

HPHP5905
Independent Project
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**What do modern Pentecostal pastors think
about the inclusion of female pastors, and
how interpretations of scripture are
changing over time?**

The project will aim to look at the perspectives of two pastors (one male and one female) from a Pentecostal church in Wales. The research will investigate their views on the growing female population of pastors and how this is supported by contemporary interpretations of the related scripture.

Methodology

Qualitative research will be carried out in the form of interviews. These will be conducted on two pastors; one male and one female from a local Pentecostal church. The informants will be asked three open questions (possibly with prompts) and from this there will be a thematic analysis of the findings.

Informants (the 2 people being interviewed) will be provided with an introduction to the research, and a consent form for permission to use their words in the research. An ethical approval form will also be completed prior to the interviews.

Key questions for the interviews:

- What are your perspectives on the importance of female pastors?
- How do interpretations of the scripture impact this?
- What was different in the past as compared to today?

Background

Who were the first female pastors?

How difficult was it entering a male dominated profession?

What problems did they encounter and how they overcame this?

Were there any congregational changes e.g. decline in numbers?

What denomination was this accepted in first?

How have the different denominations deal with the idea and where do they stand today?

How do interpretations of the bible differ when considered by a female pastor, and why is this the case?

How did society and the media negotiate the idea of female pastors?

Do female pastors now feel equally considered to male pastors?

How have modern views changed over time?

Findings

These will be broken down into themes that arise from the interviews.

Analysis

This section will look at the themes arising from the research findings and consider them using academic discussions about the subject. Literature reviews will be included to critically evaluate all findings where possible.

Literature reviews

To establish an understanding of the changing views that have taken place over time in relation to the topic, the research will look at authors such as Kenneth Allen and his discussion upon the functional consequences that arise from conflict, changes that can arise as a result of social networks, and changes that develop due to necessity or need.¹

The experiential accounts of female pastorship by Susan Maros, Vince Bantu, Kirsteen Kim and Amos Yong, will be examined for their discussions on empowering women within the church, managing male counterparts' egos, and the expansion of female leadership.²

Gina Zurlo's work on women in religion will be reviewed to see how Pentecostal worship differs from other Christian denominations in its consideration of women in leadership roles.³

Information Resources Management Association will be explored to examine how women in leadership roles manage hierarchical structures, their perspective on 'power', and their concern for societal change.⁴

Sharon Henderson Callahan's work will be researched to gain an understanding of female leadership roles (or the lack of) in differing religions, and the inclusivity of identified genders.⁵

Authors such as Adolph Saphir⁶, Jesse Henry Jones,⁷ Lewis Brogdan,⁸ Stanley Burgess and Eduard Van Der Maas⁹ and Russell Spittler¹⁰ will be examined to gain an understanding of what Pentecostalism is.

¹ Kenneth Allan, *Explorations In Classical Sociological Theory; Seeing The Social World*, 2nd edition, (California: Pine Forge Press, 2010).

² Susan L. Maros, Vince L. Bantu, Kirsteen Kim eds., Amos Yong, *Power, Agency and Women in the Mission of God: Interdisciplinary, Intercultural Conversations*, (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2024).

³ Gina A. Zurlo, *Women in World Christianity: Building and Sustaining a Global Movement*, (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Limited, 2023).

⁴ Management Association, Information Resources, *Research Anthology on Challenges for Women in Leadership Roles*, (Pennsylvania: IGI Global, 2021).

⁵ Sharon Henderson Callahan, ed., *Religious Leadership: A Reference Handbook*, (California: SAGE Publications Inc., 2013).

⁶ Adolph Saphir, *Christ and the Church*, (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1874).

⁷ Jesse Henry Jones, *The Kingdom of Heaven; What Is It; Where It Is; and the Duty of American Christians Concerning It*, (Boston: Noyes, Holmes, and Company, 1871).

⁸ Vincent Synan 'Foreword', in *An Introduction to the Prosperity Movement: The New Pentecostal Message?* by Lewis Brogdan, (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2015).

⁹ Stanley M. Burgess & Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements*, rev. edition, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2010).

¹⁰ Russell Spittler, editor, *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, (Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1976).

A review of current literature on the changing way in which scripture is interpreted will be examined through authors such as Stephen Dray,¹¹ Richard Walsh¹² and Ray Lubeck.¹³

Limitations

Any limitations to the study will be noted. This will include strengths and weaknesses of the statements and literature reviewed, and areas for further study.

Conclusion

A conclusion will then be drawn, which will summarise the findings in respect of the questions posed in the interviews, any corroborations found between the interviews and the literature reviewed, and an overview of the changing views on scripture interpretation.

Bibliography

A bibliography will be included for reference.

¹¹ Stephen Dray, *From Consensus to Chaos: An Historical Analysis of Evangelical Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 from 1945-2001*, (Florida: Stephen P. Dray, 2002).

¹² Richard Walsh, *Mapping Myths of Biblical Interpretation*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

¹³ Ray Lubeck, *Read the Bible for a Change: Understanding and Responding to God's Word*, (Oregon: WIPF & STOCK, 2018).

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