45 enough support. She was not being recognized but because God used the gift and not work
46 according to gender she became popular. God then sent her to Johannesburg to an area
47 called Reiger Park to do a revival there. She got there knowing no one and the area is
48 mainly Afrikaans speaking and is overcome by gangsters. She could not speak Afrikaans
49 but she started a revival and after that opened a local church. Her local church in
50 Ngangelizwe had to follow her to see what was happening and to support her after receiving
51 a report from sis N. She is now working as a pastor / apostle.

52 **Researcher:** Follow up - Is she officially recognized as a pastor by the senior BTG leadership?

53 **Female Participant 4:** She is not recognized as a pastor by the Back to God, but towards
54 the end of 2019 she was invited in a pastor's conference in Johannesburg. The information
55 I received is that she was an MC, so I don't know what the aim was behind her invitation.
56 The other woman I know is Sis DM who is a church planter, she planted many churches.
57 The leadership in Eastern Cape decided to give her the Vigisville local which was also
58 started by her. There are many men that are part of this church who got saved during her
59 revival preaching, she did not just win these souls but she taught them administration and
60 church policies and they are hands-on in the work of God at the Qhitsi Assemblies of God
61 at Cofimvaba.

62 **Researcher:** How do you think men and women should relate in ministry?

63 **Female Participant 4:** Women should be allowed to be full-time pastors. Because even
64 now I am working with many male evangelists and they are supportive to me. They are
65 giving me that emphasis that I am an evangelist and an apostle. But officially I am not
66 recognized as that by the top church structures or leadership structures.

67 **Researcher:** Follow up - How do you think the problem of the recognition of women can be
68 resolved?

69 **Female Participant 4:** I think this problem can be sorted if it can be brought up to our top
70 leadership that it should happen because for now there is no way that it can be official.

71 **Researcher:** Do you think it is important for the society that women should be in
72 leadership positions?

73 **Female Participant 4:** Yes, it is important for society - women should be in leadership
74 positions. If in the bible there are women like Debora who were leaders and did their work
75 successfully. We are leaders in our own right, in my society and in my workplace; they
76 honour me as a pastor, an evangelist, and an apostle because I do the work that many
77 perceive as the work that is supposed to be done by men. I am helping the society in the
78 midst of men. The gift that God has awarded me is in full operation. There's no way that
79 women cannot be given the title of a pastor because we are pastors even if we are not
80 ordained. We are pastors by virtue of being baptised. Even now we lead from the back

81 because being a pastor or being an apostle is not something that one earns through
82 education but there are certain things that are bestowed by the Holy Spirit that make women
83 deserve to be in the leadership positions.

84 **Researcher:** What do you think the challenges are for men?

85 **Female Participant 4:** The first challenge is tradition because our culture does not allow
86 women to be in an equal position with male. Culture always say we are below the males as
87 women but now it is a direct opposite in a case of the operation of the Holy Spirit because
88 Holy Spirit doesn't see gender. He gives people gifts the way he wants. Inferiority complex
89 is another issue because some act funny when they realize that you are recognized. But the
90 main issue is culture; we are bound by culture more than the Word of God.

91 **Researcher:** What have your personal experience in leadership been?

92 **Female Participant 4:** I was once a chairperson of the youth monthly meeting, a
93 chairperson of the youth quarterly meeting, and also used to be the chairperson of the girls.
94 I sometimes would have challenges because sometimes you meet egos and you have to beg
95 but as a leaders you have to be obedient all the time even though I believe that I am
96 protected by the anointing, now that God has anointed me they have no choice but to bow
97 to that; they have to submit to my gift. My gift is defending me; even the fathers in my
98 local church and even regionally respect my gift. Even when I feel that the doors are closed
99 but through the gift God has given me, the doors open. I was once booked to preach in a
100 quarterly meeting with another pastor. Because of my gift, the regional leadership found
101 themselves compelled to allow me to preach in the main service on a Sunday, even though
102 I was not the main speaker. What I think would rescue the church, is to teach our leaders
103 about the gifts.

104 They once gave me a chance to teach about the gifts and explain how gifts work, and then
105 they will have an understanding. I have realized that sometimes when we stop teaching
106 other things as a church, as the time goes people tend to forget them so we need to keep on
107 repeating these teachings. These teachings become clear with the presence of the Holy
108 Spirit. What would help us is that those women whose gifts have been recognized or

109 identified must be used fruitfully. They must be consistent so that the church can
110 understand her gift; hence the leadership will have to give us the opportunity. As a woman,
111 I was the first woman permitted to make an altar after preaching in a convention. I see
112 myself in the regional leadership one day because I was once a deaconess in my local for
113 more than 5 years. I was part of the local leadership at some stage working with my elders
114 and my pastor.

115 **Researcher:** How has the consequence of exclusion to ministry affected your spirituality
116 and as a person?

117 **Female Participant 4:** I am not satisfied, because if our top leadership was doing like my
118 local and regional leadership women would be far but, despite such circumstances, those
119 who do understand in our leadership always motivate us to study theology but those who
120 have now studied it are sedentary with it. They advise me that I must study it so that it can
121 help me to work universally but this kind of treatment does not augur well because we
122 resist certain things, there are certain things that we are reluctant to do. We must always
123 reminisce that we are women and therefore I have to know my boundaries because if I
124 happen to jump them it will seem as if I am putting myself in a position that I do not qualify
125 for. It is definitely not pleasant to such an extent that God spoke to me to go and start a
126 crusade I also said to God I am unable to go start a revival because I am a woman because
127 this is exactly what men told me when I relayed the message to them that “do you
128 understand that you are a girl”? And I said “I do understand that I am a girl but there is a
129 hand that suppresses me that I must go and do this. Some said you will not go and I went
130 back to God and I said to Him they say I will not go. They then convened again and
131 convinced each other because God revealed the message to one of the leadership members
132 that what I presented to them is true otherwise if they do not release me they would be
133 harmed. It is not a good thing, it is really hurtful.

134 **Researcher:** Follow up - Are you reluctant because you feel that you are a woman

135 **Female Participant 4:** No not at all the problem is culture, for instance, one time I was
136 requested by another church outside Back to God and something said to me are you aware,
137 and have you noticed that this church is outside the confines of BTG and it has been formed

138 differently and mysteriously? So I listen to what God tells me I have learned to go beyond
139 culture and traditions and this helps me because the will of God prevails for instance if
140 someone tells me that I am a woman, I agree with that person that yes I am a woman but
141 before God, I am not but a child and submit to God that I will continue to do His work and
142 bulldoze.

143 **Researcher:** Follow up - How do you think women can overcome the stumbling blocks and get
144 to be in the church leadership.

145 **Female Participant 4** For women to overcome I think we have to stand where the Holy
146 Spirit has positioned us, no one can stand before God. If women can remain with the Holy
147 Spirit and ensure that you are Spirit-filled, women are very powerful and very dangerous,
148 and when we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit no one can stand against us. Being
149 a woman does not mean you cannot stand before the church or you cannot be part of the
150 leadership of the church, we have full ability or capacity and potential that we can stand as
151 long as we are Spirit-filled. Physically we might be weak but spiritually we are strong and
152 we have got a sharp eye. The church can stand because of women as long as women are
153 standing in their rightful position with God, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide them. I do
154 not struggle to hear what the Holy Spirit instructs me to do.

155 I do not go to the leadership doubting that that they might not allow me to do what God
156 wants. I become confident that if I have agreed to God, they will also agree. I have not
157 encountered any stumbling blocks and they respect me and I am not even offensive or harsh
158 when I approach them but I stand on my mandate of being spirit-filled by God. When I talk
159 to my leadership I state that “God said to me” and I do not add my own words or feelings,
160 I just present the words that God indicated to me and what He has commanded me to do
161 that is all. I request God to draft everything for me from stage one as to how stage one must
162 look like up until the last stage and when I present it to the leadership I follow the course
163 as it is.

Appendix D10: Interview with Female Participant 5 (FP5)

1 **Researcher:** What overall role do women play in the Assemblies of God BTG?

2 **Female Participant 5:** The role of women is to pray for the church and for our leadership;
3 and the overall work of women is to raise funds for the Assemblies of God, BTG work of
4 the Great Commission. They are also there to organize the work of women in mothers and
5 the girls (unmarried women) since we are separated into two groups as females (the married
6 and unmarried), so there is mothers and there is girls. So women are there to organize and
7 pray for the work of the Assemblies of God, BTG as a whole To teach women about
8 holiness and to do handwork, emulating our mentor, the founder of the Assemblies of God,
9 BTG, who emphasized holiness that the church the body of Christ must live a holy life and
10 also to learn to work with their hands. So the women's duty is to teach each other married
11 and unmarried about things that concern women.

12 **Researcher:** Are you aware of women leadership in the senior church leadership?

13 **Female Participant 5:** No I am not aware of any women that are involved that much in
14 the highest positions where are taken. As women we are there in the organizations, that is
15 girls and mothers and we are not involved that much in the senior leadership in the
16 decision-making of the senior leadership of the church. We are not involved that much in the
17 overall leadership and in the decision-making of the senior leadership of the church. So we are
18 there in the committees only.

19 **Researcher:** What qualities do women bring to enhance the current decision-making?

20 **Female Participant 5:** Some women are accountants and at the moment they are in finance
21 committees, that is where I can say women are bringing expertise. Some of the women are
22 auditors in their respective jobs outside the church so they bring that expertise here. Our
23 leaders use such women especially when they know that one is honest. And when it comes
24 to finances you do the job perfectly. So that is the only area I know women are utilized
25 otherwise we are not involved in their board meetings where decisions are taken. With
26 regards to other church matters they just come to inform the church of their decision. So
27 we only take care of women's issues and we are involved in women committees only.

28 **Researcher:** Follow up - What happens when you have Ideas that you need to
29 suggest to leadership

30 **Female Participant 5:** When I want to suggest something I just tell my pastor or any of
31 the fathers. Some of them they do listen but then I am not sure if they table our complaints
32 or suggestions in their meetings. Sometimes I feel like we are left outside because there
33 things that need women that leadership discuss and for such issues women should be
34 engaged. Besides, to your question is actually raising an alarm because I never saw
35 anything wrong with women not being in the leadership. I always took things for granted
36 and everything looked right.

37 **Researcher:** How do you think men and women should relate in ministry?

38 **Female Participant 5:** God has laid something on women. Ministry can mean a lot of
39 things. Some women minister by worship, some are intercessors, and some are evangelists,
40 preachers, and so forth. But if we have to concentrate on ministers of the word, God has
41 given a message to women. In John chapter 4, there was a lady in Samaria who met Jesus
42 by the well. This woman came to draw water and Jesus tired and thirsty from his journey,
43 he requested for water from this woman.

44 After an encounter with Jesus, this woman got saved. But this woman did not keep the
45 gospel to herself. She ran to the village and started preaching to others calling them to come
46 and see a man who knows he character. Because of that lady, many people got converted
47 because of her testimony after she testified about an encounter with Jesus. Another thing
48 is that we women are so very close to God's heart as a result when we pray, there are things
49 that God do. We are awarded gifts by God and we need to be sharing these gifts in
50 ministries. If you look in the book of Acts it says that the followers of Jesus were together
51 in the boardroom in the upper room and at that time the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

52 Women were also there in that room when the Holy Spirit fell upon the church and having
53 been there women also benefitted from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As Christians therefore
54 we have to share the ministry so that our gifts can complement each other. Gifts do not
55 care who you are, they see no man, and they see no woman. It is God that awards the gifts

56 to each and every one for His own purpose; to inform the church. At the moment when we
57 speak ministry as in pastors, we feel left out. That is why there are no women in the RCC
58 and Executive because as women we are overlooked from the lower structures; so you
59 can't get there without starting from down there, so feel there is a void so we need to be there.

60 **Researcher:** Follow up - So what do you think needs to be done? Maybe, for women to be part
61 of that?

62 **Female Participant 5:** I think our fathers need to listen to the Holy Spirit. Our leadership
63 need to refer back to the church that is in the Bible, the church that was led by the Holy
64 Spirit. If we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, we will go according to the Bible standards
65 and not go according to the church procedure. Because now we feel like we are being
66 oppressed the church procedures are dominating in our church, of which these rules are
67 binding to women. When there is no law everybody would be able to live free according
68 to the Holy Spirit.

69 **Researcher:** Do you think it is important for the society that women should be in
70 leadership positions?

71 **Female Participant 5:** Yes the thing is, women are very compassionate people, they are
72 very sensitive people, actually we have a heart, and we have compassion so it is easy for
73 us to lead with balance. When awful things happen in the society we would be able take
74 significant decisions and resolve the problem. As women when something occurs we do
75 not delay, we are quick; we solve problems immediately unlike men who take time even
76 in the political circles. A lot has happens and men take time to solve problems. Women are
77 very much aware of what is happening around them. Take for instance the issue of women
78 that have been raped, attacked, and killed but our government does not take solid action
79 against the offenders. A killer must be killed most of the time the offenders literally get
80 away with murder. They do not serve their jail terms. They get parole they show no remorse
81 and repeat their cruel actions. So as women we feel offenders must be dealt with
82 accordingly. The government must bring back the death sentence.

83 **Researcher:** Follow up - So do you believe that the government must bring back the death
84 sentence?

85 **Female Participant 5:** Yes because nowadays, people commit crime and spend time in
86 jail and they are very comfortable there. It is called correctional services but nothing is
87 corrected there. They tell us that we leave in our homes there, they refer to jail as their
88 home because they are living nicely there; they are living a comfortable life there as a result
89 when they come out they go back to their old ways and continue committing crime.

90 **Researcher:** Follow up - But now what about the bible saying thou shall not kill?

91 **Female Participant 5:** I agree with you there, I am quite aware that the Bible says thou
92 shall not kill yes but it works in judicial terms. I was answering this question on political terms,
93 biblically we have to pray very hard for our nation but criminals must be punished. Prayer
94 is the answer to everything, prayer can change everything. Prayer can do wonderful things;
95 it can do things that cannot be done by man.

96 **Researcher:** What do you think the challenges are for men?

97 **Female Participant 5:** Firstly men do not trust themselves. Secondly, men have that
98 mentality that the world revolves around them since the Bible says our fathers are the head
99 of the church and they are the heads of their houses. Actually, we do not necessarily want
100 to rule as women but we just want to be heard you see, we just want to be able to advise
101 where we can; and we need to be heard. Now the problem is that they feel intimidated and
102 they feel small yet we are not wrestling with them to take their authority but we need to be
103 allowed to assist where necessary as the Bible says that we are the helpers. So their concern
104 is that we want to remove them and take over their positions. But truly speaking, this is not
105 their position, it is just that we also as women lack self-esteem, we do not have confidence,
106 you know Debora was a leader at a tough time in Israel, judging the disputes of the
107 Israelites. God put Deborah as a resolution to the whole nation of Israel.

108 Truly speaking these positions are not meant for men only, we also have a right to be in
109 positions, and the problem is that tradition and culture exclude women when it comes to
110 this. Culture has permeated the church. The scriptures state that men, although they are

111 heads but they need to love their wives, so where there is love there is liberation but now
112 culture has intruded the church and changed all this love idea because when the love has
113 been finished women feel oppressed.

114 **Researcher:** Follow up - But what about women that are not married because they are not going
115 to be loved by anybody

116 **Female Participant 5:** Yes it is just that those that are not married feel intimidated because of
117 the culture because culture came and stated that a female has no rights. We are intimidated by a
118 culture that is created by men to give men the power.

119 **Researcher:** What have your personal experience in leadership been?

120 **Female Participant 5:** I work as an organizer for girls and my personal experience in
121 leadership is that women are not given a chance instead they are being oppressed. When it
122 comes to visiting girls in the locals I encounter problems. Whenever I have to visit the girls
123 I have to beg the pastors of the locals and yet this work that I have to do to these locals will
124 assist them. If I go to girls in that local I am going there to organize the girls so that they
125 can behave well but you will find that he will tell me that this is my local church you will
126 come at my own time as a result sometimes they do not open doors for us at all, we are
127 victimized. However they are not all the same, others are very nice and they value our work
128 as a result letting us in their locals is not an issue.

129 They will tell us to go ahead with our work as organizers They open the doors for us to do
130 God's work and they do understand that we organizers also have a responsibility that will
131 assist the church when we get to their locals we come with a different gift and that gifts
132 must complement each other Some pastors would commend me saying you have helped
133 me here and there. Sometimes it becomes a different story altogether, a pastor would allow
134 you to come to his local but after you have left his local he would try to erase everything
135 you have taught the girls. He would be unhappy with you, sometimes because the pastor
136 realizes that your gift is above his, as a result, the next time you make a request to come to
137 his church he refuses saying he is very busy. It is not because he is busy but the problem is
138 your gift, he has realized that when you arrived in his local church people responded

139 positively, maybe in a way they do not respond to him, you operated in a different way that
140 makes him feel inferior.

141 We have become like the people of the world as if we are not children of God. I can
142 compare it to our workplaces, where you will find that as females we do advise here and
143 there to make the job resourceful but when you request to help with something then you
144 realize that the leadership, for example, my principal feels that you want to take his job.
145 They get intimidated and they have an inferiority complex, and you find that you were not
146 even looking at that position of being a principal; you were just trying to help for the sake
147 of the position of the school and results after all. So honestly somewhere, somehow as
148 abazalwane, we are missing the point. People are different, and somewhere, somehow we
149 feel so oppressed. And then when it comes to women's leadership, that is another problem
150 on its own.

151 Truly speaking there's a problem I think the problem is the people that were appointed by
152 Pastor B like supervisors. Pastor B put them there for certain duration only. With the issue
153 of the Supervisors and the Girls' National Committee, it is said that in 1984 pastor B said,
154 he wants to see how the work of women progresses and then after two years he would he
155 would change that committee. Unfortunately, he died in 1985 just a year after he made that
156 statement before the two years of review having not changed that committee. Now because
157 he is no longer there the old ladies are refusing to be changed and they have taken full
158 authority of the women's work and are rejecting advice from anyone and yet women's
159 work from both mothers and girls is dying a slow death because they are claiming that they
160 were elected by the late founder of the church.

161 They make us look like dismal failures because on the other side even them they have
162 fallen from grace. They are not the same as they were during the time of pastor B. They
163 are just holding on to the positions with their minds and their power and that when they
164 were elected, they were elected by pastor B with the help of the Holy Spirit, so meaning
165 that they are their own enemies, women are their own enemies because if we would agree
166 to re-elect it would be better.

167 **Researcher:** How has the consequence of exclusion to ministry affected your spirituality
168 and as a person?

169 **Female Participant 5:** I feel uncomfortable; I feel that we are being oppressed. I feel that
170 we are being excluded because we do not even know how to voice our concerns this is
171 killing us spiritually and ending up not being what God wants us to be. We are deviating
172 from the Bible and the teachings of baba B. This is also killing the work of God. We are
173 failing this Gospel of Jesus and we are failing ourselves. One does not get to be properly
174 positioned that is why we feel like we are oppressed.

