

CHAPTER 2

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Biblical-Theological Basis of the Study

This study sought to discover the leadership challenges facing seminary women serving in Christian ministry. Dallas Seminary describes itself as a professional graduate school established for the purpose of equipping “godly servant-leaders.”¹ At Dallas Seminary, women as well as men gain training that prepares them for leadership positions in various Christian contexts around the world. Scripture in both the Old Testament and the New Testament give evidence that God intends for women to hold positions of leadership.

Old Testament Evidence

The Creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 provides the backdrop for this study. And more specifically, Gen 1:26-28 and 2:18 form the biblical/theological basis for considering women as leaders in the Old Testament. Gen 1:26-28 states:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’²

¹ *Dallas Theological Seminary Catalog* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary, 2004-2005), 6.

² Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are from the NASB.

When God spoke of creating “man” in Our image, the Hebrew word for “man” is *adam*, a collective noun in the generic sense meaning “mankind.”³ The next verse offers further clarification when God described mankind as “male and female,” created in His image. Allen Ross, commenting on Genesis 1, defines “image of God” with “in essence as.”⁴ God made male and female to reflect His likeness.

Genesis 1:26-28 indicates what God created (male and female) while Genesis 2 specifies how He did it.⁵ God formed Adam first (Gen 2:7) and instructed him to cultivate the garden (Gen 2:15). However, in Gen 2:18, God declared, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” So God created woman to correct the problem of Adam’s aloneness. Two Hebrew words describe how the woman will perfectly fit the need of the man: *ezer* and *kenegdo*. The word *ezer* means “helper.”⁶ Ross explains it as a term that is not “demeaning.”

The word essentially describes one who provides what is lacking in the man, who can do what the man alone cannot do. . . . The man was thus created in such a way that he needs the help of a partner. Or we may say that human beings cannot fulfill their destiny except in mutual assistance.⁷

³ Raymond R. Mondragon, “The Woman's Nature and Role from Genesis 2:18-25” (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977), 54.

⁴ Allen Ross, “Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by the Dallas Seminary Faculty*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victory Books, 1985), 29.

⁵ Alfred Detter, “The Image of God: An Exegetical Study of Gen 1:26-27” (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1973), 46.

⁶ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 740.

⁷ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 127.

Many times *ezer* describes God as either helping⁸ or being a help.⁹ Merrill suggests that the “verbal term seems to lean towards the idea of assisting someone who has a significant need.”¹⁰

The second word *kenegdo* means “corresponding to him.”¹¹ Leupold describes the meaning “as agreeing to him” or “his counterpart.”¹² God made the woman to be a suitable helper and complement to the man. David Cotter adds, “She is not merely a helpmeet for man; it becomes evident that she and he both are created in God’s image and that they possess corresponding strengths.”¹³

After God created the man and woman, he commanded them together to do two things: (1) rule/subdue the earth and (2) multiply/fill the earth. Godfrey states, “The function of man [male and female] is to fill the earth, subdue it, and rule over it.”¹⁴ The concept of women as leaders relates to the command to subdue and rule.

The words “rule” and “subdue” are different words in Hebrew, yet have similar meanings. The word *radah* in Gen 1:26 and 1:28 means “have dominion, rule, dominate”¹⁵ and the second word *kabas* in 1:28 means “subdue or bring into

⁸ Gen 49:25; 1 Sam 7:12; Ps 28:7; 37:4; 86:17; 118:13; Is 44:2.

⁹ Deut 33:7; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9,10,11; 121:1,2.

¹⁰ David Fouts, “Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study*, ed. Eugene Merrill (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 2003), 48.

¹¹ Brown, 617.

¹² H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1942), 130.

¹³ David W. Cotter, *Genesis: Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative Poetry* (Collegeville, MN: 2003), 32.

¹⁴ Robert Godfrey, *God's Pattern for Creation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 56.

¹⁵ Eugene Merrill, “A Theology of the Pentateuch,” in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy Zuck (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 15.

bondage.”¹⁶ Richard McGee conducted a comparative study of the two words and concluded that “*radah* and *kabas* are very similar terms, both indicating an authoritative control over people or things.”¹⁷ Both the words indicate authority. McGee further explains:

In Genesis 1:28 the two verbs are in parallel construction and are practically synonymous: *radah* means “to control” (i.e., to govern, manage, care for, and to put down opposition) and *kabas* means “to subject” (i.e., to make to serve, to force out enemies, to utilize).¹⁸

David used the same Hebrew word *radah* in Ps 8:6 when he said, “Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands.” Eugene Merrill explains, “The divinely established purpose of mankind then as the image and likeness of God was to exercise authority over the created order as God’s representatives.”¹⁹

God gave this authority to rule over the earth to both the man and the woman. God repeats *radah* in Gen 1:26 and 1:28, emphasizing the control and ruling authority that mankind has been given. McGee explains, “This control is generally expressed in responsible supervision, managing, leading or directing.”²⁰ Kenneth Matthews confirms by stating, “Male and female human members are image-bearers who both are responsible for governing the world.”²¹ In other words, it follows that God created both

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Richard L. McGee, “The Meaning and Implications of *Radah* and *Kabas* in Genesis 1:26, 28” (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1981), 38.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Fouts, 44.

²⁰ McGee, 25.

²¹ Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 173.

men and women to be “leaders.” David Fouts concurs that the man and woman share dominion over the earth when he states, “Before the creation could be declared ‘very good’ by God in Gen 1:31, man needed woman to complete the concept of the image of God. Both are needed to represent God by exercising dominion over the created order.”²²

Dr. Ronald Allen, a Hebrew professor at Dallas Seminary, has done extensive study in the book of Genesis. Dr. Allen and his wife, Beverly, joined together to write the book *Liberated Traditionalism: Men and Women in Balance*. Their study offers additional support that men and women were both to have ruling authority over the earth. The Allen’s explain:

In their original setting, in the beginning, in Genesis 1:28---these words from the mouth of the Creator God were given to the female and the male, to both of them together. How may one say that a woman, by virtue of her gender, may not have a position and function of leadership when the mandate from God ‘Rule!’ was given to the woman as well as to the man? Genesis 1 does not indicate any limitation on the woman that is not upon the man as well. They were both made by God as coregents on the earth, to rule together over all that he has made.²³

God granted dominion over the world to both men and women together. James Hurley concurs, “Mankind, male and female together, is created to be the image of God and to rule the earth under Him.”²⁴ Their specific roles as leaders may vary based on Scripture, depending on whether interpreted from a complementarian or egalitarian viewpoint, but in either case, women are called to assume leadership responsibilities as well as men.

²² Fouts, 48.

²³ Ron Allen and Beverly Allen, *Liberated Traditionalism: Men and Women in Balance* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1985), 100.

²⁴ James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 31.

In the Old Testament, such women as Miriam, Deborah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther functioned in leadership roles. God used these women in assisting and supporting men to guide and direct the people. Vickie Kraft has spent her life challenging women to step into the leadership roles to which God has called them. She, too, recognizes that the call to women as leaders comes from the first chapters of Genesis. She, along with her co-author, Gwynne Johnson, explain, “Both Adam and Eve were persons, made in the image of God. And, as persons, they had several functions--things they were to do. . . . God blessed both Adam and Eve, and as one of their functions, He gave them dominion over the earth as coregents.”²⁵

Notes in *The Nelson Study Bible* also support both men and women being called by God to be leaders in the world. It states, “Whatever the case, subdue does not mean ‘destroy’ or ‘ruin.’ It does mean to ‘act as managers who have the authority to run everything God planned.’ This command applies equally to male and female.”²⁶ Men and women were both intended to assume leadership roles in the contexts God set for them. “In His benediction the Creator authorizes male and female together to carry out their mission to rule the lower creation. . . . Man was created as royalty in God’s world, male and female alike bearing the divine glory equally.”²⁷

Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof link the responsibility of ruling and multiplying together to offer further evidence of the need man and woman have for one

²⁵ Vickie Kraft and Gwynne Johnson, *Women Mentoring Women* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 37.

²⁶ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, eds., *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 6.

²⁷ John Piper and Wayne A. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 97.

another. They state, “Since both man and woman are created in God’s image, it is also true that they both share in the task of subduing the rest of creation. They will need each other just as much for this task as for multiplying and filling the earth.”²⁸ Their complementary relationship was intended by God to accomplish God’s purposes in the world. The man and woman need each other in order to reproduce, but also to effectively exercise dominion over the earth.

In addition, the relationship between the first man and woman mirrors the Trinity. As Stacy Rinehart explains, “Equality is the basis of their relationship, yet there is also role differentiation among the Trinity. They share authority, yet each has a different function.”²⁹ Larry Crabb adds that the “relationships have a non-reversible order. Three members of the Trinity have divided up the responsibilities of creation, redemption, and administration among themselves in an orderly, non-exchangeable but often overlapping fashion. Their purposes are one and their value to these purposes equal, but their responsibilities, are, to an important degree, distinguishable.”³⁰ So, from the beginning, God created men and women equal but different, intending for them to partner together to accomplish His divine plan.

²⁸ Robert L. Saucy and Judith K. TenElshof, *Women and Men in Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 52.

²⁹ Stacy Rinehart, *Upside Down: The Paradox of Servant Leadership* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 89.

³⁰ Larry Crabb, *Men and Women: Enjoying the Difference* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 139.

New Testament Evidence

From Old Testament times to New Testament times, life changed dramatically for women. God's initial plan of highly esteeming women as equal to men in value and worth had deteriorated dramatically. James Hurley offers this description:

The role of women in Judaism has presented a situation in which the subordinate role of women within patriarchal and Israelite society had hardened to a considerable degree and in which women have been relegated to a position of inferiority. . . . The rabbis spoke most often of women in a depreciation manner.³¹

It is not until Jesus arrived that women gained the respect that God initially intended at creation. James Borland spent time studying the relationship between Jesus and women in the Bible and offers this insight, "Jesus' high regard for women is seen in how He recognized their intrinsic equality with men, in how He ministered to women, and in the dignity He accorded women during His ministry."³²

In Matt 19:4, while giving instructions related to divorce, Jesus referred to the creation account. By doing so, Jesus reaffirmed the original plan that God had for male and female. From the beginning, man and woman were to join together in ruling the world. Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof explain:

Ultimately, Jesus will bring a dignity, value, and worth to women and their roles that God had intended from the very beginning, when humans were created male and female and given the mandate of being complementarian co-laborers in ruling God's world for Him (Gen. 1:26-28). Where this had been lost to women because of misinterpretation of the Old Testament, or because of cultural bias, Jesus will bring restoration.³³

³¹ Hurley, 72.

³² James A. Borland, "Women in the Life and Teaching of Jesus," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 113.

³³ Saucy and TenElshof, 92.

Men continued to hold all the main positions of leadership as seen by Jesus' selection of the twelve disciples, but women were invited to learn from Him, share meals with Him, question Him, serve Him, and travel with Him.³⁴ Jesus commended a woman who chose to sit at His feet and learn from Him (Luke 10:42), He went out of His way to offer eternal life to a woman from Samaria (John 4), He praised a woman for using expensive perfume to anoint Him for burial (Matt 26:13), He made arrangements for His mother's care after His death (John 19:26-7), and He honored a woman by allowing her to be the first to witness Him after His resurrection (John 20:16-7). By His words and actions, the Gospels testify to the value and significance Jesus placed upon women.

Pentecost ushered in the church, and the Apostle Paul communicated through his Epistles the organization of the church. Paul is careful to emphasize the equality in standing before God of men and women when writing to the Galatians. He declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"(Gal 3:28). It is significant that Paul did not say "man" and "woman," but rather "male" and "female." By doing so, he refers back to the Gen 1:27 creation account. As Saucy and TenElshof explain, "Man and woman 'in Christ' are returned to their original created relationship of loving complementarian unity."³⁵ Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ declares all believers equal in the eyes of God. It takes the study of other New Testament passages to discover the different roles men and women are to play in the church.

³⁴ Hurley, 79-114.

³⁵ Saucy and TenElshof, 140.

Passages of Scripture that particularly speak to the topic of women as leaders can be found in 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Timothy 2, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 2. In all these sections of Paul's letters, distinctions exist between men and women in the church. The passages in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy are considered "problem passages" because they are not clear in their meaning and difficult for scholars to interpret. Although discussing the different opinions held regarding these sections of Scripture is beyond the scope or the intention of this literature review, Paul clearly intended to affirm the contribution of women and clarify their relationship to men in the church.

In Titus 2, which is not hotly debated because its meaning is easy to understand, Paul instructs Titus to admonish the older women to teach and train the younger women. This one area of church ministry clearly calls for women to hold positions of leadership. Women are best equipped to help other women understand and carry out their responsibilities as women. Vickie Kraft, President of Titus 2 Ministries, has committed her life to helping women learn to minister to one another:

I believe that God's promise to provide gifted persons for the equipping of the church includes His giving gifted women to local congregations. I believe God gives each congregation the gifted women it needs to minister to the unique needs of its women. When older women train the younger women in a vital Women's Ministry program, not only are the women encouraged, but families and marriages are strengthened and stabilized.³⁶

In Titus 2:3-5, Paul gave older women a mandate to lead younger women by modeling godly behavior and teaching them sound doctrine and life skills.

First Corinthians 11:1-16 and 1 Cor 14:34-40 address issues related to men and women interacting together in corporate worship. In 1 Cor 11, Paul draws from the

³⁶ Kraft and Johnson, 12.

order of the creation of man and woman to explain order in the church. In 1 Cor 14, he uses the roles in the husband-wife relationship to give direction as to how men and women are to relate to one another during the gathering of the church. Dan Doriani observes that Paul's "counsel regarding women and ministry stressed both woman's responsibility and man's leadership."³⁷ Doriani gives a detailed explanation of these verses in his book *Women and Ministry* and concludes by saying, "So then women exercise vital gifts, but do not hold final authority."³⁸ In reference to the roles of men and women in these passages, Saucy and TenElshof comment, "[Women] exercised significant ministries, both public and private, under the 'headship' of the elders."³⁹ These biblical scholars emphasize the complementary relationship that men and women have in the church.

First Timothy 2: 9-15 discusses the topic of women in the church. After admonishing women to dress modestly and do good works, Paul addresses the issue of women teaching in the church. Paul states, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" (1 Tim 2:11-12). The first key term *didasko* means "to teach."⁴⁰ From their study of this passage, Saucy and TenElshof conclude that "the exclusive application of women thus suggests that the prohibition is not speaking of false teaching,

³⁷ Dan Doriani, *Women and Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 71.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁹ Saucy and TenElshof, 308.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

but the activity of teaching.”⁴¹ However, because the second key term *authenteo*, which means “to exercise authority” only appears once in the New Testament, it very difficult to determine precisely what Paul is trying to communicate.⁴² Therefore these verses in 1 Timothy remain a problem to interpret. At the very least, Paul seems to be putting some limitations on women in the area of teaching when in the presence of men.

Paul follows his instruction about women teaching by saying, “For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman who being quite deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Tim 2:13-14). Biblical scholars vary on the interpretation of these verses, but it is significant that Paul chooses to use the creation account to support his instruction. Doriani interprets Paul’s appeal to mean that “male leadership rests on something essential to men and women.”⁴³ Ann Bowman concurs with Doriani that Paul uses the creation account to support an order of authority and submission that exists between men and women in regards to teaching. Bowman explains her position by saying,

But how do teaching and exercising authority relate to one another? A central issue in verses 11-15 is authority and submission. It seems that teaching is a subset of holding authority. Paul wrote about a situation in which some women were violating God’s pattern of authority and submission, which was made clear in the pattern of creation (as vv. 13-14 demonstrate). Some women in Ephesus were violating God’s pattern by teaching men in the worship assembly.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid., 293.

⁴² Doriani, 177.

⁴³ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁴ Ann L. Bowman, “Women in Ministry: An Exegetical Study of 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149, no. 594 (April-June, 1992), 202.

In 1 Tim 2:9-15, authority and order are the issue rather than whether or not women may teach. Women can be teachers, as seen in Titus 2, but God's order in creation remains a model of the ultimate responsibility of leadership placed upon men within the church. Saucy and TenElshof,⁴⁵ Doriani,⁴⁶ and Bowman⁴⁷ all provide thorough studies of this passage from a complementarian viewpoint. Egalitarians do not see any limitations for women as teachers today. Stanley Grenz contends that "the apostle does not intend to set down a permanent prohibition."⁴⁸ Grenz,⁴⁹ along with Sumner⁵⁰ and Winston,⁵¹ all present studies of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 from an egalitarian perspective.

There are other New Testament passages besides the ones just discussed in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy that offer less controversial support for women as leaders. At the end of the book of Romans, Paul sends greetings to many of those who have served with him in ministry. Bowman observes in Rom 16:1-23 that "ten of the twenty-nine people commended by Paul for loyal service were women."⁵² Of those ten, Priscilla holds a very prominent place. She and her husband, Aquila, worked along side Paul. This

⁴⁵ Saucy and TenElshof, 291-307.

⁴⁶ Doriani, 175-179.

⁴⁷ Bowman, 198-210.

⁴⁸ Stanley J. Grenz, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 130.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

⁵¹ George and Dora Winston, *Recovering Biblical Ministry by Women: An Exegetical Response to Traditionalism and Feminism*.(Xulon Press: 2003).

⁵² Ann L. Bowman, "Women in Ministry," in *Two Views of Women in Ministry*, ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 279.

couple is mentioned six times in the New Testament and four of those times Priscilla's name precedes her husband (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19). The most notable time was when they instructed Apollos, a learned man in the Scriptures. Ann Bowman gives an accurate description of Priscilla when saying:

The New Testament pictures Priscilla as a strong, well-respected leader in the early church. She was a skilled teacher with a thorough understanding of both the Old Testament Scriptures and the gospel message. As a leader in the early church together with her husband, she made a significant contribution to the spread of the gospel.⁵³

Phoebe stands as another New Testament woman who held leadership responsibilities. Paul described her as “a servant of the church . . . for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well” (Rom 16:1-3). Although the word “servant” is the Greek word *diakonos*, the masculine form of ‘deacon’ or ‘servant’,⁵⁴ scholars debate whether or not Phoebe was considered a deaconess. Paul’s teaching in 1 Tim 3 addresses the topic of deacons. He lists the qualifications of overseers (elders) and deacons in verses 1-13 and right in the middle, in verse 11, he states, “Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things” (1 Tim 3:11). Robert Lewis offers three possible interpretations of what Paul means when referring to women in 1 Tim 3:11: deacon’s wives, deaconesses, or unmarried assistants.⁵⁵ No matter which interpretation is used, this instruction by Paul supports the

⁵³ Ibid., 281.

⁵⁴ Hurley, 231.

⁵⁵ Robert M. Lewis, “The ‘Women of 1 Timothy 3:11’,” in *Vital New Testament Issues: Examining New Testament Passages and Problems*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Resources, 1996), 188-95.

fact that Phoebe and other women like her held responsibilities that were valued and affirmed by Paul.

Considering different women in the New Testament occasions a great deal of controversy about a person which Rom 16:7 names as “Junias.” Scholars debate whether this is a woman or a man, but Doriani’s research concludes that many agree that she is the wife of Andronicus, a man mentioned along with her.⁵⁶ Paul described them as “my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles.” Some want to identify Junias as an apostle, but Hurley explains that “it would seem that the proper conclusion to draw from Paul’s mention of Junias is that she (or he) was ‘sent out’ by a church with Andronicus and was outstanding in the appointed task.”⁵⁷ Here again is a possible example of a woman in the early church who assumed a place of leadership and influence.

One other woman deserves mention as a leader in the New Testament. Paul discovered a group of women praying beside a river outside of Philippi (Acts 16:13-15). Lydia, a local businesswoman, became Paul’s first European convert. She opened her home to Paul on two different occasions and was influential in leading her whole household to Christ. Though never mentioned again, Lydia’s prominence most likely opened many doors of opportunity that contributed to the establishment of the church at Philippi. And along with her were many other women. The biblical record reveals that women played prominent roles in the New Testament church. The book of Acts alone has

⁵⁶ Doriani, 32.

⁵⁷ Hurley, 122.

thirty-three references to women.⁵⁸ Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul had a very high regard for women.

Conclusion

This D.Min. project sought to discover the leadership challenges facing seminary women in ministry. The evidence for women holding positions of leadership rests in both the Old and the New Testaments. Some of these challenges faced by women in ministry will likely be related to the interpretation of these critical texts. John Stott, another biblical scholar who believes the Scriptures affirm that from the time of creation God ordained men and women to rule together over the earth, states, “Thus from the beginning ‘man’ was ‘male and female’ and men and women were equal beneficiaries both of the divine image and the earthly rule.”⁵⁹

Mary Kassian also agrees with Stott that God intended men and women to share leadership responsibilities. She comments, “Biblical equality affirms that although both male and female are created in the image of God, they exist as complementary expressions of the image of God.”⁶⁰ God wants to use men and women to carry out the responsibilities of dominion over all of His creation. Saucy and TenElshof offer an excellent summary statement of men and women functioning together as leaders when they state, “Leadership of the church needs the complementary strengths of both genders.

⁵⁸ Saucy and TenElshof, 162.

⁵⁹ John R. W. Stott, *Our Social and Sexual Revolution: Major Issues for a New Century*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 107.

⁶⁰ Mary A. Kassian, “The Challenge of Feminism,” *Faith and Mission* 14, no.1 (Fall, 1996), 22.

Being different, each gender brings its unique contribution to the leadership functions.”⁶¹

Women can and should hold places of leadership, partnering with men within God’s divine order, to best accomplish God’s purposes in the world.

Literature Overview

Since the 1970s, seminaries across America have opened their doors to women.⁶² Previously, seminary training focused primarily on training men for the pastorate. The past twenty to twenty-five years have seen seminaries broaden their focus and so open many new opportunities for women in the area of vocational Christian ministry. In 1989, Leon Pacala, the Executive Director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), characterized seminaries as undergoing a paradigm shift from a “clerical paradigm” (preparation of clergy) to a “community of faith paradigm” (a multipurposed nurturing of knowledge and understanding of a faith community).⁶³ This shift has allowed women who do not desire senior pastor positions to come to seminary and prepare for a broad range of ministry contexts.

With these new opportunities for women have come new challenges. The bulk of religious research and literature to date relates to women aspiring to senior clergy positions. Very few scholarly resources identify or explore issues facing women who embrace a complementarian view of the role of women in ministry. The responses to the women alumnae survey sent to the Dallas Theological Seminary women alumnae provide

⁶¹ Saucy and TenElshof, 324.

⁶² Beth Spring and Kelsey Menehan, “Women in Seminary: Preparing for What?” *Christianity Today*, September 5, 1986, 19.

⁶³ Timothy C. Morgan, “Re-Engineering the Seminary: Crisis of Credibility Forces Change,” *Christianity Today*, October 24, 1994, 75.

one of the initial indicators of the challenges conservative evangelical women leaders face in ministry.

This study does not address those who hold to an egalitarian perspective since much literature already supports women who seek equal access to religious leadership positions. Women who are or wish to be senior clergy deal with a unique set of challenges which are not the focus of this dissertation.

This literature review focuses on two particular areas: (1) the leadership styles of women and (2) the leadership challenges of women in Christian ministry. These two topics most closely relate to the purpose of this study and contribute to a greater awareness of the unique challenges that female seminary graduates face in ministry.

Leadership Styles of Women

A great deal of debate exists concerning the topic of leadership styles. Some scholars believe there are inherent differences in the way men and women lead and others support the belief that any so-called differences are a cultural phenomena. Michele Green, in her doctoral dissertation, makes these summary remarks in her literature review:

Sufficient research evidence supports the existence of differences between men and women in epistemology, in social and communication behaviors, and in leadership style. However, not all researchers and scholars agree on the presence of male and female differences. An ideological debate continues between those who presume male and female differences and those who assume similarities that may have its roots in the feminist movement. The majority of researchers, however, acknowledge male and female differences even though they may disagree over their origin (i.e., whether they are sex-linked traits or socially constructed).⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Michele Green, "The Preparation of Women for Ministry: An Exploratory Study of the Traditional Curriculum in Evangelical Seminaries" (Ph.D. Diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2002), 65.

This D.Min. study does not intend to investigate or debate whether or not there are leadership differences. It starts with the presupposition that there are differences between the leadership styles of men and women and acknowledges that these differences contribute to the challenges women face in ministry. As Judith Briles states in *GenderTraps*: “Men and women are different and that's the good news. Pretending there are not differences between the sexes is absurd.”⁶⁵

It is important to remember that even though there exists a general acknowledgement of differences in male/female leadership styles, there still remain greater differences among all men and greater differences among all women. Temperament and life experience play a big part in how men and women lead. As Virginia Schein accurately states regarding the behavior of men and women, “research indicates that the differences within each sex are greater than the differences between the sexes. That is, the differences among women (or men), considering variations in background, experience, and so on, are greater than the differences between women in general and men in general.”⁶⁶ Not all men lead the same way and not all women lead the same way. Even so, current research such as that done by Chliwniak⁶⁷ and Rosener⁶⁸ supports general tendencies in the way men and women lead. Not only is this true in

⁶⁵ Judith Briles, *GenderTraps: Conquering Confrontophobia, Toxic Bosses, and Other Land Mines at Work* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996), 25.

⁶⁶ Virginia Schein, “Would Women Lead Differently?” in *The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership through the Ages*, ed. J. Thomas Wren (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 163.

⁶⁷ Luba Chliwniak, “Leadership in Higher Education: Influences on Perceptions of Women and Men Leaders” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Arizona, 1996).

⁶⁸ Judy B. Rosener, “Ways Women Lead,” *Harvard Business Review* 68, no. 6 (1990), 119-125.

secular circles, but Christian researchers such as Saucy and TenElshof⁶⁹ now recognize and appreciate gender differences and how these differences can enhance the body of Christ as women partner with men in ministry.

Until very recently, discussion of leadership styles in secular and religious contexts came from a male perspective. A search in most bookstores and libraries reveals that the plethora of books written on the subject of leadership have been authored by and written for men. These excellent books contain many important principles which are useful not only for men but also for women, but they often do not address the unique differences in the way women lead. The scope of this literature review will look primarily at research which contributes towards the understanding of how women lead. Women need to learn the unique and different contribution they can make to a leadership team and men need to recognize and appreciate the value and importance of having women on their leadership teams. As stated in the first part of this chapter, God intended for men and women to complement one another in their responsibilities of ruling over the world (Genesis 1 and 2), and so accomplish His plan and purpose to reflect His image and bring glory to Him.

The following literature review identifies books and articles which offer insights into some of the common characteristics of female leadership. Areas to be covered include biological research, secular research, biblically-based research, and types of leadership styles.

⁶⁹ Saucy and TenElshof.

Biological Research

With the advancement of medical science and especially brain research, studies have found a high percentage of men and women differing in the construction of their brains. Anne Moir and David Jessel have gathered information from scientific studies done around the world related to the differences in the brains of males and females. In their book *Brain Sex*, they state: "The sexes are different because their brains are different. The brain, the chief administrative and emotional organ of life, is differently constructed in men and in women; it processes information in a different way, which results in different perceptions, priorities and behavior."⁷⁰ Moir and Jessel emphasize that their book addresses the average man and the average woman. Not all men and women fit the same tendencies, but the documented studies they report support their findings for the general population of people. "The sexes are born with brains wired in different ways. They think in different ways, have different strengths, value things in a different way, and use different strategies in their approach to life."⁷¹ Their book includes detailed descriptions of studies of very young children, youth, and adults. It refutes the popular belief that culture alone shapes the behavior of people and helps explain why women might tend to have different leadership styles from men.

Whereas Moir and Jessel give specific information related to the brains of men and women, Dianne Hales concentrates only on the unique characteristics inherent to women. She uses her medical background to support the fact that women differ from men in every area of their bodies. She believes there is "an enormous blind spot in

⁷⁰ Anne Moir and David Jessel, *Brain Sex: The Real Difference between Men and Women* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), 5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

medical science--a long-standing inability to see the sex differences that exist in virtually every organ and system of the body."⁷² Hales draws from anthropology, physiology, psychology, neuroscience, endocrinology, and medicine to support her conclusions that women function differently from men in many ways. For too many years "the male brain--like the male body in human physiology--has served as the sole model of human intelligence, logic, rationality, and creativity."⁷³ Hales warns against making too many generalizations between males and females, and yet emphasizes that modern day science has ignored legitimate differences far too long. Among other things, these biological differences influence the way men and women process and respond to life, communicate, and learn.

Steven Rhoads has made one of the most recent contributions to the study of biological differences between men and women. *Taking Sex Differences Seriously* addresses the nature versus nurture debate by compiling extensive studies and quotes from hundreds of different secular researchers. He builds a well-documented case for the innate differences that exist between males and females from birth. He does not discount that sexual identity is impacted by the environment, but he refutes the popular notion "that femininity and masculinity and the gender roles that flow from them are socially constructed."⁷⁴ Rhoads explains the purpose of his research in the introduction of his book:

⁷² Dianne R. Hales, *Just Like a Woman: How Gender Science Is Redefining What Makes Us Female* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999), 10.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁷⁴ Steven E. Rhoads, *Taking Sex Differences Seriously* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2004), 14.

This book . . . argues that sex differences are large, deeply rooted and consequential. Men and women still have different natures and generally speaking, different preferences, talents and interests. This book presents evidence that these differences can be explained in part by hormones and other physiological and chemical distinctions between men and women. Thus they won't disappear unless we tinker with our fundamental biological natures.⁷⁵

Rhoads compiled research from around the world to build a strong case in support of biological differences between males and females.

Gregg Johnson, Associate Professor of Biology at Bethel College, St. Paul, also confirms the biological evidence for gender differences. Unlike the previous authors cited, Johnson comes from a Christian perspective in his research. He not only acknowledges the differences between male and female, but encourages people to value those differences and allow each man and woman to have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. He concludes his written report by saying:

Are men and women different? The evidence presented here suggests that we have some fundamental physiological and neutral differences that are present at birth and predispose us toward certain behaviors dependent on gender. . . . Let us hope that, by recognizing the existence of gender differences, we can better understand each other and help to maximize each other's potentials.⁷⁶

As these differences manifest themselves in leadership styles, the opportunity exists for men and women to combine their strengths and differences in a complementary way.

This allows for more effective ministry and brings broader impact and success to leadership teams.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁶ Gregg Johnson, "Biological Basis for Gender-Specific Behavior," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 293.

Secular Research

Men and women express leadership styles in two very broad categories: tasks (work responsibilities) and relationships (interaction with people). Although women value both categories, the majority of women prioritize relationships over tasks. Carol Gilligan first identified this distinction and recorded her findings in her book *In a Different Voice*.⁷⁷ In her early years of study under Lawrence Kohlberg in the 1970s, Gilligan began to question Kohlberg's findings because he included only boys and men in his research.⁷⁸ Kohlberg's findings and ultimate conclusions created many false assumptions about women. Gilligan's interviews and observations of girls and women opened the door to the realization that men and women generally respond differently in tasks and relationships. Her research set the stage for subsequent studies by other social scientists who also discovered significant differences between males and females.

Sally Helgesen's observations and interviews of four corporate women validated many of Gilligan's findings. She identified eight distinctions in the way men and women lead. Helgesen states the "attitudes and qualities in the words of women . . . above all emphasize relationships with people; they are also process words that reveal a focus on the doing of various tasks rather than on the completion."⁷⁹ She concludes her written observations by saying, "I became aware that the women, when describing their roles in their organization, usually referred to themselves as being in the middle of things.

⁷⁷ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

⁷⁸ Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*, 1st ed., *Essays on Moral Development*, V. 2 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

⁷⁹ Sally Helgesen, *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday Currency, 1990), 28.

Not at the top, but in the center; not reaching down, but reaching out.”⁸⁰ These early findings by Gilligan and Helgesen, and other researchers inspired by them in the past twenty-five years, have made major contributions to the study of different styles of leadership that are now being recognized in women and men.

Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule collaborated to do extensive interviews with women of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, and social status. They recorded their findings in *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. They “examine women’s ways of knowing and describe five different perspectives from which women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority.”⁸¹ They describe these perspectives as silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge (separate and connected), and constructed knowledge. In their final remarks in the book, they state: “We have argued in this book that educators can help women develop their own authentic voices if they emphasize connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate.”⁸² These recommendations concur with the findings of Gilligan and Helgesen.

Luba Chliwniak contributes to the topic of leadership styles in her doctoral work related to leadership in higher education. She makes the statement that “two distinct leadership styles dominate historical writing: autocratic and participative.”⁸³ Chliwniak

⁸⁰ Ibid., 45.

⁸¹ Mary Belenky and others, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 3.

⁸² Ibid., 229.

⁸³ Chliwniak, 55.

makes numerous distinctions regarding the way men and women lead. She summarizes her observations by stating: “The strongest evidence of sex difference in leadership style is related to women adopting a more democratic or participative style, whereas men tended to adopt a more autocratic or directive style.”⁸⁴ Chliwniak’s work focuses on institutions of higher education and the concern over the lack of female leadership. She concurs with many other studies that support women as more interactive in leadership roles compared with men who appear more dictatorial in similar positions of leadership. Chliwniak concludes that since the culture today needs leaders who have strong relational skills, women can make great contributions in the area of leadership. She makes the following observation:

Current leadership theorists encourage a model [of leadership] that encompasses strong human-relations skills, a humanistic approach, collegiality, and consensus building. . . . It becomes evident that the gender-related characteristics, described as innate to most women, encompass the very characteristics leadership theorists claim to be most effective.⁸⁵

Consequently, Chliwniak recommends that institutions should be “more centered on process and persons (described as emerging leadership concerns) rather than focused on tasks and outcomes (attributed to traditionally masculine styles of leadership).”⁸⁶ Her statement gives evidence to the value women can play in partnering with men in leadership.

Judy Rosener adds additional evidence which confirms that women tend to prioritize relationships over responsibilities. In her journal article, “How Women Lead,”

⁸⁴ Ibid., 46.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

she refers to James McGregor Burns and his two basic styles of leadership: transactional and transforming.⁸⁷ Transactional leadership has more focus on job performance and transformational leadership has more focus on interpersonal aspects of leadership. Rosner comes to the conclusion that women display “interactive leadership. . . . The women encourage participation, share power and information, enhance other people’s self-worth, and get others excited about their work.”⁸⁸

Patricia Aburdene and John Naisbitt also report the same findings in their book *Megatrends for Women*. They quote Dr. Rosemary Keller, professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, who believes that “men see leadership as a chain of command running from top to bottom, all very hierarchal. . . . Women tend toward a collegial, interpersonal, shared kind of leadership style. Women incorporate more people in decision making.”⁸⁹ Throughout their book, Aburdene and Naisbitt identify the many new opportunities opening for women leaders. As a result of all their research, Aburdene and Naisbitt believe that many of these opportunities result from of a paradigm shift in leadership. They summarize by stating, “Throughout society the command-and-control model of leadership is being replaced by the inspire-and-communicate model. That opens the way for women to lead.”⁹⁰

Cindy Rosenthal focused her research on female political leaders serving in state legislatures and in the Congress of the United States. She shares her conclusions as

⁸⁷ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 4.

⁸⁸ Rosener, 120.

⁸⁹ Patricia Aburdene and John Naisbitt, *Megatrends for Women*, 1st Ballantine Books, Rev. and updated ed. (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1993), 132.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, xiii.

to the differences between male and female members in *When Women Lead: Integrative Leadership in State Legislatures*.⁹¹ More recently, she edited the book, *Women Transforming Congress*, which included essays by various women in politics. Rosenthal refers to various articles, books, and journals related to gender differences and includes the following list of sex-gender differences:

MASCULINE	FEMININE
Individuation	Connection
Instrumental	Contextual
Rule focused	Relationship focused
Dominate	Collaborate
Power over	Power to
Competition	Cooperation
Hierarchy	Web-Center
Speak out	Listen well
Public Sphere	Home sphere
Breadwinning	Caregiving ⁹²

Rosenthal explains, “These differences have been extracted from many germinal studies of gender.”⁹³ She confirms Helgesen’s conclusions that generally speaking, men focus on goals, while women focus on process.⁹⁴ In addition, James Kouzes and Barry Posner extracted from their study of leadership the fact that because women are more focused on relationships, women tend to emphasize heart issues more than men. As Kouzes and Posner explain, “Female managers reported engaging in the leadership process practice of

⁹¹ Cindy Simon Rosenthal, *When Women Lead: Integrative Leadership in State Legislatures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁹² Cindy Simon Rosenthal, ed., *Women Transforming Congress* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 23.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Helgesen, 35.

encouraging the heart significantly more often than did their male colleagues.”⁹⁵ Clearly, most researchers support the conclusion that women tend to emphasize the “heart” versus the “head.”⁹⁶

Leadership styles are also influenced by the different ways men and women communicate. Deborah Tannen’s classic book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* emphasizes that a lack of understanding of different communication styles can cause people to blame themselves or others for relational problems.⁹⁷ Tannen’s research reveals that in conversation, men seek power, whereas women desire to establish relationships. She states, “For most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport: A way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. . . . For most men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order.”⁹⁸ Chliwniak’s research also confirms the difference in male and female conversational styles. She finds that for women, conversations intend to elicit cooperation or create rapport, whereas men tend to use conversation to negotiate status and engage in verbal competition.⁹⁹

Conversation is at the heart of leadership, for leading involves dialog among people. Women typically need to talk more than men and process information, rather than

⁹⁵ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, 2nd ed., The Jossey-Bass Management Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 346.

⁹⁶ Helgesen, 55.

⁹⁷ Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, 1st ed. (New York: Morrow, 1990), 17.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁹⁹ Chliwniak, 49.

just focus on solving problems. Rosener's research found that quite frequently female leadership reflects more interaction.¹⁰⁰ In addition, Belenky's study discovered that one of the greatest desires of women is to have a "voice."¹⁰¹ Sally Helgesen concurs by stating "that women's way of leading emphasizes the role of voice over that of vision."¹⁰²

Biblically-based Research

Most early studies of women originated from secular research. Biblically-based research surfaced only as women began holding leadership positions in Christian ministry. Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof authored one of the most comprehensive books on women in Christian leadership from a complementarian perspective. They conclude that "women define themselves in terms of relational attachment, while men in terms of individual achievement."¹⁰³ Their studies concur with the secular research related to the different ways women lead. Once again the contrast of relationships and tasks plays out in the lives of women and men. Saucy and TenElshof cite such authors as Gilligan, Crabb, Gray, and Barth to support their premise that "there are definitely clear differences between the genders."¹⁰⁴ This led them to describe women in the following way: "Women also bring a uniqueness to leadership in their femininity. They are uniquely focused on relationship with strength in communication, emotional

¹⁰⁰ Rosener, 120.

¹⁰¹ Belenky and others, 18.

¹⁰² Helgesen, 223.

¹⁰³ Saucy and TenElshof, 239.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 244.

connectedness, helping, submission, and vulnerability, with a strong desire for deep relationships.”¹⁰⁵

Linda McGinn’s book *The Strength of a Woman: Activating the 12 Dynamic Qualities Every Woman Possesses* offers insights from twelve women who serve in positions of Christian leadership. Each writer addresses a different leadership skill necessary for effective leadership. McGinn’s chapter on teambuilding draws the same conclusion as many other scholars: “Relationships are always the most important ingredient in teambuilding. . . . Value of relationships always supersedes the completion of the task.”¹⁰⁶ Reggie McNeal also supports this perspective, “A growing number of church leaders recognize that information alone rarely changes behavior. Heart-shaping involves the presence and support of community.”¹⁰⁷ Since successful teams require a strong emphasis on relationships, women offer a needed component in developing leadership in churches and Christian organizations. Men in leadership are beginning to recognize the significant contribution women can make to a leadership team.

Bill and Pam Farrel, who serve together in church ministry, make the following observation: “Men and women tend to lead differently. Men typically emphasize the achievement of organizational goals as the highest priority of the work environment while women typically emphasize people and relationships. Men are people of the ladder;

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 325.

¹⁰⁶ Linda R. McGinn, ed., *The Strength of a Woman: Activating the 12 Dynamic Qualities Every Woman Possesses* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 152.

¹⁰⁷ Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 84.

women are people of the circle.”¹⁰⁸ In their book *Men Are Like Waffles, Women Are Like Spaghetti*, the Farrels observe that “people of both genders love to achieve...but men and women do not approach achievement in the same manner.”¹⁰⁹ In their many years of Christian ministry they have observed the following:

1. Men like to take more risks than women.
2. Women like consensus more than men.
3. Men and women learn differently.
4. Men and women cope with work stress differently.
5. Women feel they have to work harder than men.
6. Women are affected more by their home life than men.¹¹⁰

The observations made by the Farrels concur with Carol Gilligan’s work and her conclusion that men feel secure alone at the top of a hierarchy, securely separate from the challenge of others. Women feel secure in the middle of a web of relationships; to be at the top of a hierarchy is seen as disconnected.¹¹¹ Though not necessarily true of all men and women, this reflects the great majority of people.

Carol Becker’s experience in Christian leadership led her to make the following observation of men and women: “If there is a style of leadership more characteristic of women, it may be called ‘embracing,’ whereas a man’s style may be characterized as standing firm.”¹¹² The styles complement one another and together meet the leadership needs in the church today. Becker adds that many studies now reveal that

¹⁰⁸ Bill Farrel and Pam Farrel, *Men Are Like Waffles, Women Are Like Spaghetti* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 129.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 125-6.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 128-32.

¹¹¹ Gilligan, 62.

¹¹² Carol E. Becker, *Leading Women: How Church Women Can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate the Gender Maze* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 53.

women lean more towards “shared leadership.”¹¹³ In her book *Leading Women*, Becker lists seven different characteristics typical of female leadership:

1. Process orientation
2. Participatory management
3. Willing to share information
4. Ability to negotiate
5. Bringing intimacy to the workplace
6. Do many things at once
7. Risk takers¹¹⁴

Becker summarizes female styles of leadership by saying, “Men tend to approach a conversation as a contest. Women tend to approach it as a connection.”¹¹⁵ Linda Bridges, in her journal article, “Women in Church Leadership,” comes from the same perspective when she notes: “As women began to assume more leadership roles in the 1980’s, there emerged a paradigm shift from an emphasis of hierarchy to one of collective action.”¹¹⁶ Bridges joins Becker in recognizing that women “encourage participation, share power and information, enhance self-worth of others, and energize others.”¹¹⁷

Alice Mathews sees a critical need for those who preach to be aware of masculine and feminine differences and develop their messages in ways that will reach all listeners in their audience. In her book *Preaching That Speaks to Women*, she cautions about stereotyping all women or all men, yet reminds preachers of the large percentage of women in their audiences. Mathews’ many years in academic ministry have allowed her

¹¹³ Ibid., 45.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 38-46.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁶ Linda McKinnish Bridges, “Women in Church Leadership,” *Review and Expositor* 95, no. 3 (1998), 340.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 339.

to observe women in many contexts. She agrees with the conclusions of Becker and Bridges that women leaders have a stronger relational component than men. She states: “Overall, research indicates that the majority of women who lead have a more collegial leadership style. Not all women do of course . . . the style is not inherently gender-specific. But it is clearly different.”¹¹⁸

Mathews cites in her book an interesting analogy that was presented by Mary Chapman, corporate trainer at Moody Bible Institute, during a seminar at the National Religious Broadcasters’ Midwest Convention in 1998. Chapman contrasted leadership styles of men and women by comparing an octopus and a goose:

The octopus has one central brain and many hands to do its bidding. In contrast, the goose sniffs fall in the air and shares the vision of the South with the gaggle. Once in the air, the leader of the V-formation breaks the wind resistance for the flock. Eventually, the lead goose tires and goes to the end of the V, with another goose taking its place.¹¹⁹

One reflects more of a top-down (the male model) and one reflects more mutual and shared responsibilities (the female model). Mathews refers to female leadership as “leading from the middle.”¹²⁰

Mathews’ focus on women “leading from the middle” is evident in the interviews Stephen Fortosis and Nancy McCall conducted with seven women in evangelical Christian leadership. They found women to have a very different attitude towards power than men. Fortosis and McCall discovered that “among the women, there was little, if any, interest in power-wielding. In other words, none had ever sought a title

¹¹⁸ Alice Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), 131.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

or a position for the incumbent power it would yield.”¹²¹ Mathews adds that when women lead they tend to see power as a means of promoting change, whereas men tend to view power as a means to having influence over other people. Women see power as something to share. They give it away through delegation and shared responsibilities. Instead of needing to keep power, women want to empower others and help those under them to develop confidence and leadership skills.¹²²

The conclusion of Michele Green’s doctoral study of seminary women summarizes the observations of male/female differences cited from other researchers mentioned in this literature review. She states:

There appears to be evidence of differences between male and female styles of leadership. Women tend to adopt a more participative or democratic style of leadership that encourages participation and the development of relationships. Men tend to adopt a more directive or autocratic style viewing their relationships with subordinates as a series of transactions or exchanges.¹²³

As a result of her research, Greene concludes, “Men in American culture tend to view the world in terms of individuation and individual achievement, equating personal autonomy with maturity. In contrast, women generally view the world through an overriding concern with relationships and responsibilities.”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Stephen G. Fortosis and Nancy K. McCall, “Feminine Perspectives in Ministry: Interviews with Selected Women in Evangelical Christian Leadership,” *Christian Education Journal* XII, no. 3 (1992), 107.

¹²² Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women*, 130.

¹²³ Green, 62-3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

Similarities in Leadership Styles

Although studies support distinctions in the way men and women lead, researchers also stress the variety of leadership styles shared by both men and women. Daniel Goleman, one of the leaders in the study of emotional intelligence, identified six styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching. Goleman found that “research indicates that leaders with the best results do not rely on only one leadership style; they use most of them in a given week--seamlessly and in different measure--depending on the business situation.”¹²⁵ Julie Baker agrees with Goleman that people can demonstrate different leadership styles depending on the need. Her book on leadership skills presents a description of various leadership models: authoritative, laissez faire, delegative, collaborative, participatory, situational, and servant leadership.¹²⁶ Baker discusses each one, explaining both the benefits and possible pitfalls. She also provides what she calls “biblical examples of the good, the bad, and the ungodly,”¹²⁷ citing different men and women in the Bible. Baker concludes with Jesus who epitomizes servant leadership and represents the ideal model of a leader.¹²⁸

Pam Farrel also uses examples of women in the Bible and identifies five leadership styles: provider, petitioner, preparer, proclaimer, and praiser.¹²⁹ She includes a

¹²⁵ Daniel Goleman, “Leadership That Gets Results,” *Harvard Business Review* 78, no. 2 (2000), 78-80.

¹²⁶ Julie Baker, *A Pebble in the Pond: The Ripple Effect: Leadership Skills Every Woman Can Achieve* (Colorado Springs: Cook Publishing, 2001), 184-190.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 190-96.

¹²⁹ Pam Farrel, *Woman of Influence: Ten Traits of Those Who Want to Make a Difference* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 33-41.

short leadership styles test in her book *Woman of Influence*. She designed the test based on the different ways God used women in the Bible. She hopes that the test can help women to learn more about how God can use them as influential leaders.¹³⁰ Rosener is in agreement with Goleman, Baker, and Farrel in believing that different situations require different styles of leadership. Rosener states, “The best leadership style depends on the organizational context.”¹³¹

Carol Porter and Mike Hamel are in agreement with previously noted researchers regarding the fact that leadership styles divide into two broad groups: task-oriented and relationally-oriented. But they do not necessarily identify one or the other as more gender-specific. Instead they emphasize the fact that every team needs both types of leadership styles. In addition, within these two styles, they break leadership down into three additional types: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. Like Rosener, Porter and Hamel stress that each style has its unique strengths and all the styles are equally needed in different leadership contexts.¹³² Chris Adams adds: “Respect and value all leadership styles, gifts, knowledge, experience, and personalities. Including various styles of leaders will help ensure an effective team for ministry.”¹³³ Knowing that ministry teams are benefited most by a variety of leadership styles, as well as recognizing that men and women tend to naturally express different ways of leading, gives great support to the

¹³⁰ Ibid., 29-30.

¹³¹ Rosener, 125.

¹³² Carol Porter and Mike Hamel, *Women's Ministry Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching, Teaching, and Training Women in the Local Church* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 52-3.

¹³³ Chris Adams, *Women Reaching Women: Beginning and Building a Growing Women's Enrichment Ministry* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1997), 63.

value of men and women joining together in order to maximize the potential for ministry effectiveness.

Conclusions

Aburdene and Naisbitt report that “in the 1980's, the United States shifted from an industrial to an information society and joined the global economy.”¹³⁴ The new work climate offers more opportunities for women because their relational skills lend themselves naturally to the world of information. Linda Bridges observes that “research in leadership theory suggests that the qualities of leadership which women bring to corporations and public life are the exact type of leadership styles needed for the corporate world of the next millennium.”¹³⁵ The secular world recognizes the important and needed contribution women can make in leadership.

Churches and other Christian organizations recognize the value of women in leadership also. In *Empowered Leaders: The Ten Principles of Christian Leadership*, Hans Finzel comments that “experts today say we are moving into an era when individual leadership is being replaced with group leadership.”¹³⁶ With this being true, women can make an important and needed contribution to Christian leadership teams. As Carol Becker suggests, “Ultimately, both men and women need to learn new styles of leading together, styles that combine the best of what both have to offer.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Aburdene and Naisbitt, 97.

¹³⁵ Bridges, 338.

¹³⁶ Hans Finzel and Charles R. Swindoll, *Empowered Leaders: The Ten Principles of Christian Leadership*, Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998), 123.

¹³⁷ Becker, 178.

Many in leadership now recognize and value the differences in men and women and seek to discover the advantageous ways they can partner men and women together as leaders. Those who hold a complementarian view of the roles of women and men recognize the ultimate authority that rests in male leadership. But they also realize that men cannot lead independently. As Saucy and TenElshof state, “God has created an order in human nature between man and woman that works beautifully and harmoniously together toward an end that cannot be accomplished by one gender alone.”¹³⁸ Daniel Goleman’s study of leadership concurs. “Leaders need to manage relationships effectively; no leader is an island.”¹³⁹ Men should not relinquish their positions of leadership, but share the burden and responsibility. Spring and Menehan observe that women have a sensitivity and discernment that is different from men. Their gifts and perspectives can enhance Christian ministries and local church staffs.¹⁴⁰ Fortosis summarizes well the dual components of tasks and relationships:

For men, the imperatives of ministry often seem to emphasize keeping the organization running smoothly and getting a job done competently—both worthy goals. However, there is a key component missing if compassionate relationships with people are not an overarching priority in their ministries.¹⁴¹

Women can help balance a team with their relational focus.

In conclusion, research substantiates the different ways in which men and women interact, communicate, and prioritize tasks and relationships when serving in

¹³⁸ Saucy and TenElshof, 227.

¹³⁹ Daniel Goleman, “What Makes a Leader?” *Harvard Business Review* 76, no. 6 (1998), 102.

¹⁴⁰ Spring and Menehan, 23.

¹⁴¹ Fortosis, 114.

leadership roles. These complementary differences can strengthen leadership teams in Christian ministry. Michele Green offers a closing thought in her study that is well to remember. She says: “A need exists in the study of gender to emphasize male and female differences as complementary and to highlight the many similarities between men and women.”¹⁴² Our sameness and our differences join together to reflect the image of God, bringing glory to Him, and accomplishing His original plan from the time of creation.

The Leadership Challenges of Women in Christian Ministry

Limited literature exists addressing the challenges of women in ministry, especially research related to women serving in conservative evangelical settings. Although some books and articles include brief sections addressing different challenges women face in ministry, and others contain broad information related to women in ministry, material written exclusively on the topic of leadership challenges of women in Christian ministry could not be found. Applicable references are presented under the following headings: personal challenges, interpersonal challenges, skill development challenges, and vocational challenges.

Personal Challenges

No matter what circumstances women may find themselves in ministry, there are always numerous challenges to be faced both in the areas of tasks and relationships. Rhonda Kelley, in her book *A Woman's Guide to Servant Leadership*, introduces the subject of leadership challenges by saying:

¹⁴² Green, 62.

Many variables contribute to these leadership challenges. The people, setting, or tasks can make a leader's work difficult. In addition, the culture and the context contribute to potential leadership challenges. While the circumstances may be different, one thing is certain--all leaders will face leadership challenges. These challenges are experienced even among church leaders. Challenges are inevitable.¹⁴³

Written in a Bible study format, Kelley's book focuses on servant leadership as exemplified by Jesus. She explains one of the reasons for her study: "It is written by a woman for women. The unique perspective of feminine leadership will be reflected."¹⁴⁴ She covers such problems as difficult people, difficult circumstances, difficult work, criticism, stress and burnout, and conflict.

Laurie Katz McIntyre (DTS, 1989) joined Jill Briscoe and Beth Seversen to write *Designing Effective Women's Ministries* for women ministering to other women. They identify the common problem of neglecting personal needs that often plague women in leadership:

Leaders often suspend having their own needs met because they are so actively engaged in ministering to others. Caught up in a never-ending cycle of ministry and family responsibilities, some leaders will not naturally take the time to pause for rest, refreshment, or rejuvenation. They may not vocalize their needs or even be aware of growing frustration, stagnancy, depression, or burn-out they may be experiencing, but the impact of a tired and emotionally or spiritually depleted leader will eventually be felt throughout the ministry.¹⁴⁵

Throughout their book, Briscoe, McIntyre, and Seversen offer numerous ways to effectively develop women as leaders and encourage them in their personal lives. They

¹⁴³ Rhonda Kelley, *A Woman's Guide to Servant Leadership: A Biblical Study for Becoming a Christlike Leader* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2002), 60.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Jill Briscoe, Laurie McIntyre, and Beth Seversen, *Designing Effective Women's Ministries: Choosing, Planning and Implementing the Right Programs for Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 101.

also identify a very key problem for women. Many women are very uncomfortable with the title of leader. “The very mention of the word intimidates some women—even those already in leadership roles!”¹⁴⁶

Judith Briles’ book *GenderTraps* brings together responses from a survey of over 1,000 women in the secular workplace. Briles wanted to discover the greatest challenges women face in their jobs. Her findings and subsequent suggestions can apply to women leaders in Christian ministry also. Briles discovered the following ten most common gender traps in the workplace: prejudice against women, communication barriers, sabotage by other women, working with upper management, pay inequities, the balancing of family and work, confrontation, apathy/complacency/ change, self-sabotage because of low self-esteem/criticism/lack of confidence, and misuse of power.¹⁴⁷ Briles dedicates a chapter to each of these gender issues and offers insightful suggestions for women in leadership. Women working in Christian ministry face these same challenges. Briles’ findings contributed greatly to the research in this study and to the development of the instrument used to discover the leadership challenges of the women alumnae at Dallas Seminary.

In *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* Marian Rutherford and Martha Hughes-James report a study of Caucasian and African American women. Rutherford and Hughes-James identified six barriers to women in management: prejudice, poor career planning, poor working environment, lack of organizational savvy, comfort in dealing with one's own kind, and balancing career and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 103.

¹⁴⁷ Briles, 4.

family.¹⁴⁸ As Briles also discovered, similar problems surfaced with prejudice being at the top of their list also. Rutherman and Hughes-James defined prejudice as “the assumption that being different from the majority group automatically implies an inability to perform.”¹⁴⁹ Very often women are discriminated against as being second-class and consequently not capable of carrying out leadership responsibilities. Prejudice against women remains one of the greatest challenges for women in ministry.

Joy Charlton’s research of women in ministry revealed that when women face problems in ministry, they often become discouraged.¹⁵⁰ This can lead to serious problems with depression. Struggles with depression have proven to be a greater challenge for women than men. Diane Hales’s medical research revealed depression to be common among women all over the world. She explains that “with few exceptions, cross-cultural studies indicate that, even in different countries, ethnic groups, and social classes, women are two to three times more likely than men to become depressed.”¹⁵¹ With depression come struggles with burnout also. Rhonda Kelley’s years of experience working with women in leadership has led her to the following conclusion: “Burnout in ministry is becoming epidemic in proportion. Many leaders in the church are becoming

¹⁴⁸ Marian N. Rutherman and Martha W. Hughes-James, “Leadership Development Across Race and Gender,” in *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development*, ed. Cynthia D. McCauley, Russ S. Moxley, and Ellen Van Velsor (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998), 296-99.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁵⁰ Joy Charlton, “Women in Seminary: A Review of Current Social Science Research,” *Review of Religious Review* 28, no. 4 (1987), 308.

¹⁵¹ Hales, 14.

mentally, physically, and spiritually exhausted. Difficult people, difficult circumstances, and difficult work add to the stress.”¹⁵²

Additional personal challenges await women leaders related to their uniquely female perception of life. Whereas men often see their work and their personal lives as two separate things, women tend to integrate all aspects of their lives in a more holistic way. Sally Helgesen found from her interviews and observations of the four women in her study that relationships both inside and outside of their work world were equally important. She comments, “The women in the diary studies do not separate their personal lives from their work place selves They conceive of their identities as integrated and whole.”¹⁵³ Often a woman’s identity rests in who she is in relationship to others in her life rather than being defined by her task or job. This is in contrast to men who normally find much of their identity in what they do. This contrast between men and women exists in Christian ministry as well.

In addition to women facing the challenge of balancing relationships in their lives, women tend to see their family life as having priority over work. They encounter the pressure of needing to give the attention their work or ministry requires and yet wanting to meet the needs of their family. This dilemma of balancing work and home influences the decisions they make as leaders. Aburdene and Naisbett’s research supports the fact that women face many challenges related to balancing work/ministry and their

¹⁵² Kelley, 64.

¹⁵³ Helgesen, 67-8.

personal lives. “Women do not identify exclusively with their careers, as most men traditionally have.”¹⁵⁴

Cheryl Kimberling’s survey of women graduates from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary revealed challenges related to adequate and affordable childcare, finding a position in the same city as a husband’s specialized skill, strains on the marital relationship, few openings for women, pastors’ insecurity about working with women competent in the same field, prejudice and discrimination, and little value given to volunteer experience.¹⁵⁵ Kimberling’s results identify some key challenges for seminary women as they seek positions in ministry.

Dr. Norm Wakefield and Jody Broolsma look to biblical narrative to explore the interpersonal challenges of women with men. In *Men Are from Israel, Women Are from Moab*, Wakefield and Broolsma use the book of Ruth to identify the ways men and women are the same and the ways they are different. The challenge rests in allowing the differences to strengthen relationships rather than drive men and women apart. The authors explain:

We believe that Ruth and Boaz are a biblical model of transformation applied to gender relationships. Through them our Lord gives us a picture-window view of his vision for men and women. . . . We focus on what we perceive as negative differences and allow them to alienate us from each other. He [God] draws us to positive differences that he has purposely planted within us, so we learn to esteem one another and admit that we need each other.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Aburdene and Naisbitt, 109.

¹⁵⁵ Cheryl Gray Kimberling, “The Sociological Factors Associated with the Career Development of Women Theological Graduates” (Ph.D. Diss., University of North Texas, 1988).

¹⁵⁶ Norm Dr. Wakefield and Jody Broolsma, *Men Are from Israel, Women Are from Moab: Insights About the Sexes from the Book of Ruth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 24, 26.

God designed women to complement men, not compete with them. Women who approach Christian leadership as a partnership with men will experience fewer problems as each gender values and appreciates the other, serving together in a complementary way.

Interpersonal Challenges

Women in leadership face many challenges related to working with other people in ministry. Lysa TerKeurst compiled many of these challenges in *Leading Women to the Heart of God*. Her book includes chapters written by over twenty women who offer advice to Christian women in leadership. Though the book focuses on ministry to women, its chapters address subjects helpful for women serving in all types of ministry positions. Topics include building confidence, handling conflict, balancing ministry and family, friendships, working with men in the church, leadership, handling stress, mentoring, singleness, maintaining a vital relationship with God, and the need of building a support network with other women in Christian leadership.¹⁵⁷ Beyond discussing these challenging areas of a woman's life, the book emphasizes the importance of developing women for Christian leadership. As Cheri Jimenez states: "I believe that influencing the next generation--those young women who will someday assume positions of leadership --is one of the most essential facets of women's ministry."¹⁵⁸

Working with men surfaces as one of the leading challenges for women serving in ministry. The challenges stem from the many differences that exist between

¹⁵⁷ Lysa TerKeurst, *Leading Women to the Heart of God: Creating a Dynamic Women's Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002).

¹⁵⁸ Cheri Jimenez, "Reaching the Next Generation One Woman at a Time," in *Leading Women to the Heart of God*, ed. Lysa TerKeurst (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002), 172.

men and women that were mentioned in earlier parts of this literature review. Elizabeth Inrig (DTS, 1993) addresses the topic in *Release Your Potential*. Inrig believes “women need godly men as well as godly women in their lives and in the local church because none of us was meant to function independently.”¹⁵⁹ She uses the epilogue of her book to promote a respect for male leadership, as well as to emphasize the important part women play in fulfilling a complementary role as Christian leaders.¹⁶⁰

Sarah Sumner addresses the problem of sexual temptation in *Men and Women in the Church*. One of the final chapters in her book entitled “Brothers and Sisters in Christ,” discusses the sexual challenges that often surface when women work with men in ministry. She believes “the only way for men and women to stay repentant from sexual sin is by experiencing true fellowship with each other.”¹⁶¹ She offers ways to avoid compromising situations and suggests ways to build healthy friendships between brothers and sisters in Christ.

Related to the challenges of women working with men is the issue of men being resistant to working with women in leadership. In *New Doors in Ministry to Women*, Sue Edwards (DTS, 1989) and Kelley Mathews (DTS, 2000) include a number of reasons why men resist the idea of women holding leadership roles in ministry. These reasons include “tradition, their view of what the Scriptures teach regarding women’s

¹⁵⁹ Elizabeth Inrig, *Release Your Potential: Using Your Gifts in a Thriving Women's Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 171.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 169-78.

¹⁶¹ Sumner, 303.

roles in the church, irrational fears, and the possibility of negative experiences from the past.”¹⁶²

In addition to the challenge of working with men, Edwards and Mathews surface another challenge for women in ministry: addressing the needs and expectations of modern and postmodern women. Individuals of different ages and cultural heritages often find it difficult to understand and accept one another’s different perspectives and preferences. Leaders often encounter the challenge of finding ways to minister to the diversity of people within their ministries. This diversity leads to yet another challenge for women leaders: the problem of conflict resolution. Edwards and Mathews offer practical ways to resolve conflict and restore broken relationships and they advise, “Stay in ministry long enough and you will encounter conflict.”¹⁶³

The very concept of being a “leader” presents a problem for many women. In *Women Mentoring Women*, Vickie Kraft (DTS, 1985) and Gwynne Johnson (DTS, 1998) combine their years of ministry experience to raise an important point when they state: “Until recently feminine leadership in the church was considered to be an oxymoron. Women were not supposed to be leaders, just followers supporting leaders.”¹⁶⁴ This belief remains a great barrier to women, especially to those who do not aspire to senior clergy. They do not desire to usurp the position of men as overseers, but to use their leadership skills as partners with men in Christian ministry.

¹⁶² Sue Edwards and Kelley Mathews, *New Doors to Ministry to Women: A Fresh Model for Transforming Your Church, Campus, or Mission Field* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002), 189.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁶⁴ Kraft and Johnson, 149.

Marriage remains a daily challenge for women leaders as they integrate family responsibilities with ministry responsibilities. Their husband's job and caring for his needs influence the decisions women make. The concern and well-being of their children stand high on a woman's list of priorities also. The women interviewed by Fortosis and McCall mentioned the challenges faced trying to balance their ministry work and their roles as wives and mothers. Though the women all testified to having over-all positive experiences as leaders in Christian ministry, they mentioned these occasional problems: men being intimidated by women who feel called to ministry, hostility from other women, and discrimination because of being women.¹⁶⁵

In Michele Green's evaluation of seminary education for women, she discovered that "men and women are not prepared to minister as partners or team members using their talents, abilities, gifts, and various callings."¹⁶⁶ Since it is a fairly new phenomenon for men and women to share Christian leadership responsibilities, challenges continue as men and women learn to work comfortably together. Although Luba Chliwniak's research primarily focused on higher education leadership, her study identified another problem which also can occur for women in Christian ministry: sexual harassment. It is Chliwniak's opinion that "sexual harassment can be anticipated in virtually any situation in which men and women interact."¹⁶⁷

Women's relational problems in ministry are not limited to working with men. They can find it difficult to work with other women also. Judith Briles' study revealed

¹⁶⁵ Fortosis, 104-18.

¹⁶⁶ Green, 265.

¹⁶⁷ Chliwniak, 33.

that some women would rather share leadership with men than with women. Briles observed, “Women are more inclined to undermine and sabotage their own gender. . . . The most common reasons women undermine other women are that they are envious, jealous, lack confidence, and have low self-esteem about their abilities.”¹⁶⁸ The responses from Briles’ survey revealed that some women found it more difficult to work under women than under men.¹⁶⁹

Skill Development Challenges

Julie Baker used her corporate background to author one of the only books written for Christian women on the topic of developing leadership skills. In *A Pebble in the Pond: The Ripple Effect*, Baker identifies numerous fears which may hinder women in leadership. Women experience fear in the areas of failure, making mistakes, risk taking, not being liked, change, over commitment, and success.¹⁷⁰ She addresses such challenges as stress, time management, internal and external struggles, lack of confidence, and the inability to listen effectively. Baker observed that many women lack skills in written and verbal communication. She includes chapters on each of these topics, encouraging Christian women to take time to prepare for the demands and expectations of leadership. She reminds her readers, “Difficult situations [challenges] can lead us into a deeper understanding of God’s love, provision, and plan for our lives. Sometimes our

¹⁶⁸ Briles, 79-80.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁷⁰ Baker, 26-9.

suffering becomes the most valuable element in the equipping process as we gain valuable experience or insight in ways we could never have predicted.”¹⁷¹

Carol Porter and Mike Hamel address a fear many women face: lallaphobia. This is “the fear of speaking in front of people . . . the number one fear for most Americans.”¹⁷² Leading in ministry requires times of speaking in front of large and small groups. Many women lack the confidence or the skills needed to communicate well in public meetings. Porter and Hamel dedicate a full chapter to “Preparing and Delivering Life-Changing Messages.” They also address the topics such as counseling women, the importance of a vital relationship with God, the value of women friends, priorities, handling criticism, and working with difficult people.

One of the great challenges facing women as leaders includes the need for counseling skills. Seminaries often fail to equip their graduates to be able to meet the emotional needs of those they lead. Beverly White Hislop recently wrote a book that addressed the dual issues of women in Christian leadership and the needed skills of counseling. *Shepherding a Woman’s Heart* contrasts counseling and shepherding, especially related to professional counseling. Women leaders need to be more involved with pastoral care which Hislop defines as synonymous with shepherding. She states, “The greatest distinction of a shepherd is that she is a woman who intentionally provides the comfort and understanding that fosters healing and growth.”¹⁷³ The book includes a chapter on practical ways for women in leadership to develop shepherding skills and

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁷² Porter and Hamel, 128.

¹⁷³ Beverly White Hislop, *Shepherding a Woman's Heart: A New Model for Effective Ministry to Women* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 31.

effectively care for those whom they lead. Hislop also includes a list of “important dos and important don’ts” related to shepherding.¹⁷⁴

Deborah Tannen addresses the issue of communication between men and women and how this impacts their relationships in the home, the church, and the workplace. Though she is careful in recognizing some of the dangers in developing general categories for all men and women, she makes the following statement:

Pretending that women and men are the same hurts women, because the ways they are treated are based on the norms for men. It also hurts men who, with good intentions, speak to women as they would to men, and are nonplussed when their words don’t work as they expected, or even spark resentment and anger. . . . There *are* gender differences in ways of speaking, and we need to identify and understand them. Without such understanding, we are doomed to blame others or ourselves---or the relationship---for the otherwise mystifying and damaging effects of our contrasting conversational styles.¹⁷⁵

When women join men on leadership teams, they can come face-to-face with this communication problem. Often effective communication must be learned just like any other skill. Success can be achieved as men and women acknowledge their differences and learn to appreciate the unique way God has created male and female, thus allowing these differences to strengthen ministry rather than bring conflict and confusion.

Rhonda Kelley also discusses the communication barriers that exist between men and women. Kelley’s journal article presents many insights related to this topic and offers ways to improve the communication between Christian men and women. She states: “The church, as a body of believers male and female, is challenged by these differences in communicative style. The impact of these gender differences is

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 135-57.

¹⁷⁵ Tannen, 16-7.

experienced in informal conversations, Bible study classes, church committee meetings, counseling sessions, and pulpit preaching.”¹⁷⁶ Along with helpful information related to communication challenges among men and women, Kelley also includes an annotated bibliography of other helpful resources.

Vocational Challenges

Many women have problems finding ministry positions. Sharon Dulaney’s research reveals the placement problems women often experience in Christian ministry. Often the church bases its opposition to women in ministry on tradition and scriptural interpretations of women’s role in the world.¹⁷⁷ Charlton concurs, “The trajectory of a ministerial career is based on a male model---men are expected to settle into a career at the same time that women are expected to marry and have children. Timing and commitment issues are salient for women in a way they are not for men.”¹⁷⁸ In addition, Spring and Menehan discovered that placement becomes complicated by churches being reluctant to hire women, ministries not having the budgets to employ women, and negative perceptions from lay people.¹⁷⁹

Single women often face an additional barrier to being hired, particularly in churches. Not being married is often seen as a liability rather than an asset. Albert Hsu makes this observation: “Qualified single adults are passed over because it is believed

¹⁷⁶ Rhonda Kelley, “Communication Between Men and Women in the Context of the Christian Community,” *Faith and Mission* 14, no. 1 (Fall, 1996), 49.

¹⁷⁷ Sharon Dulaney, “Motivations, Attitudes, and Factors Which Influence Women Seminarians: A Study of Female Students Enrolled in a Master of Divinity Program in the Nation’s Seminaries and Theological Schools” (Ph.D. Diss., Baylor University, 1990), 3.

¹⁷⁸ Charlton, 308.

¹⁷⁹ Spring and Menehan, 18-21.

that their single state means that something must be wrong with them. Single adults are viewed as immature or naïve, unable to understand the issues of marriages and families.”¹⁸⁰ Often marital status determines whether or not a woman is considered for a leadership position, leaving single women frustrated and discouraged.

Just Between Us (JBU), a magazine published for the purpose of encouraging ministry wives and women in leadership, addresses many of the challenges women face in ministry. JBU offers information on a wide variety of topics, including marriage, parenting, singleness, friendship, evangelism, stages of life, prayer, counseling tips, personal relationship with God, suffering, and financial issues. It also publicizes conferences, retreats, and seminars that are available to help Christian women continue to develop themselves as leaders. In addition, JBU has compiled a set of ten booklets addressing key issues of women in ministry. These booklets cover topics such as prayer, balancing time, conflict resolution, spiritual renewal, spiritual warfare, handling difficult people, comparison traps, finding God’s will, joy in the Christian life, and contentment.

Women of the Harvest is another magazine published for women in ministry, but specifically for those women serving cross-culturally. It includes articles to help in cultural transitions, packing and cooking tips, cross-cultural stressors, and words of encouragement and connection for women often isolated around the world. The magazine is published quarterly and includes a website that offers upcoming retreats and links to resources to assist women in missions.

¹⁸⁰ Albert Y. Hsu, *Singles at the Crossroads: A Fresh Perspective on Christian Singleness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 86.

Michele Green identified another problem facing seminarian women seeking ministry positions: men feeling threatened by competent women. The women “reported losing or having difficulty in their vocational positions because their competency was misinterpreted and threatening to some men.”¹⁸¹ As a result of her case studies of three seminaries, she makes this observation:

For example, a woman exhibiting leadership skills, even when she embraces a complementarian position, may be misunderstood and her leadership viewed as inappropriate (e.g., having authority over men) or threatening (e.g., attempting to have authority over men) as others in the ministry interpret the practical application of the same theological position differently.¹⁸²

Michelle Green’s observations, interviews, conclusions, and recommendations were the most helpful research studied pertaining to this literature review.

Conclusions from the Research

This literature review has looked at the leadership styles of women and the many challenges faced by Christian women leaders. Very few books have been written which exclusively discuss these topics, especially related to conservative evangelical Christianity. The most recent brain research is confirming distinct differences between the majority of males and females in ways of thinking, processing information, and communication. These biological differences, along with cultural influences, often influence the way men and women lead. Women tend to emphasize relationships over tasks, are more collaborative than directive, and tend to emphasize process versus goals. These differences are intended to complement the way men lead, but often cause conflict

¹⁸¹ Green, 231.

¹⁸² Ibid., 232.

and confusion if not understood and respected. Consequently one of the greatest challenges women face in ministry is working successfully with male leadership.

Many other challenges were also mentioned throughout the literature that has been reviewed. These include criticism, stress, burnout, conflict resolution, family responsibilities, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, speaking and counseling skills, disparity in salary, time management, time with God, and difficulty in finding ministry positions. Seminary women desire to serve in vocational ministry, serve churches and parachurch organizations in lay positions, or give their time to their families as wives and mothers. All of these contexts of ministry involve multiple challenges as they seek to serve God.

