

Women in pastoral ministry and church leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

A woman's voice

Marianne Dyrud Kolkmann

Submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Theology offered by
Newbold College in partnership with and awarded by Theologische Hochschule Fiedensau,
Germany

April 2013

ABSTRACT

The main focus of this paper is on the personal experiences of women working in pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The following questions were asked in this paper: How do female pastors and church leaders experience their work for the Church? The women were asked to describe their personal journey and calling to ministry, as well as their experience of the way females are being perceived in the Trans European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as pastors and church leaders.

The paper explores different questions to see if the voice and calling of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership are heard and included in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today.

Declarations/Statements for MA Theses

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed..... (candidate)

Date.....

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA in Pastoral Theology

Signed..... (candidate)

Date.....

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed..... (candidate)

Date.....

STATEMENT 3

I hereby give my consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed..... (candidate)

Date.....

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
2. Practical theological interpretation – the first task: The descriptive-empirical.....	7
2.1 Research design of the paper.....	13
2.1.1 Purpose of the Project.....	13
2.1.2 Research questions.....	14
2.1.3 Strategy of inquiry.....	16
2.1.4 Methodology.....	17
2.1.5 Research plan.....	18
2.1.6 Boundaries of the paper.....	19
2.1.7 Ethical research issues.....	20
2.1.8 Reflexivity.....	22
3. Practical theological interpretation – the second task: The interpretative	26
4. Practical theological interpretation – the third task: The normative.....	34
5. Practical theological interpretation – the fourth task: The pragmatic.....	49
5.1 Strategies of action.....	49
5.1.1 Strategy 1	49
5.1.2 Strategy 2.....	53
5.1.3 Strategy 3.....	56
5.1.4 Strategy 4.....	57
6. Conclusion.....	60
7. Appendix A.....	62
8. Appendix B.....	64
9. Appendix C.....	67

10. Appendix D.....	69
11. Appendix E.....	71
12. Appendix F.....	74
13. Appendix G.....	76
14. Appendix H.....	80
15. Appendix I.....	83
16. Appendix J.....	86
17. Appendix K.....	90
18. Appendix L.....	92
19. Appendix M.....	95
20. Appendix N.....	97
21. Bibliography.....	100

1. Introduction

‘To have a voice is to be fully present, to feel counted in, and counted on, to have something to say and to be heard.’¹

Nancy Beach in her book *Gifted to Lead, The Art of Leading as a Woman in the Church*, says in a few short words, what I see as the main, overarching theme for this paper, which is focused on the personal experiences of women working in pastoral ministry and church leadership. This subject has been explored within the boundaries of the Trans-European Division in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A group of women has been interviewed on how they experience their work in pastoral ministry and church leadership. The women have been asked to reflect on their personal journey and calling to ministry, as well as to describe their experience of how females are being received and supported as pastors and church leaders in the Trans European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Through applying Richard R. Osmer’s practical theological interpretation, I have explored four key questions to see if the voice and calling of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership are heard and included in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. The focus is on how female pastors and church leaders experience their work in the Church, their perception of the support of the leadership in the different levels of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Finally, I have asked if women find space to be themselves in the ministry and what their expectations from the Church organization were. The aim is to judge whether there is good feedback and acceptance in the Church leadership for women in leadership or not.

The research method chosen for this paper is a qualitative study with female pastors, church leaders and theology students. The women have been interviewed about their experiences of pastoral ministry and church leadership (Appendixes A to N).

A qualitative research method, on the subject of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership, was deliberately chosen to provide insight into the present reality of female

¹ Nancy Beach, *Gifted to Lead, The Art of Leading as a Woman in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), p.186.

pastors and church leaders who are working for the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in different capacities of ministry. I wanted to give a 'voice' to the women who work for the Church. Thus only female Seventh-day Adventist pastors, church leaders and theology students have been interviewed about their personal experiences in working for the Church.

Since the experience of ministry may differ from one woman to another, the qualitative research method provides a more in-depth insight into the variety of female present realities of pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The format chosen for the interviews was of an informal character in order to give space for the personal story of the women interviewed. In addition to the interviews, the paper includes a reflection on the vast research previously done on the subject of women in pastoral ministry and leadership in the Church.

2. Osmer's practical theological interpretation – the first task: The descriptive-empirical 'what is going on':

The debate of ordination and commissioning in the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

Even a superficial look at the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide, will reveal that there is a clear distinction made by the official Church working policy, between men and women in pastoral and church leadership positions. Certain leadership positions (such as conference, union, division or general conference president) in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are not open to women. This is because these positions, according to the working policy of the Church, require ordination which presently is not available to most women working in pastoral ministry or church leadership across the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is a clear distinction made between men and women in pastoral ministry and church

leadership, because of the issue of women's ordination. There is differing practice in the worldwide Church, in accepting or not women leading out in the Church.

In November of 2012, the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church formed an extensive study group whose task was to examine the question of ordination in the Bible, with a special emphasis on the issue of women's ordination. The study group will report in the fall of 2014, and make recommendations to the annual council of the General Conference in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, before the 2015 General Session. The ordination debate has been heated, to the point of demeaning comments about women working for the Church, even about the role of women in general in the Church from many prominent pastors and leaders. The questions I have to the findings of this study group are the following: Will this result in fair treatment of women in the Church, who have a God given call to ministry? Will it end the two layered leadership we have in the Church today? Will this make any difference in the Church of the view of women in ministry, after the General Session in 2015?

As the worldwide Church already has a long history of debating the role of women in the Church, the long-lasting current debate has lead certain unions and conferences to make individual decisions on this issue. Some local conferences and unions have already taken the stand to ordain women to pastoral ministry; while others have decided to postpone the ordination of males or females (the Norwegian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has done this as of December 2012) until the General Conference Session has come up with a new recommendation in 2015, after the report from the appointed study group.

The current practice of ordination may be viewed as being inconsistent within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as female deacons and elders can be ordained in the local Church. The issue of ordination of female deacons and elders was resolved many years ago. The ordination debate at that time, unfortunately never came to resolve the issue of ordination

of female pastors or church leaders to leadership positions outside the local Church. This would have an impact on specific leadership positions at conference, union, divisional level as well as at general conference level. Presently, women are being commissioned as pastors (which is only recognized within the country where the woman is commissioned), and can therefore not be elected to church leadership positions such as ‘conference president, union president, division president or general conference president’ in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Currently there have been some exceptions to the rule, where women have been asked to take up these leadership roles, but have declined to do so. (I am one of them. In 2010, I was asked to be the conference president in a Seventh-day Adventist Conference in Norway, despite the lack of ordination.)

In the present discussion of ordination and commissioning, one could ask if this is a two faced policy by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A woman who is commissioned to ministry can do everything an ordained male pastor can do, except establish a new church or hold certain leadership roles such as described above. How and where did this idea of a two layer recognition of ministry come from? In the middle of the debate of ordination and commissioning, the two layer system that is in place today seems inconsistent in the view of the fourteenth doctrine (see bibliography) of the twenty-eight Fundamental Beliefs in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The issue of ordination versus commissioning shows that there is an upper and lower level of men and women in the Church. Women may be equal but only to a certain extent. In some respects they are regarded as second class due solely to their gender.

The daily experience of women in ministry:

For most female pastors and church leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe, the absence of ordination is not a hindering factor or a topic that affects their daily work or

calling. Some of the interviewees indicate that the ordination issue of the worldwide Church is not a hindrance to their work enjoyment, their calling to ministry or their sense of doing meaningful work for God. One female leader said, when asked where she thought God wanted her to be right now:

‘Right where I am! Called me to work for children and family ministry! I am open for him to come with other suggestions. It is very meaningful to work, it is tiring, but this is where I am meant to be work wise and in my calling. I am focused on what is good in my work!’

Most of the women interviewed, were not focused on the challenges of being a woman in pastoral ministry or church leadership. They are enjoying their daily work and the meaningful aspects of being a pastor or leader. On the other hand, many Seventh-day Adventist female pastors and church leaders feel discouraged, disappointed and not supported by the worldwide Church. The interviewees have indicated that their disappointment is not so much directed towards the local level of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but more towards the lack of support, and little will to change from the General Conference level. Many of the interviewed women perceived this level of the Church leadership as lacking in showing support and affirmation for women’s call to pastoral ministry and church leadership.

This observation from the interviewees, has led me to take a brief look at what other churches outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church are experiencing on this issue. Would a sample of other research done among women in any given general Christian church provide the same type of experiences? Would these experiences match that of the women interviewed in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? My search led me to the Barna group’s survey among American Christian women in general, where they asked the following question:

‘Are women satisfied with their church experience? New research indicates the answer is yes, sort of. In short, it depends on the woman and it depends on the church. Three-quarters of churched women say they are making the most of their gifts and potential (73%) and a similar proportion feel they are doing meaningful ministry (72%).’

Assessing their influence, more than half say they have substantial influence in their church (59%) and a slight majority expects their influence to increase (55%). But the poll also shows that many women have a very different experience of church, "frustrated by their lack of opportunities at church and feeling misunderstood and undervalued by their church leaders", the survey says.

About a third (31%) says they are resigned to low expectations when it comes to church. They feel under-utilized (20%), limited by their gender (16%), under-appreciated (13%), and taken for granted (11%). "Although these represent small percentages, given that about 70 million Americans qualify as churching adult women, this amount to millions of women in the U.S. today who feel discouraged by their experiences in churches," the survey concludes.²

This survey done by the Barna group, provides an interesting backdrop for this paper. Even though the questions are asked among a general group of women in churches outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the findings still resonate with the answers from the questions asked of female pastors and church leaders in the Trans European Division. Both the more formal interviews and informal talks with several female leaders and pastors in the Church have indicated that it is common to feel undervalued and unappreciated as a female in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The issue of appreciation is an important factor of well-being among the general population of pastors in the Church. I found in my previous study of burned out pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that the male population of pastors can resonate with this experience from many female pastors and church leaders, of being unappreciated and undervalued in the ministry. One could ask what hinders the Church in showing sufficient affirmation and good feedback for the pastors on a general level. This would be an interesting topic for further discussion at some other time.

Mark Cartledge's view of qualitative research in his book *Practical Theology* has been very helpful in the process of choosing research tools and the structure for this paper.

Cartledge says that when using personal interviews for research, the interviewing process will

² Barna.org, 'Are Women Happy in Church?', *Leadership journal*, 2013, p. 14.

‘include a commitment to viewing events, actions, norms, values, etc. from the people who are being studied’³.

I would like this paper to be committed to make the voices and experiences of the females interviewees heard. In carrying out the interviews for my research, it has been fascinating to hear the different female voices and experiences in pastoral ministry and church leadership within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The goal has been to listen to these women’s individual stories and their personal experience of ministry. Therefore I agree with Cartledge, when he refers to qualitative research as ‘believing that people are not objects.’⁴ For this paper, I thought it was important to have ‘the real faces and voices’ of female pastors and church leaders present. This made it easier to more accurately describe the present situation in the Trans–European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when it comes to studying the way women experience their work in pastoral and church leadership positions.

I wanted to see if there were patterns or common denominators found in the experiences of the women interviewed about their call and work in pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is where I decided to use what Osmer describes as the ‘descriptive-empirical task of practical theological interpretation as the task of gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics’.⁵ Osmer in his book *Practical Theology, An Introduction*, refers to this part of practical theological interpretation as ‘priestly listening’ which he describes as an exercise of the ‘spirituality of presence’.⁶ As I have conducted the interviews with women from all over Europe, I have found practicing ‘priestly listening’ an important part of conducting qualitative research. I have found this especially vital in this part of the fourfold process of Osmer’s theological interpretation. In

³ Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology* (London, Colorado Springs, Hyderabad: Paternoster, 2007), p. 68.

⁴ Cartledge, p. 77.

⁵ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology, An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), p. 4.

⁶ Osmer, p. 31.

order to correctly describe the current situation, one has to spend time to listen to the voices which are speaking. In the web of life and work as a pastor, the practice of ‘priestly listening’ is a rare one, as time and ministry demands dictate that tasks are done quickly. This paper aims to provide the women in ministry in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a voice.

2.1 Research design of the paper

2.1.1 Purpose of the Project

There is a fair amount of research presented in books and articles, in addition to the interviews done for this paper, on the topic of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership. This indicates to me that it is an important topic of current relevance, not only to the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide, but to several other main stream churches as well. Not too long ago, I spoke with a woman from the local ‘Free Church’ (a Lutheran church) in Norway. She told me that her church struggles with women in the pulpit to preach, or lead the church in any significant leadership role. Women may lead out in children’s work, family ministry or youth ministry. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not the only church today, even in the western world, which is struggling with this issue of women in church leadership roles.

The books, articles, websites and research I surveyed, made it important to explore some of the more individual stories of female pastors and church leaders working in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe. Through interviewing female pastors, church leaders and theology students using qualitative research methods, I have, according to Swinton and Mowat, made an attempt in ‘searching for the meaning and process of

interpreting⁷ the present factors affecting women working in pastoral ministry and church leadership of the Church. The purpose of this qualitative study is to look at the current situation of the interviewed female pastors and church leaders in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well as some of the female theology students at Newbold College as to how they experience support and mentoring from the Church leadership.

2.1.2 Research questions:

This study has, in part answered the following research questions:

What are the personal stories of some of the women who work in pastoral ministry and church leadership within the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What kind of affirmation and mentoring are these women surrounded by today? Do they have female role models in ministry? Are they allowed to be themselves as women, or do they have to become 'male' to fit into an already prescribed pattern or model of pastoral ministry and church leadership? How does it feel to work in an environment of a constant, subtle discrimination? How will the experience of being regarded as second class, or not fully accepted, affect females who go through theological training and enter pastoral ministry and church leadership? What hinders these women from fully living out their potential and God-given gifts as pastors and church leaders in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today?

How did a church with a female among its most important and deeply respected early pioneers, fall into the same struggle over female leadership roles that affects so many denominations today? Why does the Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrine as described in Fundamental Beliefs number fourteen (where people are equal in regard to race, social status

⁷ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2009), p. 101.

and gender) clash with the Church's current working policy on ordination to the worldwide ministry? What would church leadership look like, if women and men were to work side by side? In the Bible, the church is described as the image of a body of many limbs. Alice P.

Mathews goes further to describe this image in her book, *Preaching that speaks to Women*,

‘The image of a web is remarkably similar in some respects to the dominant biblical picture of the church as a body. This is our functional identity as Christians linked together. We operate as a body, not as an organization made up of many individuals of independent will. God intends that we take this image seriously. We are to function as an organism, not as an organization.’⁸

Is the image of the church body, described by Mathews, as an organism, the way the Seventh-day Adventist Church look at church leadership? I found it interesting to read this statement in the light of the report from a leadership convention in the official Church magazine: *Adventist Review*. Only men were visible in the pictures from the convention. There was a certain uniformity in the pictures, of suit clad, serious men, ready to take the Church forward, without any representation of the almost 70% of Church membership composed by women. Little indication was made of women being a part of the Church or even included in the thinking process addressing where the Church would go in the future. There was no evident inclusive thinking of the thought that women could have a say in the matter.

Mathews' image of the web, or a body, with parts intertwined, equal and inclusive, a leadership that would include male and female, did not resonate in the article or the pictures of the *Adventist Review*. Her image is a far cry from the reality of the present church leadership structure in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This paper is not only an academic exercise, but also a research paper that has expanded and deepened my own personal journey and experience as a female pastor and church leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Hopefully it will contribute some relevant thoughts and challenging questions on this topic to be answered by the leadership of the Church. Most of

⁸ Alice P. Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), p. 134.

all, I hope the paper will provide an insight into the ways women think about their roles in pastoral ministry and church leadership. In addition to an insight into female pastors and church leaders work experience, the paper will provide some recommendations for the Church as to how it may better support women who are currently studying theology, or working in pastoral ministry and church leadership.

I have been curious to see if the interviews and research would change my own view of the central and local leadership of the Church. Would I find a big difference between what is practiced currently and what is the 'ideal'? Through the research, I did find a gap between the present practice and the ideal of the Church which will be described later in the paper.

2.1.3 Strategy of Inquiry:

This paper will apply Osmer's method of practical theological interpretation to describe and explain how women look at their calling and their experience of serving in pastoral ministry and church leadership positions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Osmer's method of practical theological interpretation uses the following questions in order to describe the current situation: 'What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond?'⁹

These questions provide the main framework and structure of the paper in describing, explaining and responding to the multi-faceted issues of women in church leadership and pastoral ministry in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Osmer's work describes the interconnectedness between the sub-disciplines of 'academic practical theology between the academy and the church. It draws attention to the web of life in

⁹ Osmer, p. 4.

which ministry takes place'.¹⁰ The image of the web of life is ever present in the lives of women who work for the Church, as shown in the interviews.

2.1.4 Methodology:

This paper is written with a qualitative study method as the tool of methodology. The interviews are conducted with current female pastors and church leaders, as well as female theology students within the area of the Trans-European Division in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only one of the interviews has been conducted outside the Trans-European Division. This woman has a long and vast experience of leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church on a worldwide basis. I chose to include her experience and voice in this paper, as she is older, and has a longer experience of employment in the Seventh-day Adventist Church than any of the other women interviewed.

Swinton and Mowat show that the task of the qualitative research method is to 'describe reality in ways which enable us to understand the world differently and in understanding differently begin to act differently.'¹¹ The theories presented in the resources surveyed as well as the questions raised in the interviews conducted, show that there are several factors to be explored, which could provide grounds for change in the area of women working in the pastoral ministry and church leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Through the personal interviews, I have looked into how these women discern their role in pastoral ministry and church leadership, and how the current policies and structures in the Seventh-day Adventist Church support or inhibit their calling and gifts.

The issue of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership calls for deeper research, not only focusing on the numbers and statistics found in books and the history of the

¹⁰ Osmer, p. 17.

¹¹ Swinton and Mowat, p. 44.

Seventh-day Adventist Church, but of the context of the current reality as told through the interviews of female pastors who are employed in pastoral ministry and church leadership positions in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In a short paper like this, space limits how exhaustive and analytical one can be in this topic.

As previously mentioned, the paper will in part answer the four questions in Osmer's method of practical theological interpretation, and it will involve the four core tasks: 'What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond?'¹²

2.1.5 Research Plan

Material for this paper has been gathered through qualitative, informal interviews and conversations, as well as resources in books and articles. The paper uses the material gathered to discern the patterns, and examine the context and dynamics of females in pastoral ministry and church leadership of women in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The interviews show that there is a significant difference in the way women are received, affirmed and appreciated or not as pastors or church leaders in the different countries of the Trans-European Division. This is related to the country culture, as well as the local union/conference culture and view of women in the Church. Local culture and traditional views have been shown to have a large influence on 'doing church' throughout the different countries of the Trans-European Division in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The paper will have a focus on the present reality, rather than provide a historical overview of research on this topic, of women in the pastoral ministry and church leadership of

¹² Osmer, p. 4.

the Trans-European Division in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The interviews have been conducted from February through April 2013.

2.1.6 Boundaries of the paper:

Due to the limitations of space for this paper, there are several research questions which have been left unanswered. These would be interesting to pursue for further study at a later point in time. Some of the relevant topics which have not been a part of this qualitative research:

- Former female pastors have not been interviewed about their experience, and the reasons why they have left the ministry.
- Former female pastors who have left the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and who are now currently working for another church organization have not been interviewed.
- The female pastors or church leaders were not asked any questions regarding their marital status or family structures (though for some of the interviewees, this information does shine through in their answers).
- The issue of gender is the focus of this paper, therefore no questions regarding race have been asked.
- The paper is not a comparative study, and therefore the interviews within women of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have not been contrasted with those of female priests or pastors in other denominations, due to the lack of space. There will only be references to the experience of others from documents and books read.
- This paper will not contrast with the experiences of male pastors in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The research done for this paper, focuses on women active in pastoral ministry, in church leadership or enrolled as theology students in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2.1.7 Ethical research issues:

The female pastors, leaders and students interviewed, have all signed letters of release of the information given in the interviews. The interviewees have agreed to be interviewed in a free format/informal interview style, and they have seen their interviews in written form before the interviews are published in this paper. This study will not mention their names or which countries the interviewees are from. There was not any private information shared during the interviews that had to be concealed before publishing. All information available from the interviews has been approved beforehand from the interviewees. The interviews have been done in three different formats due to the challenge of geography: Some of the interviewees have answered the questions by e-mail. Others have been interviewed in person, either face to face or via Skype. An ethical consent was obtained from Newbold College's ethical committee in late November 2012.

The first limitation of the interviews is related to size: Because of the limited number of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership positions in the Trans European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, the sample of available interview candidates is small. The interviews cover a sample of the women working in pastoral ministry, in church leadership, or enrolled as theology students and their experience within the Trans-European Division.

The second limitation I found was that the mix of interviewees was limited to the access of names and contact information available. All the union ministerial secretaries in the

Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have been contacted in order to obtain permission to interview their female pastors and church leaders. Not all of them have responded to my request for permission to interview in their union. After I received the permission from the ministerial secretaries, I have contacted the women by e-mail or over the telephone.

The third limitation is the lack of response from the women invited to participate in this study. In two of the unions, the females had heard about my research and wanted to be interviewed, but the ministerial secretary had not given his formal permission.

As the group of female pastors and church leaders is small in the Trans-European Division, the study does not offer the names or nationality of the pastors, church leaders or students interviewed. Doing so would not have provided the anonymity needed for the group studied. The interviews do refer to names of role models mentioned by the women in the interviews. These role models either influence them presently or have influenced them in the past.

The main written sources of background material in the form of magazine and web based articles, as well as books and other resources on this topic are from a North American background. Very little is written on the topic of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership from a European point of view. The European experience cannot always be related to the North American experience of women in pastoral ministry and leadership. Though, certain principles and experiences of women in ministry are related in this study.

2.1.8 Reflexivity

According to Osmer, reflexivity is ‘the reflection on the meta theoretical assumption informing the project, including assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge, human beings, and the moral ends of life.’¹³

One of the first tasks in this study is to describe the current situation, and to give a general overview of the present reality of the women who are working as pastors and church leaders, as well as of the female theology students at Newbold College. This part will look into their personal expectations and experience of their call to ministry.

The interviews have shown that women, who work for the Church, have a high sense of calling to the ministry. Through the interviews, the women were found to have a strong experience of God’s will in their calling to pastoral ministry and church leadership, even though the road they walk on is ‘the road less travelled’. Most of the women have a strong sense of knowing that God wants them to be where they are right now. For some of the women it has been a struggle to get to that place, for others it has been easier. This is related to the fact that the different countries in the Trans-European Division have differing practice and culture in receiving and accepting women into pastoral ministry and church leadership.

The current situation is that most of the unions in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have women working as pastors or church leaders. The most recent numbers of women working are not available at this moment, but at the last pastoral convention for the Trans-European Division in August of 2012, I counted approximately sixty women present who were directly working for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in some pastoral/church leadership capacity or another. One young woman who worked as a pastor, and had not been aware of the ‘the female pastor’s meeting’ one evening at the pastoral

¹³ Osmer, p. 48.

convention, cried when she heard that so many were gathered. 'I thought I was the only one,' she said.

As mentioned previously, throughout the interview process it became evident that not all of the unions in the Trans European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have a welcoming culture or structure, or a welcoming local church receiving these women workers in the field of ministry. Some women tend to come into 'unknown territory where no woman has walked before' when they accept the position and call to be a pastor or church leader in the Church. There is not much of a map or compass provided for these women to navigate by. The women interviewed for this paper all had strong visions and dreams of following where they thought God was calling them to be today. Here are some of the experiences they had of God's calling and sense of purpose in their life:

'Be here, finish my studies, go back home and be a pastor.'

'I want to be a pastor who listens to people, and where they feel understood.'

'I am finding a lot of deep satisfaction in ministry in my local church.'

'I am in the right place. He has given me a ministry on campus, and this surprised me. God has made me active in the community. I feel he is calling me to go back home for a certain time.'

'Right where I am.'

'No questions about Gods calling. More questions about my qualifications that are demanded for being a pastor. It has been tough being thrown in being a pastoral intern and not knowing always what to do. But I have always felt that God is calling me and I am meant to be where I am. It would be strange not to question where one is at any time. I cannot be expert at everything.'

'Since I came from outside the Church, I felt I could be a breath of fresh air to the Church. I felt that God wanted women to be engaged in the Church. I felt that God wanted me to do this. My calling was an answer to prayer, of God leading me in my life.'

Through the interviews and by studying the outside sources on this topic, it became clear that the female pastors and church leaders experience the call to work for God as an utterly personal and deeply moving part of the process of becoming a pastor.

This process of calling is recognized by females working for other denominations as well. In the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the first female priest was ordained sixty two years ago. In 2011, to commemorate this important milestone, a couple of books were published; the first was a biography of the first ordained woman in the Church of Norway, the second a collection of interviews with several female priests. This second book, *As a crown on my head*, is written by Mari Saltkjel. The title of the book refers to an interview with the one of the female Lutheran priests, and her experience of following God's calling in her life:

‘I carry my life, tenderly and proud. I carry it as a crown on my head. It demands a lot of courage, but I have discovered that I am a brave woman. It has not always been so. I do not know when, but at some point did I wake up from a spiritual sleep to my life's most important process. The one that is about understanding that I am different and fantastic, and that I deserve the very best in life. That is why I became a priest; it was an uttermost emotional and existential process. To become a priest is the best I have ever done in my life.’¹⁴

When I read this book for the first time and tried to digest the challenging title, it made me think that this is what the call from God is about; to accept the crown and call from God, and step up to the plate of being a part of God's work in his church. As women experience and accept the call from God to become a pastor or church leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is evident that they are not necessarily walking on a road lined with celebrating, cheering people. It is still viewed as ‘the road less travelled’ even today in Europe. For many women working for the Church, the experience in ministry has been and still is the road of desert wanderings, few affirmations and feeling like second class citizens of Gods kingdom.

Despite of this, the Seventh-day Adventist Church does have a long history of capable, respected and brave female pioneers in the Church, who have made a difference and paved the way for other women. But, for many women working in the ministry today, the ‘crown’ of recognition, acceptance and affirmation from the Church on the same level as men, still seems

¹⁴ Mari Saltkjel, *Som En Krone På Hodet* (Oslo: Verbum, 2011), p. 111.

a far cry in the distant future in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is much ground to be covered and a few roadblocks to overcome before that will happen.

I asked the women interviewed about the hindering factors in their lives in becoming a pastor or church leader. For some of them there were no obvious hindering factors. For others, there were problems relating to local culture and tradition in their countries, and the notion of the woman not being strong enough to be a leader. One woman told me that she had not been sure herself that God would accept women as pastors. Another said that the local Church would not hire her, because she was a woman (she was later hired in another country).

One of the women said that she would have studied theology 'if the environment had allowed it.' Again others described how the common perception of the specific expectations of the pastoral role, hindered them because they thought their personality did not fit the role. Another woman said that 'some of us grew up being good children doing what we thought others wanted us to do, and then we grew up, and saw that God had other plans.' One woman listed up reasons why she should not become a pastor:

'As a person I did not fit the mold as a pastor. I had big issues with my faith and church policies and politics. I did not feel that I wanted to work for this church. There should not be questions around this call; faith should be in place, watertight! Understand everything (I never felt that way).' One woman had done pastoral education, but the 'talk on the town' was that she had an education that could not be used.'

As I look at this section of Osmer's descriptive task of interpretation, there could have been more emphasis and time spent on discerning the patterns, context and dynamics, but the limitation of space does not permit more in depth study, other than providing a bird's eye view of the current situation of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh Adventist Church.

3. The interpretative task: ‘why is it going on’: draws on the research and interviews done with women working in pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This part of the paper includes some other sources on this topic. It interprets the personal interviews done with the female pastors and church leaders, in order to better understand as well as explain the dynamics and patterns of how female pastors and church leaders experience working in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The experience of calling to the ministry:

In this part, the interviews given are examined, and through them, an insight is provided into how these women are being welcomed into pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Whether a woman feels welcomed into the ministry or not, depends on several factors. One of them is the impact of role models. One of the women interviewed said the following about one of her role models: ‘she suggested to me that perhaps God had a place for me that I hadn’t thought of yet.’ Another pastor said that she

‘experienced my first role models, in my teachers at Tyrifjord. They were good at including me, and challenged me to think about God and be baptized. (Rolf Beckhaug). Surrige at Newbold; through people who cared and did more for us students than was required in their job. Children’s Sabbath school teachers made an impact in my life. Some people who really cared and saw me.’

While doing the research for this paper, I talked with a female church leader who is working in the educational system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a principal and departmental leader. She said the following: ‘If someone had supported and affirmed my leadership skills, my personal call and my God given talents at an earlier age, I would have become a pastor.’ It is sad that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe today has missed half of its potential workforce and is still not recognizing, challenging or seeing the God-given call of many young women in the Church. Loren Cunningham and David Hamilton

refer to this challenging issue in their book *Why not women? A fresh look at Scripture on women in missions, ministry and leadership*,

‘The devil knows his time is limited. He is doing everything he can to delay the completion of the Great Commission. One of his tactics is simply to cut the number of workers.’¹⁵

Another aspect of this ‘task of interpretation’ is to examine the pastoral role as it is perceived today. For many women, the pastoral role is a role shaped by men working in pastoral ministry or church leadership, suited for men, and seemingly very unsuitable for most women. A follow up question to this is; to what extent has the male pastoral role today been shaped by a certain type of men being attracted to ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? One could in addition ask if this type of role modeling among the male pastors and church leaders of the Church has discouraged women from thinking that they would or could be working as pastors or church leaders. The role as a pastor has traditionally been perceived as a role of a strong leader, a man with great respect in the Church, as well as somebody who decides what will be going on, perceived as a lone wolf, a leader by himself on the top. Teamwork and an antihierarchical leadership style has not been a traditional ‘pastoral way of working’, as the members of the Church have had a tendency to want to ‘look up’ to the leadership, where the pastor was (and still is) put up on a pedestal.

One woman said of her personal view of role models in the ministry; ‘she also had ‘negative’ role models, who she would often think about and say to herself: I do NOT want to be a pastor or a preacher like him.’ When I listen to these female voices, I think we have lost many potential female pastors because of the certain set role model presented or expected in the Church. One of the interviewees said the following: ‘I cannot say role models had any part in my actual calling. I could not, and still have a hard time to, identify myself with my picture of what a pastor should be like.’ So for many women (and perhaps men) the figure or model

¹⁵ Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton, *Why Not Women? A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry and Leadership* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2000), p. 15.

of how a pastor should be in his/her work, way of dressing, acting etc. does not always fit the personality of the person who is looking at his or her call to become a pastor or church leader.

From the interviews and informal conversations, it seems that there are still quite a few women who are never confronted, encouraged or challenged with the fact that God is calling them to work for the Church in the capacity of being a pastor or church leader. The interviews are quite clear in showing that women are not exactly encouraged to consider pastoral ministry or church leadership as a calling. Somehow still (at least in some countries in the Trans-European Division), it seems more 'safe' to have women work in the traditional roles as teachers and nurses. Fortunately there are some exceptions: One of the younger women interviewed, expressed how she was encouraged to continue in her calling:

'When I was 12 years, we had Kids in Discipleship. We were supposed to fill in a questionnaire and our pastor saw my answers, and he thought I should become a pastor. Once I was home after moving to the academy, I had a thought I was to become a pastor. Should I do bible school? Should I do nursing? When I chose to do theology studies, I became calm. I feel I am in the right place.'

Leadership structures in the Church:

From examining the personal experience of how God calls and affirms women to ministry, follows the focus on the impact of leadership structure in the Church. One may ask where the Seventh-day Adventist Church on a general level wants to go with the patriarchal 'ordination bound' leadership model it has at this time? Does the Church want to be inclusive or exclusive of women who have the gift of church leadership and pastoral ministry? Where did the Church get this kind of leadership organization from in the early beginnings as a Church? Has it been revised through the years as to whether this still works? The book *In search of a round table*, shows that there are several ways to structure and organize a church community, and several approaches to building up church leadership. It is interesting to observe the following description of what church community is about:

‘Ecclesia is best rendered as "democratic assembly/congress of full citizens". The translation process which transformed ecclesia/democratic assembly into kyriak/church indicates a historical development that has privileged the kyriak/hierarchical form of church over that of a democratic congress or discipleship of equals. Thus, the same word "church" in English entails two contradictory meanings: one derived from the patri-kyriarchical household in antiquity which was governed by the lord/master/husband/father of the house, to whom freeborn women, freeborn dependents, clients, workers and slaves, both women and men, were subordinated. The other meaning of church = ecclesia understands the equality of its members in term of citizenship and friendship. This meaning of "church" evolves from the vision of democracy in antiquity and modernity.’¹⁶

Church community in the shape of ‘ecclesia’ is fascinating to look at in depth, but it will for now serve as one example of the many models of church structure. One could ask which structure the Seventh-day Adventist Church tends to lean towards. If the full structure of ‘ecclesia’ as referred to in the book, *In search for a Round Table* would be practiced in the Church, why then would there be a risk or fear in the Church of admitting females into church leadership? The ‘kyriak/hierarchical’ structure of male headship as referred to in the quotation, would be no more of an issue in the Church, because the focus would be to practice and implement the fourteenth doctrine (see the bibliography) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Fundamental Beliefs. Further questions could be: Why would the described ‘ecclesia’ model be a risk? Who would be at risk? What would be at risk? The members of the Church? The growth of the Church? The image of the Church? It is my suggestions that: the risk of the Church lays in the fear of losing the traditional ‘kyriak/ hierarchical’ structure in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This leads to the question: What would be negative about losing this structure? Would church leadership loose its impact, respect and power? Would this provide a need of restructuring the whole leadership structure in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as it is today? Would a changed church leadership structure handle church business different?

It is interesting to note that freshly started church plants in general, tend to be more ‘out of the box’ and include a wider spectrum of inclusiveness in leadership. As the

¹⁶ *In Search of a Round Table, Gender, Theology & Church Leadership*, ed. by Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1997), p. 3.

organization of these church plants becomes more established, they tend to evolve into a more traditional pattern of leadership. Craig L. Blomberg makes the following observation in his book, *Two views on Women in Ministry*:

‘Indeed, the less institutionalized form of Christianity, the more likely for women to have emerged in key leadership roles.’¹⁷

If Blomberg is describing a general trend in newly started churches, it would provide a model of explanation of why the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its early history had a higher acceptance and number of women in church leadership and pastoral ministry than the worldwide Church has today. This fact was especially evident before the death of one of the Church’s pioneers, Ellen G. White. Ellen G. White had a special role in the early Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her ministry had more of a prophetic character than a pastoral one, and it is evident that she did have a strong leadership role in the early Seventh-day Adventist Church. In this perspective it is interesting to know that

‘Ellen White became a model and spokesperson for her Adventist women contemporaries. She encouraged women to make full use of their talents in both traditional and untraditional (public) roles. She also asked men to support them. The following three statements illustrate her growing conviction that women should engage in public ministry. In 1878: "Sisters, God calls you to work in the harvest field and help gather in the sheaves." In 1886: "It was Mary who first preached a risen Jesus; and the refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth now." In 1898: "There are women who should labor in the gospel ministry. In many respects they would do more good than the ministers who neglect to visit the flock of God."’¹⁸

In today’s Church, we do not see the prophetic ministry that Ellen G. White carried in the early history of the Church. As the Seventh-day Adventist Church became institutionalized and more set in its structure, the number of women in church leadership diminished dramatically, especially after Ellen G. White’s death. One may ask if Ellen G White was a

¹⁷ Linda L. Belleville and others, *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), p. 179.

¹⁸ ‘The Rise and Fall of Adventist Women in Leadership’ <<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1995/April/the-rise-and-fall-of-adventist-women-in-leadership>> [accessed 15 October 2012].

good role model in her prophetic ministry of the Church, as she was one of the pioneers, with no female role model before her, other than the role models of the female prophets of the Bible. It would be interesting to take a look at how Ellen G. White was perceived by women of her time, as well as if she has had any role in modeling leadership for the women who came after her in pastoral ministry and church leadership. It is obvious from the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that Ellen G. White could at times be an unwelcome prophetic voice in the Church. The fact that she was asked to go to Australia at a late point in her life, is an interesting observation, as the trip over and the very nature of going so far away, leads to the following question: Was she sent away, because she was a prophetic ‘trouble maker’ in the Church at the time, and she needed to be ‘silenced’? Would the brethren (the Church leadership) have done the same with a male pioneer? Breaking through the glass ceiling is never easy. There is a risk of cuts and bruises.

As part of the ‘the interpretative task’ one may ask why the present situation of the Church is the way it is, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church began its history with a strong, female pioneer and many female missionaries and leaders. In this process of enquiring, one may also look at the ambivalence from the present Church in recognizing and following up women who express and feel a call to ministry. This part in the interpretative process may ask the question of the perceived ‘risk factors’ of the Church: are there too many women in leadership, will there be no space for the men, would a ‘feminine’ Church have no appeal to men, as is the case of the Orthodox Church in the eastern part of Europe?

This could result in a whole new set of questions which would require a lot more space than this paper can accommodate. Such as: Why do we find mostly women being attracted to and active in the Orthodox Church? This church has all male leadership in a largely male dominated culture. The Seventh-day Adventist Church presently has a membership of approximately 70% women worldwide. Another interesting question would be to ask why

women are attracted to certain kinds of churches. On the other hand, what attracts men to come to church and work as a pastor or a leader?

Drene Somasundram made the following observation in her PhD dissertation, 'A *Gender Inclusive Model in Theological Education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church*' on the issue of personal calling to ministry and the Church's ambivalence to accept fully the call of women in doing pastoral ministry and church leadership:

'Ambivalence in Identity Issues of 'Call': Ambivalence for Clergywomen begins with the recognition of 'calling' to the vocation of ministry. A sense of 'call' is central in many religious traditions; the Seventh-day Adventist church is no exception. However 'call' has become problematic in its relation to Clergywomen and entry into ministry. Call is often associated as a set path leading to ordination in pastoral ministry. The organization follows protestant theology where the 'priesthood of all believers' is emphasized. Ordained ministers are viewed as persons blessed with spiritual gifts and talents and empowered to function religiously with and on behalf of their community. Ordination is a simple ceremony where the authority of the 'Church' acknowledges a person's call, 'sets them apart' for the vocation of ministry and blesses them through the laying of hands and prayer upon the individual. Adventist considers ordination as a special and sacred calling and denominational acknowledgement of God's call and living out that call in faith communities. Clergywomen expressed a strong sense of God's leading in their lives to pursue a vocation in Ministry. This impression or sense of God's divine leading could be traced from their early childhood, or in their teenage years, and for some it was finally confirmed through their theological education.'¹⁹

When studying the interview material, it is clear that the questions asked among the interviewees would provide a wider range of answers if asked in a larger, and even more diversified sample. The interviews provided in this paper provide a sample of answers. The interviews indicate that the dynamics of creating an accepting and inclusive church culture is shaped by different factors, such as feedback from church leaders and good role modeling, in addition to healthy and well defined expectations from the pastor.

In this section of the interpretive task, what emerges as strong indicators from the resource material as well as the interviews are: It is essential to examine the role, the current leadership structure and expectations of leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. The present structure of the Church leadership is not open to women; as it has very

¹⁹ Drene Somasundram, 'A Gender Inclusive Model in Theological Education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church' (England: Middlesex University, 2007), p. 116.

little flexibility, and is traditional in the way it works within the ‘male’ hierarchical leadership structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Once again this prompts the question: ‘What is the Church afraid of in letting capable women lead?’

This question could diverge into a larger discussion that might lead this paper off the track of its main subject, but it is an interesting question to have in the back of one’s mind while studying this subject matter. Jesus’ way of leadership was very different from the traditional role of the priests in the temple in his time. Jesus way of being, might have been provocative to the hierarchical priestly leadership structure present at the temple. It is clear from the gospels that the leaders of the religious elite were afraid that Jesus would destroy their structure of power. Mathews adds an insight to this thought:

‘The Christian model of leadership is servant hood, the antithesis of power. We as servants live our lives, under the control of Jesus Christ, ministering among, not ministering over, those committed to our care. This model can work in the church only because of the supernatural headship of Jesus, who works his work in each of us. | The goal of leadership is not to produce uniformity but to bring believers to deeper levels of commitment to Christ. What Christians do flows spontaneously out of who they are.’²⁰

Leading out of who he was, is what Jesus did. Jesus’ leadership model is what intimidated the religious power elite at the time. What would happen in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today if pastors, men and women were allowed to lead out from who they are in a church structure where Jesus is the only head of the Church? What would happen in the Church if the role models of church leadership had more flexibility to them, and the pastors were not expected to fill a certain cookie cutter role? What would Jesus’ way of servant hood leadership look like in the Church today? Would it be a model that fit both men and women? Again, as Jesus lead out of who he was, could that work within the Church, and would the present leadership structure be flexible enough to have this much space in ministry for people to be who they are and not fitted into a certain role? I have found that this ‘leading from who

²⁰ Mathews, p. 135.

you are, not what you do' thought permeates one of my favorite leadership books by J.R Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*²¹.

The expectation of the leadership role is one of the factors to be considered in the interpretive task. Another question to ask is: of what impact a more flexible, gender inclusive leadership culture would make in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What would the Church look like today, if that was the case?

4. The normative task 'what should be going on':

In dealing with the subject of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership, the theological concepts from Osmer have been used to interpret 'episodes and contexts'. Osmer's structure provides a norm of response to guide how this subject of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership can be dealt with in a better way in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This part of Osmer's four tasks of theological interpretation guides as to how one learns from 'good practice' in looking at women in pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Church.

What kind of normative response is sufficient in working with the subject of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership? The women interviewed were asked whether they had specific role models who had had an impact in their calling to become a pastor or leader. One woman said that her first role model was her grandfather in becoming a pastor. Another gave credit to her parents saying that

'I have had them throughout my life (my father and mother) both being dedicated to the church. Pastors who knowingly or not knowingly have influenced me and I could look up to them. Fellow students, lecturers, local church pastor here at Newbold.'

²¹ J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988).

One of the women said she was ‘in a modern church plant, which gave her the inspiration to share her faith, and find a deeper faith herself. The church plant had a female pastor.’

Another said that she did not have many to look at of role models until she moved to another country. Then she could see that women could work as pastors fully. Several of the women mentioned that they had no female role-models at all working as pastors in their home country.

The interviews as well as other sources indicated that healthy, female role models are crucial for women in ministry. The impact and importance of other female role models and mentors were clearly indicated by the interviewees. This is a vital part of ‘the normative task’. Sharon Hadary and Laura Hendersson in their book, *How women lead*, stress the important fact of ‘You can’t be what you can’t see.’²² There is a haunting reminder for the Church in this statement as it describes the present situation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as I see it. It is difficult to start out being the first one breaking the glass ceiling in the business world. The same observation can be made in the Church. I do not personally see that many women compared to the number of men in pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most of the females have not been working for more than maximum twenty years for the Church. Some women have braved the ‘privilege’ of being first, crashed and burned; others have braved and lasted, and become beacons of hope and models of ministry and possibilities to other women coming after them.

An additional question could be; what model of leadership would you take as being the first woman in a capacity of leadership in the Church? Will the ‘first’ woman be a woman to the core, or is the pressure too high to conform to the solid, ‘tried and done that’, man’s style of leadership? Jo Saxton has an interesting and challenging comment on this ‘orphan syndrome’ of being the first one to pave the way, in her book *Influential women in leadership*

²² Sharon Hadary and Laura Henderson, *How Women Lead: The 8 Essential Strategies Successful Women Know* (NY: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2013), p. 170.

at church work and beyond, where she refers to the following observation: 'Women who have 'made it' without good mentors don't know how to mentor, release, and celebrate other women.'²³ One may ask: Is this because the women have had no other women to model for them how things can be done in leadership? Is this because the male competitiveness has crept into the women's world as well? Jo Saxton's statement makes me think and ask myself if I am a good role model for women who come after me in ministry.

Another important aspect of 'the normative task' is that it is crucial for the church members that both female and male voices are heard. The woman's voice should not conform to be like the man's voice. Unfortunately, it is easy to see that this is a part of the ambivalence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in giving space and voice to the female pastors and church leaders. One of the women interviewed said the following: 'Many church members, both men and women indicate that it is easier to talk with a female pastor.'

I would like to repeat my introduction statement in the beginning of the paper from Nancy Beach's book *Gifted to lead*, where she describes the inclusiveness of having a voice in the Church to be the following: 'To have a voice is to be fully present, to feel counted in, and counted on, to have something to say, and to be heard.'²⁴ In the Church we need the balance and blend of voices, both men and women to be heard and be present. To have a real voice in the Church according to Beach is the ability to be present and having 'the experience of speaking and not leaving.'²⁵ I would like to see the female voices in the Church stay and prosper in pastoral ministry and church leadership, as well as enjoying fully the journey of working with and for God. The Seventh-day Adventist Church today needs to take into account that a lot of female voices in the Church are silenced, either because the women leave as a result of not being heard, respected or counted in, or because they have given up

²³ Jo Saxton, *Influential Women in Leadership at Church, Work and Beyond* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 2011), p. 123.

²⁴ Beach, p. 186.

²⁵ Beach, p. 188.

following their calling of lack of support. Or, the last, but not the least, there is silence, as women have been asked to be quiet, because they are women.

This makes it even more important for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to look at the way the Church is giving women a voice and a place to be recognized. The Church needs to encourage young women to study theology and take seriously their God given call to become pastors or church leaders. We need the fullness and oneness of God's voice speaking from the pulpit and in the leadership of the Church in both male and female tones.

One of the former secretaries of education in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway was a woman, a former missionary. She was one of the first Norwegian women to stand on the pulpit and preach and teach in the Church in the early 1970s and 80s. Her voice was heard and respected, and she was not afraid of standing up to speak. Irene Eide Elisenberg and her husband Johann Elisenberg (then a retired pastor when I was young and wondered what I wanted to do with my life) were instrumental in mentoring, encouraging, and role modeling the possibilities of working for the Church in Norway. They had a prominent role in affirming my personal call to ministry, even though at the time in my early twenties, I had no clear vision of working in pastoral ministry or church leadership. One of the interviewees also mentioned Irene Eide Elisenberg as her most important role model in working for the Church as a female church leader.

'The normative task' of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is to have a greater focus on encouraging female role modeling in pastoral ministry and church leadership. This encourages young women to see that it is possible to become a pastor or church leader, because they have seen it modeled in other women working for the Church. There needs to be space created for interaction between women in pastoral ministry and church leadership: Space of inspiration, social interaction with other female pastors and leaders, as well as space to learn and see female role modeling as well as discussing the Bible together from a female

stand point. The Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has an opportunity as well as a responsibility to see that this is happening, as this division is unique in the fact that most unions are supportive of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership. The Trans-European Division could very well be a role model to other divisions in the Church as to how this can be implemented.

In addition to role modeling, it is important to mentor as well as affirm young women and women in general in the Church to follow their calling from God. If this would be one of the highly visible, outspoken strategies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe, it would contribute to more women choosing to study theology in order to become pastors or church leaders. If women were more included in leading the Church, the Church would have a balanced voice in leadership and pastoral ministry, as God's image would be represented as it was in the oneness of Adam and Eve in creation.

'The normative task' of the Church, is that the women who feel called to pastoral ministry and church leadership, are affirmed and encouraged by the people around them, whether it is family, friends, the local church or the Church leadership. One interviewee said:

'it has been people who have asked me to do things that I did not know I could do, and then affirm me when I did it well. I was asked to be a chaplain, I did not know I could preach, but people affirmed me that I could do it. Leaders around me affirmed my calling. Leaders have seen the potential in me and then the church has affirmed it.'

There needs to be a conscious effort on the Church's part to work on taking away the local hindering factors. The women interviewed mentioned 'culture and tradition' as hindering factors for women working for the Church. 'The Church needs to work on its perceived leadership styles in the local area, if women are to be working for the Church in areas where male chauvinism and dominance is still a part of the Church' culture as well as deeply engraved into the country culture. Cunningham and Hamilton stated the following challenge

to the Church: ‘Perhaps we, the church, were unwilling to see the truth in God's Word. We have listened more to our culture than to the Lord or to His Word.’²⁶

It is interesting to observe that the countries in Europe, who have the lowest acceptance of women in pastoral ministry or church leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, are the Catholic Church dominated cultures. Whether it is the Catholic Church culture, or other church cultures, it seems obvious that a regional culture will impact the local church culture. This will have influence inside the Seventh-day Adventist Church where the Fundamental Beliefs may take the Church in a different route (idealistically) than the common culture in the country. Then, ‘the normative task’ will be a challenging one for the Church in becoming countercultural to the local society it is trying to reach. Would this be a risk factor or would it be a benefit to the local Seventh-day Adventist Church? Would the Church lose church members or alienate people seeking the Seventh-day Adventist Church over this issue? Would it create respect and attract a different group of people to the Church?

In the discussion of being countercultural, the book *In Search of a Round Table, Gender, Theology & Church Leadership*, provides the following thought provoking insight into this issue.

‘On the one hand, the church cannot and should not divorce itself from its social context totally. It may that, for a time, cultural considerations prohibit the ordination of women, and to act otherwise would seriously impair the witness of the church in that place and that time. But if that is the case, the Christian community itself should be clear on the reasons and not pretend that there are theological problems. On the other hand, the church is the sign of the kingdom in every cultural context, and must witness to the equality of women and men. To be such a sign, the church may have to ordain women before the time when women leaders are generally tolerated elsewhere. All too often the churches have followed, rather than led.’²⁷

This quote would most likely challenge the thinking of the top leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the middle of the current debate of female ordination. At the same time I

²⁶ Cunningham and Hamilton, p. 36.

²⁷ *In Search of a Round Table, Gender, Theology & Church Leadership*, ed. by Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1997), p. 23.

would hope it could propel the Church into thinking outside its traditional leadership box. If the Church would be willing to try the above quoted action, it could give a fresh perspective and boldness in society. It would add the responsibility of clearly holding up the official Seventh-day Adventist Church Fundamental Beliefs of biblically based gender equality (fourteenth Fundamental Belief). As mentioned previously; would this brave move attract a different type of people to the Church? The current fact that the Church is not ordaining women to the ministry or fully including women in pastoral ministry and church leadership is shutting many young women out from the Church, who are looking in. I could also add, many young men. What is the responsibility of the Church to the young people of Northern Europe, who live in an equality based society, where gender is no longer an issue outside the Church? Will the archaic leadership structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church be a hindrance to church growth? In the western world, I would propose that it already is. Beach quotes John Ortberg on the credibility of the church,

‘It will increasingly damage the credibility of the gospel if the church becomes the one place in society where women and men cannot serve together as equal co-bearers of the image of God.’²⁸

Another author who provides a clear view on the responsibility of the church, is Gilbert Bilezikian in his book, *Beyond Sex Roles, What the Bible Says about a Woman's Place in Church and Family*

‘Perhaps no other area of corporate Christian life requires as critical a reappraisal of its basic presuppositions as that which concerns the relationships of believers among themselves. Faulty relationships among Christians have paralyzing effects on the vitality and the effectiveness of their corporate witness. Discriminatory and divisive practices grieve the Holy Spirit and impair the integrity and outreach of Christian communities.’²⁹

Bilezikian’s quote has made me wonder if the Seventh-day Adventist Church is willing to take the risk and walk straight, with integrity and courage. As women are being regarded as

²⁸ Beach, p. 137.

²⁹ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles, What the Bible Says About a Woman's Place in Church and Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), p. 159.

second class citizens in so many places of the world, it would be a courageous move to go counterclockwise of culture, but in line with the Church's biblical beliefs. Further examination of this question of the structure of leadership, has led me to think that the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to explore again the story of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, where the Bible portrays the image of God as oneness. Oneness in the Trinity 'creating man and woman in our image', and oneness as Adam and Eve became one. Jesus restored oneness on the cross, not only in our relationship with God, but also restoring the relationship between man and woman. Cunningham and Hamilton add another interesting insight to the debate around a gender inclusive leadership structure, when they conclude: 'notice that God didn't give man dominion over the earth until woman was standing beside him.'³⁰

When looking at the issue of church leadership structure, this poem by Chuck Lathrop stood out in the book *In search of a Round Table*. It illustrates the needed paradigm shift in order for women to be fully included and integrated in pastoral ministry and church leadership. The poem illustrates a highly valid point that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will have to start integrating, if women are to be included in church leadership:

'In the search of a roundtable

Concerning the why and how and what and
who of ministry, one image keeps surfacing:
A table that is round.

It will take some sawing to be roundtabled,
some redefining, some redesigning, some redoing and rebirthing,
of narrowlong churching can painful be for people and tables.
It would mean no daising and throning, for but one king is there,
and he is the foot washer, at table no less.

And what of narrowlong ministers when they confront a roundtable people,
after years of working up the table to finally sit at its head, only to discover
that the table has been turned round?

They must be loved into roundness, for God has called a people, not "them and us".
"Them and us" are unable to gather round for at a roundtable, there are no sides,
and all are invited to wholeness and to food.

At one time our narrowlong churches were built to resemble the cross
but it does no good for buildings to do so, if lives do not.

³⁰ Cunningham and Hamilton, p. 97.

Roundtabling means no preferred seating, no first and last, no better and no corners for the “least of these”.

Roundtabling means being with, a part of, together, and one.

It means room for the Spirit and gifts and disturbing profound peace for all.

We can no longer prepare for the past.

We will and must and are called to be church, and if God calls for other than roundtable we are bound to follow.

Leaving the sawdust and chips, designs and redesigns behind

in search of and in the presence of the kingdom that is Gods and not ours.

Amen.³¹

When searching for a ‘roundtable’ in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the women will hopefully find a place for them where they are included, not only on the local level of the Church, but as full-bodied members, with the same rights in coming to the same round table as the men. The illustration of a round table is fascinating, as this very much paints the picture of the leadership model I think that the Church should ideally stand for (I am colored by my Scandinavian culture, as it is generally a flat structured leadership). But the question still lingers in my mind, as it does for many of the women in pastoral ministry and church leadership; will the shape of the ‘church table’ ever change? Will women be taken seriously when speaking and approaching the table? What will we find once women are finally allowed to sit at the leadership table of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Will it be as Christine Grumm notes in her chapter of ‘Searching for a Round Table’?

‘So while women make their way to the table, searching for a seat, they find that very little has changed in order to accommodate their presence. The table is still long and narrow. The consequence of this is the creation of an unhealthy environment with the following results:

- women find that they cannot work for the church and have a home life as well, and therefore have to make a choice between the two;
- women leave because they are burned-out and unable to take the daily abuse of a system that does not fully recognize them, but insists that they perform with above-average results;
- some women have a place at the table but have forgotten how to support the participation of other women;
- some women support the traditional shape of the table because they have found a way to benefit as individuals from the system, but they have lost sight of the fact that many other women are not beneficiaries.³²

³¹ Kanyoro, p. 28.

³² Kanyoro, p. 31.

Today, many women who are working for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the capacity of pastoral ministry and church leadership do feel they are hitting the glass ceiling rather than approaching a round table. Many women experience that their voices are not listened to; for example, in the planning of special women's pastoral retreats. Pastoral retreats in general are planned by men, without including the wishes or specific needs of women in the field of pastoral ministry or church leadership.

Another part of the image of the round table is the current debate in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church on the subject of ordination of women. This is not a topic that will be referred to in depth in this paper, as there has been, and is done extensive research on the topic of female ordination. The official Church's working policy states that women cannot be ordained to pastoral ministry or church leadership, and as a result of this, women cannot be leaders outside the local Church. As I look at the issue of female ordination in the Church, the gap and contrast between the official Seventh-day Adventist Church working policy, and the fourteenth statement of the twenty-eight Fundamental Beliefs of the Church seems difficult to understand:

‘The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.’³³

One may ask if the Church is aware that its fourteenth Fundamental Belief is not in any obvious way aligned with the practical functions of the working policy of the Church. Currently, women are not considered for ordination to the pastoral ministry or church leadership by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a worldwide Church. As a consequence of this, the working policy of the Church implies that women are in all practical means not considered to be fully equal in Christ. At this time, women are not considered in regard to

³³ ‘Adventist.org: The Official Site of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church’ <<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/>> [accessed 27 March 2013].

national, divisional or worldwide leadership in the Church (even if they had the same qualifications, experience or spiritual gifts as a man). I find this fact, together with other women in pastoral ministry and church leadership, sad and disturbing. One woman interviewed said the following:

‘I find it sad/hard/challenging to know, that my local administration and churches approve of my calling, the Division does too – but the leadership at the top level of the General Conference is against – and it is hard to know, that the people who are leading this church think that I am not worthy to work for the church. It hurts. But mostly it hurts to think of all the young, talented girls, who never give it second thoughts to enter ministry, because nobody acknowledges their talents, nobody tells them that it is a possibility to go into ministry, and that they have so very few role models, that the thought never enters their mind, that they could choose fulltime ministry as a career.’

The same woman added to the question of the greatest challenge of being a woman in pastoral ministry and church leadership. Her answer was: ‘Juggling family and ministry! And knowing that the top leaders of the church do not wish to see me doing this work.’

Another woman said the following: ‘I also believe that it is always better when somebody else talks on our behalf.’ According to the interviewees, the most important task of the Church, is that men in church leadership are supportive towards women in ministry and ‘talks on the women’s behalf’. One woman said that ‘the leadership in Norway is positive. They are law abiding, do not cry out or go forward to make a difference (loyal to the world church)...’ I sense a quiet frustration here. There is a need for the union leaders to become bold and speak out on behalf of the women in their union.

In addition to ‘speaking on the women’s behalf’, there are ways of implementing support. One example of this came up recently: A male pastor in Norway gave his ordination credential back to the Church and asked to have it exchanged for a commissioned credential, as he wanted to stand in solidarity with the female pastors in his union. Other men have given support in the debate, both in writing and through spoken words. I sense a need for the

leadership of the Church to become more deliberate in affirming and encouraging female pastors and church leaders. It seems that male colleagues are supportive in many countries, but that the leadership of the Church needs to be clearer and more outspoken in their support and affirmation.

What has become obvious during the process of interviewing for this paper is the following: It is not necessarily the local level of Church leadership that is the hindering factor for women in pastoral ministry. The fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide church does have a big influence in this issue. From the interviews I can detect that there is not much perceived affirmation from the top level of leadership in the Church. There needs to be a clear affirmative signal from the top level of the administration and leadership of the worldwide Church. This clear signal from the Church could be; taking serious the fourteenth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Fundamental Beliefs; that women are regarded as equal, created in the same image of God as men. Women need to be affirmed by the Church in their unique calling, spiritual gifts as well as their contribution to pastoral ministry and church leadership.

When asked questions about challenges in ministry, the women interviewed, answered the following: One woman said this: 'Every woman in leadership must change some kind of paradigm in her own eyes and in the eyes of other people. It demands strength. She must be a strong person.' It is a valid point that women should not have to change their specific style, personality or way of being in order to be a leader. There are various ways of being strong. Another woman wanted 'to be heard. (To be heard, I really have to concentrate be clear and to reach others in communication) I want to be taken serious! To be accepted as the person I am.' This last comment takes me back to the question of whether the Church is accepting and affirming the voices of women in the Church. Do women have to become men to have a 'voice'?

‘To be taken seriously’ seems to be a common need for several of the women interviewed. One of the women said she wanted to be ‘taken seriously! I felt tolerated when I would speak... Not expected to come with much serious.’ Why is it that these women feel that they are not taken seriously in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today? Some women in pastoral ministry and church leadership battle with the feeling of being the ‘token woman’ and not being taken seriously in different areas of ministry, such as in committees. One of the women expressed her frustration in this way:

‘As the token woman on administrative committees, I felt tolerated when I would speak, but I also felt many times that I was not expected to say anything with much substance. I will say that in the departmental circles where I worked, I was treated much more as an equal and sensed that I was respected as an intelligent, contributing member of the staff.’

It seems to be a reoccurring pattern in the interviews that women in pastoral ministry and church leadership tend to struggle with being taken serious and counted in, as well as being allowed to having their own voice. For one woman, her greatest challenge was:

‘To find out how to be a pastor without losing one’s own personality. How to work in a role traditionally for men and still be a woman, how to deal with often being a leader in the church as well as often being a “leader” at home. Also dealing with the different expectations and roles, both at home and at work, in a healthy way. Knowing where one’s boundaries are and sticking to them even when your heart is bleeding for others.’

According to the interviews, many women experience the problem of loneliness in pastoral ministry and church leadership. Finding good friends, within and outside the Church is a challenge. One of the women said the following of her challenge in ministry: ‘Finding close friends, and not being lonely!’ I have found that loneliness is a problem many male pastors and church leaders encounter as well. The issue of loneliness tends to lead into pastoral burnout and pastors and church leaders leaving ministry.

In my personal experience of leadership in the Church as well as from other sources, I have found the following: When there is team work among an equal blend of women and men

on the leadership team, there tends to be good dynamic and group feeling. Research done in Norway on volunteer based organizations such as the Red Cross; show that these organizations do better, when there is a blend of men and women in the leadership. Hadary and Henderson affirm this from the viewpoint of the business world as well:

‘Both women and men increasingly are recognizing that women's leadership styles differ from, and complement, men's styles, resulting in stronger organizations. It is not that one leadership style - male or female - is better. The greatest success occurs when the leadership styles of both men and women are combined. No longer should the discussion be which style is better; rather, the discussion must be how we can most effectively integrate the two styles.’³⁴

Hadary and Henderson add to this by saying that ‘what is holding women back is the challenge of the mindset of most corporations.’³⁵ Then one might ask what the mindset is in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. Leadership styles tend to vary according to gender and personality type. It is important that the Church integrates women as well as men in its leadership. This will add in a positive direction according to Hadary and Henderson:

‘When an organization effectively integrates women's and men's leadership styles, the result is a stronger, more nimble organization; it is an organization that is considered by employees as a good place to work.’³⁶

This paper is looking at a church and not a business, but the quote resonates on this topic of female church leadership. From a Nordic female pastoral meeting in 2012, the feedback from the women was that they missed a blend of women and men in the union Church leadership.

One may ask if the question of females in ministry is a concern among the female pastors and church leaders only, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But it seems to be a concern of lay church members as well. If the question were to be explored further of how lay church members perceive this issue of female pastors and church leaders, it would require even more extensive research. It is an interesting thought to explore more at some other time.

³⁴ Hadary and Henderson, p. xx.

³⁵ Hadary and Henderson, p. xxi.

³⁶ Hadary and Henderson, p. 3.

Many young people and especially young women in northern Europe today, are debating whether they seriously want to join a church who does not want to fully recognize women as equal with men in leadership of the Church. I have many times encountered people who have left the Church over this issue and found another church to attend. As I have spoken with young women and men about this over the years, I have had the some of the same thoughts as Sarah Sumner in her book *Men and Women in the Church* on the subject of the role of women in the Church:

‘No one is debating whether or not women can be full-fledged Christians (Gal 3:28). The debate has to do with women being able to use their spiritual gifts in the presence of the full congregation. To be more specific, the argument is about women and spiritual authority.’³⁷

The question of spiritual authority can develop into a new paper, but for now, it is part of the many facets of the debate around females in pastoral ministry and church leadership. I find it interesting as Sumner says, that women can be full-fledged Christians. This seems to be of no discussion in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But for women to go further than the pews, the children’s Sabbath school room or pathfinders/scouts, then there is a problem in many of the Churches around the world. It is amazing that women are ok in teaching and having spiritual authority over children in the most impressionable years, but not accepted when it comes to adult men. For many men who have a traditional view of the church leadership structure, the image of women being in positions of authority in the Church is wrong. As I have looked at this part of the normative task, I have found that the Church collectively needs to look at the structure of leadership as well as the role modeling, and teaching of the local churches, so that women experience acceptance in the role of leadership.

³⁷ Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), p. 50.

5. The pragmatic task ‘how might we respond’:

The pragmatic task determines the ‘strategies of action’ that will influence how the church employer and the local church can reach an optimal way of dealing with the issue of women in pastoral ministry. This task will open a reflective path where there will be evaluations of what has been done and what can be done better in the Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church. The reflective paths indicate ‘strategies of action’ for several levels of the Church, both on the conference or union levels, as well as on the divisional or general conference levels of the Church. In addition to ‘strategy of action’ to Church leadership, it includes ‘a strategy of action’ for the theology department at Newbold College.

5.1 Strategies of action:

The interviews show that there are several different parts in planning a well-defined ‘strategy of action’. The first part is directed towards the employing local conference or union, as well as implications for the division. The local conferences or unions, hire the women once they have finished their theology or leadership education. The second part is directed towards what the educational institution can improve or do more of in the theology department and through its teachers. The third part is what the local church/family can contribute to in this action plan. The fourth part would be how female pastors and church leaders will be more comfortable in working for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

5.1.1 Strategy 1:

The first part involves the employing union or conference. The local employing organization is for the most part portrayed as being supportive and actively positive by the women

interviewed for this research. There are a few women interviewed where the unions and conferences are not viewed as actively positive or supportive. From most of the women interviewed, there is a general need of more support and encouragement from the employing organization in order for women to want to pursue a theology degree or a church leadership education. Some of the interviewees also indicated that the employing organizations need to have a higher degree of openness towards women being included in church leadership positions, whether it is in the shape of formal paid employee as pastors or church leaders, or in the local church.

One of the women with many years of experience described her wish for the women coming after her: ‘We need more square pegs in the round holes system. Majority of women approach decision-making and problem solving in different ways than men do.’ Another woman said she wished ‘there was a model of ministry developed that fits women.’ One interviewee added that she would like to see ‘women would feel that they are not treated differently because they are women. I don’t want them to be held back by the fact that they are women. I would wish there is a network.’ Another of the interviewees said the following, ‘that women are offered supervision/mentoring from the start.’ In addition to the previous statements, one of the women said the following:

‘That they will have the same positive experience that I have had. That they will keep their focus and their calling, and not focus on the negative. I wish we were better in the Church at using the internship system and support each other. I think we should be better at giving good experiences in ministry.’

The feedback from the women interviewed, made me search for a strategic plan in order to integrate women into pastoral ministry and church leadership functions in the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So far I haven’t found a strategic plan for integrating and encouraging more women to join pastoral ministry and church leadership in the Trans-European Division. What I did find was the North-American Division’s plan called: *WANTED! More Female Pastors — Essential for the Harvest*. This plan shows the need for

and a model of a strategic action plan for the Trans-European Division. The North-American Division's plan needs to be implemented into the local unions and conferences of the different countries. The action plan has the following points which resonated with the interviews done for this research:

The North American Division, its Unions, and Conferences must become more intentional (as local circumstances permit) in the development of pathways to ministry for female pastors. Thus, it is also imperative to develop intentional methods of mentoring women who can become conference Executive Secretaries and Treasurers.

What is the strategy? What kind of collaborative "Human Resources" approach is needed to initiate, develop, and implement this new "Women in Ministry" Building Block?

The strategy is to design, build, and implement a process mechanism, which identifies, targets, and provides a partnership to support females, who feel called by the Lord, from college level through the seminary, leading to full-employment into the local conferences. The goal and result of this strategy is to increase the number of employed female pastors by 100% over the next five years or by 2016. The strategy will also include a comprehensive approach to education and communication of the NAD membership.

Concrete activities and events that make up the strategy include such activities as the following:

- Programs for the orientation and education of church members
- Incentivizing the hiring of greater numbers of women clergy and administrators
- Development of church administrator support structures for women clergy

In 2013, the North American Division will begin to aggressively implement an emphasis on "Women in Ministry" within its territory, which will start with a communication strategy while simultaneously building partnerships with employing entities to place and identify women God has called to assist in ushering in His Second Coming. There will also be a significant financial commitment from the North American Division to support this endeavor. We cannot fail in this Building Block, and we will not fail because God's work needs and calls for these additional laborers in His field. Jesus said, "The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few." Yet, there are women lined-up and standing at the gate waiting to come in to help with the Harvest. It is time to let them in!³⁸

Another look at the employing organization would reveal the following: Many of the female pastors in the Trans-European Division are married to male pastors, and one of the

³⁸ 'WANTED! More Female Pastors — Essential for the Harvest'
<<http://www.nadministerial.org/article/370/for-nad-pastors/pastor-life/women-clergy/why-the-nad-needs-women-pastors/wanted-more-female-pastors-essential-for-the-harvest>> [accessed 4 March 2013].

interviewees said the following of her being hired by the local union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church the first time:

‘When we (my husband and I) graduated, the conference/Union was in severe financial troubles. So they offered him a full-time job – and me a half-time job. My dear husband told the Union board, that if we were going to work for them – I would be the full-time worker, and he would be employed part-time. Somehow they then managed to find a full budget for both of us. Once I was employed, I have not met any opposition at all from the leadership in the Union. They (and the session) have always been very supportive of my ministry.’

From some of the other interviewees it became clear that several women have had similar situations in the hiring process. One pastor was married to a theology student, and when the Church gave an offer, they offered him a 100% position and her 50%. This seems to be a reoccurring pattern for many of the female pastors.

I would like to include from my personal knowledge and experience from speaking with other female pastors (married to male pastors) outside this research, that this has often been the norm, especially when the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in a financial crisis. The Church would offer the male a 100% position and the female a 50% position. The financial ‘explanation’ has also been presented to females who are not married to male pastors.

My personal experience was once I was done with my BA in theology, I was offered a student missionary position and salary because the local union had financial problems. When I declined taking the job offer, I was told that I would never be considered again for a pastoral position in that union.

The strategic action from the employing organization needs to include a local action plan like the above mentioned in the active hiring process as well as the encouragement of women to start studying theology. This strategic action plan needs an element of deliberate follow up, affirmation and encouragement of women in ministry.

5.1.2 Strategy 2:

The educational institutions do play an important role in this ‘strategic plan’ and the following observations are noteworthy: One woman said that she wished for the educational institution to ‘stress that God has created woman as a human being of the same value as the husband or any other man.’ Another recommended that the educational institution would ‘keep the program flexible enough to keep up with women’s demanding lives.’ The practical implications in the classrooms would be the following recommendations from the interviewees:

‘To make us realize how the way we lead/work differs from men’s way to do things and learn how to take advantage of our strengths and be aware of weaknesses as well as know how to deal with it. The traditional role of a pastor, and the picture of how a pastor ought to be and do, is very much formed out of being a man. What would it look like and how would it work if the “model” of a pastor was a woman instead of a man?’

‘Women need female role models in leadership and in the theology teachers (department). We need to have the space for difference.’

‘Sometimes I wish that the teachers could defend us women. I wish that the teachers would be more outspoken on our behalf in class.’

‘To have more subjects on human psychology, counseling and women’s role in leadership.’

‘I would like to see more diversity at the academic staff. Right now there are maybe not that many academic theology women out there. Affirm women and girls that their style of ministry is ok and good enough. It has taken me all these years to find my own voice and that is ok to be quiet and small. The preaching world is strongly masculine.’

‘When there is reference to practical examples in the classroom, there needs to be mentioning of both women and men in ministry. The classes are ok being the same, but the practical implications of pastoral ministry need to include female examples. I wish for more female teachers (not on a quota level, but the best ones).’

Theology classes in Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions tend to have most men and very few women present, with a male professor teaching the class. For many women, this may be a barrier in order to start studying theology. The aspect of loneliness in ministry as a female pastor or church leader is obvious, even in this first step towards working in ministry.

Another barrier for young women is to be confident enough to say something in a predominantly male class and with a male teacher. Especially if the voice of the female is not respected, valued or heard (as perceived through fellow student's actions or the teacher's actions).

The classes taught on the different aspects of theology need to have space and respect for the female voice and creative approaches to theological thinking. A practical example: Because few women work as pastors and theology professors, the preaching style taught in the theology department tend to be predominantly focused on the male style of preaching. Referring to one of the women interviewed: 'It has taken me all these years to find my own voice and that it is ok to be quiet and small.'

Women preach in different ways, according to personality, culture and style, as men do. In the homiletic classes, it is recommended to pull out examples of good female preachers, and demonstrate the variety of styles, the handling of subjects and the way gender and different perspectives influence preaching. The still, small voice of many women may often be drowned in the male perspective of how a 'good sermon should be'.

In the practical pastoral classes, when dealing with an example of pastoral ministry, there need to be a conscious effort to include female pastor's experiences as well as men's. In examples of both pastoral ministry and church leadership, there may be ways of handling the situation differently according to gender. This would enrich the classes as well as the experience of the students.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to be more aware of the fact that almost 70% of Church membership consists of women. How is this dealt with in the practical pastoral education? There might be a present focus on ethical conduct in the Church for the pastor, but there does not seem to be a conscious focus on reaching the different 'ears or experience' of the Church.

Theology viewed in feminine terms or within a feminine context is seldom mentioned in the educational institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. Is there a space for the 'theology of women's experience' inside the educational institutions of the Church? Drene Somasundram has written extensively on this question. She says the following:

Adventism as an organization finds itself at a crossroad and is confronted with numerous challenges for relevance in today's modern context. One such named challenge is to acknowledge that Clergywomen are making positive contributions in ministry and these contributions should be valued and reflected in theological education. Theology needs to be reconstructed and redefined in the context of faith and practice.

'For the first time, Clergywomen are articulating their vision, reclaiming their history and bringing a 'theology of women's experience'. Women's lived experiences encompasses considerations of the impact of women upon the pastoral ministry reflection on 'feminine' religious experience and its distinctive nature; biblical interpretation; questions of inclusive language; feminist reconstructions of care growth, human identity, relatedness and community, and their implications for pastoral practice' (Graham 1996, pp124-125).

'The experience and sense of calling among clergy women in the 1990's shows that clergy women are not merely survivors, nor are they breaking down barriers simply to get into a vocation shaped and still dominated by male perspectives. Rather, clergy women are reinventing ministry for the future. Clergy women are expanding the very essence of Christian ministry and guiding the whole church' (Zikmund, Lummis & Chang 1998, p133). This challenge of revision could bring a new sense of optimism in the quest to find new workable models in Theological education and practice in what Hodgson describes as the 'Second Enlightenment' (Hodgeson 1994, p56).³⁹

The resource material studied for this paper indicates that there needs to be an even clearer message from the Seventh-day Adventist Church educational institutions that women do have a place in the pastoral ministry, leadership and teaching ministry. According to Fritz Guy,

It is because of its creativity that feminist theology is able to make a particularly valuable contribution to Christian theology in general; to the extent that women experience human existence differently from men, they see truth from a different perspective - not necessarily a "truer" perspective, but a different one that has been almost wholly missing from a traditional Christian thought.⁴⁰

The female experience needs to be taken into the strategy of planning for the educational institutions of the Church in two ways: Number one; a conscious effort to be inclusive of the

³⁹ Somasundram, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically, Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1999), p. 15.

female population of the Church and an awareness of different needs in ministering to them. Number two; the inclusiveness of the female voice and experience in the theological training.

5.1.3 Strategy 3:

The third part of a ‘strategy of action’ includes the local church and the family of the female pastor. Most women interviewed said the following: ‘My greatest support comes from my parents and my husband. Several people in the church are also supporting me.’ According to the interviews, there is need of a network of support as pastoral ministry and church leadership is lonely. Some women have mentioned a need for prayer group support and more collegial support through other female ministers, as well as a network of mentors.

In addition to this, some of the interviewees would like to have a local coach who is not a member of the Church. Other interviewees expressed fear of not having a good enough local network around them when they start their pastoral ministry. Many of the women expressed the value and joy of having excellent support from their husbands. The single women interviewed, depended heavily on their friends and fellow students.

The strategy of action in this third part could implement parts of the action plan from the North-American Division as mentioned earlier. One of the goals of this action plan is:

‘to design, build, and implement a process mechanism, which identifies, targets, and provide a partnership to support females, who feel called by the Lord, from college level through the seminary, leading to full-employment into the local conferences.’⁴¹

As the female pastors and leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are few and far from each other geographically, there needs to be an even more conscious effort in building networks where there can be support, prayer, mentoring and where it is safe to share ministerial ups and downs. In addition to this, one may wonder how many of the pastoral

⁴¹ ‘WANTED! More Female Pastors — Essential for the Harvest’.

husbands are consciously aware of their role in this network, as the interviews revealed a heavy focus on the support from the husband as one of the most important pillars in the female pastor and church leader's life. An interesting question would be if there is a need of a different focus and support for the female pastoral household than the male? This would take me back up to the previous discussion of the strategy of action number one.

5.1.4 Strategy 4:

Hadary and Henderson are clear in their conclusion when it comes to female leadership (though speaking from a viewpoint outside of the church):

Successful women are true to themselves. They act authentically and complement their business acumen with their female leadership strengths. It is neither necessary nor advisable to behave like one of the boys. People like women to behave like women.⁴²

To be true to yourself is an important strategy in becoming a healthy female pastor. God did not call or create women to be like men, inside or outside the pastoral ministry and leadership of the Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide needs to realize that women are not a threat in leadership, but an asset. Looking at the general material on female leadership strengths in the business world, Hadary and Henderson say the following: 'One of women's strengths is building networks where the members support each other. Men tend to make contacts; women build relationships.'⁴³ On the same train of thought I would like to refer to Rosie Wards book, *Growing women leaders, nurturing women's leadership in the Church*. She points out,

'how women leaders prefer to work in flattened, interwoven organizational structures - webs of relationships. Through these webs, women maximize productivity and innovation. Women often refer to themselves as being in the middle of things - not at the top, but in the center.'⁴⁴

⁴² Hadary and Henderson, p. 14.

⁴³ Hadary and Henderson, p. 86.

⁴⁴ Rosie Ward, *Growing Women Leaders, Nurturing Women's Leadership in the Church* (Abingdon, UK: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008), p. 125.

Perhaps it is time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to do a paradigm shift in the way the Church thinks about its leadership structures. One may ask if a fair amount of change is necessary in the structure of Church leadership for both men and women to be included into it.

On this thought of inclusion and being yourself, one of the interviewees said the following: ‘Some of us grew up being good children doing what we thought others wanted us to do, and then we grew up and saw that God had other plans.’ ‘Being good’ is deeply ingrained in children, especially females. To step out of the ‘niceness/goodness’ is a hard habit to change. What can become a problem later, is finding your own voice. Toril Moi, in her book *Voices, language and attention*, writes the following challenging thought: ‘Children, who are taught that being good is higher on the scale than all other values, may have problems later in life in finding their own voice.’⁴⁵ Women and girls are supposed to be good and nice. There might be a need of a greater paradigm shift, by going even deeper and further back than to structural changes in the Church.

From the question of being good and nice, I would like to move on to what some of the interviewees were afraid of. They feared that their smallness and being shy did not fit the general expectations of a pastor or church leader. I found Rosie Ward to be focusing on similar experiences in her observations of Jim Collins research of leadership roles. It was fascinating to see that there was a resounding bell with the interviewee’s experiences of perceived role expectations from the Church,

‘it showed, that the leaders who took companies from good to great were the opposite of the big personalities who are often thought of as great leaders. He found that the most effective leaders were ‘level 5 leaders’ and precisely the opposite: ‘Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy, these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility, and professional will, they are more like Lincoln and Socrates than Patton or Caesar.’⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Toril Moi, *Stemmer, Språk og oppmerksomhet* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2013), p. 68.

⁴⁶ Ward, p. 110.

One of the interviewees said the following of her experience in pastoral ministry:

‘When I preach, I preach from my heart – and my heart is different from any other person’s heart – and it is different from most men’s hearts. God can use me – not because I am woman, but because I am me. God created both sexes because we need both men and women – and I STRONGLY believe that is the case for the church and pastors as well. We need both the men and the women in order to portray a more whole picture God and the world to people around us.’

One of the major newspapers in Norway recently published an article on business women and how they tend to look, in the way they lead, dress and act. It was interesting to observe that none of the women portrayed, wanted to be like a man. They did not feel like it was necessary to act, sound or look like a man to be heard. Now, may the same confidence be a part of female pastors and leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. It is important for women in the ministry to be themselves, in ‘their own female skin’, as well as comfortable in leading and pastoring through who they are.

Studying the different parts of the strategy of action has indicated that there needs to be a response from the different entities of the Church on the topic of female pastors and church leaders. There needs to be a definite strategy and plan of action from the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church that is implemented to the division and union level as well as the conference. This plan needs to have an inclusive view of females in pastoral ministry and church leadership as well as clarity of expectations from the Church, in addition to clear visions and formulated goals of pastoral ministry, both from the central Church leadership and the local Church.

In addition to this, the theological institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will have to take on a more conscious, inclusive line of thinking when they goes through the curriculum for the theology departments and theological seminaries. In saying this, I have to add that the interviewees in general have had a good view of Newbold College and the theology department there.

The strategies of action can be divided into the different parts of responsibilities. The responsible entities are: the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, all the way to the General Conference, the theological institutions, the local church as well as the pastoral family and network surrounding the female pastor. There is a need of a more inclusive focus of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership as well as better support and network from these different entities of the Church for women working in ministry.

6. Conclusion:

In the limited space of this paper, it has used Osmer's core tasks of practical theological interpretation, in order to provide a framework of the development of this paper as well as an umbrella of structure over the materials found in the interviews and resources gathered. The resources and present reality of the interviews have shown that the issue of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership is important to deal with.

In asking Osmer's guiding research questions, the paper has raised more questions than answers in reflecting over the different issues of women in pastoral ministry and church leadership. Some of the questions have not been visited in the interviews done. The Seventh-day Adventist Church would benefit in exploring these questions further. As I have mentioned in the section concerning boundaries for this paper, there are countless issues to look at. The Church would do well to explore the questions of why Seventh-day Adventist female pastors crash, burn and leave the ministry. The Church would benefit from researching the questions of why young people do not want to join a church where women are not treated equal with men. I would also challenge the Church to look at the obvious gap between the Church Fundamental Belief number fourteen and the current working policy. I have found that the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to seriously revisit its present leadership culture and

structure in order to include the voices of both men and women in church leadership. This is crucial if the Church wants to be a church which portrays the whole image of God, not only half of God's image in leadership. I would like to see a focus on the fact that oneness in the Bible is not only between the Church and Christ, but represented in men and women working together representing oneness in the image of God.

I have found that the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to take into account, and be even more radical in the way it lives out its fourteenth Fundamental Belief. Today this belief only goes skin deep. I think that if the Church in Northern Europe is to experience growth and appeal to young people, living in a gender inclusive society, the Church needs to include in even a more conscious manner, the female voice in the Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership.

Appendix A

Age: 34

Baptized at: 24

Theology student at Newbold

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I just had after being a Christian for four years, an urge to become a pastor. I almost dropped out of my education as a teacher. I was a little impatient, but I finished my education and worked a year (theology being second degree). I kept coming back this passion to become a pastor, so I figured it had to be a call from God.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

Before my calling: In my church there was a female pastor, strong female leaders, a Lutheran pastor who was my mentor and good role model. It has never been a thought that women should not be a leader in the church.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

Affirmed by friends (not so much by leaders and mentors) all the strong leaders had left the church. I was affirmed by people around me in the church. They supported me.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Friends and church members in the church. Leaders in the church, my pastor.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

None really!

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

No issue for me.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

Yes, the last one and a half year has been hell for me. I think it is a lot of things. It has to do with the fact that everything went so smooth and easy with my call. Coming to study, not everything has been affirmed. Newbold is an environment for what you can do. It is more competitive. Everything has been so tough. In life with God, I have asked if this is really what I should do.

I concluded that yes, life is tough sometimes, but that is how it really is.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

Be here, finish my studies, go back home and be a pastor.

What is your network/support group?

I am pretty good at finding the people I need. I need to have some close friends that I can confide in and be deep with. I have a few mentors as well.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

I wish that women would be supported, and I wish that narrow minded people would not stop people from living out their calling from God.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

No, I have really enjoyed my studies here at Newbold.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

Most of this has to do with personality. I don't really know.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

I haven't really had any challenges so far.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

Yes, I have support from my Union. The leadership has supported me a lot.

Appendix B:

Age: 41

Baptized at: 15

Years of service: 15

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

When it was time to decide on future career and education, it struck me, that theology would be the most important study to undertake. I felt a strong calling – not so much from other people, but from God. I had been active in the church all my life, and always got good response when participating in various church-activities, programs and meetings.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

No female role-models at all. The youth director at the time always involved me in all his ideas and ministries, and I became very active. He was always supporting and nudging me on, so he was a role-model. I also had “negative” role models, who I would often think about and say to myself, that I do NOT want to be a pastor or a preacher like him ☺

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

As mentioned above – but once I began studying there was not much mentoring.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

My boyfriend/husband! My parents. The local conference sponsored me while studying.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

When we (my husband and I) graduated, the conference/Union was in severe financial troubles. So they offered him a full-time job – and me a half-time job. My dear husband told the Union board, that if we were going to work for them – I would be the full-time worker, and he would be employed part-time. Somehow they then managed to find a full budget for both of us ☺. Once I was employed, I have not met any opposition at all from the leadership in the Union. They (and the session) have always been very supportive of my ministry.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a ‘minority’, or was that not an issue?

I cannot remember, that I thought of myself as a minority. The teachers never treated me as such. I met other female students, who would have liked to study theology, but their cultural background did not allow that possibility. So not much of an issue. But the issue of women’s ordination was high on the agenda in many conversations and classes, leading up to Utrecht 1995 (I graduated 1994).

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

I have never doubted God's call! I do not think God's call is static. I constantly need to search God to find out what he is calling me to do right now. That has led me into different areas of ministry – but I have never doubted that I am called. I have often doubted that I was in the right position, and have always acted on it and thereby seen God's leading hand through the different jobs I have had in the church.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

Right here – right now!

What is your network/support group?

My husband, my fellow “directors” in the TED. Good friends, who challenge me.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

Do not let any person stop you!! If God is calling you – go for it. Do not be discouraged by other people's negativity, but stay strong in God. My biggest wish is that they will feel the support and recognition from all levels of the church organization – all the way to the top! I find it sad/hard/challenging to know, that my local administration and churches approve of my calling, the Division does too – but the leadership at the top level of the General Conference is against – and it is hard to know, that the people who are leading this church think that I am not worthy to work for the church. It hurts. But mostly it hurts to think of all the young, talented girls, who never give it second thoughts to enter ministry, because nobody acknowledges their talents, nobody tells them that it is a possibility to go into ministry, and that they have so very few role models, that the thought never enters their mind, that they could choose fulltime ministry as a career.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

N/A

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

That I am woman, a wife and a mother – just by being me I have common ground with almost 2/3 of our members!! When I preach, I preach from my heart – and my heart is different from any other person's heart – and it is different from most men's hearts. God can use me – not because I am woman, but because I am me. God created both sexes because we need both men and women – and I STRONGLY believe that is the case for the church and pastors as well. We need both the men and the women in order to portray a more whole picture God and the world to people around us.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Juggling family and ministry! And knowing that the top-leaders of the church do not wish to see me doing this work.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

I have always felt much supported by my local church/Union and Division. I have never had to face any opposition alone, and I have backed up 100% in the challenges I have met.

Appendix C

Age: 53

Baptized at: 13

Years of service: 30

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I wanted to become a primary school teacher in the SDA school system as my mission of ministry to the Church.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

I had good teachers at Tyrifjord Høyere Skole + Irene Eide Elisenberg, director of education, inspired me – a gifted and enthusiastic leader, presentation during career advice week at THS.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

Encouragement from church leaders.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Particularly from Irene Eide Elisenberg + persons already working within the SDA schools.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

N/A

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a ‘minority’, or was that not an issue?

After teacher’s training, I did my BA in theology. I was at the top of my class. I think that meant that it was less of an issue. But some of my male colleagues had clear views about female ministers – as not acceptable.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

No, but then I have never taken on a typical pastoral role. I have been teacher/lecturer/principal/business manager. I never wanted to be a pastor.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

Where I am or in some type of role similar to what I have had in my career so far.

What is your network/support group?

Colleagues at the college and old friends.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

Equality – full!

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

Make sure gender equality is an integral part of the curriculum.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

I think women are generally more approachable and have better people skills than men, and these factors would give them the greatest advantage.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Authority

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

N/A

Appendix D

Age: 55

Baptized at: 11

Years of service: 14

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

The first of all, I did not know the thing. After my graduation, I simply prayed to God that He could find a job place for me if He had his plan with my life. Two days after the prayer I have got a message from Union President for a job-interview in spite of the fact that I did not tell anything to him. The president and his colleges asked me if I would work as a book-editor in Adventist Publishing House. I accepted the workplace as a God's choice and I was very amazed. After ten years working as an editor and a lector, I have got other duties including leadership.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

There were not role models in our country. Women were working only as secretaries in Church offices until I came. A couple of them started to work as Bible teachers, but they married and their service took less than two years.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

I had to blaze the trail alone. I read about leadership and educate on various ways (master of philosophy, doctoral studies etc.)

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

There were two men who gave me support – Union president and Union secretary. They wanted involve some changes in the structure and profile of workers in the Church.

Sometime later, another Union president and Executive Board looked for someone who could be a head teacher/principal in Adventist Secondary School. Since Ministry of Education had strong conditions for a position and I fulfilled them, I was called in the service.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

Cultural and traditional conventions were the hindering factors – many of Church members were talking that I had no a strong hand for a leader. I had to have an iron will to profile a different type of leader who thinks, prays and serves and in the case there is no need for a strong hand.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

I am not a theologian. I obtained my education in humanistic sciences. Naturally, I am educated in theology, but only in an elementary level. But I am ‘minority’ in the Church. It is something that I can cope with.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

Sometimes I am tired, but there was no time when I have been doubts.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

I am in the past ten years of my work life and I have a presentiment that I could be sent in a new field of my mission – in a mission with scientists and poets in my country. But, anywhere, I am in the hand of my Leader, Jesus Christ. Sometimes His plans are unexpected, aren't they?

What is your network/support group?

I have a wonderful team in the school where I am working. I have also non Adventist people who give me their support.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

I'd like they will have an inner calling and it will be a secret of their success.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

At the level of theology education there is no need to accommodate anything, except maybe to stress that God has created woman as a human being of the same value as it has been his husband or any other man.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

I have a special mission. It is a good feeling. It gives me sense.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Every woman in leadership must change some kind of paradigm in her own eyes and in eyes of other people. It demands strength. She must be a strong person.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

Sometimes I have their support – they respect me and ask for my opinion, sometimes I am alone: Nobody knows my troubles but Lord, nobody knows but Jesus.

Appendix E

Age: 40

Baptized at: 18

Years of service: 13

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

It was not something that was an obvious call. I decided to let God use my life. One of the best ways was to work for the Church. I felt that he had given me a gift of listening and communicating with people. I felt more like pastor than a theologian. Since I came from outside the Church, I felt I could be a breath of fresh air to the Church. I felt that God wanted women to be engaged in the Church. I felt that God wanted me to do this. My calling was an answer to prayer, of God leading me in my life.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

I experienced my first role models, in my teachers at Tyrifjord. They were good at including me, and challenged me to think about God and be baptized. (Rolf Beckhaug). SurrIDGE at Newbold; people who cared and did more for us students than was required in their job. Children's Sabbath school teachers made an impact in my life. Some people who really cared and saw me.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

My husband has affirmed and mentored me in my calling. Several people from the local Church have affirmed me, but little from the Church leadership. There was little mentoring in general. I have a supportive husband. He is objective in mentoring me. My own motivation. There is not very much coming from the Church leadership.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

My husband, the union president. The leadership is positive. They are law abiding, do not cry out or go forward to make a difference (loyal to the world church)...

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

I was first told that they would not hire female pastors in England, and only when we were thinking of moving to Norway, I was offered a job. After we moved to Norway, I had to take the initiative myself and ask for an appointment with the Union president asking for a pastoral position.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a ‘minority’, or was that not an issue?

Positive and negative (I like better to be around men and work with them than women, as they are more straight forward) felt that some of the teachers at Newbold were negative towards me as a theology student. No problem at the time as such (we were four women who studied from Norway) No special hindering factors.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

No, I have never doubted Gods calling in my life. I have never doubted that I have been in the right place, but I have been frustrated where I have been (tired and frustrated in my work at times). I have felt that I have been in the right place at the right time... Sometimes it is a given that the woman will be at home with the children than the men.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

Right where I am!!! Called me to work for children and family ministry! I am open for him to come with other suggestions. It is very meaningful to work, it is tiring, but this is where I am meant to be work wise and in my calling. I am focused on what is good in my work!

What is your network/support group?

Nothing structured. More colleagues that I can talk with, and friends from my time at Newbold College.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

My wish is that they will have the same positive experience that I have had. That they will keep their focus and their calling, and not focus on the negative. I wish we were better in the Church at using the internship system and support each other. I think we should be better at giving good experiences in ministry.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

Need a broader education: For example: how to communicate with children, more practical education, and more relevance in every day communication in the Church. Too little psychology and counseling in the education.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

Being a woman! As women we see things in a different light. 2/3 of SDA are women, so it is easier to communicate with women. Many church members, both men and women indicate that it is easier to talk with a female pastor. It is easier to be a pastor and counselor.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

I care too much! It is sometimes difficult to set good boundaries between work and private life!

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

They hired me! Certain church members are giving positive feedback. Never gotten negative feedback when it comes to being a female pastor in Scandinavia! Generally supportive!

Appendix F:

Age: 19

Baptized at: 13

Theology student

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

When I was 12 years, we had Kids in Discipleship. We were supposed to fill in a questionnaire and our pastor saw my answers and he thought I should become a pastor. Once I was home after moving to Tyrifjord, I had a thought I was to become a pastor. Should I do bible school? Should I do nursing? When I chose to do theology studies, I became calm. I feel I am in the right place.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

Here at Newbold it is Bjørn Ottesen.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

Through my local church pastor, my mom and dad. I had worships at my school and some people have told me that I should become a pastor.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Same as above.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

I haven't been sure that God would accept women as pastors. I was not sure if women could work as pastors, but these thoughts have never stopped me. There have been discussions around me that I have heard that women might not be working as pastor. I have felt this as it has been a bigger problem here at Newbold to be a woman pastor than at home. For the most part it is that most men are taking theology and few women in theology. Some men have strong opinions about female pastors. A couple of people in my class are open against women pastors.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

Sometimes it feels difficult. Sometimes I wish that the teachers could defend us women. I wish that the teachers would be more outspoken on our behalf in class.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

I have had doubts – one year before I came here – thinking that I might become a nurse.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

Song and music: worship ministry. I want to be a pastor who listens to people and where they feel understood.

What is your network/support group?

My family and my fiancé. The union is supportive.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

Understanding, and that they can say what they mean, at the same time that they can be overbearing towards others as well. I hope that they will find useful what they are learning and they find it interesting.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

Take the weaker parts side. (not necessarily only for the women's side)

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

I think that women easier read feelings (when someone is sad and happy). We are better at showing compassion.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

To be heard. (To be heard, I really have to concentrate be clear and to reach others in communication) I want to be taken serious! To be accepted as the person I am.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

Not from the local church. I have no real support from the Union – but they do want to give us summer jobs this summer, working med camps and in a local church.

Appendix G:

Age: 67

Baptized at: 11

Years of service: 31

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I was always leading out in church activities all through academy and college; I was on the team of students. No doubt in my mind that I would have been a pastor, but it was not a choice for girls back then. I became a teacher. I felt drawn to ministry and wanted to use the talents I had in that direction.

My parents were very affirming I could do whatever I wanted to do – But ministry was just not an option for girls.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

Leona Running at Andrews, I admired her. She was my husband's Hebrew teacher. She affirmed my leadership in church activities, suggesting to me that perhaps God had a place for me that I hadn't thought of yet.

We went to a local Sabbath school (progressive thinking) where both men and women were already pressing the church to give women a chance in ministry. They said to me: You should be thinking about this. My husband welcomed me into team ministry long before it was a common thing.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

I was affirmed and mentored by the people around me. I always had good, forward thinking men around me. They offered me opportunities of serving where women were not necessarily welcome. My husband and I did things as a team. Delmer Holbrook invited us to do ministry together as a team. He gave me a position that affirmed I was in ministry and not just Ron's sidekick. Jan Paulsen and Mathew Bediako also affirmed my ministry. At the GC he supported our co-directorship of the FM department in title as well as function. I also had a number of women to watch in the way they served the church. They demonstrated for me an attitude that was keeping in line with the Gospel even as they used their voices and used them effectively.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Leona Running, Professor of Biblical Languages, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University

Nancy Marter, past-President, Association of Adventist Women; head elder and board chair, Capital Memorial Church, Washington, DC (where Ron and I pastured)

Kathleen Srouer, Rhona Cooper (marvelous Christian women, mothers in Israel, who touched my life deeply and affirmed my ministry, both leaders in Capital Memorial Church and kindred spirits with whom I could—and did—talk about anything!

Mrs Mitchell (headlibrarian at AU)

Alberta Mazat, past-Chair of Marriage and Family Therapy, Loma Linda University

Betty Holbrook, past-Director of Family Ministries, GC

Jane Thayer (major professor and advisor, PhD program)

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

Certainly the milieu during my high school/college years. I would have taken theology if the environment had allowed it. I did not buck the system at this point. I chose teaching. (Same gift).

I have always had a high level of commitment to my family and being a mom. You can only do so much (took ten years at home that I was at home with my sons). So professionally, I started ten years late. I would not be where I am today if I hadn't been given special opportunities to advance in ministry by Delmer and Betty Holbrook

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

My PhD in Religious Education (now based in the seminary) will be from the School of Education at Andrews. In the School of Education, there was no discrimination against women in teaching/ministry.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

Yes, there have been doubts. However, those moments were moments when whatever was going on in my personal life at the time made me question whether God could use me. Fortunately, in those moments of self-doubt, there was reassurance from my mentors and friends that nobody is perfect, but God works through imperfect vessels. It was times of deep personal reflection that I wondered if I should be doing what I should be doing. How can I be of help to anyone when I have so many questions myself? My weaknesses are so apparent. Betty Holbrook told me: When you get your act together, we will not need you here anymore.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

I am finding a lot of deep satisfaction in ministry in my local church. Small churches in America have many needs. In my local church, the average age is 35 years. They need mentors. They need basic understanding of how the church works and someone to show them how to lead children's Sabbath School, organize a church service, chair a committee, as well as practical help to just get the job done. They tell us they need people to talk to with some sort of depth of experience in the Christian life, in strengthening relationships, parenting... There is a lot of calling to be answered here!

What is your network/support group?

I tend to prefer fewer but deeper relationships, rather than shallow ones. However, I realized my network of support was impoverished during the years I was working, because it's very hard to keep up with a strong network of relationships at home when you travel extensively for your work. I am very thankful for the friends who stuck with us through those years and offered caring support even when we weren't able to be there for them as we would have liked because we were away. We both also come from small families, don't have a lot of relatives. Now I have a strong local network in church. Glad for the young people who welcome us into their circle. A lot of the people of my age group that I was close to have died before their time. I want to put some more energy into my relationships.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

I wish for them, a full spectrum of opportunity, based on their gifts and abilities, without gender barriers. We need more square pegs in the role holes system. Majority of women approach decision-making and problem solving in different ways than men do. Only one time I served on a committee where half the members were women. Everyone agreed it was an amazing experience, much more people-oriented (as opposed to task-oriented) than most committees.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

One thing Andrews did, they did recognize the desire on my part to be able to accommodate career, education and family with some sense of integrity.

Keeping the program flexible enough to keep up with women's demanding lives.

I could have been happy in the same professional program where my husband did his doctoral work (D.Min). However, because I was building on an M.A. (not an M.Div.), the only advanced degree open to me was a PhD.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

Maybe my people orientation (75/25% F/M split on the Myers-Briggs Temperament Inventory with regard to people vs. task orientation). More women than men do their work relationally and take into first consideration how a decision will affect people.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

As the token woman on administrative committees, I felt tolerated when I would speak, but I also felt many times that I was not expected to say anything with much substance. I will say that in the departmental circles where I worked, I was treated much more as an equal and sensed that I was respected as an intelligent, contributing member of the staff.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

Overall I have been very fortunate, with good men and women superiors who were really supportive of me. I have also encountered challenges. Being the token woman has not been fun. However, because of my position at the GC (and I'm sure because I was considered "safe" because I worked in team ministry with my husband), I had the world open to me. We chose to use the educational opportunities open to us to go out and do some grassroots groundwork toward women's equality. It was a natural fit because God's overarching design for marriage and family was one of mutuality and shared power for good.

Appendix H:

Age: 37

Baptized at: 15

Years of service: 10 years

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I did not want to. Pastor was one of two things I said I would never become. After finishing school I worked with many different things for several years, unable to find out what I really wanted to do. One day, on a seminar at a Willow Creek weekend, I surrendered and told God that whatever he wanted me to do, I would do. Right after that meeting several people, some of whom I knew, and one I had never met before, asked me if I had ever thought about being a pastor. During the next six months God sent many people in my way, telling me the same thing and I eventually got convinced that God wanted me to be a pastor.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

I cannot say role models had any part in my actual calling. I could not, and still have a hard time to, identify myself with my picture of what a pastor should be like.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

By some of the people that I mentioned in the first question. Later on it was in particular one young pastor in Sweden and my parents.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Same as above. Once at Newbold there were also my teachers.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

I just could not see myself as being a pastor.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

It never bothered me. My classmates were my brothers and I seldom even noticed I was the only women in my class. The teachers made no distinction either.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

I have seldom felt such a peace as when I began my education. I know God called me to be a pastor. However, now I wonder if he still wants me to work as a pastor. I doubt whether I can be of any use, if I can contribute in any way. My greatest question is: Can I really be a pastor

if I am the person I truly am? Or do I have to change my very personality in order to be accepted as a pastor? I know that God has created me to be the person I am and he knew all about me when he called me to ministry. Still I feel that the way a pastor is supposed to be and function today is in many ways contrary to the way I am as a person. I really wonder how God wants to make that equation...

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

That is the great question I am dealing with right now. I do not yet have an answer.

What is your network/support group?

My greatest support comes from my parents and my husband. Several people in church are also supporting me, but as my situation is at the moment, I cannot be fully open with them. I very much wish support group or coach that is not part of the local church. When we studied counselling at Newbold we were told never to counsel without having regular meetings with a supervisor. I have asked for a coach who is not my employer, and have been told that they will not provide it but of course I may get one privately if I want to.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

That they should be able to find their place, working in ministry using their full potential as individuals, being fully themselves without complying to or accommodating to the “traditional” role of a pastor. I wish they should feel that God has called them as they are - personality, gender and all fits perfectly in his plan.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

To make us realize how the way we lead/work differs from men’s way to do things and learn how to take advantage of our strengths and be aware of weaknesses as well as know how to deal with it. The traditional role of a pastor, and the picture of how a pastor ought to be and do, is very much formed out of being a man. What would it look like and how would it work if the “model” of a pastor was a woman instead of a man? How to balance family and ministry – especially as many women pastors are not only leaders in church but also at home, taking the greatest responsibility for home and children.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

I think women sometimes see things in a different way than men. We are for example usually more relationships oriented than task oriented. If we can learn to work together and take advantage of each other’s strengths we can reach a lot further than would otherwise be possible.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

To find out how to be a pastor without losing one’s own personality, how to work in a role traditionally for men and still be a woman, how to deal with often being a leader in church as

well as often being a “leader” at home. Also dealing with the different expectations and roles, both at home and at work, in a healthy way. Knowing where one’s boundaries are and sticking to them even when your heart is bleeding for others.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

Many members in my local church give encouragement, challenges me to grow and pray for me. My employers? Well, to be honest I do think they would be happy if I quit. I am very sorry to say that I have felt no support from them these last years when I would have needed it most. (Audrey was of great support!)

Appendix I:

Age: 38

Baptized at:

Years of service: 6

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

In November 2002 – I went to a Willow Creek conference, and during this conference I felt God called me to work for him full time. I was not quite sure what that meant. I sensed it was something beyond teaching. Got involved in the local church and gave my time there, trying to figure out what God wanted me to do. When I have tried to return to my previous profession in teaching, God has shut the door. I have had this experience more than once in various ways.

It was last year that I realized that I am not to do something else other than teach and minister. It has been a long journey. It has taken me many years to figure out that God wanted me to do fulltime ministry.

I have felt that people have affirmed and confirmed my calling. I have felt joy in my ministry.

I see myself preaching and teaching the word of God.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

Part of it has been married to a pastor and seeing that I can contribute there as well. My husband has been a role model. Audrey Andersson has been a role model in leadership. Lawrence Turner, the way he teaches the Bible has been a great inspiration to me. I would like to be in the same type of ministry, teaching the Bible and make it come alive.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

It has been people who have asked me to do things that I did not know I could do, and then affirm me when I did it well. I was asked to be a chaplain, I did not know I could preach, but people affirmed me that I could do it.

Leaders around me affirmed my calling. Leaders have seen the potential in me and then the church has affirmed it.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

The former youth director included me in planning Relay and several youth activities.

Bjørn Ottesen was very instrumental and supportive, Audrey Andersson has encouraged me to pursue ministry in different areas. The reason I am studying at Newbold is because of Jon

Paulien. A couple of years ago the union leadership started to include me in the pastoral meetings and being supportive in getting my education.

It feels like a twofold process, first about the fact that I could do ministry, and then encouragement to study and get formal education and develop. (Some down time in between the two parts of the process)

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

My father was raised as a Catholic, so the idea as a woman pastor never existed. I looked at the few women who studied theology and was skeptic – my dad strongly being against it. This has also affected the time it has taken to develop and follow my calling. My dad is now very supportive and has been throughout this latter part of the process.

My personality: being an introvert and not a night owl – challenging in youth work. I am not the life of the party and have a hard time coming up with things to say when I meet new people. I had the picture of an extreme outgoing youth worker. The picture I had of what a pastor should be has held me back. How do I fit into ministry?

The fact that I am married to a pastor both helped and held me back. I heard from the leadership of the Church: it is not practical to have two pastors in the same family. Our life situation has kept me from studying. My husband was not ready to start studying again, so I waited until it was convenient.

It was hard to leave my work back home and go and study. I felt needed at the place I was working.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a ‘minority’, or was that not an issue?

I think it is challenging! Ministry in general is lonely. Loneliness associated with ministry and the fact that there are few women makes it worse. I am in a man’s world and I have to find a way to find companionship in a good way. There are few women theology students and pastors to befriend and have deep discussions with. Finding those friends that you can go deep with is the big challenge being a woman and a minority.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

Absolutely, the whole time. It has been a question of what type of ministry I should be in. In the first years I really struggled with that. What on earth was God thinking? I feel that God has called me, and I am trying to figure out what exactly that means.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

At the moment I need to be right here at Newbold where I am studying and developing as a person. Beyond that I will go into some kind of ministry. I don’t know which kind.

What is your network/support group?

I don't really have one! I have the support of my husband. Outside of him...

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

I would wish that they would have leadership that will encourage them, both men and women encouraging them. I would wish that they would feel that they are not treated differently because they are women. I don't want them to be held back by the fact that they are women. I would wish that there is a network. I would wish that they don't experience this feeling of loneliness. That there is a model of ministry developed that fits women. That does not necessarily fit the model men have, but that it is ok to be different and have different focus. Accepted, affirmed and priced. That we are stronger together!

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

Women need female role models in leadership and in the theology teachers (department). We need to have the space for difference.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

Considering the large portion of the church being women, there is a need for female pastors. I can connect better to the women as a woman. Finding that emotional support and connection.

I think that women are more the intuitive relational type. Pick up feelings in people different than men do.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Finding close friends and not being lonely!

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

The Church supports me financially for my studies, encouragement and affirmation. Support on several different levels. They have trusted me with positions in leadership.

Appendix J:

Age: 44

Baptized at: 13

Years of service: 5

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I felt called from birth. My father was an SDA pastor and I was always involved in some type of ministry. However, because there weren't any female pastors my parents never encouraged me to go into the ministry. It was not until later (13 years ago) after I cofounded a small prayer group that grew from 7 to 30 in six months that I took leadership role and got really excited about doing ministry. The group experience was awesome and it changed my life! Some of the group members encouraged me to go into the ministry. I did want to study Theology, but was did not plan to become a pastor. After much prayer and decided to go attend M.Div. at Andrews University so I can get a clearer picture as to what to study next

During my third year at AU as I was looking into Doctoral programs, I felt a strong and definite call by God into pastoral ministry! This was a huge shock because I was focusing on academia and I had hardly preached (except as a part of my class work). Upon completion of my degree I was called to serve at the Hinsdale Seventh-day Adventist Church as an associate pastor and that turned out to be the greatest blessing in my life! It was a perfect fit! I loved everything I had privilege to do and I was encouraged to do everything God laid on my heart. I felt approval from God through many baptisms, prayer-led events, efforts, seminars, sermons.... I was also commissioned there just before I left.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

Hyveth Williams and Elisabeth Talbot are my top two women preachers/leaders in the SDA church. However, my best mentors were Pastor Ron Schultz, John Rapp and Dr. Ante Jeronic.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

The senior pastor affirmed me by giving me a chance to work with him though I had no professional experience prior to becoming a pastor. God affirmed me by leading and blessing the works of my hands.

1. Opportunities given, the feedback (people still call me and ask me for prayer and counselling), I have done baptisms, weddings and communions.
2. I was commissioned
3. I really sought to honor God and He honored me. I felt that God was pouring blessings on me by buckets.

4. when I went back to my old church last summer – the church was still practicing prayer efforts I started – Prayer after church, prayer walks, praying for the families (year around). Prayer is still happening!

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Who: Dr. Bogdan Scur and Dr. Ante Jeronic had a role to play in encouraging me to become a pastor and Dr. Jeronic put me in touch with Pastor Schultz. I was the only paid female pastor in the conference. My dad and many friends supported me through prayer.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

Some of us grew up being good children doing what we thought others wanted us to do, and then we grew up and saw that God had other plans. As a female engineer I had to take a leading role in standing up and God was preparing me for the next thing he wanted me to do.

Discouraging factors right now:

Hindering factor:

Came from 900 member church (350-600 attending) to 7-10 member church (3-5 attending).

This country has been raped by those who over-promised but under-delivered for decades (politicians, as well as religious people), as well as with the civil war in the 90's, so the people are very suspicious of anyone who tries to persuade them of anything!

In addition people here are predominantly Muslim (secular Muslim, but still Muslim) and Muslims do not have much respect for women in general. On another hand, members in our church are still wondering if women should be pastors. Just the fact that there is a woman standing up front is a challenge to some people in the pews...

I do not feel called to be in the forefront of the ordination issue, but I do want to preach! I also believe that it is always better when somebody else talks on our behalf.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

School is my forte and I love school, and most students loved me because I was always helping others, sharing my notes and other resources. I did experience few unpleasant things, but those were exceptions! However, I was shocked to find out that there are still many men, pastors, who are in ministry who do not believe that women should be pastors.

Has there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

At one point, during my education, I was reminded that every member is a minister and I wondered if maybe I should have stayed and worked as a software engineer ministering to

that group of people, but I have always believed, deep down, that this is what I was created to do!

Being a woman pastor in my country is a challenge.

I struggled about coming to work here and I am still struggle, not so much with my calling, but with my usefulness here. Can God really use me here as much (or more) as He was using me in the past? Bosnia is a mission field, thus results are not as many or as visible, at least not yet!

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

I believe that God is calling me to serve Him today where I am in doing what I am doing right now!

What is your network/support group?

Prayer group, four people who meet and pray every morning. Knew them back at Andrews University, and they know me and understand my struggles. I am doing a D.Min in preaching.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

Greatest encouragement, a random lady: you don't know how much you mean to women who study theology.

Those of us currently working as pastors, we are being watched by many.

I really would wish that they would follow their God given dreams. If God is calling them, God will open all the doors. Don't quit if you have dreams to do God's work. We cannot afford for you to quit!

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

It is not a choice anymore if we want to finish Gods work (70% women in the SDA church). How we interpret scripture is different... we need to struggle with theological issues until God shows us the way. We need to allow men and women to serve side by side.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

Relate to women, men are more task oriented, women create an atmosphere... of fellowship. We also tend to be more inclusive.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Being a woman... is the greatest challenge and a greatest asset.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

They are not hindering my work and allowing me to continue my education!

Appendix K:

Age: 52

Baptized at: 18

Years of ministry: 19

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I am not a pastor but the Union Women`s Ministries, Family Ministry and Clergy Spouses department Director. I did think of studying theology but in the 1980s when I was a student, in our Union, women who graduated theology could not work as pastors but only as the office secretaries in the offices of the church departments. Therefore I studied and graduated English language and literature.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

When I graduated I started working as a professor at the SDA education institution – The Adventist High School and Theological Seminary in Marusevec, Croatia. There I met my future husband who was finishing theology and when we got married he started working as a pastor. So instead of becoming a pastor I became a pastoral wife. My first role model was my grandfather (my mother`s father who was dedicated Adventist), my mother and pastors and pastoral wives who used to serve in my local church.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

I received my first affirmation and mentoring from the senior professors I used to work with in the SDA education institutions in Marusevec, Croatia. Then senior pastoral wives, colleagues, and coworkers as well as the church members and my students were providing the necessary support and affirmation.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

My first support came from the church administration that recognized some leadership abilities in me, then from my husband, mother and sister.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

My father was not a believer and a church member and he did not want me to have Christian education let alone the theological one. There was also uncertainty about the future job since women were not employed as pastors at the time I was a student.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a ‘minority’, or was that not an issue?

This question is not applicable to my situation since I studied foreign languages and literature at the State University.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

No. I have always wanted to serve God and to become involved in some kind of the church work or ministry even though I studied English. Since there has always been a great need for translation of the different materials in the church, I considered that my opportunity. But I turned to work as a teacher, dean of women, ADRA director, and department director.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

I am convinced that I have to be at the place I am at the moment and I consider my special calling to be further development of the departments I am in charge of, especially Family Ministry.

What is your network/support group?

Church members, co-workers, colleagues, other women leaders.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

To be more affirmed and supported by the Union and conference leaders and more accepted and appreciated by the church members. In some of the districts of our Union, the female leaders are still not appreciated as male leaders.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

To have more subjects on human psychology, counseling and women`s role in leadership.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

To have influence on people`s attitudes, to be able to mold their way of thinking in the right direction and to take them closer to God and their fellowmen.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Not having enough recognition and support of the male coworkers and high rank administrators.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

By providing material resources, organizing pastoral meeting, councils and advisories, mentoring system, etc.

Appendix L:

Age: 27

Baptized at: 16

Theology Student

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I didn't know. I am a PK and I was very upset as a child that I had to move because of my father... I complained that nobody asked me. I promised myself that I would never marry a pastor. I have always been active in church, done free credits in theology in my former studies. Part of me wanted to study theology and part wanted to get away from home. Is this the best use of my life? It took a semester before I realized that this was what I wanted to do. I was heavily influenced by fellow students and friends. When things got official, then I felt that this was a way to walk for me (two years ago). The feeling has only gotten stronger since. I feel that I wouldn't want to work anywhere else than for the church and for God.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

I have had them throughout my life (my father and mother) both being dedicated to the church. Pastors who knowingly or not knowingly have influenced me and I could look up to them. Fellow students, lecturers, local church pastor here at Newbold.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

Friends who supported me, parents (my father has been hesitant) it is a hard job to do. Asking questions: Are you sure? Conference and union leaders have been supportive. They encouraged that I would do my MA.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Same as above!

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

I already had an education and I was on the doorstep of a career as an academic. People in the university did not understand my choice. Hindering factors: Personal fear, finance etc... Questions like: whether it is the right thing to do?

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

I am a minority. I have had to deal with it. I had to think it through. I had to do counselling. The pastoral world is a very masculine world. 20 people in the class 15 are men... Something I have had to realize that it is there. It has been a source of my insecurity. I had good grades, but I didn't always want to ask questions. I feel the support of the lecturers.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

I have only experienced doubts in the very beginning, having academic struggles. Not too much guidance or tutoring. Not sure if this place was for me. I haven't had questions. My calling has been quite strong.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

I am in the right place. He has given me a ministry on campus, and this surprised. God has made me active in the community. I feel he is calling me to go back home for a certain time.

What is your network/support group?

I don't have one back home and this scares me. I feel like an alien at home with the other pastors. Network of friends and support here at Newbold is very important to me.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

I am not worried about the girls who are studying theology here. I am more concerned about the young women who do not see this as an option for cultural or gender reason. We need more good role models. I will try to be one myself, to tell people that God will make things possible and he has a role for you to fill in the church.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

I would like to see more diversity at the staff at the academic staff. Right now there are maybe not that many academic theology women out there. Affirm women and girls that their style of ministry is ok and good enough. It has taken me all these years to find my own voice and that is ok to be quiet and small. The preaching world is strongly masculine. It takes some courage to find a place outside the box of expectations.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

It comes out to the personal characteristic. More quiet listening ministry, outside the spotlight, outside the pulpit. Women are more sensitive and notice people more in the everyday life. It is not about being a great preacher, but listening is one of the things. People need to have someone listening to them.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Not to get discouraged! To hear people discussing women's ordination from a narrow point of view. To maintain the knowledge and call God has given me and he will see me through. One day to put family life and ministry together. The box does not always fit. To find somebody who would be ok with it.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

College staff has been supportive, conference and union leadership. Lot of support from church members and friends (even elderly church members). They realize that I have chosen the road less travelled.

Appendix M:

Age: 41

Baptized at: 12

Years of service: 6

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

I didn't feel a call as such, rather a growing desire to learn more about God and share that joy with other people.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

I was in a modern church plant in Denmark, which gave me the inspiration to share my faith, and find a deeper faith myself. The church plant had a female minister.

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

I didn't as such. I just decided to go to Newbold on my own initiative, and at my own expense. I was affirmed by my husband, family and friends. Once there, the British Union decided to sponsor my MA.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

The teachers at Newbold. Friends and family.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

My own concerns about my own ability.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a 'minority', or was that not an issue?

This was not an issue for me.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

Yes. When things have been difficult at times (both personally and in the ministry), the doubts that I was to be a minister crept forwards, and support through supervision/mentoring was crucial at such times.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

Right where I am.

What is your network/support group?

My small group in the church, my supervisor, other women ministers in the Union and some few church members.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

That they are offered supervision/mentoring from the start – someone or a few people they can talk to/ receive encouragement from.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

I haven't really thought about the education for women to be any different from the men's?

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

That I can relate to other people that the men do not. It's good to be a variety of types as ministers, as we reach more people that way.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

That I struggle with lower self-esteem at times, and think too much.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

I have paid supervision/mentoring from an external person, paid by the Union. When I started, the local church was very supportive. After 4 years here, I still have a few members that take it on themselves to be my encourager.

Appendix N:

Age: 35

Baptized: 17

Years of service: 3

How did you know that you wanted to become a pastor/leader in the SDA church and how did you feel called to the ministry?

The most interesting is that when I was 10 years old and needed to choose school. I chose a school to work for God. The thought was not to become a pastor, but to become a missionary (I hadn't met a female pastor at the time). I wanted to learn lots of languages for this. I did not have this in my thought until my grandfather asked me to start studying at an SDA school/university. I have had the question asked me from different people throughout the years. I came to the country I now live in because I feel God fixed this for me, but I did not know exactly why. I took different leadership in the local church, and the question came up again if I should become a pastor. God had to show me an exact calling to be a pastor: My boss in my daily work said to me that it was time to make a major decision in your life. Some hours later the union president called and asked if I wanted to work as a pastoral intern. I was arguing with God of why I didn't want to do this. This time all my questions were answered. I had a feeling that the people who knew me, also knew what I could do. I did not feel that I matched the pastoral stereotype. It felt like God had been on my case for years, and now I couldn't run away anymore.

Where and how did you have role models play a role in your calling to the ministry?

I did not have many to look at. That I came to this country, I could see that women can work as pastors fully. Marianne Kolkmann and Audrey Andersson

How did you get affirmed and mentored in your calling?

Those I had expected to get support from did not support me. My parents were critical and afraid that I would get burned. Those in my work, were really positive. Then I had affirmation and support from friends and a pastor who knew me well. The local church did not react very positive or negative to my new calling. I stayed in my local church that I had been a member of for several years, as a pastoral intern.

What and who were the ones around you supporting you in becoming a pastor/leader?

Leaders in the union office.

What were the hindering factors in your life in becoming a pastor/leader?

I had a lot of reasons why I should not become a pastor:

- As a person I did not fit the mold as a pastor
- I had big issues with my faith and church policies and politics
- I did not feel that I wanted to work for this church
- There should not be questions around this call, faith should be in place, watertight!
Understand everything (I never felt that way)
- One woman who had done pastoral education close in geography, but the talk on the town was that she had an education that could not be used.

When you did your theological education, how did it feel to be a ‘minority’, or was that not an issue?

I don’t care about whether or not I am a minority, but I react to the fact that all the examples are relating to male pastors for ministry. Always referring to the pastor as ‘he’. I have always been treated with respect in my classes.

Have there at any point during your education or throughout your years of work, been doubts in your mind that you are in the right position, or that God called you? Describe why.

No questions about Gods calling. More questions about my qualifications that are demanded for being a pastor. It has been tough being thrown in being a pastoral intern and not knowing always what to do. But I have always felt that God is calling me and I am meant to be where I am. It would be strange not to question where one is at any time. I cannot be expert at everything.

Where do you think God is calling you to be today?

No questions about Gods calling. More questions about my qualifications that are demanded for being a pastor. It has been tough being thrown in being a pastoral intern and not knowing always what to do. But I have always felt that God is calling me and I am meant to be where I am. It would be strange not to question where one is at any time. I cannot be expert at everything.

What is your network/support group?

My elder. And I am aware of that this is not enough.

What is your wish for women coming into the ministry/leadership after you?

Mostly I would wish that they would feel affirmed in their role as a pastor as I do. I wish that they would feel affirmed from the leadership. I wish that women can be women and not have to be pressured into a man’s suit to be a pastor.

What is your recommendation for the theology education in the years to come, to accommodate women in ministry/leadership?

When there is reference to practical examples in the classroom, there needs to be mentioning of both women and men in ministry. The classes are ok being the same, but the practical implications of pastoral ministry need to include female examples. I wish for more female teachers. (not on a quota level, but the best ones)

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is your greatest advantage?

Being creative, seeing the whole congregation from children to elderly people and trying to include them. Being able to cater to feelings. Seeing the broader picture not just seeing compartments. Having a different way of communicating.

Being a woman in pastoral ministry/leadership, what is the greatest challenge?

Feeling responsible for everything.

How does the Seventh-day Adventist Church support you? Locally in your local church, from your employer: Conference or Union?

The union leadership wants women pastors and this is outspoken on all levels that the work description should be the same for women as men in pastoral ministry.

Bibliography

‘Adventist.org: The Official Site of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church’
<<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/>> [accessed 27 March 2013]

Barna.org, ‘Are Women Happy in Church?’, *Leadership journal*, 2013, 14

Beach, Nancy, *Gifted to Lead, The Art of Leading as a Woman in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008)

Belleville, Linda L., Craig L. Blomberg, Craig S. Keener, and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005)

Bilezikian, Gilbert, *Beyond Sex Roles, What the Bible Says About a Woman’s Place in Church and Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006)

Cartledge, Mark J., *Practical Theology* (London, Colorado Springs, Hyderabad: Paternoster, 2007)

Clinton, J. Robert, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988)

Cunningham, Loren, and David Joel Hamilton, *Why Not Women? A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry and Leadership* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2000)

Guy, Fritz, *Thinking Theologically, Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1999)

Hadary, Sharon, and Laura Henderson, *How Women Lead: The 8 Essential Strategies Successful Women Know* (NY: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2013)

Kanyoro, Musimbi R.A., ed., *In Search of a Round Table, Gender, Theology & Church Leadership* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1997)

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

Moi, Toril, *Stemmer, Språk Og Oppmerksomhet* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2013)

Osmer, Richard R., *Practical Theology, An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmanns, 2008)

Saltkjel, Mari, *Som En Krone På Hodet* (Oslo: Verbum, 2011)

Saxton, Jo, *Influential Women in Leadership at Church, Work and Beyond* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 2011)

Somasundram, Drene, ‘A Gender Inclusive Model in Theological Education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church’ (England: Middlesex University, 2007)

Sumner, Sarah, *Men and Women in the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003)

Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2009)

‘The Rise and Fall of Adventist Women in Leadership’

<<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1995/April/the-rise-and-fall-of-adventist-women-in-leadership>> [accessed 15 October 2012]

‘WANTED! More Female Pastors — Essential for the Harvest’

<<http://www.nadministerial.org/article/370/for-nad-pastors/pastor-life/women-clergy/why-the-nad-needs-women-pastors/wanted-more-female-pastors-essential-for-the-harvest>> [accessed 4 March 2013]

Ward, Rosie, *Growing Women Leaders, Nurturing Women’s Leadership in the Church* (Abingdon, UK: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008)