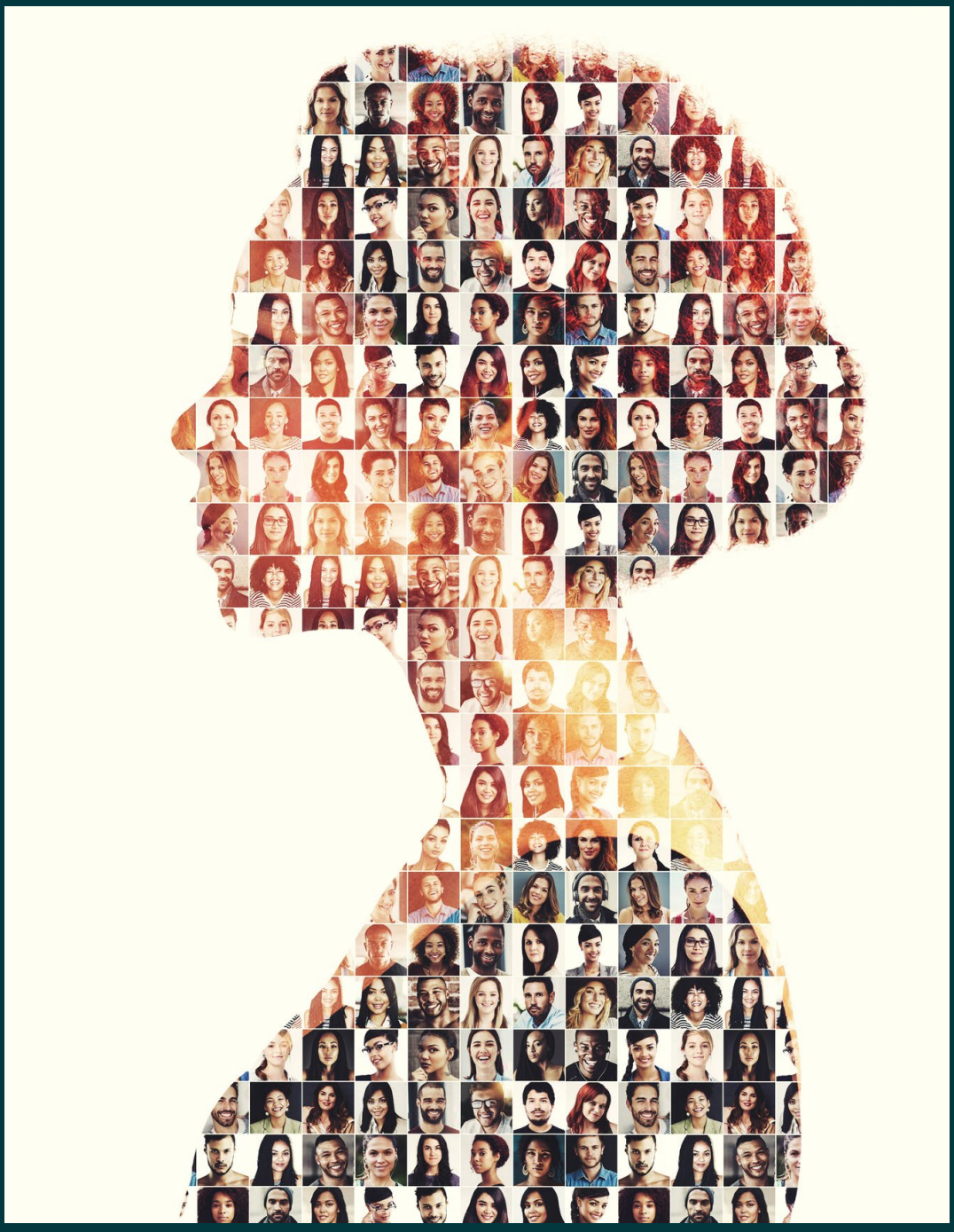
ATS Women in Leadership: Celebrating Twenty Years



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The Association of Theological Schools
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ATS Women in Leadership: Celebrating Twenty Years

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The Association of Theological Schools is a membership organization of schools in the United States and Canada that conduct postbaccalaureate professional and academic degree programs to educate persons for the practice of ministry and advanced study of the theological disciplines. The Association's mission is to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public. The Commission on Accrediting of ATS accredits schools that are members of ATS and approves the degree programs they offer.

Views expressed in this publication are those of the writers. Publication does not necessarily signify endorsement by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

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Editor's Introduction

This is a publication dedicated to the leadership of women in theological schools. Women in Leadership (WIL) in theological education has been included in the programmatic efforts of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) since 1997. The WIL work has been funded throughout the years by grants from the Carpenter Foundation and from Lilly Endowment Inc. In 2005, ATS received a grant from the Carpenter Foundation for an in-depth study of women's leadership in theological education. The research was "designed to produce insights to guide the future work of ATS in its efforts to support the professional development of women in theological education, enhance the capacity of theological schools to utilize the gifts and abilities of women faculty and administrators, and inform educational programs for women students."[1] Completed in 2009, the study focused on women who held senior leadership positions in ATS member schools as chief executive officers and chief academic officers. The results of that study were published in volume 45, number 2 of the 2010 issue of *Theological Education*, the Association's former journal. One of five challenges that grew out of the 2009 research summit connected with the study suggested the need to provide more creative and focused programming and training for female leaders in historically male settings.[2] Examples of such programming included one-on-one executive coaching, a regional mentoring program, continuing the events for new presidents and new deans, having regional overnight or one-day events, and celebrating the length of service for women at ATS events.[3] While the program design for WIL has shifted several times during its life, programming has sought to convene women in ways that promote mentoring, coaching, support, and celebration of the immense contribution their leadership makes to theological education. Throughout the years, the goals of the initiatives have remained both to provide educational opportunities for women regarding various leadership issues and to encourage them in the pursuit of more senior leadership opportunities.

1 Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Report on Women in Leadership in Theological Education," *Program and Reports Book*, 47th Biennial Meeting (Pittsburgh, PA: The Association of Theological Schools, 2010), 134.

2 Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Three Coins in the Fountain: Female Leadership in Theological Education," *Theological Education* 45, no. 2 (2010): 51.

3 Ibid., 52.

In 2017, leading up to the twentieth anniversary celebration of the ATS Women in Leadership program, ATS conducted another research project on women in leadership in theological education. Funded by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, this extensive study included surveys from more than five hundred women leaders as well as thirty or so one-on-one interviews. One reference to findings from the research can be found in this *Colloquy Online* article titled "Women in Leadership survey: what we found may not be what you think" by Deborah H. C. Gin, ATS director of research and faculty development. The research team—ATS staff, research consultants, and other advisory team members—examined data that provided a rich tapestry of women's leadership in theological schools and suggested ways to enhance the programming for WIL initiatives.

A few data items have changed since the publishing of the June 2018 *Colloquy Online* article that reported on the 2017 research project. For instance, the percentage of women chief academic officers (CAOs) is now up to 26% from 25% in 2018. Though this is a slight overall increase, representation by two ecclesial families reflected small decreases (i.e., evangelical schools went from 11% to 12%, mainline schools from 47% to 45%, and Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools from 19% to 18%). The upturn in this year's 26% women CAOs mirrors the one percent (24% to 25%) increase for women in full-time faculty positions, though both categories fall short of the current 34% women students in member schools. Among chief executive officers (CEOs), women represent 3% of evangelical schools, 27% of mainline schools (down from 30%), and 7% of Roman Catholic/Orthodox schools. Actual numbers of racial/ethnic women serving in upper level leadership also changed since the 2018 article was published.[4] CEOs of African descent have increased from five to seven, and CAOs from six to nine. While the number of Asian descent women CEOs remained at one, the number of CAOs increased from six to seven. Likewise, CEOs of Latin descent remained at one, but a significant increase occurred with CAOs, where the numbers jumped from one to four. These figures reflect a small, yet hopeful pattern of growth for women serving in chief executive and

4 "Racial/Ethnic" is a term used in the work of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) to refer to individuals and communities minoritized by race or ethnicity. The term was first coined by the Association's Committee on Race and Ethnicity (CORE) more than fifteen years ago as a way to anchor ATS work in diversity and inclusion on race and to avoid mission drift. CORE recently revisited and reaffirmed the use of the term, knowing that it departs from current terminology (e.g., "of color"or "non-dominant") used in the broader world of higher education and that White is also a race. Members of CORE currently and historically are predominantly racial/ethnic.

academic leadership positions in member schools. ATS programming for women continues to make a difference and remains a vital opportunity to inspire and encourage women into leadership.

Included in this volume are essays from two ATS staff members that focus on aspects of the 2017 ATS Women in Leadership research project. While some findings from the research are consistent with the 2010 study—pathways the women have taken into leadership and the importance of mentoring and advocacy for sustaining them as leaders—the 2017 study uncovered, to a greater degree, the importance of mentors and advocates for women in leadership (especially male advocates), and the need for institutions to create environments that recognize the ways that assumptions about leadership have the potential to negatively impact women. Additionally, the research revealed how sexism and racism can contribute to environments where women are unable to thrive and blossom as leaders.

Reflecting on past WIL programming and findings from the 2017 research project, the goals of the twentieth anniversary event were to celebrate the movement of women into leadership positions at ATS member schools, to create strategies that effectively equip and empower women as leaders in theological education, and to chart a course for future programming in support of women and the variety of vocations and career paths they take in theological education. In addition to reporting on the major study of the ATS work with Women in Leadership and making recommendations for continuing that work in the future, the celebration conference also included other highlights. At that event, two interactive panel discussions, "Having Our Say," brought together eight women at various stages of their careers to talk about leadership celebrations and challenges. Eight seasoned presidents and deans served as "wisdom elders," and agreed to mentor twenty-three emerging women leaders throughout the event and a year beyond. Prior to the celebration, ATS invited a diverse group of experienced, emerging, and innovative women leaders in member schools to write a 1,500 to 3,000-word paper reflecting on one of the following:

- What does the Association need to know in order to effectively develop a plan for the Women in Leadership program?
- What contribution can I make to inform the next phase of work regarding Women in Leadership in ATS schools?

Possible topics for their papers included:

- The history of women leaders in ATS institutions
- Strategies to effectively equip and empower women leaders
- Strategies to expand the capacity of ATS schools to hire and support women leaders
- Defining issues related to gender in theological education

Nine theological leaders wrote resource papers for the conference, and six of the nine attended the conference and led discussion groups about the papers they had written. ATS is now pleased to share eight of those nine resource papers with the larger ATS membership. One writer was asked to contribute her paper to a collection of chapters in a manuscript. Their reflections form the major content of this publication, which is being made available through in both print and digital copies.

This issue includes an opening framing essay by Jo Ann Deasy, ATS director of institutional initiatives and student research. In her essay, Deasy focuses on three aspects of the WIL research project: pathways into leadership, mentoring and advocacy, and the connection between expectations of women's leadership and experiences of harassment. Weaving in the experiences of the eight writers whose papers are included in this publication, Deasy lifts up themes of collaboration, mentoring and advocacy, and the cultural construction of gender, race/ethnicity, and leadership.

The eight articles reflect an amazing microcosm of women who display vulnerability and transparency in their words. They represent diversity in terms of ecclesial family, race, ethnicity, veteran versus emerging status, and historical versus forward thinking in their leadership perspectives. Each contributor was asked to submit her paper as she had originally written it for discussion at the WIL twentieth anniversary celebration. Thus, the papers are a mix of perspectives, varying in length and style. Some of them include more personal reflections, while others focus on theological scholarship. Some include empirical research—quantitative and qualitative—while others provide rich practical tips for navigating the leadership landscape. All the writers offer concrete suggestions as to how their experiences and studies of women in leadership might inform future ATS WIL programming. Together, their contributions provide a rich and engaging array of leadership perspectives, experiences, and expertise to guide women in their service to theological schools as well as to educate

theological institutions about some ways they can best serve and support women leaders.

- ***Chung-Yan Joyce Chan***, academic vice president at Carey Theological College, suggests that minority women are underrepresented in theological education due to the intersectionality of their lives. She advocates for the need to focus on Asian and other minoritized women and their pathways to leadership.
- ***Charisse L. Gillett***, president of Lexington Theological Seminary, offers a personal reflection on the matter of invisibility as a female leader. She provides strategies to ensuring that one's voice is heard and contributions to decision-making processes are impactful.
- ***J. Dorcas Gordon,*** principal emerita of Knox College, reflects on her early years as the first woman to serve as a seminary principal in her denomination. She describes her "way of being" as a female leader using a feminist biblical framework.
- ***Alison P. Gise Johnson***, associate professor of historical and theological studies at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University, writes a revealing comparison between ordinary leaders and extraordinary leaders. She challenges women to lead in ways that build a sustainable future characterized by balance and harmony.
- ***Loida I. Martell***, vice president of academic affairs and dean at Lexington Theological Seminary, suggests that leaders of color are often viewed as foreign bodies in academic spaces. She offers a spirituality of education that seeks to dismantle the current system of race and privilege.
- ***Elsie M. Miranda***, ATS director of accreditation, considers how women's experiences of "otherness" can provide a source of wisdom for effective leadership in diverse contexts. She proposes how theological education in the US might benefit from more inclusive, dialogical methods of leadership.
- ***Shawn L. Oliver***, associate dean for planning and assessment at Princeton Theological Seminary, writes about the impact that mentors, coaches, and other advocates have made in her theological education career. Speaking about leading from the center, she illustrates how general leadership skills in higher education can be used in theological education.

- ***Barbara E. Reid***, vice president and academic dean at Catholic Theological Union, provides a twenty-year look at the landscape of Catholic women in ministry and in theological education, utilizing ATS data points. Along with mentioning disconcerting realities that Catholic women face when considering senior leadership roles in Roman Catholic seminaries, she also offers a way forward with practical suggestions of how women can support one another into leadership roles.

Following the eight resource papers are reflections by Samantha Plummer, postdoctoral research scholar at Columbia University, who assisted with the ATS WIL research project. Plummer puts the data gathered from the WIL research interviews in conversation with research on emotional labor to show that gendered and racialized assumptions about their skills and resistance to their leadership put women leaders in situations where they must routinely manage feelings of insecurity, do unremunerated work, and expend excessive emotional energy considering others' assessments of themselves and their work.

Deborah H. C. Gin, ATS director of research and faculty development and staff leader for the WIL research project, provides the concluding framing essay. In her article, Gin discusses three additional aspects of the WIL research study: preparation for leadership, factors preventing women from advancing in leadership, and harassment based on gender. She identifies how certain elements from the research are unexpectedly related (e.g., certain leadership skills and the presence of an advocate), and she suggests these relationships as strategies to move the needle forward in advancing women in leadership in theological education.

The twentieth anniversary celebration afforded ATS time to both glance backward and look forward in consideration of programming for women in leadership. The backward glance reflected two decades of leadership training opportunities designed to provide educational support for women faculty and administrators and to assist schools in their efforts to include more women in leadership positions. Every year since 1990, at least one woman has been named to one of the top two positions at an ATS member school, and there are scores of other women in various positions whose leadership is critical for thriving institutions. Women of varied races and ethnicities, varied ecclesial families, varied geographical locations, and varied contextual realities have found sisterhood, mentorship,

vocational guidance, and encouragement in their work through the Association's Women in Leadership program. These gatherings have not only been "holy blessings," but they have also inspired a "righteous indignation" about the leadership challenges and inequities that some women in theological education found themselves facing.

The forward look for WIL programming identified specific concerns around the need for mentoring, leadership skill development, strengthening of leadership competencies, and intentional programming that would equip women to navigate leadership terrains amid institutional cultures. In addition to the ongoing leadership development programming for WIL, which participants have found helpful, new programming includes an online engagement community designed for women in theological school leadership who are seeking connection through critical and collegial dialogue, informal mentoring, and peer support; a new three-year mentoring program; a blended design for the annual fall leadership conference; and a new WIL summit gathering to explore leadership matters for women both collectively and among affinity groupings.[5] These various programs seek to provide support and advocacy for women faculty, students, and administrators, and to assist the Association in accomplishing its mission to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public.

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5 Ongoing programming includes three primary components: (1) annual fall conferences for women emerging or advancing in leadership in theological schools; (2) periodic preconferences for women presidents and women chief academic officers that precede the Presidential Leadership Intensive Conference and chief academic officers' meetings; and (3) occasional preconference sessions for midcareer women faculty that precede the annual seminar for midcareer faculty.

Constructing Cultures That Expand Pathways for Women Leaders

Jo Ann Deasy
The Association of Theological Schools

As part of the twentieth anniversary celebration of The Association of Theological Schools' (ATS) Women in Leadership (WIL) initiative, ATS conducted a research project in 2017 on women in leadership in theological education. Based on surveys of more than five hundred women leaders and interviews with thirty more, the research provided a broader understanding of the experiences of women leaders and insights into how to strengthen their potential pathways into leadership. The research uncovered the importance of male advocates, mentoring relationships with men and women, and creating environments that recognize the ways that our assumptions about leadership negatively impact women.

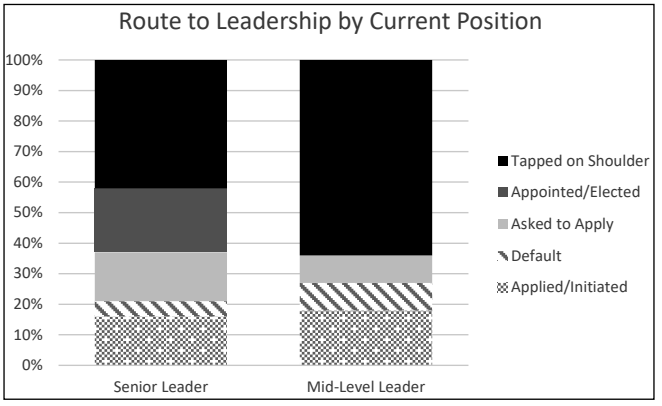
The twentieth anniversary celebration also invited papers from ten women scholars and leaders in theological education. The papers expanded upon the surveys and interviews. Some looked at the particularity of certain women's experiences whether by race/ethnicity or denomination. Others shared more of their own leadership journeys. Still others provided rich theological and sociological contexts for the varied experiences of women. The themes of collaboration, mentoring and advocacy, and the cultural construction of gender, race/ethnic, and leadership were prominent.

This essay will focus on three aspects of the ATS Women in Leadership research project: pathways into leadership, mentoring and advocacy, and the connection between expectations of women's leadership and experiences of harassment. As we'll see, these themes also run throughout the essays in this publication and point to the need for us to continue to look more critically and deeply at the ways sexism and racism have not just provided barriers to women's leadership, but create communities where women are more likely to experience harassment.

Career pathways

How does a women enter into a leadership role in theological education? Of the women interviewed as part of the 2017 ATS Women in Leadership Study, about a quarter of them took the initiative to apply for their leadership positions or offered to fill a position that no one else would do (by default). However, a vast majority of women leaders reported being invited into a role or process. Some were asked to apply for a particular position. Some were appointed or elected by a committee. Many, though, were "tapped" on the shoulder by another leader in an organization and asked to serve in a particular role without any formal or communal process.

This was especially true for mid-level leaders who were overwhelmingly (64%) called into their positions by being tapped on the shoulder to lead. While a large percentage of senior leaders were also tapped for certain positions (42%), more senior women leaders were invited to go through a formal process where they were appointed, elected, or asked to apply for a position (37%).



Being "tapped" to serve in a leadership position can have its advantages. It avoids cumbersome processes and can bypass prejudice or resistances to new forms of leadership within an institution. The Asian women leaders interviewed by Chung-Yan Joyce Chan for her article understood this process as God opening doors for them into leadership. Such an understanding gave them "a clear sense that God has placed them in such roles for His purpose and His glory."[1] Chan, who currently serves as the

1 Chung-Yan Joyce Chan, "Reimagining Asian North American Women in Leadership" (Written for the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 7.

academic vice president at Carey Theological College, connects this with an Asian/Confucian sense of selfhood that sees oneself as part of a larger narrative and interprets leadership as serving corporate responsibilities rather than fulfilling individual rights.

However, being "tapped" for a leadership position can also have its drawbacks. Their positions, authorities, and powers may be linked to a single individual. If that person is not respected within the community or ends up leaving the position, the individual who was "tapped" by them to fulfill a particular role may lose authority, power, or even the position if he or she or the position no longer fulfills the vision of the next leader. For those who are "tapped" to serve in particular roles, it becomes important to build alliances and broaden partnerships to more effectively do their work and strengthen the security of their positions.

While being "tapped" can leave a woman leader vulnerable, going through a formal process can have its own drawbacks as well. J. Dorcas Gordon, principal emerita of Knox College, shares the painful experience of her own appointment as the first woman principal of a particular seminary in her article. Though recommended by a board, her appointment stalled during a lengthy debate at the judicatory level that focused on her own abilities and credentials rather than addressing the primary concern, the fact that she would be the first woman serving in such a position.[2]

Barbara Wheeler, coauthor of a 2010 study of theological school presidents titled "Leadership that Works" and co-researcher on the ATS Women in Leadership Study, reports that men follow similar pathways as women into leadership in theological education. Men senior leaders are also more often invited into leadership: tapped, appointed, or asked to apply. If the pathways to leadership are the same for both men and women, Wheeler asks, then why is it that institutions are much more likely to call men into senior leadership than women?

Loida I. Martell, now serving as vice president of academic affairs and dean at Lexington Theological Seminary, shared about her own experience

2 J. Dorcas Gordon, "A Robust Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Critical for Seminary Leadership" (Paper presented at the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 1.

of a system that was not able to see her leadership potential.[3] She describes how the normativity of male leaders and the attribution of leadership qualities to men leaves women vulnerable in a passive system to both overt and unnamed systems of prejudice and sexism. Martell's article suggests the need for theological schools who are interested in furthering women's leadership to be more intentional about examining their own assumptions and practices of leadership, to name the systems of prejudice and sexism that exist in our institutions, and to be more deliberate in creating pathways for women to serve in leadership roles.

Communities of support, mentors, and advocates

The 2017 ATS Women in Leadership Study surveyed more than 570 women about the various types of support, or lack of support, they experienced as leaders and its impact on their career paths. Not surprisingly, the women in the study named a wide range of supportive relationships and communities—both within and outside their organizations—that had a significant impact on their career paths. Also named were the ways that unsupportive environments impacted not just their careers, but also led to more hostile environments for women overall.

Of the thirty women leaders interviewed for this study, twenty-three mentioned the importance of support external to their schools or departments. The largest source of external support was family (thirteen out of twenty-three). Chung-Yan Joyce Chan highlights the importance of family support, especially spouses who "not only understand their vocational goals, but also are willing to take on more responsibilities when their wives' job demands extra work hours."[4]

Also listed were professional organizations, education/training, and friends groups. Several of the articles in this publication also reference the importance of these external sources of support. Shawn L. Oliver, senior associate academic dean at Princeton Theological Seminary, writes about the "spiritual friends" who kept her and her work personally "lifted in

3 Loida I. Martell, "From Foreign Bodies in Academic Space to Embodies Spirit in *Personas Educados*: or, How to Prevent 'Tourists of Diversity' in Education" (Paper presented at the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 11.

4 Chan, 10.

prayer," reminded her of her calling, and talked with her through various strategies.[5] These friends have helped Oliver lead from her "spiritual center," a key aspect of her approach to leadership. Elsie M. Miranda, director of accreditation at ATS, writes of the importance of befriending others who have also claimed their otherness as a way "to transform communities from fear to empathy and sisterhood."[6] Alison P. Gise Johnson, associate professor of historical and theological studies at Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University, describes the mentoring circle that she was a part of while a graduate student at Temple University. The mentoring circle served as "a system of accountability that demands and nurtures the ability to hold true to vision, values, and personal integrity." She credits her mentoring circle for catapulting her to the next levels of leadership.[7]

In the broader survey that was part of this research, more than two-thirds of the 573 respondents reported having some type of professional mentor. This was affirmed in the research of Chung-Yan Joyce Chan. All of her interviewees named mentorship crucial for their journey, citing that "mentorship provides encouragement, shared wisdom, friendship, and acceptance . . ."[8]

Barbara E. Reid, professor of New Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union, writes of the important role a mentor played in her decision to become an academic dean. She goes on to write:

> "One of the things that has been a constant and critical factor that enables women to exercise leadership has been mentoring, especially by other women who have been trailblazers. Women leaders can affirm other women's gifts and give them the necessary encouragement and support to embark on a new leadership role… A seasoned mentor

5 Shawn L. Oliver, "Leading From the Center" (Paper written for the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 2.

6 Elsie M. Miranda, "Sourcing Wisdom from 'Otherness' and Leading from the Margins" (Paper presented at the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 3.

7 Alison P. Gise Johnson, "Beyond Belonging: A Reflection on Vison, Values, and Vulnerability of Women Called to Lead, Extraordinarily" (Paper presented at the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 5–6.

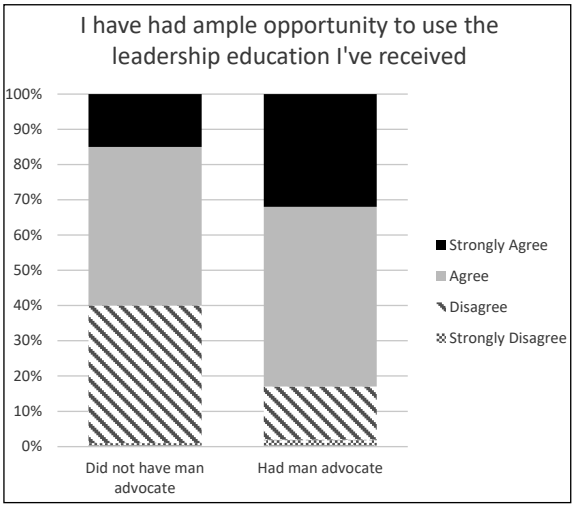
8 Chan, 14.

> can also alert a younger colleague to the challenges she is likely to face and can guide her with the wisdom she has gained about how to navigate sexist waters."[9]

Charisse L. Gillett, president of Lexington Theological Seminary, names the importance of mentors in one of her six strategies for leadership. Strategy V entails seeking mentors and conversation partners. "These include men and women from all walks. Simply put, I need people of like mind and spirit with whom to converse. They help to expand my thinking and enrich my perspective . . ."[10]

However, mentoring by male colleagues can be a challenge for women in cultures that preserve strict gender distinctions. One of the women interviewed by Chung-Yan Joyce Chan spoke of "the conservative culture among her male colleagues," which meant that "male and female professors have to keep a distance from one another."[11] Keeping such a distance may mean that women do not have access to important male mentors in their institutions. It may also mean that they are precluded from both formal and informal structures of power and authority simply by virtue of their genders.

While mentors were important, the most significant impact on a woman's career path came in the form of advocates, people in positions of power or influence who strongly advocated for their leadership. Half of the women completing the Women in Leadership



9 Barbara E. Reid, "Twenty Years of Roman Catholic Women in Leadership: What Difference Did It Make?" (Paper presented at the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 7.

10 Charisse L. Gillett, "What Charisse Saw: Reflections on the Intersections of Race and Gender: Narrative and Knowing" (Paper presented at the ATS Women in Leadership 20th Anniversary Celebration, Pittsburgh, PA, March 1, 2018), 5.

11 Chan, 8.

Survey reported having women advocates and three-quarters reported having male advocates. Of those who had advocates, more than 95% named their importance for their professional journeys. Women with advocates, particularly male advocates, were more likely to report that they had ample opportunity to use the leadership education they had received at their institutions.

At the beginning of Shawn L. Oliver's career, the president of the seminary where she worked informed her that she "needed to pursue my PhD in order to most effectively serve in theological education administration." The seminary then made it possible for her to pursue her degree while continuing to work full-time at the seminary. Before she completed her PhD, Oliver was appointed to the role of associate academic dean. The president once again advocated on her behalf, despite concern from some who believed a PhD was necessary to assume such a role.[12]

When reading literature on leadership, we are often confronted with images of rugged individualism, with this sense that the strongest and most gifted leaders work alone. Women have often been associated with a type of leadership that is more collaborative. However, Martell suggests such collaborative ways of leading, including working with mentors or serving as advocates, is simply a part of our created nature as human beings. We have been created in God's image as social beings, reflecting the same relational nature of the trinity, "as intimate and diversified community."[13]

Cultural norms around gender and leadership

Respondents in the survey were asked to answer a set of questions related to expectations of women's leadership at their institutions. The questions themselves were considered controversial, partly due to the diversity of the ways gender is understood in ATS schools and to a history of leadership theories based on white men's experiences. This diversity is reflected in the articles in this publication.

Shawn L. Oliver describes her own more collaborative form of leadership. She calls it leading from "her heart center," and it includes "relatedness,

12 Oliver, 1.

13 Martell, 8.

honesty, authenticity, and openness."[14] Alison P. Gise Johnson draws on the example of the women she has observed in leadership positions whom she describes as exercising "extraordinary" leadership. Such leaders focus on co-building and "exact an approach toward building a sustainable future characterized by balance and harmony." These leaders are apostolic in nature, building new institutions and new missional practices rather than focusing on sustaining the past. And, she argues, they are critical for the future of theological education.[15] She challenges women to stop trying to belong, to stop serving as caretakers of institutions, and to start building by being vision-centered, values-committed, and vulnerability-cautious.

J. Dorcas Gordon describes how the history of leadership theory has tended to rationalize, justify, and even create inequality. She writes how the symbolic separation of gender roles "can imperil our leadership particularly when significant change is introduced into the institutional system or conflict needs to be managed."[16] In her own leadership, she needed to adopt a "hermeneutic of suspicion," recognizing that gendered norms may mean that the way she spoke or that her mannerisms may be misinterpreted or may keep her voice from being heard.

The data itself reflects the diversity of women's experiences in theological education. The chart on the following page shows the percentage of women who agreed or strongly agreed with statements about expectations of women's leadership. As you can see from the list, several stood out. On a positive note, a majority of women responding to the WIL survey reported that they speak up as often as their male colleagues in meetings and feel that their ideas are heard. Perhaps not as encouraging is that more than half of the women responding to the survey indicated that they were more likely to be asked to do administrative or hospitality tasks than male colleagues of the same rank. More than half also responded that they were expected to be more collaborative and to lead in a more caring and nurturing way.

The important thing to note here is that this is not about the leadership styles of the women responding, but rather the expectations of their communities that differ than the expectations of their male colleagues.

14 Oliver, 3

15 Johnson, 1.

16 Gordon, 6.

Expectations of Women's Leadership

What percentage of women surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements?

	All Women	Asian/ Asian North American/ Pacific Islander Women	African, African American, Black Women	Senior Leaders
I am expected to lead in a more caring/ nurturing way than the way male colleagues lead.	58%	71%	53%	64%
I have been asked to do administrative tasks (or hospitality tasks) that male colleagues of the same rank would not be expected to do.	52%	52%	32%	55%
People expect me to be more collaborative than male colleagues.	51%	71%	47%	60%
I am expected to lead like a man.	37%	43%	12%	40%
People take my decisions more personally than they do for male colleagues' decisions.	37%	48%	38%	47%
Male colleagues regularly take credit for my ideas.	32%	54%	24%	43%
When I lead like a man, I am criticized for not being feminine enough.	26%	57%	21%	34%
I am perceived as too emotional.	22%	24%	17%	
I speak up in meetings as often as male colleagues.	75%	67%	87%	92%
My ideas are heard in meetings.	82%	76%	94%	

Expectations to be more collaborative or more caring and nurturing require women to spend more relational time and energy in leadership than their male colleagues. This was especially true of senior women leaders, a higher percentage of whom agreed with statements about these expectations.

Perhaps even more striking were the differences in responses by race/ ethnicity. A much higher percentage of Asian/Asian North American/ Pacific Islander women agreed that they were expected to lead in ways that were more collaborative and more caring or nurturing ways. Not only were they expected to lead in such ways, but a higher percentage also reported being criticized for not leading in ways that were feminine enough and agreed that male colleagues took credit for their ideas in meetings.

Chung-Yan Joyce Chan provides a helpful history of the construction of gender dynamics from early Asian agricultural societies through industrialization and the impact of immigration into a North American context. Immigrant families often "had to adjust their cultural gender role expectation in order to meet the real need of providing for the family."[17] Chan argues that the intersectionality of race and gender is inseparable and leads to a particular form of "gendered racism." The women she interviewed spoke of the need "to work twice if not three times as hard in order to gain respect from their colleagues. It is easy for people to think that minority women are placed in leadership positions only as tokens of political correctness."[18]

One Asian woman leader in Chan's study reported, "that while her Caucasian supervisor did not intentionally look down upon women leaders, he did not understand how a woman's voice should be received." Some "minority women . . . assume other voices in order to survive in an environment that does not recognize their authentic voices." Others reported being labeled as "'emotional unstable,' a common stereotypic image associated with female gender identity."[19]

The intersection of race and gender in expectations of leadership are constructed in varied ways. While Asian/Asian North American/Pacific Islander women are often expected to lead in more collaborative or nurturing ways, African/African American/Black women reported being less likely to be asked to do administrative tasks or to lead "like a man." While these responses suggest a more positive culture for Black women's leadership, Charisse L. Gillett shares her own growing awareness as a young woman leader "that regardless of their education, position, or title, the women had a very difficult time commanding the floor and having their positions heard and taken seriously." She writes of the ways men's voices were affirmed while women's voices, especially women of color, were rendered silent and invisible. Gillett understood that she would need to "cultivate a way of being present and heard in a room that was

17 Chan, 3.

18 Ibid., 6.

19 Ibid, 6–8.

unaccustomed to taking a person like me seriously" and has woven these practices into her six strategies for leadership.[20]

Another way to think about these expectations of women's leadership is by describing them as "normatizing myths." Loida I. Martell gives examples of several normatizing myths reaffirmed and believed by the dominant culture and their negative impacts on one's personhood and agency. She writes that the "overall result of these mythologies is that 'difference' is often equated with 'inferior,' 'bad,' 'impure,' 'tainted,' and even 'mindless.'" She goes on to argue that it is not just the dominant culture that believes these myths. People of color internalize them as well.[21]

If we are to advocate for all women, we need to be aware of these cultural nuances and how they operate within our communities. Barbara E. Reid writes, ". . . it is commonly agreed among Roman Catholic women that the solution does not lie in simply ordaining women. The whole clerical and hierarchical structure itself needs reforming and sexist and patriarchal attitudes need to be transformed."[22] Chung-Yan Joyce Chan argues for a deeper understanding of diversity and the need for employees to "be equipped to work with people from different backgrounds as well as developing self-awareness about one's own communication styles, thinking pattern, and biases."[23] We need to educate ourselves as an industry about how expectations of leadership have been constructed in our communities and how these various constructions can provide additional hurdles for women—particularly women of color—to overcome in order for their leadership capacities to be recognized within the community.

Connecting harassment and culture

There were eleven statements from the survey related to the expectations of women's leadership ranging from "I am expected to lead like a man," to "Male colleagues regularly take credit for my ideas," and "I am perceived as too emotional." Each one of them correlated in statistically significant ways with the experience of harassment. In addition, a similar correlation

20 Gillett, 3. (See also one of Chung-Yan Joyce Chan's interviewees who spoke of needing to "talk in disguise" to be heard by male colleagues, p. 9).

21 Martell, 9.

22 Reid, 6.

23 Chan, 12.

was found between harassment and a separate question asking women whether or not "the climate at my current organization facilitates the development of women into leadership roles." Women in environments less supportive of their leadership, with unfavorable organizational climates, were more likely to report experiencing some form of harassment based on gender.[24]

Overall, 53% of the women surveyed reported experiencing some form of harassment based on their gender at least once. More than one-fifth of the women had experienced harassment several times or frequently. For the purposes of the survey, harassment was defined as "including a range of behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, either 'aimed at sexual cooperation' or to convey 'insulting, hostile, and degrading attitudes about women.'"[25] A majority of these instances (65%) were not reported.

Loida I. Martell writes of verbal harassment and physical intimidation by a student during her first semester at an institution. Such harassment seemed to occur on a regular basis. She came to realize that "teachers and administrators of color, particularly women of color, are marked 'foreign bodies' in academic spaces because its so-called hallowed halls are not neutral, but rather inherently racist, kyriarchal, and inhospitable spaces for difference."[26] Martell highlights how prejudice that lies at the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender impacts not just the potential of women to lead, but their very health and well-being. She argues that theological education must resist such violence and create hospitable, sacred places, "that nurture diverse *presencia*, and thereby prepare *personas educadas* who can establish relations of hospitality, particularly with those perceived as other."[27]

J. Dorcas Gordon uses the language of "decolonization" and "conscientization" to describe strategies that seek to make her institution, including

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24 For more on the connection between organizational climate and harassment, see Deborah H. C. Gin's article in this publication titled, "Strategic Relationships to Advance Women Leaders: Skills, Advocates, and Organizational Climate."

25 Taken from Louise F. Fitzgerald, Suzanne Swan, and Karla Fischer, "Why Didn't She Just Report Him? The Psychological and Legal Implications of Women's Responses to Sexual Harassment," *Journal of Social Issues*, Spring 1995.

26 Martell, 2.

27 Ibid., 3.

faculty syllabi and admission practices, more inclusive of the "other."[28] This interpretive work includes both an "analysis of structures of domination" and "a different way of reconstructing or remembering."[29]

Elsie M. Miranda draws on a similar theme in her article on "Sourcing Wisdom from 'Otherness' and Leading from the Margins." Miranda's way of creating sacred spaces of hospitality involves "listening with the undivided self," recalling "the subjective struggles for freedom in the Christian tradition," and integrating them "into the contemporary moment." It is a call to radically recognize the "particularity of our subjectivity." She draws on the Chinese character Ting ("to listen") to describe the process of sourcing wisdom from otherness to shape our practices of leadership. Such leadership would include both commitment to dialogical thinking and justice with humility.[30]

Charisse L. Gillett begins her article, "What Charisse Saw," with a challenge to take "the voice and perspective of the 'other,' to dive beneath the surface to seek nuances in the conversations and data. The challenge is to reach for larger more complex meanings about life and the circumstances that people encounter for a deeper truth."[31] What might it mean to look for the deeper truth behind this data on harassment and the leadership culture of an institution?

Conclusion

Often when we think about developing women leaders, we focus on the women themselves. To be sure, there are certain skills that women can develop in order to be more effective leaders, as Deborah H. C. Gin highlights in her article in this book. However, the data included here suggests that in order for women to thrive in leadership in theological education, one must take a more institutional approach. There is a need for more men and women to serve as advocates and mentors for potential women leaders. In some communities, this may mean finding ways to nurture such

28 Gordon, 7–8.

29 Ibid., 9.

30 Miranda, 2–3.

31 Gillett, 1.

mentoring and advocacy relationships between men and women even when there are barriers as to how they might interact with one another.

There is a need for us to look carefully at how expectations around leadership are constructed and operationalized within our communities. We need to make space to listen to the experiences of women in our own communities, to believe what is being reported, and to make it safe to talk about experiences of harassment or marginalization. Perhaps, more importantly, we need to educate ourselves about the intersection of gender, race, and leadership. We, as an industry and as theological schools, need to be able to recognize and name when harassment and marginalization are happening. It shouldn't be the sole responsibility of those who face discrimination to name what is happening. Rather, schools need to be more proactive about creating environments that fully embrace leadership from diverse voices. This is especially true in an environment that relies on advocacy and passive ways of moving into senior leadership positions. Without analyzing our own assumptions, we unintentionally fail to recognize both the leadership and leadership potential of women in our midst. And—as the data suggests—when we have negative expectations of women leaders, we not only limit their leadership potential, we create environments where harassment is more likely to take place. This is not just about leadership, but about creating environments that honor and respect the image of God in all people.

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Reimagining Asian North American Women in Leadership

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Introduction

The study of minority women in leadership has been largely ignored in leadership research until recently.[1] Part of the reason could be that minority women in leadership have been underrepresented in both the corporate world and the non-profit sector.[2] The underrepresentation is even "more acute" among Asian, Black, and Hispanic groups of women, as they "make up 17 percent of workers in S&P companies but fewer than 4 percent of executive officials and managers."[3] Sanchez-Hucles and Davis write that "African American, Asian American, and Latino men and women are more likely to experience overt discrimination and subtle prejudice and be forced into outgroup status and experience occupational segregation as a result."[4] Furthermore, in the Canadian scene, 8.2 percent of visible minorities held senior manager positions and only 3.4 percent are top executives, with only a fraction of them to be women.[5]

Despite the fact that women are earning more degrees than men, women are still underrepresented in top academic leadership, particularly among

> ". . . the ranks of tenured faculty and full professors, who wield much of the power to hire and tenure colleagues as

1 Janis V. Sanchez-Hucles and Donald D. Davis, "Women and Women of Color in Leadership," *American Psychologist* 65, no. 3 (2010): 171.

2 Ibid., 171. See also "Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership," American Association of University Women (Washington, DC: 2016), 1.

3 "Barriers and Bias," 1.

4 Sanchez-Hucles and Davis, 173.

5 Alelie Ocampo, "Combining Work and Family: The Experiences of Gender and Ethnicity of Visible Minority Women in Leadership Positions," M.A. Research Paper, Department of Sociology, the University of Western Ontario (2015), 1. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=sociology_masrp, accessed January 18, 2018.

> well as to prioritize areas of research. Women's under-representation as tenured and full professors in turn limits their opportunities to advance into formal leadership positions at colleges and universities. It is, therefore, not surprising that men outnumber women even among newly appointed deans, provosts, and presidents."[6]

Minority women accounted for eight percent of all higher education faculty in the US in 2011 with only four percent in the role of full professor.[7] The author hopes that this paper can contribute to fill in the gap of the under-researched area in minority women in leadership, particularly in theological education.

The intersectionality of multiple identities among minority women leaders makes the data analysis about minority women more challenging. Due to the complex intertwined relationships among gender, socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural, theological, and biblical positions on gender roles and understanding of vocation, it is not surprising that the sample sizes from these studies will be small. Minority women are few even among members of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS).[8] As a result, the author feels that it is wise to narrow down the scope of studies being conducted to a focus on Asian women leaders in order to establish a common ground for contextual analysis of minority women.

Defining Asian women leadership and the scope of study

Within the ATS Women in Leadership initiative, the majority of the effort has been put toward affirming and supporting women who take senior leadership positions within the ATS institutions (e.g., presidents, deans, and other senior administrators). What defines Asian women leadership?

Asian women have always been leaders. Historically, Asian women played important roles as household leaders. The Chinese have an old saying, "Nán zhǔ wài, Nǔ zhǔ nèi," which literally translates as "males

6 "Barriers and Bias," 9.

7 Ibid., 10.

8 Readers may find different terminologies referring to "minority" throughout the paper. In the US context, "people of color" is commonly used to describe non-white racial ethnic groups versus in the Canadian context, the term "visible minority" is used.

master the outside (work); women master the inside (household)." In other words, males are seen as breadwinners and their primary responsibilities lie outside of the household while females are seen as homemakers and their primary responsibilities lie within the home. This dichotomy is seen most clearly in the ancient imperial governance system while the emperor managed the business of the state and the empress managed all the businesses within the imperial household. There was a clear boundary that the empress must not interfere with court business or interact with government officials about political issues. Education was normally available only to males. Only daughters of rich households or the imperial family were educated but, even then, they were excluded from the public official exams to move into civil service opportunities.

Some argued that this dichotomy between gender roles and responsibilities represented merely a sharing of responsibilities within a family with no implication on gender equality. Responsibilities were assigned according to the "masculinity" and "femininity" characteristics of each gender based on the social structure and expectations of an agricultural society.[9] As the society becomes modernized and industrialized, opportunities for women labor increase. As education becomes more available among women, it also creates new opportunities for women to participate in work beyond the household, not only as laborers but also as professionals. However, women are not transitioning out of the homemaker role into the breadwinner role. It also does not necessarily mean that men and women are sharing work accordingly in the household while both men and women are working. It is still very rare for an Asian man to take up a full-time homemaker role even if the wife is working full-time. Women remain the primary household caregivers while taking up work outside of their households.[10] The question is not whether Asian women leaders remain leaders in the traditional sense as household leaders, but whether Asian women leaders can expand their leadership roles beyond the household to the community and, when that happens, whether their new leadership roles will be recognized and affirmed by members in their communities.

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9 Chén Yàntíng and Yè nǎijiā, "Cóng xìngbié fēngōng tàn tǎo xìngbié píngděng. (Investigating Gender Equality from Gender Responsibilities)" http://www.nhu.edu.tw/~society/e-j/64/64-53.htm, accessed January 13, 2018.

10 Ibid. Table 2.

The author decided to develop her own study of Asian women. Participants being interviewed in my study included Asian Christian women educators, professionals, and research/business entrepreneurs. Though they may not serve as senior administrators in either corporate or non-profit institutions, they have definitely moved beyond the traditional household leadership role into a community leadership role.

In addition to the perspective of gender role relationship to the traditional Asian family system and social structure, it is extremely important to keep in mind that leaders being interviewed in this study have moved away from the Asian social structure into a new context. These leaders are immigrants from non-North American location or children of immigrants. Their identities are shaped by both the Asian and Western worlds. The shaping of immigrant gender identity role and how it affects the traditional ethnic gender dynamic and family system is a unique area of study in its own right, which is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we need to keep in mind that both racial and gender dynamic changes as these immigrants and their children operate in a new context.

Early Asian immigrants were segregated from the mainstream society.[11] The majority of them came to North America as waged workers or operated their small family businesses. Asian immigrants were prohibited from socializing into the mainstream society and, as a result, were forced into ethnic ghettoes such as Chinatowns. Many of them were not well-versed in the English language. Recent immigrants tend to be more educated professionals or wealthy business entrepreneurs who can communicate fluently or reasonably well in English. One interviewee shared that she and her husband had attended a Caucasian church since their student days. People were kind to them but treated them with a "colonial attitude." As soon as they graduated from their professional trainings and ended up as a university professor and a medical specialist doctor, their social statuses in the church changed immediately. Every group was trying to befriend them and invite them to serve in some capacity.

In order to meet the challenges of the "new world," immigrant families had to adjust their cultural gender role expectations in order to meet the real need of providing for the family.

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11 See stories from Joyce Chan, *Rediscover the Fading Memories: Early Chinese Canadian Christian History* (Chinese Christian Mission, 2014).

> "Central to the reconfiguration of gender hierarchies are the changes in immigrant women's and men's relative positions of power and status in the country of settlement. Theoretically, migration may improve women's social position if it leads to increased participation in wage employment, more control over earnings, and gender participation in family decision making."[12]

In the immigrant context, sometimes it is easier for women than men to find jobs and, as a result, the family must make a decision whether it is more important to preserve the ethnic gender role norm or to create space for women to take on more outside responsibilities or even leadership roles as breadwinners of the family.[13] For second generation children who are born into families with ethnic parents and raised in a western culture, the different sets of cultural values could create cultural identity and gender role conflicts as they encounter different expectations and values from their family of origin and the social context in which they are raised.[14]

Methodology and data gathering

Many studies of minority women in leadership are quantitative and statistical rather than qualitative. "Missing from these statistical reports are the lived stories and multidimensional experiences of those visible minority women who have attained leadership positions amid the existing structural barriers."[15] My study employs the qualitative research method of interviewing a small group of Asian women leaders, namely educators and professionals, to identify common themes through these lived stories. At the same time, this paper also incorporates data from the larger literature on women in leadership to provide more substantial information

12 Yen Le Espiritu, "Gender and Labor in Asian Immigrant Families," *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 4 (January 1999): 628. From the SAGE Social Science Collections.

13 Ibid., 633–634. (Espiritu's article provides examples of Asian women retaining their professional jobs while men suffered from "downward occupation mobility" in the US)

14 William Ming Liu, "Asian American Men's Gender Role Conflict: The Role of Asian Values, Self-Esteem, and Psychological Distress," *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 7, no. 3 (2006): 163–164.

15 Ocampo, 9.

to frame the overall study. Readers should keep in mind an important point while looking at this study—the fact that intersectionality of race and gender is inseparable. Some researchers called it "gendered racism." The study shows that race and gender often work with and against each other, gleaning from the responses of the interviewees. Rather than trying to dissect artificially which factor alone is causing what phenomenon, it is better to look at them as a whole that shapes both individual identities as well as the collective context in which these leaders serve.

Eight Asian women in leadership responded to the questionnaire. Five out of the eight leaders are currently serving or have served in leadership positions at ATS or ATS affiliated institutions. Six were born outside of North America. The ages of these women leaders range from early forties to the eighties, and all have resided in North America for more than twenty years. All participants have earned academic or professional doctorates (PhD, JD, MD, or EdD). Their occupations include academic administrators, professors, a medical specialist doctor, a lawyer, and a CEO of a research institution. Five have been teaching in higher education settings (seminary or university) for at least ten years and two in professional practices. The sizes of institutions they serve(d) range from 50 to over 10,000 students or employees.[16] For the seminary educators, the fields of teaching and scholarship include Christian theology, ethics, Bible, church history and practical ministry areas.

The institutional contexts in which these women leaders served or are serving are very diverse. Seven of them are working/have worked in predominantly white or English-speaking institutions while one works at a predominately Asian institution. Four are Canadians and four are Americans. Among those who serve(d) in theological schools, three of the institutions are mainline, three are evangelical, two have homogeneous racial ethnic composition, and the other four have various degrees of racial ethnic diversity among both staff and faculty. The majority of the institutions in which these women leaders serve are located in major urban/metropolitan areas across North America with more than one million people in population.

16 "Barriers and Bias," 9. Researchers noted that women in leadership among smallest nonprofit organizations is significantly higher than larger nonprofits (55%: 18% women CEOs).

Seven questions were being asked of the interviewees:

1. Please describe your pathway into leadership position at your current/former institutions.
2. Would you identify the top three obstacles/challenges in your career path moving into leadership position and how much of that do you think has direct relation with gender and/or racial ethnic identity? Would you please provide one specific scenario to illustrate?
3. Would you think of three words that describe most accurately how your colleagues relate to your leadership and elaborate on them? Do you sense any difference among the receptivity of your leadership role among male and female colleagues? Would you please provide one specific scenario to illustrate?
4. Have you experienced discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on gender or ethnicity or both? How do you distinguish between the double minority dynamic? Are you able to identify the reason(s) or motivation(s) behind the discriminatory or harassing behaviors? Would you please provide one specific scenario to illustrate?
5. How does the gender stereotype or expectation in your culture influence (1) your decision to take on a leadership role and (2) the way you relate to your male colleagues or other male leaders? Would you please provide one specific scenario to illustrate?
6. How does family role stereotype or expectation in your culture influence your (1) career path, (2) decision to take on leadership role, and (3) performance in your role? Would you please provide one specific scenario to illustrate?
7. What advice/wisdom would you share with the next generation of minority women in leadership?

While each participant carries a unique story with her life's journey and pathway to leadership, there are common themes that emerged from the conversations that are strikingly similar.

Leadership is not a birthright for Asian women leaders

Asian women are certainly not the group that is naturally privileged with leadership rights. It is extremely clear from listening to the stories of these women leaders that leadership is earned and not given as a birthright. Participants reported that they needed to work twice if not three times as hard to gain respect from their colleagues. It is easy for people to think that minority women are placed in leadership positions only as tokens of political correctness. "You have to be better in order to be equal," as one participant described her journey to leadership. Women and ethnic minority leaders have to work "more diligently to gain the same level of acceptance and inclusion that other leaders almost automatically obtained by default."[17]

One person commented in the same way, "I am a leader in my own right because I am able to establish strong scholarship in my own field." Another participant shared that her students and colleagues' respect grew as her seniority serving at the institution increased and as she established herself as a published scholar connected to the larger academic community. Three participants reported that it was difficult to establish their leadership roles when they first began because they were "young" in age (between mid-thirties and early-forties). In addition to gender bias, young age is an unfavorable factor to leadership in the Asian culture.

One participant reported that she constantly had to remind herself that she had to out-perform her peers in order to get proper recognition. "I need to demonstrate to my colleagues that I am hired for the position not just because I am Chinese." She felt that the only way that her colleagues would not look down upon her is to demonstrate to them that she is as competent as they are as a scholar and teacher. It is easy for ethnic program directors to feel isolated from the rest of the faculty and be assigned to teach only in the ethnic program or language courses as if they could not function in English or could not relate to white students. One participant of this research shared an incident in which a colleague expressed concern at a faculty meeting that Asians could not possibly teach Caucasian students because of the cultural gap. Ethnic faculty can be excluded or "automatically screened out" from teaching in the "mainstream" English programs.

17 Master Sergeant Greg Jenkins, "Ethnic Minority and Women Leadership: My Experience as a White Male Soldier," *Communique* (August 2009, Special Edition), XVII.

Again, as the author stated in the introduction of this paper and agreed by almost all interviewees, often times, gender and racial discrimination are so intertwined or the boundary is so blurred that it might be hard to distinguish which factor is at work in its expressions.

"White privilege" or "white bias"—whether displayed consciously or subconsciously—was named as a big obstacle for minority women leaders to flourish. One reported that while her Caucasian supervisor did not intentionally look down upon women leaders, he did not understand how a woman's voice should be received. One participant commented, "White man has to affirm who I am as an Asian woman. I need to come to my own voice and know how to engage my supervisor in my own voice." One participant said that only ten percent of her medical classmates were female and only two were Asians among a class of 110 students. After she graduated from medical school and specialist training, she tried to apply for fellowship or staff positions at hospitals but was being rejected by most institutions. She was fortunate to find a private practice.

It's very easy for minority women leaders to assume other voices in order to survive in an environment that does not recognize their authentic voices. Some people became discouraged and tired of the dissonance between their own and their colleagues' mindsets and ways of thinking, and took on a camouflage mode to operate among colleagues who did not understand them. Others were worried that if they did not follow the social norm, they would be excluded from the community. In some cases, their own voices were being perceived as a "threat" to the community and made others feel insecure and react against them. An effective leader needs to be able to lead from the center, which takes tremendous courage and grace. Asian women leaders need to be affirmed as they work hard to establish their leadership roles.

A successful woman leader displays a strong sense of self-worth and vocational call

Secondly, successful women leaders display a strong sense of self-identity and vocational calling in what they do or in the roles they play. In every single case, these women leaders affirm themselves with high self-worth as precious daughters of God, created in God's image and likeness. This understanding of who they are sustains them through hardships, doubts, discriminations, and other negative experiences. Despite cultural

stereotypes and challenges they faced in stepping into leadership roles, all expressed a clear sense that God has placed them in such roles for His purpose and His glory. They felt that instead of actively pursuing leadership positions, God opened doors and led them into leadership opportunities. One interviewee said that she was invited to apply for a faculty position because the school attempted to be responsive to the demand of the changing political climate on gender equality. Two women deans said they were invited to take the positions to fill the void of unexpected departures of former colleagues. Two interviewees said they gradually "grew into" the current positions as academic program director or dean. Whatever pathways that led these women into leadership positions, they strongly believe that when God opens the door, one should respond to the invitation to walk with God. One should not doubt that she could not do certain kinds of jobs because she is a woman.

It is clear that these women leaders understand their self-identities based on a narrative larger than and beyond themselves. In whatever roles they are serving, one can see that their self-identities and senses of vocational call are rooted in a strong conviction of themselves participating in the larger story and larger mission in God's kingdom beyond themselves. In contrast with the Western sense of individual and autonomous self, such self-understanding is in fact congruent with the Asian/Confucian worldview of selfhood. The affirmation of one's self-worth and "rights" to take leadership position points to corporate responsibilities rather than individual rights. In the Confucian worldview, a leader takes leadership positions not because of self-benefits (power, money, fame, etc.) but for the larger good of the community/society/nation which one is serving. The concept of "self" is not the same as "ego." Unfortunately, many people including powerful leaders are confused between the two. A contemporary Confucian scholar, Tu Wei-Ming, suggested that the self in Confucianism is an "open and ongoing entity. Unlike the closed and unchanged system of *si* (the ego), the self has the potential for endless transformation and indeed perfection."[18]

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18 Wei Ming Tu, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985) cited in Huajun Zhuang, "Individuality beyond the Dichotomy of "Small Self and Big Self" in *Contemporary Chinese Education: Lessons from Hu Shi and Liang Shuming* (Front. Educ. China 2013), 8(4): 542. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/BF03396990.pdf

The cultivation and transformation of self in Confucian philosophy is a prerequisite for any person to take a leadership position.[19]

Gender roles and gender beliefs are inseparable. Gender beliefs are "cultural schemas for interpreting or making sense of the social world. As such, they represent what we think "most people" believe or accept as true about the categories of "men" and "women."[20] One interviewee whose teaching context is primarily Asian said she was perceived by her male colleagues as "emotionally unstable," a common stereotypic image associated with female gender identity. "In North America, at least, men are widely thought to be more competent than women, except when performing "feminine" tasks."[21] Because of the conservative culture among her male colleagues, male and female professors have to keep a distance from one another. For example, they cannot carpool together. She is rarely invited to lunch or gathering of her male colleagues. This "safe distance" among males and females preserves distinctive gender identity and boundary within the day to day socialization and collegial relationship in her institution. Others reported that female professors are allowed to teach only in the practical areas such as counselling or education, but not in Bible or theology.

Among the women theological educators, the author also attempted to investigate their leadership identities among the larger Christian community to which they are connected. Three interviewees affirmed that

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19 "The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdoms first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy. From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides." James Legge trans., *Liji, Daxue* 2, http://ctext.org/liji/da-xue

20 Shelley J. Correll, "Gender and the Career Choice Process: the Role of Based Self-Assessments," *American Journal of Sociology* vol. 106, no. 6 (May 2001), http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/321299, accessed January 13, 2018.

21 Ibid.

preaching is the primary vehicle through which they establish their leadership roles among the larger Christian community. Particularly among Chinese churches, preaching takes a prominent role in Sunday worship, and a good preacher gets tremendous respect from the community. However, the pastoral identity of women preachers are often diminished because of their gender. One participant shared that the church would only address her as "Dr." but not "Rev." because her church does not recognize ordination of female pastors. Though ordained, she was not allowed to give the benediction or lead communion. Asian women theological educators get to preach because of the high respect that teachers have among the Asian community, but seldom are they recognized as pastoral leaders despite the fact that they received an MDiv education or have a strong calling to Christian ministry. Another interviewee who is gifted in preaching said that some people commented about her style in the pulpit as unacceptable because she is a female: "You shouldn't have preached that way." Two female biblical scholars who also have prominent roles as pastors' wives in the Asian community find it easy for people to see them first as pastors' wives (because of Asian's high view of ordained male pastors) rather than preachers in their own right.

In addition to gender stereotype, there is an additional layer of complexity for Asian women theological education leaders. The subject areas which they teach also impact how well they are being received. Professors who teach in the biblical areas (assuming they are allowed) often receive the highest respect because of the high view of Scripture among Asian churches. A young female Asian Bible scholar could gain respect quickly if she is a great Bible teacher and well published in biblical commentaries. Asian women leaders have to navigate constantly the discrepancy between their personal identities and calls to ministry, and how they are being perceived and received by their communities. Finding their self-worth and call in Christ is of utmost importance for these women Christian leaders—not only for them to survive, but to thrive in the roles they play and in the people they lead.

Perseverance and resilience are the keys to success

To these women leaders, living out their true identities and vocational callings are, in fact, extremely challenging and brutal at times. Discrimination, loneliness, and separation often characterize the collegial relationship

between women leaders and their male and/or white colleagues. The experience of intentional or unintentional discrimination and isolation is mentally and psychologically tiring. Resilience is being named as a crucial character for minority women in leadership to survive in a hostile environment of both racial and gender discrimination.

One participant reported constant passive aggressive attitudes and making verbal disparaging comments from some of her male colleagues in both one-on-one and public settings. Another interviewee shared the story that as soon as she began her teaching career, she faced discrimination from within and without. She was hired as the first "woman of color" professor at a prominent seminary. As a double minority—a token of political correctness—she was treated as an invisible entity among her faculty colleagues. Her voice was hardly heard in faculty meetings unless she talked in disguise "deleting all the adjectives and adverbs" or comments that reflected "feminine characteristics or women's passion." That created a constant struggle within herself, as she felt that she would be betraying the way God created her to be. Racism or sexism were also expressed in the context of budget allocation opportunity for salary and promotion. She was denied tenure because only one faculty colleague was willing to advocate for her promotion. From without, she was being rejected by her own ethnic community. "Patriarchal leaders" from her own ecclesial community complained to the seminary that they should have hired a man rather than a woman for the professorial position at the seminary. Asian students from her ethnic community began to boycott her classes. Both white and minority students looked down upon her as a teacher. She described that her students were "brainwashed by Euro-centric theology perpetuated from racist patriarchal theologians."

One person who serves in a predominately multicultural and mainline liberal seminary reported that because of the diversity of the faculty composition, she never stood out as a minority based on gender or cultural identity. Instead, the middle-aged white male colleagues felt they were the minority who were being discriminated against. As a result, the white faculty gathered against the "colored" faculty and treated her as an enemy. She was being misunderstood by common stereotypes among both Asian and male leaders. Her white colleagues associated her "Asianness" with a hierarchical management paradigm that pressures people to do things like traditional authoritarian Asian leaders. Whether male or female, they failed to see her operating as an Asian in a non-Asian context.

Ethnic minorities "tend to adopt a nurturing, inclusive, dynamic, engaging and inspiring leadership styles that fall under the umbrella of "transformation leadership."[22]

In addition to viewing her leadership through a cultural lens, male colleagues also assumed that she operated in the classical male masculine leadership mode of "command and control" and perceived her to be a control freak. She was deemed a double authoritarian for being Asian and for being a leader. Ironically, these assumptions actually go against the stereotypic image of an Asian female–warm, motherly, and gracious, and the predominant women leadership style as "facilitative and collaborative."[23] "Researchers have also found that women tend to adopt a transformational leadership style, which motivates followers through charisma, intellectual stimulation, and consideration of individual."[24] Another person reported that she experienced similar dynamic in the relationship with her colleagues. In these cases, the association of leadership image with Asian types (culture) took over the female (gender) image and leadership was stereotyped to be a "male only" enterprise (leaders are only associated with masculine features). "This masculine ethic," embedded in management ideals, shaped the role and image of the manager as male, systematically excluding women from leadership positions due to their association with irrationality, personality, and emotionality."[25]

Navigating among work, life, and family

With minority women leaders—particularly among Asians—work, life, and family "balance" remain one of the top challenges. Gender roles and identity are embedded and shaped by its cultural values and expectations. Asian wives and mothers are burdened by their shoulder cultural specific expectations as wives and mothers that they are expected to fulfill. There is always a tension, if not conflict, when Asian women take on multiple

22 Innocent F. Okozi, Kimberly Smith, Le Ondra Clark, and Regina M. Sherman, "Leadership Styles of Ethnic Minority Leaders," *Communique* (August 2009, Special Edition), VII.

23 Sanchez-Hucles and Davis, 173.

24 "Barriers and Bias," 5.

25 Ocampo, 3. Cf. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York, 1977, 1993).

identities and roles as professionals, teachers, leaders, scholars, wives (in some cases, also a pastor's wife), and mothers. Building a career and raising families at the same time is a labour-intensive pursuit and not very many are able to juggle both—not because they are not smart or hard-working but because of many complex factors. Or, in other words, in order for women leaders to be able to maintain both community/public leadership and family roles, many factors have to work together to create a favorable environment in which that can happen. One interviewee said that she deliberately followed the "one-child policy" because one child is the maximum she could afford to support, emotionally, physically, and financially, and to maintain a healthy work-life balance to the family. She was also very grateful to have a relatively "low maintenance" child to raise.

Multiple interviewees talked about how grateful they were to have spouses who not only understand their vocational goals, but also who are willing to take on more responsibilities when their wives' jobs demand extra work hours. Arrangement of childcare remains the primary challenge for women leaders who raise a young family while taking on leadership positions. One mentioned that when her son was in preschool, her academic dean made a commitment to allow her flexible work hours or to bring her son to work after school. A couple of participants mentioned that their parents or in-laws helped in providing after-school care. One participant frequently says to her colleague as she finishes off her work day, "I am going to my other job." These women educators and professionals constantly work long days—getting up early in the morning to get the children ready for school, preparing meals for the family, tending to children's homework and play, and doing household chores as their regular routines. "To balance work and family, minority women in leadership positions relied on organizational supports and personal strategies" to make the pathway possible.[26] For the ones who succeeded in keeping both their professional roles and raising the family simultaneously, the support of their family members as well as institutions that allowed flexibility for them to work on their jobs were indispensable factors.

Even with support from families and institutions, Asian women leaders can still experience pressure from both the larger Asian and Western cultural expectations and norms. Ethno-cultural expectations of appropriate

26 Ocampo, 18.

gender roles in family and public perception about Asian women in leadership create social pressure and emotional stress for many of these women leaders. In the previous section, we already mentioned an incident where an Asian woman leader was rejected by her own ethnic community after being hired as a professor at a prominent seminary. A couple of participants expressed guilt and continue to experience constant tension about not being able to fulfill the traditional cultural norm as a full-time stay at home mother. They bear even more guilt if their children do not grow up as model children. One participant reported that she was told by another senior Asian woman in an open space at a conference that she should give up her job and stay home to raise her family. Another participant reported a similar experience with a white colleague making the same comment.

With two-career families, the matter could be even more complicated. One participant mentioned that she had to adjust her career path slightly because she was looking for work that was more flexible and "family friendly," and that would allow her to find another job easily when her family needs to move because of her husband's job change. There are constant negotiations between the husband and wife when both are professionals, and it may not be always possible for the spouse to find an equivalent job in the same location when the other one gets a promotional opportunity elsewhere. One participant shared another story that when the wife became the "breadwinner" for the family, it could upset the economic equilibrium and power dynamic and could create additional tension to the gender role and family dynamic. Some spouses suffered inferiority complexes when their wives become more "successful" than them in their career paths. Women leaders had to be very astute in navigating their gender roles in both the workplace, in the family, and in the larger community.

Building collegiality and structural support to allow minority women leaders to flourish

Institutions need to commit to cultivate a culture of diversity beyond merely eating international cuisine and celebrating ethnic festivals. Employees at all levels need to be equipped to work with people from different backgrounds as well as developing self-awareness about one's own communication styles, thinking pattern, and biases. One participant shared a story that when she took her first research seminar in her PhD

program, the professor asked the male students in the class to speak at one-tenth of their normal voice levels and asked the female students to speak at their normal voices. He asked everyone how they felt afterward. Then, told the male students that how they felt speaking at one-tenth of their voices is how women feel all the time in the workplace. There is a natural power dynamic among male and female communication. Men automatically speak "louder" than women. Women's voices are often being ignored or taken lightly. Institutions need to develop intentional reflective practices to ensure that voices from men and women employees are being considered at equal weight.

It is important to build cultural awareness among colleagues in the workplace. "I don't know how to be direct in the "white way" and I can't use "indirect Asian way" to communicate because no one understands it." Institutions need to create and maintain policies that prevent sexual harassment and gender discrimination. In many of the cases, it was noted that discriminatory comments or attitudes were expressed toward women colleagues but it was never addressed by either the administration or the colleagues. Gender diversity policy can ensure equal hiring opportunity among men and women. Training and education such as gender stereotype awareness, self-awareness, communications, etc. can help the workplace to nurture healthy working relationships among men and women.

For women leaders who choose to raise a family while maintaining their professions, family-friendly policies and management attitudes are important for their success. Childcare arrangement for women leaders with young children is the number one challenge to career advancement. Women leaders often lagged behind in their career paths during childbearing and childrearing years. "For visible minority women, the intersection of gender and ethnicity is accompanied by expected traditional roles that hinder career development needed to fulfill leadership positions in the workplace."[27] Participants who are professors said that they could never catch up with the tenure promotion speed of their male colleagues because they had to raise their families and build their careers at the same time. While their male colleagues could keep working on their research at home after office hours, these women professors had to attend to family chores and taking care of the children. One participant reported that she was able

27 Ibid., 22.

to publish both books because of her two one-year maternity leaves. Some women doctors maintained part-time family practices in order to balance their family obligations. Participants who were able to work full-time while raising a family gave credit to their family members, husbands, parents, or in-laws who took care of the children while they worked or it would otherwise have been impossible.

Conclusion and recommendations: empowering Asian women leaders to flourish

When the participants were asked to think of three words that most accurately described themselves and how their colleagues perceived their leadership, these are the words that came up: persistent, dedicated, reliable, determined, visionary, enthusiastic, passionate, confident, scholarly, hardworking, shepherd-teacher, and scholar-saint. It is important to keep in mind that each of these words contain unique stories of the journeys of these Asian women leaders. Each of these words genuinely reflects their identities in Christ, the unique gender and ethnic DNA of how these Asian women are created to be, and how their journeys as Asian women leaders have shaped them. Despite stereotypic assumptions and discriminatory attitudes, hard work and endurance of minority women leaders will eventually bear good fruit if they allow Jesus to shine through their lives.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body." (2 Cor. 4:7-10)

Live by grace, overcome evil with good

When experiencing discrimination and oppression, it is easy for people to feel victimized or operate in a self-pity mode. Some might suffer from an inferiority complex because of such experiences. One participant described that people can display "toxic reflexive autoimmune response" as a way to protect themselves and survive in such an environment. "Powerlessness is one of the most toxic dynamic played out," said one interviewee. "I must constantly remind myself to choose life over death. Power comes

from radical love. Choose Life over Death. Don't let the system control you and don't allow yourselves to be trapped in the victim mentality. Overcome evil with good." Minority women leaders can become "outstanding examples of grace and perseverance" by rising above the "demeaning and belittling behaviors" and lead others to accomplish the mission together.[28] When minority women leaders put their trust in God and rely on His strength to overcome evil with good, they are able to unleash the power of radical love and grace and act as the instruments of God's mission. Let us be encouraged by Joseph's words, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done."[29]

Nurture sustaining relationships

The value of mentorship was named by all interviewees to be a crucial relationship for their journeys. Mentorship provides encouragement, shared wisdom, friendship, and acceptance that are "key to achieving corporate success."[30] Women, especially minority women leaders, are typically "more isolated, without mentors or a network of support, and are less able to garner the help that they might need when facing extraordinary challenges."[31] Because the number of Asian women leaders is limited, most people may not be able to find a mentor within their workplaces. They must find creative ways to reach out and network with other leaders. Participants reported ways such as involvement in a larger academic circle of Asian women leadership, participation in women leadership blogs, connecting with people through social media, etc. as ways to nurture friendship, perspective, and opportunity to work together as scholars.

One interviewee said that she was raised as a natural woman leader because she had family role models to follow. Her grandmother set an example and taught both her mother and herself that women need to be independent. Her mother, as a pioneer female immigrant professional, set a strong role model for her. She witnessed the struggles and heard the

28 Jenkins, XVIII.

29 Genesis 50:20, NIV.

30 Sanchez-Hucles and Davis, 172.

31 Ibid.

story of a minority leader from the inside out. Another participant said that she struggled with whether to get married because many women practicing in her field remained single. With her circle of influence (including her pastor), she was told that it is virtually impossible to keep both family obligations and expectations, and thrive in her vocational calling. She was fortunate to find role models who were able to succeed in both professional and family roles. As one Latina woman leader said, "It was important to know that "someone who looked like me" had succeeded in the way I hoped to someday."[32]

Wisdom for the next generation

The final interview question called for wisdom from these women leaders to pass on to the next generation. The success of leaders is not merely measured by what jobs they can accomplish, but also by what next generation leaders they are able to nurture and raise. It is the hope of the Asian women leaders who participated in this project that their stories can become an encouragement to those who come after them and that we can turn the tide from Asian woman leadership as a lonely journey that lacks role models and mentors to a journey full of "cloud of witnesses," encouraging one another to run the race before us.

> "As a leader, you need to be bold and courageous to affirm the mission God has called you."
>
> "Follow your dream and your passion, never be shy to take the opportunity being offered."
>
> "Women who are placed in leadership positions are called to make a difference. They are given opportunities to make changes at the structural and institutional level. Therefore, women leaders should seize take the opportunity God has given them."
>
> "You can choose life over death. Don't let the toxic powerless victim narrative poison you and those around you. Fly your dream and exercise the power of radical love."

32 Michele R. Guzmán, "Developing Woman of Color Leaders in Higher Education," *Communique* (August 2009, Special Edition), XXXIII.

> "Be intentional in thinking why you do things the way you do. Listen before you judge. Honour those who come before you."
>
> "Be a role model. Show the next generation that they don't need to be afraid."

May these words of encouragement bring strength and hope to all women leaders who come after us.

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What Charisse Saw: Reflections on the Intersections of Race and Gender—Narrative and Knowing

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In his book, *What the Dog Saw*, Malcom Gladwell encourages the reader to see what others do not. The challenge, the author argues, is to take the voice and perspective of the "other," to dive beneath the surface to seek nuances in the conversations and data.[1] The challenge is to reach for larger, more complex meanings about life and the circumstances that people encounter for a deeper truth. It is a challenge to think deeply about the intersection of ourselves, our communities, and our world. I am reminded of this challenge as I attempt to frame the meaning of my experiences in leadership in higher education. Is there deeper meaning in the countless hours spent in board meetings, committee meetings, and consultations? Is there a larger purpose in my effort to contribute a unique point of view to important conversations and decision-making? Is there something of value to share with other women who aspire to lead in places that traditionally have not been places of welcome for women in general and for women of color in particular? Is there a contribution I can make to the journeys of other women as they struggle to be heard in board rooms, offices, and classrooms as persons of value with gifts for leadership? I am not alone in this desire to understand and derive meaning from my experiences. For human beings, the drive for meaning is stronger than the drive for physical survival. We need to make sense of what happens to us, clothe our existence within an interpretive pattern that reflects back to us lives of integrity, coherence, and significance. If we cannot, the will to live withers.[2]

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1 Malcolm Gladwell, *What the Dog Saw: And Other Adventures* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2009).

2 Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroads, 2006), 45.

The act of peeling back layers and layers of encounters with mentors, family, coworkers, and detractors is a search for meaning and an effort to capture that meaning in ways that might have value for myself and for others. This effort to find meaning is connected to what I saw as a college student and as an unseasoned professional in the early years of my career. These observations and experiences have helped to shape my desire to be *heard* and valued for my contributions. I fully and freely admit that the lens through which I process these reflections is that of an African American woman. To say this is not to invite disengagement but rather to acknowledge to you, and to embrace for myself, that the totality of my experience is tied to my identity as a Black woman. It is through this lens that I engage the world and believe, to a large degree, that this is how the world engages and views me. Thus, it is through this lens that I have developed and tried to exercise a strategic voice.

My journey began as a student at a mid-sized state institution where I was offered multiple opportunities to serve as a student leader and then as an employee. I was the silent student in the meeting, or the new employee (kid) on the block. In either case, I was promptly forgotten. What I unconsciously observed over the years was that the women in these meetings were not offered a full hearing, and their comments were not valued or given the same consideration as their male colleagues. Most importantly, from my perspective, there was a growing awareness that regardless of their educations, positions, or titles, the women had a very difficult time commanding the floor and having their positions heard and taken seriously. From my position of near invisibility, I was always amazed when the men in the room would take valuable minutes to state an opinion, clarify that opinion, and then comment on *another* topic. It seemed to me that the others in the room listened with rapt attention to male colleagues and offered positive support for their comments. Indeed, in my mind, the words, "a very reasoned position," or "your line of thinking is particularly apt," became code words for affirming the male voice. This affirmation was less so for women and almost nonexistent for women of color. It was also as a student/new kid on the block that I noticed the odd practice of male committee members agreeing with one another and then restating agreed-upon positions in ways that seemed to confer a special status on the male speaker. In other words, when Dr. Male ABC agreed with Dr. Male XYZ, the latter was somehow elevated in the eyes of his colleagues. Rarely was this status conferred upon women. The men affirmed and complimented

one another, and the others in the room were rendered invisible by this kind of collegial back slapping.

What I saw was a pervasive pattern of ignoring the ideas, the thoughts, and the contributions of women and people of color in ways that rendered them knowingly or unknowingly faceless, voiceless, and to some degree, powerless. This was especially true for women, women of color, and for those without institutional power and position. I thought then, as I do now, that if I were to avoid becoming a faceless, voiceless, powerless, invisible person, I would need to cultivate a way of being present and heard in a room that was unaccustomed to taking a person like me seriously.

After thirty-two years of work and ministry in public and private institutions of higher education, I believe I have six strategies that reflect my education, training, and experience that work well for me and give me the best opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the discussion, to the decision-making processes, and to be heard.

Strategy I

I try to understand and recognize the norms that guide and direct the conversation and decision-making processes of the group.

I prepare for meetings by reading the materials, becoming acquainted with the organizers of the meeting, and—in most cases—by having a conversation with the chair or the person who invited me to participate in the meeting.

Strategy II

I practice the art of asking the strategic question.

In high school journalism class, I learned that reporters think about data and information by asking the questions, who, what, where, when, how, and why. Thus, in many ways, I'm expecting the conversation to answer these questions; if one of these questions is left unanswered, I ask it.

Strategy III

I often lift up for myself and others the perspectives each individual brings to the table as a necessary part of the process.

These perspectives include the lens through which we encounter the world, our specific gifts and talents, our training, and our approaches to problem solving. My goal is to ask those of us making decisions—have we considered all of the relevant information and necessary perspectives needed to make a decision, or have we once again acquiesced to the loudest voice or the squeaky wheel?

Strategy IV

I state the obvious.

I am an African American woman. I don't speak for all African American women, but by stating the obvious in a room where I am often the only woman and only person of color, I believe it helps others to recognize that there is an unacknowledged dominate perspective being used as a default for decision-making. It's an opportunity to ask those in the room to make space at the table for new perspectives and ideas.

Strategy V

I seek mentors and conversation partners to help me unpack my experiences.

These mentors include men and women from all walks. Simply put, I need people of like mind and spirit with whom to converse. They help to expand my thinking and enrich my perspective, and, frankly, they tell me when I'm off track.

Strategy VI

I participate in activities that are meaningful to my work and that are worthy of the sacrifices made by my family.

Thus, when invited to participate in a gathering, join a board, or serve on a committee, I conduct a self-assessment. Can I add value to the conversation? Can I make a meaningful contribution to the task at hand? Is there something I can learn to better support my work and ministry? If the answer is yes, I commit my time and talent. If the answer is no, I decline to participate. It's important to acknowledge that at one point in my life, receiving such invitations were critical opportunities to grow and learn as I navigated my professional contexts. Later, these invitations became important symbols of personal growth and professional affirmation.

Today, I want to know if those inviting me into the conversation are doing so because they value a wide variety of perspectives or if something else is involved. In either case, I commit my time, talent, energy, and resources in places that are not seeking a faceless, voiceless, invisible person at the table.

In closing, there is much I have learned about leadership and leadership in higher education since my observations as a young college student and professional; some of it I have tried to capture with these practical strategies, but other observations and learnings are not as easily captured. These observations and learnings reveal that institutions do enact policies that ensure access and equity, however they also reveal how difficult it is for individuals employed by these same institutions to relinquish their embedded power to open up spaces for different voices and understandings of leadership. These observations and learnings reveal how emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausting it can be to fight the good fight not *once*, not *twice*, but *daily*. These observations and learnings reveal the ways in which others align to marginalize black and brown women to secure their own voice and power. Navigating this difficult terrain requires spiritual, emotional, and political self-awareness as well as the above practical strategies for exercising one's own voice and engaging in authentic leadership. The ATS 20th Anniversary Women in Leadership Celebration was a much needed opportunity to start a conversation about these important issues. It was hoped that this gathering would serve as a pathway to a much larger conversation about the ways in which women of color enlarge the decision-making table and the ways in which institutions align their priorities to ensure that all voices are heard, respected, and ultimately valued.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have shared these thoughts with those attending the anniversary celebration. I offer a word of appreciation to Dr. Mary H. Young, director of leadership education for The Association of Theological Schools, for the invitation. I salute all the women who accepted the invitation to share their leadership reflections—I was inspired by your presence and our conversations.

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A Robust Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Critical for Seminary Leadership

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I was the first woman seminary principal in my denomination's history, as well as the first woman to sit regularly with other heads of theological schools as part of an ecumenical consortium. In these two situations, I quickly realized that if I was to be effective as principal, I needed to practice what had become second nature during my career as a New Testament scholar. I needed to begin to translate a feminist method of reading the biblical text into an interpretive model for reading the office of principal.

My appointment had been contested. In our polity, the recommendation of an individual for principal by the Board of Governors must be forwarded to and approved by the denomination's highest court. Although well supported by the Board, the process of my appointment stalled, and the debate at the judicatory level took so long that one of my friends later intimated: "Do you realize that the discussion to appoint you took longer than the discussion to approve our denomination's new subordinate standard of faith?"

This experience was hurtful, as throughout the delay in process, and rumors abounded. There had to be something profoundly wrong with me. What was it that was suspect? Was my Christology malformed, my ecclesiology misguided, my private life wanting or what? I found all this difficult to understand as I had faithfully served the church for several years, both in congregational ministry and in academic administration. What made it even more challenging was that very few questioned whether the problem was simply that I was a woman and the first to be recommended for such an appointment.

I came to realize that this experience had more of an effect on me than I originally thought. During the first couple of years, rightly or wrongly, I sensed that there were those in the denomination who expected me to fail and fail miserably, so I set out to prove them wrong, sacrificing relationships and personal time for work. In these early years, what made

life bearable was the wisdom and counsel gleaned through meetings and shared experiences with many of the women encountered at the ATS Women in Leadership events.

As I look back, some of these early experiences are quite laughable. For example, as I prepared for the Installation Service, my modelling of the traditional principal's gown brought gales of laughter from my administrative assistant. It obviously had been made for one of my predecessors – a rather large, and very tall man. On another occasion, when I arrived at a conference (not ATS), those greeting me looked rather taken aback. I later discovered that they had assumed I was a man and had assigned me a male roommate.

More seriously, I soon realized there were aspects of my way of being and functioning that I needed to evaluate. Rereading several articles about the different criteria by which the actions of men and women are judged, I realized that there were a number of things to which I needed to pay attention. Most helpful was the discovery that my language could be subject to miscommunication. For example, in my previous work in congregational ministry, I was the one charged with recruiting volunteers. I was very good not only in persuading people they had the gifts needed for that task, but also in mentoring them for success in the work to be accomplished. I realized that I carried this style into my work as principal so much so that I rarely used imperatives. I consistently sought to be supportive and to find a middle ground in any conflict. My *modus operandi* of seeking to be inclusive in my dealings with staff, focusing on persuasion, and being suggestive rather than decisive, led to a lack of clarity as to my expectations and uncertainty about what I *really* wanted.

I also came to recognize, through the assistance of a colleague, how family systems theory could help me to understand what I was experiencing. In other words, through my appointment a significant change had occurred within the institutional family system, and my lack of clarity and precision about what that would mean was causing stress in which interlocking triangulation seemed to thrive.[1] It also provided encouragement for those who, prior to my appointment, had significant and mostly informal power to continue to exercise it—often in ways to protect the *status quo*—the opposite of what I believed to be best practices for a school

1 Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guildford Press, 1985), 268–271.

needing to make significant academic and financial decisions about its future. All of this led me to the conclusion that I must begin to ask more questions about what was actually happening at the school both *through* me and *around* me.

I trust that this introduction begins to situate the title I have chosen. My academic career was founded on principles of feminist biblical interpretation, particularly the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Central and of first importance to her method is the interpretive principle that she names a hermeneutics of suspicion. Included also in her earliest work are three other hermeneutical principles—those of remembrance, proclamation, and imagination.[2] Her interpretive model has developed over the decades, moving from a focus on women and how their full participation in the earliest church should be recognized, to a greater focus on paradigms of meaning through which systems and institutions determine what is true and normative and what is not. One of her works addresses the politics of biblical study and another focuses on how the discipline is being taught in seminaries.[3] In all these matters, a hermeneutics of suspicion remains a central part of any and every methodological addition or change. It is, however, the addition of three hermeneutical moves—conscientization, a critical analysis of systems of domination and transformation for action, which, in her 1999 work, provided me with an interpretive model that I could use to understand better the office of the principal and the work of giving leadership in a theological school.[4]

For Fiorenza to engage in a hermeneutics of suspicion is not just simply to ask questions, but to ask questions that seek to uncover and challenge deep-seated interpretive frameworks that value a particular construction of knowledge with its prejudices, assumptions, and obscure

2 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Construction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1983). Each of these has a particular meaning: "remembrance" is about restructuring knowledge to see new perspectives; "proclamation" is an evaluation of whether what is concluded from the evidence is healthy or unhealthy—who does it impact negatively; "imagination" is about visions of what is not yet—it is setting out creatively what we can not yet put into words.

3 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999); *Democratizing Biblical Studies: Toward an Emancipatory Educational Space* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2009).

4 The model in *Rhetoric and Ethic* includes seven interpretive moves: Conscientization, Critical Analysis of Domination, Suspicion, Reconstruction or Remembering, Assessment and Evaluation, Reimagination, and Transformation or Action for Change.

new epistemologies. This means being a resistant rather than a compliant reader. As principal, this led me to ask questions about my own enculturation. What had I learned about women's leadership by being a first child, a daughter, in a traditional Irish minister's family, my every action and word subject to critique by the whole congregation? I discovered that I had learned a lot. I learned to be cautious, to be somewhat reserved—one who was careful about assuming too much leadership. I learned much about what appeared to be the acceptable characteristics of being female—humility, acquiescence, about being equal to boys, yet somehow not quite. These distinctions I learned long before I had the vocabulary to name such deception. One story has stayed with me, which I think elaborates some of what I have described. I was six years old and loved to accompany my father on his pastoral visits. One day we were to visit an older couple, and I was reminded numerous times not to speak unless spoken to. Their three grandsons, who were older but close to my age, were visiting. After a very boring few minutes of sitting still and being quiet, I asked if they would like to play cricket. Reluctantly, they agreed, and I set about organizing us. In the background, I could hear their grandmother in a loud voice say to my father: "Reverend, you are going to have to watch that one. She is an awfully bossy little girl."

Fortunately, my father encouraged me to think critically, to move outside this limited and limiting frame of reference to find my own agency; in effect, to ask probing questions about whether what was considered "true" actually constituted "truth." Even so, this early enculturation remains strong throughout one's life, and as principal—particularly, in the midst of contentious voices—I would find myself questioning this "other" knowledge only to discover in hindsight that it represented years of accumulated experience and wise counsel (often referred to with derision as "women's intuition") that should be acted upon.

In the social sciences, until recently, the study of work and behaviour has been limited to men's experience—indeed, not only men's but white men's—creating an even greater level of complexity for women in leadership who are of other ethnicities and races. This incompleteness led to

> ". . . the tendency to perceive separate spheres and separate characteristics and qualities for men and for women. Much of the 'research' conducted within these models served

> to rationalize and justify inequality, and even helped to create it."[5]

While many of these distinctions have been investigated and challenged in the intervening years, it is still accepted by social science researchers that signs of symbolic segregation do exist.[6] I believe—and know from negative experiences—that women in senior leadership should not dismiss such research, in that these symbols can imperil our leadership particularly when significant change is introduced into the institutional system or when conflict needs to be managed. At the end of this work, which I recognize is somewhat dated, but continues to serve as an important reminder, Cynthia Epstein states:

> "…whether the creation and maintenance of distinctions are a self-conscious activity of the powerful whose interests are served by them or whether differences once created by intent or accident become perpetuated through a process of institutionalization, it seems clear most gender differences are socially created and therefore may be socially altered."[7]

My experience is that I have often had to make two value judgments as to how to engage in meetings. First, like any of my male colleagues, I needed to be well prepared and, if truthful, I generally felt that I needed to be even better prepared. Second, I found myself often evaluating and interpreting the culture of the discussion with a *hermeneutics of suspicion*—that is, with the understanding that in any given situation, what I said or how I said it, when I spoke or didn't speak, and what I wore or projected through my mannerisms had the potential to limit my voice and keep it from being heard the way I intended.

My work with Fiorenza's later model of interpretation had led me to an engagement with the field of academic study focused on decolonizing minds. Its exponents begin by setting out a colonial/modernity epistemology, what Fiorenza's model would call "conscientization" and a critical

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5 Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, *Deceptive Distinctions: Sex, Gender, and the Social Order* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 1.

6 Ibid., 215–231.

7 Ibid., 231.

analysis of a system of domination. By focusing on an epistemology of "othering," their research identifies characteristics of a Eurocentric understanding of the world, characteristics that continue to impact so many aspects of public and private decision-making. These include, among other characteristics, the following: that Europe (later extended to nations considered to be like Europe such as the US and Canada) was more highly developed—politically, economically, culturally, and socially—than other regions or civilizations; that this development was the result of Europe's innate qualities and not from any external influence. A corollary of this understanding is that having detached itself from its violent and exploitative colonial history, Europe as normative is never itself the problem; such comes from outside forces.[8] These researchers focus on how such powerful myths can be disrupted.

I have been reminded of this each year at our convocation when a representative from the university describes the founding of universities in Paris, Berlin, and London, praising the values of the more progressive world that they embody. To be sure, there is truth in what is articulated, but also there are epistemological implications in the way such a system organizes knowledge and what it means to sanction certain values and dismiss others. De-colonial thinkers conclude that, too often, we are blind to these epistemological implications.

Important for my work as principal was the clarity that an understanding of colonial difference be brought to various aspects of seminary leadership, including that of gender, where those who are "othered" can be doubly marginalized.[9] For example, those engaged in subaltern studies affirm that such groups come to inhabit the world in tension with this mythic world produced by the activity of ruling groups.[10] They exist in what W.D. Mignolo calls a "position of exteriority to Eurocentric, modern reason in which 'exteriority doesn't mean the outside'" or to be free from

8 Aaron Gordon, *Eurocentric Archival Knowledge Production and Decolonizing Archival Theory* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, York University, 2014), 36–40.

9 Ary Fernández-Álban, "De-Colonial Thought: An Exploration of Its Developments and Implications for Latin American Liberation Theologies (Comprehensive Examination No. 3)," unpublished paper (Toronto: Emmanuel College, 2012), 4.

10 Gordon, 10.

the Eurocentric "set of terms that function as a reference point."[11] The call from these academics is to create an "epistemic disobedience" or, to read as Mignolo states, from "positions of exteriority" to the Eurocentric epistemological paradigm.[12]

While seemingly far removed from the day-to-day administrative functions of a principal's office, I have used these insights to help me focus on what is going on within me and within a school where gender and/or ethnic and racial diversity can consciously or unconsciously be judged from this Eurocentric myth. It is as obvious as failing to see how the "other" is impacted by faculty syllabi, admission practices, the awarding of scholarships, or student evaluation. In addition, as religious plurality in the student body increases, so also it does in the classroom. This has been and will continue to be challenging for every school principal, president, or dean. During my tenure as principal, it was a reminder that I needed to continue to be alert to new ways of using a hermeneutics of suspicion to name accommodations or silences and erasures that have resulted from assumptions and prejudice about what is normative. In Fiorenza's model, such interpretive work is related both to an analysis of structures of domination and to a different way (like that called for by Gordon, Fernández, and Mignolo) of reconstructing or remembering.

An important aspect to note is Fiorenza's continuing affirmation of the critical nature of imagination. How she defines this has been significant for my work as principal. She compares it to the imagination necessary for the construction of a scientific experiment, which speculates for what it is hoped in the absence of proof. For Fiorenza, "what we have not first imagined can never be our reality."

Imagining what is not yet! For me, this has been and continues to be what leadership is all about. It pushes us to inspire a school to envisage its mission in new ways, whether that means putting resources into enriching global partnerships; imagining programs that go beyond the traditional discipline-based model; or forming graduates who have the imagination to lead the church into what is not yet. These are some of the possibilities that I aspired to in my leadership. Was I successful?

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11 Ibid., Quoting W. D. Mignolo, "The Enduring Enchantment (Or the Epistemic Privilege of Modernity and Where to Go from Here)," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 4, 947.

12 Fernández-Álban, 8.

As in so many things, success was limited. Even after eighteen years, I could be conflicted by the simplest of systems upheavals, and I was often distracted from what might be by what was. Many times, daily administration demanded that I focus on the urgent at the expense of the important. I often failed to see how much my academic and administrative work continued to be embedded in epistemological frameworks, holding me—more importantly, the school—in their biased structures and values. My biggest disappointment is that after thirty-five years in ministry—twenty-four of them in senior academic leadership—these obstacles still demand significant energy, creating the need for ongoing insight and discernment particularly for women seeking a senior leadership position.

Surely, this was why a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the ATS Women in Leadership initiative was so important. It was a time to proclaim that all is not what it should be, that women still do not form a critical mass at the senior levels of seminary leadership, and that in many situations not only are we a minority but, in some cases, the only one. This event provided the opportunity to look back to what was, to evaluate how we got from there to here. It was also a time for a "truthful" assessment of the present. Why has the number of women as presidents or principals not grown in proportion to the number of schools joining ATS? What's next? What are we being called to imagine that we can't quite put into words? How will we move forward in effecting the transformation required, achieving what Fiorenza has called "an emancipatory educational space"?[13]

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13 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Democratizing Biblical Studies: Toward an Emancipatory Educational Space* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2009), Subtitle.

Beyond Belonging: A Reflection on Vision, Values, and Vulnerability of Women Called to Lead, Extraordinarily

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Over the span of my conscious life, I have observed women in leadership positions from school principals to PTA presidents. I have watched them, as little girls do, when nurturing themselves into womanhood. The nature of these women in leadership had little to do with rising through the ranks as much as being agile and responsive enough to affect change, given the complexities of their institutions and social contexts. Much like the participants in The Black Club Women's Movements, a special kind of leadership was required in situations where groups of individuals, particularly families, sought to survive and thrive in social contexts that were inhospitable. These women invited making a distinction between management and leadership, in much the same way that historian Catherine Albanese made distinctions between *ordinary religion* and *extraordinary religion* in *America: Religions and Religion.* Designed to maintain the status quo, ordinary religion paralleled and nurtured values reflected in the larger society; extraordinary religion, more prophetic in composition, unapologetically positioned as co-architects with commitments to building a world hospitable to sustaining life while celebrating the beauty of diversification.[1]

As we consider women in leadership, this same delineation seems appropriate. *Ordinary leaders* are placed in institutions committed to trying to either survive or maintain previously achieved statuses, which often means continued commitments to values centered on acquisition of objects and commodification of end users to reach a bottom line or to merely

1 Catherine L. Albanese, *America, Religions and Religion* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992).

survive. Committed to caring for the institution, *ordinary leadership* necessarily takes the position of manager wherein the greatest achievement is having been invited to the table with hopes of establishing a sense of belonging. In contrast, *extraordinary leaders* are not focused so much on belonging, but co-building. Equipped with vision grounded in the mission of the institution, *extraordinary leaders* exact an approach toward building a sustainable future characterized by balance and harmony. Based on that vision, these leaders are often apostolic in their approaches. They begin to either build foundations for new institutions or build onto previously laid infrastructures focusing on and accountable to not only the "now" but the "next."

Shifting social and economic complexities and political pulls toward the ordinary, have erupted in a pivotal moment for religious institutions in general—and theological schools in particular. The concern is no longer leadership preparation that carves out spaces where women can belong; where the biggest concern is breaking through the glass ceiling in order to have access to the next level of being ordinary. The present challenge for The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is how to prepare leadership capable of standing in the gap for communities and families overwhelmed by debt-based economies and seduced into pledging allegiance to a political-religious ideology fueled by unthinkable "isms," while simultaneously having to choose between employment and access to breathable air, clean water, and a balanced sustainable food and ecosystem. How do you make ready institutions to receive extraordinary leaders who may deliver them from calculations of survival based on commodifying millennials and diverse ethnic groups in hopes of sustaining operations? How do we risk—as a guiding force for theological education—access to resources, and perhaps even survival, for the sake of pushing toward the *extraordinary*?

Simultaneously, as women in leadership, we are invited to honestly assess our postures on and placement in leadership roles. Are we being prepared to be caretakers of institutions that maintain the status quo? Have we been invited to leadership positions to be custodians of institutions motivated by commodification of peoples and resources, masked as ministry? Does all of our energy have to be used in order to carve out a sense of belonging? Or, is there something within, pushing us to be extraordinary leaders that cannot be satisfied with having a seat at the table while being promoted to keep quiet? Belonging or Building?

Some of us have the luxury of being ordinary leaders while some of us feel the hand of God on our backs, guiding us into territory for which we have never anticipated, consciously prepared, or dreamed. It is for this woman that I share these reflections in terms of ATS leadership development supporting moving beyond belonging to building. As I consider my own trajectory and those that have nurtured me into this reflection, there are three constituent *elements of extraordinary leadership* that override our deep-seeded need to belong in order to unapologetically build; *being vision-centered, values-committed*, and *vulnerability-cautious*.

Vision-centered leadership

As part of my scholarship, I have recently been exploring the concept of what I have named the *tower of moral tutoring*. Each society builds on a particular system of ideas or vision, if you will, that is translated from idea to lived reality by constructing systems of governance, institutions, and media that simultaneously tutor, normalize, and build the vision to ensure its continuity, social order, and existence into perpetuity. Much like skyscrapers, these *towers of moral tutoring* are built to sway but never to bend nor break, though winds blow and the ground shakes.

In this study, I have been confronted with the reality that much of our global world— including our theological perspectives—is built on ideologies of insufficiency, such that we are formed to never be satisfied while simultaneously exploiting all of nature and humanity in an "abortive search for somebodiness." In other words, this type of wrongheadedness makes hierarchies essential, all creation is commodified, and difference is deemed as deficient.

As we consider leadership development that transitions from belonging to building, one of the most urgent of our realities is to constructively find ways to shift the mission of our institutions and administrative assignments from merely surviving in this world of insatiability to developing infrastructures based on the reality of sufficiency. There is enough for all of us. Therefore, the vision must align with what Delores Williams claims as the ministerial vision of Jesus, that is, restoration of relationships between God, humanity, and creation in *Sisters in the Wilderness*.[2] As a practical

2 Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993). Print.

example, thirteen women, from a cross-section of cultures, ethnicities, and spiritual practices interviewed in the book, *Grandmothers Counsel the World*, offer a vision outlining "the essential elements in creating a healthy future: how to heal families, how to end war, the proper relationship between men and women, integrating traditional and indigenous medicine, maintaining the Earth's balance, and bringing forth the collective power of wise women by deepening our relationship with the feminine."[3]

Recently, I was invited as director to redesign the doctor of ministry program at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University. I did not start with the question of finances and increasing student numbers. The vision that God gave me was in the form of three questions: What would happen if we designed a program that addressed urgent matters facing communities? What would it mean for students to come to a place where their ministry research could be translated into resources for the communities they love? What would it mean to build a program focused on destroying poverty in light of the fact that poverty is an affront to the God of provisions? I translated the answers to these questions into the vision for the program.

This sense of *vision-centered leadership* is aligned with the radical nature of the church in the book of Acts. All were invited to pool their resources so they could create spaces where needs were provided without exploitation. This stands as the first installment of the Great Commission, where the world is not a geographic location as we have supposed, but is an insatiable global political economy from which people need relief. Therefore, in terms of skills building, as extraordinary leaders we require tools to facilitate shared-vision construction, grounded in the creation of an alternative reality that extricates itself from being caretakers of ideological and theological insufficiency.

Values-consistent leadership

Engaging in vision-centered leadership always keeps in mind an end that aligns with transformation of people's lives. Moving from vision to lived-reality requires *values-consistent leadership*. As an ethicist, values are the building blocks foundational for transitioning theory into constructed

3 Carol Schaefer, *Grandmothers Counsel the World: Women Elders Offer Their Vision for Our Planet* (Boston, MA: Trumpeter Books, 2006).

reality. They are the collaborative "how" to the "what" of vision. In our biblical narrative, it is the relationship between *imago dei* or the "who of God" in alignment with the *similitudo dei*, the collaborative "how of God." Counseling psychologist Brian Hall, in his work *Values Shift: A Guide to Personal and Organizational Transformation*, develops a very practical approach to understanding the intersection between values and human and organizational development.[4] Specifically related to extraordinary institutions is consistency among vision, values, and leadership style. For "pre-conventional" and "conventional" organizations, leadership styles range, for the most part, between authoritarian and manager. For organizations that are "post-conventional" and building toward a "global ethic and morality," values-consistent leadership tends toward being collaborators, servants, or visionaries.

In my observations, values—at least rhetorically of organizations evinced by the presence of women in leadership—suggests inclusivity and maybe hints at equality. In Hall's delineation of the phases and stages of development, this rhetoric would suggest institutions are post-conventional, committed to creating a sustainable order with values of unity and diversity. However, in governance, infrastructure, and financial support, hierarchies, uniformity, loyalty, and fidelity are the values best characterizing many of our institutional existences and therefore limiting organizational development to "conventionality." As such, leadership is circumscribed to manager or, at best, facilitates and becomes incapable of sustained efforts toward inclusion beyond tokenism.

Over the course of thirty years, as project engineer, scholar, and administrator—before I even knew clearly that I was operating from a values-centered understanding of leadership—I have resigned from positions not over inequities in pay nor demands of the work itself. I left, sometimes rather abruptly with no new plan in hand, because the vision-rhetoric of the institution was inconsistent with its governance and constitutive approach to leadership.

I raise this issue not as critique, but as potential for research to assess the continuity between *vision-centeredness* and *values-consistent leadership* styles. In other words, do leadership styles of women align with the vision-rhetoric that we claim to espouse? If not, what skill building is required for

4 Brian P. Hall, *Values Shift: A Guide to Personal and Organizational Transformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishing), 2006.

continuity? In the work of Hall, the end of the developmental spectrum is not inclusivity, but a "global ethic and morality" wherein I propose we reconstitute our privilege, as leaders, in order to usher in global harmony built on justice and sustainable economics. Therefore, the question that ought to be raised is, "Are approaches to leadership toward those in our employ, especially related to younger generations, other women of color, and those embodying the complexities of gender identity in alignment with the vision of the world that we would create for ourselves?" Are we *values-consistent leaders* or have we squandered vision-centered opportunities by resorting to policing and ruling over others, in much the same way as those whom we purport to critique?

Vulnerability-cautious leadership

I will quickly confess that *vulnerability-cautious leadership*, at first glance, seems like an attempt to maintain literary creativity using alliteration. However, as I reflected on what I think is central in *extraordinary leadership*, especially as we seek to align vision with rhetoric and values-consistencies, there must be a cautious awareness of being vulnerable. Not necessarily in the sense of being harmed, but the fallout of being underfunded, under-supported, isolated at times, and perhaps more inconspicuously seduced into exceptionalism. Being an *extraordinary leader* often means experiencing resistance because change is a difficult endeavor especially within religious organizations where convention is cast as righteousness. For these institutions, there is the constant proclivity to fight against what could be and the continual investment in rebuilding the *ordinary*. Rooted in foundations of theological education and orthodox American Christianity the way that it dawned the shores of the colonial past, many of our institutions were designed to form an elite class of religious leaders equipped to maintain social order.

There is constant external resistance to transformation. Exacerbating the condition, perhaps to a larger degree, is a deep desire to tend to the ordinary. The formative reality of women, whether in leadership or not, is that many women—especially those born to families with some modicum of privilege—have been morally tutored to be caretakers of that which already exists; and to some degree finding our identity in the ordinary. Therefore, doing the work of the extraordinary at times exhausts to the core. There are days when one committed to *extraordinary leadership*

would rather lie in the comfortable arms of the *ordinary*, just to feel as if she belongs.

It is this internal vulnerability that represents the largest risk of aborted vision and suspended values. While being innovative in one aspect of leadership, there is the tendency to blur vision and rely on survivalist values when our need for acceptance or desire for ease outweighs the courage to walk a path unpaved. Acceptance is important to who we are; the challenge of *vulnerability-cautious leadership* is to find a community of accountability that demands and nurtures being vision-centered and values-consistent, unapologetically. In so many movements toward radical liberation and freedom, those at the helm make personal decisions that are incongruent with the mission in order to have a sense of release and belonging resulting in endangered or truncated movements.

For this reason, *vulnerability-cautious leadership* requires taking precautions against shirking back by having a system of accountability that demands and nurtures the ability to hold true to vision, values, and personal integrity. This created community may often be found in the safe space of a mentoring circle. Mentoring circles are relationship-centered gatherings of intergenerational, cross-preparation, equally-valued women wholly committed to supporting the life and work of each woman in the circle. If possible, it is beneficial to convene a real face-to-face group. However, if time and space limit such an opportunity, each *extraordinary leader* must identify at least two other women with whom mentor-mentee relationships are formed. At least one woman should be older and one younger. They have to be women with whom we may be vulnerable—the kind of women who both celebrate and guide.

While at Temple University as a graduate student, I was blessed to be a part of a mentoring circle. Katie Cannon, a womanist scholar and professor of religion, convened a group of Black women graduate students and women from the community who served in faith-based leadership capacities. The group was intergenerational and cross-discipline. Some of us were at the beginning of our graduate programs, others were at the dissertation phase, while others did the day-to-day heavy lifting of nurturing families. Gathering once a month, the agenda was the same—introduce yourself and tell us about your work. Simple yet powerful. Monthly, we nurtured one another and we prayed for those who were ready to kill their advisors. We encouraged and gave guidance to those who seemed stagnated on the journey. There was skill building in power dynamics, strategies for

amassing allies, and developing know-how in navigating difficult terrain. We were all mentors and mentees, simultaneously. We knew one another's work and personalities. We were all vulnerable because we dared to be extraordinary, but we all finished with vision and values in tact because we risked loving one another, our own work, and ourselves, regardless.

Vulnerability-cautious leadership requires an investment, perhaps even love, when love is defined as the ability to discern the potential in another and invest in fulfillment without calculation of one's own gain. Focusing on love prevented horizontal violence and power struggles endemic to the *ordinary*. Focusing on our own work prevented the potential outcomes of mentor-mentee relationships where the senior drives the junior; requiring unrequited respect and development of a "mini-me" forged through unchecked servitude and unmitigated jealousy masked as mentorship.

When I reflect on my development as a leader, it was and is mentoring that prepared and catapulted me into next levels. In these moments of non-contact virtual interface, mentorship is quite possibly the element of *extraordinary leadership* to which we must give greater attention on how to do it effectively, perhaps ensuring values alignment. It is powerful to embrace two elements of the triumvirate, being *vision-centered* and *values-consistent*, but without clear understanding of being *vulnerability-cautious*, the extraordinary easily slips into the ordinariness of constructed belonging.

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From Foreign Bodies in Academic Space to Embodied Spirit in *Personas Educadas:* or, How to Prevent "Tourists of Diversity" in Education[1]

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They say that academic administration is an honorable calling. It certainly is a rewarding one. It can also be a difficult one; at least, it has been for me. I always thought this was so because I stumbled into the world of teaching, and consequently, theological education. At least, I believed I stumbled into it. Forty years ago, when I was a recent graduate from veterinary school, the government of Puerto Rico called in its chips for service in return for its scholarship support. It wanted to begin a veterinary technology program, and I was to be the "go to" person to get it done. I had no training in teaching and certainly none in academic administration. Veterinary medicine trained me to distinguish viruses, not curricula. I could discuss the latest histopathology techniques, but not the latest creative teaching methods. I eventually learned to teach, to organize schedules, and to develop budgets through trial and error. The program was little understood and underfunded—I was its only full-time faculty and also its de facto administrator. I attributed my difficulties to these factors.

With time, I realized I had not "stumbled" into education at all. I was called. Through the affirmation of this vocation and of my gifts for teaching, and with the guidance and mentoring of those who would later become colleagues and were already friends, I began to hone my skills in this new profession. It was one that I never expected to practice, but found myself

1 This essay was originally published in *Teaching for a Culturally Diverse and Racially Just World*, ed. Eleazar Fernandez (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2024) and adapted for the ATS presentation. My thanks to A.J. van den Blink for the phrase "tourists of diversity" in "Empathy and Diversity: Problems and Possibilities," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 3, no. 1 (Summer 1993): 5.

enjoying immensely. I slowly and truly became a teacher. Yet, in spite of becoming better at my craft, of understanding such terms as "pedagogy," "teaching," "learning," "education," and yes, even "curriculum;" in spite of learning creative methods of teaching both from books and colleagues; my early years of teaching each semester in the United States presented difficulties. As I now move into the world of academic administration, I find a sense of "wash, rinse, repeat," meaning that similar issues I encountered in the classroom are now being encountered in the office and in the various administrative roles I inhabit. I find myself, disconcertingly so, back at the "starting line" of issues I thought that three and a half decades in the field had finally overcome.

During my first semester at an institution where I taught for fifteen years, I was verbally harassed and physically intimidated by a student. The situation escalated to the point that the dean and president of the seminary had to intervene. It almost seemed that each term thereafter, someone was at the dean's office lodging a new complaint against me. The initial sympathy of the then dean turned to suspicion. I detected in the hesitancy of her demeanor the unspoken question: "What is *wrong* with this new professor?" It has taken much reflection, much prayer, many conversations with colleagues of color—Latinx and non-Latinx—to realize that what I was experiencing went beyond the personal. In this essay, I discuss what it means to be a "foreign body" in the educational spaces by first examining what it means in the teaching space. I locate this narrative within the primary argument: that teachers and administrators of color—particularly women of color—are marked "foreign bodies" in academic spaces because its so-called hallowed halls are not neutral, but rather inherently racist, kyriarchal, and inhospitable spaces for difference. Until we begin to address the foundational institutional assumptions of the educational space, teachers and administrators of color, and particularly women, will continue to experience what Carol B. Duncan refers to as a "kind of casual violence to our psyches."[2] I conclude this essay with a "spirituality of education." From the perspective of a Latina *evangélica*, I argue that theological education must intentionally create a hospitable place—a sacred place—that nurtures diverse *presencia*, and thereby prepare *personas educadas* who

2 Carol B. Duncan, "Visible/Invisible: Teaching Popular Culture and Vulgar Body in Black Religious Studies," *Being Black, Teaching Black: Politics and Pedagogy in Religious Studies*, ed. Nancy Lynne Westfield (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 14.

can establish relations of hospitality, particularly with those perceived as other.

Space—neutral ground, web of power, or place of relations?

One of the earliest books about teaching I encountered was Parker Palmer's *To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. In it, he expounds on his now famous dictum, "to teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced."[3] Yet, years later—battered and wiser—I realize that while this seems to state a profound and altruistic truism, there are a number of questionable assumptions behind this statement. The most fundamental assumption is that space is neutral. It is not. Space is not an inert vacuum. Space is occupied; it is a context. We do not simply exist in space. We "take place" in dimensions of time and space. We create a web of relationships. How we are organized in space is an expression of those relationships. Space therefore has sociopolitical, economic, and religious significance.[4] Those of us who have grown up in *barrios*, or who have participated in schools with broken chalkboards, outdated books, and overcrowded classrooms know that space is neither innocent nor neutral. Space can be sacred, but it can also represent structural "powers and principalities"—humanly constructed social institutions that seem to take on a life of their own and appear to be "natural" in the hegemonic influence they wield. No space we think we create is neutral. We bring to such spaces the biases, worldviews, and yes, embodied beings—and therefore, relations—that we are. We, thus, shape space. This means that the embodied community that is found in that space is not just any community, nor is the alleged "truth" that arises some spontaneous and profound insight.[5] It demands that we discern the spirits of truth that arise.

3 Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (NY: HarperCollins, 1993), xii.

4 Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 6.

5 Carrette and King would argue that in the age of globalization and "neoliberal ideology" this is particularly true. See Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2005), 10–11.

One must always approach with intentionality the purpose of the space, the community, and whatever truth one seeks.

When I was growing up, racism was often defined in terms of how it victimized people of color. Today we have come to understand racism in broader terms. Racism is a systemic structure of power and privilege that empowers a dominant group through institutional means—legal, political, religious, economic, communication, cultural, and other foundational social structural means. Through a process of "racial formation," the United States has produced "structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race" as well as of class, gender, sexual orientation, and other "regions" of hegemony that appear to be "natural" or at least, make some kind of "common sense."[6] This process has led white dominate culture—particularly that based on rich, heterosexual male Protestants—to believe that its worldview is the norm and standard for everyone, and that its privilege is its "just rewards."[7] Whoever does not conform to that norm or that standard is "other," and by definition, "alien." In such a context, difference is a "weapon" that is wielded for exclusion and denigration.[8]

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza defines kyriarchy as pyramidal multiplicative stratifications of dominance and subordination based on class, gender, and other essentialized categories of power and privilege. When coupled with racism—which includes not just privilege based on color, but that based on culture and religion—kyriarchy creates a series of "interlocking oppressions." These oppressions form a matrix that impacts

6 Michael Omi, and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (NY: Routledge, 1994), 60, 68, 71. See also Joseph Barndt, *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America* (MN: Fortress Press, 2007), *passim*.

7 Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability*, rev. ed. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2009), 15.

8 Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 31. This was underscored recently with the alleged statements of the current President of the United States referring to geographic spaces that have majority people of color as being "s**tholes."

the communal living of most who reside in the United States.[9] These so-called "–isms" that plague our society and damage our communities are not simply passed on passively as if they were some giant DNA strand, invisible to the eye. The very system of racial formation and privilege that makes it invisible to the bearer of privilege also inscribes itself in ways to ensure that it is maintained and continued. It does so both overtly and covertly.[10]

Our educational system participates in this process of intentionality. It is a system that is constructed to (pre)serve this culture of power and privilege. If education is the "deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, or sensibilities," as Lawrence Cremin suggests, then our educational system has served the dominant culture well.[11] Charles Foster observes that its purpose is to "empower the full participation of a privileged group" and limit the participation of others.[12] Gloria Ladson-Billings finds that

> ". . . schools, society, and the structures and products of knowledge are designed to create individuals who internalize the dominant worldview . . .The hegemony of the dominant paradigm makes it more than just another way to view the world—it claims to be the only legitimate way to view the world."[13]

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9 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 115. Also, Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, "Beyond Diversity: Cultural Competence, White Racism Awareness, and European-American Theology Students," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 5, no. 3 (July 2002): 144; and Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, "Women of Color in Academe: Living with Multiple Marginality," *The Journal of Higher Education* 73, no. 1 (January/February 2002): 79. I would add that given the reality of colonization and globalization, recently defined as the new form of racism, such realities extend well beyond our borders. See Daniel G. Groody, Globalization, *Spirituality, and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), particularly chapter 1.

10 For more, see Rodney D. Coats, "Covert Racism in the USA and Globally," *Sociology Compass* 2, no. 1 (January 2008): 208-231. Also, Joseph Barndt, *Dismantling Racism* (Augsburg Books, 2009), 88, 93, 156.

11 As cited by Charles R. Foster, "Diversity in Theological Education," *Theological Education* 38, no. 2 (2002): 24.

12 Ibid.

13 Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Racialized Discourses and Ethnic Epistemologies," *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), 258.

Consequently, the educational space is not neutral. Edward Soja prefers the term "spatiality" to indicate that there is an intentionality of how it is organized and used to ensure the power and privilege of the dominant culture. Whoever enters that space must be well aware that its epistemological assumptions—the epistemological perspectives, ideologies, and insistence on "educational excellence"—are already situated and serve the needs of a privileged group. In this space, knowledge is constructed. In so doing, this space becomes inhospitable to anyone or anything it deems "other." This happens because a discourse is validated in this space, which "includes myths, symbols, [and] language patterns" that ensures that "we understand ourselves 'properly'—that is, hierarchically—classed, raced, and gendered persons."[14] This discourse shapes and validates cultures and legitimizes *a* worldview. In that process, relations are constructed over time. Thus, how we relate to and treat one another as a community is not a happenstance or a graced and fortuitous encounter. It too has been intentionally constructed. Consequently, what is created is not a life-giving space, but one that declares some people as *personae non gratae*. In Spanish, we would say that such people are treated as *sobrajas* (leftovers)—as if they have nothing of worth to contribute to the life of the *communitas*.

Given this reality, it would seem that Palmer's invitation to create a space is not as easy or as innocent of a task as it first seems. The space is already gerrymandered to be a particular space—its community is one that ensures the legitimacy of the truth of a dominant worldview. The way of learning, the truths that are validated, and the very *presencia* (presence) and humanity recognized are those of a privileged group. It is into this space that teachers and administrators of color, particularly women of color, enter. It is in this space that we are called to create community, to teach, to invite that community into a process of learning, and to model community through academic administration. It is in this inhospitable place that we seek to hear and find some modicum of truth, but not simply "truth" as an abstract notion. It is into this constructed space that we enter as embodied people to help form a community of *personas educadas*.

14 Hobgood, 22.

Foreign body in resistant spaces

"Body" is not a neutral term either. It can be defined in myriad ways. From a purely biological perspective, we can be attentive to the various anatomical and physiological systems that comprise "body." From a theological perspective, one can plumb the depths of the Hebraic understanding of *bāśār* or the Pauline use of *sōmā*.[15] Leaving Hellenized Greek, Platonic, Aristotelian, Gnostic, or other anthropologically dualistic interpretations aside—what Eleazar S. Fernandez has rightly called "Manichean hermeneutics"—Christian anthropology has claimed that we human beings do not have bodies but rather *are* bodies.[16] The Hebrew *bāśār* points to the relationality of our embodied existence. The Mexican slang term *carnal*, literally "flesh" or "meat" that can be roughly translated as "sibling" or "intimate friend," actually comes very close to the notion of *bāśār*. To be an enfleshed, that is, an embodied people, is to acknowledge that we are created as social beings—the fact of our enfleshed reality is our *perichoretic ousia*.[17] Insofar as Christian anthropology is concerned, the US myth of the rugged individual has no biblical or theological basis. Recent Trinitarian perspectives, particularly in the understanding of *hypostases* as persons-in-relations and *perichoresis* as diversified and intimate community, would also argue against an individualist anthropology as God's intention for creation.[18]

Thus, embodiment not only points to the fact of our physical existence, it underscores the *who*-ness of our identity as persons and as social beings. It is the site of learning, relating, growing, apprehending, and knowing.

15 Cf. Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 26–31. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 115–117.

16 Eleazar S. Fernández, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 11. See chapter 1 for a deconstruction of this kind of "disembodied knowledge."

17 "Perichoresis" is a technical term that refers to the interpenetration and interdependence of the Three Trinitarian Persons. Catherine Mowry LaCugna used its basic root meanings to evoke the metaphor of an intimate dance in *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (NY: HarperCollins, 1991).

18 For more, see John Zizioulas, "Communion and Otherness," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1994), 357–360. Also Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988). LaCugna, *God for Us.*

This is not knowledge in a modernist reductionist understanding (i.e., an intellectual apprehension of facts), but rather the knowing of intimacy as captured in the biblical concept, *yādā*. It is not reduced to "knowing about," but means truly to know the other. We can only know as an embodied people. We can only know through relationality, and relations take place in a given space.

Embodiment like spatiality, therefore, is not a neutral term. In particular, when the space is racist and kyriarchical such that the constructs of knowing are distorted, bodies are "misinformed"/distorted by what I have coined as "normatizing myths," reaffirmed and believed to be true by the dominant culture.[19] People of color are often familiar with these myths. For African American women, there is the caricature of "Aunt Jemima" or the sacrificial "Help" that lives to serve her white employers. Latinas are welfare "octomoms" or "illegal aliens" who are here to hustle the system. Asian North Americans are perennial foreigners who all look the same or are good at kung fu and math. I could go on. In this sense, bodies are socially constructed. M. Shawn Copeland asserts

> "The social body's assignment of meaning and significance to race and/or gender, sex and/or sexuality of physical bodies influences, perhaps even determines, the trajectories of concrete human lives."[20]

This is why, for Elaine Graham, bodies occupy "the intersection of nature and culture, construction and agency."[21] Embodiment points to this reality of the body as a site of constructed knowledge.

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19 Loida I. Martell, "Reading Against the Grain: Scripture and Constructive Evangélica Theology," manuscript. Daisy L. Machado calls it "historical imagination" or, "how those in the dominant group of a nation who have power to tell its history perceive the other" in her essay titled "Voices from Nepantla: Latinas in US Religious History," *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Explorations for a Just World*, eds. María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado-Nunes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 93.

20 M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 8.

21 Elaine Graham, "Towards a Practical Theology of Embodiment," *Globalisation and Difference: Practical Theology in a World Context*, eds. Paul Ballard and Pam Couture (Fairwater, Cardiff, Great Britain: Cardiff Academic Press, 1999), 80.

Academic space: *brillamos por nuestra ausencia*

Because we live in a racist and kyriarchical society, the overall result of these mythologies is that "difference" is often equated with "inferior," "bad," "impure," "tainted," and even "mindless." It is not only the dominant culture that imbibes and believes such distortions and lies. People of color internalize this bombardment of misinformation/malformation as well. This is why bell hooks prefers to use the term "white supremacy" rather than racism: to underscore that racial and kyriarchal oppressions are not only about a dominant culture that seeks to ensure its power and privilege, but also about the internalization of behaviors and beliefs of the oppressed.[22] What is now "common sense" is the value and recognition given to certain bodies. Beauty, intelligence, good, authority, and even respect become elements of privilege. The dominant culture determines a "norm," which is invariably based on "whiteness."

The halls of academia become a space in which the "norm" is the white, primarily heterosexual male. In such places in particular, and in society in general, the "other" is marked by invisibility and absence, since presence is generally a mark of privilege. In Spanish we say, "*brillamos por nuestra ausencia* (we shine with our absence)!" To be present in a place where the "other" *has no right* to be means that one is marginalized. Consequently, one occupies a peripheral space that is often a site of conflict and despair. People, and especially women of color, are often relegated to such spaces. To occupy such a space marks one as "other"—more often than not perceived to be a minoritized, racialized, ethnic, or "foreigner"—guilty of "transgressing borders." She is an "illegal alien," a "space invader," a "foreign body" occupying spaces that resist her, deny her humanity, and

22 bell hooks, "Talking Race and Racism," *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, (NY: Routledge, 2003), especially 28. See also Jack Glascock and Thomas E. Ruggiero, "The Relationship of Ethnicity and Sex to Professor Credibility at a Culturally Diverse University," *Communication Education* 55, no. 2 (April 2006): 204–205, where they note that students of color have internalized this oppression and often treat faculty of color in the same way as white students.

seek to isolate, quarantine, and if possible, expel her like the virus she is perceived to be.[23]

This space is thus fraught with obstacles that are not visible to the eye. In this space, one must play by the rules of a game that one is never taught, and rules change more often than the rooms in a Harry Potter novel. Palmer considers the act of learning an attempt to control one's reality. However, for people of color, particularly for those of us who are in academia, it is a survival skill.[24] We must learn the "campus culture"/rules of the game to maneuver the political minefield. We learn quickly that the structures that determine scholarly recognition—tenure, promotion, recognition of the worth of one's work, student evaluation forms, and even peer relations—are "controlled by the dominant ideology" of white supremacy.[25] As hooks points out, we also learn that "the irony is that we are not actually allowed to play at the game of race, we are merely pawns in the hands of those who invent the games and determine the rules."[26] It is an exhausting enterprise to be sure. For faculty, and more so for administrators of color, creative energy is often sapped by constant service to others while also focusing on surviving the gauntlet that is the academic space.

To be in this space is not only to be marked as other, it also means to be isolated and alone. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) reported in 2018–2019 that, of its 278 member schools in the United States and Canada, only thirty-two faculty members are Latina, ninety-four are African American, seventy are Asian/Asian North American, three are American Indian, and seven are multiracial women, compared to 1,937 white men and 588 white women.[27] The report does not include any of the

23 David Mills and Mette Louise Berg, "Gender, Disembodiment and Vocation: Exploring the Unmentionables of British Academic Life," *Critique of Anthropology* 30, no. 4 (December 2010): 338. Ann Milliken Pederson, "The Nature of Embodiment: Religion and Science in Dialogue," *Zygon* 45, no. 1 (March 2010): 366. Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom*, 15.

24 Cf. Palmer, 24.

25 Ladson-Billings, 267.

26 hooks, 35.

27 See ATS, "2018–2019 Annual Data Tables," Table 3.1A. This represents a reduction from 2016 when there were 37 Latinas, 103 African American women, and 73 Asian North American full-time faculty members. ATS does not report on the population of administrators by race, ethnicity, or gender, but I suspect that the numbers are proportionately small.

myriad other groups that now represent our diverse populations since it is limited to the Census Bureau's myopic categories. The report does not indicate how many women of color inhabit administrative roles within ATS schools. This isolation of women of color in academia translates into very real consequences.

To begin with, we are often exposed to rejection, disrespectful behavior, ostracism, microaggressions, or sexual harassment (because our bodies are often eroticized in stereotypical fashion), and other unacceptable behavior. Our scholarship and achievements are often ignored or devalued. Too often, rather than seeing a scholar—a biblical scholar, an ethicist, a theologian, and so forth—students and colleagues see a Puerto Rican, an African American, or a Korean first. Additionally, stereotypes associated with ethnicity and race are superimposed upon our bodies. This often also translates into the lack of encouragement or mentoring of women of color into administrative roles. In my last position, during my exit interview, my dean was shocked when I pointed out that I was never offered a position in administration nor encouraged to seek such a position when they were available, while white colleagues in less senior (even part-time) positions were repeatedly encouraged to do so. Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner and others found that, too often, teachers and administrators of color are isolated and overworked—forced to split their allegiances among academia, family, and community concerns, while asked to "represent" their constituencies because they are the "only ones." She also finds that their authorities are undermined often, and the legitimacy of their roles are questioned. This leaves them feeling shattered and exhausted, or in Nancy Lynne Westfield's words, wondering if they should apply for "combat pay."[28]

I can resonate with many of these findings throughout my professional career, not solely in my teaching institution. In spite of the fact that I taught at a school whose student enrollment is fifty percent African American students, each time I walked into a classroom, I was at risk of there being at least one student whose body language indicated his or her displeasure that a Latina had transgressed the teacher space. Each semester, a silent

28 Turner, "Women of Color in Academe," 75, 80–84. Nancy Lynne Westfield, "Called Out My Name, or Had I Known You Were Somebody. . . : The Pain of Fending Off Stereotypes," *Being Black, Teaching Black: Politics and Pedagogy in Religious Studies*, ed. Nancy Lynne Westfield (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 63, 65.

and intense negotiation of establishing my right to inhabit the academic space, be respected as a human being, and be regarded as an intelligent person with knowledge took place. There was a silent and continuous battle against myriad stereotypes and expectations. In this battle, whether I believe it right or not, fair or not, I gained legitimacy only if I brought into the classroom space the disembodied voices of the (predominantly white) bodies that students expected to find. Thus the oft-repeated question to anything new I taught, "Where did you read that?" with the expectation that I legitimize my knowledge by citing "experts" (since I was not deemed one) and that those experts must certainly include Euro-centric/white authors. Only then was there an unconscious exhalation, a sense of relief and legitimacy, an "it must be true-ness." Thus, a disembodied white voice carried more weight than my embodied presence—which, at times, becomes an obstruction for learning—in the classroom. My greatest sin was that I am not white, not male, not tall, and not anything that students were expecting.

Shifting to academic administration, I find myself negotiating in similar fashion. I find myself negotiating a very narrow band of space: invoking the authority that comes with the title, while being true to the embodied person I am—culturally, linguistically, corporeally—and at all times needing to "prove" that I am competent in the field. In an institution where I am no longer alone as an administrator of color, I must nevertheless continue to use caution. Collusion could be perceived where there is none when I am with Latinx colleagues speaking in Spanish in English-dominant contexts. Patriarchy and colonization—and the "disembodied ideals of academia"—are always the subtexts within which administrators of color realistically function.[29]

Thus, again as in my previous teaching positions, I find that I must "earn my keep" and "pay my dues" to prove once again that I have the right to occupy the academic/administrative space I currently inhabit. I am continuously reminded of the "ambiguous authority" and the

29 Mills and Berg, "Gender, Disembodiment and Vocation," 331. See also Tina S. Kazan and her discussion on inscription and incorporation that "discursively reposition" bodies that "disrupt the genre" of the expected, in "Dancing Bodies in the Classroom: Moving Toward an Embodied Pedagogy," *Pedagogy* 5, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 382, 397.

ever-shifting rules of the game that women of color face in academia.[30] It is because of these experiences in academia that I resist Stephen D. Brookfield and Palmer's call to become vulnerable in order to allegedly remove the "psychological, cultural, interpersonal, or pedagogic barriers" that get in the way of learning and administrative advancement, since often the perceived barrier is my embodied self![31] Vulnerability is a luxury that women of color can ill-afford because as "foreign bodies" we are already vulnerable to psychological, spiritual, emotional, and even, albeit rarely, physical assault.

These overt and covert racial/sexist/heterosexist incidents often transcend a given institution and encompass professional venues, such as guild meetings. The hostile space is not necessarily delimited to a given school. Rather, resistance permeates academic spaces in general, and theological education in particular. The difficulty and emotional toll of incidents faced by educators of color, whether in the classroom or meeting room, are exacerbated by the fact that there are so few of us in theological education. Isolation has three consequences: first, there is often no one with whom we can debrief and safely deconstruct these incidents. As indicated by the ATS data, for most faculty of color and even more acutely so for administrators of color, it is often the case that there is no one "like them" with whom they can share their experiences. Second, isolation brings with it the risk of personalizing these incidents. It is easy to blame the teacher or denounce the dean, provost, or president: the conflicts must be arising because of something they are doing wrong and not because the system itself is deficient. Being isolated does not allow academics of color to effectively demonstrate how these spaces are racist and kyriarchical, and thus damaging to all. Third, if there is no community of significant presence or numbers, there is little political power. These incidents continue to occur because faculty and administrators of color, particularly women of color, do not have sufficient political power or voice in theological education in general—and in their respective institutions in particular—to force significant changes. On the contrary, often subject to the racist and kyriarchal power structures already in place, to counter them is to risk being

30 Turner, "Women of Color in Academe," 75.

31 Stephen D. Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 12.

ostracized, being further marginalized, or losing one's position altogether. *Brillamos por nuestra ausencia.*

A spirituality of education: *formando personas educadas*

Thus far, I have shared my experiences as a woman of color in academia and as being a "foreign body" facing resistance in academic spaces. Those are painful experiences to be sure, but they are not the whole story. Neither I nor any of my colleagues of color whom I have met and with whom I have shared are passive victims. On the contrary, these colleagues have modeled grace and strength for me. I can attest that I have remained in academia these thirty-plus years and have, in the midst of experiences of pain, fatigue, and frustration, also experienced great joy, wonderment, and growth. Teaching and administration are not one-way streets, nor are they one-lane roads! This vocation is a multi-dimensional journey, a rich landscape filled with a multiplicity of experiences, events, encounters and—above all—people who enrich our lives along the way. What, then, is the saving grace for administrators and teachers, especially women of color?

I dedicate this last section to writing about academia not from a generic "women of color" or even "Latina" perspective, but from much more concrete context. I am, after all, not "Latina," but a bicoastal, bilingual, multicultural Puerto Rican. I am an *evangélica*, a designation that points to a particular form of popular Protestantism that includes foundational roots of indigenous, African, and Iberian Catholic popular piety and spirituality, and therefore never to be translated as "evangelical"—with its own particular theological, and political connotations. From this perspective, I want to discuss a spirituality of education that includes three important concepts: place, relationality as perichoretic *presencia*, and *persona educada*. It is an embodied spirituality that forms a kind of community that is hospitable to difference because diversity is part of its life-giving essence. It is my contention that as long as our educational system continues to privilege a dominant worldview of racism and kyriarchy, it will produce people with degrees, yes, but not *personas educadas*.

It would seem almost counterintuitive to write about spirituality in an essay on embodiment and racism, but from a Latina *evangélica* perspective, these two things are not oxymoronic in the least. Here, I define spirituality

as all that entails a profound encounter or experience with the divine.[32] From the perspective of *evangélica* theology, it denotes the development of intimate relations with the Triune God, who is Community and therefore Diversity-in-Godself. This God who is Diversity-precisely-because-God-is-community is One because of the perichoretic intimacy of the Persons. "Perichoresis" is a term that literally signifies "to dance around" and, in the tradition, became synonymous with "interpenetration" and "interdependence." I believe that the Spanish word *vínculo* (literally, "intimate ties that bind") captures this well. The Three are so intimately involved in a dance of love that they are one, yet not so impenetrably self-involved that God cannot invite others to dance as well. We, and all of creation, are invited to dance with God through the Person of the Spirit precisely because we are *not God*. There are no foreign bodies in this dance.

Zaida Maldonado Pérez has described the Spirit as "the wild Child" who invites us to dance, *a bachata*.[33] To speak of spirituality in terms of dance is not to envision an abstract immaterial or idealized utopia. On the contrary, spirituality is profoundly incarnational, and therefore "embodied," because this God is incarnationally present in human history, not only through Jesus Christ, but also through Spirit who is Person intimately present in the lives of people—particularly the marginalized, forgotten, voiceless, oppressed, and poor people of the world. This is the Spirit of truth who "springs forth" with life and hope, who is found in dusky wells outside the gates of polite society, and who inevitably moves to change the world.[34] The powerful fear this Spirit, this "wild Child" who they cannot control or dominate, but the powerless sing, "Come, oh Holy Spirit" and open their arms in worship.

Perhaps it is the Puerto Rican *evangélica* theologian in me who resonates so well with Laura I. Rendón's proposal for a spirituality of education. Under the rubric of "sentipensante" (literally, "sensing/thinking"), she envisions education as a process that takes into account the "whole human

32 Regarding the use of spirituality as a consumer item, or a capitalist venture, see Carrette and King, *Selling Spirituality*.

33 Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Loida I. Martell-Otero, and Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "Dancing with the Wild Child: Evangélicas and the Holy Spirit," *Latinas Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 14, 30.

34 Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), "Epilogue."

being"—not only the intellectual life of the learner, but also the social, emotional, and spiritual life as well.[35] For Rendón, such a spirituality also considers the importance of developing an equitable relationship between the teacher and learner. Indeed, one of the principal precepts of her book is valuing the quality of life of both in order to develop a healthy and balanced relationship of respect and dignity in the classroom. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier and others echo similar perspectives when they argue for the need to create an ambience of "hospitality" and "empathy." For Conde-Frazier, this begins with the creation of a "borderland" or a "space" that allows for mutuality and discovery amid difference throughout the educational journey. For her, the heart of education is to create a "place" that is hospitable, defined as a "space that is safe, personal, and comfortable" in which people can connect to one another. According to Conde-Frazier, hospitality is related to "human dignity and respect for persons," particularly when persons are different so that people can respect "the image of God" in each other.[36] That is to say, a spirituality of education is attentive to *presencia* (presence) and place.

Other educators besides Rendón have also emphasized the importance of the teacher-learner relationship. While few have considered these precepts from the perspective of academic administration, I would posit that the values of hospitality and *presencia* must be extended to the relations we nurture among administrators, faculty, and staff. The problem is that in a society that glorifies competition rather than cooperation, individuality rather than communality, hierarchy rather than egalitarianism, segregation as "purity" rather than diversity as the Triune God's call for all creation, it is difficult to establish holistic, balanced, or healthy relations. We do not know how to be *presente* (present) to one another. In the Latinx culture, where *vínculos* (relations) and people take precedence over

35 Laura I. Rendón, *SentiPensante Pedagogy (Sensing/Thinking): Education for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2009), 135. See also Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 15.

36 Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "Prejudice and Conversion," *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*, eds. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steve Kang, and Gary A. Parrett (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 105-106. Idem, "From Hospitality to Shalom," 171–172. See also Herbert Anderson, "Seeing the Other Whole: A Habitus for Globalisation," *Globalisation and Difference: Practical Theology in a World Context*, eds. Paul Ballard and Pam Couture (Fairwater: Cardiff Academic Press, 1999), 11-12. van den Blink, "Empathy Amid Diversity," 6–7.

time and productivity, the issue of *presencia* is foundational. Harking back to our indigenous and African roots, when the gods were *presente* in the spaces of *lo cotidiano* (everyday), people learned to be attentive to the presence of the sacred in and through the daily spaces. The sacred is to be encountered in and through our daily *vínculos*. The sacred is thus embodied in concrete ways through people, our *vínculos* (relations), and our ways of treating each other. This view of the sacredness of creation is expressed in the works of some non-Latinx scholars.[37] Letty M. Russell affirms this sense of the sacredness of creation when she insists that as part of God's creation, human beings are also holy and must be treated as such.[38]

This concept of *presencia* means that we are attuned to the value of people in the *communitas* because they are holy, and are conduits of divine blessings for us all, even as we are conduits of blessings for the community. That God is foundational for our understanding of *presencia* points to a Trinitarian nuance to the concept: as the Three Persons are perichoretically *presente* to one another, intimately related as diverse and yet one, in an eternal and intimately loving dance, so humankind is called in its *imago Dei* to be *presente* before God, and *presente* in its *vínculos* to one another and to all of creation. This understanding of *presencia*, embodiment, and diversity as *imago Dei* does not allow for anyone to be treated like a foreign body in any space. Rather, it helps us to attune our ears to hear the invitation of the "wild Child" to invite us to a new dance, to hear music to a different beat, which welcomes a diversity of people to learn new things in new ways.

Presencia, vínculo, and embodied holiness shift the notion of space from an inert and neutral vacuum to what I call "place." Place is more than space. There is an intentionality to "place." We inhabit place. Relations take place. Place is the cross section of time and space, but not simply any time or space. Place is the cross section of *kairos* and sacred space. Kairos has often been defined in terms of a divinely appointed time, but it also has a locative meeting: being at the right place at the right time. Sacred places

37 Robert Kress, "Unity in Diversity and Diversity in Unity: Toward an Ecumenical Perichoretic Kenotic Trinitarian Ontology," *Dialogue and Alliance* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 66.

38 Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 87.

are often geographical spaces imbued with memory and power.[39] They have a historical narrative that ties people and communities together. The divine has left an imprint in such spaces. In Puerto Rico, the national rain forest, *El Yunque*, is such a place. Regardless of the colonized narratives imposed on it, and its takeover by the US federal government, the natives of Puerto Rico know it to be the home of the Taíno gods. *Evangélicxs* recognize it as the place where we can hear the voice of the "wild Child" speak to us in the wind and amid the *coquís* (tree frogs).

Unlike the dominant culture, many indigenous cultures do not give priority to time as *chronos*, measured finite time. Unlike the Western anxiety over time (e.g., the obsession about "wasting time," "killing time," or of "time running out"), indigenous people emphasize *place* because place is where we develop relations. This is especially evoked in the Lakota prayer, *mitakuye oyasin*—"to all my relations." For many indigenous people in the Americas and the Caribbean, their "relations" include the land and all of creation. This is what makes the land upon which they reside "sacred space." It is where God and all holy things are *presente*.

Our educational system does not allow for the formation of place. It is ironic that we pay so little attention to the classroom space as place. It is sometimes difficult to envision the office or the meeting room as an opportunity to form relations and to experience the sacred. It is symptomatic of a disembodied system that is not attentive to relations and does not nurture diversity-in-community. We are too busy cramming our schedules to the brim to take time to be *presente* to one another, or to create a sacred place where we can experience the holy, and learn from the "wild Child." We live so much under the pressure of schedules and deadlines that, at times, I think they become gods before whom we too often sacrifice their adherents, whether students, faculty, administrators, or staff. How then can we teach about a Life-giving Spirit, this wild Child, who liberates us to go forth with joy, if we live under the continuous cloud of something that begins with the word "dead"? In such a system, I am not only "foreign body," I am also one who has been robbed of "breath"—that is, of the Spirit of life that allows me to dance to a different beat.

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39 Roger Friedland and Ricard D. Hecht, "The Powers of Place," *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, ed. Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 17–36.

I realize that I am proposing a different way of visualizing education. Yet unless we dismantle the current system of race and privilege, educators and administrators of color will continue to experience being "foreign bodies" in academic spaces. The current structures seem to ensure the success and well-being of a select and privileged group at the expense of many others who are undeservedly marginalized and dehumanized. Such a system may produce experts in particular fields, but it does not produce *personas educadas*. How ironic! Though the phrase *"persona educada"* is literally translated "educated person," it does not necessarily correspond to a person with degrees. In fact, I would posit that racist and kyriarchical people who are socialized and conditioned to demean others, to be blind to their sinful acts of power and privilege, and to treat administrators, teachers, and peers like foreign bodies, are far from being *personas educadas*.

Rendón translates *persona educada* as synonymous with a wise person and, citing Antonio Pulido, notes that it can refer to someone with insight and common sense.[40] I believe that the term denotes something more profound. A *persona educada* is a person who is welcoming—especially to the stranger—compassionate, respectful, and accord human dignity to all who enter their home. That is to say, it is someone who embodies hospitality. It is someone who is unfailingly polite and attentive to the needs of others. A *persona educada* is someone who creates a sacred place and is attentive to the embodied *presencia* of the other. In a sense, this is part of what is interpreted as "wisdom." Irrespective of their educational, economic, or social status, to be *educada* is related to how one treats others. The community acknowledges their status. Our current educational system, in failing to create sacred spaces where we respect each other's embodied *presencia*, develop holistic *vínculos*, and learn to celebrate diversity as reflecting the *imago Dei*, has failed to produce compassionate *personas educadas*. We need to do better.

My pedagogical approach is not so much to teach a given subject as much as to try to create perichoretic communities of *personas educadas* that respect diversity. This is the insight that I now try to bring into administrative spaces. The challenge and question is, is there room to be prophetic and change the current paradigm of administrative spaces to make it more holistic and welcoming to difference, while still being effective and

40 Rendón, 87.

nurturing of life for theological education, particularly now that it is under assault from so many quarters? Can we afford to engender a journey of becoming in which we create a place of communal *vínculos* and learning, where people of color can cease to be "foreign bodies" in now sacred spaces? My prayer is that the answer is a resounding yes, and that in the journey, we will experience joy in seeing the dance.

Conclusion

Everyone involved in education needs to create places where all of us can hear the music of God's call to hospitality, relations, compassion, care, and true perichoretic relations (*vínculos*) with one another. We need to create places where true loving justice is practiced in holistic ways. We need to create places where we can be *personas educadas* who stop *talking* about diversity, stop being what van den Blink calls "tourists of diversity," and have the courage to live out what being a diverse community means—with all its messiness, conflict, and loss of power and privilege.[41] We need to stop silencing people and treating administrators and teachers of color as foreign objects, and justifying such mistreatment and "casual violence" with the false excuses we make up. The minute anyone is robbed of her human dignity, we have violated the sacredness of God's creation. For that, there is no excuse. It is sinful. It is wrong. We need to let Spirit be the Life-breathing wild Child in our academic spaces and show us what it means to bring life into an educational system that thus far has been *matándonos a paso lento*.[42] I pray and hope we can hear the invitation to dance *en otro son*.

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41 van den Blink, "Empathy Amid Diversity," 5.

42 "*Matándonos a paso lento"* is a riff on a popular saying—"literally, killing us slowly." Equivalent to the English, "killing me softly."

Sourcing Wisdom from "Otherness" and Leading from the Margins

Elsie M. Miranda
The Association of Theological Schools

Note: This session was presented in a highly dialogical modality. The primary substance of the presentation as presented herein does not include the examples or questions shared by the women who participated in the group discourse.

What makes a forum on women in leadership hosted by The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) so powerful for me is the inherent wisdom in the group of women. From whichever context we come from, most of us can acknowledge that being right is less important than being true. Similarly, most of us know that when we act on the knowledge that wisdom and power reside in the discourse itself, we are awakened to claim our own voices and harness our own strengths. I believe a discourse that acknowledges the subjective "situatedness" of reality and works toward the transformation of losses is fundamentally empowering. With this dynamic in mind, I will consider how women's experiences of "otherness" can provide a source of wisdom for effective leadership, and propose how theological education in the United States might benefit from more inclusive, discursive methods of leadership from the margins.

From the context of my own lived experience, the power of women's leadership was something I learned from my mother and my grandmothers. I wish to start by acknowledging the wisdom of my grandparents who sent their eldest children to the United States in 1961, shortly after the "triumph of the Cuban Revolution" to protect them from the Soviet-supported Communist indoctrination. I was born in Miami Beach in 1963, to young Cuban parents who had arrived alone as political exiles. I was baptized at St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Church in 1965 after their best friends had arrived from Cuba. They became my godparents. By 1967, most of my family had left Cuba and was settled in Miami. They all hoped to "return home" once the island was liberated, but that day never came

to pass. My parents never saw their grandparents again, they never went back "home," and life as they knew it ceased. As the first-born child of first-born parents and grandparents, I grew up surrounded by adults and initially, I only spoke Spanish. Around these adults, I learned that Fidel Castro was a brutal dictator who used firing squads to kill any dissenter right in the middle of civilian neighborhoods. I learned that intimidation of many kinds was used to ensure silence and that Castro's political monologues mimicked the language of the Church but, in the case of Cuba, he was the one playing God. Castro promised justice and social equality through the systematic oppression of the entire island nation of Cuba. I heard about how my grandparents' businesses and farmlands were intervened upon by the government, and how their lives were completely upended while the world watched and did nothing. After Castro changed the constitution in 1961, the change in national currency left everyone equally, economically poor. I also heard of how Soviet propaganda was boasting of Cuba's "model society," where education, healthcare, food, and housing were "free" for all. I also saw how the manipulation of truths impacted the lives of people I loved and people I did not even know, in a world where nothing is ever free. I noticed the many wounds of people I encountered, and I recognized the many losses of relationships, belonging, homeland, and intangibles such as personal identity that could not be replaced with time or money. Although I was powerless to do anything about these wounds, the angst fueled my passion for justice and truth at a young age, and I learned from my grandmothers that there is a profound wisdom that resides in holding on to the memories of our stories.

In 1967, amid much social and civic change in the US, I was very excited to go to school, to be with people my age, and to learn all sorts of new things. However, I was shamed for not speaking English, and was relegated to the back of the class with another Cuban boy named Carlos. That was the first time that I was made to feel fundamentally "other." From this vantage point, however, I learned to see how much our contexts shape the stories we live and tell, and how much these stories can shape and provide wisdom for the journey.

From the margins of my own life, I learned to straddle two very different worlds: a culturally Cuban and Catholic world in my home and a culturally Judeo/Christian and American world in my school and neighborhood. Every day, I pledged allegiance to the flag and learned about the founding principles of the United States: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of

justice." Given that my Cuban family had lost all of these freedoms—these nationalist values were extoled in my home as the crux of well-being for *all* people, and yet given the cultural mores of my Catholic and Cuban family, I didn't always fit in the broader cultural landscape. Thus, my multicultural identity taught me that binary paradigms for ordering reality were insufficient to categorize meaning, identity, or even virtue. In the written word, I came to appreciate the capacity of the hyphen to hold together seemingly disparate realities to create the middle way of "both-and." For me, the term "life on-the-hyphen," coined by the Cuban-American author Gustavo Perez-Firmat, allows for the in-between spaces of cultural and religious identities to extend beyond the neatly pre-determined categories that serve to exclude the other.[1] The reality of "life on-the-hyphen" affords the freedom to expand categories of experience allowing for more inclusive ways of being in the world. Thus, I learned to interpret meaning beyond the imposed categories that limit women's capacities to be leaders, visionaries, priests, and prophets. I learned to listen well and to trust in the ways of Spirit—my mother and my grandmothers taught me that by living in their own truths.

Being opened by the reality of the "other" that is you too

I share the reality of my own cultural and religious "situatedness" because in the process of reflecting on women's leadership for this conference, I realize how often the diverse realities of women's experiences of "otherness" can generate an embodied knowing that yields wisdom from discourse itself.[2] I find that when "otherness" generates fear, shame, or false humility, the very wisdom that can be a source of empowerment can feed the perspective of the "powerless victim," or it can fuel a competitive antagonism that serves only the egos of some at the expense of liberation of many. I bring this up to invite all of us to consider our own starting

1 Gustavo Perez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen, The Cuban American Way* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2012) Firmat acknowledges that "Cuban American culture is more about collusion than collision" in the context of this cultural and linguistic hybridity, "hyphens hurt" because collusion is complicated by history.

2 When the transformative potential of women's discourse is prevented by misogynistic and exclusivist attitudes, some bodies are rendered unqualified for the conversation itself. In such instances, women can become the most zealous antagonists to women's leadership, and vice versa, and men can become women's greatest allies.

points for sourcing wisdom for leadership. Consider the following questions for a moment:

- How have life's disappointments yielded "ways of being" in my life?
  - Did these disappointments serve to disempower or empower? How so?
- What have the struggles of my upbringing taught me about my inherent worth?
- What have the wounds that have been generated by persons or institutions taught me about my resiliency and my needs?

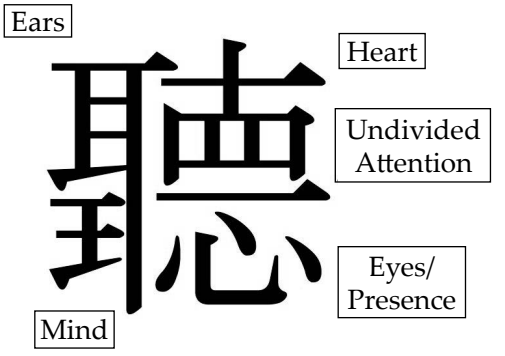
These questions, while intended to take us on a dive deep into our core, can also be considered from the surface to determine the level of openness with which we navigate through life. Our responses to these questions are intended to shed light on why we respond or react to life's situations or persons in particular ways; and to consider why our responses are never devoid of our own system and patterns for knowing, analyzing, and acting. For this reason, we must first attend to the story of our own lives and do the transformational work that yields self-love before we can be aware, empathic, intentional, and generous with others. Being opened by our own lived reality, or being called to enter into what St. John of the Cross called the "Dark Night of the Soul," allows us to find that love's unconditional embrace is on the other side of loss. I believe that owning our own stories and mining the wisdom born of losses can empower us to break out of dualistic paradigms into the "both-and," and live into our respective calls to fullness of life. This process, however, requires a fundamental openness to diverse truths and to an awakened consciousness of our power to heal and to wound. As women called to leadership, we must be opened by the realities of life and invest in being truthful and merciful over being right and judgmental.

Wisdom born of pain

The Jesuit theologian Johann Baptist Metz considers a broad gamut of human recollections as *Dangerous Memories* because they connect the Christian message to the modern world. Dangerous memories remind all Christians that the struggles for freedom and justice are part of the

Christian struggle; and that through the use of memory, all Christians are called, through Jesus, to recognize their subjectivity before God.[3]

Often, our particularly subjective stories provide a historical connection to the stories of a collective. These particularities are often the source of our own "otherness," and I contend that it is precisely the role of theological education and of wise leaders to recall the subjective struggles for justice and freedom of our brothers and sisters to be connected to our own "dangerous memories." To correlate these stories to the broader life cycle or to the narratives of the Judeo Christian traditions generates a capacity to integrate dangerous memories as stories (and lives) ripe for redemption in the contemporary moment. I believe that this process allows for a birthing of wisdom that is realized in the act of true listening. True listening is an act of generosity of the undivided-self. In our fragmented, multitasking world, many of us have lost a sense of what true listening requires of us. To illustrate this, I would like to offer the Chinese character Ting, which means "To Listen":



This character (representing the act of listening), is the composite of various symbols that represent the ears, the mind, the heart, undivided attention, the eyes, and presence. I believe that effective leaders learn to source wisdom from otherness because they know how to listen and act with wholeness of being. In the context of my own life, I had to learn how to listen amid cultural and ecclesial revolutions that constantly played one side against the other. Liberals against conservatives, blacks against whites, straight against gay, rich against poor, Catholics against Protestants (and vice versa), Christians, Jews, and Muslims against one another, and so on and so on.

Because I never fit neatly into any of these categories, I located myself as hyphenated and on the margins. In so doing, I learned to operate with a hermeneutic of suspicion. This meant that I learned to interpret reality

3 Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Society* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 236.

with a good portion of criticality because I understood since childhood that reality was rarely consistent with what was put forth as the undisputed truth. Many truths were conveniently never discussed in public, or they were dismissed lest they disrupt the power dynamics of the status quo. From the margins, I befriended others who, along with me, claimed wisdom from our "otherness." Together, we knowingly or not, turned from ordering reality from the Cartesian principle of "I think therefore I am," to include also the North African principle of *Ubuntu*, "I am because we are"/"*Soy porque somos*."[4] Applying the principle of *Ubuntu* allows like-minded leaders to practice cooperation, not just competition. This style of leadership engages the other with trust and openness to the gifts each member brings to the task at hand and is more circular in nature than it is linear. One of the challenges of this leadership style is that the leader must be capable of calling forth the best in each member of the team, and trust in the capacity that each has to deliver for the sake of the larger group or organization.

In my experience, leadership from the margins requires a fine balance between empowerment and management. Much like conducting an orchestra, the leader provides the team with the objective knowledge (facts for the task) and then empowers the members of the organization with the capacity for subjective interpretations of the texts for the task at hand. Together, the team enters into a journey of discovery, and each brings their gifts to the process. Management for this leader involves moving each individual toward the synthesis of the objective and the subjective into a textured "performance" that would be the equivalent of each team member playing his or her own instrument in a manner that generates synchronous beauty amid a diversity of gifts. Instead of attempting to control the performance, the leader empowers members of his or her community to become leaders in their own right and to work cooperatively without fear or threat. Much more can be said about this type of leadership, but I would like to encourage us as women to consider how each of us has come to own our own stories.

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4 Jaco Dreyer, Yolanda Dreyer, Edward Foley (eds), *Practicing Ubuntu: Practical Theological Perspectives on Injustice, Personhood and Human Dignity* (Lit Verlaf GmbH & Co.: Zurich, 2017), 97–99. Note, that the Spanish translation of *Ubuntu*, *Soy porque somos*, does not require the identification of the "I" because "*soy*" denotes a sense of *being* that is not individualistic or rooted in a function such as "thinking" but rather is grounded in a shared sense of humanity.

- How have we carried the struggles or injustices of our particular journey to that place of transformation?
- How has the loss become a source of wisdom and growth?
- Who or what has empowered us toward wholeness, and thus given us the courage to let go of "the victim" narrative in order to embrace the narrative of redemption?
- How and by whom have you experienced leadership as empowering and transformative? What are the principle characteristics of this leader that you most wish to emulate?

The leader who sources wisdom and power from the discourse itself finds that the best lived stories never end in the desert or on the cross, but rather in the amazement of resurrection and transformation. Stories that invite us to dig deep into the knowledge of what is real and to imagine what is possible for each of us serve to challenge and comfort us into a process of re-birthing the self that gives rise to the w*ild untamed possibility* we are called to embody.[5] Once awakened and fully conscious, the reborn live into being *the glory of God, as a human being fully alive*.[6] As such, the *wild*, self-determined leader embodies the glory of God in a manner that is not self-aggrandizing, but in a manner that accompanies the other with fearless generosity, from the margins for the sake of something larger than ourselves.

Along the way, I have learned that, as women, leading effectively from the margins requires knowing how to encourage and empower others to embrace what is for the sake of what can be! The word encourage, from the Old French, means "to make strong, to put heart in;" to empower means "to give ability, strength, or might."[7] In the 1980s, the word "empowerment" gained popularity as a noun, referring to the process of supporting others to discover and claim their personal worth and power. This process was particularly significant for women who were encouraged to reclaim

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5 In Mary Oliver's poem, *The Summer Day*, she takes notice of the uniqueness of the grasshopper. She learned to listen well and to show others the beauty, power, and majesty that surrounds us. In her poems, she engages and leads others to explore what we plan to do with "one wild and precious life."

6 St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* (Lib. 4, 20, 5-7; SC 100,640-642, 644-648), 185 AD.

7 *Oxford Dictionary*

our stories, to attend to our wounds, to be accompanied and to accompany; to embrace the silent self with tenderness and compassion, and to forgive in order to be unbound. This encouragement to reclaim "dangerous memory" enabled a process whereby wounds could be transformed to become scars. For those of us who were privileged to enter into this transformative work, we learned that we cannot give our power away to the perpetrator of personal, social, or institutional sin. The temptation to find comfort in being a victim keeps the very essence of our being human imprisoned in cages of our own design. This is why the late Mujerista theologian Ada Maria Isasi Diaz recognized that *En La Lucha* (In the Struggle), there is power in giving voice to the oppressive burdens of women's lives, not for the sake of blaming, self-pity, or a collective wallowing in the unfairness of life, but rather for the sake of empowerment that arises from the transformations born out of the struggle.[8] For Isasi Diaz, *la lucha* sharpens the vision for a brand of leadership that empowers and builds fires for relinquishing guilt and unbinding the self for a new dawn. Theologian Johann Baptist Metz would categorize all of these recollections as *Dangerous Memories* because they can synthesize the objective of the Christian message to the subjective narratives of the modern world.[9] In the context of developing the skills for leading from the margins, the leaders who come to recognize their inherent worth and subjectivities before God rely on the memories of transformed struggle to empower and manage others toward their own redeemed-selves and their glorified offerings.

Power born of forgiveness

In support of these claims, M. Shawn Copeland gives voice to wisdom sourced from a visceral embodied knowing of otherness that challenges theological platitudes from the context of black women's bodies. Copeland argues for a reframing of our North American theological anthropology that is capable of re-cognizing (of seeing again) the black body as the body

8 Ada Maria Isasi Diaz, *En La Lucha/In the Struggle: A Hispanic Woman's Liberation Theology* (New York: Fortress Press, 1993).

9 Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Society* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 236.

of Christ.[10] In similar fashion, Jon Sobrino, Gustavo Gutierrez, Ignacio Ellacuria, and Saint Oscar Romero were attempting to reframe the theological anthropology of the Church in the Global South by giving voice to the Christ crucified daily via legitimized methods of political, social, and economic exploitation of brown bodies, who remain largely invisible even when they reach our shores and insert themselves into our communities. As Metz attests, theology communicates "dangerous memories," and effective leaders who source wisdom from the margins cannot turn their backs to the complexity of these realities all the while singing "Alleluia Christ is Risen," without also falling to our knees and praying, "Here I am Lord, send me."

Out of this struggle, I believe that a transformation of loss and a restoration of right relations can generate a renewed consciousness that leads to cooperative and informed action for the greater good. I believe that as ATS effectively develops a plan for women in leadership, it will be important for diverse members of ATS schools to accompany, acknowledge, and support the wisdom that is sourced from "otherness" among the community. This process will require making amends, when necessary, by exhibiting:

- a willingness to listen (and respect) the other as a legitimate subject,
- a commitment to dialogical and strategic thinking, and
- a humility that can exercise justice over righteousness.[11]

Sourcing wisdom from "otherness" and leading from the margins also requires a paradigmatic shift in power dynamics. For example, how can the vertical dimensions of leadership strive to empower and promote horizontal networks of power that are focused more on cooperation than competition? I believe that as schools navigate into a new way of being in

10 M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (New York: Fortress Press, 2009).

11 At the ATS *Black and Hispanic Dialogue*, held in 2002 and 2004, Black and Hispanic/Latinx leaders gathered and acknowledged the challenges to diversity in leadership that racism within theological education presented. At the closing, someone said, "it's time for us to take off our kid gloves and have the honest conversation about our own internalized racism against one another." In his closing remarks, former ATS Executive Director Dan Aleshire modeled a reconciliatory leadership style when he acknowledged his own racism and asked forgiveness of his African American and Hispanic/Latinx brothers and sisters. See also: https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/theological-education/2002-theological-education-v38-n2.pdf

the world, organizations that learn to be cooperative will be able to navigate with less drag. How power is shared and who rises to competent leadership will need to represent the marginalized as well as the dominant cultures. When I worked as director of ministerial formation at Barry University, I had the distinct pleasure of working with the most diverse student body of any university in the United States.[12] In the process, my objectives were never to form men and women into a particular type of leader or minister, but rather to empower them to source wisdom from their own traditions—from their own struggles for freedom and justice—and to encourage them to be their best selves. I believe leaders must learn to "midwife" the other into being. Being born again is first and foremost a conversion of the self into an empathic preacher, teacher, and disciple of the one who is the ultimate source and summit of one's life. In the context of theological education, I believe that leadership from the margins allows for relationships to unfold, whereby the gifts that are often entombed in the recesses of others are brought forth with great care and intentionality (like the story of the master carver, in Thomas Merton's *I-Ching*). Through the process of dialogical listening and reclaiming dangerous memories, we accompany one another toward a wholesome sense of letting go of the ways that no longer serve us, and welcoming new life-bearing kenotic reality that impacts how we relate to one another.

Last words

I believe that espousing leadership requires a way of being in the world, whereby we make manifest the beauty of the gems and shards encountered in the lives of people along the way. I believe that this way of being requires us to listen with mind and heart, and invites us to see again. Despite the losses or brokenness of life, we are invited to be made whole. As such, there is no place for the "victim leader" striving to make straight what life has bent, rather there is the invitation to the wise and wounded leader, redeemed by Love, who calls back to life what has been lost. Along this journey, the leaders bear witness and affirm that "in Christ, we are neither Jew, nor Greek, slave or free, male or female, but rather we are

12 US News Best Colleges, Overall Rankings, Ethnic Diversity, 2019. https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/barry-university-1466

one." (adapted from Galatians 3:27). Let us strive to lead, accompanied by wisdom sourced from the margins of our own redeemed realities.

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Leading from the Center

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As a theological education administrator, I most often lead from the center in three primary ways: from the organization's center, my spiritual center, and my heart center. When I entered theological education administration in 2001, after completing my MDiv degree, I could not have imagined the various positions I would hold and the experiences I would have during the next eighteen years in two seminaries. Many of my opportunities for leadership in theological education have occurred because of the support of various leaders, both administrators and faculty, who have recognized and affirmed my leadership gifts as a woman. This paper provides examples of how I have been able to affect change by leading from each of my three centers. Throughout the paper, I also highlight how influential senior administrators (in particular, male) have been instrumental in my career advancement.

Becoming an administrator at a theological school was not necessarily the path I had chosen, rather, one that opened up for me. In my final year as an MDiv student, I worked with the faculty to develop a cohort program. Upon graduation, I was hired to continue working with the cohort program and to provide academic support services. After one year, the president of the seminary informed me that I needed to pursue my PhD in order to most effectively serve in theological education administration. I had not necessarily thought about pursuing this path, although I had some experience in leadership, curriculum, and organizational change. I did not sense a call to pursue a PhD in a traditional theological discipline. Instead, I pursued a PhD in higher education administration while continuing to work full-time at the seminary. The institution recognized my potential and invested in me to pursue the PhD. The courses I took as part of my degree introduced me to a variety of higher education areas such as: law, student development, finance, group dynamics, curriculum, organizational change and development, and assessment. Each of these areas has enhanced my various administrative roles.

Within one year of serving as the director of curriculum and academic support services, I was promoted to the position of associate academic

dean. My promotion received mixed emotions from members of the seminary community. Those who knew me well were happy with the decision; others were more concerned that a person without a PhD (especially without faculty rank) would be asked to assume such a role. I will always be grateful to the seminary president who recognized my leadership abilities early on and provided avenues for me to grow. It is important for senior administrative leaders to invest in the development of younger administrators.

The organization's center

The first center I lead from is the organizational center. My administrative positions have thus far been primarily in middle administration. I am grateful for the opportunities that I have been given to lead institutional processes from the organization's center. Within two years of working in my first seminary appointment, the president and dean asked me to lead a comprehensive curriculum review process with a team of faculty and administrators; this was a huge undertaking, just two years into the job. However, my educational background, PhD training, and previous experience working with the faculty in the creation of the cohort program provided me with some credentials for such a task. I worked with the dean to create a curriculum review team of ten faculty and administrators, believing that such a cooperative process would provide the best opportunity for widespread change. The curriculum team members brought expertise in various theological disciplines, and I brought an understanding of systems, people, and organizational change. The president's belief in me as a young administrator leading this process was instrumental to my formation. I am grateful to him and to others for seeing my potential, promoting me to positions, and entrusting various institutional processes to my leadership.

The curriculum review process was one of many institutional-level processes that I have led or co-led as a middle-level administrator. I have also led organizational restructuring, strategic planning, and self-study processes from the center of institutions. I approach these initiatives with great care and concern for the members of the seminary community, given that evaluation and change can be challenging. Being positioned within middle leadership provides easier access to the thoughts and concerns of the staff, faculty, and students, as well as those at the vice president

level, and it has allowed me to serve as a bridge between the various constituencies. My positions have provided me with unique access to senior leadership, as I have served on the presidents' executive councils at both seminaries. The insights gained and the relationships built have helped me to effectively fulfill my responsibilities.

At my current seminary, I was hired as associate dean for curricula in 2011 based, in part, on my expertise in academic administration. The previous academic dean regularly reflected on the professionalism I brought to the position. An understanding of higher education systems and knowing how to navigate an institution of higher learning served me well. I worked closely with faculty and students, and I often had to navigate complicated administrative structures in order to advocate for the needs of students. Navigating these avenues required that I be fully engaged with my heart and spiritual center.

My spiritual center

Second, my leadership from the organization's center is predicated on leading from my spiritual center. Serving as the chair of the curriculum review team at my first seminary posed many challenges and led me to spend a great deal of time in prayer seeking God's wisdom throughout that process. Having recently been a student, not having my PhD at the time, and being a female contributed to some of those leadership challenges. It was during this time that I recognized the necessity of leading not only from the organization's center, but also from a spiritual center. I value the spiritual friends that I had in my life who kept both the process and me lifted in prayer, who would remind me of my calling to various roles, and who would talk with me through various strategies. The professors in my PhD program were supportive and provided an objective perspective during that time.

In my current position as associate dean for planning and assessment, I have been given the opportunity to co-lead the seminary's ten-year reaccreditation process with the academic dean. Co-leading with a faculty member has offered a gift balance that works well. I took much of what I learned from the previous curriculum review to make adjustments in my leadership strategies. Leading from a spiritual center also requires that I spend time discerning the direction of the Spirit to know the next steps to take. I begin meetings with a focus on Christ to help us settle into

the present moment, to be reminded of our higher calling, and to listen attentively to one another. Being mindful of how a process may impact the members of the organization is critical to successful leadership. Taking time to understand people's feelings and concerns helps ensure a more positive outcome for any challenging process. True leadership is not about the competency or personality of the leader, but rather about helping others to grow and develop in the process. That growth process is as important as the end result. Leadership is not without its challenges, but tuning into the voice of God helps the leader know the directions to take, how to handle rather complex issues, and how to work in a collaborative way with colleagues.

My engagement in Christian community, personal devotion, and prayer life help me to operate from a spiritual center, providing strength in the challenging times and joy in the good times, such as serving students and bringing institutional processes to a successful conclusion. I have found that it can sometimes be difficult to facilitate processes from a spiritual center, even in theological schools. People often want to pursue the most efficient path; sometimes spirituality and discernment are seen as slowing down the process. However, I am committed to this approach.

My heart center

Finally, leading from the organizational center and spiritual center must be maintained by a focus on my heart center. I lead with my heart because of the value I place on relatedness, honesty, authenticity, and openness. Engaging one's heart enriches theological work. To facilitate student learning and faith development in a seminary, the administration needs to foster open and honest relationships with students and faculty. I am grateful to the president of the current seminary where I serve, who believes in transparency and placing difficult issues before the community for consideration. Students look to the faculty and administration to embody leadership and work lovingly in conflict resolution. As students begin to develop their own models of leadership during their time in seminary, they learn from the actions and behaviors of others. The examples of leadership modeled by the administration and faculty likely influence the type of leadership students implement in their ministries, both inside and outside the church. People will often assume the character of

the community around them, so an experience of community that is life-giving for students and employees is critical.

Leading from my heart also enables me to genuinely affirm colleagues, not only for their expertise, but also for whom God has created them to be. Open and honest relationships are especially important in a theological school where people are being formed for ministry. I often find a collaborative style of leadership the most fitting. Leading from my heart center is important in building relationships with colleagues and facilitating organizational change. Knowing that the fifteen people on the self-study steering committee I co-lead have other full-time responsibilities stirs my heart to consistently express to them genuine appreciation for their work and affirmation of their gifts. In doing so, we build community and ownership of our work together, which has positive implications in improving all that we do in service to the mission of the seminary. At the outset of the committee's first meeting, I introduced each person by sharing from my heart why each person was selected to be on the committee, and by highlighting the specific gifts they bring to the process. This approach helped set a positive tone for the committee's work.

Leading from these three centers provides me with the strength, nourishment, and insight needed to collaborate with colleagues in making lasting change at the institutional level. In reflecting upon my various leadership experiences, I offer some ideas for how ATS can further support women in leadership.

Possible areas of focus for the ATS Women in Leadership program

1. Assist administration and faculty in knowing how to identify and affirm younger women with gifts of leadership, nurture their professional development, and provide them with opportunities to lead.
2. Focus on leadership development for women in middle administration especially on relating to other administrators, faculty, and senior leadership.
3. Strengthen the culture of leadership in theological education by engaging women and men in conversation on working together as leaders and appreciating one another's strengths despite gender differences.

4. Focus on developing leaders who can guide organizational change.
5. Focus leadership initiatives on how faculty and administrators can best collaborate on institutional processes within a theological school, providing models of how this has been done successfully.

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Twenty Years of Roman Catholic Women in Leadership: What Difference Did It Make?

Barbara E. Reid
Catholic Theological Union

A reluctant nominee

I did not want to be academic dean. When my predecessor decided to retire in 2008–2009, I was appointed to the search committee, and I was doing my best to twist the arms of my female colleagues to get them to consider applying. It was an internal search, and I felt strongly it was time for us to have a female dean. At that point, Catholic Theological Union (CTU) had had a female dean for only three years (1992–1995) of its 41-year history.[1] Try as I might, I could persuade none of the other eleven female faculty members to apply. Several weeks into the process, I was having supper with a close friend and I was lamenting our inability to surface a woman candidate. My friend, who has known me since the late 1970s, looked at me and said, "Why aren't you considering it?" I was quite taken aback. She knew my passion for teaching, preaching, and writing and how little I was drawn to administration. More importantly, she knew my struggles with the institutional Church, its male dominated structures, and its refusal to ordain women or allow women significant decision-making power. She also knew that as a vocal feminist scholar, I was concerned not to draw

1 Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ was professor of word and worship who served at CTU from 1980 to 1999, when she was elected provincial of her congregation, Religious Sisters of the Sacred Heart. She was the first woman to earn a doctorate in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame.

the attention of ecclesiastical authorities who were hostile to feminism.[2] My friend persisted. She said that I influenced a lot of people through my teaching, public lectures, preaching, and writing, but she observed that I could have a lot more influence at a different level if I were exercising leadership as part of the administration. She has a master's degree in organizational development and has been facilitating groups for years as they discern new leadership for transformative change. I knew she was right, and I couldn't dismiss what she was saying. I experienced a profound interior shift, and my resistance gave way to being able to see new possibilities. Now, after almost nine years of academic leadership, another friend to whom I recounted this story asked: "And how did it work out? Do you feel you made a difference as a woman administrator?" Before sharing how I responded to that question, I first want to sketch some of the broader landscape of Catholic women leaders in ministry and in theological education.

Theological education and ecclesial ministry for women

In the Roman Catholic Church, vowed women religious (sisters and nuns) have been in the vanguard of leadership for centuries, especially in schools, hospitals, and social work. However, it was not until the rise of the Sister Formation Movement (1911) that the groundwork was laid for women religious to pursue doctorates in theological disciplines. By the

2 The atmosphere toward feminists was becoming increasingly hostile. In December 2008, the Vatican initiated an Apostolic Visitation "in order to look into the quality of the life" of women religious in the US. That same year, a doctrinal investigation of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) was announced. Among its top three concerns was the "prevalence of certain radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith." In 2011, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, distinguished professor of theology at Fordham University—one of the foremost Catholic feminist systematic theologians—came under public scrutiny when the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Doctrine declared that many of the conclusions in her book, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping the Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2007), were "incompatible with Catholic teaching." Johnson wrote a response in which she said that "in several key instances [the bishops] radically misinterpret what I think, and what I in fact wrote." Another renowned Catholic feminist theologian, Margaret Farley, RSM, professor emerita of Christian ethics at Yale University Divinity School, also found herself under fire from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith when it declared in June 2012 that her book, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), was "not consistent with authentic Catholic theology," and should not be used by Roman Catholics.

1940s, publications and conferences were calling attention to the inadequate education of sisters at a time when Catholic colleges and universities were primarily the domain of men.[3]

Attention to the formation of lay ecclesial ministers, both women and men, grew after Vatican II.[4] and has been on the US Bishops' agenda since 1980.[5] In the early 1970s, some Roman Catholic theologates began accepting lay students. By 1975, lay students enrolled in graduate theological education numbered 1,393.[6] The high point was when lay enrollment reached 3,682 in 2002–2003; the lowest was in 2008–2009 at 2,359. There was a slight increase again between 2012 and 2015, when the average was 3,176.[7] In the past twenty years, the percentage of laywomen students has fluctuated from 58% (1997) to 63% in the middle years, and currently 58%. In those same years, the percentage of laymen has risen steadily from 30% to 38%.[8] The number of women religious continues to decline, standing now at about 2%.[9] In ATS Roman Catholic schools, the percentage of women students has fluctuated in the past ten years from 32% to 27%, with an average of 29%.[10]

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3 See http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/sister-formation-movement

4 See the Vatican II Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, issued by Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html

5 In 1980, they issued *Called and Gifted. The American Catholic Laity*: http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/laity/upload/called_and_gifted.pdf. In 2005, they issued *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*: http://www.usccb.org/upload/co-workers-vineyard-lay-ecclesial-ministry-2005.pdf

6 These and the following statistics are from Katarina Schuth, *Seminary Formation. Recent History, Current Circumstances, New Directions* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016), here 82.

7 In diocesan seminaries, the majority of lay students pursue certificates; in religious order schools, more are seeking degrees.

8 There has been a similar rise and decline in the numbers of lay women and men participating in diocesan lay ministry training programs. See Peter Feuerherd, "Participation in lay ministry training programs down 16 percent," *National Catholic Reporter* (November 3–16, 2017).

9 The number of women religious in the US has declined from the high point in 1966 of 181,421 to 49,883 in 2014. See the report issued by CARA in fall 2014: http://cara.georgetown.edu/WomenReligious.pdf

10 I am grateful to Chris Meinzer, senior director of administration and COO at ATS, who compiled the ATS data for me. Statistics are not available beyond the past decade.

Women Students in Roman Catholic ATS Schools—average: 29%

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Women	2583	2460	2443	2212	2114	1991	2024	2011	2072	2297
Total	8069	7899	7840	7574	7646	7350	7332	7518	7487	7755
% Women	32%	31%	31%	29%	28%	27%	28%	27%	28%	30%

It must be noted that there are some Roman Catholic seminaries that admit only male students who are preparing for ordination. There tends to be more women in theological schools sponsored by religious orders than in diocesan seminaries. In my own institution, the percentage of women students—most of whom are in degree programs—grew in the last twenty years from 29% in 1997 to a peak of 61% in 2002, and now stands at 37% in 2017. The average over the past twenty years is 41%.[11]

There are a number of factors causing the current drop in the numbers of lay women and men pursuing graduate theological education. Not all dioceses require lay ecclesial ministers to have a graduate degree. There is insufficient scholarship money available as the cost of graduate education continues to climb. Not all bishops promote lay ministry formation; some put their resources into the permanent diaconate for men as a response to the shortage of priests. There is also a shrinking number of paid positions for lay ecclesial ministers, partly due to the amount of money being paid out in settlements from clergy sex abuse. Another factor is the rise in the Catholic Hispanic population. Many Hispanics are interested in ministry, but lack a college education. Consequently, they enroll in certificate programs, but not graduate-level programs.

Women faculty

The number of women full-time faculty in ATS Roman Catholic schools has remained fairly constant, averaging 21%, during the past ten years. Women now teach in most every discipline, the most popular being

11 I am grateful to my assistant, Sister Antoine Lawlor, who compiled the CTU data. See Appendix A.

Christian Ethics/Moral Theology, Church History, Formation/Spiritual Theology, New Testament, Pastoral Theology, and Systematic Theology.[12]

Women Faculty in Roman Catholic ATS Schools—average: 21%[13]

	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Female	161	169	169	163	155	154	150	154	147	154
Total	728	748	753	753	732	746	747	771	741	760
% Female	22%	23%	22%	22%	21%	21%	20%	20%	20%	20%

When this data is further broken out, it becomes clear that there has been a steady rise in the past twenty years of lay women who have been hired into full-time faculty positions, counterbalanced by a steady decline in the number of women religious.

Women Faculty in Roman Catholic Seminaries and Schools of Theology[14]

	1985	**1995**	**2005**	**2015**
Lay women	3.7	6.6	12.3	13.8
Women religious	10.4	12.8	8.9	4.9
ALL WOMEN	14.1	19.4	21.2	18.7

At CTU, the percentage of women faculty has been consistently higher for the past two decades. Currently, it is at 38%; the average over the past decade is 36%.[15]

12 See Appendix B.

13 Data compiled by Chris Meinzer at ATS.

14 Schuth, *Seminary Formation*, 63.

15 See Appendix C.

Women in theological guilds

A good deal of progress has been made for women in academic guilds. In earlier years, professional societies like the Catholic Biblical Association of America (CBA) and the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) were composed primarily of priests who were seminary professors. Now, there is much more openness in the structures, if not always in all the individual members. In some instances, there was resistance to women joining and taking leadership; in others, male colleagues have actively promoted women's participation and leadership in their guilds. The CTSA elected its first woman president, Agnes Cunningham, in 1977. Thirteen more have been elected since then. The CBA elected Pheme Perkins as its first woman president in 1986; seven more have followed. The Catholic Academy of Liturgy (CAL), founded in 2002, has consistently had female members of their three-person executive committee, each of whom has served as president.[16] The leadership of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium, founded in 1978, has been primarily female.

Catholic women have also served in leadership roles in ecumenical guilds. The immediate past president and the incoming president of the Society for Christian Ethics are Catholic women. The Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality alternates between male and female presidents each year, some of whom have been Catholic. Catholic women have served as president of the Society of Biblical Literature. In the case of the American Society of Missiology, a good number of Roman Catholic women are members, but men tend to be elected as leaders.

Catholic women in leadership in ATS schools

Because women are not yet able to be ordained in our denomination, they do not hold the top leadership positions in seminaries and schools of theology: seminary rector or president. Twenty-one women have served as academic deans in ATS Roman Catholic schools during the past decade. Several served only one year; two have served for nine of the past ten years. Of the fifty-nine Roman Catholic ATS schools, eight currently have

16 Liturgy is a more difficult field for Roman Catholic women, as sacramental ministry is reserved to ordained males. Recent documents, such as *Liturgiam Authenticum*, have been very discouraging for women, making some less inclined to pursue doctorates in liturgy.

women chief academic officers—not quite 14%. This is significantly lower than the percentage of women CAOs in Mainline Protestant schools, where the number is over 40%. The overall percentage in ATS schools is 23.2%.[17]

Women on governing boards

As Roman Catholic seminaries and schools of theology have recognized the need for the expertise of lay women and men, especially in financial matters, there has been a significant upswing in the number of lay women serving on governing boards. From a percentage of 7.3 in 1985, lay women comprised 15.1% in 2015. At the same time, the percentage of women religious has declined from 3.7% in 1985 to 2.4% in 2015.[18]

Challenges and hopes for the future

Looking at the changing landscape over the past twenty years, we can see some advances for Roman Catholic women in leadership. Some women have achieved the same educational credentials as their male colleagues and serve as administrators of parishes, directors of diocesan offices, and theological educators.[19] Some hold influential national leadership positions previously held by priests, such as Sister Donna Markham, O.P., president and CEO of Catholic Charities, Carolyn Woo, immediate past president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services, and Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, executive director of NETWORK lobby for Catholic Social Justice. As noted earlier, more lay women are serving on governing boards of seminaries, and a few women have taken on leadership as academic deans. Women are taking on leadership in many academic guilds.

At the same time, there are a number of disconcerting realities. The number of women studying theology, both lay and religious, has declined. The steady growth in the number of paid positions for lay ecclesial ministers

17 Data on women in leadership from ATS dated January 2017. The statistics reported by Katarina Schuth, *Seminary Formation*, 181, are even lower. She reports one woman (religious) in 1989; three (religious) in 1999; two women religious; and one lay woman in 2015.

18 Schuth, *Seminary Formation*, 44.

19 According to a 1995–1998 National Association of Church Personnel Administrators study of 100 participating dioceses, as of 1998, 25.5 % of all top diocesan administrative positions were held by women.

from the 1980s up to the early 2000s has now reversed.[20] The percentage of women faculty at ATS Roman Catholic schools has declined from the high-point a dozen years ago. Full-time faculty positions in theology are hard to come by, and women can be at a disadvantage if they disclose that they have a family. Often, men who are married with families are perceived as stable while women with children are perceived as less free to give their all to their jobs. Few women assume leadership as academic dean, and none are eligible to be CEO in a Roman Catholic seminary or school of theology. The factors contributing to these trends are many and complex, but one impediment to women's leadership is undeniable. As long as women are not able to be ordained and "as long as jurisdiction (the power to govern) is tied to ordination, a very limited number of roles with authority will be open to women. The relationship of jurisdiction to ordination creates a glass ceiling for women in the church."[21]

Many people wonder if that glass ceiling will finally crack if the commission that Pope Francis established in August 2016 to study the question of ordaining women to the diaconate has a positive conclusion. Would it then open the door to serious consideration of ordaining women to the priesthood? Even so, it is commonly agreed among Roman Catholic women that the solution does not lie in simply ordaining women. The whole clerical and hierarchical structure itself needs reforming, and sexist and patriarchal attitudes need to be transformed. Some women are not hopeful that this can happen any time soon, observing that male dominance is so ingrained that it will take more than one generation for real change. Others steadfastly hope for the Spirit to continue to empower

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20 In 2005, the number of lay ecclesial ministers working at least twenty hours per week in paid positions in parishes was 30,632. Laywomen comprised 64% of the total, laymen 20%, and women religious 16%. Some 2,000 more lay ministers were working in hospitals and healthcare settings, college and university campuses, prisons, seaports, and airports. Between 1990 and 1997, the number of lay parish ministers working at least twenty hours per week in paid pastoral positions increased by 35%. Between 1997 and 2005, it grew another 5%. See US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) FAQ sheet, which cites David DeLambo, *Lay Parish Ministers: A Study of Emerging Leadership* (New York: National Pastoral Life Center, 2005), 88. See http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/lay-ecclesial-ministry/lay-ecclesial-ministry-faqs.cfm

21 Anne Munley, IHM; Rosemary Smith, SC; Helen Maher Garvey, BVM; Lois MacGillivray, SNJM; and Mary Milligan, RSHM, *Introduction to Women and Jurisdiction: An Unfolding Reality. The LCWR Study of Selected Church Leadership Roles* (2012).

women and help us break down barriers that keep us from fully exercising our God-given gifts in the Church.

Ways forward

Beyond steadfast hope, there are concrete ways that we can continue to move forward. One of the things that has been a constant and critical factor that enables women to exercise leadership has been mentoring, especially by other women who have been trailblazers. Women leaders can affirm other women's gifts and give them the necessary encouragement and support to embark on a new leadership role. Sometimes it is a matter of calling forth another woman's gifts if she is reluctant, as in my own case. A seasoned mentor can also alert a younger colleague to the challenges she is likely to face and can guide her with the wisdom she has gained about how to navigate sexist waters. Supportive male colleagues are also a great help. They can open doors and offer support in a different way than women mentors. For many women, the relationships built with their mentors, especially other women, last a lifetime.

For women leaders to be successful, it is also important to form the men with whom they will be working. In some Roman Catholic seminaries, more often diocesan, the men studying for ordination are kept in separate courses from the lay women and men, sisters, and brothers studying theology. There has been a noted rise in clericalism in such seminarians, who value a strict hierarchical structure and see themselves as set apart from lay ministers. These men who highly esteem Pope John Paul II espouse a cultic model of priesthood rather than the kind of servant leadership that was more typical of Vatican II priests.[22] In schools of theology sponsored by religious orders, lay women and men, seminarians, sisters, and brothers usually study together in the same courses and have shared formation experiences. They also tend to have a higher percentage of women faculty. The kinds of interactions that such a situation provides have led to greater mutual understanding and appreciation, and results in a greater ability for men and women to collaborate with one another on an equal footing when they are in ministry. It is also critical to include women authors in

22 Schuth, *Seminary Formation*, 86–87.

the required readings for seminary courses, and for women professors to teach in core areas of the curriculum.

To form the next generation of women leaders, it is also vitally important to make theological education accessible to more women through sufficient scholarship assistance and flexible scheduling of courses. The commitment of bishops to lay ecclesial ministry needs to become more solid, expressed through their financial backing for graduate theological education for lay women and insuring paid positions with salaries commensurate with their education and experience. A hope is that bishops could not only pave the way with investment of resources in women's leadership, but that they also promote attitudes of respect for women ministers and leaders in ways that work to dismantle sexism throughout their diocese. In some parts of the world, such as Asia, there is a great deal of consultation by bishops with women at the highest levels.

What difference does it make?

After almost nine years in leadership, a friend asked: "What difference has it made?" I did not know at first how to answer. I know that in our line of work we may see some tangible results immediately but we may never see the difference we make or, if we do, it may not become evident until much later.

I can think of a number of women students who have told me that I have been a role model for them and that my style of leading has inspired them for their own ministries. One female student told me that when she was choosing where to study, she charted out how many women faculty there were and in what disciplines at each school she considered. She chose CTU because of the strong influence of women. I have also had male international students from strongly male-dominated cultures tell me how startling it was for them to see a woman academic dean and women professors. They have said that taking courses from us, hearing us preach, and watching us lead has made a profound change in them. This change, hopefully, will be carried back to their home countries and will have long-term and far-reaching effects.

There are some initiatives I undertook that I hope have given the women in our institution a higher profile and greater support, such as a yearly observance of International Women's Day, and monthly gatherings of Women in Ministry offering support, prayer, and theological reflection for women students, staff, and faculty. There are ways I have changed processes and some structures to be more inclusive and consultative. I have made a concerted effort to appoint people representing all constituents and diverse perspectives in committees and task forces. Faculty assemblies are now more interactive. I have rearranged the furniture, turning hollow squares into circles. The president subsequently adopted a similar table arrangement and approach for the meetings of the Board of Trustees. When it comes to hiring, encouraging, and supporting women faculty, it is hard to know whether having a female dean has made a difference. At CTU, I have always experienced a strong spirit of inclusivity across all kinds of boundaries, including gender, race, nationality, and ecclesial status (clerical/religious/lay). Strong feminist women on the faculty paved the way long before I came thirty years ago. Four women and four men have been hired to the full-time faculty during my tenure as dean. Six women have been promoted to full professors.

Has it made a difference that there is a female face in the predominantly male gatherings such as National Association of Catholic Theological Schools (NACTS)? Has my success in forging very good working relationships with the formation directors and with our trustees and major donors—the majority of whom are male—been due to my being a woman or just my particular style of interaction? It is hard to say.

As I conclude these reflections, I find myself returning to a statement one of our students made to me: as we take three steps forward and four backward, perhaps the dance is more important than the actual progress. What she was saying is akin, I think, to Margaret Wheatley's challenge to leaders to be willing to let go of the need to make a difference. What is important, she advises, is engaging in meaningful work on behalf of others, regardless of the results.[23] The structural changes for which many Roman Catholic women hope have not yet been accomplished, but women in leadership have made a difference to some students, faculty, staff, administrators, board members, formation directors, parishioners, and

23 Margaret J. Wheatley, *Who Do We Choose to Be? Facing Reality, Claiming Leadership, Restoring Sanity* (Oakland, CA: Berett-Koehler Publishers, 2017), 268–69.

diocesan ministers. The dance will go on, and women will keep inventing new steps.

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Appendix A:
Women Students at Catholic Theological Union—average: 41%

	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total Students	540	540	714	514	699	442	455	453	416	425
Total Women Students	156	170	155	226	175	165	179	179	140	195
% of Women Students	29%	31%	22%	44%	25%	37%	39%	32%	34%	46%
Women Religious	38	61	44	48	37	27	35	35	33	42
Lay Women	118	109	111	178	138	138	144	144	107	153

	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total Students	401	392	400	359	333	330	312	303	308	291
Total Women Students	185	169	163	192	203	188	126	165	127	109
% of Women Students	46%	43%	41%	53%	61%	57%	40%	54%	41%	37%
Women Religious	27	23	27	23	32	32	19	34	26	29
Lay Women	158	146	136	169	171	156	107	131	101	80

Appendix B:
Discipline Areas of Full Time Women Faculty in ATS Roman Catholic Schools

Teaching Field	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Biblical Archaeology	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Biblical Languages	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Biblical Studies						1	3
Black Church Studies						1	1
Christian Ethics/Moral Theology	11	10	10	8	9	9	8
Church Administration	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Church History	9	9	9	9	9	10	9
Church Law	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Church Music	2	2	4	2	5	5	5
Clinical Pastoral Education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Comparative World Religions	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Education	1	4	3	3	1	1	1
Ethics: Christian and Social	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Formation/Spiritual Theology	10	11	15	13	13	11	10
Historical Theology	3	4	4	3	3	1	1
Homiletics	2	1	1	1	1	1	
Marriage and Family Counseling					1	1	1
Missiology	1	1	1				
Moral Theology	4	5	5	4	3	2	3
New Testament	18	18	19	18	16	14	10
Old Testament	3	3	2	5	3	3	3
Other	13	19	19	13	12	12	10
Pastoral Counseling and Care	5	5	5	6	6	5	5
Pastoral Theology	11	11	9	9	9	11	10
Philosophical Theology	2	3	3	4	2	3	4
Philosophy of Religion	3	3	3	2	1	2	2
Practical Theology: General		2	3	2	1	2	2
Practical Theology: Pastoral Care					1	1	1
Psychology and Theology	1	1					
Religion and Society	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Religious/Christian Education	7	4	3	5	5	4	1
Sacramental & Liturgical Theol./Worship	5	5	6	6	5	5	5
Systematic Theology	17	14	15	14	12	12	14
Theology and The Arts	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Theology of the Bible		1		1	1		1
Women's Studies	2	2	2	4	3	2	2
Youth Ministry			1	1	1	1	1
Other	14	16	13	16	18	20	23
TOTALS	161	169	169	163	155	154	150

Appendix C:
Women Faculty at Catholic Theological Union—average: 36%

CTU Faculty 2008–2018

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Total Faculty[24]	32	30	28	26	26	28	27	26	27	29
Religious Men	14	14	13	12	11	13	13	12	13	13
Religious Women	7	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Lay Men	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
Lay Women	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5
Diocesan Clergy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ordained Protestant Woman Minister	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Male Rabbi	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Jewish Woman										1
Number of Women	12	11	9	9	10	10	10	10	9	11
Percentage of Women Faculty	37%	37%	32%	35%	38%	36%	37%	38%	33%	38%

24 Includes all with full faculty appointments (including those who are on reduced loads); does not include director of Paul Bechtold Library.

Women Leaders' Emotional Labor

Samantha Plummer
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Introduction

Women in leadership in theological education face significant challenges in carrying out their roles and advancing in the ranks, according to findings from a survey to women in leadership in theological education.[1] Principal among these challenges are sexism, racism, and institutional instability, which intersect to shape and constrain women leaders' emotional labor (i.e., the process of regulating emotions in response to the demands of a job). Using interviews with a diverse group of thirty women in leadership at a varied group of theological institutions, I show that gendered and racialized assumptions about their skills and resistance to their leadership put women leaders in situations where they must routinely manage feelings of insecurity, do unremunerated work, and expend excessive emotional energy considering others' assessments of their selves and work. Before analyzing the interviews, I will briefly describe the data and methods and the prior research on emotional labor.

Data and methods

In the fall of 2017, the Women in Leadership (WIL) program of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) conducted structured interviews with thirty women in leadership positions in theological education. The interview questions focused on the respondents' pathways to leadership, assistance and support, obstacles and challenges, assessments of WIL programming, and understandings and experiences of harassment. Tables 1 and 2 show the percent distribution of interviewees by institutional and personal characteristics, respectively:

1 See Jo Ann Deasy, *Constructing Cultures That Expand Pathways for Women Leaders* and Deborah H. C. Gin, *Strategic Relationships to Advance Women Leaders: Skills, Advocates, and Organizational Climate* in this publication.

Table 1. Characteristics of interviewees' institutions (n=30 interviewees)

Denominationality	
Denominational	80%
Independent	20%
Ecclesial Family	
Evangelical Protestant	40%
Mainline Protestant	36.7%
Roman Catholic	23.3%
Female Faculty Representation (n=27)	
25% or Less	51.9%
Over 25%	48.1%
Female Student Enrollment (n=29)	
50% or Less	65.50%
Over 50%	34.50%
Size	
Largest (HC 301+)	43.3%
Large (HC 151-300)	33.4%
Mid (76-150)	13.3%
Small (1-75)	10%
Structure	
Freestanding	60%
Embedded	40%

Table 2. Personal characteristics of interviewees (n=30)

Faculty Status	
Faculty	63.3%
Non-Faculty	36.7%
Leadership Level	
Senior	63.3%
Mid	36.7%
Race/Ethnicity (Non-Specific)	
White	63.3%
Racial/Ethnic[2]	36.7%
Years in Role	
1-4 yrs	46.7%
5-9 yrs	23.3%
10-20 yrs	20%
21+ yrs	10%

2 "Racial/Ethnic" is a term used in the work of ATS to refer to individuals and communities minoritized by race or ethnicity. The term was first coined by the Association's Committee on Race and Ethnicity (CORE) more than fifteen years ago as a way to anchor its work in diversity and inclusion on race and to avoid mission drift. The Association's CORE recently revisited and reaffirmed the use of the term, knowing that it departs from current terminology (e.g., "of color" or "non-dominant") used in the broader world of higher education and that White is also a race. Members of CORE currently and historically are predominantly racial/ethnic.

I coded the interviews thematically using second level codes pre-defined by the WIL research team. These codes identified respondents' preparation for and route to their positions, work responsibilities, forms and sources of support, institutional struggles, experiences of racism and sexism, assessments of necessary changes to promote women's leadership, and perceptions of why people do or do not report harassment. I identified the theme of emotional labor based on a theoretically informed coding of the data.

Gender, race, and emotional labor

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) defines emotional labor as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" within the workplace.[3] Using case studies of flight attendants and bill collectors, Hochschild argues famously that employers coercively regulate the feelings of their employees by requiring them to align their inner emotions and outward displays with prescribed "feeling rules"—a practice linked to competitive advantage and commercial gain.[4] Flight attendants, for example, offer flyers not only drinks and food, but also feelings of security and tranquility. To make flyers feel important and safe, flight attendants must perform deference and contain their own feelings of irritation or frustration. Bill collectors, on the other hand, use performances of anger and bellicosity to encourage debtors to pay their bills and suppress any sympathetic feelings they may have toward debtors.

As the examples of flight attendants and bill collectors suggest, emotional labor is gendered; women and men are expected to perform traditionally feminine and masculine emotions, respectively. In turn, men and women appear to fit naturally into segregated occupations and job roles. In academia, because of gendered and racialized assumptions about emotional availability and disposition, universities and colleges expect white women and faculty of color to take on a much larger share of invisible

3 Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA: 1983), 7.

4 Ibid.

service burden than their white men colleagues.[5] Women working in traditionally masculine workspaces and roles are also penalized for adopting traditionally masculine emotions. In her ethnography examining gender and work in two corporate law firms, Jennifer Pierce reveals the double bind that women attorneys encounter: when they act aggressively and combatively—emotions that firms prize when men display them—their male colleagues classify them as brazen and insufferable, and when they don't display toughness, women attorneys are labeled as incompetent.[6]

Hochschild posits that privileged individuals have a "status shield" that protects them from the "displaced feelings of others."[7] Individuals with lower social statuses (e.g., white women and people of color) are "easier targets" for people's complaints and dissatisfaction and for others' "poorer treatment of their feelings."[8] Recent research on nurses supports Hochschild's idea of a status shield. M. D. Cottingham and colleagues find that, compared to women nurses, men nurses are significantly less likely to report being expected to abide by feeling rules, covering up their true feelings, and pretending to have feelings that are expected but that they don't feel.[9] Furthermore, they find that unlike women nurses, whose job satisfaction is negatively related to the performance of emotional labor, male nurses who do report often covering felt emotions or pretending to feel emotions benefited from emotional labor. Black and other minoritized workers often face overt and implicit racism in the workplace from both clients and coworkers. Not only must they manage their emotional reactions to the same routine frustrations as their white colleagues, but, as Louwanda Evans' study of black pilots and flight attendants reveals, also to racist comments and attempts to undermine their competence.[10]

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5 S. Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Duke University Press: 2012); P.A. Matthew, Written/unwritten: *Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure* (University of North Carolina Press: 2016).

6 J. L. Pierce, *Gender Trials: Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms* (University of California Press: 1996).

7 Hochschild, 163.

8 Ibid., 174.

9 M. D. Cottingham and J. M. Diefendorff, "Examining Men's Status Shield and Status Bonus: How Gender Frames the Emotional Labor and Job Satisfaction of Nurses," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* 72 (7–8), 377–389, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0419-z

10 Louwanda Evans, *Cabin Pressure: African American Pilots, Flight Attendants, and Emotional Labor* (Rowan & Littlefield: 2013).

At theological schools, the status shield and gendered and racialized assumptions about emotional competencies generate a situation where women in leadership do the bulk of unremunerated emotional labor, not only in their interactions with students but also with colleagues. Respondents reported spending an inordinate amount of time managing others' assessments of them, careful to avoid giving the impression that they were overwhelmed, annoyed, or tired; to appear not to take things personally; and to treat subtly sexist remarks as unintentional. Respondents also explained the mentally taxing strategies they devised in response. As I show below, women leaders' emotional burdens are exacerbated by unstable institutional environments and men's resistance to their leadership.

Women leaders' emotional labor

Twenty-seven out of thirty respondents described facing sexism and/or racism at some point during their interviews, typically while discussing their obstacles and challenges. All three of the women who did *not* mention racism or sexism are white. Sexism and racism typically manifested as resistance to respondents' leadership and authority. Most of the resistance to leadership that women described came from other faculty members and internal leadership, but some interviewees mentioned resistance from alumni/ae, students, faculty when they were students, and outside institutions (e.g., local churches). Resistance to women's leadership generated situations where respondents had to manage their colleagues' feelings of distrust as well as their own insecurities. Respondents reported having to demonstrate their leadership abilities time and again, and maintain a near-constant awareness of their relatively privileged colleagues' emotions. Importantly, the status shield protects privileged individuals from having to engage in the same emotional labor, leaving them more time and energy to spend on institutionally valued work.

Research by legal scholars Joan C. Williams and Rachel Dempsey reveals a "Prove it Again" bias in the workplace. Per this research, men's leadership opportunities are premised on their potential, but women must prove their aptitude for leadership again and again through their achievements.[11] About a quarter of the interviewees mentioned that they

11 Rachel Dempsey and Joan C. Williams, *What Works for Women at Work: Four Patterns Working Women Need to Know* (New York University Press: 2018).

were hired for temporary, part-time, or adjunct positions before they were hired full-time. This finding suggests that in theological education, as elsewhere, women must prove themselves before they can move up in the ranks. Reflecting on this issue, one interviewee stated that "we need to stop creating a culture, especially in theological education, where women have to continually prove themselves in order to be seen as valid" [racial/ethnic, mainline, senior-level leader].

The "Prove it Again" bias came through in men's resistance to respondents' leadership, which the latter described as challenges to their professionalism, integrity, and credibility. They described feeling "disrespected," "exhausted," "dismissed," "intimidated," "uncertain," "uncelebrated," "unacknowledged," "unheard," and—more than anything—"untrusted." Most of these words begin with negative prefixes that, in general, signal oppositeness or adverseness. Their repeated and widespread use of such words suggests that the interviewees interpret men's resistance to their leadership in opposition to the response male leadership receives. They know (or perceive) they are uncelebrated because they see how men are celebrated; they feel they are unheard because they know how men are heard.

Echoing the expressed sentiments of other respondents of color, one respondent explained how racism and sexism intersect to shape people's perception of her and willingness to trust her. In response to a question about the obstacles she encountered on her pathway to leadership, she answered:

> Racism. I think that . . . being a woman of color, the combination of those two. Of course, it means that I'm not a white woman, and so . . . race comes into it. I think if I were a man of color . . . white women wouldn't know how to deal with it . . . now I'm trying to imagine what's going on in the minds of others. I just know that the combination of being a woman and being a person of color has . . . impacted peoples' perceptions of me . . . and their willingness to trust me to know what I'm doing . . . I'm just guessing that it's an issue of trust. The trust that you would automatically give a white male to know what they're doing, I don't get [racial/ethnic, mainline, senior-level leader].

In this excerpt, the respondent conveyed a challenge that is particular to women of color—dealing with and explaining the impact of sexism and racism. These intersecting principles of inequality not only generate double standards in how trust is allocated, but also lead women of color to spend (or waste) time thinking about "what's going on in the minds of others." The mental effort of imagining "what's going on" in the heads of white women and white men is a form of invisible emotion work that women of color may often need to perform to survive in leadership positions and historically white male-dominated institutions in general. White respondents also expressed running through internal scripts and thinking about men's interpretations of them, but, unlike women of color, are not additionally burdened by having to spend time thinking about how women of color or other white women perceive them.

The extra work women perform in response to resistance to their leadership is not limited to interpreting people's perceptions of them, but also includes devising strategies for responding. Two respondents reported finding external reference points to support their claims (e.g., showing people a competitor school's curriculum to get them to agree to revise the curriculum). Many respondents described having to 'tone down' their leadership styles or to 'be less direct' when addressing faculty.

Like the woman quoted earlier, many respondents reported feeling like there were double standards in evaluations and expectations of their work. Like the women attorneys in Pierce's study, respondents reported that their leadership skills—the way they take control of meetings, the way they handle conflicts—are judged differently than men's.[12] They also reported receiving less praise than men for similar achievements and more critiques than men for mistakes.

Often, double standards are linked with attitudes or assumptions about women, for example that they excel at clerical work and multitasking. Though sexism often manifests as the refusal to trust women with certain tasks or responsibilities, a more insidious form of sexism is the delegation to women of unremunerated and/or unacknowledged responsibilities based on the gendered expectation that they are predisposed for those roles. In addition to their formal responsibilities, more than a quarter

12 Pierce, *Gender Trials.*

of respondents described being overloaded with unrecognized work or segregated into feminized roles.

One participant explained that her disproportionate involvement in committee work was the direct result of her gender identity:

> I got put on a number of committees because I was a woman, and we didn't have a lot of women on the faculty at this time. One year I remember going to my provost and saying, "I don't know if you know this, but I have nine committee assignments, and everybody else has like three or four or five." He's like, "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry" [white, evangelical, senior-level leader].

While the experience of being on several committees actually spurred their interest in becoming a dean, too much unacknowledged service can cause women to fall behind their male colleagues and have negative impacts on their leadership trajectories. One interviewee described the ability to refuse to do informal work as "the challenge of not becoming an institutional wife…just being able to draw the line and say no, that I can't do that" [white, evangelical, mid-level leader]. Another stated that "servant leadership is one of the most dangerous traps for women that there is" because "women are expected to be servants [and] men are not." She suggested that women should be careful to define their roles before moving into them so they do not get bogged down by forms of "servant leadership" that men are not asked to do [white, mainline, senior-level leader].

Sexist assumptions about women's proficiencies intersect with categories like race/ethnicity, age, and denomination. One respondent described her reluctance to return to an Asian/Asian North American church, where she stated women pastors are "not accepted…on an equal basis." "The age factor was also a part of it," she said, "A young female pastor in an [Asian North American] church is very hard. You're stereotyped to be able to only do certain things, like teach children Sunday school or in women's ministry" [racial/ethnic, evangelical, senior-level leader].

In response to a question about the changes that would promote the leadership of women in theological education, another interviewee

described how the work women do is obscured and suggested that women should be given titles and status for the unremunerated work that they do:

> What I found at my institution and looking at other institutions is that women are often recruited to function as leaders and administrators, but are not given the full responsibility nor the title…I think just for institutions to be able to name those administrative positions, and to equate funding a line item with them, instead of getting women to volunteer their time. Which as a result, you never have time to really study or to publish [racial/ethnic, mainline, mid-level leader].

This interviewee and others made the important point that schools should do more to acknowledge diverse forms of leadership.

Acknowledging and valuing various forms of leadership is especially important in light of theological schools' common financial struggles and other institutional challenges, which increase service burdens and place women leaders in precarious positions. Nine respondents, both senior- and mid-level, mentioned declining enrollment and ensuing financial struggles as a primary institutional obstacle or challenge. Because of declining enrollment and increasing financial strain, respondents are called upon to do more with less. It is impossible to determine from these interviews whether male administrators are also being asked to shoulder more tasks. But, given that women do more unremunerated administrative work and often take on more emotional burdens, it is likely that this form of gendered inequality is exacerbated when the institution is under financial strain. Respondents expressed that heavier teaching and administrative loads have a negative impact on their scholarship. During one interview, a respondent explained that as a person with "multiple skill sets" she was asked by the school to add different disciplines to her teaching portfolio "to fill the gap in curriculum." She ended up carrying three full-time faculty loads [racial/ethnic, mainline, senior-level leader]. Financial and budgetary issues also mean there is less money for professional development, including travel to ATS meetings.

Several respondents also remarked upon the challenges of assuming a leadership position in a time of institutional crisis. Social psychologists Michelle K. Ryan and Alexander Haslam coined the term 'glass cliff' to describe the tendency for women to be appointed to leadership positions

when an organization faces difficult times.[13] This phenomenon extends from political parties, where women are more likely than men to be selected to contest hard-to-win seats,[14] to Fortune 500 companies, where white women and women and men of color are more likely than white men to get promoted to CEO when companies are performing poorly.[15] Women not only have fewer, but also more precarious leadership opportunities than men. Some research indicates that women are given the reigns in risky situations because of gender stereotypes (e.g., that they are intuitive, understanding, and willing to collaborate) that increase their perceived suitability for managing crisis and acting as a scapegoat.[16]

Interviews with women in leadership positions in theological schools suggest that, like women in politics and business, they too may be standing on glass cliffs. While explaining that she thinks the work of increasing the number of women in leadership positions is "just gonna continue to get more and more complicated," one interviewee stated, "I looked at the [denomination] system, and it seems that we've put women leaders in some of these schools that are in the most convoluted, complex situations. We expect, 'Well let's have so-and-so do it.' I've seen this across our [denomination] schools" [white, mainline, senior-level leader].

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13 S. Alexander Haslam and Michelle K. Ryan, "The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are Overrepresented in Precarious Leadership Positions," *British Journal of Management*, vol. 16, (2005), 81-90, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2005.00433.x

14 S. Alexander Haslam, Clara Kulich, and Michelle K. Ryan, "Politics and the Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are Preferentially Selected to Contest Hard-to-Win Seats," *Psychology of Women Quarterly,* vol. 34 (Wiley Periodicals, Inc.: 2010), 56–64.

15 Alison Cook and Christy Glass, "Above the Glass Ceiling: When are Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Promoted to CEO?" *Strategic Management Journal*, published online EarlyView, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/smj.2161, received September 27, 2012; final revision received June 4, 2013.

16 R. Bongiorno, S. Alexander Haslam, M. D. Hersby, and Michelle K. Ryan, "Think crisis–think female: The glass cliff and contextual variation in the think manager–think male stereotype," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 96 (3), 470–484. (2011), https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022133

Ten respondents described the circumstances under which they assumed leadership positions as unstable, chaotic, or difficult. One interviewee explained that when she became president, her "school was very, very fragile" and "the board felt like they were tossing me the keys to the Titanic, as they have said" [white, mainline, senior-level leader]. The same respondent who referred to the "convoluted, complex situations" in her denomination's schools described some of the emotional labor that results from taking power in a "changing environment" where "people don't like what you're doing" and are "dealing with their own sense of fear and loss," particularly of vocation. Referring to how she has managed her emotions in the face of colleagues' anger, she said:

> Sometimes, they just need to be mad at somebody, and…in this context, the president's a great target…I've seen some presidents position the institution against the board, and say, 'oh, well, I'm on your side, but that mean old board, they just won't let us spend the money that's needed to do this or that.' I've never done that. I've tried to take it on the chin [white, mainline, senior-level leader].

This interviewee's description of herself as trying to "take it on the chin" is consistent with some of the findings in the research outlined above, particularly women's willingness to be scapegoats during times of institutional upheaval and/or precarity.

Conclusion

Women in leadership in theological schools encounter a great degree of both subtle and overt racism and sexism in their positions that interacts with the institutional instability under which they assumed their roles to increase the emotional burdens of their work. Women leaders are often in situations where they have to cater to the emotions of their more privileged colleagues while also managing their own institutionally induced insecurity. The forms and extent of emotional labor discussed by the interview respondents are not unique to women in theological schools, but the latter's financial struggles place women in especially precarious positions. Theological schools would do well to heed the advice of interview respondents

and devise ways of confronting sexism and racism and valuing forms of work that go unremunerated and often unrecognized.

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Strategic Relationships to Advance Women Leaders: Skills, Advocates, and Organizational Climate

Deborah H. C. Gin
The Association of Theological Schools

In 2017, The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) conducted a comprehensive study of women in leadership in theological education. In this publication's opening article, Jo Ann Deasy discusses selected findings from the study. In this concluding article, I discuss three additional topics from the findings—preparation for leadership, factors preventing women from leadership advancement, and harassment based on gender—and offer solutions to enduring challenges based on responses of the study's participants. I focus particularly on how various aspects are related—for example, organizational climate with opportunities to lead, or the presence of advocates with preparation in leadership skills—and highlight strategies related to these relationships and tactics that will help advance women in leadership. To unpack the topics further, I include analyses comparing the perspectives and experiences of presidents to those of participants who have never held an executive role, as well as preliminary results from recent ATS studies of presidents and of deans.

The ATS Women in Leadership study featured focus groups of women and men senior administrators, a survey of 573 women (including participants from the Association's twenty years of the Women in Leadership program, as well as those who have never participated in the program but are currently serving in ATS schools), and interviews of thirty women administrators (both mid- and senior-level) at ATS schools. The focus groups explored high-level questions about women in leadership in theological schools; the survey captured perspectives on the state of women in leadership in theological schools, as well as leaders' habits and experiences; and the interviews provided a thicker description of the leaders' pathways to leadership and a deeper understanding of selected issues.[1]

1 For details on methodology and analyses, see ATS director of research and faculty development.

Leadership skills

In their articles, Alison P. Gise Johnson, Elsie M. Miranda, and Shawn L. Oliver draw attention to the key role that preparedness for leadership plays in the journeys of women. Indeed, more than 60% of survey participants attributed the success they've experienced professionally to their education (most frequently selected), and more than 55% attributed their success to growth and development of skills (second most frequently selected). In contrast, only about 18% named support and mentoring by women, and about 25%, support and mentoring by men. So, while networks, advocacy, and mentoring are helpful and necessary for women in leadership, women in theological education acknowledge the reality that preparation is paramount.

We asked survey participants: "How well prepared are you with the following leadership skills?" Figure 1 on the next page shows the responses. The list of nineteen skills was developed by the ATS Board of Directors and Board of Commissioners and used to identify the next ATS executive director in 2016. Response options ranged from "Completely Prepared" to "Not At All Prepared." Overall, the responses showed that women see themselves as prepared in most leadership skills. In particular, they believe they are prepared with the so-called "soft skills" of leadership, such as generous listening, valuing the organization's human resources, and inter-personal skills. They also feel they are prepared in skills known to be required for leadership, such as articulating the organization's vision, decision-making, and the ability to motivate others. The skills for which they think they are least prepared are some of the more concrete and specialized leadership areas, including board leadership, financial management, and fundraising. These findings mirror results in Barbara Wheeler and colleagues' 2010 study *Leadership That Works* as well as in the Association's recent studies of CEOs and of CAOs, where men and women leaders saw themselves better prepared in the "soft skills" and least prepared in the specialized tasks of leadership.[2]

Two nuances to these findings may prove helpful for women considering higher levels of leadership. First, leadership skill preparation appears to be related specifically to the presence of mentors and advocates. Responses to preparedness for certain skills differed significantly

2 Reports on these six ATS leadership studies will be completed later this year.

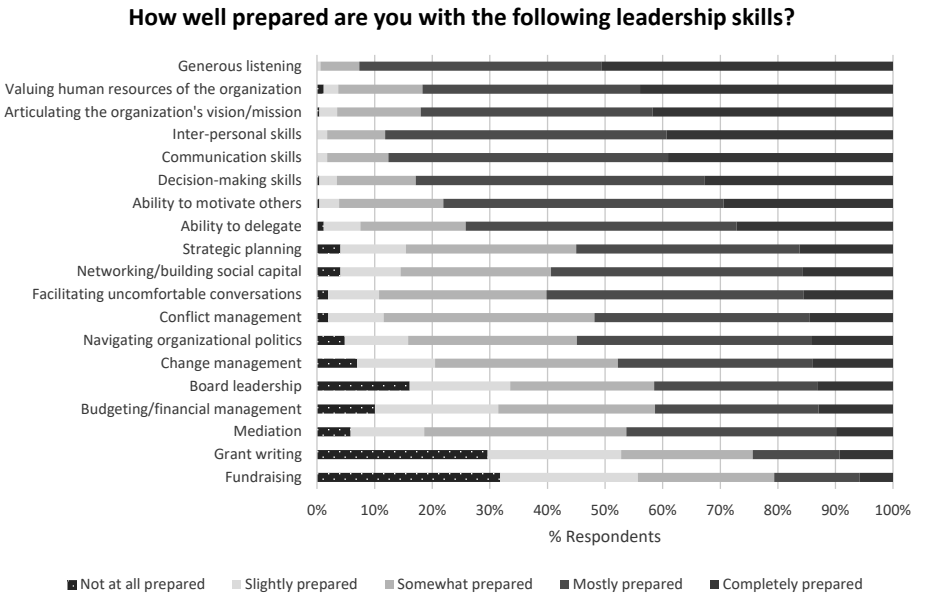

Figure 1: Leadership Skill Preparation

between those who had a mentor and those who hadn't. On average, those who had a mentor said they were better prepared than those who did not have a mentor in the skills of:

- Fundraising
- Grant writing
- Networking/building social capital

For the remaining sixteen skills, those with a mentor and those without reported similar preparedness.

Similarly, those who had a man in a position of power strongly advocate for their leadership said they were better prepared than those who hadn't had such advocacy in the skills of:

- Conflict management
- Mediation
- Navigating organizational politics

Interestingly, these six skills—conflict management, fundraising, grant writing, mediation, navigating organizational politics, and networking—are among the middle- to lowest-ranked skills. So, while women did not directly attribute mentors or advocates to their success (see this section's

opening paragraph), having such persons in their networks makes a difference in skills for which leaders report being least prepared.

Interview participants confirm this connection between having mentors and better leadership skill preparation. An excerpt from a mid-level leader from an evangelical Protestant school stated it this way:

> "When I was in the university setting, the provost there, I just was very privileged to watch how she managed her office, and how she went about doing institutional effectiveness with so much grace and professionalism…."

A comparison of responses between presidents and those who have never held a senior-level role provides a second nuance to this understanding of leadership skill preparation. Of the nineteen listed, presidents reported significantly higher preparedness in five leadership skills:

- Budget/financial management
- Change management
- Conflict management
- Facilitating uncomfortable conversations
- Strategic planning

Mean reports of preparedness by these women presidents mirror mean reports of preparedness by men presidents in the Association's recent study of CEOs. Note, also, that these five skills are found among the mid- to lowest-ranked skills by respondents overall.

Enduring challenges

All eight resource papers writers, but especially Joyce Chan, Charisse Gillett, and Dorcas Gordon, raise concerns regarding structural challenges that remain for women aspiring to leadership roles. The study identified several of these challenges that women leaders continue to face in theological education, including obstacles to the advancement of women leaders and experiences of harassment based on gender.

Factors preventing advancement

The survey asked respondents to select the top three factors preventing women from advancing in theological education. Participants chose from a list of fourteen factors, ranging from more personal decisions

(e.g., reluctance to relocate or prioritizing spouse's/partner's professional advancement) to more systemic inequities (e.g., impenetrable boys' club of upper-level leadership or lack of women role models). Figure 2 shows how these factors ranked, with the most frequently selected at the top.

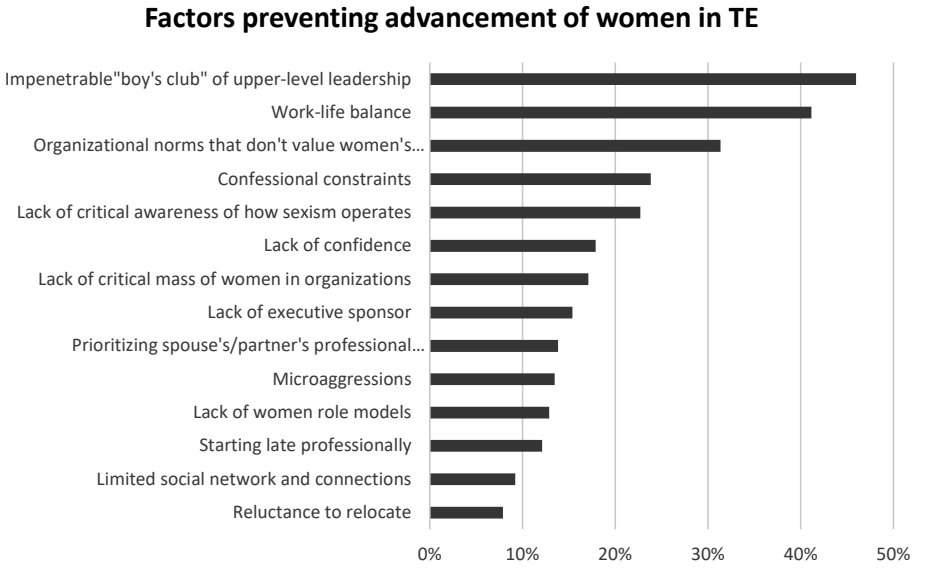

Figure 2: Factors Preventing the Advancement of Women in Theological Education

Several of the factors were significantly correlated to specific characteristics of the women who selected them. For example, women who raised children were significantly more likely to have named "work-life balance" as a preventing factor; women who are older, more likely to have selected "starting late professionally"; and under-represented minority (URM) women, more likely to have identified "microaggressions" as preventing women's advancement in leadership. The findings also included ecclesial differences. Those in Roman Catholic contexts were significantly more likely to name "confessional constraints" as a preventing factor; women in evangelical Protestant schools, more likely to cite a "lack of women role models" as a top factor; and participants from mainline Protestant contexts were more likely to have named "lack of executive sponsor" as an obstacle to the advancement of women in leadership in theological education.

Certain factors were found to be salient with respect to various groups—whether respondents were presidents or not, as well as whether

respondents were from favorable school climates or not. Presidents answered differently than non-presidents on only one of the fourteen items. While 50% of presidents named a "lack of critical awareness of how sexism operates" as a top factor preventing the advancement of women in leadership (their top factor), only 22% of non-presidents selected it. Interviewees shared many observations about their leadership experiences, including challenges, confirming findings in the literature about gender bias in higher education and other sectors (see Samantha Plummer's article in this issue). In particular, the study identified several types of sexism that continue to operate in ATS schools, such as the following:

- **Glass cliff** → being placed in situations that set women up to fail
- **Asymmetrical expectations** of men and women leaders
- **Prove-it-again bias** → leadership value based on proof rather than potential (and women having to prove over and over)
- **Policies and practices** that unevenly eliminate women from candidate pools

Participants were also divided into two groups, based on their responses to the item: "The climate at my current organization facilitates the development of women into leadership roles." Those who agreed in some way were placed in the "Favorable Climate" group, and those who disagreed in some way were placed in the "Unfavorable Climate" group. Women from favorable climates were significantly less likely (36%) than those from unfavorable climates (62%) to name "impenetrable boys' club of upper-level leadership" as a top factor preventing the advancement of women in leadership, suggesting there is something about the differing climates that is linked to the attendant experiences and views on the challenges women face.

Harassment

The survey included a pair of questions on harassment. Knowing the literature related to harassment in the workplace, we wanted to compare the theological educational environment to that of the broader workforce.[3] The two questions were phrased in this way:

3 Readers should note that the survey was launched at least a half year before the #MeToo movement exploded in the US public and social media.

1. "In your *professional roles in theological education*, how often have you experienced harassment based on your gender?" (Response options were: "Never," "Once or twice," "Several times," or "Frequently")
2. "How often did you report the harassment?" (Response options were: "Never," "Half the time," or "Almost every time/Every time")

With the first question, a broad definition was provided to respondents: "In this question, 'harassment' includes a range of behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, either 'aimed at sexual cooperation' or to convey 'insulting, hostile, and degrading attitudes about women.'"[4] Meant to capture the array of offensive behaviors and attitudes women face, the broad definition complicated results and made interpretation somewhat difficult. We were not able to tease out those behaviors that the public typically associates with sexual harassment.[5]

However, several observations can be made of the results, which help shed light on the experiences of women in the theological workplace. Figure 3 presents how the 520 women responded to the first question. Response options elicited frequency answers, prompting respondents to pinpoint distinct occurrences. The data show that at least half the women could name a clearly defined moment of harassment.

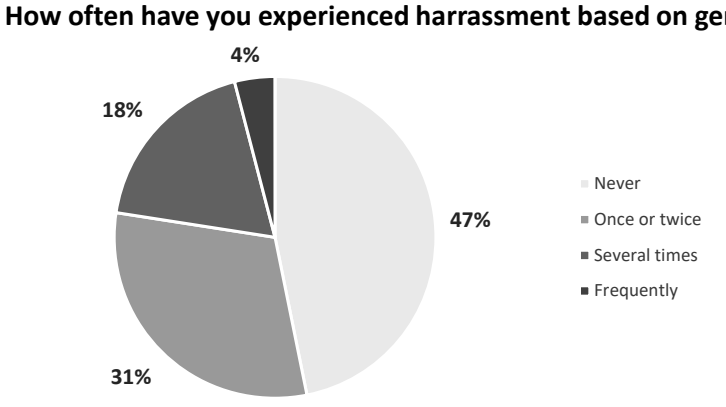

Figure 3: Experiences of Harassment Based on Gender

4 Taken from Fitzgerald, Louise F., Suzanne Swan, and Karla Fischer. "Why Didn't She Just Report Him? The Psychological and Legal Implications of Women's Responses to Sexual Harassment," *Journal of Social Issues*, Spring 1995.

5 Read Jo Ann Deasy's discussion (in this publication) on expectations of women in leadership. A series of items on the expectations of women in leadership all correlated strongly with these items on harassment and help unpack what respondents meant by "harassment."

Comparisons of responses between those in contexts with favorable climates toward developing women into leadership roles and those in contexts with unfavorable climates reveal a statistically significant difference, as seen in Figure 4 below. A far greater portion of women in unfavorable climates (64%, more than half of which responded "Several times" or "Frequently") can pinpoint an experience of harassment than women in favorable climates (46%). While these figures reflect a broad definition of harassment and the average is below the 59% of women who reported receiving "unwanted sexual advances or verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature" in a Pew study on sexual harassment in the workplace, the significant differences in experiences between school climates in theological education deserves our attention.[6]

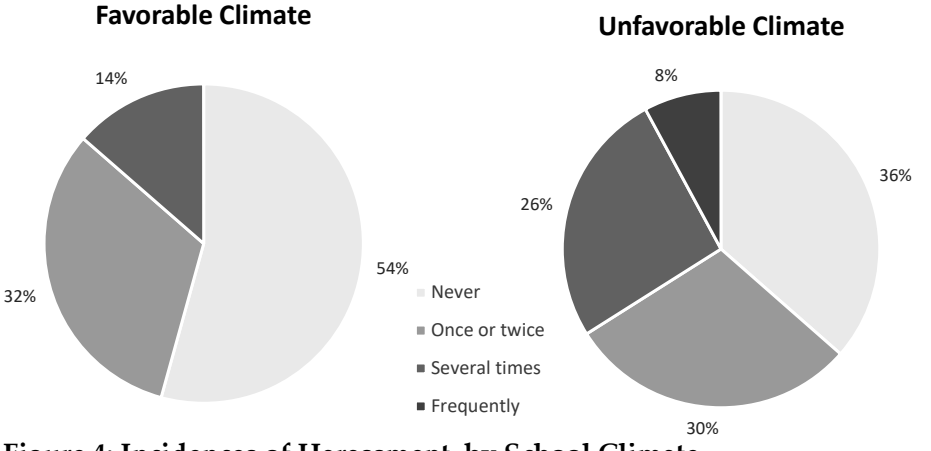

Figure 4: Incidences of Harassment, by School Climate

Those who said they'd experienced harassment at least once or twice were asked a second question, about how frequently they'd reported the experience. In Figure 5, we see that nearly two-thirds (65%) said they'd never reported the incident. In this case, there was no difference by campus climate; those in favorable and unfavorable contexts responded virtually the same. It is unclear why the women did not report; they may not have wanted to make waves, they did not want to relive the incident, they dealt with it individually, they were not sure whether it actually happened, or some other reason. Whatever the reason, these findings point to a need in theological schools to address harassment and to provide safe mechanisms for doing so.

6 Pew Research Center: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/04/04/sexual-harassment-at-work-in-the-era-of-metoo/. Accessed Feb 2, 2020.

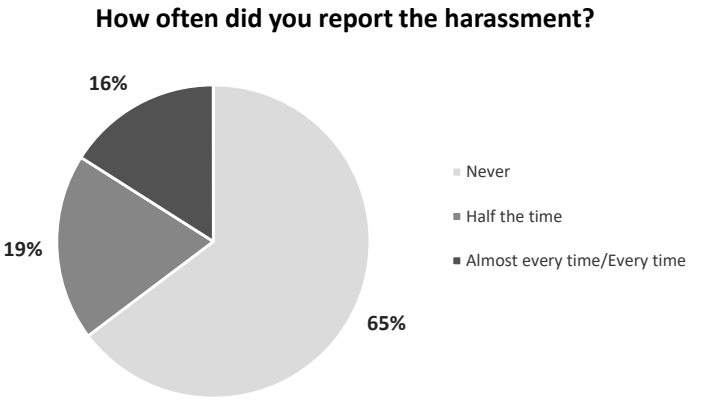

Figure 5: Report of the Harassment

Addressing the challenges

The challenges highlighted in this issue's three articles that report findings from the ATS Women in Leadership study point to conditions that prevent women from thriving in their work and advancing in leadership. The study also identified possible ways forward and directions for tackling some of the stubborn structural obstacles.

Current realities

Before moving to solutions, however, we must name current realities because it is within these realities that viable solutions will arise. The membership is comprised of a wide range of theological schools. Some allow women to occupy all levels of leadership, while others—because of confessional constraint—do not. Figure 6 shows, on the top, the distribution of women's responses, by the ecclesial family of respondents' schools, to the question: "Does the church, denomination, or theological position associated with your current place of employment *allow for* women in all leadership roles?" The distribution is largely as expected, with far greater portions of women in mainline Protestant than those in Roman Catholic settings answering "yes." The bottom graph depicts the responses to a second question: "Does the church, denomination, or theological position associated with your current place of employment *support, promote, or funnel* women into leadership roles?" This question was posed only to those who answered "yes" to the first. About a quarter (mainline) to a half (Roman Catholic) of those whose contexts allowed for women in

all leadership levels said they were not being promoted into those roles. Regardless of context, not all women are being supported into leadership even when women are allowed to lead at all levels. This leaves us to consider why and what can be done in those contexts.

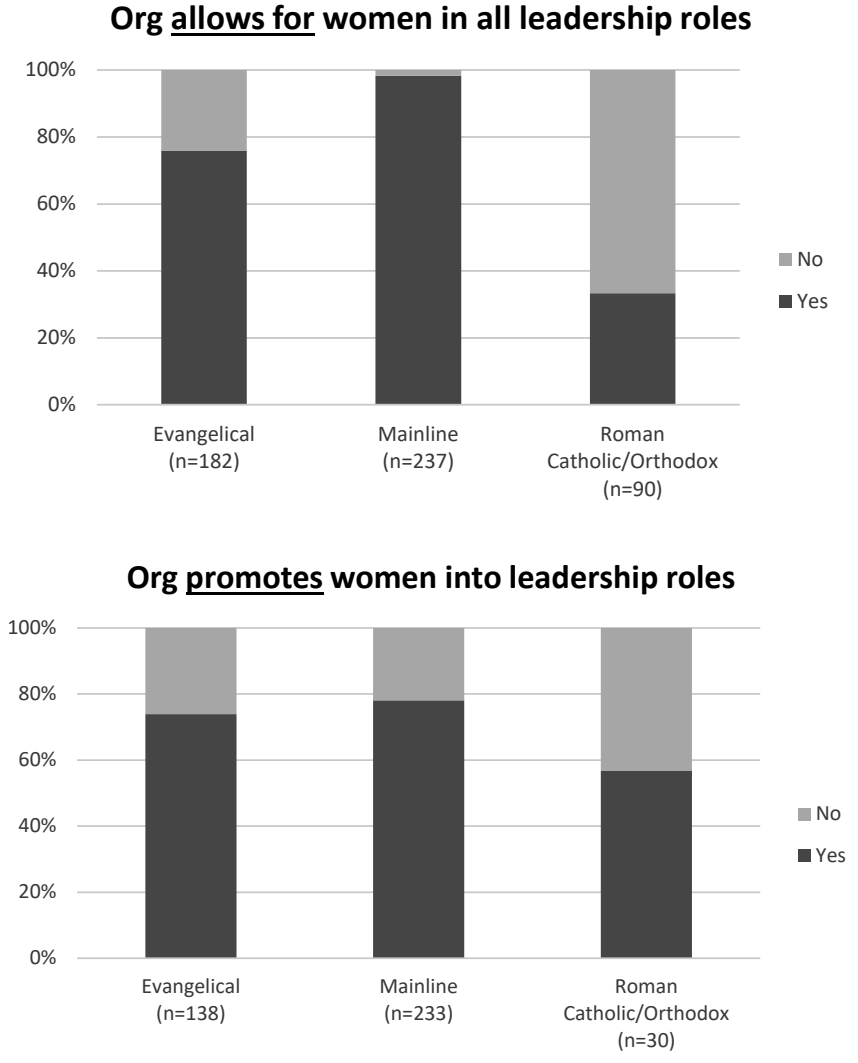

Figure 6: Current Realities, by Ecclesial Family of School

Solutions from ATS

The first solution is something that ATS can and will continue to provide through its Women in Leadership (WIL) programming. The program offers women a place to develop in leadership and support one another

in that development. An analysis of responses to an open-ended question about the impact of participation in WIL suggests how important the program has been to reduce the sense of isolation, to provide support and safe spaces, and to raise awareness of issues for women in leadership. Figure 7 lists these and other types of impact from WIL programming. Examples include responses such as, "Gave me hope that women who achieved a level of leadership to which I aspire were once just like me," and "Seeing issues at institutional/systemic levels." Indeed, 93% of this item's responses were about something positive.

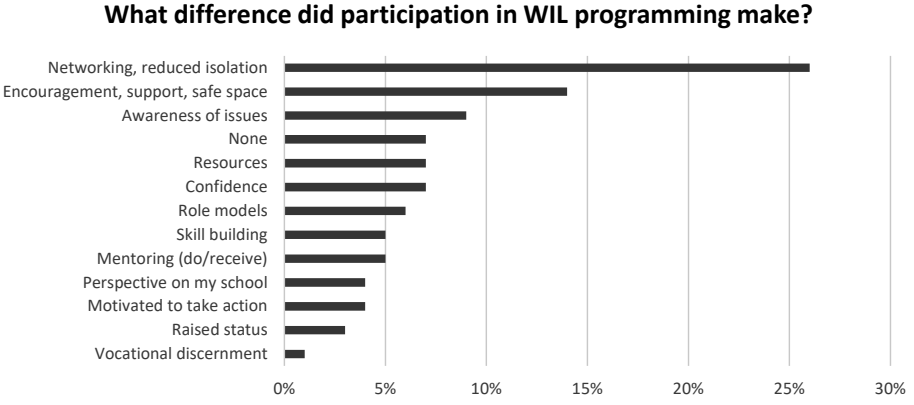

Figure 7: Types of Impact of WIL Participation

At the same time, we must name the limitations of WIL programming. We wanted to know whether WIL programs mattered in terms of strategic movement toward advancing women into leadership roles. Participants in WIL events were receiving leadership education, but did this translate into leadership positions? Analysis of responses to two questions helps us understand this better.

Women who participated in one or more WIL events were significantly more likely to report they've considered taking on a (higher-level) leadership role at their organizations than those who had never participated in WIL. This was a welcomed finding—that WIL programming was related to a greater likelihood of intent to lead. Respondents were also asked whether they'd had ample opportunity to use the leadership education they'd received (i.e., ample opportunity to lead). Participants and non-participants of WIL events answered about the same, just under "Agree" (on a scale from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree"). In this case, it appears that ATS programming does not make a difference. So, while WIL

programming is related to intentions to lead, it is not related to opportunities to lead.

Solutions from schools

Can we find a counterbalance to the limitations of ATS programming for women in leadership in the schools where women serve? Perhaps, in order to move this work of advancing women in leadership in theological education forward, the schools and ATS must approach solutions together.

Recall the comparison made earlier between contexts where the climate facilitates the development of women into leadership roles ("Favorable climate") and those where the climate does not ("Unfavorable climate"). In the earlier comparison, we saw how campus climate is related to experiences of harassment. Here, I present another difference. Figure 8 shows how those in favorable climates report having far greater opportunities to use their leadership education. To reiterate, participation in WIL makes no difference in having greater opportunities to lead, but being in a school with a favorable climate *does*.

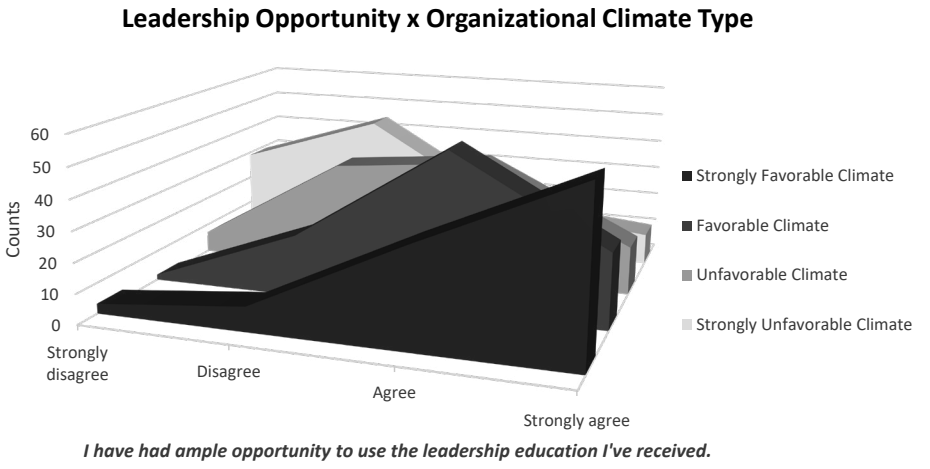

Figure 8: Leadership Opportunities, by School Climate toward Developing Women into Leadership

In their articles for this publication, Barbara Reid and Loida Martell emphasize how institutional contexts can either help or hinder the development of women in leadership. I have also referenced favorable climates throughout this article. What specifically do the schools with such climates

do differently? We posed the following twelve yes/no items about policies and priorities of the organizations where all respondents serve:

- "My current organization has an intentional plan to increase the representation of women in leadership."
- "Gender balance/parity is mandated in my current organization."
- "My current organization has an inclusive-language policy for references to *human beings*."
- "My current organization has an inclusive-language policy for references to *God*."
- "My current organizational colleagues are composed of more than one-third women."
- "My current organization's decision-making board is composed of more than one-third women."
- "My current organization has a parental-leave policy."
- "My current organization allows employees to bring children to work."
- "My current organization provides childcare."
- "My current organization offers flexible work arrangements."
- "My current organization has a mentoring system that facilitates women's professional development."
- "My current organization intentionally recruits diverse employees."

The schools with favorable climates differ significantly from schools with unfavorable climates on all these policies and priorities except two—having a parental-leave policy and allowing employees to bring children to work. For these two, there were no differences between favorable-climate and unfavorable-climate schools. The remaining ten policies and priorities are what distinguish the types of schools; favorable-climate schools are more likely to have these policies and priorities.

Becoming a school with a climate that facilitates the development of women into all leadership roles may not be the goal for every school. We saw this in the discussion of current realities. However, even if a school does aspire to having such a climate, working on ten policies and priorities may seem too difficult of a task. So where should schools focus?

The solution may lie in a comparison of schools and opportunities for women to lead. Of the twelve policies and priorities listed above, only the following three were related to having ample opportunities to lead:

- "Gender balance/parity is mandated"
- "More than one-third of colleagues are women"
- "Intentionally recruits diverse employees"

Schools that had these three priorities in place were the schools where women agreed more strongly that they'd had ample opportunities to lead. Causation cannot be concluded, but the factors *are* related. So, for schools desiring to advance women into leadership, focusing on these three priorities is something to consider.

Concluding reflections

The ATS Women in Leadership study illuminated many aspects of the state of women in leadership in theological education. Three articles in this issue unpack some of the findings and several implications of the results. In this article, we considered leadership skill preparation, factors preventing the advancement of women in leadership, and harassment based on gender. We then looked at possible solutions to the challenges that women continue to face in this industry, looking carefully at how individual skills, the presence of mentors or advocates, and organizational climate are related and could be used in strategic movement toward advancing women in leadership.

With respect to preparation for leadership, participants identified their education and their growth and development in leadership skills as the top reasons for their professional success. Of the nineteen skills listed, participants felt prepared overall for most but least prepared for the specialized skills related to budget, fundraising, and board leadership. Connections between preparation for certain leadership skills and the presence of mentors and advocates were also highlighted.

For women with intentions to advance in leadership, nineteen skills may seem too many to tackle at once. To find a starting point, identify skills that are particularly relevant for the leadership roles to which you aspire. In addition, consider the skills where both men and women leaders report a lack of preparation, and focus on the skills where there is a significant difference between the preparation levels of presidents and those who have never held senior-level leadership positions.

When it comes to the factors that continue to prevent the advancement of women in leadership, participants most frequently named the

impenetrable boys' club of upper-level leadership as a top issue. But those in contexts with favorable climates (i.e., climates that facilitate the development of women into leadership roles) were far less likely than those in contexts with unfavorable climates (36% vs 62%, respectively) to name this boys' club as a top preventing factor. In addition, presidents most frequently named a lack of awareness of sexism as a factor impeding the advancement of women; whereas, far fewer non-presidents saw this as a top factor.

An important finding of the study was that more than half of the participants indicated that they had experienced at least one incident of harassment based on gender. Nearly two-thirds of those who'd experienced harassment said they never reported it, which points to a systemic problem. The definition of harassment used was intentionally broader than what is traditionally understood as "sexual harassment," in order to capture the breadth of degrading or offensive behaviors and attitudes women face. Though use of such a broad definition created complexities for interpretation, it suggests the need for a better understanding of harassment in the larger context of organizational climate and expectations of women leaders. Taken together, these findings on preventing factors and harassment underscore a call for the industry of theological education to attend to campus climates that undervalue or devalue women in the workplace.

Potential solutions to the challenges that endure were found to come from both ATS and from the schools. Participation in the Association's Women in Leadership (WIL) program matters in terms of intending to take on higher-level leadership roles; those who participated were more likely to say they had this intent. However, participation in WIL does not matter in terms of having ample opportunities to lead; those who participated were just as likely to say that they had enough opportunities to lead as those who had not participated. Rather, opportunities to lead lie in the realm of the school.

Participants in schools with climates that are favorable toward the development of women into leadership roles were more likely than those in climates that are unfavorable to report that their schools have a list of policies and priorities that help women in theological education. However, three of those were found to be salient in schools where women had had ample opportunities to lead—mandating gender parity, prioritizing efforts

to intentionally recruit diverse employees, and ensuring more than one-third of colleagues are women.

Among ATS schools, there is a range of confessional traditions that allow/don't allow women to occupy leadership positions at all levels. Based on context, some women may never advance to the top leadership positions. Regardless of context, however, all women should be valued in the workplace and should be able to depend on safe climates and mechanisms for reporting harassment.

The occasion of the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Association's Women in Leadership program provided an opportunity to hear from women in ATS schools. Through the study, we identified challenges that women in leadership continue to encounter and clarified ways forward for both individual women and the enterprise.

Challenges do remain, but women are finding their way forward in the midst of many gender-related obstacles. One-third of the women (both mid- and senior-level leaders) interviewed in the study said they took on their leadership roles in contexts that were unstable; yet, the organizations where these women lead are now thriving. There are strong indications of hope. Not a single interviewee indicated she regretted moving into her leadership role, and a vast majority said *without hesitation* that they enjoy what they do. One senior leader at a mainline Protestant school stated it this way: "If you look, you can see some wonderful things happening as a result of your work. Somehow we've gotta figure out how to balance the challenges and the joys."

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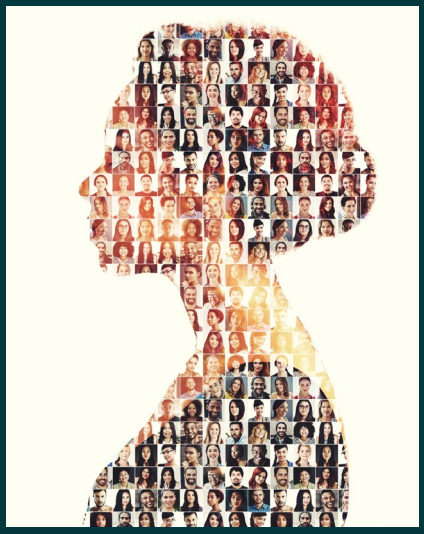
A publication dedicated to the leadership of women in theological schools, Editor Mary H. Young (Director of Leadership Education for The Association of Theological Schools) brings together essays discussing past and present research findings from the Association's Women in Leadership initiative, as well as writings reflecting personal perspectives, experiences, and expertise to enhance the work and leadership of women in theological institutions.



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