

HOW EVANGELICAL BLACK WOMEN LEARN TO NEGOTIATE POWER RELATIONS
BASED ON RACE AND GENDER IN THEIR MINISTRY

PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

by

EVETTA ROSE ARMSTRONG

(Under the Direction of Ronald M. Cervero)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical black women in ministry preparation and practice. The questions that guided this study were: How do power relationships based on race and gender affect the ministry preparation and practice of evangelical black women? How do black evangelical women ministers learn to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical church?

Qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews was determined the best approach to be used for this study. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. The constant comparative method was used to tease out the emergent themes among the research participants.

Data analysis disclosed four primary findings experienced by the participants: 1) The women experienced gender oppression through unequal access to learning in the seminary, and poor treatment and salary disparity in their ministry workplace; 2) Five of the 11 women experienced racism in the seminary and their ministry workplace and felt assimilation was the price to pay for acceptance; 3) All of the women have considered leaving their job; three of the

11 women did leave due to race or gender oppression, while eight remain in the same ministry position; and 4) All of the women learned how to persevere in the hierarchy of evangelical ministry context through critical reflection and mentoring.

Four major conclusions emerged from the findings in this study: power relations based on race and gender in the wider society framed the experiences of the women in their ministry preparation; 2) Power relations based on race and gender in wider society informed the experiences of the women in their ministry practice; a particular interpretation of scripture was deployed to sustain both gender and race domination; and the women learned how to exist in the hierarchical structure of their evangelical ministry context through mentoring relationships and reflecting on their experiences.

INDEX WORDS: Black Evangelical Women, Racism, Sexism, White Male Privilege, Black Church, Ministry Practice, Ministry Preparation, Conservative Evangelical Seminary, Adult Education, Spirituality

HOW EVANGELICAL BLACK WOMEN LEARN TO NEGOTIATE POWER RELATIONS
BASED ON RACE AND GENDER IN THEIR MINISTRY
PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

by

EVETTA ROSE ARMSTRONG

Bachelor of Science, Texas A & M – Commerce, 1983

Master of Arts, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1996

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2007

© 2007

Evetta Rose Armstrong

All Rights Reserved

HOW EVANGELICAL BLACK WOMEN LEARN TO NEGOTIATE POWER RELATIONS
BASED ON RACE AND GENDER IN THEIR MINISTRY
PREPARATION AND PRACTICE

by

EVETTA ROSE ARMSTRONG

Major Professor: Ronald M. Cervero

Committee: Juanita Johnson-Bailey
Bradley C. Courtenay
Talmadge C. Guy
Sandy D. Martin

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2007

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My deceased paternal grandparents, Emmett and Mahala Armstrong
and my deceased maternal grandfather, Dorsey Henry Black your spirit lives on in me.

My ninety six year old grandmother, Peggy Black I sometimes wonder,

(Though you can't remember my name)

When you see me smiling, do you love me just the same?

You don't have to say it. You don't even have to try.

Because you have said it for a lifetime.

My loving parents, Emmitt and Delores Armstrong

You gave me wings and made me fly

You said no star was out of reach

Everything I am and have accomplished is be cause of you.

You are the wind beneath my wings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is one of the most significant challenges I have faced. There are many people who made the journey easier with words of encouragement, advice, support, patience, and guidance. I owe them my deepest gratitude because without them this study would not have been possible.

To my major professor, Ronald M. Cervero, thank you for your patience during the months I spent procrastinating, changing my mind, and editing copy that was not supposed to be edited. Certainly, you have the patience of Job. Thank you for encouraging me to research my own experience as a black evangelical woman who experienced the sting of racism and sexism in my ministry preparation and practice. Each time I doubted myself you always reminded me “you can do this.” Those words are forever etched in my mind and heart.

To my methodologist, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, thank you so much for your advice, encouragement and friendship. Thank you for the hard talks and lessons learned.

To the rest of my committee members, Bradley C. Courtenay, Sandy D. Martin, and Talmadge C. Guy, you challenged me to think with precision. Your interest in my topic was a tremendous blessing to me.

To Avita, Joye, Tenecia, Aisha, Yvette, Cacilla, Tara, Kim, Erica, Arlene and Nino, you taught me how to laugh at myself and not to take myself and life too seriously. Although you call me your mentor, it has been a blessing for me to be your “mentee” during this period.

To my girlfriends, Yvonne, Sharon C., Jeanette S., Jeanae, Regina, Sonja, Renae, Cerene, and Leishea you have been proud of me, and have been my emotional and spiritual anchors throughout graduate school. Thank you for being there when I needed you most.

To Royce, Chanda, Lavonna, Letha, and Ernise because you have been through completing a doctoral degree you were able to talk me through the many uncertainties, challenges and sacrifices. You always reminded me it is just a process, so get it done. Thank you for being trusted friends and confidants.

To Monica and Nichole, you truly have been sisters in the struggle. Monica our dinner meetings and Nichole our breakfast meetings, were exactly what I needed in the midst of trying to make sense of completing this doctoral project, life, and the future. We became fast friends; I will always cherish those times.

To Cassandra, thank you for coming to my aid at the last minute. Although the task of reading my dissertation was too great for the time allotted, your willingness to help as much as you could blessed me tremendously.

To my cousin Tony, thank you for always calling me at the right time and encouraging me with scripture and prayer. I am astounded by your unconditional love for me. You always point me back to the one who loves me most, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To the women who participated in this study, you made it possible to tell this story. I do not take you for granted; you invited me into personal spaces in your private lives and opened painful wounds. I hope and pray that you will be made whole because you were willing to share yourselves in this study. Other women will gain strength from you.

To my mom and dad, words can not express how much I love you and appreciate the unconditional love, the sacrifices, and the times you cheered me on throughout graduate school. Without your constant support and unwavering belief in my abilities, I would not have attempted or completed this project. All I have ever hoped to become is because of you. You are the wind beneath my wings.

Finally, I give all praise, glory and honor to the lover of my soul, Jesus Christ. Above everyone and all things, my help comes from You. In spite of me, You gave me the strength and ability to accomplish insurmountable tasks. I am thankful that You considered me faithful enough to complete this divine appointment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | v |
| LIST OF TABLES | xi |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Naming the Power and Politics in Ministry Preparation and Practice | 4 |
| Statement of the Research Problem and Purpose | 12 |
| Significance of the Study | 12 |
| Definition of Terms | 15 |
| 2 LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| Race, Slavery, and the Beginning of American Protestant Evangelicalism..... | 17 |
| The Social and Historical Dynamics of the Black Church..... | 25 |
| Race and Gender Disparities in Ministry Preparation and Practice | 29 |
| Chapter Summary | 40 |
| 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY | 41 |
| Research Approach and Rationale | 41 |
| Data Collection Methods..... | 47 |
| Data Analysis | 52 |
| Validity and Reliability | 54 |
| Subjectivities | 55 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Limitations of Study | 57 |
| Chapter Summary | 57 |
| 4 PARTICIPANTS PROFILES | 59 |
| Faye | 59 |
| Joan | 60 |
| Linda | 62 |
| Lisa | 63 |
| Lynne | 64 |
| Madison | 65 |
| Melissa | 66 |
| Rita | 67 |
| Tiffany | 68 |
| Tina | 69 |
| Trisha | 70 |
| Chapter Summary | 70 |
| 5 FINDINGS | 72 |
| Being Confined to One's Place: Sexism and Women in Religion | 72 |
| Struggles of the Internalized Oppressed - Tales of Racism | 95 |
| Obedience is Better than Sacrifice | 100 |
| Longsuffering: Learning to Persevere | 104 |
| Chapter Summary | 115 |
| 6 SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS | 116 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Conclusions and Discussion..... | 117 |
| Implications and Recommendations | 134 |
| A Concluding Note..... | 137 |
| REFERENCES | 139 |
| APPENDICES | 150 |
| A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION | 151 |
| B INTERVIEW GUIDE..... | 152 |
| C CONSENT FORM..... | 153 |
| D CATALOGUE STATEMENTS ABOUT GENDER AND MINISTRY | 154 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Table 1: Participants Demographics | 63 |
| Table 2: Power Dynamics Summary | 76 |
| Table 3: Student Enrollment by Degree Category and Gender, 2002 | 122 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“We shall not cease from exploration, And the end of all our exploring. Will be to arrive where we started from, And know the place for the first time.” T.S. Eliot

After 12 successful years in the corporate world, I left what I knew for an unknown path. I believed this road would lead to answers to many of the questions I had about my purpose and existence on Earth. This journey was spiritual and personal. My epistemology was grounded in my faith, and it gave me the courage to take these uncertain steps. I didn’t know where it would lead me, but I was certain it would be far away from the power and political games often found in corporate America. I was “getting off the fast track” or doing what is commonly known as “downshifting” for a slower pace of living (Pennington, 1999). As suggested in Pennington’s study, my identity was not rooted in or defined by my job. What was more important to me was my belief in God and my feeling of being compelled to respond to His calling on my life.

I was certain that by answering this call I would find my utopia in the hallowed halls of the seminary, studying about the Greatest Teacher and the Creator of the universe. I would find solitude, affirmation, acceptance, and purpose. As it turned out, it was a far cry from what I expected. I experienced racism and sexism in the places I least predicted—in my ministry preparation and my ministry practice.

I experienced my first encounter with covert racism in my fabricated utopia—the seminary—the same place I was learning about the mercy, wrath, goodness, and justice of God. One of my professors spent an entire session talking about the sin of racism. This was a class of

about 120 students of which two were African-American women and six were African-American men. Undoubtedly, the topic was disconcerting for some of the other students since several of the white males walked out of class while a great many of them squirmed uncomfortably in their seats. I sat there in tears. I couldn't believe what was happening in my utopia! The seminary was the last place I expected to witness white men being uneasy with the teaching of racism as a sin. At the time I believed it was just circumstantial and that once I was in ministry and out of the sterile environment of seminary, things would be different. No longer would I have to contend with overt injustices. But I encountered sexism in my ministry practice.

As the only woman and Black person on staff at a newly established church, I was offered the coveted prize of being commissioned—ordained—as a part of my employment package. This was a rather attractive offer, considering that in most conservative evangelical churches women are denied the privilege of being ordained. And especially because—after all the years I had labored in leadership without being ordained—I would finally have the same respect and tax-exempt privileges as men in similar roles. On many occasions, I reminded my employer of their offer to have me ordained. I was constantly told it would happen; they just had not had a chance to get around to talking

about it because there were so many other issues to address. In the end, they finally told me that several members on the board (all male) were against ordaining women. I asked about the basis of their decision. But rather than giving me a doctrinal or biblical reason, they told me that several of the men just did not “feel” it was the right thing to do because I was a woman.

The most unsettling feeling I have experienced in full-time ministry has been that my race as well as my gender can be problematic for some church leaders and parishioners. The question, “If it had been a white woman/man or a black man, would they have come to the same

conclusion?” always loomed in the background. Unfortunately, many black women in a predominately white male environment tend to vacillate between whether their unjust experiences are cases of racism, sexism, or both.

Black women are increasingly assuming ministerial roles similar to their ordained white and black counterparts, yet they lack the same respect and privileges. With that comes self-doubt, wondering whether they are qualified or have the right to be there and questioning if they truly heard from God about their calling. External experiences are in constant conflict with internal spiritual affirmations.

While going through the inner turmoil of reconciling my faith with my ministry practice, I had this unyielding desire to return to school for a doctorate degree. After I enrolled in a university in southeast United States and completed my courses, I decided to study spirituality and its affect on adult learning. This was an area I felt comfortable with and believed to be the least personally invasive. Although the topic was interesting, it was not enough to sustain my commitment for the duration of completing my degree. Yet, still nagging my psyche were my experiences pertaining to race and gender in the ministry and seminary.

These ministry experiences were perplexing, and as I shared them with other African-American women who graduated from the same seminary I realized I was not alone. I also realized that no one heard our voices. We often cried out but couldn't find the answers we were seeking. Yet, in each case, we felt we were being treated unjustly because of our race, gender, or both, and that treatment was not congruent with our understanding of the Bible. Ultimately, I decided to change my safe topic of looking at spirituality and its affect on adult learning to investigating the messiness of racism, gender, and power in ministry preparation and practice. My new topic choice was grounded in the daily experiences of my ministry preparation and

practice. Research topics are usually discovered when there is an interest in finding answers to the things that puzzle us most (Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

Naming the Power and Politics in Ministry Preparation and Practice

Church scholars and historians (Butler, 1984; Carey, 1976; J. A. Carpenter, 1984; Emerson & Smith, 1999, 2000; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Marsden, 1984; Martin, 2000; Myrdal, 1962; Noll et al., 1994; Perry, 1998; Raboteau, 1980, 1984, 1995, 2001; Sernett, 1999; Sweet, 1984; Wimbush, 2003) and Womanist, biblical feminist scholars, and other theologians (Frederick, 2003; Gallagher, 2003; Grant, 1989; Hewitt, 1984; Higginbotham, 1992, 1993; Ingersoll, 2003; Jenkins, 1994; Kraybill, 2004; Nesbitt, 1997; Riggs, 2003; Sullins, 2000; Warne, 2001; Wiggins, 2005) have stated in similar ways that while the foundations of American history—and Christianity in particular—were being formulated, the history of women in ministry was not a simple story of progress, especially as it related to black women. Wiggins (2005) stated that recently there has been an increasing interest in the religiosity and spirituality of black women in various contexts. In most cases the essays and texts give visibility to the roles women have played as co-creators of the institutions and the religious culture of the church.

Although women have been co-creators of the church, Martin (2000) says women have never received unilateral support as leaders in the church. Historically, women volunteered to work in the nursery and Sunday school classes teaching women, youth, and children. For the non-clergy women (layperson), this level of ministry involvement was acceptable based on the teachings of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12-14 which states:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women

will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

These women did not believe their ability to serve was being thwarted by men nor did they see this passage as oppressive (Griffith, 1997). However, women who felt called by God to preach, teach, or lead in other areas of ministry were frustrated with their limited roles of doing women's work. There is a long history of women being oppressed and marginalized as potential leaders in the church.

In September 1900, Nannie Helen Burrows gave a speech titled "How the Sisters are Hindered From Helping" (Higginbotham, 1993). Burroughs is credited for raising the awareness of how women were excluded from leadership roles in the church. As a result of her speech, the Women's Convention was established as an auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention. Higginbotham says that this organization emerged, in part, in resistance to the established male hegemony within the church. She went on to say that the Women's Convention grew to more than one million Baptist women, and they began to establish themselves as a force to be reckoned with by setting their own agendas in the national convention and in the churches.

Although the women were separate regarding gender matters in the black church, they allied with black men in the struggle for racial advancement. Also, they were separate from white women regarding race yet allied with them in the struggle for gender equality. Moreover, Higginbotham says that when it came to the issues between poor blacks and middle-class white women, the church women practiced a "politics of respectability" and "rallied poor working class Blacks to the cause of racial self-help while on the other hand risked class tensions within the Black community by adopting values that would command the white community's respect" (p. 2). Clearly, these women were living within multiple race, gender, and class realities.

Gender had multiple meanings within black Baptist theology (Hackett, 1995). Blacks as well as other Americans believed there were innate differences between the sexes. The black Baptist church never portrayed black women as fragile and impressionable by nature. Black women worked alongside the men for racial uplift. They knew they had the ability to influence men. These women turned to the Bible to argue for their rights. They held men accountable using the same text that legitimized their arguments for racial equality (Higginbotham, 1993). They found themselves in a spiritual power and political struggle.

It is widespread and common knowledge that ministry is a gendered place, one in which women are viewed as being treated as if they are “less than” by outsiders while insiders see it as “it’s just the way things are” in many conservative ministry contexts (Griffith, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003; Wiggins, 2005). Most women knowingly enter the ministry aware of the racial and gender makeup of the ministry or religious organization from which they are seeking an appointment from. However, undoubtedly, the question for them is not whether power and politics exists in ministry preparation and practice but, what the character and intensity are in which it is expressed, channeled, or camouflaged. To establish the context of this study, a brief discussion of the historical and foundational issues surrounding the political dynamics found in Black women’s ministry preparation and practice will be addressed.

Politics in Ministry Preparation

A seminary education was not typically required for pastors in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries (Zikmund, et al, 1998). Colonial life was a reality and therefore tended to be more lenient towards educational requirements for pastoral ministry (Lehman, 2002). In most cases, churches usually selected a man who seemingly possessed the most religious devotion and whereby it was obvious to all that he had a “call” on his life, says

Lehman. Typically during this time, very few people valued education and therefore did not see formal education as a prerequisite for church leadership (Lehman, 2002). Lehman goes on to say that as a result very few if any of the pastors went to seminary.

However, by the late 20th century, that pattern had changed dramatically (Peterson, 1996). The level of formal education in the United States had risen “to the point where most church members were no longer satisfied with untrained church leadership. What used to be called ‘Spirit-led preaching,’ for example, came to be widely regarded as ‘ignorant ranting.’ ” (Lehman, 2002, p. 7) Pastors had to complete a prescribed curriculum to prepare them for ministry.

The number of women enrolled in seminaries was rather small prior to the early 1970s (Lehman, 2002). However, around the early to mid-1980s, Lehman says that women constituted at least one-third of entering classes and in many cases they outnumbered men. Within the last ten years women have been observed entering seminary in record numbers (Zikmund, Lummis, & Chang, 1998). Zikmund, et al. says that although women were present on seminary campuses, women and men students typically did not interact as equals and were not viewed as such by seminary faculty and administration. These women during this period of the 1970s and 1980s realized they were pioneers and understood there would be some resistance and that it would take time for church systems to change (Zikmund et al., 1998). As time progressed women were tolerated more, and there was the appearance of acceptance. Albeit, they did not always receive the same educational experience as men (Hackett, 1995). Faculty at more conservative seminaries would excuse the women from classes when they believed the topic or subject was not relevant to “the ladies.” Zikmund, et al. found that this trend would be especially difficult for women entering the seminaries during the 1990s. The women of the 1990s seem to overlook or

were unaware of the struggles of the women during the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, the experiences of discrimination or prejudice caused the women to translate their experiences as personal failures rather than as a systemic problem that categorically stacked the deck against them (Zikmund et al., 1998).

On more liberal seminary campuses women refused to be silent. Women were gaining power and knowledge through women's studies programs (Wilkes, 1991). Nevertheless, black clergywomen realized their issues and concerns were not being properly addressed in traditional women's studies classes. And as a result, Womanist theology was born out of the integration of feminist doctrine and black theology.

The stated purpose of Womanist theology was to address key shortcomings in feminist theology and in black liberation theology. For women of this movement, feminist theology did not adequately address the issues and social situations of black women, particularly poor black women, while black liberation theology was male-oriented and did not adequately address the issues of women. Thus, Womanist theology is based on a tri-dimensional analysis of racism, sexism, and classism (Thomas, 1998). It simultaneously associates with and disassociates itself from Black (male) theology and (white) feminist theology (Thomas, 2004).

Though it is affirming overall, Womanist theology departs from and contradicts scripture in a number of its core defining principles, making it another gospel by the Bible's stated definition of the Gospel. The most basic departure from scripture in Womanist theology is its being defined in terms of human philosophy, not scripture: Womanist theology draws on sources that range from traditional church doctrines, African American fiction and poetry black religiosity, and Womanist ethnographic approaches (Thomas, 1998). Although Womanist doctrine has not made its way into the pews of mainstream churches and white seminaries, it has

not substantially changed the power structure between the sexes. It does, however, move Black Womanist scholars and theologians to empower themselves and develop their own sphere of influence (Hackett, 1995).

Notwithstanding, another group of black women began matriculating into predominately white conservative evangelical seminaries. Unquestionably, these black women had a difficult path to walk as they chose to enter predominately white seminaries during a time when it was already difficult for white women. Contrast their experience with the fact that Protestant mainline churches were segregated (Emerson & Smith, 1999, 2000a, 2000b; C. Smith & Emerson, 1998); surely this had a tremendous impact on the black woman's ministry practice as well.

Politics in Ministry Practice

The ministry maintains a long history of being myopic as it relates to race and gender. On any given Sunday a common reality is that most congregations are racially segregated (Emerson & Smith, 1999, 2000b) and they are made up of predominately women (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002). However, the leadership is typically all male and of the same race. Noticeably, it does not reflect the majority that makes up the congregation. Socially conscious evangelical church leaders often hire at least one person of another race and/or gender to address their diversity concerns. Among those hired are black women or black men. Once employed, they must often learn to negotiate politically and strategically in an all-male or an all-white conservative context.

Today it is clearly understood that ministry by its very nature is a political process (Burns & Cervero, 2002, 2004). Access and duties are not evenly or equitably distributed among those who have professed a calling on their life, especially within conservative theological

contexts. Also, as identified in Burns and Cervero's (2004) seminal study, leaders are constantly negotiating personal and professional interests. Burns and Cervero (2002) investigated the power and politics of 11 pastors in the presbytery and how it impacted their ministry practice. One key finding was that there were differences experienced by the only two black men and two white women respondents. Each identified some element of discrimination based on race and/or gender. In this instance, not only is there an issue of white males being color-blind (Emerson & Smith, 2000a), but also of being gender-blind (Johnson-Bailey, 2001b). White male participants did not identify any critical incidents relative to race or gender.

Black women who find themselves in a white-dominated context are viewed as what Bell and Nkomo (2003) call "affirmative action cover girls." They explain this trend as black women being placed in highly visible positions that give the impression the organization is committed to diversity. However, within the day-to-day operations they are constantly jumping intellectual and spiritual hoops to prove they are qualified to do the job they were hired (and called by God) to do. Bell and Nkomo (2003) refer to the phenomena as racialized sexism, the experience of gender discrimination in a social context that depends on a woman's race. As black women, they are subjected to a particular form of sexism shaped by racism and racial stereotyping. Getting in the door is not the problem; it is overcoming the obstacles of the glass ceiling (Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998), or rather the stained-glass ceiling for women in ministry (Nesbitt, 1997).

Another point found in the literature regarding the political dynamics faced by black women in ministry is that they are expected to assimilate into the dominate culture (Bell & Nkomo, 2003). They must divest themselves of any semblance of "blackness" or "womaness." Bell and Nkomo say white-male dominated organizations often make cultural assimilation the price of acceptability for racial minorities. A key component of assimilation is remaining silent

and not calling attention to the injustices one may encounter. Although referring to the adult classroom, Johnson-Bailey (2001) states that minorities typically use silence as a means of finding acceptance, and it is often used as a coping mechanism.

The black church is the primary site of sexism struggles for black women in ministry as evidenced by the literature written by Womanist theologians and black church scholars (Higginbotham, 1992; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin, 2000; Perry, 1998; Raboteau, 1995; Wiggins, 2005; Zoba & Lee, 1996). Although the struggle of black clergywomen for acceptance as pastors paralleled that of white women, there were distinct differences related to the additional burden of racism. Black male church leaders seem to view oppressions as hierarchical, with racism believed to be the ultimate and—in some cases—the only oppression that African-American people face. Nevertheless, black women's concern about sexist experiences in the black church is often seen as an irritant and ultimately is dismissed by black male leadership. Women make up approximately 70 percent of the church membership (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002). They are the largest contributors in terms of time and finances. They sit on the board of trustees, members of the usher board, music ministry, yet rarely are they hired as associate or assistant pastors in the black church.

Cervero and Wilson (2001) say elements of power exist in all human interactions and essentially determine outcomes. The women who emerge today from the non-traditional black church traditions are influenced by the history of the church as well as the contemporary demands of society. Their walk of faith is often a struggle for personal power, salvation, and social justice.

Statement of the Research Problem and Purpose

The disparities in the experiences of black men and women and white men and women shed light on the fact that minorities and—more specifically black women—have not been adequately prepared for the sexism, racism, and loneliness experienced while serving in ministry (Zikmund et al., 1998). In many cases among these women, there was a high rate of burnout.

Consequently, if they do not learn how to cope with the problems they face, many of them choose to leave the ministry completely with a feeling of inadequacy, although they have been successful in previous professions. The problem is the lack of research on how the racial and gendered systems of power play out in ministry preparation and practice for black women.

The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical black women in ministry preparation and practice. The questions that guided this study were:

1. How do power relationships based on race and gender affect the ministry preparation and practice of evangelical black women?
2. How do black evangelical women ministers learn to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical church?

Significance of the Study

It has been stated that one of the most important recent trends in pastoral leadership has been the attention paid to the entry of women into significant leadership positions during the last quarter of the 20th century (Carroll, Hargrove, & Lummis, 1982; Hackett, 1995; Higginbotham, 1992; Lehman, 2002; Sullins, 2000; Zikmund et al., 1998). However, it has also been duly noted that conservative evangelical denominations are lagging considerably in terms of hiring and promoting women in key leadership positions (Zikmund et al., 1998). Studies and papers have

been written that focus on the religious experiences of white women (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002; Charlton, 1987; Clouse, Clouse, & Culver, 1989; Griffith, 1997; Hackett, 1995; Hamilton, 1993; Ingersoll, 2003; Kostenberger, Schreiner, & Baldwin, 1995; Steward, Steward, & Dary, 1983; Sullins, 2000; Winfield, 1993; Zikmund et al., 1998). However, as with most studies related to African Americans, there is a limited amount of research regarding their contributions and experiences in the United States. This trend is also found in the area of the black church and, more specifically, the contributions black women have made to this highly revered historical institution in African-American culture (Carpenter, 1989; Frederick, 2003; C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Wiggins, 2005). Black women have always worked alongside black men as non-clergy leaders and co-creators of the church (Carpenter, 1989; Higginbotham, 1993; C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Raboteau, 1980, 1984, 1995, 2001; Wiggins, 2005) without much recognition or acknowledgement of their contributions.

Within recent years more scholars have taken a notable interest in telling the black clergywoman's story from a historical, sociological, biblical, and theological (Carpenter, 1989) perspective. Many of these essays and historical accounts have shored up her leadership roles in the church as lecturer, religious educator, preacher, administrator, and evangelist (Carpenter, 1986, 1989, 2001). The history of black women in ministry was not a simple story of progress (Cannon, 1985, 1988, 1995; Carpenter, 1986, 1989, 2001; Higginbotham, 1992, 1993; C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin, 2000; Raboteau, 1984, 1995; Wiggins, 2005; Williams, 2004). What is missing significantly from the literature are empirical studies investigating their struggles and accomplishments in these leadership positions. Therefore, this study will contribute to this knowledge gap by providing a more in-depth look into the social problems found in black women's ministry preparation and practice.

Many women enter the field of ministry as a second career, and in most cases they came from a secular job where there were laws that protected them from discrimination. Civil Rights laws do not apply to religious organizations, and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits government from pressuring denominations to open their pulpits to women (Lehman, 2002; Zikmund et al., 1998). Although the laws did not eradicate racism or sexism in the workplace, it did, however, lessen many of the overt racist and sexist practices. Conceivably, when women go into full-time ministry, they may have expectations that are grounded in their secular work experiences. However, many discriminatory practices in ministry are addressed on moral and theological grounds rather than secular laws (Lehman, 2002). Beyond this focus, the information obtained from this study will benefit multiple fields such as Christian higher education and the sociology of religion.

This investigation offers practical significance by providing insight into the process of how black clergywomen learned how to cope in an environment that may be eager to receive them while at the same time are reluctant to give them the support they need to be effective and successful in their respective ministry context. Therefore, a significant research implication of this study would be for pastors and denominational leaders to become more aware of the factors that cause burnout and high turnover rates among women and other minorities. This in turn would be helpful in facilitating the planning, designing, and application of a more gender- and racially-sensitive hiring and retention practice.

Finally, the Burns and Cervero (2004) study suggested that the significance of their research was so that program planners could use the knowledge to develop effective pre-professional and continuing education programs for pastors. Nevertheless, in addition to meeting the needs of pastors, this study seeks to raise their awareness that clergywomen and other

minority leaders must be included at the planning table if an organization is seriously committed to diversity in their leadership.

Definition of Terms

1. Call, Calling - An inner urge or a strong impulse, especially one believed to be divinely inspired to accept the Gospels as truth and Jesus as one's personal savior. An occupation, profession, or career.
2. Clergyman/woman- In some denominations, clergy status is reserved for males. In other denominations both men and women serve as clergy. Depending on the religion, clergy usually teach, take care of the ritual aspects of the religious life, or otherwise help in spreading the religion's doctrine and practices. They often deal with life-cycle events such as childbirth, marriage, and death. Clergy of most faiths work inside as well as outside formal houses of worship and can be found working in hospitals, nursing homes, missions, the military, etc.
3. Evangelical -A designation for Christians how believes in the authority of a literal interpretation of the Bible; the belief in the literal supernatural conception (virgin birth) of Jesus; salvation only through the belief of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection; regeneration and a spiritually transformed personal life; and sharing the gospel with others.
4. Layperson - Someone who is not a clergy or a professional religious leader.
5. Liberal - Suggests a more progressive attitude towards Christianity based on individualism. In its emphasis on individual subjective experience and liberalism, its respect for the freedom of the individual to hold a less literal view of the Bible and

express views that fall outside the boundaries of conservative orthodoxy and tradition.
Christian doctrines.

6. Theologian – one who seeks to take core religious beliefs and express them in language consistent with contemporary rational thought
7. Conservative - a descriptive term applied to a number of Protestants and Roman Catholics committed to traditional values and traditional beliefs and practices.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical black women in ministry preparation and practice. The questions that guided this study were:

1. How do power relationships based on race and gender affect the ministry preparation and practice of evangelical black women?
2. How do black evangelical women ministers learn to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical church?

In this chapter, I review the relevant literature that serves as the background information to this study. There are three major sections in this study: race, slavery, and Christian Protestant evangelicalism; the black church; and race and gender disparities in black women's ministry preparation and practice. The first section of this chapter reviews relevant literature pertaining to race, slavery, and the beginning of Protestant evangelicalism. Since many of the clergywomen have history with the black church, directly or indirectly, in the second section I will review the literature relevant to the social and historical dynamics of the black church. The third and final section reviews the literature relevant to the race and gender disparities found in black women's ministry preparation and practice.

Race, Slavery, and the Beginning of American Protestant Evangelicalism

Christianity has inhabited many strange spaces in American life. It has consistently presented contrasting faces and contrasting vices and virtues; wealth-poverty; pluralism-

authoritarianism; prejudice-tolerance (Noll, 2001). Race, slavery, and sexism have certainly been found in such strange spaces. The inherent nature of Christianity is promoting Christian love and fellowship among the body of believers. But even today the barriers of racism still remain. The church is the only institution in America that makes the claim as the House of God (Mays, 2003), yet many of God's people still worship separately while preaching redemption and salvation. How could this contradiction between words and deeds be so?

A brief glance at the beginning of Christian Protestant evangelicalism in America can provide a glimpse of a huge unspoken problem in Christendom. Race was and still is the huge elephant in the room that everyone tends to walk around. To examine the problem would expose old wounds and past hurts (Emerson & Smith, 2000b). Since the problem is rarely addressed, it just continues to grow and ultimately impact others. Therefore, it is necessary to review the past in order to expose the transgressions of the present. In this section, I will discuss the role of race and slavery in the formative years of Christian Protestant Evangelicalism.

According to Marsden (1980), what we now know as evangelicalism has its origins in the 18th century (Marsden, 1980). Evangelicalism came into when the First Great Awakening, a series of religious revivals, swept over the American Colonies (Noll, 1983, 2001). This spiritual awakening resulted in doctrinal changes and influenced social and political thought throughout the Colonies. Marsden (1980) states that the predominant characteristics of evangelicalism emphasized by the First Great Awakening were the importance of being converted to Christianity, the pursuit of a pious life, and abstaining from the acquisition of wealth. George Whitefield has been credited for bringing together different revivals in the colonies such as the pietistic awakenings among the Dutch in New Jersey, the revival in Jonathan Edwards's congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the sacramental seasons among the

Presbyterians in the Middle Colonies (Marsden, 1980; Noll, 2003). Much of this was a reaction to Enlightenment thinking and the writings of many of the western philosophers. The Enlightenment era refers to an intellectual movement that advocated rationality as a means of establishing a more reliable system of ethics and knowledge (Elwell, 1996). The intellectual leaders of this movement viewed themselves as leading the world toward progress and out of a long period of darkness and irrationality, superstition and oppression (Noll, 2001).

Charles Finney led the Second Great Awakening in the early 19th century. The main tenet of the message was the belief that one can experience Heaven while on Earth. For that reason, the movement inspired several secular reform movements such as observing the Sabbath, temperance, and public education (Noll, 2001). It was also responsible for the moral values in the North clashing with the social values in the South; southern evangelicals were at odds with northern abolitionists over the issue of slavery (Raboteau, 1980, 1984, 1995, 2001).

During the early 19th century northern abolitionists believed that the nation's slaves should be freed immediately. Black abolitionists Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and others spoke publicly and boldly against southern slavery and northern racism. Southern evangelicalism became more narrow-minded as it was being attacked by northern abolitionists (Noll, 2001; T. L. Smith, 1957); America was being challenged to end slavery.

It was also during this time that the growing African population led American slaveholders to consider Christianizing the slaves (Raboteau, 1980). Some white Southerners believed the slaves needed to be Christianized to absolve them of their perceived heathen ways. But at the same time, they feared the slaves would lay claim to their right to be free according to the Bible (Noll, 2001; Raboteau, 1980). Nevertheless, slaveholders did Christianize the slaves, but there was a three-part strategy to guard against slaves seeing their Christian liberty as

freedom from slavery and revolt against their masters. In fact, prior to being baptized, Francis Le Jau, a missionary and pastor, required slaves to commit to the following baptismal vow:

You declare in the presence of God and before this congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of any design to free yourself from the Duty and Obedience you owe to your Master while you live, but merely for the good of your soul and to partake of the Graces and Blessings promised to the Church of Jesus Christ (p. 24)

The clergy knew that, as Christians, they had a spiritual responsibility to the slaves since a major element of their faith was sharing the gospel, assuring the slaves of their destiny in the afterlife. However, they also wanted to control their destiny on Earth for their own personal gain.

Northern evangelicals were united by the issue of slavery. However, after the Emancipation Proclamation, they began having theological debates and denominational disputes (Balmer, 1989). The publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859 had gone somewhat unnoticed, but after the war evangelicals began to recognize that it had significant implications for a literal interpretation of the Bible. American Protestants, especially in the North, waged intense battles over biblical inspiration (Noll, 2001). Conservative evangelical B. B. Warfield and theologians at Princeton Seminary reaffirmed that the Bible was divinely inspired and was inerrant. However, Noll goes on to say that liberal theologians such as Charles A. Briggs at Union Theological Seminary took a less strict view (Noll, 2001). Despite their differing views, Protestants are united by the same basic tenets of faith, and those beliefs made them evangelical (McGrath, 1995; Noll, 2001; Smith & Emerson, 1998; Sweet, 1984).

According to the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, conservative Protestant evangelical Christianity is often characterized by several specific tenets (Elwell, 1996). They

believe in the authority of the Bible and that it is an unquestionable source of God's revelation. They believe the Bible is the final authority and is to be believed over science or any other source. Christ's resurrection is seen as a historical event, and one must believe His redeeming work on the cross as the means for salvation and the forgiveness of sins. Sharing one's faith in salvation through Jesus Christ with others through both organized missionary work and personal evangelism is a distinct characteristic as well. What separates conservative and liberal evangelicals is what each believes about the reliability of scripture (Elwell, 1996). Is there a denial of the supernatural so much so that inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible are not a possibility (Zuck, 1991)? However one tends to answer that question typically determines whether they have a conservative or liberal view of the Bible. A related issue, also divisive with regards how scripture is interpreted in terms of the role of women in the church.

Egalitarians and Complimentarians: Two Biblical Views of Women in Ministry

Historically, the role of women in local evangelical assemblies has always been a matter of debate within Christendom (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002; Gallagher, 2003; Higginbotham, 1992, 1993; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Marsden, 1984; Noll et al., 1994; Raboteau, 1984; Zikmund, Lummis, & Chang, 1998). Throughout the 1800s and well into the 1920s, evangelical Christian women frequently served as pastors, missionaries, and traveling proselytizers (Ingersoll, 2003). Women, like men, received calls from God to serve, and their leadership within evangelism fueled the moralistic drives for temperance, abolition, and women's suffrage that were an essential part of feminism's first wave, says Ingersoll.

The views concerning the role of women in local church ministry has historically been broken into two distinct groups: those who believed women should be permitted to hold positions of pastoral authority in the church and those who believed that only men should be

permitted to hold such positions in the local church (Clouse et al., 1989). Those who believe women should be restricted from holding an authoritative, pastoral role in the church embrace what is known as the traditional, or complementarians, view (Piper & Grudem, 1991). On the other hand, those who believe women should possess the ability to occupy all positions of leadership within the church embrace what is referred to as the evangelical feminist, or progressive view, says Piper and Grudem. Biblical feminists have a high view of scripture and believe the Bible teaches full equality of men and women without any regards to role distinction (Piper and Grudem, 1991). According to Clouse, et al. (1989), Protestant religious leaders did not always subscribe solely to all aspects of one view or the other. There were many traditionalist evangelicals that prohibited any type of ministerial service by women. Piper and Grudem say traditionalist evangelicals believe the Bible teaches full equality of men and women, in their essence. But there are distinct role differences. Others allowed women to serve as lay or associate ministers as long as they were not ordained. Another observation among evangelicals was the variety of opinions that existed regarding ordaining women in ministry (Kostenberger, Schreiner, & Baldwin, 1995). Traditionalists refused to ordain women as ministers, mainly because of their interpretation of 1 Timothy 2, in which the Bible prohibits women from the office of pastor (Piper & Grudem, 1991), while others advocated equal access to the ministry (Kostenberger, et al.).

The debate about gender issues tends to focus on a few passages in the New Testament in which traditionalists and evangelical feminists use different hermeneutical principles to interpret the passages and ultimately come up with different views regarding women in ministry.

Pentecost (1958) states that the literal method of interpretation used by traditionalists assigns to each word the same meaning it would have in normal, ordinary usage, whether writing, speaking,

or thinking. It is called the grammatical-historical method to emphasize the fact that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations. Kostenberger et. al. says evangelical feminists typically include the above methods used by traditionalists but also make room for reading into the text their personal meanings as well as experience.

One of the predominant arguments evangelical feminists use is that the relationship between slave and master is similar to that of husband and wife, founding the passage in Galatians 3:28, which says, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* In Christ there was to be no distinction of class, race, or sex. All were considered equal. Evangelical feminists say that those who believe slavery was wrong but believe men should have authority over their wives are being inconsistent. It is highly likely if those same persons were living 150 years ago, biblical feminists say, those same people would probably be the ones fighting against abolitionists (Keener, 1992). Traditionalists make the assertion that to parallel the role of women with slavery is to assume God ordained slavery, which is clearly not a teaching substantiated by Scripture. Slavery was not a part of the creation story and the role of wife and husband is seen separately, thus the argument for women's limited role in the church and slavery are mutually exclusive (Johnston, 1979).

How then do we deal with the demands of Scripture that seem to challenge our culture, when at the same time we know that Scripture does not condone any one culture over others? Whichever side of the debate one falls on, it is certain the church has not always been on the right side of cultural questions. This is certainly the case with regard to race and slavery.

Slavery, Race, and Women in Religious Social Context

It is widely known that the conservative evangelical church played a very significant role in race relations and slavery (Reimers, 1965). However, in order to understand the race and

slavery problem in Protestantism, Reimers (1965) suggests that it must be understood that churches are social institutions that are shaped by the culture in which they exist. People are members of a variety of social groups and those groups certainly influence and pressure individuals to take a stand on one side of the social problem or the other. Reimers stated that many of the positions taken by white Protestant churches regarding the race and slavery debate were generally those of white America. There has always been the misconception that southern slaveholders were primarily Christians (Weatherford, 1957). According to Raboteau (2001) and Weatherford (1957), that was not the case.

Much of the consternation came from slaveholders who were not Christians, but rather landowners who stood to lose much economically if slavery was abolished. Whether or not for economic reasons, the fact remained that slavery was the principal social and moral issue of the day, and evangelical Protestant leaders weighed in on the topic. Many southern Christians felt that slavery stood as an institution of God (Emerson & Smith, 2000). It was also stated that southerners gave biblical reasons why slavery was sanctioned and ordained by God (Noll, 2001).

In their own way southern white Christians convinced themselves the church should not engage in political affairs and therefore, since it was law, Christians must obey civil authorities, and those authorities permitted and protected slavery (Noll, Bebbington, & Rawlyk, 1994). They believed the church's role was to concentrate on spiritual matters, such as evangelizing lost souls, rather than political matters. And many felt that anyone who supported abolitionist ideas were atheists, socialists, communists, and red republicans (Emerson & Smith, 1999, 2000). The decision to exclude themselves from public debate regarding this social and moral ill ultimately helped to further distinguish themselves as a more conservative evangelical arm of the Protestant church while the problems and the conditions of the slaves continued to fester.

Family life for blacks during the nineteenth century was always uncertain because of the threat of selling family members to other plantation owners. Ultimately, black families existed and thrived at the mercy of their masters. The plight of being a slave was so grim that Ellen Craft, a woman who escaped from slavery with her husband, stated, “I had much rather starve in England, a free woman, than be a slave for the best man that ever breathed upon the American continent” (Loewenberg & Bogin, 1977, p. 107). Black women’s response to their desperate situations often brought forth a spirituality and commitment that allowed them to persist even under the worst circumstances. As they expressed their righteous discontent with the society in which they lived, they referenced and worshiped God because they knew He was the only One who could deliver them from the grip of slavery.

The Social and Historical Dynamics of the Black Church

Most church history books have historically overlooked the creation, the contribution and the role of the black church in the larger context of evangelical Christianity (Gilkes, 2001; Higginbotham, 1993; McKenzie, 1996; Perry, 1998; Raboteau, 1980, 1984, 1995, 2001; Sernett, 1991, 1999; Turner Jr., 1989; Wiggins, 2005; Wimbush, 2003; Woodson, 1921). Usually, it is necessary for the reader to obtain supplementary works to gain a broad view of the Protestant evangelical black church. There have been several works produced that have been instrumental in bridging the knowledge gap. Their seminal and complimentary works are foundational to many scholars knowing the history and nature of the institution we call the black church. Since this study is about understanding how black evangelical women persist in their ministry practice, it is crucial to know black religious history beginning with Africans first setting foot on American soil. The spiritual journey of the African during colonial times until the present ultimately—directly or indirectly—informs the practice of black men and women who have

worked in the past or are currently working in a Christian ministry context. There have been more radical views of the history of the black church, such as Gayraud S. Wilmore's, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*. However, in this section I will use the works of Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*; and C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* to discuss the historical and social dynamics of the black church.

According to Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), Raboteau (1980) and Woodson (1921), African-American slaves were denied the right to practice the religion of their ancestors. Some African slaves were Muslims and many of them believed in a variety of forms of ancestor worship that were more similar to Christianity than Europeans understood (Woodson, 1921). Slave owners viewed African religion as a combination of witchcraft and superstition. As a result they would not allow the slaves to practice their form of worship because they were fearful that the slaves might use it to put spells or curses on them, says Raboteau. Most slave owners believed that Christianizing their slaves would make them more passive (Reimers, 1965). They looked to Christianizing the slaves as a means of saving the slaves from their barbarous past. Although they were slaves at the moment, slave owners ensured them of their salvation in the next life by making them Christians.

The Christianity taught to slaves by their masters was very different from what the masters practiced themselves (Raboteau, 1980; Woodson, 1921). They omitted the implicit and explicit messages in the New Testament about individual freedom and responsibility. Instead, slave owners used the Bible selectively for their own personal gain. Nevertheless, the slaves combined what they could remember from their old religions with what their masters told them

about Christianity and what they learned about Christianity from literate Blacks and antislavery whites (Raboteau, 1980). According to Raboteau, from this information they developed their own form of Christianity, which was a religion of hope and liberation.

In the slave version of Christianity, Christ and Moses played almost equal roles as heroes who had led their people to freedom (Raboteau, 2001). Black religion was very much anchored in the real world rather than in life after death. Slaves learned to phrase the words of their prayers and spirituals to speak of salvation and freedom in heaven, but, clearly, they were praying and singing about deliverance from slavery in this world, not the next (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Raboteau, 1980; Woodson, 1921).

The black church came into existence because of the racism of the white churches in the United States (Watley, 1993). Racism, as it is seen through the eyes of blacks, has been and continues to be the heresy and the major church-dividing issue since Christianity was first preached to the slaves. Although some scholars would argue that racism was not the direct cause of the development of the black church, others would agree that racism is the reason for the existence of the black religious enterprise (Watley, 1993).

The black evangelical church challenged the conscience of the white evangelical church regarding its misuse of scripture, the pulpit, and the government to maintain a separate and unequal society. For many blacks, religion has always been primarily a spiritual endeavor and a refuge from the harsh social conditions to which they were often subjected. During the Civil Rights movement, black churches had a very high profile. The image of black clergy and church members on the front lines, on Capitol Hill, and protesting on the streets have been etched into the hearts and minds of the world.

According to Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), there are seven major historic black denominations that make up what is known as the black church: the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church; the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated (NBC); the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (NBCA); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Although most blacks have traditionally belonged to the aforementioned denominations, it is important to note that blacks were also members of predominantly white groups, such as the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, United Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches (Reimers, 1965). Nevertheless, in their longitudinal study, Lincoln and Mamiya defined the black church as those independent, historic, and totally black-controlled denominations, which were founded after the Free African Society of 1787 and which constituted the core of black Christians. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) stated that black church membership at the end of the 19th century was around 2.7 million out of a population of 8.3 million, and the Baptist church was the largest denomination at that time.

By the latter half of the 19th century and until after World War I, southern blacks were migrating to cities in the North and the South (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The southern migration put a strain on the resources of northern urban churches. As a result of the urbanization that was taking place, blacks were exposed to and were presented with new religious alternatives such as Catholicism (primarily because of parochial schools) and different versions of Judaism and Islam (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). During the formative years, black churches were primarily Protestant because blacks did not have much contact with Roman Catholicism outside of Maryland and Louisiana (Raboteau, 1980).

During the 20th century, the black church was once again challenged as a rather conservative and what some would call an apolitical institution (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Secular organizations, like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People depended on black church members and the support from local ministers (C. E. Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Raboteau, 2001) to advance their agenda. Some more radical black ministers and theologians were inspired by the teachings of the Nation of Islam, also known as Black Muslims, which emphasized the need to change the existing political economic structure and human relationships in society (C. E. Lincoln, 1994).

Watley (1993) holds that the existence of the black church is a witness to the long tenure of the African-American religious endeavor within U.S. religious history, a reality that has too often been ignored in the literature on the subject.

The exclusionary nature of racist white American scholarship has meant that African-American religious history is either not mentioned at all or treated as if the African-American churches were some historically late sect or corrupt deviations from the 'legitimate' mainstream churches (Watley, 1993, p. 9).

Although this may be true of the transgressions of white American scholarship, until recently black scholarship has also been guilty of omitting the story of black women as they worked alongside men in creating and sustaining the black church. Until recently, she is not only glaringly omitted from the record of American church history, but also from the records of Black church history.

Race and Gender Disparities in Ministry Preparation and Practice

Research shows that black women seem to aspire to careers that are traditionally dominated by women (Evans & Herr, 1991). Although this may be true in some cases, it is not

necessarily true for women who leave lucrative careers to respond to a call to enter into vocational ministry, a male-dominated field. Pennington (1999) investigated the lives of six black women who were quitting their jobs, getting off the fast track, or downshifting, that is, working so many hours or transitioning to a slower paced profession (Pennington, 1999). She recorded the narratives of these women who described their journey as taking a leap of faith (the dominant theme) by leaving their jobs on short notice for an uncertain future. In each woman's narrative, they referred to this move away from their lucrative careers and into ministry opportunities as responding to a *calling*.

Women who chose to respond to a call and pursue the ministry with full knowledge that it is a male-dominated career are called adventuresome (Steward et al., 1983). Steward et al's study revealed that in most cases the women were the first in their families to choose to go into the ministry and half of them came from professional families. The racial makeup of Steward et al's research population is unknown, and as a result they treated women as a monolithic group. According to Johnson-Bailey and Tisdell (1998), most literature presents white women as representative of all women while omitting the experiences of women of other races and ethnicities. Therefore, in this section I will discuss relevant literature that informs this study, and I will also look at the race and gender disparities among black women in their ministry preparation and practice.

Black Evangelical Women Serving in the Margins

Church scholars and historians (Butler, 1984; Carey, 1976; J. A. Carpenter, 1984; Emerson & Smith, 1999, 2000; Eskridge, n. d.; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Marsden, 1980; Martin, 2000; Noll et al., 1994; Perry, 1998; Raboteau, 1980, 1984, 1995, 2001; Sernett, 1999; Sweet, 1984; Wimbush, 2003), Womanist, evangelical feminist scholars, and other theologians

(Frederick, 2003; Grant, 1989; Higginbotham, 1992, 1993; Ingersoll, 2003; Nesbitt, 1997; Riggs, 2003; Sullins, 2000; Wiggins, 2005) have stated that while the foundations of American history and Christianity in particular were being formulated, the history of women in ministry was not a simple story of progress, especially as it related to black women.

Wiggins (2005) stated that recently there has been an increasing interest in the religiosity and spirituality of black women in various contexts. In most cases the essays and texts give visibility to the roles women have played as co-creators of the institutions and the religious culture of the church.

Higginbotham (1993) examined the black Baptist church and documented the lives of women whose vision, sacrifice, faith, and intelligence served the poor and built schools, promoted self-help, and shaped the forces that would challenge racial (Frederick, 2003) and gender subordination. The literature gives an account of the women's interaction with black men in pressing for racial equality and with northern white Baptist women in championing gender equality. Women started and served congregations and some even preached (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002; Carpenter, 1989; Frederick, 2003; Grant, 1989; Higginbotham, 1992, 1993; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin, 2000; Nesbitt, 1997; Raboteau, 1995; Riggs, 2003; Sernett, 1999; Sullins, 2000; Wiggins, 2005; Zikmund et al., 1998). Although they have been co-creators of the church and they worked alongside the men for racial uplift, women, according to Martin (2000), have never received unqualified support as leaders in the church. Gender had multiple meanings within black Baptist theology (Hackett, 1995). Blacks as well as other Americans believed there were innate differences between the sexes. However, unlike their white church sisters, black women were never portrayed as fragile and impressionable by nature in the black Baptist church. Although many of the women were resigned to work in the nursery and teach

women, youth, and children in Sunday school classes, they knew they had the ability to influence men. These women turned to the Bible to argue for their rights, and they held men accountable using the same text that legitimized their arguments for racial equality (Higginbotham, 1993). Nevertheless, their frustration grew with their limited roles. Black women gave voice to their concerns within denominational auxiliaries by founding such organizations as the Baptist Women's Convention (Higginbotham, 1993), an auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention.

Within the Women's Convention, Higginbotham stated, a rising gender consciousness led black Baptist women to be separate regarding gender matters but allied with black men in the struggle for racial advancement. The women were separate regarding race but allied with white women in the struggle for gender equality. Moreover, she says that when it came to the issues between poor blacks and middle-class white women, the church women practiced a "politics of respectability." They "rallied poor working class Blacks to the cause of racial self-help while on the other hand risked class tensions within the Black community by adopting values that would command the white community's respect" (p. 2). Clearly, these women were living within multiple race, gender, and class realities. The church was both a site of struggle as well as their salvation.

Womanist Theologians and Ministry Preparation

On seminary campuses where women were being trained for ministry service, black women theologians began to address the issues relative to the black woman, her community, family, and church. Over the years men have used the Bible as a triple threat to keep women in their places: It was used in terms of her gender (sexism), her race (racism), and her class (classism) (Grant, 1989). Grant goes on to say that as a result, black women experienced Jesus differently than what was intended by the teaching and preaching of men but more specifically

white men. Through liberating Jesus and themselves from the bondage of this teaching, black women were able to create a space that spoke to their spirit as well as to their social concerns. Womanist theology was being established as the antithesis of white feminism.

Womanist theology is a critical reflection upon black women's place in the world that God has created and takes seriously black women's experience as human beings who are made in the image of God (Carpenter, 1989). It affirms and critiques the positive and negative attributes of the church, the black community, and the larger society (Cannon, 1988, 1995; Riggs, 2003; Sanders, 1995; Thomas, 2004). Black women challenged the issue of traditional submission and the concept of women's church work using literary works by secular feminists, literary authors, and women's narratives (Carpenter, 1989; Grant, 1989; Higginbotham, 1992; Riggs, 2003). They not only fought for their race, but for themselves as well.

As a result of the documented sexism of the church as defined by many of the Womanist theologians, scholar and theologian Wiggins (2005) wants to know the answer to two primary questions: "Why are women so faithful to the black church?" and "How is the black church faring in the eyes of women?" The purpose of her research was to offer insight into some of the issues and concerns facing black women in the church. Unlike the women Higginbotham (1992) brought to the forefront in her historical account of women highlighted in *Righteous Discontent*, the women are not obligated to look to the black church as the only means of establishing and engaging in the public sphere. With the development of organizations like the NAACP, the Urban League, and various women's clubs and sororities, black women had other avenues whereby they could advocate for various causes and engage in public debate (Frederick, 2003). As a result of these changes, their expectations of the black church are different. Nevertheless, there remain certain consistencies regarding how they view women in ministry.

Wiggins states that the women in her sample were ambivalent about their need to challenge the status quo (male leadership) regarding more women clergy or women in positions of pastoral leadership. While the women indicated they had an appreciation for women ministers, they were not motivated to address or tackle the proverbial stained glass ceiling that is evident in most Protestant denominations. This research bears witness to the fact that Womanist doctrine has not made its way into the pews of mainstream churches, and for the most part it has not changed the power structure between the sexes. However, it does move black women scholars and theologians to empower themselves and develop their own sphere of influence (Hackett, 1995) by making the invisible (racism and sexism) visible.

Gender and Color-blindness: Race and Gender Issues in the Ministry

Although the purpose of the Burns and Cervero's (2002) study was to investigate the power and politics found in pastors' ministry practice, their data revealed race and gender as a specific point of struggle for several of their respondents. They interviewed 11 pastors' in the presbytery. They used constant and comparative data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in their qualitative study. The sample population break down was: seven white males, two white females, and two black males. The women and black men were in an associate position in their organization. Although all of the respondents indicated they learned the politics of ministry practice through painful experiences and disillusionment, the two black men and two white women respondents each identified some element of discrimination based on race and/or gender as a point of concern. Burns and Cervero (2002) suggested that if churches and denominations are interested in ministering effectively in a multicultural environment, it is crucial that they understand the perspective and experiences of the people within their congregations and seminary programs. Burns and Cervero state that church leaders, those who possess relational

power, make the wrong assumption that their situation is normative and, therefore, tend to be blindsided by the painful experiences of those they hire and work alongside.

It may be safe to assert that not only was there an issue of the white male respondents being color-blind (Emerson & Smith, 1999, 2000), but there was also an issue of them being gender-blind (Johnson-Bailey, 2001) as well. Color-blindness is the idea that there is a failure to acknowledge the existence of racism in society. In a society where gender-blindness is a reality, gender is seen as a white woman's issue and it describes the activities undertaken without any regard for gender (Johnson-Bailey, 1999). In the case of the Burns and Cervero study, the two elephants in the room that seem to be constant in the ministry—racism and sexism—were not seen by the white pastors. This study attempts to investigate both the consequences of color-blindness (racism) and gender-blindness (sexism) in the ministry and how black women learn to negotiate the political dynamics Burns and Cervero says are inherent in ministry.

One study has been done that speaks specifically to the issue of sexism in the ministry. Ingersoll (2004) looked at white evangelical feminists and their struggles and strategies as a minority within evangelicalism. Her study documents the tremendous amount of force it took for the men to move women to the margins as well as the multiple ways in which evangelical women have been in the process of leading an uprising against this for the past 30 years. Ingersoll performed formal interviews with 44 self-identified evangelical feminists. Most of them were faculty members and/or leaders within the movement for biblical equality. Her work was extensive in that she reviewed the massive archives of Christians for Biblical Equality (one of the largest evangelical feminist organizations), and visited a wide range of evangelical churches, colleges, and conferences to gather more information about the women and the movement.

Her study revealed that the woman issue is a clear divider in our time. Previously, evangelicals' most public battle was defending biblical literalism as a result of Darwin. But gender issues have become dominant, says Ingersoll, as illustrated by a recent dispute at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In the mid-1990s, after the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention by conservatives, Mohler (the president of the college) was brought in to head up its seminary, where he introduced a series of new litmus tests into the job interview process. In the past, when hiring faculty members, the seminary was only concerned with whether the candidate believed in biblical inerrancy. However, Mohler added a series of questions about the candidate's views on abortion, homosexuality, and women's ordination. Candidates who agreed with every point but believed in women's ordination were blocked from being hired.

The Ingersoll study revealed an incident surrounding the Seminary's Dean of the School of Social Work. The dean was concerned that her school would lose accreditation because the hiring procedures would prevent her from hiring enough tenured faculty. She went public with her concerns and was eventually forced out. The dean indicated that tensions were so intense at the school that faculty members were openly weeping at a meeting with the president, and one professor left the room to vomit.

Ingersoll also documented women pastors being barred from conducting rituals such as baptisms at male-led churches and being prohibited from attending pastoral retreats. She interviewed female seminary students who were accused of being apostates for asking such questions in class as "Why is God father and not mother." Many of them ended up quitting the seminary or taking antidepressants to weather the oppressive atmosphere. Ingersoll says the

result is that at schools affiliated with the Christian College Coalition, only 19 percent of senior positions are filled by women.

Ingersoll says Biblical feminists spend an inordinate amount of energy proving to their community that they do not threaten the conservative evangelical worldview. Initially, Christians for Biblical Equality sought endorsements from prominent male evangelists to validate their views, and the group took strong positions against homosexuality, abortion, and sex outside of marriage that alienated many of its own members. It's clear from Ingersoll's research that there are two streams of thought within biblical feminism: One strand is more accommodating, desiring only to lift the glass ceiling; and the other has the potential to challenge the heart of conservative evangelical thought.

Unquestionably, Ingersoll's study contributes to the body of literature regarding women who self-identify as evangelical feminists and who are part of the biblical equality movement. The current research is different from Ingersoll's study in that the sample population in this study are black women who are not a part of a movement. But rather, they are women who desire to go to seminary to be treated fairly and have the same respect their male counterparts experience naturally and not have to deal with both covert racism and sexism in their ministry preparation and practice. The purpose of this study was not to struggle over whether a woman should be able to hold a position as senior pastor, but rather to be instructive to those in leadership by shedding light on her experiences as a co-learner and practitioner. As previously stated, black women are casualties of both gender and color-blindness and live in multiple realities.

Affirmative Action Cover Girls

A point found in the literature that is related to women in the workplace but that is also relevant to the experiences of women in ministry is that black women are expected to assimilate

into the dominate culture, say Bell and Nkomo (2003). They must divest themselves of any semblance of “blackness”. Bell and Nkomo say “white dominated organizations often make cultural assimilation the price of acceptability for racial minorities” (p. 13). Although mainstream America has made efforts to enhance diversity in the workplace (Hanscome & Cervero, 2003; Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998), the church maintains a long history of being myopic as it relates to race and gender. Socially conscious evangelical church leaders often hire at least one person of another race and/or gender to address their diversity concerns. Among those hired are evangelical black women. Once employed, they must often learn to negotiate politically and strategically in an all-male, often all-white conservative context.

Black women who find themselves in a white-dominated context are viewed as what Bell and Nkomo (2003) call affirmative action cover girls. They are placed in highly visible positions that give the impression the organization is committed to diversity. However, within the day-to-day operations, they are constantly jumping intellectual and spiritual hoops to prove they are qualified to do the job they were hired (and called of God) to do. Bell and Nkomo refer to the phenomenon as “racialized sexism. As black women, they are subjected to a particular form of sexism shaped by racism and racial stereotyping. Getting in the door is not the problem; it is overcoming the obstacles of the glass ceiling (Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998), or rather, the stained-glass ceiling for women in ministry.

Studies (Wiggins, 2005) have shown that even when a majority of members in the congregation feel a woman is as qualified as a man to lead in an executive leadership capacity; those same members may also perceive that hiring a female minister would cause conflict among some members of the congregation. Therefore, the hiring committee will usually choose a man over an equally qualified woman in order to keep the peace. This is even at the expense of the

hiring committee's own personal preference. Clearly, women in the workplace must learn how to counteract the negative perceptions of their credibility and professional aptitude because of their race and gender (Brown, Cervero, & Johnson-Bailey, 2000).

Sexism in the black church is the primary point of struggle for black women in ministry as evidenced by the literature written by Womanist theologians and black church scholars (Higginbotham, 1992; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin, 2000; Perry, 1998; Raboteau, 1995; Wiggins, 2005; Riggs, 2003). A personal critique of black male church leaders is that oppressions are seen hierarchically, with racism believed to be the ultimate and in some cases the only oppression that African-American people face. Issues of sexism by male leadership in the church are often seen as an irritant and ultimately are dismissed. Women make up approximately 70 percent of the church membership (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002), and they are the largest contributors in terms of time and finances. Yet, they lack a significant voice in the black church. Ironically, after fighting so hard for recognition and after obtaining a certain ministry status, it was found that women were more likely to leave the ministry after ordination because of discrimination and few employment opportunities (Zikmund et al., 1998). Thus, women who find themselves called to ministry may eventually leave the ministry to seek employment in other helping professions, or alternatively, go to another denomination that hires and promotes women.

Interestingly, according to Carpenter (1989), black women themselves may be part of the problem in the issue of gender equality, especially as it relates to the black church. Carpenter (1989) made the following observation as to why, traditionally, black women in the church are silent conspirators in maintaining sexism in the black church: Black women do not want to be "destabilizers" of the black male leadership role...it is the only place a black man can be in

control and not be emasculated; the role of black men and women is already a major issue in the black community; and women find comfort in the role of male pastors, especially when there is a lack of a male presence in the home.

The women who emerge today from the black evangelical tradition are influenced by both its history and the contemporary demands of society. In many cases, their walk of faith is a struggle for personal salvation as well as social justice (Frederick, 2003). To be both socially and morally conscious is a tension that black women have embraced since the beginning of established religion in the black church, says Frederick.

Chapter Summary

As previously stated, the purpose of this research is to investigate how black women learn to negotiate the power and politics in their ministry preparation and practice. It is not to make a case for women to assume the role of senior pastor or even ordination, but rather to open dialogue regarding the issue of racism and sexism in the church while giving these women a voice. Therefore, it was necessary to review the relevant literature that serves as the backdrop to this study. There were three major sections in this study: Race, Slavery, and Christian Protestant Evangelicalism; The Black Church; and Race and Gender Disparities in Black Women's Ministry Preparation and Practice. In the first section, I gave a historical account of race and slavery by reviewing relevant Christian protestant evangelicalism literature. Also, because of the role of the black church in the lives of black women, I gave an account of the social and historical dynamics of the black church. In the third and final section, I discussed the literature relevant to the race and gender disparities found in black women's ministry preparation and practice and determined how several studies inform the current research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical black women in ministry preparation and practice. The questions that guided this study were:

1. How do power relationships based on race and gender affect the ministry preparation and practice of evangelical black women?
2. How do black evangelical women ministers learn to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical church?

Qualitative methodology was determined to be the best approach to explore the phenomenon of evangelical women and how they learn to navigate through the landmines of race and gender in their ministry preparation and practice. This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the qualitative methodology chosen for this study. More specifically, an explanation of the research approach and rationale, the design of the study, data collection and analysis, and the issues surrounding the reliability and validity of the findings will be addressed. In the concluding section, the limitations of the study will be delineated.

Research Approach and Rationale

Individuals do not live in a vacuum, but within the context of their life experiences, accumulated knowledge, and surroundings (Merriam, 1997). Merriam says that researchers working in the social sciences are interested in studying human behavior and the social world inhabited by human beings that makes it difficult to try to explain human behavior in simple

measurable terms. Measurements tell us how often or how many people behave in a certain way but they do not always adequately answer the question “Why?” (Crotty 1998) Research that attempts to increase our understanding of why things are the way they are in our social world and why people act the way they do is qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define qualitative research as: an activity situated in the world of everyday life of the participants with an attempt to make sense of the interplays while interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people attribute to them within their natural environment.

Since qualitative researchers are interested in understanding various constructions and interpretations of reality that are in flux and that change over time (Merriam & Simpson, 2000), individuals engaging in qualitative research must be open to multiple ways of viewing what they are studying and comfortable with the assumptions of the qualitative approach. They must also be willing to engage in collaborative work with the study participants and present findings from the participants’ point of view (Crotty 1998).

The advantage of using qualitative research is that questions grow out of the process itself, rather than requiring a set of clearly defined questions, independent and dependent variables, and a controlled research environment as is typically found in quantitative studies. Several characteristics are inherently found in qualitative research, says Merriam (2000): (a) the researchers’ goal is to understand the participants’ world construct; (b) the researcher is the principle instrument; (c) the research is inductive; (d) and it is descriptively rich.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

This study’s main purpose was to The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical black women in ministry preparation and practice. Therefore, in order to gain an understanding, I needed to hear them describe their

experiences. What made it an unpleasant experience? How did they know it was directly related to their gender and/or race? What did it feel like? What were the options they felt they had or did not have? How or what did they do in light of their struggles? How did they maintain a sense of normalcy? These women's realities are constructed as a result of their interaction within their social contexts. Consequently, their experiences are directly related to their race, gender, concept of self, and their worldview, variables of which qualitative research seeks to access and understand (Patton, 2002).

The role of the "researcher as the instrument" is limited because the instrument is human and, therefore, fallible. As with any research instrument, the researcher can influence the validity and reliability of the research study. Mistakes are made, opportunities are missed, and personal biases can be viewed as interference (Merriam, 2000). However, the researcher as the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data can respond to any situation and maximize opportunities while collecting and producing meaningful information. Also, the researcher as an instrument is typically aware of personal biases, assumptions, and values and how these elements may influence the research course of action. Lather (1991) presented the idea that all research is value-laden and that the researcher should be self-reflexive throughout the research process. Therefore, I need to constantly ask myself, What are my motives? As a result of my own experiences as a black woman in ministry, how am I influencing the responses of my participants? In order for my study to be trustworthy, I must keep my proclivities in check.

Research that is inductive is not necessarily hypothesis-driven but is grounded in the literature and also addresses an important research question (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Usually the outcome of inductive research frequently forms the basis for a deductive research

hypothesis. For this reason, the process is foundational to theory building, says Merriam, when a theory does not already exist.

The characteristic of rich descriptions is a tremendous advantage of qualitative research. As previously suggested, the purpose of qualitative research is to attempt to make sense of people's behavior, constructions of what they experience, and how they view the world around them. In most cases, this is all done with the purpose of either addressing injustices, affecting policy, raising awareness, or simply improving practice.

The philosophical assumptions that underlie qualitative research are interpretive, postmodern/post-structural, and critical approach (Merriam, 2002). However, for the purpose of this study, attention will be given to the critical approach. Critical qualitative research has as its main goal the improvement of the human condition through seeking out contradictions and social inequalities in order to empower those who are marginalized (Merriam, 2002). Although the primary agenda of critical research is an emancipatory one, says Merriam, it was my desire that this study also accomplish as its overarching goal the empowerment of the participants while the research agenda is being carried out (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

Selection of Sample

A purposeful sample selection strategy was used for this study. A purposeful sample—also known as an information-rich (Patton, 2002) sample—is where the researcher uses what she knows about members of the population to choose those members who will yield the most information (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998), purposeful sample strategies are used because it is assumed that the researcher wants to discover or understand a particular dilemma or phenomenon. According to both Patton and Merriam, the following is a list of the various purposeful sampling strategies used to obtain information-rich cases in qualitative

research: typical, critical, theoretical, snowball or chain, opportunistic, confirming, disconfirming, criterion, homogeneous, maximum variation, extreme or deviant case, intensity, convenience, and combination or mixed purposeful. Given that the purpose of this study was to learn as much as possible about how black women learn to negotiate the power and politics in their ministry preparation and practice, chain sampling was utilized. Chain sampling typically asks well-situated people to identify other informants for the study at hand (Patton, 2002). Patton says that asking for the names of other potential participants causes the list to grow, or rather, snowball. Consequently, key names were mentioned over and over, at which point a small core of names converged and the women's experiences were repeated and saturation was met. This became the sample population to be studied.

For the purpose of this study, I purposefully selected black women who have gone to an evangelical conservative seminary and have been in a ministry position two or more years. The experiences of these women gave the necessary insight to the issues of gender, race, and power that matter most to this study because of the doctrinal beliefs regarding the role of women in ministry, the racial makeup of the conservative evangelical seminary, and the all-male environment of their ministry placement. Specifically, I used two criterion in selecting the sample for this study.

First, black women who have graduated from a conservative evangelical seminary were a primary criteria for participating in this study. Although there have been studies done on black women in the seminary and their placement in ministry (Carpenter, 1986), the focus was on women from a more liberal tradition, graduating with a master of divinity degree. Carpenter's quantitative analysis provided a "baseline descriptive analysis of the background, education and history" (p. 60) of these women. Her participants did cite sexism, male clergy, and rules

regarding the role of women in ministry as factors that inhibited their professionalization. The reason the current study was administered is because of the common knowledge of these factors, yet it endeavored to give voice to the women who graduated from an evangelical conservative seminary whose conservative theological training may or may not play a role in the ways they handle these power dynamics in their ministry practice. Many of the women in this sample had graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Counseling, Christian education, or Biblical studies. Traditionally, these degrees were sanctioned and granted to women and men alike without much retribution. However, several women earned the master of theology (ThM), which is traditionally granted to men. Prior to five or six years ago, women who sought this degree were seen as being subversive and having desires to pastor a congregation—a major concern in conservative milieus. Nevertheless, these women's experiences were unique and different from the more liberal seminary graduates because of their interpretation of scripture and how they practically applied it to their personal lives and their work. They also typically found themselves in conservative evangelical ministry placements where they were either the only or first woman or the only black woman on staff.

Consequently, the second criteria that had to be met is that the women must have been in their ministry placement a minimum of two years, whether or not they are currently practicing in ministry. Typically, the first year on the job can be somewhat of a honeymoon period where the women may view whatever concerns they have as an adjustment period. However, for some women, many of their problems may begin during the first year and continue to escalate throughout their tenure in the workplace. Nevertheless, they may have learned how to cope in order to persist in their context. The ministry turnover and burnout rate is typically five years, at

which point the women either leave ministry altogether or go to another ministry placement that may be more receptive of women in leadership (Lehman, 2002).

Once I was certain the women met the above criteria, I made contact with them via the telephone to further discuss the nature of this research and to secure their commitment to participate in the study. Fourteen women agreed to participate, however, two women never responded to my follow-up phone calls and one person did not fit the specified criteria. She had only been in full-time ministry for six months. More information about each participant is discussed in Chapter 4. After my follow-up phone call, I sent each participant a Letter of Introduction (Appendix A) along with two copies of the consent form (Appendix C) and a self-addressed stamped envelope. The participants signed both copies and returned a copy to me in the self-addressed envelope. They kept the other copy for their files. After I received the consent form from the participants, I called them to confirm a date and time to conduct the recorded telephone interview. However, when it was feasible, I scheduled a face-to-face meeting in a place that was convenient and comfortable for the participant.

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative methods for data collection play an important role of providing information useful to understanding the processes behind observed results. The qualitative methods most commonly used in evaluation can be classified in three broad categories: interviews, observation, and document analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1990) stress the value of collecting data from a variety of sources for the purpose of revealing variations and to confirm conceptualizations. For the purpose of this study interviews and document analysis was utilized.

The interview is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 1990). Interviews

are commonly used in survey designs and in exploratory and descriptive studies. Merriam and Simpson state there are ranges of approaches to interviewing, from completely unstructured in which the subject is allowed to talk freely about whatever they wish to highly structured in which the subject responses are limited to answering direct questions.

The quality of the data collected in an interview will depend on both the interview design and on the skill of the interviewer (Patton, 1990). At the outset of the interviewing process, Dey (1999) posited that the process may seem like a long conversation, however, but become “highly selective and focused on particular topics (and therefore much shorter) by its close” (p. 6). Being sensitive in the data-gathering phase of the study involves a keen sense of timing, of knowing when enough had been observed (Merriam, 1998). In interviewing, it means knowing when to allow for silence, when to probe more deeply, and when to change the direction of the interview. Every sense of the investigator must be alert to cues and nuances provided by the context (Merriam, 1998). In addition, a poorly designed interview may include leading questions or questions that are not understood by the subject. A poor interviewer may or may not consciously influence the responses that the subject makes. In either circumstance, the research findings can be influenced detrimentally.

The interview design and question phrasing can influence the depth and freedom with which a subject can respond. Some interviews encourage lengthy and detailed replies while others are designed to elicit short and specific responses. The degree of structure imposed on an interview will actually vary along a continuum (Patton, 1990). This study utilized the semi-structured interview format.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used for this study because they involved a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas (Patton, 1990). For instance, the open-ended nature of the question defines the topic under investigation, but also provides opportunities for both interviewer and participant to discuss some topics in more detail (Merriam, 1998). When the participant had difficulty answering a question or provided only a brief response, I used cues or prompts to encourage the participant to consider the question further. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer also has the freedom to probe the participant to elaborate on an original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the participant. Also, the researcher is able to see the participants' body language and the context in which the research is taking place. Although face-to-face or personal semi-structured interviews can be very labor intensive, they have been touted as the best way of collecting high quality data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Face-to-face interviews are preferable when the subject matter is very sensitive, if the questions are very complex or if the interview is likely to be lengthy. In the case of this study, six of the interviews were face to face.

Telephone interviews, which were used for this study, were an effective way of collecting data for five of the participants because they were only accessible via the telephone. A common concern regarding telephone interviews is the difficulty in observing the body language of the participant. Even though face-to-face interviews were the preferred method for this study, telephone interviews were used when the respondents to be interviewed were widely geographically distributed. A telephone recording device was purchased and used along with the interview guide that directed the flow of the interview.

Interview Guide

My interview guide (Appendix B) consisted of twenty questions that guided the discussion during each interview (Patton, 1990). Although it was prepared to insure that the same information is gathered from each person, there were no predetermined responses, and in semi-structured interviews as suggested above, I was free to probe and explore within these predetermined inquiry areas. Interview guides ensure good use of limited interview time; they make interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive; and they help to keep interactions focused. In keeping with the flexible nature of qualitative research designs, there were times I modified the interview guide to focus attention on areas of particular importance, or to exclude questions the I found to be unproductive for the goals of the research (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Another important element of the interview process is determining how the data will be gathered. Both field notes and a recorder were used for this study.

Recording the Interview and Using Field Notes

Patton says that a tape recorder is "indispensable" (1990, p. 348), while Lincoln and Guba "do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons" (1985, p. 241). Lincoln and Guba base their recommendation on the intrusiveness of tape recorders and the inevitable possibility of technical failure. Although these matters were definitely considered, the taping of the interview was more advantageous and captured data more succinctly than field notes. It made it easier for me, the researcher, to focus on the interview. I had a backup recording device, extra tapes, and batteries in case there was technical failure or other unforeseen problems with the primary device.

I realized the importance of making the participant comfortable and assuring them that their privacy will be guarded with the utmost care. I informed them that their interview will be transcribed by someone other than me. The transcription was double spaced and each line was assigned numbers for ease of making notes and analyzing the data.

Field notes are also considered as primary recording tools for the researcher doing qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Field researchers rely most heavily on the use of field notes, which are running descriptions of settings, people, activities, and sounds. Field notes may include drawings or maps. Acknowledging the difficulty of writing extensive field notes during an observation, Lofland and Lofland (1984) recommend jotting down notes that will serve as a memory aid during the interview. Therefore, rather than interrupting the participant I took notes to remind me of the questions I wanted to follow up with the participant either during or after the interview. In addition to field notes, some researchers use photographs and videotapes as means of accurately capturing a setting. However, for the purpose of this study I used both a recording device and taking field notes during the interview to ascertain good data collection practices.

When the interview was face to face, I made note of the environment as well (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Immediately after the interview and at the bottom of several of the participants field notes I wrote my reflections on what I observed in the face-to-face interviews—observations and thoughts about what else I might want to know, thoughts about my research and theory that may be relevant in helping me to articulate my findings.

Documents

Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that documents and records in qualitative research are important and relevant for qualitative research. Records are more official and formal which includes marriage certificates, driving licenses, and bank statements. However, documents such

as diaries, memos, letters, field notes are more personal and they are closer to speech (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln state that although the terms records and documents are used interchangeably there is a clear distinction between their meanings and utility.

Three of the participants provided relevant documents based on two guidelines. First, the document must be related in some way to the organizations published doctrinal and mission statements, core values statement and or purpose statements. These documents were instrumental in indicating what they believe about the role of women in ministry, as well as they were key identifiers of whether or not they are an evangelical church or organization.

Typically, most official documents described above are publicly available. However, due to protecting the identity of the women, I have provided sample statements (Appendix D) from seminaries that are similar statements found in the catalogue where the women attended.

Personal documents may include personal notes, journals, letters, and autobiographical information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Some of the women kept a journal documenting their ministry experiences. I requested copies to view their relevant entries, however they were unwilling to share that information. For all the documents I did have access to I reviewed the details to see how it informed this study. This type of data sources and the methods for accessing those sources makes the next step, data analysis, an easier process.

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) define qualitative data analysis as looking at data, organizing it into units that are manageable, while looking for patterns that stand out and will be important to tell others. Qualitative researchers typically use inductive data analysis which means that important themes emerge out of the data (Patton, 1990). Patton goes on to say more specifically, qualitative data analysis requires the researcher to be creative in terms of placing the raw data

into logical, meaningful categories; examine them as a whole, and then find a way to report and communicate the findings. This can be rather overwhelming since it may involve looking over raw data which could include hundreds of pages of interview transcripts, field notes and documents numerous times (LeCompte, 2000). Realizing it is just the nature of qualitative research and however daunting the task may be there are steps the researcher must take as they plow through the mounds of paper and hours of scouring through each interview line by line.

For the purpose of this study, the first step in the data analysis process was to utilize open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding is when the identification of the themes begins to emerge from the raw data. Strauss and Corbin point out why open coding is necessary "...to uncover, name, and develop concepts, we must open up the text and expose the thoughts, ideas and meanings contained therein" (p. 102). During this process I identified and named the categories as they were observed and placed them in the order in which they would be grouped. According to Strauss and Corbin this is called conceptualizing. It was crucial to look specifically for things pertinent to answering my research questions. My questions served as a guide as to what was coded and what was not coded. The goal was to create descriptive categories which aided in forming a preliminary framework for analysis (Patton, 1990). Words and phrases that appeared to be similar were grouped into the same category. As the raw data were broken down into manageable portions, I developed a scheme for identifying the data. Straus and Corbin (1990) call this next step in the coding process axial coding.

Axial coding means the researcher is relating codes to each other or rather discovering categories (p113). I reviewed the data line by line and when necessary I wrote notes to myself regarding thoughts and suggestions I might have as I go along in my analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend connecting codes through their own coding "paradigm" which is

arranging the codes according to “conditions, context, action, strategies and consequences” (p. 96). It has been stated that axial coding happens automatically without thinking about it—it’s the next natural step to organizing the data into themes. The third step is selective coding (Charmaz, 2002).

At this point it is assumed the researcher has exhausted the data in terms of developing any new codes. However, before going on I went back over the data several times to find codes I may have missed. At this point, I began to map out frequent categories or patterns that were identified. Ultimately, at this point Glaser and Strauss (1967) calls this “theoretical saturation” (p. 111)--the data does not offer any new directions, properties, categories, or relationships. This process is also called constant comparison, whereby the data is systematically examined and refined as differences emerge (Patton, 2002).

Validity and Reliability

The credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, and in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002). Although reliability and validity are treated separately in quantitative studies, these terms are not viewed separately in qualitative studies (LeCompte, 2000). Instead, terminology that encompasses both—such as credibility, trustworthiness, dependability, and confirmability—is used. The primary question researchers should be concerned with in terms of the validity and reliability of the findings in their study is: “How trustworthy are their findings?” Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that researchers should be mindful of making sure they can persuade their audiences that their research findings are worthy of attention. LeCompte 2000) says the researcher should continuously ask the questions: “Do I, the researcher, really understand and describe what I am studying in the same way the people who live it do? Did I really get it

right?” (p. 152). As a result of the debate that had gone on in previous years regarding the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam and Simpson (2000) say that researchers need alternative models appropriate to qualitative designs to ensure thoroughness without sacrificing the relevance of qualitative research.

To the best of my ability I took the necessary steps to ensure the validity and reliability in my study using four methods suggested by Merriam (1998). First, I used multiple data sources, with participants from who attended two different seminaries that had the same position on the role of women in ministry. One seminary is in the southwestern part of the United States and the other is in the southeastern part of the states. The ministries were the women were working at the time of the interviews were distributed through out the Midwest, Southwest and Southeast part of the states. Second, I confirmed my interpretations of data with five of the eleven participants, a process called member checks. This involved contacting participants and asking them if my analysis was correct and getting them to comment on the data analysis. Patton (2002) says participant reviews could potentially lead to new ideas or questions about the analysis and/or verify the findings. I also met with my methodologist during this time to make sure what I was seeing in the data was correct. The third method for ensuring reliability and validity involved asking other women who were not a part of the study—they did not fit the prescribed criteria—but were serving as volunteer leaders in ministry. This also gave me greater insight to if I was going in the right direction and it was a fresh way of looking at the data. Finally, as Merriam recommends, I reflected on my biases and subjectivities before beginning the study.

Subjectivities

Bogden & Biklen (1992) say all research is affected to some extent by the investigator's biases. A primary task of the researcher is to think through their own subjectivities and the

impact they have on the data collected. I end this chapter with where I enter this investigation of how evangelical black women learn coping strategies in their ministry preparation and practice. In this study, I shared some of the characteristics of my participants. I am a black female who attended an evangelical conservative seminary and had been in vocational ministry more than two years, 15 years to be exact. Thus, I shared the same race, gender, and career paths as the women in this study. In many cases, we also shared similar cultural background and social status as well as the experiences of marginality. Social science reveals a growing trend toward native anthropology and other insider studies by ethnic minorities of our own communities (Foster, 1994). As a black woman, I have had to ask myself: What impact will my subjectivities and biases have on the data I collect and on my analysis? In what ways will my personal and professional experiences impact my study? What are the problems and the possibilities associated with my participants and me being part of the same culture and community? Truths or meanings do not exist independently, but are created by the human mind on an individual and personal level. Instead of uncovering an objective truth, we create truth or meaning through engaging with realities in our world (Crotty, 1998). Thus, I believe being an insider enabled me to understand and identify with a number of the cultural perspectives the participants discussed in terms of their personal and professional lives and the challenges in both contexts. It has always been a major contention of mine that women who are on the outside do not have a clear view of what it means to be black, evangelical, and theologically conservative. Their critique has been through the use of a more non-biblical, liberal, and feminist worldview and, therefore, it provided a skewed view of black woman in an all-male conservative environment. However, one concern I did have as an insider was how my participants viewed me, and what impact I would have on their responses. As a result, I tried not to convey any signals—affirmative or

non-affirmative—so as not to influence the data-gathering process. I was consistently reflexive during this process. I realized, however, that no matter how much reflexive questioning I did, I was clear that who I am would influence the sample I drew and the data I gathered.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations of this study. First, this study did not speak for all black clergywomen in conservative evangelical contexts. However, it may have possibly been representative of the challenges that black clergywomen have encountered in their ministry preparation and practice. Second, the study was not designed to determine the differences between the challenges that black women, white women, and black men may encounter and the strategies they utilize to successfully negotiate power and politics. Finally, only black women who attended one of two conservative evangelical seminaries—one in Texas and the other in Georgia—were included in this study. I believe with these factors as my focus, my research can contribute considerably to the body of literature pertaining to black women in conservative evangelical seminaries and ministry organizations. The findings from this study could have implications for a better understanding of conservative evangelical black clergywomen in other parts of the country as well.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the nature of qualitative research and its efficacy in this proposed study. I discussed my sample population and how I carefully selected the participants with the goal of collecting rich, thick data (Patton, 2002). I also talked about how I guarded the women's privacy and respected them as individuals while participating in this study. I talked about the importance of the study being trustworthy and useful in most contexts similar to my area of concentration. I self-disclosed my subjectivities and how I believe my personal position

did or did not influence this study. I concluded this section discussing the perceived limitations of the study and its relevance to the population of black clergywomen as a whole.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

This chapter introduces the participants alphabetically and gives a brief description of their ministry context. Eleven evangelical black women agreed to participate in this study as outlined in Table 1. Each of the participants has attended a predominately white male conservative evangelical seminary and has been serving two or more years in vocational ministry. The study participants are referred to by a pseudonym. They range in age from late 20s to late 50s. Ten of the 11 women have bachelor's degrees in fields such as finance, education, sociology, marketing and management, and pre-med. One participant has a bachelor's degree in religion. Prior to attending seminary, they all had careers in a corporate context. Two of the women retired after 30-plus years in their field and have assumed a paid leadership position at their local churches. The position titles listed in Table 1 are the titles the women currently have, or they are titles they made reference to during the interview. Some have moved on to other positions or have started their own nonprofit companies in their respective specialty in ministry as a consultant. No one has renounced their call to the ministry.

Faye

Faye is a 44-year-old assistant professor and administrator at a predominantly white Christian university in the southwest. She works with both graduate and undergraduate students in a nontraditional program. Faye was the first female professor to teach a Bible course at her college. She has been in vocational ministry for 16 years. As an undergraduate at a college in the southeast, she was heavily involved with a ministry on her campus. After graduating from

Participants Demographics – Table 1

| Name | Age | Years in Ministry | Ministry Position | Education | Ministry Context | Workplace Racial Demographics |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Faye | 44 | 16 | Student Services/Professor | MA.CE | Academia | Predominately White |
| Joan | 57 | 26 | Director of Admissions | DMIN | Academia | Predominately Black |
| Linda | 33 | 7 | Event Coordinator | MACE | Parachurch | All Black |
| Lisa | 38 | 7 | Executive Pastor Pastor of Christian Education | M. Div | Church | All Black |
| Lynne | 57 | 5 | Christian Counselor | M.DIV | Church | All Black Predominately White |
| Madison | 37 | 11 | Pastor | Th. M | Parachurch | White |
| Melissa | 55 | 10 | | M. Div | Church | All Black |
| Rita | 37 | 4 | Pastor of Education Project Manager | Th. M | Church | All Black Predominately White |
| Tiffany | 29 | 8 | | M. Div | Parachurch | White |
| Tina | 51 | 13 | Director of Counseling | MACC MASW | Church | Predominately Black |
| Trisha | 59 | 30 | Director of Christian Education | MDIV | Church Academia | Predominately: Black White |

college, she decided to join the campus ministry staff as a full-time employee. After several years, she chose to go to seminary because of her desire to learn more about the Bible, change careers, and remain in full-time ministry. She attended a seminary in the southwest and received a master of arts in Christian Education.

Faye lives in a city in the southwest, so I conducted a phone interview. We had difficulty trying to come up with a time that was good for her, as she had just had a baby several weeks prior to our proposed time to talk. Nevertheless, she was persistent in trying to find a time that was conducive to completing the interview. Our recorded conversation lasted 35 minutes.

Joan

Joan is a 57-year-old woman serving as a professor and senior administrator at a predominately black Bible college in the southeast. She has never been on staff at a local

church, but she has been in full-time ministry for 26 years. She is invited to preach at many different congregations and denominations throughout the southeast. Although she has worked in the corporate arena for many years, she credits God for the switch in careers.

I was in the corporate world for many, many years, totally dissatisfied. It had gotten to a point that there was a conflict in schedule when I started attending Bible College. It seemed my corporate job demanded time that I wanted to give to studying the Bible. And the conflict in the schedule grew into a conflict in my mind. So, out of the clear blue sky, I decided to quit work, not knowing how I was going to eat or how I was going to feed my child or how I was going to pay my bills. But, some kind of way, I knew that God was somewhere in the back of that decision. And when I made that decision, all kinds of doors opened up. So, I started attending a college just for Bible knowledge. I had no direction. I didn't even have a goal. And, after a couple of months of being at this college as a student, I was offered a job.

I asked Joan why she thought that, as a woman, she was called to the ministry. She said:

Why do I think that I, as a woman, was called to the ministry? Actually, that question has never crossed my mind, especially after studying the Bible and realizing that there's no gender in God when it comes to doing the work of the ministry. So my question from God's perspective ... I mean, I didn't have a question from that perspective because I know now that God uses a body, a willing vessel. And I was a willing vessel.

Much of Joan's data is related to her experiences as an itinerate preacher. Joan has a Master of Divinity in Christian education from a seminary in the southeast. She

started working on a Doctorate of Ministry, but for various reasons she put continuing her education on hold to work as a consultant with a newly established church in her city.

She says she has yet to be asked by her pastor to preach.

I drove to Joan's town for a face-to-face interview. We had a difficult time trying to coordinate a place to meet. Originally, we were supposed to meet on her college campus the day they were having orientation for new students. However, that did not work out, and we were not able to meet there. I had to scramble around to find a quiet, neutral place to meet. Ultimately, we met at a library in another town. The interview lasted two hours.

Linda

Linda is a 33-year-old event coordinator for an all-black and predominantly female parachurch organization in the southeast. Linda has a degree in economics from a major university in the Midwest. When asked how she came to the decision to attend seminary, she said, "I didn't feel as though I was learning what I needed to learn, so I started being interested in learning more and thought the only place I could do that would be at an institution of higher learning." Therefore, she left her corporate job and enrolled in a seminary in the southeast. After receiving a master of arts in Christian Education, Linda taught for three years at a private Christian elementary school in the southeast. During that time, she also served as a lay leader at her church. Her current ministry position is with an organization in the southeast that does campus ministry on historically black school campuses nationwide. Her current ministry context is unique in that they have more men than women, but all of the board members and the president of the

organization are black men. When asked why she thought that, as a woman, she was called to the ministry, she said:

As a woman, I was called (*short pause*) ... God uses everyone. I don't think He distinguishes the difference between men and women in that regard. I just think that everyone has a purpose. Once you're saved, there's something that He puts you here for. Women are included.

Linda lives in another state in the southeast; therefore, we scheduled a time to do the interview over the phone. Linda was a little apprehensive about doing the interview. Since she knew that this topic was about how black women learned to negotiate the power and politics in seminary and in the workplace, she did not feel she had anything to contribute to this study. Our recorded conversation lasted 45 minutes.

Lisa

Lisa is the executive pastor at her church. She is 40 years old and has a Master of Divinity in Church Leadership from a seminary in the southeast. The church where she is serving has approximately 5,000 members, and it is an all-black congregation. Lisa says they have 23 ministers, of which 11 are women. Although her ministry context seems to be a favorable environment for women, nonetheless, she shares the internal struggles her pastor goes through when he is making decisions about their role in the church.

I've seen him support us. But on the same token, I've also seen him kind of struggle... Even with my pastor, you support women. It's what you say. But I still see in him and some of his actions that he does have an inner struggle. What he speaks on his lips sometimes is not necessarily what he's actually thinking out in

his mind. And I say that because I've watched him open some doors, but yet I've watched him kind of leave some half open.

When I asked Lisa to tell me why she thought, as a woman, she was called to the ministry, her response was:

I believe that God—and we see it throughout scripture—that He uses both men and women to accomplish His tasks and to get the job done. And in addition to that, there are some people who won't receive from a man actually standing up teaching or preaching to them. But they can better hear a word from someone that they are better able to identify with. And so, I believe that God has selected both men and women for that purpose.

I drove to Lisa's town and met her at her church. As the executive pastor, her office was extremely busy, people were entering in and out, and the phone rang nonstop. We left her office and went to another building on the church campus and began the interview. The interview lasted about one hour and 45 minutes.

Lynne

Lynne is a retired corporate executive and is the pastor of Christian education at her church in the southeast. Prior to retiring she decided to take some classes at a seminary in the southeast and finished with a Master of Divinity in Christian Education. She is 57 years old and has been teaching in the church since she was sixteen years old. So, for her initially it was difficult to think of instances that were directly related to her race or gender. However, as the interview continued, she began to recall several occasions in seminary whereby she was the target of several sexist comments. Although it is not a variable investigated, she mentioned age

discrimination in the workplace. When I asked Lynn, as a woman why did she think God called her to the ministry she said:

As a woman, I guess I never looked at it as a call as just a woman. In a sense I did and in another I didn't. The call into the ministry, I had always been doing the work for the Lord, but it took my pastor to make me focus in on saying 'yes you have a calling; you are not doing what God is telling you to do.'

I met Lynne for lunch in her town and then we went to her home to do the interview. Lynne lives in a very large home far away from the hustle and bustle of the city. She and her husband decided to build their dream home since they were retired so there would be a place for Lynne's mother to stay and a place for all the grandchildren to "spread out and run wild" says Lynne. The recorded interview lasted an hour and a half.

Madison

At the time of the interview, Madison had just resigned from her position as a Christian counselor at an all white mixed gendered counseling center in the southeast. She went to a seminary in the southwest and graduated with a Master of Theology in Old Testament Studies. She has been in full time ministry for eleven years. After graduating with a ThM, Madison felt led to get another masters degree from the same seminary in Christian counseling. She found this ministry position through word of mouth. She met with the owners of the center and they were anxious to hire a person of color, but more specifically a woman of color. When I asked Madison why did she think she was called as a woman in ministry her response was:

Because I guess I never thought of me being called from a position of gender. I just saw it as being called. And my gender ... the fact that I was a woman didn't really play much of a role in it. I just felt that as a person I was called.

At the time of our recorded conversation, Madison had decided to take some time off and visit her family in another state. We scheduled a time to talk, but because of the time difference we rescheduled to talk two weeks later when she would be back home. When we talked, the recorded conversation lasted one hour and fifteen minutes. However, Madison wanted to talk “off the record” and we talked for another forty-five minutes. She was in tremendous emotional pain and did not want the content of our off the record conversation included in this dissertation.

Melissa

Melissa is the senior pastor of a church she and her husband planted in a southeastern town. She is 55 years old and has a Master of Divinity in pastoral ministries. She also has an honorary doctorate degree and has been in full time ministry for ten years. Melissa’s husband is a doctor with a thriving practice and was the senior pastor for a period of time. Over the years he had to limit his time with the ministry and by the time she graduated from seminary she became the senior pastor. In my field notes I took notes when Melissa started sharing the story of how they purchased ten acres of land outside the city limits of their city and built their dream home. After about two years in their new home, they felt the Lord calling them to minister in the projects of their town. Melissa said they felt hypocritical driving into town, minister to the people and then drive back out to their large six bedroom home. Ultimately, they decided to sell their luxury home and moved into the community to live among the people they were serving.

They are currently meeting in the basement of another church that meets at a different time on Sundays. They have a membership of about 175 people. Because of the commitment they have made, several other members of their congregation made a similar decision and moved out of the suburbs and into the community to live among the people. When I asked Melissa to share why she thought as a woman she was called to the ministry, she said:

If I may share with you in all honesty what God told me why I needed to do this and pursue this because I was a woman. The only thing that I walked away with that God would say to me when I asked “Why me God?” -- being a female, being southern Baptist. God said “Because I have called you. Because I have called you.” And that’s all I’ve ever had to stand on is the fact that I know, that I know that I’ve been called and that God has called me.

I drove to her town to meet her at her home, several hours away. Despite the community in which they live, Melissa showed me around the house sharing how they totally renovated the inside. We spent some time getting acquainted over lunch and then we began the recorded interview. The interview lasted two hours.

Rita

Rita has a Master of Theology in Church history and is 37 years old. She went to a seminary in the southwest and after graduation she moved to the Midwest to serve as the pastor of Christian education at a mega-church. She has been in full time ministry for four years, but has served in a lay capacity for fourteen years. Rita states that the pastor was persistent in recruiting her and was anxious for her to come on board. The content of this interview covers the time she served in full time ministry. After two years on staff, Rita resigned from her position to save her life and to learn how to love herself. When asked why she thought she was called as a woman into full time ministry, she said:

Okay let me see, the time that I was called I didn’t necessary think I was called because I was a woman, it’s kind of like on a personal level and kind of on the ministry level or just on the body of Christ level – I believe God called me – and

it's hard to separate. As I told you, it's this identity issue because I'm thinking God just called me, Rita, and I just happen to be a woman (*laughs*).

At the time of our interview, Rita had resigned from her position two months prior. She was planning to take a year off to nurse her wounds. She was not sure if she would ever go back on staff at a church because of her experiences. Rita lives in another state and our recorded conversation lasted two and a half hours.

Tiffany

Tiffany is one of two people of color at an all white Parachurch organization of about 200 people and she works in the advancement office. She has been in full time ministry for seven years; she is 29 years old and has a Masters of Arts in Biblical Studies from a seminary in the southeast. Tiffany was actively recruited to this organization because they were trying to reach out to the black community and realized internally they did not have any minorities represented in the company. Tiffany says her employer is a ministry that partners with the local church and provides training and teaching resources for the purpose of discipleship. When Tiffany started with the organization they were going through a major reorganization and so it was a difficult time for many of the employees that had been in the same position for over twenty years, as well as the new hires. When asked why she thought she was called as a woman, she said:

(heavy sigh) That's a good question *(pause)*. I really don't know. I mean, I think that umm, I think that God can, you know, definitely single out and call whomever He would like. And because of some of the struggles I've encountered, that you know, after pursuing a seminary degree, I probably could answer that question differently now in terms of as a woman why I feel I was

called. I think that umm, I mean I just ... I think that God has to have examples in both males and females, in my opinion. And so, you know, I don't really have a spiritual answer for that, but whatever reason He chose He thought that I was a person that was worthy of carrying out a call of leadership in ministry.

Although Tiffany lived in the nearby, her job caused her to work late hours, so it was more expedient for us to do the interview by phone rather than face to face. The recorded interview lasted one and one half hours.

Tina

Tina is a 51 year old licensed counselor with two master degrees. She has a Master of Social Work from a major university in the Midwest and a Master of Arts in Christian counseling from a seminary in the southwest. After graduating from seminary to moved to the southeast and has been in full time ministry for ten years. At the time of our interview she had resigned from her position as Director of Counseling and was preparing to go out on her own. When I asked Tina why she felt she was called to the ministry especially since she was a woman, she said:

Well, I just believe that God has a call on all of our lives, and that calling does not always have to be a pastoral calling; but God has a purpose for each one of us.

And so, I just believe that for me its counseling.

Tina felt more comfortable meeting in her home rather than meeting somewhere in public. So, I drove to her home and the interview lasted one hour and a half. At the end of the interview she shared with me the importance of this study. She said,

I do hope you know as you are doing the research and as it's put out there it will cause other women to take a stand ...and not feel like the lone ranger, not feel like

they're out there by themselves...regardless...it's not about being in a majority; but it's about standing for what Lord has said and just recognizing their calling.

Trisha

Trisha is a fifty nine year old retired higher education administrator with two master degrees, one in math education and the other a Master of Divinity in Christian education from a seminary in the southeast. She is currently working on a doctorate in Christian education, just because she enjoys learning. Trisha is the Director of Christian education at her church, a historical black church in the southeast. Previously, she was at an all white church but chose to leave and go on staff with her current employer. She was very adamant that she does not see power and politics played out in the ministry context. When I asked Trisha to explain to me why she thought as a woman she was called to the ministry she said:

(long pause) I'm not sure that being a woman has anything to do with it. I think God calls whoever He chooses to call. And so, He called and I answered.

The interview I had with Trisha was at her home in a town nearby. Therefore, it was convenient to have a face to face interview and it lasted forty five minutes.

Chapter Summary

There are many assumptions about women in ministry and black women in ministry in particular. Some of those assumptions are that they are so submissive that they have resigned themselves to being a second class citizen and believe their sole purpose as a woman is to serve men. Another assumption is that those who dare to walk the road of most resistant are subversive and angry about the way women are left out of the leadership circle. Therefore, taking up their crosses and waging a battle of the sexes. Although this may be the case for many women, the participants of this study are women who felt called to the ministry, but never

considered their gender as a factor. As a result, as a researcher, I believe a key element to reporting the findings of this study was to understand the study participants within the context of their own personal identities as black women in ministry who never considered their gender a factor when they realized they were called by God into full time ministry preparation and practice.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings of the study and is arranged and presented according to the two research questions guiding this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical Black women in ministry preparation and practice. The questions that guide this study were:

1. How do power relationships based on race and gender affect the ministry preparation and practice of evangelical Black women?
2. How do Black evangelical women ministers learn to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical culture?

The major findings for the first question are presented under the headings in (Table -2): *Being Confined to One's Place: Sexism and Women in Religion* and *Struggles of the Internalized Oppressed: Tales of Racism*. The findings for question two are outlined under the headings *Obedience is Better than Sacrifice and Longsuffering: Learning to Persevere*.

Being Confined to One's Place: Sexism and Women in Religion

Women have been working alongside men in the church, but have never been given the credit for that they have accomplished. Primarily, they have served in ministries that are traditionally considered "ladies work", such as working in the nursery, on the hospitality committee, office work, and music ministry. However, once a women has indicated that she has a call on her life, church leaders in the conservative evangelical church have only allowed her

 Being Confined to One's Place: Sexism and Women in Religion

Marginalized in Sacred Spaces

The Seminary as a Sacred Space

The Ministry Workplace as a Sacred Space

Woman-to-Woman Oppression

The Political is Personal

Struggles of the Internalized Oppressed – Tales of Racism

Obedience is Better than Sacrifice

Longsuffering: Learning to Persevere

Entertaining Angels Unaware: Learning from Mentors and Friends

 Standing Like a Tree Firmly Planted: Critical Reflection, Praying and Reading the
 Bible

A Form of Godliness but Denying its Power: Choosing Not to Learn

work with women, youth or children. As two of the participants indicated, when reading the catalogues of several seminaries and bible colleges (Appendix D), it is very clear women are confined to taking certain classes that will train them to work in traditional women's work in the church. Once they are employed and working in the ministry, they are paid less than the men with the same or less credentials as the female minister. These and other accounts of sexism will be discussed in this section.

Marginalized in Sacred Spaces

The data reflected that eight of the eleven women readily identified gender oppression as a factor in their ministry preparation and practice. The remaining three participants maintained a commitment to the assertion that they did not experience any marginalization while in seminary or the workplace. This will be discussed further in the section entitled: *A Form of Godliness but Denying its Power: Choosing Not to Learn*

Nevertheless, answering the call to full time ministry was not a direct and easy path for five of the study participants because of their own beliefs about women in ministry as in the case of Joan. She said “I used to be a person who didn’t believe that God called women. But, it was because of ignorance and that’s how I grew up.” It took what she called a “supernatural” encounter that led her to believe that she as a woman could be called. Rita on the other hand was somewhat upset that she was called because she was aware what it meant to be a woman and called to the ministry. This was either the teaching she had heard or it may possibly have been her own inner struggle of what she believed about women in ministry. Nevertheless she comments about her calling:

I was very, very insecure in being a woman who’s called because I had understood the dynamics of that, and the rejection that kind of had come with that. So, I was kind of very upset (*laughs*) at that in terms of the call. I was like - oh God now my gender is highlighted, which it had never been highlighted before. I have probably come into a very keen awareness of the fact that I have a false dichotomy operating within me. And the dichotomy that I have operating in me, on the base level is how can I be Christian and a woman? Meaning a woman specifically who has desired goals and dreams, and how do I reconcile that with

being a Christian? And then on the more specific level is, how can I be a woman and be a pastor.

But in the case of Lisa, she was confident in her calling but it was disconcerting to have to always give an answer to her classmates, colleagues and professors as to why she believed she was called to the ministry:

When I knew that God had called me into the ministry I was going to a very conservative seminary that did not recognize women as preachers. And so being an employee there I was now faced with several other employees who wondered well “What do you mean?” and “What does that mean?” And so you’re constantly questioned even not just by employees, but by some persons on staff.

The Dean and some of the other instructors “Well, what does that mean?” I never had been in a place where I felt that I had to defend what God was doing in me until I’d gone to seminary and actually accepted my call while I was there.

Despite the struggle and the internal conflict suggested by Rita and Lisa, regarding the vocation they felt they were being called to, it was a personal decision to enroll into a predominately all white male seminary for ministry preparation. When asked to describe two important experiences while in seminary, the nine women talked about how they were treated as a woman in a class whereby they were in the minority.

The Seminary as a Sacred Space

The seminary’s position (Appendix D) on women in ministry was not a surprise to eight of the women. In fact Tiffany said, “where I went to seminary...the option to opt out for women has always been there.” Joan also saw that there was a section in the college catalogue indicating women should use their own judgment as to whether or not they should take a class

traditionally attended by men only. However, she goes a little further and shed light on what may be one of several reasons the women chose to attend the seminaries despite the college's position:

And actually, that was when I really saw that there was a difference between how men were treated and how women were treated... It was actually printed that if you were a female you were not required to take certain courses that a male was required to take. And, that really concerned me, but I made a choice that I would not fight it. I would not even discuss it. I just made a choice that, that was the college that I chose and if this was their policy I would respect that and get what I came for and move on. But, I just thought that that was very interesting. But, I've learned to choose my battles and that was not one that I picked to fight.

Trisha shared an incident where she and another woman were the only women in the class and they were ignored. As a result she chose another alternative to getting what she went there to get, "... after taking a second class and experiencing the same type of thing I just decided to take courses on line whatever ...I thought about what I had been through and I didn't necessarily want to continue down that path."

Both Madison and Joan knew their seminary held conservative views regarding women in ministry. However, it was not until Madison was standing in front of her classmates did she realize how deeply entrenched were the views about women in a leadership capacity. Madison said,

I was leading something and I was in front of class. And a lot of people asked me if I was scared being in front of people and leading because I was a woman. And, I think for me even though I knew how conservative my school was, it just really

brought home that reality of how people – both men and women view women in ministry. And just how they really didn't believe that women had a place out in front and, before people.

Joan on the other hand came to the realization of the views held about women when she found out that there were some topics she was not able to talk about or lead discussions on:

We were not able to lead any form of Bible study or Bible discussion. We could sing and I didn't have that gift. So, that just left me out altogether. But we were allowed to sit and learn at the feet of men. So, that within itself was an experience. And actually, that was when I really saw that there was a difference between how men were treated and how women were treated.

Melissa says that although it was not taught overtly, in some cases the professors used their positional power to assert the message that women could not be called to ministry and that belief was carried out covertly in the classroom. She says,

As I sat in the classroom there were times, but not every class, there was an openness or discussion concerning particular scriptures based on women in ministry. There were some and when there were it was apparent that God did not, according to the professors, that God did not call women to ministry – to full-time ministry, to pastorate positions; to have any authority in the church over a male. A few classes not many, for the most part, and those that did not necessarily discuss scripture concerning that again it was done in such a covert manner; but nonetheless it was there and it was being taught all the way from the fact that you know, I was only one female in the class of all males. And every male at the end of the class, a male would be, someone would be asked to close in prayer. Only

the men were ever asked to close in prayer. And so, that's why I say it was being taught even though it may not have been verbally.

The classroom should be a safe place whereby all members of the class should be able to express their thoughts and ideas openly without the fear of retribution. Nevertheless, the classroom was a site of struggle for Rita. In her case it was not covertly expressed, it was implied through the overt actions of the professor and then the open hostility expressed by her classmates, the men in the class:

I was sitting in class and basically; it was like – “how many of you believe that women should pastor?” (*laughs*). ...I was in favor of women preaching and teaching men and ... I was the only one that raised my hand (*laughs*). And I got attacked literally.

For the participants in this study tension as a means of marginalization was apparently a regular dynamic in the classroom. But also, the constant feeling that one has to prove they belong or they are capable of doing the work just as well as the members of their class who happen to be male. Madison said that as the only woman in her class, it was not until she proved herself by making good grades in Hebrew and Greek that “they seemed to relate to me a little bit differently than they did. But, I always felt the pressure to perform. But honestly at that time I just felt like I could run with the best of them. So, you know I lived under that pressure, but I didn't, you know, I just believed I could do what was set before me and I did it.”

The message was clear that women can take certain classes, but then it was a matter of semantics when the college made attempts to be inclusive with the women enrolled in the seminary by “changing the title of the preaching classes (*laughs*) to Biblical Communications” said Rita. Both Tiffany and Rita said their respective seminaries stated that in the preaching

classes women were told that they can *teach* women and children and men can *preach* to everyone. “But then some professors were open to women *preaching* to women and to children, but definitely not to men. So it’s kind of really not one very well defined view except women should not be pastoring men.” Tiffany gives an example of how the position was different for women attending seminary and planning to minister in the United States versus the women planning to minister outside of the country. She said:

The thing that I find interesting is that there is a teaching that a woman can minister and pastor—so to speak--other women and children but not men. So if she can do that why would you not equip her to do that? And furthermore, most of these institutions and these seminaries have no problem with women going to another country and being in a pastoral role. But, you give her the option to opt out of the class in the United States. So, when she goes overseas and she’s acting in this pastoral role and she has this degree from your institution; you have given her the option to not even be trained to do what you are, approving or, you know, allowing or agreeing (*pause*) with her to do in a foreign land. But, you don’t want her to do it in the United States.

Tiffany goes on to talk about being called to do a task, but then having to wrestle with what men have told her she was not able to do by virtue of her being a woman:

...in most cases, most of my experiences have been to remind me that you are not in a man’s role in terms of pastoring, ...or providing ...direction to people. Now it’s okay to do it for women and children. But that’s it! And so it’s just the whole idea of being constantly reminded that a man should take the lead. But the frustration being when you know that a part of your, your gifts and your abilities

is to be and act in a pastoral type role and shepherding people, it's something you really can't control. You just do it naturally. And so, in my opinion, it's been pretty consistent in terms of what I was taught in seminary and what I've experienced in the workplace. But also, but the ... I guess the struggle comes in when you just are doing what it is that you love to do and you're passionate about, and then you're met with this opposition and these restrictions. I think that people believe and know that I am a woman who God is using in ministry. But, I don't think that they think of me as a woman that God has called to the ministry. I think that the word "called" is used more for men than it is women. And I think the word "being used by God in ministry"... is more for women.

Nevertheless, not only do they begin to question their role in ministry, but then they are told their place in ministry is not working along side the men in a co-leadership capacity, but rather, in a more subservient role. For instance Madison said,

its like women getting excited about auditing a class in seminary and getting excited about the future and stuff; and then beginning to wonder what their role is and then being told, you know, your role is to, to support me and to take care of our household. And there's nothing wrong with that in and of itself, but there's more to us than that. God created us for more than that.

Women of color typically face many obstacles of access when attempting to find their place in ministry as expressed by some of the participants above. It is extremely painful when one feels marginalized in what may seem to be a sterile environment like the classroom, but to then to feel invisible and marginalized in their spiritual community and ministry workplace is

just as difficult, if not more difficult. The participants also shared instances of marginalization once they left the hallowed halls of the seminary and went into the workplace.

The Ministry Workplace

The participants of the study were all employed in ministry in some cases where they were the only woman or the first black woman to hold that particular position. Nine of the participants shared experiences of marginalization in their ministry practice. After Tina graduated from seminary, she went on staff at a Bible college as an assistant professor--she was met with much resistance from many of the male students because of her gender:

Even at the college where I taught, there were students--especially male students--who were, "OK, you are a woman. How can you teach us?" ...Because their thought process is that a woman is not to teach a man. And "How did you get on this campus? (*chuckles*). But at the same time being confident that God had called me to do that. You would have that resistance, and I literally had some men that would stand up to the point not taking my classes.

Clearly, the male students took offense to Tina's role as a teacher in the college. Even though she wasn't teaching Bible classes it was her positionality that was a problem. Albeit, there are some men who seem to be in agreement with women in ministry, their actions sometimes reflect otherwise.

Although Lynne's pastor recognized women as leaders in the church, there is a distinct difference in how he interacts with the men and women on staff. She posited that he used intimidation as a method to keep the women on staff submissive and in their place.

In my church, at the church I attend, I truly feel it's from the top because I've seen how he talks to people differently – and he being the pastor, bishop. He talks

to women much differently than he does the men and this is just from being on staff. If you don't have a strong backbone he could intimidate you.

Even within the context of believing in and supporting women in ministry, Lynn says the men are sometimes given preferential treatment by the pastor. "The male ministers are I should say – certain male ministers are always chosen or selected to do certain functions, whereas they're out front all the time. And you may have one or two females that would be always the certain ones that are chosen." This seems to be a common theme for the pastors that support women. On the one hand they hire and promote women to the pulpit, but may be somewhat apprehensive in how they are dealt with. Case in point, Lisa says:

I think that when we see, when I see a pastor – be it my pastor or another pastor – really support and push a young man and he does not push a young female in ministry, I see that a lot of it is because of what he has been taught as a minister; that women are to keep silent and I really need to engage this young man so he's able to be a leader and you know that mindset that I'm raising up a Timothy or I'm trying to raise up a Titus. Because they don't see that I'm raising up a Phoebe, you know (*laughs*).

There is a discrepancy in how the women are treated from one context to another. And because they are not mentored like the men as suggested by Lisa, when they go into vocational ministry, the participants shared some very painful experiences they have had that have hindered their judgment about what they should do when met with opposition. They are personally confident about their calling, but are publicly insecure with what to do when attending funerals, conventions or other public places. Like Rita, for instance, when she goes to a funeral, there's this internal conflict that goes on within her:

I just automatically assume rejection and then consider acceptance with boldness. Like I'm still working that out. When I go to a funeral, I'm nervous walking in the door because, especially because of the pastor where I'm at – I'm nervous walking in the door because I don't know if the presiding minister, what he believes – and it's usually a he. I don't know what he believes. And since I don't know what he believes I'm not really for certain how to flow. So, I come in always thinking “don't identify yourself” and then I get really nervous when they start talking about all the ministers and clergy, because then I'm thinking ... Are they going to ask me to come up? Are they going to tell me only men? I was at a funeral once where the guy said “any male preachers in the house come to the pulpit.” Which I appreciated. But it's when you don't know. I'm still trying to walk in confidence in Christ and I honestly just don't have it yet in those unknown situations. So I just kind of assume like I said, non existence unless acceptance is offered.

Joan indicated the same concern regarding visiting other churches. However, her response is to adjust to whatever comes her way and not let it hinder her thoughts about her role in ministry.

I have learned to just adapt to it knowing that those types of people are out there. I don't make a fuss over it. If I'm not welcome to sit in the pulpit then I sit ... I sit in the back of the church. It doesn't matter. And I don't even come to the conclusion that I do not want to ever go back to that church because of this, this and this. I've learned to accept people where they are and move on.

Lisa shared an experience whereby three men responded differently from each other in

the same context and how they chose to interact with her. The pastor invited her to preach; the pastor became ill and was not there to receive her when she came. The interim pastor was not as receptive and actually put her in harms way--either intentionally or unintentionally. Ultimately a deacon came to her aid. Experiences like Lisa's can be confusing and hurtful for some women:

There have been times when I can think of one particular incident where I went to a church and the pastor was ill and he was not there – he was very ill and there was an interim pastor. He actually made me sit in the back of this room with a kerosene heater just like sky high and throwing out all kinds of fumes. I asked him “How long do you want me to stay here?” He said “Oh, you can stay back here maybe about 20 minutes and then you can come out.” He left me back there and went out. There was a deacon who came back there and he knocked on the door. And I said “Yes.” And he opened it and he says “What are you doing back here?” And I told him what the interim pastor told me. And he says “Oh no, come out of here. You’ll die back here like this!” And he says “I don’t know why he would tell you to sit back here!” So I’ve been some places where people may have done things when I got there they didn’t seem too happy to see me; and when I came they actually showed that in actions that they may have taken. Now whether or not he meant to kill me or me sit back there and die, I don’t know.

She goes on to give another situation she found herself in and she attributed it to the insecurity of the pastor that can be the problem:

...In most cases when I’ve gone places – I have gone places where I was initially welcomed there, but then when I came the pastor began to exude traits of insecurity and began to lash out or to handle himself in a manner that was not of

great hospitality. Rude! You know, just rude! (*laughs*) Just literally rude.

Talking rude. Talking down. Talking harsh – “Well, you can sit anywhere you want to sit.” You know I mean just harsh, harsh treatment.

Madison shared the same sentiment as Lisa regarding the dichotomy of what pastors feel about women in ministry:

I’ve seen some environments in working and just probably one before I went to seminary where it appears as though you know, women were, women were wanted and esteemed and, and to be in positions of leadership in ministry. But then in action, they were treated like second class citizens, you know. As it relates to just being a woman and being a black woman, it’s like I saw the lip service and then saying that they affirm women, but then didn’t see it actually being lived out in the, in the practical dynamics of how it’s done. I think that on the other hand I’ve seen where people are, are threatened by, are threatened by woman in ministry; by being, especially by being a black woman in ministry. So, even though they may say that they are ... well (hmm) (pause). They say they affirm you within limitations, but the limitations are much more limiting than they will admit to.

So, although there is this awareness that women can and should be placed in a leadership capacity there is a chasm between what should be and what is really happening. But, marginalization of women in ministry is not only perpetuated by men or white men in particular in ministry. Four of the participants also indicated that much of the resistance they have experienced has been from other women in leadership and in the church.

Woman to Woman Oppression

We are accustomed to talking about the way women have been marginalized by men for so many years. However, we sometimes fail to address the issue of women marginalizing other women, especially in the ministry. This marginalization in some cases start with the beliefs of the women themselves and how they have been taught or their own interpretation of scripture. In the case of Trisha, she is a woman serving in a significant leadership capacity over men but does not believe a woman should have authority over men. Her position is grounded in her interpretation of scripture regarding women assuming the position of a senior pastor. She said, “As far as my personal beliefs, I have problems with female pastors and it goes, it stems out of the passage that says ‘a woman should not have authority over a man.’ And as I’ve researched that and I’ve just looked up those words in the Greek I still come back to a woman should not have authority over a man.” However, she goes on to explain how it is a personal concern for her in her own ministry and how she has reconciled the differences:

Where it becomes an issue for me is in teaching because I’m in a situation now wherein I have males in my classroom. And so, the only thing that I knew to do was to say Lord here’s the situation: I know that you sent me here, I know that you’ve called me to this position; and if this not what I’m supposed to do then I pray that you would just interrupt it. Things have not been interrupted. The peace that I get from it comes from the fact that I have not solicited any males. They have chosen to be in my classroom. Male ministers have approached me to ask me to help them with some biblical issues or whatever. On my own I would never solicit a man to be in my classroom. I would not put myself in a position

where a male has no choice but to be under my authority. And so that's how I deal with it.

Joan held the same position about the role of women in ministry and in some cases perpetuated some of the same beliefs. But, now that she has been called to preach she recognizes that this belief was rooted in what she was taught rather than what she knew for herself. She said that she understand that line of thinking, and have learned to be patient with people that have that mindset. She said:

Actually I used to be a person who didn't believe that God called women. But, it was because of ignorance and that's how I grew up. So I respect the people out there that may cause problems for women or don't believe that women were called into the ministry. I respect their position because I know that at one time I was one of them.

Melissa did not necessarily have a problem of being angry with people that took such position. Her problem was with herself. She wrestled with accepting her call within the context of her own interpretation of what a woman could or could not do. For instance, "I had to begin to see myself and knowing the God who called me and what I was called to do based on who God is and not what people say."

Three of the participants in this study went on to share how much of their opposition was from other women that held this aforementioned mindset. For instance, Tiffany talked about how she was stereotyped by one of the older women on staff where she worked:

I'm stereotyped on a regular basis, in my opinion. I mean, the prime example is the position I have now. I am a project manager for a senior vice president. And unfortunately, there are two other women in our department. And one of the other

women, she constantly wants to place me in a secretarial role to the senior vice president as opposed to the project manager role that I have. And so, she's constantly, you know, making verbal and non verbal statements about my being an assistant to this person, instead of my being a project manager in the department and helping getting different projects off the ground and making sure that they come to fruition and doing research. She never refers to those things. But when it comes to making sure that you get that on his calendar, make sure you schedule these appointments, that's most of the terminology that she uses for me. And that's about 10% of my job.

I asked Tiffany to clarify the basis of the beliefs she felt the woman had regarding the role of women in the workplace. She shared "you know, there are women who have this whole theology that women are helpers and completers to men." When I asked her to further explain what she meant by that she said,

You know, in the Bible in Genesis God created Adam and then He created Eve as a helper-completer to Adam. You know, and gave Adam a woman to be his helper, you know. Her position and her idea and thought process of that is that – that goes for every woman to be helpers-completers to men in general. And, so she's taken a specific theology and generalized it.

Tiffany surmised this woman's belief about her role was grounded in her interpretation of the book of Genesis and Adam and Eve's relationship. Although some biblical scholars will agree that what was intended in the relationships between men and women was established in the book of Genesis, however, as Tiffany indicated the woman took that text and made it applicable for all male and female relationships. I asked her why that was a problem and she shared that "that may be appropriate in married relationship, but not for work relationships." Another

participant, Lisa, talked about how other women have approached her and questioned her understanding of her role in the church:

Believe it or not, much of the opposition that I've had in my walk in ministry has come from women. I have had several women to come to me – I had one in particular to come to me and ask me who told me that I was called and what does it mean to be called? “And why are you trying to stand in leadership when don't you know that you are out of order?”

Being out of order in some Christian contexts can be grounded in tradition as well as a particular interpretation of scripture. Lisa has a subjective theory about why some women tend to respond to other women who are in leadership based on her experience after attending the woman's church:

I've been to that person's church and I realize that there is a cry for the women who have been called into a place of leadership but who have not been given that platform to lead; and I realize I can hear them crying. I can hear their anger. I can hear their bitterness. And I realize that a part of what she was saying to me was really her lashing out in hurt because where I was and what God was doing in my life was really where she desired to be. So I've seen a lot of opposition come from women.

Rita purports that this lashing out by other women causes a lot of hurt. She said that it caused her to do things that God never called her to do, like doing only women's ministry. This is how she explained it:

...hurt drives us to do things that God never intended for us to do in the first place. And like for example when I was in seminary I remember it seemed like

that hurt and then just conversations with other women in ministry kept pulling me away from the reason why I came to seminary. Kept pulling me into okay let me do all my paper on women in ministry and that's not my calling. Don't get me wrong, I'm called to promote women in ministry. I'm called to serve women in ministry. I'm called to be a woman in ministry, but my calling in seminary was not to do women's ministry. It was not to write all my papers on women's issues and I found myself doing that. And then I had to stop and I was like – no I came to seminary one, to be this tool, this instrument for God's use; but I also came to seminary to learn how to preach.

The Political is Personal

The experiences and feelings of the participants is not only a matter of personal preferences and choices imposed on them by others, but they are also defined by the broader political and social setting of the evangelical community. The majority of the participants know what they feel is personal and the details are personal, but the context and character from which their experiences flow is systemic—the political is personal.

Joan readily identified it and called it as she saw it. Her experiences in ministry were such that she felt used by the pastor using her gender for what may be seen as the church's needs or for their personal gain:

Well (*pause*), politics is again what I was just saying. It's when pastors want to use you for what they want. And a lot of times just to well ... I'm trying to find the right words. For instance, 'I may not believe in you, but I know that I need you. I need your family. I need your tithes and I need your offering. So, I'm going to play this game with you and I will put you in a position , until I can reach

my goal.’ So, I just see a lot of politics. Actually I have been I have ... I’ve had leaders plead with me to be a part of their ministry because of my connections, because I am connected with a prominent college and prominent leaders who I can serve as a liaison to help them get what they want. So I’ve been involved in all of those kinds of things. I have been offered money to be a part of ministry and I have even been offered , titles and positions because of ... because of my gift or because of money. And, those are some of the reasons I put those in the category of being political; because going back to what I said earlier, I don’t want to come to your church because you can pay me more money than what I’m making where I am. So, I just think that’s the wrong way to ... So, those are some of the political aspects of ministry that I see.

Even if a pastor is wrestling with what he believes is the role of women in ministry, Joan said there are instances whereby, “some ministers they know that they have to appease some women, so they come up with different ways to place you in a position just to keep you quiet or to keep you appeased.” She surmises the pastor’s thoughts go something like, “you know, we don’t want these women going crazy around here so we will strategically place them.” She says that typically it is “with restrictions” and he puts you there so ”it won’t be a place where you can grow or even a place where you can be known in the congregation.”

For some of the other women, ministry mirrors corporate America as it relates to salaries. Lisa says it best, “you know salary wise I think that that’s something that has been adapted from culture because you see it not just in church, but you see it in the secular, you know in corporate as well. It’s just something that has been engraved in the male mindset that says that any male who has a family is worth more than a female who has no husband. You see? And it’s just

something that they've been taught. But what we have to do is we have to – I mentioned this with my pastor – is we have to come in and say “You know this is really what I'm doing. This is really what this is valued at.”

Regardless, Madison said of women in ministry “they're still paid less. You know, things would happen where they wouldn't get the same office furniture, office space and all those kinds of things. And so, again it's kind of like the same thing that, you know, you see in corporate America.”

Tina, felt the differences women experienced in ministry from men was based on “the roles that they're given and the titles that they receive.” She said that they “are handled according to those titles. And they're not only handled according to those titles in the setting of ministry” but “they're handled according to those titles financially, in terms of salary, in my opinion” and she says that “of course I think that the marital status plays a role also.”

Tina expressed her frustration about the empty promises of getting a raise. It seemed the question of was it personal or political surfaced, especially when Tina knew she had all the credentials and was more qualified than all the men including the pastor. Tina felt that,

...finances didn't have to be a big issue, but it was an issue and when I say that it's because I was told you're going to get a raise and then I wouldn't, you know, when they kept putting it off and putting it off. Then the raise that they said I was going to get, I didn't get it and there were times that I literally was ready to walk away. So there was , *(pause)* what terminology can I use? There was prejudice, you know and some of it was I think , *(pause)* I don't know if necessarily want to use the word blatant, but , some of it possibly was blatant. You know I came to find out later on that obviously there was definitely a difference, salary wise you

know, I was not equal to what the men were making at all. And yet I was the only one who had a graduate degree; and that included the pastor.

The good ol' boy network is sometimes seen as being germane to White men whereby preferential treatment is given to friends or acquaintances from within the network. Deals are made on the golf course and solidified in the board room. However, in the case of Rita, working in an all black male context, she found the same network was being perpetuated in her ministry context. She felt some of the men were undermining her and sabotaging her relationships with those who work for her to advance their own agenda.

...Like you know, where I was, the guys would go running in the morning. When they're running in the morning they're talking about ministry and that tick me off because they're talking about the ministry that I'm over, and you're talking to somebody that even though he's my boss he's not informed. *(laughs)* So the powers that be are thinking certain things aren't in place, when they've been in place. It's just that the one I'm reporting to he seems to forget everything I say *(laughs)*. Or not read any of the notes and plans that I give him even though I've *[inaudible]*. Yeah, so literally unfortunately they started undercutting me – stealing is really the right word – but you know the nice word is undercutting me and going in and talking to people serving underneath me without talking to me first to get them to go work in other areas.

Rita goes on to say that there was a lesson to be learned in her ministry context that helped her see the political moves were personal. She says,

Everybody in authority and over me was not for me which translates to me they were against me. That's when I got the news that I wasn't even being considered

for licensure or ordination even though that was a part of my hiring deal. That's when my boss essentially fronted me in front of the ministry that I lead for something that was his fault and left me hanging in front of the people that I serve. And I take that really personally. And that's when his boss which is the one in between the senior pastor and my boss were talking about me in his office to my boy, basically saying 'Rita's had three years to get it together and she hasn't got it together yet.' When might I add everything in my area of ministry that I said I was going to do, that I got the buy in to do, that I got the plans to do— was all approved by you (*laughs*) and the person directly over me.

Joan previously told of an instance how men used women to advance their own agendas, but she also told instances of taking on a position that came with a high price tag. She inferred that in order for the women to get the desired ministry opportunity, in exchange they were asked for and acquiesced to intimate relationships.

I get frustrated with deceivers. People who would, who pretend to support women in ministry just to get their way ... what they want out of them; either your tithe if they know that you have a good job they'll pretend to support you. Or even when I was single – and I realize this is on tape – but I had some scary experiences from men who were willing to offer me the world, but for a personal relationship. And I, understand too, that many females have even resorted to accepting those types of advances. And so, that was a turn off for me. But I learned how to get around that as well.

Lisa told of an instance where a group of women were at a conference and the speaker shared instances of sexual harassment in the pulpit:

I went to lunch with a few ladies I had gone down to a conference. And in the conference one of the instructors, Dr. Jacqueline Grant, she got up and she spoke and she talked about the abuse of women in ministry and the being raped, not just spiritually but physically. I sat there with my mouth aghast thinking “How could this be happening?” It was just like you having sexual harassment in corporate America, you were seeing sexual harassment in the pulpit. I sat there with my mouth open. Well, then afterwards we went to lunch with some people and there was one woman there who literally came to tears as she began to tell me what she had experienced and I thought – wow this is so real.

Even in realizing this type of sexual harassment is taking place in ministry, Lisa made a decision that she would not try to force her way. She realized she could not trust that all pastors would have her best interest. She said of the men she encounters in ministry:

I will not compromise...and I'm not going to buck you. I'm not going to fight with you. I'm not going to argue with you. I'm just not, and I'm not going to try to make a way for myself; but I am going to sit back and quietly trust the Lord. You see? Without compromising.

In this section I have discussed the ways the women in this study felt they were marginalized by men and in some cases by women as well. There have been accounts of personal as well as emotional struggles. Unfortunately, the struggle does not stop with sexism but it also includes racism.

Struggles of the Internalized Oppressed – Tales of Racism

In the bible, Jesus constantly broke down walls of prejudice. People were upset with Him because he chose to befriend tax collectors and social outcasts of His day. Even when He met the

Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:7, she was surprised that He would even talk to her because the racial and cultural prejudice between the Jewish people and the Samaritans was so great. That same type of social exclusion still exists today. There is practically no aspect of our lives where racial prejudice does not find expression. Politics, education, corporate organizations, and the medical field, all struggle with segregation or exclusion based on skin color or other chosen racial criteria. Unfortunately, racism is still alive and thriving in Christianity, the seminary, and the ministry workplace. This was especially difficult to comprehend by the women in this study when they looked at the teachings of Christ and what the Bible actually teaches and what they experienced.

Of the eleven study participants, eight freely and openly talked about instances of hurt, disappointment and frustration as a woman of color in ministry. All of the women in this study attended a predominately white male seminary; however, five of the participants referenced the issue of race as it relates to the seminary and their ministry workplace. Three of the four women who worked in a predominately white environment referenced race as a factor. Clearly, racism in the ministry is not a new phenomenon.

Although Tiffany believed racism was indirect and she was not able to give a specific example, she felt her race was a factor at her workplace:

(pause) There have been instances where I just know that I'm not the most favorable person at the table because of my race. Of course, like the elephant in the room – you know it's there but nobody will talk about it. And so, you know, if somebody asked me to give a concrete, factual example, I probably couldn't give one. But I, you just know....

Racism is not always an overt expression such as using racial slurs or telling racist jokes, it can be just as subtle as considering culturally different behaviors as not being the norm or rather appropriate behavior. That is exactly how Madison explained its subtlety as it related to the seminary she attended:

I think that race is a very sticky thing. And what I think that with race is that it's okay as long as you totally assimilate in to their culture and into their values. But, as soon as you do something that's different, then that becomes a problem. You know, I think that especially like at [seminary] and stuff I think that the race issues are not overt, in a sense.

Lisa talked about covert racism within the context of being a member of a city-wide committee whereby she was the only black female and there were two black males and the rest were "Caucasian" as she puts it.

I found myself having to speak up for some things that were not correct. I've noticed that in the group we say we all love Jesus, but in reality it is more of an attempt for you to forget your culture and to adopt my culture. "You" and "they" is for you the African-American. We want "you" here at the table, but we want to tell "you" that the way to do church really is the way that "you" see the Caucasian do church. And so I found as an African-American foremost, that I've had to address that in the group and to say that worship does not mean – true worship does not mean that I conform to the way that a Caucasian worships; but true worship means that I express – be it I'm African-American or Caucasian – that I express my heart to the Master. That's worship.

Lisa said being African American and female made a difference in that group. She said that several of the committee members were “staunch Presbyterians” and they were shocked that she was a preacher and was about to be ordained at her church. Lisa said that she had a conversation with another member of the group who was a woman and she said the woman “basically told me that it was good that I was talking about my church and what we like, but in reality that’s not who I was there for.” Lisa went on to say:

And I said on the contrary, I beg to differ with you. I only sit at this table because of my church and because of where I do come from; and that’s why I said “I believe God has allowed me to be in here on top of the fact that I am an African-American and I am a female.” And so, I can not take away my experience. I can not take away my culture to conform to who you want me to be.

Clearly in the case of Lisa’s experience, the superior attitude of the dominant culture within the committee critiqued the value and legitimacy of the minority cultures’ way of worshipping and having a sense of agency in the group. Lisa seemed to have responded as a result of believing she had a purpose for being on the committee far beyond what the committee members thought. She was there to give voice to the culture of the African American church, their authentic worship and African American women called to the ministry. Even when you know you have to take a stand, as Madison says, those types of environments (oppressive) can be hard on a person’s psyche.

There are these implicit expectations that those of the minority culture conform to the mores` of the dominant culture. In her workplace Madison said instead of it feeling like she was in a Christian environment, “it was feeling like I was in a white corporate environment...that was, that was Christian – that was supposed to be Christian.” She was the only person of color

and there were some “major cultural differences in terms of communication, in terms of relationship.” She said her co-workers “may have felt threatened” by her. She said it was best described as “psychological warfare” and those dynamics made it hard for her “to be in that environment.” I asked Madison to explain what she meant by “psychological warfare,” and she described it as:

Psychological warfare ... it’s like ... people doing things and people playing games to, to erode you. To, to eat away at you. But then at the same time smiling in your face and wanting to pray for you. Humph (*laughs*)... while at the same they’re, you know, doing all kinds of things to bring you down emotionally. And trying to, (*pause*) get at your sense of self at your inner core. It was just like being in corporate America basically. You know, but, the additional insult was: “Oh, but, let’s pray. Tell me your personal business.” You know, but yet playing all these games.

Just as this section is titled “Struggles of the Internalized Oppressed” one of the participants critiqued the tradition of the black church and because of it’s lack of teaching what she felt like she needed to learn, she said “I came into seminary not necessarily with a mentality of going in to ministry but just trying to learn about all the stuff that I felt I lacked.” She said “I’m not trying to develop relationships”; her mentality was “that I’m just going to do two and a half years and get my degree and just leave.” She said that since she walked in with that attitude:

I think a lot of the things that I may have heard other people had concerns about being a woman or being African-American or things like that, I didn’t experience because I was so focused on – well I knew what I needed I didn’t get from a black environment so maybe here I might get a chance to learn stuff. There were

obvious things that I noted in terms of I'm in a setting and I'm one of two or three blacks in a classroom full of people who are not, who are white; and there were a couple of other international students and things like that. So those things were obvious. A lot of times when we were taught things as far as ministering in a church it was geared toward their churches, but those things I didn't get angry about because I wasn't planning on going back to work in a church. So like I think in hindsight I was like oh yeah, yeah that wasn't right. Or it wasn't a clear picture of what it is we can expect when we go back to our environments; but the time I was there it didn't affect me because I didn't plan on going into ministry anyway.

Although Linda was aware of issues surrounding race and gender, her focus was to go to school, get what she came there to get, and move on. She had no intentions of going into the ministry. In several cases it seems as several of the women skirted around the issues of race and gender, but did not openly talk about it. This will be discussed further in the next section.

Obedience is Better than Sacrifice

The participants of this study had a range of experiences that revealed the power dynamics in the relationships they had with their predominately white male classmates while in seminary and the black or white male supervisor in their ministry workplace. Three of the participants knew their limitations, and although there were times throughout the process they wanted to leave, their conviction was to wait on God and not rely just on their emotions to make a decision. They chose to stand still and be obedient to whatever they believed God was telling them to do. After going through so much, the three participants believed they were granted permission to leave, whereas the remaining eight participants are still serving in their respective

positions. As the narratives reflect, it is during this time they learn how to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical culture.

Rita was continuously confounded by the things that she experienced directly related to her gender. There were no practical classes to attend while in seminary that addressed race or gender—those matters that would be important to her success while in the workplace. Rita persisted until she knew it was time to leave. She said,

It may be of God for me to serve in the ministry, but it's definitely not of God for me to be going out after three months of working there on stress leave, because my mind is shutting down on me – literally. I'm not able to process with any reasonable speed or degree simple questions that I'm being asked. But it was this personal process of coming into an understanding of what's healthy for Rita and what's not; coming to understand what's healthy in terms of the gift that God has given me in the ministry and what's not, and where I can thrive and where I can't; and then understanding what I don't know. So I guess the short of it is – I'm burning out, I'm losing myself and I am hurting in ways that I don't think I've ever felt pain before. It was kind of rough there. Just a bunch of little stuff chipping away every day... So I had to leave just to find myself.

Madison also felt she needed to maintain a sense of self in the midst of the internal struggles. However, she knew her limitations; she chose not to press beyond what was healthy for her to only look up one day to find the rope had snapped and unraveled—seemingly occurring out of the blue. She said she tried to “stay true” to her “internal boundaries and her “internal compass,” but it became more difficult. She also said,

It was kind of perplexing, because on the one hand, I wanted to believe that everything is great – we're all Christians and everything. And so, every once in awhile I might share something from the heart, but then at the same time there was always this nagging thing in the back of my head that was like –these are not your friends! These people are not for you... towards the end I just began to feel like it wasn't worth it. It began to eat away at me emotionally. I just knew that I needed to be out of that environment...So, I left.

Tina persevered as long as she could in her ministry workplace. There were so many different things going on that troubled her. There were things that were personal and things that were directly related to the integrity of the church members

... I don't even know how I can put this into words. (long pause) it has been seeing the Body of Christ (pause) in a negative way. Through people knowing what scripture says about what the church is supposed to look like and it not look that way and just really being hurt because of situations and circumstances in a congregation. Going through the changes and just not thinking that I would have to deal with something of that magnitude or of that nature. And so that part has just been difficult, because it caused me to just see the church in a different light. Then I consider even just the questioning and the attitude of how much does she really know...or I would say especially because of the school that I attended there was one part of it there was definitely respect because of that particular school I attended; but then also sometimes it appeared that they were intimidated because of me attending the seminary I attended. And so I think that sometimes caused more issues...I was surprised because I just didn't expect it. But at the same time

I had somewhat experienced it a little bit before, but thought well no this is just this one person. Then when I started to see it more I was disappointed. I felt *(pause)* cheated *(pause)* I felt disrespected umm, to a degree. There were times that I literally was ready to walk away. And the only reason that I stayed was because the Lord said it was not time for me ... for me to go I had to literally give it to Him because I personally wanted to say – I’m done...And I don’t ... I don’t like that and so I’ve had to literally recover from feeling that way...Even in God transitioning me from being in a position where I was teaching at a school and then transitioning to director of counseling at a large mega church. And then knowing He was telling me “okay now its time for you to go out on your own.”

Tina did not feel she was at liberty to walk away from her ministry position on her own volition. It was a process of seeking God and waiting on Him to transition her out of a bad situation and into starting her own business.

Nonetheless, the remaining eight participants had an attitude similar to Tiffany whereby leaving the tumultuous circumstance was not an option because of their desire to “be obedient to God.” Tiffany said:

At the end of the day I think that for any woman who knows in her heart that she is called, she knows that she can’t quit. So although there are struggles and there are things that you deal with – that is where you get your strength to carry on to continue to complete what you’ve been called to do. Because it’s not about the men and it’s not about the treatment that you may receive. It’s about being obedient to the Lord and what He has called you to do. Whew! *(heavy sigh)*

All of the women in the study referenced “being obedient to God” as a primary concern in making the decision to leave or stay in an unfavorable situation. Their experiences were grounded in their belief and understanding of the will of God. Joan says it best: “If we learn to be obedient and remain in His will, it’ll all work out.” It is within this mindset and frame of reference that the experiences of the women can be understood as they learned to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical church.

Longsuffering: Learning to Persevere

When feeling like you have to operate on the margins in the workplace and the academy there is a sense of feeling like you are invisible to the rest of the world. Although you know you are significant and you were put here to make a contribution, when you are not acknowledged it is hard to not grow bitter and angry. There is an old Negro spiritual that says, “I’m gone wait till my change come,” and in the case of the participants it is quite apparent that the women were patiently waiting on God to bring about a change in their circumstances. It is during this time they reflected on what they were going through and chose to see their situation through the eyes of God and a mentor or friend.

Entertaining Angels Unaware: Learning from Mentors and Friends

When going down a path that you have never traveled before, where the lights are dim and the terrain is rocky. The journey is much easier when you have someone who has gone down that trail before. In fact, they have been there so many times they know it like the back of their hands and they know the hard places and the necessary detours. They possess words of wisdom and comfort for the soul. For certain, as the women shared in the findings below, for them, these people have been like angels in disguise.

You somehow feel you are not alone and what you are experiencing is not an anomaly. For instance Lisa said, “there are many who share similar experiences; other women in ministry. Or maybe not necessarily in ministry but just being a female in a patriarchal society, so to speak.” Or in the case of Melissa, it was the members of her congregation that would tell her: “‘You know, God is so good. We’re praying for you. God is going to bless this ministry to have everything that God has in store, so just be encouraged.’ That helps as well.” The participants said that it is at this time they recognized the value of a mentor or friend. For some of the women in this study that is what they sought as they went through some of the hard times while in ministry—a mentor or other people in the church.

Madison said the only way she was able to manage what she was going through at her work place was to stay “connected with other African-American women who are in corporate environments, in order to have a constant reality check about who I am and where I am.” She said it helped her not feel confused “by the fact that they are crazy.” (*laughs*). She said “you know it’s kind of like having that support and having that constant springboard of reality for me.” What she learned is what she needed most:

Because I think, umm, in seminary I kind of bought into an idea of the kind of relationships that we have with each other because we’re Christians. When that’s not – that isn’t what I faced (*pause*) on the other side. And so, umm, I just think staying grounded and rooted in reality and knowing exactly where I am, who I am and who I’m dealing with.

Tina said it was through talking with other people that helped her to understand that sometimes that’s what ministry looks like—“that the church is not perfect; umm, you know one because *people* are in the church....and so just you know, coming to grips with that and just you

know having my eyes open to the fact that it was just not going to be easy.” Not that they were only looking for others to help them understand the hard things of ministry, they also needed someone to validate their interpretation of what it meant to be in ministry.

Lisa felt it was providential that there would be women strategically placed around her who had a wealth of experience:

God so strategically set it that I would be surrounded with women who had made a lasting mark in ministry. In my life, see here’s a woman who not only pastored the church but who started that church. And that church is thriving today. At that point she was probably 80 years old when she had spoken to me and this was like in the 80’s. She of course now has gone home to be with the Lord, but was a strong woman in the Lord. And the Lord allowed me to see her and to watch her.

Lisa further shared how another woman who was well known was willing to spend time with her, get to know her, and invest the time, be there for her when she was being ordained.

And then there is another lady even now, [she gave the name of the lady] who has written several books [title of the books]. And she came up to our church for a marriage retreat and I happened to call her about it and I was getting her hotel accommodations. And she says “I want to stay with you.” And I’m thinking, she doesn’t know me. But it was God’s ordained hand you see, causing her to come to my home where she would be able to pour into me and not just her but her husband, [husband’s name] would begin to speak into my life and say “What is God doing in you? What is He calling you to?” That they would affirm, you see? They had plans to go somewhere else during my ordination and they cancelled

those plans and said “We will be there.” And so, you know, unbeknownst to me God surrounded me with legends. You see legends!

Mentors were not always other women; they were also men as Lisa just shared. Also, Joan discussed how a male minister came into her life at just the right time. He was a seminary graduate and he helped her understand what it meant to be called. She said since she believed her calling came through supernatural means that she didn’t understand, it was either “find somebody to talk to or consider myself crazy.” She found someone to talk to and that person told her he believed she was being called to the ministry. Joan said that she learn a great deal from this person and he

took me to bookstores, libraries and helped me to choose the right material, guided me into , , how to ... what I was supposed to learn from the material. And eventually this same person after becoming a pastor of a church, licensed and ordained me to minister. And he set guidelines uh, before this could happen – you will have to have a college education, you will need to know this and you need to know how to do that. So, had it not been for that person I ... I don’t know where I would be. I’m sure I would have eventually struggled upon the right things...

In some cases it was someone that Lynn did not know well, but she said it was just when she was ready to give up, “someone would come along. God would send someone along to encourage me and say “Don’t give up, you can do this!” I’d reflect back and I’d tell them “That meant a lot to me.” In most cases she said at the time they said it, it did not mean much to her because she was “very, very hurt, upset” and especially since she was “semi-retired I would say

‘I don’t need this.’ She said it is those times that let her know that she is “really called into it” because she would want to give up.

So it was with Rita, it was at those darkest hours when a woman from out of nowhere would come along and encourage her and stand with her.

That Sunday when I went to church it took every ounce of energy in me to get up and go to church because I was in this depression. And literally I sat on the front just couldn’t get up. And I was just weeping and that Sunday, that’s when God was like, I see you and I love you. A sister came from across the sanctuary and stood by me, and then another sister came from the back and stood by me; and another couple, a man and his wife, I told you it was always at least one guy – came and were laying hands on me and were just praying for me. And another sister came and so I was surrounded and I could feel God’s love through these people that were praying for me. But it was usually always the women. It might be always one guy in there somewhere, but supernaturally God moved. So that’s why, now I love my sisters.

Rita also said that it was because of her experiences that she had a new love for sisterhood. She said she did not always have that kind of love for women:

I’ve come to have a love for women that I don’t think I’ve ever had for women; and an appreciation for sisterhood that I don’t think I’ve ever had because I’ve never been the recipient of it. Like, I’ve always been the giver of it, but I’ve never been (*laughs*) the recipient. So yeah, so that was the beauty of it. And then when it came to this whole man thing, because I really struggle in this area with men and was really, really upset with God because I’m thinking Lord, now you

added another level of discrimination. It's bad enough I'm a Christian and you put pastor on me and then I have to get the faith – God you can do anything so I guess you can do that. But even in those other moments before I get the faith and I'm just kind of dealing with my flesh or with my desires as a woman, it was the women in ministry that would discern it in their spirits. And this one sister would come and she would be like “Girl I need to talk to you because I know exactly what you're struggling with.” And I would be like “whatever.” And she's the one that had to train me on what a godly woman is and taught me to understand that you can't be pastor at home. (*laughs*).

Church members were never meant to walk alone. It has been said that there are fifty-five “one another” verses in the New Testament alone. One third of them calling us to love one another and the other two thirds remind us to serve one another, accept one another, bear one another's burdens, and forgive one another and so on. Although we have been commanded to love one another, it has not been always been realized in the life of the church. Typically it has been a one way “street.”

Most women's ministries are dedicated to empowering women to better deal with life's situations and circumstance through practical application of the Bible. The caveat is that in most cases since the evangelical church only allow women to minister to women, the participants of the study often had women's ministry responsibilities. Just as Rita said, and it can be said of most women in leadership, they are accustomed “giving to mentoring, helping women with life skills and Bible study. Therefore, when the affirming or comforting words of a mentor or a friend were not available, the women had to encourage themselves through reading the Bible, praying or journaling.

Standing Like a Tree Firmly Planted: Critical Reflection, Praying and Reading the Bible

When analyzing the data, it is consistently clear that difficult times seem to be part of being in full time ministry as a woman and more specifically a black woman in a conservative evangelical ministry. Sometimes it is necessary to go into survival mode just to maintain a sense of normalcy. There are times when reaching out for help is not an immediate option. Such is the case of five of the participants who readily stated that the only way they could remain steadfast in their position was that they looked to God, the scriptures or prayer for strength.

There is a commitment to stay the course and not be deterred by the circumstances surrounding them—like Madison—“I just pray about it and try to remain steadfast in the scriptures reading through psalms and things like that.” They are unwavering in their faith and they believe they were called for a purpose and there was no tuning back. For instance, Tina said, “I have managed it through prayer. I would like things to be nice and wonderful and rosy, but sometimes it’s a battle.” She talked about God has called her to a task,

and I have to continue to remind myself that that’s what He’s created me to do and that it’s a privilege for me to work alongside Him; and if I have to take a stand – then I have to take a stand and let Him deal with the outcome. I have to realize that I have to let Spirit rule.

In order to persist in discouraging situations, Melissa believed her only hope of surviving was to first be reminded of a specific passage that says “what God has begun, God will complete.” She went on to say:

I’m not just pulling scriptures. I mean literally these are scriptures that come to me in my moment of need. I need to be encouraged, because it’s not easy

managing it. It's really not. I have to be reminded of the...scriptures to encourage me, to keep me mindful of God's promises.

Lisa was aware of the finiteness of her power but was resolute in the infinite power of God. She stated that it was the "coming to a realization" that there was only so much she could do, she "[does] what God's calls [her] to do, take responsibility for that, be faithful in that and leave the consequences to God."

For Tiffany, sometimes the pain and pressure was so great that it was not enough to just read scripture. She said:

There are some times and some days where I feel like I can handle it and I can manage it because of the things that are in the Bible and it makes it clear that nobody's perfect and we're all going make mistakes, and nothing can separate us from the love of God and things of that nature. And so sometimes I'm really comforted by those things. But other times I'm not. But I also journal a lot too and write down those things so that I can know that it is something that's making a difference. But, more than anything, I have a responsibility to be obedient, you know, and to stand when I'm told to stand and sit when I'm told to sit – but not by humans! By the Lord!

A Form of Godliness but Denying its Power: Choosing Not to Learn

Three of the participants stated early on in the interview that they did not experience any differences in treatment. It was clear that they had learned to cope with the circumstances and the conditions of being in the minority by denying there was a problem. Typically, problems are opportunities to learn about our selves, a particular social context, as well as learning about others. As a result, by denying there is a problem, the women also chose not to learn. In the

case of three of the participants as the interview went on they each shared an incident that they either personally experienced directly or indirectly that were related to their gender and race.

When I asked Linda to share an experience she had that did not resonate with scripture, she talked about a relationship whereby the person was not honest, and he misled her into thinking one thing when in reality it was something completely different for him. I asked her was there any other experiences where there may have been some differences she experienced in seminary or in the workplace. She said, “No I don’t think ... I don’t remember there being differences. I mean the basic premise of just treating people in a way that would represent God well. I don’t think there were differences.” However, she went on to share about something that happened to a classmate:

I just thought of how one woman was given a leadership position and how some of the men didn’t respond well. And so there was, I don’t know if you want to call it sabotage, but that’s the only word I can think of right now – just not very supportive. And as a result of not being supported they just kind of shut down and didn’t assist when she needed help and things like that.

I asked her to explain how it impacted her, she said that she obviously got angry as a result of the situation, and “wanting to encourage her that it wasn’t her fault and that she didn’t do anything wrong. But then, just trying to figure out what was going on with them. A lot of it had to do with their [the men] tradition which I have problems with anyway.”

Faye shared an instance whereby she was affected by sexism, but ruled it out as factor that she had to deal with personally. She said referring to my inquest about there being differences in how men and women are treated differently, “I don’t think with me specifically, but I definitely think with other women yeah. I mean I know that it takes place and probably

always will.” I asked her why she felt it was different for her than with others. She replied, “Yeah, that’s a great question. I think it’s because I’m a peacemaker. I’m not one to necessarily rock the boat unless I really feel very strongly about something. And even if that’s the case then I probably would respond different from somebody else.” She went on to explain a particular situation that her supervisor had to deal with related to her gender and her teaching a course traditionally taught by men:

I remember my supervisor had suggested she wanted me to teach and one of the things I remember she had to go through for me to be approved to teach bible courses because I am a woman; not so much a woman of color, but I think she said because I was a woman. And as far as I know from what I remember I was like the first one, at least at that location as a woman, to teach Bible because it had always been men.

The other two participants had similar occurrences whereby, they were aware that sexism and racism is a factor in ministry, but they did not experience it personally. For the most part, the participants of this study were relegated to operating within the margins of the seminary and their ministry workplace.

In the case of Trisha, I had asked her all the questions on my interview guide and I was bringing the interview to a close. I asked her if there was anything else she would like to share that we had not discussed. She said, “Well, I guess I’m a little surprised at the questions. I’m (pauses) I don’t know what I expected, but I’d like for you to explain again your research.” So I told her the title of my research and shared with her the information on the International Review Board form. After which she said, “But I thought you would have talked more about the power and the politics of women in ministry.” When I explained to her I just wanted her to share at

least two important events while in seminary or the workplace and whatever she said at that time would be sufficient, she went on to tell me about an event that took place on her previous job:

One experience was devastating because it ended up with my being released. Really I was fired. (*laughs*) I can laugh about it because as I sought the Lord to get beyond my pain, He allowed me to see where I went wrong; and therefore I can't hold a grudge against the people that are involved. It goes right back to what I was just saying, you know, we tend to step outside of our role and I think that was a valuable lesson for me. As I've gone back over it, meditated on it, spent probably too much time thinking about it, asking where did I go wrong – that's where I went wrong, stepping outside of my particular role. And I probably ... there are two things: either I should not have accepted the position or at some point I should have quit. Probably should have quit. I thought I knew the organization when I actually learned the organization I should have resigned. I was asked to do some things that were unethical. And at that point I should have resigned; but ego, greed, prestige, pride all of that stuff was involved and therefore I didn't. And so, as I look at it I can't hold anybody else responsible. I can't. I stepped outside of my role in terms of authority. I was hired to do a secular job within a ministry, and in doing my secular job because no one else at the institution understood what I was to do, then I moved into a position of authority. And therefore, what happened should have happened.

In this instance, Trisha was one of two black women on staff at a predominately white male seminary. She absolved the men of any liability and took full responsibility of what happened that resulted in her being fired from her job. In her current position however, she is

resolute that her gender is not a concern, nor does she feel any “residual affects” of her being a woman.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical Black women in ministry preparation and practice were discussed. In summation, issues of sexism, racism, learning how to cope were the most frequent concerns raised by the women when asked what were two important events experienced in seminary and ministry workplace. These factors were not surprising as it relates to the women and their experiences; however it was the intensity and the impact that it had on them that was astonishing.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the power dynamics involved in the careers of evangelical black women in ministry preparation and practice. The questions that guide this study were:

1. How do power relationships based on race and gender affect the ministry preparation and practice of evangelical black women?
2. How do black evangelical women ministers learn to exist in the hierarchical structure of the evangelical culture?

Qualitative methodology was determined to be the best approach to explore the phenomenon of 11 evangelical women and how they learn to negotiate the power dynamics in their ministry preparation and practice. I used semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method for this study. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. The constant comparative method was used to tease out the emergent themes among the research participants.

Data analysis disclosed four primary findings experienced by the participants in this study where they were the first or only woman of color in their ministry training or workplace. The first finding addressed Question 1 and revealed that the women were being confined to a “woman’s place” through social exclusion in seminary and/or their ministry workplace. Although the women were invited to the table, they did not have a voice. The second finding

also addressed Question 1 in which five of the 11 women experienced racism on in their ministry preparation and practice. The women indicated that they felt they had to abandon their own culture and assimilate in to the dominate culture in order to be accepted.

The third finding answered Question 2 by revealing that the women either chose to leave or to stay in their ministry context. Depending on how difficult things were, they ran the risk of developing significant health problems, and three of the women chose to leave. The other eight women chose to stay and learned how to cope with their situation.

The fourth and final finding indicated that all of the women in the study employed one of two strategies to stay spiritually grounded in the midst of working through marginalization and oppression by the men in their workplaces. The strategies are: learning through a mentor and critically reflecting on their experiences through journaling, and choosing not to learn by denying that there are differences in the way women are treated.

Conclusions and Discussion

Four major conclusions emerged from the findings in this study: 1) Power relations based on race and gender in the wider society framed the experiences of the women in their ministry preparation; 2) Power relations based on race and gender in wider society informed the experiences of the women in their ministry practice; 3) A particular interpretation of scripture was deployed to sustain both gender and race domination; and 4) The women learned how to exist in the hierarchical structure of their evangelical ministry context through mentoring relationships and reflecting on their experiences.

Conclusion One: Power relations based on race and gender in wider society framed the experiences of the women in their ministry preparation

The participants in this study were all black women who were called to the ministry and chose to attend a predominantly white male conservative evangelical seminary for graduate-level ministerial training. All of the women except one received a bachelor's degree from a secular university. One participant had a master's degree from a university in the Midwest.

The data supports the literature that their experiences in seminary were congruent with and a reflection of what is typically experienced in university settings (Johnson-Bailey, 2001). Gender oppression was a reality in their day-to-day experiences as women of color in the adult classroom. They were silenced, abused, ignored, and made to feel as if they were anomalies (Hayes, 2000b).

Gender Bias in Higher Education and the Seminary

Historically, both Christian and secular higher education has been considered an exclusive white-male club (Johnson-Bailey, 2001). Prior to the passing of the Suffrage Act and Civil Rights Bill, women and blacks need not apply because their applications would not be considered nor would they be admitted to the ivory tower club. Nonetheless, white women attended private colleges that were established for their particular needs in the mid-1800s (Johnson-Bailey, 2001). However, as time progressed and in more recent years, white male academics—the threshold-keepers—began to rethink how they would determine who would gain entrance into their beloved academic halls. Blacks had to fight and risk their lives to gain their right to education opportunities equal to those of their white cohorts. White women received a slight nod of approval as they persistently made application to the club.

This trend of women gaining access to the ivory tower would continue to the point that women are now “the largest proportion and most rapidly growing cohort of participants in many educational settings, particularly in higher education” (Hayes, 2000, p. 27). According to Hayes,

women's participation in higher education has surpassed that of men, with more women receiving bachelor's and master's degrees than previously, however, "...white men still earn more doctoral degrees..." (p. 2), thus they hold more administrative and academic appointments in higher education. The threshold-keepers in secular universities were made up of white men and a few white women. Women insider-outsiders can be excellent role models and contribute to the personal and professional growth (Hayes, 2000a; Merriam et al., 2001) of young women on campus. However, the hierarchical system that exists in the Western world gives privilege status to whiteness and maleness, and black women possess neither characteristic (Johnson-Bailey, 2001). As a result, the women were isolated and marginalized

The ones who hold the keys are the ones with the most power and privilege. In society as a whole, white males have enjoyed the benefits, exemptions, and immunities (McIntosh, 1990) beyond what women and people of color experience in their day-to-day experiences, particularly on college and seminary campuses. Brookfield (2005) says, "Whoever is in a position of power is able to create knowledge supporting that power relationship. Whatever a society accepts as knowledge or truth inevitably ends up strengthening the power of some and limiting the power of others" (p.136). All knowledge reflects the values and interests of its creators. Throughout the ages, white males and a few white women have been the primary creators and dispensers of knowledge. So, if the quote by Francis Bacon is true, "knowledge is power." And if whites are taught not to consider their privileged status, and white men are taught not to consider their white-male privilege (McIntosh, 1993), then both white men and women are able to cash in on their unmerited power and privilege (McIntosh, 1990) status while remaining unaware about the effect it has on those who lack the same educational opportunity.

Unequal Access and Stereotypes in the Seminary

The seminary changed from elite to a mass system of ministerial training in the last decade, according to the Association of Theological Schools Fact Book (2003). One of the most dramatic changes is the growing number of women attending seminary. But, what is most alarming is that the growth happened without any strategic planning, let alone any vision for women attending the traditional all-male seminary.

The number of women enrolled in white evangelical seminaries was rather small prior to the early 1970s (Lehman, 2002). In 1977, there were 3,019 women enrolled in the MDiv program compared to 23, 234 men. Twenty-five years later in 2002, there were 10,070 women (a gain of 234 percent) and 21, 924 men (a loss of six percent) (Association of Theological Schools Fact Book, 2003). The percentage of women has been rising steadily. Although the women in this study matriculated into their respective seminary between 1994 and 2000, there is no way of identifying the actual number of women of color attending seminary because, as with most censuses, researchers treat women and blacks as a monolithic group (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). When they are reporting on specific concerns, the societal and cultural differences of others are not taken into consideration.

More black women were present on conservative evangelical seminary campuses and, according to the experiences of the women associated with this study they did not interact as equals with men and were not viewed as such by seminary faculty and administration (Carpenter, 1989; Ingersoll, 2003; Moody, 1988; Nesbitt, 1997; Spring & Menehan, 1986; Wilkes, 1991; Wilson, 1974; Zikmund et al., 1998). Traditionally, a woman's only role was in the home and so preparing for the ministry was a waste of time. The argument here is not whether the choices women make to stay home or work outside the home are right or wrong, but how some men

misuse scripture to keep women in their place and out of the seminary. I will discuss this further in Conclusion Three. As a result, the women in this study were excused from classes when the seminary believed the topic or subject was not relevant to “the ladies.” Several of the women stated that this position regarding the classes for men only was printed in their college’s catalogue (Appendix D). Feminist and Womanist studies found a home on more liberal seminary campuses. Students, both male and female were integrating these perspectives in their religious life and scholarship (Lehman, 2002). However, this was not the case on more conservative evangelical seminary campuses. Evangelical conservative scholars renounced feminist thought and may have offered one course in the curriculum that addressed their conservative views of the role of women in ministry.

Women are the majority (55 percent) in non-MDiv degrees that prepare individuals for ministerial leadership, but they are the minority in all other program types (See Table 3). While some denominations ordain women, ministry as a career choice can be problematic for women, and they encounter more difficulties than men (Carpenter, 1989; Ingersoll, 2003; Moody, 1988; Nesbitt, 1997; Spring & Menehan, 1986; Wilkes, 1991; Wilson, 1974; Zikmund et al., 1998). Gender and religious leadership is a major issue the women of the study was met with, and probably will continue to be an issue in North American religion. The Association of Theological Schools suggests that the increasing presence of women in theological schools is changing the face of religious leadership, particularly among mainline Protestants. Even though the makeup of religious leadership may be changing due to the increasing presence of women graduating from theological schools, gender is still a contested issue in the religious communities. Moreover, the experiences of the women in this study suggest that a key challenge

| TABLE 3: Student Enrollment by Degree Category and Gender, 2002 | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| | MEN | WOMEN |
| Master of Divinity | 21,924 | 10,070 |
| Basic Ministerial Leadership (non-MDiv) | 4,281 | 5,186 |
| General Theological Studies | 4,726 | 3,884 |
| Advanced Ministerial Leadership | 7,665 | 1,543 |
| Advanced Theological Research and Teaching | 4,170 | 1,483 |
| Other | 6,429 | 5,149 |
| Total | 49,195 | 27,315 |

Data Provided by Association of Theological Schools (www.ats.edu)

facing seminaries is the need to meet the educational objectives of a more diverse group of learners, namely women and women of color in particular.

Unequal Opportunity for Participation

Colleges and universities typically provide an environment that differentiates between students on the basis of merit. Women and people of color attending conservative evangelical seminaries are not exempt from the stereotypes held by the larger society in which biases are reinforced and expressed in the classroom. As previously mentioned, despite the increasing presence of women on campuses, seminary is still considered a masculine endeavor and success is believed to be based on skills and abilities. As two of the participants in the study indicated, it was not until they made good grades in Hebrew and Greek or preached better than some of the men in their class, were they taken seriously. Research reveals that there is a tendency to devalue women and their work. Johnson-Bailey (2001) says that typically black women are not seen as proficient scholars due to them being viewed as intellectually inferior. Clearly, this can have an incredible influence on the self-esteem of women (Johnson-Bailey, 2001).

The classroom is not a neutral space (Cervero & Wilson, 1996; Drennon & Cervero, 2002; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1997). It is value laden, and we all bring our biases about race, gender and class into the classroom. We are always in the midst of negotiating power

(Cervero & Wilson, 2006), and when it is unequally distributed, it compromises democracy and participation in the classroom. Several of the women in the study shared how they either chose to not participate by remaining silent in the classroom, or the instructor silenced them by ignoring their presence. Silence may be used as a safety strategy where a woman may be protecting her grade (Johnson-Bailey, 2001), sense of self-worth, or—in the case of the women in this study—the ability to achieve certain goals they have set for themselves (Hayes, 2000b).

Although the classroom is not a neutral space, it should be a safe space. This description of the classroom suggests that students should feel secure enough to take risks while sharing their views and exploring their knowledge and attitudes. Adult learners should walk away from their classroom experiences affirmed by their classmates and their instructors, even if there are differences in opinions, values, and views. Unfortunately, the professors' of the study participants and their classmates' ability to become culturally competent, think critically, confront biases, and become more aware of their own values and beliefs were short-circuited in the seminary classroom.

Conclusion Two: Power relations based on race and gender in wider society informed the experiences of the women in their ministry practice.

The evangelical subculture is a microcosm of the broader American society (Alumkal, 2004). On the one hand, you have neo-white supremacists who view blacks and other racial minorities and feminists as threats to the traditional values of American society. But on the other hand, you have evangelicals who are committed to social justice issues surrounding race reconciliation and inclusive language regarding women (Perry, 1998). And in the middle, we find the values of wider society that support the equality of all people but are opposed to the

programs, such as Affirmative Action (Alumkal, 2004; Perry, 1998), designed to redistribute political and economic resources.

Emerson and Smith (2000) did a study among self-proclaimed evangelicals regarding race in America. Their study revealed that whites talked about race only when it came up as a topic of discussion. Moreover, evangelical white Christians view race and racism as an individual issue, and they tend to compartmentalize it as a legitimate concern. But by no means does it dominate their thinking nor is it a focal point in their life experiences. The evangelicals in the study also believe we are now living in a color-blind society, and race is only a perceived or fabricated problem exacerbated by the media, government, and liberals (Emerson & Smith, 2000a).

In the wider society, what does it really mean to be color-blind? It is presumed that if race is not an issue, or when race is discussed indirectly or does not directly impact anyone in a serious way, then race is relative (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). This, in effect, denies the importance of celebrating racial differences in minorities. However, it also negates the unjust experiences of minorities (racism and discrimination) while allowing white people to deny how their whiteness infringes upon people of color and their cultural mores.

I am foregrounding the concept of color-blindness because it contextualizes the experiences of the women in this study. I also want to introduce the idea that not only were the study participants' experiences framed within the context that employers perceived themselves as nonracist and color-blind; but the participants also worked in an environment where the leaders were gender-mute. People are gender-mute when, for instance, they know there is a problem in how women are systematically oppressed and abused. But rather than address it, they choose to turn their heads the other way and remain silent. So, here we have black women

buying into the idea that in Christianity, everyone loves the Lord, and we are all His children. But, then, they are forced to realize that the same people they are sitting next to roasting marshmallows by the fire and singing *Kum Ba Yah* are the perpetrators of racist and sexist behaviors toward them.

It's a Man's World: Seeing in Black and White

The women in this study believed their ministerial career chose them rather than them choosing to go into the ministry, a male-dominated career. Although black women typically aspire to careers that are traditionally dominated by women (Evans & Herr, 1991), the demographics of the participants of the study reveal that they chose to work in either predominantly white male or all-black male contexts.

Ministry by its very nature is a political process (Burns & Cervero, 2002, 2004). When the participants of the study talked about their experiences and that they were expected to assimilate into the dominant cultures' behavior because they are a racial minority, it was evident that they were working in a predominantly white context. However, they also talked about how their gender was highlighted in an all-black male context.

Access and duties are not evenly or equitably distributed in wider society nor is it the case among those within conservative theological contexts. Moreover, in their ministry practice in both the predominately white and all-black male leadership context, they experienced salary disparities or token job titles for the sake of appeasement. Many people typically think that once women have a presence in a particular occupation, parity has occurred (Nesbitt, 1997). The women in this study talked extensively about their experiences in their ministry workplace and compared it to wider society in a corporate environment.

Working for the White Man: Color-Blind and Gender-Mute

White ministry leaders will hire a black woman to prove they are committed to racial reconciliation and that they are pro-women in the ministry. Bell and Nkomo (2003) call women who find themselves in this predicament “affirmative action cover girls.” Within the day-to-day operations, such women are constantly jumping through intellectual and spiritual hoops to prove they are qualified to do the job they were hired—and called by God—to do, fighting to survive what is essentially spiritual, professional, and psychological sabotage. One of the participants called it “psychological warfare.” Bell and Nkomo (2003) refer to the phenomenon as racialized sexism, the experience of gender discrimination in a social context that depends on a woman’s race. As black women, they are subjected to a particular form of sexism shaped by racism and racial stereotyping. Getting in the door is not the problem; it is overcoming the obstacles of the stained-glass ceiling (Nesbitt, 1997).

Another point brought up in the study is the fact that black women are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture (Bell & Nkomo, 2003) when they are serving in a predominantly white context. They must divest themselves of any semblance of “blackness” or “femaleness.” Bell and Nkomo say white-male dominated organizations often make cultural assimilation the price of acceptability for racial minorities.

Working for the Black Man: Gender-Mute

Gender politics in the black church is a reflection of gender politics in the broader society. One of the study participants stated that black pastors will sometimes place women in a highly visible position just to appease the women in the congregation. They have the position but no power.

The black church is the primary site of sexism struggles for black women in ministry as evidenced by the literature written by Womanist theologians and black church scholars (Higginbotham, 1992; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin, 2000; Perry, 1998; Raboteau, 1995; Wiggins, 2005; Zoba & Lee, 1996). Although black clergywomen's struggle for acceptance as pastors paralleled that of white women, there were distinct differences related to the additional burden of racism. Black male church leaders seem to view oppressions as hierarchical, with racism believed to be the ultimate and—in some cases—the only oppression that African-American people face. Black women's concern about sexist experiences in the black church is often seen as an irritant and ultimately is dismissed by black male leadership.

Black men are not the only ones in the black church who are gender-mute. A common factor sited in the study was that other women are sometimes silent conspirators in the problems women in leadership experience (Carpenter, 1986). Wiggins (2005) says that black women do not want to be de-stabilizers of the black male leadership role since it is the only place a black man can be in control and not be emasculated. Nor do they want to exacerbate issues between black men and women that are already a major concern in the black community.

Despite all the pressure of social movements and legislation in wider society over the last 25 or 30 years, gender segregation and income differences between men and women have not changed significantly in the ministry. Women who are seeking to enter male-dominated fields are still experiencing difficulty in getting accepted into schools and placed in a fulfilling position once they graduate (Lehman, 2002).

Conclusion Three: Tradition and a particular interpretation of scripture was deployed to sustain both gender and race domination.

Historically, the role of women in local evangelical assemblies has always been a matter of debate within Christendom (Bendroth & Brereton, 2002; Gallagher, 2003; Higginbotham, 1992, 1993; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Marsden, 1984; Noll et al., 1994; Raboteau, 1984; Zikmund, Lummis, & Chang, 1998). The views concerning the role of women in ministry have historically been broken into two distinct groups: those who believed women should be permitted to hold positions of pastoral authority in the church and those who believed that only men should be permitted to hold such positions in the local church (Clouse et al., 1989).

Those who believe women should be restricted from holding authoritative, pastoral roles in the church embrace what is known as the complimentary view (Piper & Grudem, 1991). On the other hand, those who believe women should possess the ability to occupy all positions of leadership within the church embrace what is referred to as the egalitarian view, says Piper and Grudem. Another observation among evangelicals was the variety of opinions that existed regarding ordaining women in ministry (Kostenberger, Schreiner, & Baldwin, 1995). Complimentarians refused to ordain women as ministers, mainly because of their interpretation of 1 Timothy 2, in which the Bible prohibits women from the office of pastor (Piper & Grudem, 1991), while egalitarians advocated ordination (Kostenberger, et al.). According to Clouse, et al. (1989), evangelicals do not subscribe to all aspects of one view, as is the case of the women in this study.

Like men, the women in this study were called to serve vocationally in the ministry. They never considered their gender a factor when they responded to the call. Their gender was problematic for the men in the seminary, ministry workplace, or both. The women said they

believe these problems stem from tradition, the specific hermeneutical principles used to interpret the Bible, or both. These women believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible and that the Bible teaches full equality of men and women; but they also believe there are very distinct role designations, and that there is a hierarchical structure within the home, with men as the head. To some degree, this could partially explain why they chose to attend a conservative evangelical seminary; they went there to learn about God and a particular understanding of the Bible, but checked their social concerns at the door. Several of the women stated that all they wanted was to learn about God, the Bible, church history, and theology. Once the women experienced racism and sexism in their classes, their goal was to get what they came there to learn and practically apply biblical principles to their own social context.

The debate about gender issues tends to focus on a few passages in the New Testament in which complementarians and egalitarians use different hermeneutical principles to interpret the passages and ultimately come up with different views regarding women in ministry. Pentecost (1958) states that the literal method of interpretation used by complementarians assigns to each word the same meaning it would have in normal, ordinary usage, whether writing, speaking, or thinking. It is called the grammatical-historical method to emphasize the fact that the meaning is to be determined by both grammatical and historical considerations. Kostenberger et al. (1995) says traditionalists typically include the above methods used by complementarians but also make room for reading their personal meanings and experiences into the text.

The women in this study discussed how their pastors, or the men they work for, are conservative complementarians; they hold to a literal interpretation of the scriptures. But these women have nonetheless watched their pastors vacillate about the role of women in ministry. Some stated that their pastor did not believe in women in ministry, but over the years he relaxed

his views. I find this interesting since men who believe in the limited roles of women in ministry use specific scriptures to make sure the women remain in their places. The Bible has not changed; the pastors still apply the same hermeneutical principles to interpret the Bible, but now his position on women has changed. Are they hiring and placing women in significant roles of leadership to appease the women who say they have been called? Or are they coming to terms with the fact that maybe they were deploying sexist views of women apart from scriptural references?

Conclusion Four: The women learned how to exist in the hierarchical structure of their evangelical ministry context through mentoring and reflecting on their experiences.

Unless the social context in which the women's learning takes place is understood, it is difficult to understand what they have learned (Hayes, 2000). Women tend to learn more about their race, culture and class when their social context is taken in to consideration, which in turn shapes their future learning experiences. The participants in this study were aware of the hierarchical structure of their ministry preparation and practice context and they took specific measures to learn how to exist within the system. In most cases quitting was a thought but instead they employed spiritual disciplines and transformative learning and relied on a mentor or friends, and they especially learned from their experiences.

Crisis of Belief: A Disorienting Dilemma

One of the first courses seminarians are required to take is spiritual formation. Spiritual formation describes the dynamic process of growth and change in one's spiritual development. In most cases a variety of subjects, methodologies, disciplines and theologies coexist within this framework. Students are given models for soul care with the expressed purpose of deepening

their personal experience with God and understanding themselves and the world around them better.

Scholars (Astin, 2004; hooks, 2003, English and Gillen, 2000; Palmer, 2000; Wuthnow, 2001) in adult and higher education have come to value the role spirituality plays in learning. Tisdell (2003) says, "spirituality intersects the personal and professional, and makes most sense when it is integrated fully into all aspects of a person's life" (p. 9). Learners come to a better appreciation and understanding of the essence of who they are through transformative learning experiences (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006).

Transformative learning theory came out of Mesirow's (1978) study of women returning or entering higher education. *Perspective transformation* was a major theoretical finding in the study whereby the women experienced a disorienting dilemma (a significant personal crisis). They became critically aware of their personal, historical, and cultural contexts, their assumptions and frames of references changed. The women in this study all came to a crisis of belief about racist and sexist acts toward them. It was disorienting because it came from the people they least expected. This dilemma caused them to look for ways to respond to the situation that was most painful and perplexing to them. All eleven women talked about their relationship with God and how that was the only way they were able to survive. They chose to invoke spirituality as a means of critical reflection and employed the use of the introspective/critical reflective tools (prayer, journaling, meditating on scriptures) they learned while in seminary. Mezirow (1990) considers the driving force for critical reflection as the insatiable human search for meaning and reason. In the religious community and in the lives of the women in this study, this longing or search would be consistent with desiring to know God or feel His presence in their lives.

Meaning schemes is another major component of Mezirow's theory. The meaning schemes or frame of reference the women applied to their understanding their situation was internalizing the "will of God" or "being obedient to God". Perspective transformation places emphasis on the intra-personal aspect of critical reflection of our underlying assumptions or presuppositions but, it also affirms the importance of rational discourse as a key element to transformation. Not only did the women look up and within, they also looked outside of themselves and to others to construct a different perspective and understanding of their situation as the first or only woman of color in their ministry context.

The Wounded Leader: The Healing Hands of Mentors and Friends

Initially, when a person is the first or only in their chosen careers, there is a sense of euphoria and loneliness. There is the feeling like you have finally made it and have found your "sweet spot" and then once you are there, you look around and find no one looks like you, talks like you or even capable of even truly understanding you. You quickly come to realize what it took to get where you are and the expectations you had for yourself; however in some cases the expectation of others leaned a completely different direction (Gilbreath, 2007). There is an additional burden that is an imposition, because now you represent either all woman or all black people. Your successes or failures are not only your own, but they impact everyone that follow you, says Gilbreath. In the case of the women in this study, in so many words that is what they explained about their ministry work place as the first or only in a male dominated career. When asked how they learned to exist in that environment, the responses were not only about soul care, but how others helped them get over.

Despite the barriers of racism and sexism in their ministry preparation and practice, in most cases the women in this study had to learn how to persevere. It is difficult to find

information that document the lived experiences of black women in the ministry. In general, Bova (2000) said that the ability to track and understand the careers of black women has been a neglected topic. As it relate to the success of the women in this study, they said that if it had not been for mentors, people in the congregation, or other women who were still in the corporate workforce, they do not know what they would have done.

Bova also says that having a mentor can serve both a career related and psychosocial purpose in the lives of women. For one of the participants, it was a male in the ministry that encouraged her to accept her calling and was instrumental in ordaining her into the ministry. He served in a career related capacity for her by constantly being a support system for her when things got difficult. Another element of the career related focus of a mentor is shielding or protecting them from what could be an otherwise complicated situation. There was one participant that shared an incident whereby her boss, a woman, had to fight for her to be able to teach a course that had been traditionally taught by men. Although she felt like she had not had any racist or sexist experiences in both the seminary and the workplace, her supervisor in effect protected her from having to deal with the issue directly.

As it relates to the psychosocial purpose of mentoring relationship, the remaining women who said that it was because of others that they were able to get beyond the difficulties they were having in ministry. A participant in particular talked about the impact of another woman reaching out to her in her time of need affected her and gave her a greater love for sisterhood. She has always been the one providing counsel to others, but it was not until she was on the receiving end that she valued the concept of mentoring.

In the Burns and Cervero (2002) study, they defined a mentor as a person who was considered a wise and trusted confidant who served as a guide while pursuing their education as a

pastor. These relationships can easily be forged between the pastor and a professor because of their respective role in each others life. In some cases professors have been pastors as well as educators. Unfortunately, the women in this study did not have the privilege of developing those types of relationships because in most cases the relationship between them and their professors was not always collegial.

For women of color in particular, the black church can be a source of strength and encouragement as well (Gregory, 1995) even when the relationship with the leaders is not the best. Three of the participants stated that just when they were ready to give up, someone in the congregation would tell them they were praying for them, or encourage them not to give up. In most of those cases they were being encouraged by people they did not know.

The concept of mentoring is not a new concept for people in the ministry. The Bible is replete with instances of mentoring relationships. However, in a day to day lived experience those types of relationships are difficult to develop. In most cases it is about trust, the same basic concern Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2002, 2004) discussed in their piece on cross-cultural mentoring. However, for these women it was about learning how to trust other women with their business. Relationships are dynamic and fluid and a great amount of effort has to be made to be transparent about what you are going through. Particularly in the church—a place where it seems gossip thrives—the concern is will the things shared be the new hot topic for the other ladies in the church. These concerns left several of the women feeling alone and left to learn through their experiences.

Implications and Recommendations

This study is important because it explores the subjective experiences of black evangelical women in their conservative evangelical ministry context and the ways power

dynamics, racism and sexism impact their ministry preparation and practice. The literature as well as the conclusions from this study suggests that the power relations of the wider society pre-existed and framed the experiences of the women's ministry preparation and practice. There is an implication for theory, several recommendations for future research on this topic, as well as implications for practice.

Implications for Theory and Future Research

In terms of theoretical implications, this study adds to the growing body of literature within adult education that examines the role spirituality plays in adult learning. Since most people are concerned with the separation of church and state there has been a tendency to not address the affective side of the learner particularly as it relates to their religion or spirituality within the classroom. However, more educators (Astin, 2004; hooks, 2003; Tisdell, 2003; English & Gillen, 2000; Palmer, 2000; English, Fenwick & Parsons, 2003; Wuthnow, 2001) in adult and higher education have come to value the role spirituality plays in learning. As the findings of this study revealed, religion and spirituality played a crucial role in the learning of the women in this study as they worked through oppression and marginalization in the classroom and workplace whereby they were the first or only women within that context.

As the findings and conclusions in this study revealed, there are at least two directions that can be taken to better understand the plight of black evangelical women serving in the margins. The first is to build upon this study to further examine the power dynamics and marginalization of black women in religious continuing education classes and leadership. This could be done by including the voices of black and white men in leadership who have attended white conservative evangelical seminaries.

Several of the participants in this study indicated that their pastors' and employers' views had changed over the years regarding the role of women in ministry. It has only been within the last ten or twelve years that black women have been entering conservative evangelical seminaries and ministry related workplaces. However, there continues to be much disparity in the treatment and salaries between the men and the women on staff or in the classroom. Nesbitt says (1997) most men feel as though parity has taken place when one or two of an underrepresented people group has been hired or accepted into a program. That person in effect becomes the poster child for diversity and the unofficial spokesperson for their gender, race and/or culture. Although these women are going into the conservative evangelical context to learn and serve, because of the treatment they receive they are either staying and suffering or leaving. Therefore, a triangulated study using different research methods and including the voice of the men would improve the validity and reliability of the findings in this study.

The second area that should be investigated is looking at how evangelical black women in ministry practice reconcile the Biblical teaching they receive with their experiences in the ministry. Many of the women, as previously stated, were perplexed by what they were being taught and how their experiences ran contrary to that teaching. Clearly it caused them to question themselves, what they learned and God. As one of the participants stated, it may be of God for her to be in ministry but it was not of God for her to be going into a depression and then leaving that ministry context after only being there less than six months. Therefore, understanding how the women in this study juxtapose theory and practice in ministry would be a benefit of additional research.

Recommendations for Practice

As it relates to practice, one way to give them a voice is to begin in the seminary. Developing a multicultural awareness course or track in the seminary that not only teaches about culture outside the United States, but also on race and gender relations in wider society and how it impacts the church would be solid start. Most conservative seminaries offer courses on culture awareness because they have students who are interested in missions outside the United States. However, they may offer one elective course that deals with the black church history, but only those who are going into the black church register for the class. Of course everyone is required to take the core classes related to American Christianity. Subjects written about white men—for white men—by white men. What a shame since Acts 1:8 says "...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem [city], and in all Judea [state] and Samaria [country], and to the ends of the earth [outside the United States]." In many cases the black church is concerned with "Jerusalem" and the white church is concerned with "the ends of the earth". Rarely does the black church and white church meet somewhere in between. Also, there are classes in the conservative seminary for the "ladies" to take, and it is regarding their role in the ministry. In those classes women are further taught their place in ministry, which of course is subservient to their husbands. Therefore, many women while in seminary begin looking for their husband, a further reflection of wider society, and graduate not sure what they are biblically allowed to do with their seminary degree. Therefore, an expansion on the idea of multiculturalism in the seminary would be a place to start in practice.

In addition, another area for practice is to bring the participants in this study together to strategize on how we can support each other as well as other women in similar social contexts. This can be done by writing a grant to support our efforts in developing workshops and

ultimately a leadership conference targeting evangelical black women leaders. The long range plan would be to begin including well respected male scholars, theologians and pastors that have a vision for the narrowing the gap related to racism and sexism in the Christian community. The goal would be to facilitate healing in the black and white evangelical community whereby there desire to knock down the walls of racism and sexism and rebuild with respect for each other's differences.

A Concluding Note

I end this study where I started. In Chapter 1, I quoted a stanza from the poem "Little Giddings" by TS Elliot: *We shall not cease from exploration, And the end of all our exploring. Will be to arrive where we started from, And know the place for the first time.* When I first embarked upon this study as an insider-outsider (Merriam et al., 2001), that passage resonated with my own journey as a black woman who attended a predominately white male evangelical seminary and worked in ministries where I was either the first or only black woman on staff in a significant leadership capacity. At the time, I had not come to a clear understanding of what the entire passage meant. However, analyzing the narratives of the women in this study and reviewing the findings that emerged brought clarity to the meaning of the verse.

I found that there was a confluence of three elements: critically reflecting on the historical aspect of the role of women in ministry; listening to the personal stories of past and present experiences of gender and race oppression while in seminary and in their ministry workplace; and a renewing of the spirit through mentors, reading the Bible, and prayer. Reflecting on their cyclical journey led me back to where "I started," and to "the place" where I knew myself "for the first time."

REFERENCES

- Alumkal, A. W. (2004). American evangelicalism in the post-civil rights era: A racial formation theory analysis. *Sociology of Religion*, 65(3), 195-213.
- Balmer, R. H. (1989). *Mine eyes have seen the glory: A journey into the evangelical subculture in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, E. L. J. E., & Nkomo, S. M. (2003). Our separate ways: Black and white women and the struggle for professional identity., *Diversity Factor*, 11(1), 11-15.
- Bendroth, M. L., & Brereton, V. L. (2002). *Women and twentieth-century Protestantism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (4 ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Group.
- Brown, A.H., Cervero, R.M., & Johnson-Bailey, J. (2000). Making the invisible visible: Race, gender, and teaching in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50, 273-288.
- Burns, R.W., & Cervero, R.M. (2002). How pastors learn the politics of ministry practice. *Religious Education*, 97 (4), 304-321.
- Burns, R., & Cervero, R.M. (2004). Issues framing the politics of pastoral ministry practice. *Review of Religious Research*, 45(3), 235-253.
- Cannon, K. G. (1988). *Black womanist ethics*. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press.
- Cannon, K. G. (1995). *Katie's canon: Womanism and the soul of the black community*. New York: Continuum.

- Cannon, K. G. (1985). *God's fierce whimsY: Christian feminism and theological education*. New York: Pilgrim Press.
- Carpenter, D. C. (1986). The professionalization of the ministry of women. *Journal of Religious Thought*, 43(1), 59.
- Carpenter, D. C. (1989). Black women in religious institutions: A historical summary from slavery to the 1960s., *Journal of Religious Thought*, 46, 7.
- Carpenter, D. C. (2001). *A time for honor: A portrait of African American clergywomen*. St. Louis MO: Chalice Press.
- Carroll, J. W., Hargrove, B., & Lummis, A. T. (1982). *Women of the cloth: A new opportunity for the churches*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Cervero, R. M., & Wilson, A.L. (Eds.). (1996). *What really matters in adult education program planning: Lessons in negotiating power and interests*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education. No. 69. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cervero, R. M., Wilson, A. L., & Associates. (2001). *Power in practice: Adult education and the struggle for knowledge and power in society*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cervero, R. M., & Wilson, A. L. (2006). *Working the planning table: Negotiating democratically for adult, continuing, and workplace education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Charlton, J. (1987). Women in seminary : a review of current social science research. *Review of Religious Research*, 28, 305-318.
- Charmaz, K. (2002). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. Gubrium & J. A. Holestein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 675-694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Clouse, B., Clouse, R. G., & Culver, R. D. (1989). *Women in ministry: Four views*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Drennon, C.E., & Cervero, R.M. (2002). The politics of facilitation in practitioner inquiry groups. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52, 193-209.
- Elwell, W. A. (1996). *Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Emerson, M. O., Smith, C. & Sikkink, D. (1999). Equal in Christ, but not in the world: White conservative protestants and explanations of black-white inequality. *Social Problems*, 46, 398-417.
- Emerson, M. O., & Smith, C. (2000b). *Divided by faith: Evangelical religion and the problem of race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, K. M., & Herr, E. L. (1991). The Influence of racism and sexism in the career development of African American women., *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 19, 130-135.
- Foster, M. (1994). The power to know one thing is never the power to know all things: Methodological notes on two studies of black American teachers. In A. D. Gitlin (Ed.), *Power and method : Political activism and educational research* New York: Routledge.
- Frederick, M. F. (2003). *Between Sundays : Black women and everyday struggles of faith*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Gilkes, C. (2001). *If it wasn't for the women: Black women's experience and womanist culture in church and community*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.
- Gilbreath, E., (2007, February). Exit interviews: Why blacks are leaving evangelical ministries. Retrieved March 30, 2007, from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/4.104.html>
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.
- Grant, J. (1989). *White women's Christ and black women's Jesus: Feminist christology and womanist response*. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press.
- Gregory, S. T. (1995). *Black women in the academy : The secrets to success and achievement*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Griffith, R. M. (1997). *God's daughters : Evangelical women and the power of submission*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hackett, D. G. (1995). Gender and religion in American culture, 1870-1930. *Religion and American Culture*, 5, 127-157.
- Hamilton, M. S. (1993). Women, public ministry, and American fundamentalism, 1920-1950. *Religion and American Culture*, 3, 171-196.
- Hanscome, L., & Cervero, R.M. (2003). Impact of gendered power relations in HRD. *Human Resource Development International*, 6(4), 509-525.
- Hayes, E. (2000a). Social contexts. In E. Hayes & D. D. Flannery (Eds.), *Women as learners: The significance of gender in adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Hayes, E. (2000b). Voice. In E. Hayes & D. D. Flannery (Eds.), *Women as learners: The significance of gender in adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Higginbotham, E. B. (1992). African-American women's history and the metalanguage of race. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 17(2), 251-274.
- Higginbotham, E. B. (1993). *Righteous discontent: The women's movement in the black Baptist church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Ingersoll, J. (2003). *Evangelical Christian women: War stories in the gender battles*. New York: New York University Press.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. (1999). The ties that bind and the shackles that separate: Race, gender, class and color in a research process. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(6), 659-670.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. (2001). The road less walked: A retrospective of race and ethnicity in adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(1-2), 89-99.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Hitting and climbing the proverbial wall: Participation and retention issues for Black graduate women. *Race, Ethnicity, & Education*, 7(4), 331-349.
- Johnson-Bailey, J., & Cervero, R.M. (2002). Cross-cultural mentoring as a context for learning. In M. V. Alfred (Ed.), *Learning and sociocultural contexts: Implications for adult, community, and workplace education* (pp. 15-26). New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 96. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Johnson-Bailey, J., & Cervero, R. M. (2000a). The invisible politics of race in adult education. In A. L. Wilson & E. R. Hayes (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education: New edition* (pp. 147-160). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Johnson-Bailey, J., & Cervero, R. M. (1997). Negotiating power dynamics in workshops. In J. A. Fleming (Ed.), *New perspectives on designing and implementing effective workshops* (pp. 41-50). *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 76. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

- Johnson-Bailey, J., & Tisdell, E. J. (1998). Diversity issues in women's career development. In L. L. Bierema (Ed.), *Women's career development across the lifespan: Insights and strategies for women, organizations, and adult educators* (pp. 83-93). *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 80. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Kostenberger, A. J., Schreiner, T. R., & Baldwin, H. S. (1995). *Women in the church: A fresh analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*. Grand Rapids: Baker House Books.
- LeCompte, M. D. (2000). Analyzing qualitative data. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 146-154.
- Lehman, E.C. (2002). Women's path into ministry: Six major studies. Durham, NC: Pulpit & Pew Research Report.
- Lincoln, C. E. (1994). *The Black muslims in America* (3rd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- Lincoln, C. E., & Mamiya, L. H. (1990). *The black church in the African-American experience*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1984). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co.
- Marsden, G. M. (1980). *Fundamentalism and American culture: The shaping of twentieth century evangelicalism, 1870-1925*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, S. (2000). Black Baptists, African missios, and racial identity, 1800-1915; a case study of African American religion. *Baptist History and Heritage*(Summer-Fall).
- Mays, B. E. (2003). *Born to rebel: An autobiography*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- McGrath, A. E. (1995). *Evangelicalism & the future of Christianity*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School*, 49(2), 31.
- McIntosh, P. (1993). Examining unearned privilege. *Liberal Education*, 79(1), 61.
- McKenzie, V. M. (1996). *Not without a struggle: Leadership development for African American women in ministry*. Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press.
- Merriam, S.B. (1997). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Merriam, S. B. (2004). The role of cognitive development in mezirow's learning theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*. 55(1), 60-68.
- Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M.-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M. (2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(5), 405-416.
- Merriam, S.B., & Simpson, E.L. (2000). *A guide to research for educators and trainers of adults*. (2nd ed., updated). Malabar, FL: Krieger.
- Moody, L. A. (1988). Women in seminary: Any progress? *Christian Century*, 105, 109-110.
- Nesbitt, P. D. (1997). Gender, tokenism, and the construction of elite clergy careers. *Review of Religious Research*, 38, 193-210.
- Noll, M. A. (1983). *Eerdmans' handbook to Christianity in America*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.
- Noll, M. A. (2001). *American evangelical Christianity: An introduction*. Oxford ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Noll, M. A. (2003). *The rise of evangelicalism: The age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- Noll, M. A., Bebbington, D. W., & Rawlyk, G. A. (1994). *Evangelicalism: Comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and beyond 1700-1900*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Pennington, D. L. (1999). *African American women quitting in the workplace*. Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press.
- Perry, D. (1998). *Breaking down barriers : a Black evangelical explains the Black church*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.
- Peterson, E. A. (1996). *Freedom road : Adult education of African Americans* (Original ed.). Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co.
- Piper, J., & Grudem, W. A. (1991). *Recovering biblical manhood and womanhood: A response to Evangelical feminism*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.
- Raboteau, A. J. (1980). *Slave religion : The invisible institution in the Antebellum South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raboteau, A. J. (1984). The Black experience in American Evangelicalism : The meaning of slavery. In L. I. Sweet (Ed.), *Evangelical Tradition in America* (pp. 181-197): Macon, GA : Mercer University Press.
- Raboteau, A. J. (1995). *A fire in the bones: Reflections on African-American religious history*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Raboteau, A. J. (2001). *Canaan land: A religious history of African Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reimers, D. M. (1965). *White protestantism and the negro*. New York,: Oxford University Press.
- Riggs, M. (2003). *Plenty good room: Women versus male power in the Black church*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.
- Sanders, C. J. (1995). *Living the intersection: Womanism and afrocentrism in theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Sernett, M. C. (1991). Black religion and the question of evangelical identity. In D. W. Dayton, (Ed.), *Variety of American evangelicalism* (pp. 135-147). Knoxville, Tenn : Univ of Tennessee Press.
- Sernett, M. C. (1999). *African American religious history: A documentary witness* (2nd ed.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Smith, C., & Emerson, M. (1998). *American evangelicalism: embattled and thriving*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, T. L. (1957). *Revivalism and social reform in mid-nineteenth-century America*. New York: Abingdon Press.
- Spring, B., & Menehan, K. (1986). Women in seminary: Preparing for what. *Christianity Today*, 30(12), 18-23.
- Stainback, S. B., & Stainback, W. C. (1988). *Understanding & conducting qualitative research*. Reston, VA: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co.
- Steward, M. S., Steward, D. S., & Dary, J. A. (1983). Women who choose a man's career: A study of women in ministry. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 8(2), 166.

- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sullins, P. (2000). The stained glass ceiling: Career attainment for women clergy., *Sociology of Religion* (Vol. 61, pp. 243).
- Sweet, L. I. (1984). *The Evangelical tradition in America*. Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press.
- Thomas, L. E. (1998). Womanist theology, epistemology, and a new anthropological paradigm. *Cross Currents*, 48(4), 488.
- Thomas, L. E. (2004). *Living stones in the household of God: The legacy and future of Black theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Turner Jr., W. C. (1989). Black evangelicalism: Theology, politics, and race. *Journal of Religious Thought*, 45(2), 40.
- Watley, W. D. (1993). *Singing the Lord's song in a strange land: The African American churches and ecumenism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Weatherford, W. D. (1957). *American churches and the Negro: An historical study from early slave days to the present*. Boston,,: Christopher Pub. House.
- Wiggins, D. C. (2005). *Righteous content: Black women's perspectives of church and faith*. New York: New York University Press.
- Wilkes, P. (1991). The contributions of women to seminaries., *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 37, B3.
- Williams, D. K. (2004). *An end to this strife : The politics of gender in African American churches*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Wilson, M. M. (1974). Women in seminary. *Duke Divinity School Review*, 39, 57-102.

Wimbush, V. L. (2003). *The Bible and African Americans: A brief history*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Winfield, M. (1993). Baptist women gaining ground in ministry roles. *Word and Way*, 5.

Woodson, C. G. (1921). *The history of the Negro church* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers.

Zikmund, B. B., Lummis, A. T., & Chang, P. M. Y. (1998). *Clergy women: An uphill calling* (1st ed.). Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

March, 2006
2035 Timothy Rd, D204
Athens, GA 30606

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this doctoral study which is designed to explore your experiences in ministry preparation and practice. The ultimate goal is to learn how you may have or have not learned to negotiate the power and politics of being a woman of color in a conservative evangelical ministry context. This research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Ronald M. Cervero, Department Head, Lifelong Education Administration and Policy. As explained in the consent form, the interview will take approximately one to one hour over the phone at a time convenient for you. However, if it is feasible, we will meet at a place and time that is comfortable for you and fit your schedule.

The interview will consist of approximately ten to twelve questions. I will record our conversation and will have the interview transcribed within one week of our exchange. I will send you a copy of the transcribed interview for you to review for accuracy. In the study I will use a pseudonym to disguise your identity and to preserve your anonymity. When reporting the findings in the research publication, your confidentiality will be maintained, as there will be no identifying information disclosed.

I have enclosed an informed consent form as required by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board. It will give you a more thorough description of the research. If you are still in agreement with participating in this research, please sign the consent form and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

I will call you within one week of the interview to follow-up with any questions or to ask for clarification of information obtained during the interview. If you have any grave concerns regarding the interview, please feel free to contact the chair of my committee, Dr. Ronald M. Cervero at 706-542-2221. Otherwise, if you need to reach me, please do not hesitate to call me at my home number which is 706-354-4588 or my cell phone number 404-376-2444.

Sincerely,

Evetta R. Armstrong, M.A./CE
Doctoral Student
Lifelong Education Administration and Policy
Adult Education Department
University of Georgia

Enclosures

APPENDIX B**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. How did you come to this decision to enter the seminary?
2. Why do you think you, as a woman, were called?
3. Describe two important experiences you had while in seminary.
4. How did you get your ministry job?
5. How did you learn to be a minister?
6. What was/is your favorite part of your ministerial job?
7. What was/is your least favorite part of your ministerial job?
8. How did you learn to manage this aspect of your ministerial job?
9. What was/is the most successful aspect of your ministerial job?
10. How did you learn to manage this aspect of your ministerial job?
11. What was/is the least successful aspect of your ministerial job?
12. How did you learn to manage this aspect of your ministerial job?
13. Describe your ideal ministry job.
14. In what ways does your biblical teaching/knowledge resonate with your experiences in your ministry preparation?
15. In what ways does your biblical teaching/knowledge fail to resonate with your experiences in your ministry preparation?
16. How do your experiences as a woman in full time ministry sit with people's professed beliefs?
17. How does your treatment and the treatment you see/observe/know compare with the way male ministers are treated?
18. How does that difference relate to biblical beliefs or training?
19. Why do you think there is a difference?
20. Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

I agree to take part in a research study titled “How Black Evangelical Women Learn to Negotiate the Power and Politics of their Ministry Preparation and Practice”, which is being conducted by Evetta R. Armstrong, Lifelong Education Administration and Policy, The University of Georgia, 706-354-4588 under the direction of Dr. Ronald M. Cervero, Lifelong Education Administration and Policy, The University of Georgia, 706-542-2221. My participation is voluntary; I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The purpose of this study is to explore my experiences in ministry preparation and practice.
2. Through my participation in this study I will be contributing to the knowledge in this area, and I may gain some personal insight into my own coping strategies and how I may have or have not dealt with them satisfactorily.
3. The Procedures are as follows:
 - a. Participation in this study will require one personal interview with the researching lasting approximately one hour. A brief follow-up personal or telephone interview may be necessary if the researcher needs to clarify information. The interview will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher.
 - b. The participant will be asked to review an information packet prior to the interview which includes a Brief Description of the Study and a list of questions that will be asked during the interview.
 - c. Participants will be asked to review her interview transcript for accuracy and share any changes to the transcript with the researcher.
4. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen except for emotional discomfort. The researcher will talk out these issues with the participant.
5. No risks are expected.
6. I understand that my identity will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. The tape recording of my interview will be destroyed at the completion of the study’s data collection, analysis, and write-up.
7. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the interview and can be reached by telephone 706-354-4588.

My signature below indicates that the researchers have answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------|
| <u>Evetta R. Armstrong</u> | | |
| Name of Researcher | Signature | Date |
| Phone: 706-354-4588 | | |
| Email: earmstro@uga.edu | | |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|------|
| | | |
| Name of Participant | Signature | Date |

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX D CATALOGUE STATEMENTS REGARDING GENDER AND MINISTRY

[Seminary 1] recognizes that throughout church history God has been pleased to use both men and women in marvelous ways for the advancement of the gospel. We also recognize that the Christian community has long held diverse opinions regarding the roles of women in ministry. Sincere and godly people hold varying positions on this subject.

While recognizing and respecting this diversity, as an institution and faculty, [Seminary 1] believes and teaches that the role of church pastor can be fulfilled biblically only by a man (1 Tim 2.12; 3.1-7; Heb 13.7, 17). Christian women, however, are gifted and are called to a broad array of other ministries.

The recognition of scriptural gender distinctions neither disparages one sex nor exalts the other. It is simply the proper response to God's revelation regarding His creation (Gen 2.18; 3.16; 1 Cor 11.8, 9; 1 Tim 2.13-14), His children (Gal 3.28; Eph 5.22-33), and His church (1 Tim 2.12; 3.1-7, Tit 1.5-9).

Notification of Nondiscriminatory Policy

Students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin are admitted to all the rights, privileges, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at [Seminary 2].

The seminary does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in its administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Seminary 3: Master of Divinity in Women's Leadership

The Master of Divinity in Women's Leadership is a professional degree involving selected disciplines in the School of Leadership and Church Ministry and other theological disciplines. Included in the degree program are biblical studies, biblical language studies, theological and historical studies, Christian education studies, and women's leadership studies such as leadership skill development for women, women's ministry in the local church, women and evangelism, and more. *This degree is designed to prepare women to engage the culture and to be effective leaders of women in churches as well as in denominational or institutional work. Women will learn how to lead, minister to women, and support their pastor and local church in a broad range of ministries.* A student who has earned the Master of Arts degree from an accredited seminary and who wishes to pursue this degree should consult with the Dean of the School of Leadership and Church Ministry in order to discover what additional requirements are necessary.

Seminary 3: Master of Divinity with a Concentration in Pastoral Studies

This degree is primarily designed to prepare men who are called to serve in the office of pastor in local congregations. A balance of biblical, theological, and ministry courses makes this a broad program of pastoral training, allowing for exposure to a range of knowledge and skills needed.