

Aspects of the experience of ordination by URCSA female ministers in the Western Cape

By

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this thesis is strictly my own work and is an original document. This research was conducted by my own efforts. I have acknowledged and referenced all secondary material used in this thesis as required by the guidelines of the University of Pretoria.

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KEY TERMS

- **Coloured:** “‘Coloured’ refers to those South Africans loosely bound together for historical reasons such as slavery and a combination of oppressive and preferential treatment during apartheid, rather than by common ethnic identity” (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999:169).

- **African:** A person of African origin or ancestry, particularly a black person

- **Woman:** An adult female above the age of 18

- **Ordination:** The act of being ordained into a church as a minister

- **Load-shedding:** Planned blackouts or interruptions to the electricity supply of South Africa in an attempt to reduce the load on the demand for electricity. Load-shedding often occurs multiple times throughout a day

- **URCSA:** Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa

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ABSTRACT

I would like to draw attention to the experiences of ordained Coloured women in South Africa, in particular those ministering to congregations in the Uniting Reformed Church South Africa (URCSA) in the Western Cape.

Coloured female clergy in the URCSA family are seldom assigned positions of authority in the church, which may lead to a disinterest in pursuing this line of ministry. The main question is, what challenges do Coloured women face after their ordination into the URCSA family?

The aim of this research study is to investigate the positive and negative experiences of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA and to journey with them as they minister in a male-dominated environment. The objective is to encourage more Coloured women to consider ordination within this denomination.

So that reliable and truthful answers can be shared, interviews will be conducted with an open-minded approach so and no pre-conceived perspectives are projected onto the participants. Female clergy from multiple URCSA congregations across Western Cape Province will be interviewed.

It is the responsibility of the church to provide pastoral care to ordained women clergy suffering from marginalisation. They need to be given emotional support and encouragement through counselling before undergoing ordination to prepare them for the journey, and during the ordination process for a long-term effect.

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CHAPTER ONE: ABOUT THE RESEARCH

1.1.Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to practically and theoretically investigate the experiences of women clergy in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, and to illustrate how the use of Pollard's healing methodology empowers Coloured women clergy in the URCSA.

For the purpose of this study, I would like to single out one shared experience amongst Coloured people across the country, the experience of the Christian faith, and in particular, membership in the URCSA community. I would, in particular, like to bring attention to the ordination experiences of Coloured women in South Africa, mainly those in ministry in Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa congregations in the Western Cape. This is because Coloured women in the URCSA family rarely take positions of authority in the church or seem to have an interest in this line of ministry. The main question to ask is what are the challenges Coloured women face after their ordination into the URCSA family?

1.2.Background

Rev Mary-Ann Plaatjies-van Huffel, originally from Prieska in the Western Cape, became the first female to be ordained as minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in November 1992 (Flaendorp, 2014:53). However, this victory for female clergy was not without conflict as she experienced a schism once she began her ministerial duties. About 120 congregants (including females) left her church and joined the Robertson community, reportedly because many of the congregants could not accept this new normal being led in worship by a woman.

Rev Plaatjies-van Huffel that she would need to deal with various forms of prejudice as a woman in ministry (Flaendorp, 2014:55-56). She would go on to write about her experiences within the patriarchal systems of the URCSA, referring to the phenomenon as 'identity politics in URCSA' (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:2).

The above story reflects the struggles experienced in both pastoral and women's ministry as a result of the URCSA's decision to ordain women.

According to Sekano, the modern world may slowly be moving towards an existence void of racism and sexism (Sekano, 2007:1). In today's world, different forms of racism and sexism still exist in the Christian church. There have been many books and biographies written highlighting the Dutch Reformed Church's history of using Scripture to justify racism and sexism in South Africa. With more men and women of African, Coloured and Asian descent being ordained in the URCSA family, these systems may change. Some men in the church however, believe that they are being victimized by this new trend of promoting female leadership. They also claim that female ordination and the inclusion of women in leadership positions violates the Holy laws of ordination and cultural traditions. (Sekano, 2007:2).

The South African democratic laws passed in 1994 have encouraged the population previously classified as "Coloured" to respond to their new-found liberty in a multitude of ways. Some contend that they struggle with their identity which is viewed 'as lack'; expressing that during the Apartheid regime, they were not "white enough" to claim a positive identity, and today, post- Apartheid they are now seen as "not black enough" (Caliguire, 1996:12; Erasmus, 2000:72). Some have even gone as far as establishing their identities through the historical association of Coloured people with the indigenous Khoi-San, thus claiming authentic ethnicity through this link (Erasmus, 2000:72). The above racial struggles have affected women on their road to ministry.

It is safe to say that based on Erasmus's findings, there is no single form of identification that can be used to label the Coloured population in South Africa. This group of people has a diverse and extensive history and they have managed to form multiple traditions across the country.

1.3.Preliminary literature review

The literature review (Chapter 2) covers research conducted on the ordination of women from different denominations and cultural backgrounds. While reading doctrines remains important to understand context, some believe that one should not

strictly uphold doctrinal teachings when it comes to justice, as this is scandalous (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:45).

This chapter probes the literature on women clergy and their experiences, especially their journeys in ordination. The literature review also addresses the concerns of black African and Coloured women and their religious lives, especially those living in Western¹ countries. The focus of this research will also include empirical research.

This study will investigate the experiences and concerns of Coloured women clergy and their ordination within the URCSA denomination. Some studies have been conducted on the history of Coloured women, yet little has been done concerning their lack of ordination.

Pioneering female scholars in the field of feminist theology form part of the authors of literature used in this study, including Mary Ann Plaatjies-van Huffel, Mercy Oduyoye, Christina Landman and Isabel Phiri, amongst others. These are the scholars that contribute to the African literature and experiences of women clergy in different church congregations. As Plaatjies-van Huffel states, “The ordination of women in URCSA only brought about a few modifications of the image of the status of the minister of the Word, but essentially, nothing has changed in the patriarchal anthropology of URCSA” (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:3).

The literature review will also analyze sources on the history and livelihoods of Coloured women and people in a democratic South Africa, as a means of understanding how racial patriarchal structures, including cultural systems contribute to the religious experiences of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA. The literature used in this thesis is intended to question and to strengthen arguments made, and not overpower them. The literature used for the thesis will be based on the narratives of Coloured women in ordination. I will engage with literature from Coloured, African and Western scholars concerning this topic. Oduyoye quotes, “Words that are constantly on the lips of women are “by God’s grace”; “God will show us the way.” Women’s hope moves them not only to take risks, but often to sacrifice their own comfort to enhance the lives of others. Sometimes this becomes needless suffering and women grow a victim mentality that some mistake for a living sacrifice” (Mapasure, 2022).

1.4. Methodology

I will use the qualitative research method and the grounded theory approach in particular, to investigate the experiences of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA. The intention is to learn and understand what women are encountering in ordination, and deconstruct the perceptions the URCSA family may hold about female leadership. It is important to understand why Coloured women may be reluctant to enter the vocation of ministry and participate in ordination, and why URCSA congregations appear cautious about having Coloured women as ministers, in order to understand why young Coloured women may be less eager to be ordained. This will hopefully allow people in the URCSA family to consider and develop alternative worldviews that are more inclusive.

Information gathered throughout the informal interviewing process will be compartmentalized for the purpose of identifying common trends experiences of the participants.

Lastly, Nick Pollard will also be critically analyzed as the author of the healing methodology in this study. The study intends to deconstruct and reconstruct the potential cultural systems which may contribute to the ordination experiences of Coloured women in the URCSA by using the healing methodology of Pollard.

There are a variety of cultural and social factors that would most likely have an influence on those who will be interviewed during the research process (Clough, 2017:6). The factors which affect the outcomes of this research include gender, family, nationality and race, educational background, religious belief and the upbringing of the participants and congregant members.

This research is going to be conducted using a qualitative research method because the concerns listed in the problem statement and objectives are best answered by conducting interviews with women who have experienced ordination in the URCSA church. It would have been alternatively possible to use a method of data collection if the study were using a quantitative approach. This would, however, limit the freedom of the participants and cover their emotional interests, the perceptions they have and the complexities surrounding the relationships within female clergy experiences (Matshobane, 2020:5-6). It is important to use the qualitative method of data collection so as to remain objective, and to ensure that each woman is given the

voice she needs in order to express her experiences as raw and accurately as it occurred.

The method used to address the problem behind Coloured women's ordination will be based on Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction. The process was labelled "deconstruction" because it helps the participant take apart-or deconstruct-their personal belief system, look at it in detail, and conduct an analysis on it (Pollard, 1997:44). Using Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction, the research intends to firstly investigate the experiences of Coloured and black African women clergy in the URCSA, and then deconstruct and reconstruct the cultural systems these women experience in their leadership roles.

A qualitative research design theory is implemented to assist with the collection and the analysis of the participating women clergy in the study. The following research tools will be used as a means of collecting the required data for the success of the study: unstructured and semi-structured interviews, the grounded theory approach, empirical research epistemology, and Pollard's healing methodology.

The most suitable groups of women to interview would be the Coloured women in the Western Cape who are directly affected by ordination in the URCSA congregation. Interviews will be conducted in an attempt to "capture perceptions, attitudes, and emotions of the interview participants" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:155; Matshobane, 2020:5). There are eight elements within qualitative research that contribute to the method of researching, and multiple traditions that are also useful when using this approach. These research traditions are a case study, narrative inquiry, ethnography, action research, phenomenology and finally, grounded theory (Matshobane, 2020:6).

The most appropriate research tradition to use during this study is the grounded theory approach, as it gives an opportunity for participants to express their grievances freely and without restraint. Implementing Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction as a healing methodology for the study will help me research, deconstruct and pastorally care for those affected by the ordination concerns of Coloured women. Appendix A is listed as an example of the compiled interview questions for participants of the study.

1.5. Ethical considerations

All participants in the study are to be treated with respect and dignity at all times, understanding that their contribution is to assist with identifying the problems at hand. The research will ensure that participants are aware of developments and the purpose of the study. This means that during the interviews, all participants are aware of what they are answering to. Appendix B is a sample of the consent form which will be given to all participants of the study granting permission to be interviewed for this thesis. Participants should feel that they are able to contribute as needed. A large part of this thesis focuses on racial concerns, therefore indicating the need for clarification on race in South Africa. For this research, I will use the definition of Coloured articulated by Erasmus and Pieterse in a chapter entitled, 'Conceptualizing Coloured identities in the Western Cape Province of South Africa'. They state that: "Coloured' refers to those South Africans loosely bound together for historical reasons such as slavery and a combination of oppressive and preferential treatment during apartheid, rather than by common ethnic identity. For us, the identity 'coloured' is sometimes seen as overlapping with 'black' and always with 'african'" (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999:169).

1.6. Researcher's consideration

As this study may involve sensitive material which I, as the researcher, may find triggering, I will avail myself to the counselling services at the University of Pretoria as needed. This will ensure that I remain objective when collecting data and contribute to the success of the study.

1.7. Problem statement

The struggles faced by Rev Plaatjies-van Huffel and other female Coloured ministers in the URCSA gave rise to several questions which will guide my research in this thesis. Young women from predominantly Coloured communities often find themselves losing close friends, their sense of identity with their communities and even with their families when they seek ordination in male-dominated churches. African women have had numerous discussions on women's roles in ministry and

they conclude that the ordination of women is an “empty ecclesiastical victory” (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:6). Phiri and Nadar (2005) maintain this because women clergy have little or no authority in the church and their contributions are not valued. (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:6). I opine that similar experiences have occurred in various congregations across the Western Cape Province, and I therefore seek to identify and report on the experiences of women in these congregations.

The expectations society has of Coloured women are seldom higher than that of being a wife and mother, occasionally working in menial jobs in order to support their families. Nel (2019) questions whether the Christian Women’s Ministry of the URCSA has achieved its aim of moving away from the Victorian or missionary perspective of women being nothing more than “mothers” and “docile objects” (Nel, 2019:12). This assumption will be analysed in the course of this study. Historically, this was the highest expectation for Coloured women, and these household roles, although not as strictly enforced, are still expected to be upheld by Coloured women from a young age. In the URCSA family, female ministers find that their decisions within the church are overturned by their male counterparts who believe that women should not make decisions in the church. In some congregations, such as the congregation that I originate from, church council members often make decisions without consultation from the ministers, which undermines the authority of the minister.

This research wishes to not only challenge those docile expectations, both in terms of the church’s laws for women and the church’s general lack of confidence in them, but also to explore the ordination experiences of these women by identifying their ordination concerns and employing the pastoral care model of Pollard to assist with the empowerment of ordained Coloured clergy women.

1.8.Aims and objectives

The aim of this research study is to uncover the ordination experiences of Coloured women in the URCSA, and to journey with them regarding how they navigate their ministry within a male-dominated field. In addition, the aim of the research is to investigate both positive and negative experiences in their ordination, what they have

faced and why this occurs, and to pastorally encourage more Coloured women to consider ordination within this denomination.

The objectives of this research were as follows:

- To investigate the experiences that Coloured women who serve as ordained women clergy face in their positions within their congregations.
- To investigate whether the historically male-dominated culture of the URCSA is still in operation in congregations with female Coloured ministers and pastorally deconstruct this concept.
- To use the Positive Deconstruction model of Pollard as a healing methodology in order to empower the Coloured women clergy in the URCSA who have journeyed with ordination.

1.9. Relevance of the study

There is an astoundingly low number of Coloured women in ministry, and while many Coloured households believe in living by the Christian faith, few women enter into ordination in churches. The phenomenon in question here is to understand why Coloured women are not being ordained in numbers in the URCSA family. Based on personal experience, it is my belief that Coloured women are not usually encouraged to explore ministry as a career option, both by their immediate families and by society at large. I would like to journey in understanding why Coloured women are rarely ordained in the Uniting Reformed Church, and what it is that they experience after their ordination. This study is relevant to the field of Practical Theology because it deals with human experiences and investigating how ordination is faced by Coloured women.

1.10. Motivation

I am motivated by my interest to contribute to the ministerial lives of present and future lives of Coloured women both in terms of academic contributions by means of this study, and pastorally by implementing a pastoral care model that can assist with concerns future women may have during ordination, as well as to make sense of the

purpose I have in ministry. As a Coloured woman in the URCSA, I am at risk of experiencing the same cultural systems with the same level of silence surrounding the lack of female ordination. There is currently only one operational Coloured female minister in the URCSA community in the province of Gauteng, and approximately less than 50 Coloured women ordained as ministers in the URCSA and operating presently, which leads me to question why more Coloured women are not seeking or succeeding in their pursuits of ordination in other congregations. My concern is about the traditionally male-dominated systems women are expected to work under these conditions in the church, the silence from the church who may be aware of this, the clergy participating in these domineering systems, and the limited academic sources shedding light on these systems. Another motivational point of this research is based on empathy. This empathy is born out of an understanding of being a female theologian in the church with no form of support from a male-dominated congregation, a woman within the URCSA community, and the only female in my own congregation to pursue a career in ministry currently where no woman has been ordained as a minister for decades. My hope is to empower women within the congregation and hope that this study will indirectly encourage more women to become ordained in the URCSA. By using Pollard's theory of Positive deconstruction, pastoral caregiving can take place. I hope to assist people within the church who believe that serving under women is degrading, and to remind them of the works of the Holy Spirit in all our lives.

1.11. Research gap

I seldom come across ample research done about Coloured women by Coloured women, however many of those living in the Western Cape have given us a voice. The likes of Mary Ann Plaatjies-van Huffel and Christina Landman have done much research about feminist theology in the URCSA, and Benita Nel and Zimitri Erasmus have contributed to the literature about the lived experiences of Coloured women. In Plaatjies-van Huffel's (2019) article on the gender insensitivity of the URCSA, the intention behind uncovering the issue of identity politics within the URCSA is to make readers aware of these circumstances that remain silent under the denomination's authority once women have been ordained (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:2). While this is a similar study, my research gap is identified where I focus strictly on the lived

experiences of Coloured women in their ordination journey the URCSA Western Cape family. However, the University of Pretoria library is limited in its literature on the experiences of Coloured women in general, and the religious journeys of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA. This thesis intends to investigate the lived experiences of Coloured women clergy regarding their ordination into ministry and contribute to this limited literature. The element of Pastoral Care comes where I hope to journey with these women regarding their previous experiences with the church. The church has always been the foundation of a Coloured woman's faith, and during times of uncertainty and life changes, this is a relationship I hope to maintain. I would like to find out both positive and negative experiences, whether their relationship with their church was maintained during these times, and whether they had sufficient support in terms of their aspirations regarding ordination into ministry.

1.12. Epistemology

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), the idea of epistemology is primarily concerned with the knowledge gained from theoretical work. Epistemology allows us to grapple with the reasons behind gaining certain knowledge. In my research it is primarily concerned with the ordination of Coloured women. I have chosen to work with Clergy women who have experienced the journey of pressures and expectations within the church regarding how they become ordained ministers in the church and the affects this has on their ministry, in terms of both positive and negative experiences. The knowledge obtained during the interviews will be received when an appropriate group of participants are interviewed. The most suitable group to interview will be Coloured women clergy in the province of the Western Cape, as they have been directly affected by these structures. In an effort to best understand the views they share and the perspectives they hold as a result, interviewing them about their experiences is fundamental to gaining the correct information (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016:42; Matshobane, 2020:8). The church consists of people and not structural buildings. Buildings are simply the tools used to assist with carrying out our responsibilities. For this reason, the only method of obtaining knowledge is not through the church itself, but the people from the church. Those who feel oppressed by the church, embraced by it, conflicted and wounded. All knowledge on the value of the church is held by those who it has impacted (Phiri, 2005:65). During this study

I will interact with what African and Western female scholars have to say about this topic, and then integrate the findings with women who have been affected by their journeys in ordination in the URCSA family.

1.13. Preliminary Chapter Outlines

1.13.1. Chapter One

Chapter one of this study is the introductory chapter and contains an outline for the research study. This chapter consists of the following headings: the introduction of the study, the background, the literature review, the methodology, the problem statements, the aims and objectives, relevance of the study, the motivation, a research gap, an epistemology, the preliminary chapter outlines, a list of preliminarily cited works and a preliminary conclusion.

1.13.2. Chapter Two

Chapter two of the study is a critical and analytical review of the literature covering the ministerial journey of Coloured women, as well as patriarchy in the URCSA and other denominations. This chapter gives a critical analysis of literature about women clergy and their lived experiences, black African and Coloured women and the ministerial experienced in their religious lives in a male-dominated field, and Western women's lived experiences in the religious world.

Additionally, the study will include a satisfactory definition for the Coloured race in South Africa.

1.13.3. Chapter Three

Chapter three highlights the research methods that will be used along with methodological concepts for the study. It is constructed under the following headings:

- the research design,
- a qualitative research approach,
- the grounded theory approach,

- empirical research-epistemology,
- collection of data,
- unstructured interviews,
- participants of the study,
- sampling of participants,
- analysis of data,
- Pollard's healing methodology,
- ethical considerations of the study, and
- a preliminary conclusion.

Focusing on Pollard's methodology of Positive Deconstruction will help with entering into the space of Coloured women in ministry and the circumstances that they face. Pollard's theory will be supported by the experiences of Coloured women in ordination and assist the research in the journey with them.

1.13.4. Chapter Four

This chapter will look into the experiences of ordination through looking at literature surrounding women clergy and their ordination in Christian churches. This chapter looks further into literature by pioneering feminist theologians who have gone through ordination from both Western and African sources. In addition to identifying sources containing information of women and the circumstances they have dealt with in the URCSA, the Bible has been used as a tool to regulate the roles of not only women in general, but also women seeking and journeying through ordination. This chapter will additionally focus on how this has been done in the lives of Coloured women.

1.13.5. Chapter Five

Chapter five is based on the informal interviews conducted during the study with ordained Coloured women, as well as the data that will be collected and an analysis of the provided information. The collected data samples will be critically analyzed by using multiple grounded theory methods as a qualitative research approach, which will be used during the study.

1.13.6. Chapter Six

Chapter six comprises on the development of a healing methodology fitting for the women in the URCSA and their journey with ordination. While developing a healing methodology for this thesis, I will deconstruct the patriarchal interpretations of Biblical scripture intended purely for the regulation of women clergy in the church and use Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction to pastorally care for women clergy who have dealt with ordination in the URCSA.

1.13.7. Chapter Seven

Chapter seven concludes the thesis by discussing the findings obtained throughout the research procedure, recommendations for other scholars, and a conclusion on the study.

1.14. Preliminary Conclusion

Many publications have been written expressing concerns about why few women are ordained as church ministers. By bringing a similar assumption into the URCSA family, it can be investigated whether the same is occurring in this church denomination. The assumptions presented regarding women's ordination are suggestive of several stumbling blocks that were found by different scholars. These assumptions will be tested during the interview process with ordained women in the URCSA in an effort to investigate whether they are faced with the same problems. The next chapter will analyse literature from Western and African sources on the ordination experiences of women.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the literature covering the experiences of women clergy in the URCSA family. The researcher will be using the literature produced by

pioneering Coloured and feminist theologians such as Mary Ann Plaatjies-van Huffel and Christina Landman. I will also be studying the experiences of pioneering feminist theologians from the Western world, engaging their material with those who are in the URCSA.

There are many literary sources covering the history of the URCSA family and the high regard in which male clergy members is held, however, very little has been written about the experiences of women clergy within the denomination. When seeking justice for the oppressed people of God, it becomes less important to strictly believe in a platform that upholds nothing but doctrinal preaching and teachings. Attempting to strictly uphold doctrinal teachings is nothing short of scandalous (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:45).

The acknowledgment by the church of the high and ever-increasing number of women who enrol in seminaries to be in ministry calls for a change in the current structures of ministry leadership. It is now imperative that women are permitted equal opportunity and ability to lead the church in fresh and exciting ways (Willhauck and Thorpe, 2001:19). However, despite the increasing number of women entering ordination across the world, many still believe that, among other factors, patriarchy serves as a stumbling block. Fiorenza (1996) contends that: "As long as patriarchy endures an ecology that leads to change is impossible Ultimately patriarchy is not something predestined but a historical phenomenon. It arose at some time; it can also disappear again. And it is now the time for that ..." (Fiorenza, 1996:138–140).

In order to understand the lived experiences of women clergy in the church, we must begin by asking them to share their stories with us. The literary sources used throughout the research for this thesis are intended to question and to strengthen the lived experiences shared by participants during the interview process. The intention is not to overpower the words of the participants, but to strengthen them. Comparing literary sources from the perspective of the African women and Western women will also be advantageous, as it will give an illustrative example of how African women experience ordination in their context and how Western women experience ordination in order to highlight the experiences of multiple cultural groups and demographics. These sources will then bring to light the importance of acknowledging the ordination experiences of women in multiple contexts.

Some of the literary sources used throughout this thesis will give explanations of certain terms and corroborate information, and other literary sources will come directly from the experiences of the ordained women.

2.2 Existing literature on women's ordination

The cardinal purpose behind the construction of this literature review is to give a description and an analysis of research publications that have similarities or already exist on the subject of women's ordination. Additionally, a literature review establishes to the reader that the researcher grasps an understanding of the nature of their topic. This gives further credibility to the efforts of the author and the overall integrity of the argument being presented by the researcher. By reading, analysing and documenting existing literature in the field of study, it is easier for the researcher to identify shortcomings and weaknesses in existing literary works. This assists the researcher in uncovering the need for research in a specific field, and to develop a compelling argument for the need for this research. This is how the research study is able to "Foreshadow the researcher's own study" (Berg, 2009:388; Denney and Tewksbury, 2013:2).

Many themes surrounding the obstruction of female ordination have already been addressed by womanist theologians from North America, and by men and women in South Africa. Plaatjies-van Huffel (2008; 2011) has expressed resonance with these challenges in her own journey of ordination in the DRC. Ground-breaking work has been done in this field by the women of the Circle for Concerned African Women, such as Mercy Amba Odoyuye and Isabel Phiri (2010, 454-467). Other scholars have also contributed to this work, such as Roxanne Creasy-Jordaan (1995), Sarojini Nadar (2009, 210), Christina Landman (2017), and Madipoane Masenya (2012, 205-214) to name a few (Nel, 2019:6).

The literature review looks into publications surrounding Coloured women in the church, and women clergy in the URCSA family. This includes looking into a variety of theories surrounding the experiences of women in the URCSA community and the methodology for collecting the required data and the literature pertaining to information found on the study of female ordination in the church.

In an article entitled '*The institutionalisation of Christian women's organisations: from docile recipients to agents of change*,' Plaatjies van Huffel (2011) presents an argument that institutionalizing all the organizations for Christian women in the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (URCSA) resulted in the women in the church being viewed as docile objects, altering their theological discourse. The article in question reflects on a few aspects of the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa and its treatment of women of colour. It speaks on the history and the background of the organizations run by Christian women in the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, and how these organizations were institutionalized. Additionally, the article looks at how involved the Women Mission Society was in the constitution of women into the organizations of Christian women, as the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) as well as the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) were separated according to gender and race during this time. Lastly, the article analyses the contributions that the organizations of Christian women made towards improving the religious lives of women, and the level of change that these organizations have successfully implemented. Plaatjies-van Huffel shares that in the article, "It will highlight experiences shrouded in silence within URCSA, and deepen knowledge about the struggles that women in ordained positions within URCSA have had to endure" (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2011:1).

The academic field of Practical Theology is divided in multiple sub-disciplines which reflect on some of the practices which facilitate receiving and sharing of the life-altering salvation of God, a promise that the Christian faith proclaims, such as preaching, pastoral counselling and care, education, and extending care to those who are poor, sick, near death and bereaved. Additional practices could include participating in mission activities and evangelism (Phiri, 2013:358). In the field of Practical Theology and Missiology at the University of Pretoria, very little has been written on the lived experiences and the healing ministry of Coloured women in the URCSA community.

2.3 Women ordination in the URCSA

The subject of ordination within the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa is usually addressed from a racial and gender perspective. Plaatjies-van Huffel further

notes: “The Women’s Mission Society played a pivotal role in constituting Christian women’s organisations in the URCSA that were segregated on racial and gender lines” (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2011).

However, many articles focus on the history of the Dutch Reformed Church and its association with the Apartheid regime, and how this can be corrected by addressing the ordination of black African men and women. One significant characteristic of any literature review is that it includes multiple manuscripts and articles on the subject as well as opposing viewpoints. While reports typically consist of information proving the existence of a form of relationship, this is not the objective of a literature review, as the existence of a relationship between certain concepts is not a requirement (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Denney and Tewksbury, 2013:3). This allows the researcher to showcase a gap of knowledge in society (Denney and Tewksbury, 2013:3). I opine that before interviews are conducted, it is important for the study to have a strong foundation of literature upon which the interviews can be based.

As previously mentioned, to accurately conduct research this thesis conducts a comparative study of a variety of related sources. This includes literary sources from South African academic institutions which offer courses in Religious Studies and Theology containing modules on Black Liberation Theology. This is pivotal for the success of this study.

While doing consultations with and identifying compatible sources from the libraries of the three universities-namely, Stellenbosch University, the University of Pretoria, and the University of South Africa (UNISA)-, a few gaps in the research were noted. One of the gaps identified was a noticeable lack of information on women clergy in the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa. Some articles spoke on the history of Coloured women in the church, however, very few articles mentioned modern ordination concerns on this issue. Additionally, there is a limited number of resources on Coloured women in ministry and the steps they face with ordination and leadership. This includes insufficient information on the congregations in the Western Cape which they lead.

In the field of Theology, much research has been done on the history of the Dutch Reformed Church and the contribution of women in the church. Mary Ann Plaatjies-

van Huffel and Christina Landman are renowned female theologians who have written on Feminist Theology within the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa.

The ordination struggles of African women have been documented by Dr Sekano (2011) and Dr Matshobane (2020). Sekano shares the experiences of his own mother and sister during ordination: “Some of the men who find themselves under the leadership of women withhold their support and cooperation whilst others even quit their jobs and church affiliation. These actions cause tension in the work environment, in particular the church” (Sekano, 2012:1).

In his Masters and Doctoral dissertations, Dr Sekano has researched the experiences of women under oppression in leadership roles in the church. As Sekano states, “The aim is to research the destructive behavioural acts of male subordinates towards their female pastors; to expose them and to endeavour to formulate a methodology that can avert this warped ideology within the church” (Sekano, 2011:1).

Dr Matshobane has also written on succession in his Doctoral dissertation. He points out that “The aim of this research is to facilitate a smooth transition during succession by investigating the causes of contentions through a literature review, a qualitative research that has been conducted through interviewing 31 individuals that were purposively chosen from founders, successors and congregants” (Matshobane, 2020:v). There is not much research done on the ordination of Coloured women in South Africa.

In 1992 Rev. Prof. Dr. Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel made history by being the first female within the Dutch Reformed Church in Southern Africa to be formally ordained as a minister. She wrote an article, ‘The institutionalisation of Christian women’s organisations: from docile recipients to agents of change,’ which gives insight into the historical aspects of women in the greater Dutch Reformed Church. This article highlights institutionalization within the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) - a major concern in organizations for Christian Women.

According to Nel, “In 2005, at URCSA General Synod, male delegates (who were by far the majority) drafted and presented an “Open Letter from the men of URCSA to the women of URCSA” (URCSA Acts 2005, 176); ...*we confess that we have applied the liberating guidance of Belhar primarily to the problems of overcoming barriers of*

“race,” culture and ethnicity. So today, as URCSA, we stand judged by the Belhar Confession” (Nel, 2019:2).

The organizations for Christian women contributed to perceptions that women may be constituted as docile objects within the church, and that this also applies in theological discourse. The article explores the history and the background of organizations for Christian women revealing how they were institutionalized into the systems of the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (URCSA). It documents the role the Women Mission Society played in constituting organizations for Christian women in both the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and the Dutch Reformed Church (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2011).

It is important to look at the history of the women in the church in order to move forward and acknowledge the current circumstances of women’s ordination. Plaatjies-van Huffel (2011) has provided a solid foundation for this thesis of the historical aspect of women in the church and their ordination. In 2019, Rev Plaatjies-van Huffel wrote an article entitled *“A history of gender insensitivity in URCSA.”* The article highlights her experiences as the first female minister to be ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church, and the marginalizing experiences of women in the present-day URCSA.

An auto ethnographical methodology is used to deconstruct how the URCSA has addressed gender inequality. The argument of this thesis on the value of women’s ordination is strengthened by Plaatjies-van Huffel (2019) in her article as follows: “It concentrates on research grounded in personal experience, hopeful that this research would sensitise readers to issues of identity politics in URCSA, enlighten readers experiences shrouded in silence in URCSA, and would deepen knowledge about the struggles women in ordained positions in URCSA have had to endure” (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:2).

The intention Plaatjies-van Huffel’s article is to sensitize the reader to the reality of identity politics within the URCSA. In addition, experiences in the URCSA that have been hidden from public view will be brought to light and contribute to the body of knowledge on the concerns and struggles shared by ordained female ministers in the URCSA (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:1). The article does not specifically refer to the experiences and struggles of Coloured women. However, the similarity between my

own study and the research of the article results in this article additionally serving as a foundation for this thesis.

2.4 Women clergy on the African continent

This section of the thesis will bring to light the struggles of other women on the African continent in order to demonstrate that the problems faced by URCSA women clergy are not unique. Dorcas Olubanke Akintunde gives an indication that religious academic literature seldom addresses the contributions of women clergy. Women who have dedicated their lives to the church are hardly mentioned and their roles in the church are often minimized if mentioned at all. This is particularly evident when one delves into the official historical literature and doctrines of the churches. This is one of the reasons there are so many Independent African Churches with a history of male-dominance who are able to influence the decision-making processes in the church (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:81). Malone further supports the idea that women clergy find themselves being treated different to men. This is an opinion he claims is evident worldwide: “The history of Christianity shows ambivalence towards women. On the one hand, women have been included, called, graced, inspired and canonized by Christianity throughout the centuries. On the other hand, it is evident that women have not always felt appreciated within the Christian tradition and indeed have often felt excluded and oppressed by church leaders, particularly because most leaders in the church were male. It is this ambivalence towards women that characterizes the whole of Christian history.” (Malone, 2001:17). I concur, because many literary works by African feminist scholars have indicated levels of gender inequality within the church.

2.5 Research techniques and methodology

This thesis has considered and dissected multiple sources covering women from different races and cultural traditions and their ordination experiences. Each of the four main sources places emphasis on a different aspect of ministry and the effect that this ministry has on women. The literary sources identified align with arguments already made by women in ministry from both African and Western perspectives.

These sources speak to the various ordination journeys that clergy women are inclined to face in leadership positions.

The literature used for this thesis can be categorised into four groups of sources to highlight the multifaceted ordination experiences of African women in ministry. The first group comprises Coloured women serving as ministers in the URCSA family, as this will give an understanding of how clergy women within the URCSA experience ministry. The second group of sources comprises black African ordained women in the URCSA family, so as to identify the experiences of black African women and develop a comparative study on the experiences of women from different racial and cultural backgrounds. The third group of sources comprises Coloured women in the URCSA family with an interest in ministry in different denominations in order to understand the reasons behind the limited number of Coloured women clergies in the URCSA family. The last group is made up of Western sources so as to compare the experiences of Western and African women in ministry.

By including sources of Western origin and the viewpoints of black African and Coloured women in the URCSA congregation, the thesis can bring to light potentially opposing views on ordination experienced in the church. The study will therefore identify non-identical views of ordination from both the Western world and women who are from different cultural backgrounds globally participating in God's ministry. Mugambi recalls that "The earliest presence of Western Christianity is evident especially in Ghana, Angola, South Africa and Kenya. The second phase of Western Christianity was the Cross-Atlantic slave trade, in which European merchants procured African slaves for export to the Caribbean and the Americas" (Phiri, 2016:107). During the third phase, colonies were established on the African continent. In order to achieve this, missionary personnel were acquired to act as auxiliaries. This was done to control and govern the African population (Phiri, 2016:108).

2.6 A context for Coloured women ordination

All the literary sources in the chapter speak on the struggles that women from different walks of life have faced within the church. Some of the women have expressed, through these literary sources, being challenged when attempting to be

ordained in their congregations. Smarr, Disnennet-Lee and Hakim (2018) support this by stating that while women clergy could see their gender as an aspect that provides them with certain advantages, some members of their congregations, including clergymen, may be against this. Some religious denominations with members of both Black and Caucasian backgrounds have opposed the ordination of female clergy (Smarr, Disbennett-Lee and Hakim: 2018:2).

McGrath takes the initiative to question what some people may believe, particularly those with an interest in the sociology of religion. These are the individuals who believe that the best universal understanding of Christianity should be one consisting of European origin. He opines that there are multiple paradigms of Christianity, and that Western Christianity can and should exist as one of them (Phiri, 2013:87).

To gather information from multiple sources, a constructive dialogue on the ordination of both Western and African women may be of value. A dialogue will allow for multiple points of view to be heard and understood. This will develop a deeper knowledge of the world (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:47).

Letty M. Russel contends that as Christians we form part of the dominating system which can be found all over the world, and we have become people who conform to this standard by pretending that there is a universal approach to conversations in the church surrounding issues of gender. We find ourselves ignoring that people come from different racial backgrounds, social classes and genders, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, different power structures and nationalities (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:15). By looking at a comparison between the African and Western Christian movements, I am hopeful that women from both spheres can find relation in their ordination journey.

2.7 Coverage of Women's Ordination in academic works

In theological studies, succession struggles have been researched and documented in the field of Practical Theology by Dr Mangaliso Matshobane (2020) in his dissertation for his doctoral degree about Independent Pentecostal Churches in the Eastern Cape. The oppression of women clergy and the oppressive behaviour of men in the church is covered in his master's dissertation (2007). Based on

information obtained from libraries at the University of Pretoria, the University of South Africa, and Stellenbosch University, there is not much written specifically in Practical Theology on the ordination experiences of Coloured women in the URCSA family.

In *'Women's voices and visions of the church: Reflections from North America,'* Kelly Brown Douglas speaks on the Black Church, particularly for African American clergy women. Douglas believes that in essence, the Black Church refers to separate groups or branches of churches which reflect how diverse the black community of North America is. These church branches may originate from denominational structures of white churches, or may be autonomous of them. The churches are reflective of different church systems, including episcopal, connectional and congregational systems. These can either be rural, urban or suburban and can be as small as a storefront-sized church or as big as a mega-church. The North American population in question ranges from middle-class people, working class people and poor people. These systems are reflective of highly overwhelming or highly restrictive methods of expressing spirituality (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:29).

To contribute to the limited literary sources on Coloured women clergy and ordination practices in the URCSA, this thesis dives into the experiences of women clergy in the Western Cape.

2.8 A male perspective on women's ordination

Much of the literature surrounding the ordination of women in the URCSA alludes to the idea that men have created a displeasing and an oftentimes hostile experience. As Sekano articulates, "They also destroy the self-esteem of women who are given opportunities and responsibilities of leadership. They finally traumatize women by suppressing them so as not to function properly in their positions of leadership" (Sekano, 2012:4).

The auto ethnographical article by Plaatjies-van Huffel is an example of what is referred to as 'gender insensitivity' within the URCSA denomination, (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:1). This is identified in multiple academic sources.

It is important to capture the perspectives of men who have historically been labelled as contributing to the unpleasant nature of the ordination journeys of URCSA women clergy. Dr Sekano in his Masters dissertation for Practical Theology conducted a study on the experiences of men who had served under women in the Pentecostal church. The men who were interviewed were reported as feeling traumatized and sometimes degraded when expected to serve under female leadership, as they were comfortable within the patriarchal structures that they were raised in. These men appear to believe that culture plays a pivotal role in assisting them with how they address the structures of patriarchy (Sekano, 2007: viii). Sekano supports this statement by quoting, “These passages share the same connotation with the Setswana idiom that says *‘Tsa etelelwa pele ke e namagadi di wela ka lengope’*. This means ‘Those that are led by a female leader will fall into dongas’. The negative idiom reinforces the socialization of men to continue with their negative concept of women leadership” (Sekano, 2012:2). These patriarchal systems also contribute to why many male leaders are unenthusiastic about allowing women to become their successors. The concept of succession is a generally challenging aspect within African Independent Pentecostal churches. The ordination of women into ministry becomes scarce because when referring to male church leaders, Matshobane quotes, “The only time they will be succeeded is when they retire, die or are removed because of a moral failure or incompetence” (Matshobane, 2020:1). Unlike traditional churches in South Africa, these churches have not developed a system of rotation that allows them to transfer ministers to different congregations once their work is completed (Matshobane, 2020:1). Men have acknowledged often feeling humiliated by the reality that they are on the same professional level, or even under the leadership and authority of women. In light of the concepts mentioned above, some men have mentioned that they are left feeling ‘degraded and traumatized’ as a result of certain new laws of equality. They report that these new laws go against the laws that God enforced, and stand against their cultural rights, as women are not traditionally given roles within leadership (Sekano, 2007:2).

Churches are not in a position where they can lose the men who are already skilled and highly experienced simply because they are traumatized. This trauma causes them to resign from the church as they struggle to adapt to a society free from racism and sexism. Therefore, it is important to do sufficient research and educate

people who still hold onto patriarchal values (Sekano, 2007:15). To create change in the church, one must first understand why it is difficult to accept a new leader, and second, whether the gender of the new leader is a contributing factor to struggles in ordination. As it pertains to succession challenges, it is harder to find a new leader once the founder has been serving in the organization for a long period of time. 'When experienced people leave organisations, they take with them not only the capacity to do the work but also the accumulated wisdom they have acquired' (Rothwell, 2005: xviii; Matshobane, 2020:1).

The researcher agrees with Matshobane that new leadership in the church is difficult to accept by the congregation. Nevertheless, women who seek ordination should be encouraged to take on this new role and they should be treated in the same way as their successors.

Warren Bird had conducted research on the statistics of global Independent Pentecostal churches which was featured in Outreach Magazine. In Brazil, China, Korea, Nigeria, Singapore and the United Kingdom, 82% of global Independent Pentecostal churches have reported experiencing significant growth while being led by their current head pastor, who, at the time, had yet been succeeded (Bird 2016; cf. Bird 2010; Matshobane, 2020:1). Many of these head pastors are believed to be men, as there has not been much documented on the succession of women in ministry.

Throughout history, men have always been considered heads of the household, and leaders within places of employment and even in churches. Men have always made decisions on important matters, and women have never considered questioning their authority. It is truly believed that the world was made for men and was known as such (Sekano, 2007:16). Even in instances where women were made leaders in the church, men would have the authority to either question or overrule their decisions. "Even in para church ministries, where women were theoretically granted equal status, they fall far behind their male counterparts." (Snyder & Runyon, 1986:99). These are some of the struggles women face in ministry.

One reason that male clergy members may be reluctant to respect the authority of female clergy is because they are fearful of succession in their congregations. Matshobane in his Master's dissertation (2020) for Practical Theology conducted

qualitative research on succession within the African Independent Pentecostal churches. It is estimated that 93.75% of the principal leaders from congregations in the African Independent Pentecostal churches fear that once they are no longer leaders in the church, they will lose the respect of, and the influence they have on their flock. They contend that they had dedicated the majority of their lives to serving their congregations (Matshobane, 2020:3).

While this statistic applies to the Pentecostal church, it reflects attitudes in the church at large and demonstrates how difficult it may be for ordained women to practise as ministers in the URCSA. These fears cause them to be reluctant when approached with the idea of succession, even more so when the potential successor is not an individual born and bred inside the immediate congregation, but has been outsourced (Matshobane, 2020:3-4). Most principal leaders within the church also show mistrust in their potential successors, as 87.7% of leaders have indicated. These leaders maintain that they fear the intentions of the successor for the church, and are concerned that too many changes regarding the direction and the vision of the church may be implemented (Matshobane, 2020:4). One potential reason for the lack of women's ordination in the URCSA denomination is the fear that female ministers could alter the vision of the church. This will be investigated during the interviews with participants.

Women are believed to receive differing treatment in some African churches than their male counterparts. Some church denominations across the board, particularly denominations from African Indigenous origin, still exist in systems where women are not permitted to use the same door of the church building that male congregation members use, and are expected to use a separate door. It becomes a particularly painful instance when women go through their menstruation cycle each month. During this time, women are not permitted to attend to certain chores within the home, and are to avoid touching certain utensils in the kitchen (Sekano, 2007:35-36). They may also not attend any church services. This is an ancient biblical concept which is found in Hebrew culture. It is one of the laws established by Moses and is said to be ordained by Yahweh (Sekano, 2007:35-36). The primary question is concerned with what happened during that time when a female clergy member was on her cycle. This law is found in Leviticus 15:19-20, and reads, "When a woman has had her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days,

and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening. Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean.” The above-mentioned story highlights the different ways that women are oppressed in African churches. It is believed that these oppressive practices may hinder the ordination process of women in the church in Africa. Some of these struggles will be analysed when interviewing clergy women.

2.9 African women clergy in ministry

All throughout history for the majority of South African cultures, particularly in rural areas where African customs are upheld, no woman had ever been the figure of ultimate authority and power in a position of leadership. In rare circumstances where women were in positions of leadership, it was always found that there was a male figure who stood above them and could override their decisions (Sekano, 2007:33). African Women’s Theology focuses greatly on the struggles and the suffering that African women face in their journey with theology. Their unique set of challenges lead them to aim at empowering and liberating other African women, and hopefully free them from the oppression and the injustice they had experienced. Oduyoye (2001) has a lot to say about this, and agrees by stating; “This theology boldly criticizes what is oppressive while advocating for the enhancement of what is liberative not only for women but for the whole community” (2001:17).

When conversing on women within ministry, the African women in ministry are often emphasized more. The ordination of black African women is described as an “empty ecclesiastical victory,” as a result of the reality that women do not have sufficient recognition or authority in the church, and their value within ministry is not often acknowledged (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:6). When discussing theological education, one must also consider how important it is to speak on African women within all levels of the church. Female theologians and groups for women in the church are imperative so that women are able to work together constructively. This is particularly important when acknowledging how important training is in helping young women feel empowered. As it pertains to gender issues within the church and the greater society, there was also an emphasis on how hermeneutics are important to culture, especially when identifying African roots” (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:7).

Brigalia Bam exerts with confidence that there is no exaggeration in the reality that church in South Africa is primarily a church of and for women. If we look at many of the places around the continent of Africa, and even in the world, it is evident that women make up the majority of memberships of churches. If women were somehow removed from the churches in South Africa, there is no doubt that the entire church would collapse from inside, and other members of the church would die slowly and painfully. Women remain the backbone of the church in South Africa (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:12). Mercy Oduyoye wrote a book entitled *Daughters of Anowa*, and contends that traditionally, women in African are known as “the slaves of slaves”. This is a term that could even be used to describe women in the church. Brigalia Bam contends that these systems are the reason why there are specific roles given to people and why certain people are permitted to have specific roles considered crucial, but not enough to be in powerful positions (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:12).

The roles of Indian women in South Africa have also taken a significant change in the last few years. Initially, Indian women were submissive and remained silent in their positions in the church, and more recently they began occupying positions as ordained ministers. How women are viewed by men and the by themselves in their home lives and in the church have a significant impact on what they are allowed or even willing to do to advance their positions in the church (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:64). Although the roles of Indian women in domestic terms are transposed in the church, their roles under emancipation are not. This means that despite the fact that many women have jobs working as professionals in society, within the walls of the church, they are still considered domestic workers (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:64).

The Full Gospel denomination has a unique system of beliefs. According to the constitution of the Full Gospel Church, it is legally permitted for women to have full participation in everything pertaining to the church, including the right to ordination (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:64). The moderator of this denomination notes that it has never forbidden or restricted the ordination of women. Phiri and Nadar (2005) indicated in this literature that the church just maintained a level of complete silence regarding the issue. However, the facts surrounding ordination in the Full Gospel tradition throw a wrench in this alleged system. Until the 1980s, women pastors were only permitted a two-year training period, preventing them from the chance at ordination by default. On the other hand, men were permitted to train for as long as

they required in order to be ordained. This gives an idea of the discrimination women faced in the church. The simple fact that the church limited the amount of time they could spend at college, therefore, restricting them from completing their required studies, meant that they were not able to get ordained (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:64-65). Whether the same is true for the URCSA will be investigated during the interviews with participants. The moderator notes that today women are able to fully take part in all aspects of the church, and may be ordained to whichever level they desired. In reality this is not what women end up doing. Women in this church are still instructed to carry out basic and traditional 'womanly tasks,' such as making tea for meetings, holding Sunday School and "sister's meetings" and taking care of basic chores. They are not commonly seen in positions of leadership (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:64-65). With the above in mind, let us now analyse the western culture, and what women in ministry experience.

2.10 A Western comparison of women clergy ordination

Women in clergy systems are often treated differently, based on the traditional belief systems and values of their churches. Demetra Velisarios Jaquet believes that women in the Orthodox Church are commonly educated, valued and well respected in their respective congregations. They do, however, find themselves challenged when attempting to find a balance between their spiritual lives and their work lives (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:138-139). Cecily P. Broderick y Guerra notes that as a woman from an African American and Hispanic background, she finds herself frequently accepting positions that the men around her have rejected, often in positions in ministry (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:124). This is considered a form of gender-based oppression, as women are expected to be appreciative of the bare minimum opportunity to work in positions where their skills would not be taken into consideration, but rather the focus would remain on the idea that they were given the job in spite of their gender (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:31). Kelly Brown Douglas gives an illustration of the African American church. It is imperative that we recognize the values of the African American church and how they remain grounded in two different meta-theological principles. The first principle reflects the African heritage of the Black church, and the second principle speaks on the church's Christian identity. Initially, the church helps

to nurture the existential, spiritual and the communal “harmony” that the church is involved in, and in using womanist terms, it can be said that the church intends to foster and house “wholeness.” This abecedarian tendency rooted toward peace and harmony is similar to that of a theologically African heritage. This heritage takes for granted that a relationship between the divine and the human entities are of utmost importance. Additionally, the core religious values that the traditional Black Church uphold fall in line with the incarnational nature of the Christian religion. The religious values of the Black Church fall in line with the revelation that Jesus gives about God. This is in the sense that throughout history, God has been a compassionate ally of the oppressed people, which is an affirmation of the importance of their lives (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:31). Rebecca Todd Peters contends that we have a lot to learn by examining the behavioural patterns and the attitudes of most Christian groups when the slave trade was rampant in the United States. It allows us to understand the heritage of United States Christians as well as what they stand to inherit (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:95). Maake Masango (2013) expresses that the Western World had always made it possible for Western individuals to have comfortable spaces where they are free to deal with their problems. The Western World remains respectful of the idea that individuals occasionally need space and that they are aware of their God-given rights (Phiri, 2013:745).

Teva Regula provides a perspective of Orthodox Christian women in North America and their contribution to ministry. Both men and women from the Orthodox Christian tradition are gifted in receiving access to Christ by being baptised and going through Chrismation. By unitingly acknowledging that Christ has risen from the dead, we are able to look past our social separations, and no longer consider factors such as gender, ethnicity or cultural background, and instead take on a new identity in Christ. Although human beings are different in multiple manners, they remain transcended and are bound by their unified belief in Christ’s body-in the Church (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:114).

According to the contribution of Demetra Velisarios Jaquet, American Orthodox women of the modern world are considered highly educated women, and of the most affluent of the entire population. These women are often educated according to seminary credentials, and would also be educated in leadership skills. They are also,

however, continuously being challenged by the culture of America to learn and be self-actualized in their differences. Many Orthodox women are caught in challenging circumstances where they struggle to find balances in their spiritual lives and well-being, particularly as it pertains to accepting their individual call to the life of holiness, and to being in the service of the church as leaders in the body of Christ (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:138-139).

There are many literary sources that speak on the history of the URCSA family and the pride the community feels for its male clergy members. However, there is a limited number of sources pertaining to the experiences of Coloured women clergy in the denomination. There has been a lot of research done on black African women in ordination. The following will show how culture is a factor that affects the ordination of women of colour in Africa.

2.11 Black African culture as a factor within ordination

Sekano in his Masters (2007) and Doctoral (2011) dissertations explore that both men and women pull women down in their ordination journeys, and uses Setswana cultural idioms to further support this perspective. If anyone experiences weaknesses or any form of failure, it is associated with girls and women, and many will result to using phrases such as '*Ke ntse ke go bona gore o apere mosese kgotsa bulumase.*' This translates to, "I have seen that you are wearing a dress or panty." Words of this nature may leave a man feeling angry, and makes him feel small. These idioms have been supported by many black African communities (Sekano, 2007:12). Sekano agrees with the words of Waruta and Kimoti which are quoted, "Most people are moulded by the type of education they are exposed to during their training" (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 16; Sekano, 2007:11-12). Sekano also acknowledges that there are patriarchal concepts that are detrimental to society, and he also grew up captive to this patriarchal world (Sekano, 2007:11-12). The intention behind Sekano's dissertation is to help men as they deal with their patriarchal upbringings, and intend to move them into more positive mind-sets. By doing this, men may begin to advocate for women to be emancipated from their gendered roles, and to embrace laws of equality and understand the consequences of fighting positive changes. Hopefully men will recognize and acknowledge that women belong

to God just like them and that all mankind was made in the image of God. The philosopher Condorcet says, “That men are being with sensibility, capable of acquiring moral ideas and of reasoning on these ideas; from this possession of a common human nature flows equal rights. Either no individual of the human race has genuine rights or else all have the same.” (Ruether, 1993: 103; Sekano, 2007:17).

The research conducted results from the Master’s thesis of Sekano (2007). Sekano wrote a thesis on the problems that exist within women leadership. The issues discussed revolved around how men experienced having to serve female leaders in the church in the Pentecostal denomination in the North West province. In Sekano’s Doctoral dissertation (2011), he researches how imperative it is to remember the destructive patterns still held by men within the church who are obliged to serve under female pastors (Sekano, 2011:1). The topic of women’s ordination is important because ordination is considered an introduction into leadership. If women have unpleasant experiences during their ordination, it may affect their perceptions of religious leadership as future ministers.

The lessons that African people have commonly given to their communities regarding the leadership and ordination of women is rooted within ancient and hurtful idioms from the Setswana culture, as many of these lessons are still being upheld by those who believe that women should not be leaders. One Setswana idiom reads, ‘*Tsa etwa ke e namagadi di wela ka mangope,*’ meaning that a man led by a woman will fall into dongas. The intention behind this idiom is to instil fear into the minds of those willing to listen, and to convince them that when women lead, trouble will follow (Sekano, 2011:2). There is great shame in allowing God’s children to use the Scripture, which is considered a tool for the liberation of all, to further oppress those who are already oppressed (Sekano, 2011:18). Landman (2019) speaks on her experiences as a woman attempting ordination during her studies: “Although I finished top of my class—which consisted of only about 20 men left—I was not allowed in the Theological Seminary at Pretoria University to study theology. On the day of registration, a professor there simply took my application form from my hand and said: ‘Vroue studeer nie hier nie’” (Landman, 2019:5).

This term mentioned by Landman which was told to her by her professor translates to, “Women do not study here.” The experiences mentioned in Sekano’s thesis and

the ethnographic experiences of Landman are examples of how women had been treated while they attempt to study and practice ordination. These examples indicate the experiences of white and black South African women. This thesis adds to existing literature by researching Coloured women in ordination.

2.12 The effects of succession on the ordination of women

Many of the sources used in this literature review are about Pentecostalism, however, the focus of the thesis remains on women in the URCSA and their journey through ordination.

Matshobane (2020) in his Doctoral dissertation speaks on pastoral succession in Independent Pentecostal churches and why many leaders are reluctant to present others with the opportunity for leadership. This is relevant to my research because, based on the literary sources consulted, male clergy members serving as senior pastors may not encourage the ordination of women because of their fear of succession. The researcher will be, more often, founders of churches are known to only be succeeded by new pastors under specific circumstances: they are either at the age of retirement, they pass away or they are dismissed from their positions because they have committed a moral sin according to the laws of the Scripture. Principal leaders in the church who are succeeded mostly find this because they come from independent churches, mainly when they are the founders of the church. There are many instances where founders from the African Independent Pentecostal Churches are not willing to retire even when they are exposed for their immoral sin; instead, these pastors will remain as leaders in their congregations until they pass away (Matshobane, 2020:1).

Because founders have planted their first congregation for their church, they are always known to be most highly invested in the prosperity of the church than pastors who had been long-term servants of the church. However, there have been a few occasions where pastors who were long-term servants of the congregation were far more emotionally invested, and therefore contributed in terms of finance, spiritual growth and the intellectual value of the church, even more than the founders had during their term. This was done in attempts to continue on visions that the founder

had, as the founder may have died or left the ministry while the congregation was still in its infancy (Matshobane, 2020:3).

The available literature available about succession within churches is primarily available in research fields about education, leadership and health. These fields discuss succession as spaces where individuals within work spaces are in line with the requirements from management. This is why many conversations pertaining to succession refer to management and planning (Soonhee 2003, cf. Rothwell 2005, Fink 2010, see McMurray *et al* 2012; Matshobane, 2020:5). While pastoral succession does not directly relate to the experiences of Coloured women in ordination, it may be a contributing factor to whether women are ordained as often as men in the URCSA. The next section will investigate the experiences that women from Western countries encounter during ordination to uncover the similarities between Coloured women and Western women's ordination.

2.13 Western women and ordination

Western literary sources address many of the ordination and pastoral journeys that African America women continue to go through in ministry. In addition, the religious encounters of Indian women in the Western world have been added to broaden knowledge on Western experiences.

Letty M. Russel has the following to say on how the American church deals with issues of women in ministry: "We are part of the dominant system that has globalized the world and have often acted that way by talking about gender issues in the church as though our one size fits all: ignoring differences of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability, power and nationality" (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:15).

Kelly Brown Douglas describes the Black Church as an institution that can endure almost anything, and at the same time remains one of the most enigmatic institutions. The Black Church could either be a strong advocate for changes within society, or it could be completely resistant to any formed of change. When it comes to racial injustice, the Black Church mainly advocates for its progression. However, when it comes to issues about gender equality and sexuality, the Back Church is not

as openly willing to fight for progress (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:28). In modern Christianity, Rebecca Todd Peters believes it is effective to examine how Christians behaved and articulated their perspectives on the slave trade of the United States. It becomes easier to understand how Christians from the United States experience their heritage and what they have inherited (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:95).

Women from the Orthodox Christian tradition experience a different set of expectations, according to Teva Regule. Both men and women from the Orthodox Christian tradition receive life in Christ when they are baptised or go through Chrismation. By acknowledging our lives in Christ, it is possible to look past what divides us as a society, such as our differing ethnicities, genders of even our cultural backgrounds, and see ourselves as Christ sees us. Even though humans are fundamentally different, we are all brought to unity by the church-as this is the eternal Body of Christ (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:114). While the experiences of African women and Western women are not parallel, many of the experiences faced by African American women are similar to those of Coloured women in South Africa.

2.14 Coloured women and ordination history in the URCSA

Mary Ann Plaatjies-van Huffel has written multiple articles and books on the oppressive structures of the DRC and the history of women and their contributions to the DRC. While there are no current doctrines or church orders that speak on the ordination of women from the Coloured background, the history of the DRC gives insight into how doctrines, scripture and a patriarchal culture were factors contributing to the ordination journeys of women. This resulted in a limited number of literary sources written to document Coloured women's ordination in the church.

An article from Plaatjies van Huffel demonstrates that while women were attempting to be fully engaged in developed ministries and speaks on the problems women experience while aiming to be ordained. While women tried to be ordained into the Dutch Reformed Church, the theological anthropology that originates from the Afrikaans Reformed tradition that has greatly influenced many practices that were regulated from 1928 to 1932. This article by Plaatjies and Landman present a unique

approach to concerns regarding women in ministry. The main purpose of these discussions is to understand the alterations that take place when reading. Plaatjies and Landman affirm, 'A post structural feminist discourse is presented and selected guidelines that the church may wish to take into account in the deconstructing of the theological anthropology are suggested' (Plaatjies and Landman, 2005:225).

On 11 February 1927, in Cape Town there was a conference held by the Women's Mission Society. The conference was held with the intention of emphasizing the living and health conditions that Coloured people were experiencing during that time (Kriel, 1963:206, Plaatjies and Landman, 2005:226). Only missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the wives of these men were permitted to attend the conference when the Women's Mission Society sent out the invitations. There were no Coloured people who attended the conference at this time (Plaatjies and Landman, 2005:226). As indicated by Plaatjies-van Huffel, statistics and insights on Coloured people were excluded during this conference, similar to how the experiences of Coloured people in literature remain limited today. This thesis aims to correct this by including the voices of Coloured women.

The article by Plaatjies-van Huffel (2019) on the gender insensitivity of the URCSA, she mentions that the article is reflective writing. The article focused on Plaatjies-van Huffel's experience as the first female ordained minister in the denomination, and intended to showcase to the readers how identity politics functioned in the URCSA at the time. This information will be highlighted and followed up in interviews, especially about women's experience in URCSA. This will highlight the female experiences in the URCSA that have remained silent, and acknowledge the existence of information on how women have continued to struggle with ordination in the URCSA family (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:2).

2.15 Preliminary conclusion

The literature review of the study gives insight into various texts which speak on how women have experienced being members of the URCSA family, and how they are treated within the church. Multiple pioneering feminist theologians were referenced during this chapter, including the journey of Rev. Mary Ann Plaatjies-van Huffel into ordination, who noted that she felt marginalized in her position. Much of the literature

on the ordination of women into the URCSA has maintained similar responses from ordained women from various racial and cultural backgrounds. While this thesis focuses strictly on Coloured women, the literature review reveals that the marginalization of women in ordination is not exclusive to the research participants of this study.

Additional literary sources from both Western and African authors were used in the literature review to probe into the varying journeys of women from different backgrounds, including multiple church denominations. The literature review concludes that women often experience marginalization during their ordination as ministers into the church. The literature review was extremely important for this thesis as it gives insight into the documented lived experiences of women from Western and African backgrounds.

The next chapter of this thesis will focus on the research methodology and techniques used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three discusses the methodology that will be used in the study in an effort to achieve the aims and objectives mentioned previously in chapter one. This chapter will present a detailed description of the direction that the research will take, as well as the tools that will be used. This will help in developing a conclusion about the results of the research questions of the study. The chapter establishes an outline of the research methods needed for the study, as well as all of the methodological concepts. In this chapter, the research design, a qualitative method, the grounded theory approach, research epistemology, sampling, collection of data, analysis of data, a healing methodology and the ethical considerations of the study are discussed. This permits an introduction into the way that the research will be conducted during the collection and analysis period.

One of the main concerns for this research would be the number of available participants. During my initial search for research participants, I was informed by one of my research participants that across the country of South Africa, there are less than 50 Coloured women ministers in the URCSA family in totality. This poses an issue in terms of pinning down a geographical area to research. However, I will address this issue by interviewing Coloured women clergy from various URCSA congregations across the Western Cape, as this is the most suitable group of interview participants for this study.

According to Pandey and Pandey (2015), the word 'Research' is made up of two separate words, the first being 're' and the second being 'search.' This means to search for information more than once. Therefore, research is a systematic investigative activity, or an attempt to gain even more information on a subject than has already been obtained. The act of researching is an activity that relies on intellectual contributions. Research also contributes to adding more knowledge to existing studies. It also assists with changing mistakes presently found in bodies of knowledge, getting rid of misconceptions within knowledge that already exist, and adding information to the body of knowledge of existing subjects (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:7). Another definition of research could be that it acts as applying scientific methods within problem solving. Empirical research is considered one

branch of reason, and is a technique which relies heavily on being goal-oriented (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:8).

It is important to highlight and understand what research means first, in order to create the foundation for how the research for this thesis is conducted. This chapter explains which research methodology is the most appropriate for the purpose of this study.

There are various cultural and social factors that are influential toward the perspectives of the researcher or the author, and are also potentially influential on the participants of the study. Factors that influence the study may be the nationality and gender of participants, their familial, educational and religious backgrounds. They may also be influenced by their class and their upbringing, whether it be an urban, rural or suburban upbringing, and the effects of the media on the participants (Clough, 2017:6).

The study has identified Pollard's methodology of Positive Deconstruction as the research method that is pivotal to the success of the study, ensuring that the research is conducted fairly and accurately. During the course of the study, the theory of Positive Deconstruction by Nick Pollard will be used as the methodology for this research. The Positive Deconstruction method of Nick Pollard is used as a primary methodology, and will be supported by the grounded theory method. This research method has been chosen as the most effective methods for the research problem.

3.2 Nature of the research

This study examines the complexity of qualitative research alongside the epistemology of the research. The grounded theory approach will be applied because the collected data will later be used to assist with developing a pastoral care theory for the empowerment and pastoral care of the research participants who are Coloured women clergy. The sample of participants will be made up of Coloured women clergy ordained by the URCSA Cape Synod in the Western Cape, South Africa. An additional tool for data collection during the interview process will be in-depth interviews conducted through Zoom calls, recordings, and verbatim transcripts

of interviews conducted. The above techniques will assist the researcher with asking appropriate questions for the benefit of the research. The collected data will be examined and the healing method of Pollard will be used to pastorally care for the women clergy who are affected by the patriarchal culture of the URCSA (Sefatsa, 2021:20).

3.3 Research design

The main purpose of any research design is to act as the framework of a particular study, and it is used as a guide for the collection and analysis of all data. The research design acts as a blueprint which will be adhered to during the course of the study. The research design also acts as a blue print showing the measures used to collect and analyse the data. Essentially, it acts as a map intended to develop and guide the research of this thesis (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:18).

According to Diana Panke (2018) on her understanding of research design, she asserts that: “The starting point for all scientific endeavours is a research question.” Gopal Koopan (2019) in his doctoral dissertation on astral projection agrees with Panke, as the research question is a method of showing motivations behind the research. Additionally, the intention here is to answer the research question in the most scientifically sound manner possible for a research project. A research question may be understood as a sentence which ends in a question mark. The research question typically brings to light which answers the researcher of the study is attempting to find (Panke, 2018:8; Koopan, 2019:89).

The methodology of the study gives a framework for the decisions made during the process of research. The researcher must identify how participants for the study will be selected, which are the most appropriate methods usable for the collection and analysis of relevant data, who the best person for conducting the research should be, and what the function of the researcher will be (Braun and Clarke, 2013:32; Koopan, 2019:61).

3.4 Qualitative research

This research uses a qualitative research method to answer the research question. The qualitative research approach employed is primarily intended for the understanding and the exploration of a certain individual or a group's perspectives, and how this information could be used to identify a human or a social challenge

(Creswell, 2014:4). This thesis will use the grounded theory and a qualitative research method to buttress Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction.

Studies that use a qualitative research method are commonly aimed at gaining a better understanding of the types of social interactions that exist in various worlds (Denney and Tewsbury, 2013:4). There are multiple ways to conduct qualitative research studies, commonly interviews, observation and participant observation are used. The most effective way to view qualitative studies is to think of it as the desire to understand how the social world works, as well as the different participants of these social worlds interact and live, work and feel about where they live (Denney and Tewsbury, 2013:5).

For the purpose of this thesis, a qualitative research method will be used as a means to collect accurate information. This method is considered the most conducive as it will assist with developing a solution to the aforementioned problem statement. The study has identified a group of female clergy participants to be interviewed, all of which have been directly affected by the ordination experiences of the URCSA denomination. All interviews conducted are intended to maintain the dignity and respect of the participants, and to take note of the emotional and physical reactions of the participants as the interviews take place. The definition of a qualitative research approach may be ascribed as a "multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011:3; Matshobane, 2020:78).

One of the ways that the researcher will apply hermeneutics to this thesis is to allow the women clergy in the process of ordination to effectively and freely communicate their experiences and the researcher interpreting the answers given during the interviews as accurately as possible. Considering that hermeneutics is defined as the interpretation and the understanding of texts, Capp explains his own understanding of hermeneutics. In the modern world, doctrines which speak on hermeneutics are known to relate to things outside of texts, and are even able to go as far as relating to certain aspects within the field of humanities (Capp, 1984:12; Koopan, 2019:93).

The purpose of conducting qualitative interviews is to identify qualitative knowledge as it is given in common language. The aim is not to quantify the information. Qualitative interviews intend to obtain nuanced accounts about the subject at hand, and in doing so, noting multiple perspectives of the worldview of the participants. These interviews do not rely on numbers, but depend on the words and experience of all participants.

During the process of qualitative interviews, the precise nature and the stringency found during the interpretation of information given should directly correspond with all the exactness of the quantitative measures used (Kvale, 2007:12; Sulumba-Kapuma, 2018:68). The reason that the researcher chose the qualitative method in this instance is that this form of interviewing provides the best opportunity for participants to explain their worldview. These interviews help the researcher understand the perspectives and the experiences of the women clergy interviewees.

The application of qualitative research implies that a multitude of methods are available for data collection. While the research for this thesis is conducted, the following methods will be used:

- Unstructured, informal interviews,
- Sampling,
- Biblical hermeneutics, and the
- Positive Deconstruction model of Nick Pollard.

The most appropriate manner to collect data is to use the grounded theory method once interviews have been conducted, to give the research participants the freedom to speak openly on their experiences. The grounded theory method is effective as it will accurately buttress Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction, which is the primary methodology for this study.

3.5 Grounded theory approach

The grounded theory method is not the primary theory of this thesis; instead, this theory supports Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction. Creswell (2013:69) acknowledges five primary traditions or genres within the qualitative approach. These genres are ethnography, case studies, narrative research, phenomenology and the grounded theory approach (Creswell, 2013:69).

Pertaining to the elements of qualitative research, there are eight identified elements which could contribute to the manner of research. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss have been credited as the sociologists responsible for the development of this form of qualitative design in the year 1967. Glaser and Strauss argued then that the available research theories from that time were not the most suitable, especially when the research focuses on the participants of the study. These arguments were noted in several of their works (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Corbin and Strauss, 2015; Matshobane, 2020:84). Charmaz (2006) was also found advocating for the use of grounded theory in qualitative design, and went further to note that the perspectives of the researcher could also be added by using constructivism (Creswell 2013:83-84).

The grounded theory approach will lead this research study, as it is connected to the qualitative research theory. The grounded theory approach is buttressed by Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction. The grounded theory approach helps the researcher with three things: firstly, it helps the researcher start the research, secondly, it helps the researcher stay involved throughout the research, and finally, it completes the project. The process of researching is full of surprises, new and exciting ideas, and will even help the researcher develop their analysing skills. The grounded theory approach will allow the researcher to view the collected data in new ways, so that new data and ideas could be explored while writing takes place. By applying the grounded theory research method, it is possible for the researcher to direct their research, as well as manage it and control how the data is used during data collection. This also means being able to develop original data based off already existing data collected. This method makes use of a systematic approach, however is also flexible with the guidelines needed to obtain and interpret the qualitative data, and this is how the data becomes 'grounded.' The guidelines mentioned are not only for rules on formulas, but could be used to present general principles for the study (see also Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Charmaz, 2006:4). Therefore, all the collected data become the theoretical foundation and showcase how the generated data is analysed in our noted constructs (Charmaz, 2006:4).

This theory has been grounded in data that has inductively been generated from information received from the participants of the study. Despite the literary

contributions made by pioneering Coloured women scholars in the field of feminist theology, not much research has been document pertaining to the past and current experiences that Coloured women face in ordination in this denomination. The grounded theory approach will assist the study as the methods used are effective enough so that the researcher is able to analyse the data collected effectively. The beginning stages of this study require an analysis of all works consulted to contribute to the success of the study. Whether the data collected consists of interviews, documentations, or other sources, all works consulted should be analysed with willingness so that the researcher can better understand the worldviews of participants.

I have concluded that the most appropriate research tradition to use for this thesis is the grounded theory approach. This provides an opportunity for the participants to express their appreciations and grievances for the church denomination freely and without restraint. Based off the definitions by Charmaz (2006), it is the researcher's observation that the grounded theory method requires an open mind and willingness to learn for the investigative process to succeed. All the information collected throughout the interviews conducted should be processed according to the correct categories in terms of negative and positive experiences in the URCSA, and this will assist the researcher in comparing and understanding data. It will also present an objective result of collected data.

The grounded theory approach grants me the opportunity to unpack many of the social issues that exist in this regard. Once these issues have been unpacked, they will also need to be reconstructed to help with the empowerment of the participants. Using the Positive Deconstruction theory of Pollard will help me unpack the current experiences of these women, and reconstruct them to bring about an opportunity for empowerment. This will be done by implementing the qualitative research theory, and conducting interviews by sending out questionnaires to participants. Appendix A is an example of the list of questions used as preliminary and primary questions during the interview process with research participants.

3.6 Empirical research-epistemology

A qualitative research approach utilizes a certain method to make sense of the world. This is why it becomes beneficial to observe the underlying epistemology found within this research (Sefatsa, 2021:21).

The term “epistemology” is said to find its origin in the Greek language, from the term “episteme” which translates to ‘true knowledge.’ Human perspectives on various phenomena are not commonly questioned, and are mainly regarded as absolute truth. Therefore, it is possible to define a statement as a sentence where a claim to knowledge can be found, where the claim relates to either a reality or a form of truth. This is why epistemology is understood as the study of the knowledge of humanity (Mouton and Marais, 1996:8; Koopan, 2019:97).

To be more precise, epistemology derives from a certain branch within philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge, and deals with four themes: Firstly, it deals with ontology, which questions what humans truly know, it deals with epistemology, which asks how it is that we have the knowledge that we possess, it deals with axiology, which questions which of our values contribute to informing our knowledge, and it deals with methodology, which is concerned with the study of information and knowledge (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016:42; Matshobane, 2020:7).

Sefatsa (2021) in his master’s thesis presents the following understanding of epistemology: “Epistemology is about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry” (Sefatsa, 2021:22). Based on the definition provided, by developing an epistemological foundation, the researcher can build further knowledge on the experiences of Coloured women regarding ordination. It becomes easier to sympathize with the positions of the women with different encounters within ordination and those who are to be affected by these systems in the future.

Taking into consideration this viewpoint of knowledge and putting it in contrast with the perspective of the qualitative research approach will assist with this thesis. The qualitative perspective gives the impression that when people communicate and interact with one another, it leads to the construction of knowledge. This means that generally, knowledge will not simply be found existing, but can be uncovered by looking at an individual and knowing what their perceptions and their interpretations

on specific subjects are. Simply put, 'knowledge is constructed or created by people' (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:166). A qualitative research perspective requires that the researcher not to make assumptions on the possibility of analysing and understanding a subject by looking into the different parts of it. Instead, it is imperative that the researcher takes a critical look into the greater context of the study subject, as well as uncovering how the involved participants and the knowledge function together. This concept has been identified as the 'social construct of reality' (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:166).

Colaizzi (1990) identifies two different ways that researchers can present their collected data. First, there are researchers who prefer to use personal experience and knowledge and contribute this toward their data, this is known as 'a reflexive form of phenomenology.' Second, there are researchers who use information obtained from multiple subjects, and this is referred to as 'an empirical form of phenomenology.' This research requires the empirical form of phenomenology mentioned above, as it is beneficial to gain information from many subjects, adding to the reliability of the thesis. It would be helpful to note down the experiences of many subjects, adding to the number of participants (Koopan, 2019:95).

This thesis also incorporates much of the theory of phenomenology in its epistemological development. Phenomenology is a concept derived from works of philosophy developed by Edmund Husserl. This philosophy holds an assumption that indicates the existence of a real essence or a particular structure in each unique experience. Van Manen (1990) gives an explanation for phenomenology, stating; "Phenomenology asks for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a some-thing what it is-and without which it would not be what it is" (Van Manen, 1990:10; Vanderstoep, 2009:206).

The focus of phenomenology is to understand how humans go about facing a certain phenomenon, in other words, what the '*sine qua non*' is within a particular experience. Phenomenologists dive into the way that people explain what their experiences mean to them, and the impact that these explanations have as a means of shaping cultural and group meanings (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:206). One special feature about the concept of phenomenology is that it appeals to the researcher to release themselves from the temptation of holding judgements on

reality. Instead, phenomenologists explain that those who live through certain circumstances are able to make sense of them. Phenomenologists speak on a phrase called the “reality of consciousness,” which gives the impression that an individual’s reality is derived from how they interpret an experience of view it in their consciousness (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:207). The phenomenology of this thesis is evident in the qualitative research noted in this study.

The researcher is aware of the cultural systems in place within these dominations that contributed to the lived experiences of the participants, as is aware that each participant has a different experience. When considering methods of generating and creating knowledge, it becomes evident that epistemology is mirrored by qualitative research. This is primarily because the data collected is rooted in capturing authentic human experiences. It therefore becomes imperative that the study considers epistemology as an inquiry method for data collection and analysis.

3.7 Data collection

In his doctoral dissertation, Koopan highlights the importance of collecting data: “According to Rathje (1984) qualitative data is any evidence or material the researcher collects that is not articulated in numbers. Renata Tesch (1990), Glaser (1998) and Stern (1994) are in agreement with Renata and therefore argue against some grounded theorists who tend to make a fuss about quantity of data” (Koopan, 2019:100). Methods surrounding grounded theory place more emphasis in the development of categories from conceptual backgrounds. This means that the collected data is acquired in order to bring together a category of properties and to dwell into the relationships between these categories (Koopan, 2019:100-101).

Lincoln and Guba (1981) maintain that during the process of data collection, two primary questions are important to question to serve as guidance. The first question pertains to the level of fidelity visible during the reproduction of collected data. The fidelity asks about the level of purity that the recorded data holds, especially when compared to the literal lived experience of participants and the accessibility thereof (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:180). In the case of this thesis, one example would be to compare the lived experiences of women in the URCSA and their gendered roles in the church, as opposed to reading a book or researched article on

the experiences of URCSA women. The second question that assists with a guide for data collection focuses on the level of structure available for the methods of data collection. In this regard, structure speaks about the level of flexibility available to adapt different methods as needed for the accurate collection of data. In the field of qualitative research, it is preferred to maintain low structure. During the course of evaluating collected data, a variety of procedures should be followed. The researcher should question whether there is a possibility for questions and methods to change throughout the study, to accurately record perspectives while data is being collected, and being able to refer back to data that had been collected earlier. This will assist with finding direction once the appropriate data had been collected (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:190).

It is not necessary for the researcher to proceed in asking an unlimited number of questions on the subject at hand, as it would not be practical to analyse all the data fully. Logically speaking, this would take too much time for the researcher to complete if they were to analyse all the notes. As an analyst, it becomes a requirement to rely on common sense and how to make good choices on which sections of the data should be questioned, and the amount of time it would take to achieve this. There are no correct or incorrect ways to conduct analysis. In the same way, there are no particular procedures or rules to follow consistently or under all circumstances. Analysis relies on intuition and would require the researcher to fully trust in their own abilities to make good choices (Corbin and Strauss, 2015:92). A lot of the acquired data depends on the availability of participants, both in regard to quantity and ability to participate. The next point of discussion is the interviewing technique to be used.

3.8 Interviews

Interviews are observed as a method of collecting data from participants by enquiring and getting reactions from them in words. Therefore, there is no specific style dictating how interviews should be conducted (Potter, 2016; Koopan, 2019:101).

Marshall and Rossman (1989) explain the importance of having qualitative interviews. When conducting in-depth qualitative interviews, it becomes apparent that the structure of the interviews appears more conversational than structured,

formal interviews. The researcher typically begins with an exploration of general topics that assist with uncovering the perspectives of the participants, yet still manages to be respectful about how the participants have structured their responses to the interview questions (Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Potter, 1996:82, 96; Koopan, 2019:102).

The interviews will be conducted with an open-minded approach, so that no pre-conceived perspectives are projected onto the participants. This is beneficial to the study as reliable and truthful answers can be shared during the interviews, which consequently helps with identifying the authentic experiences of Coloured women. By focusing in on having open-ended interviews with clergy women from multiple URCSA congregations across Western Cape Province, the pastoral care model which will be developed later, can be seen as a qualitative care model. In-depth interviews will be administered as a research method with the Coloured women clergy in an effort to journey with them on their experiences in ministry and the current social culture in the URCSA family pertaining to ordination. After the interviews are conducted and accurately documented, chapter four presents a deeper exploration into the varying experiences of women clergy across varying cultural backgrounds.

This thesis in particular used interviews as a means of uncovering the knowledge of URCSA Coloured women clergy. The interviews were part of disclosing the feelings and shared journeys of the participants during their ministry, particularly regarding their ordination. The researcher considers this a chance for Coloured women in ministry to share a part of their journey they may not commonly be asked to express.

3.8.1 Unstructured interviews

For this study, unstructured interviews are the best form of interviewing as the women clergy affected by ordination structures are permitted to freely express their shared experiences. Brown and Dowling (1998:72-73) contend that using the term 'unstructured' may be considered misleading. This is primarily because usually when a researcher is investigating a subject, they are driven by an interest in the subject being pursued and are attempting to understand it. By implying that there is no form

of structure in an interview, it is possible to consider the possibility that the purpose of the interview is futile (Gibson and Brown, 2009:87-89; Koopan, 2019:102).

To better understand the benefits of unstructured interviews, in her doctoral dissertation, Suluma-Kapuma quotes Kombo and Tromp who have the following to say: “In unstructured interviewing, neither the specific questions to be asked nor the range or type of possible answers are pre-defined. They are informal and conversational. The aim is to get the informants to open up, and the researcher should stimulate an informant to produce more information...It is useful in studying sensitive topics” (Kombo and Tromp, 2006:92; Sulumba-Kapuma, 2018:71). The study will include unstructured questions which may arise during the interview process.

The purpose behind unstructured interviews is to engage in open-ended question which appear to be more conversational, so that the researcher does not have specific categories that need to be filled. During the interview process, the researcher and the participant are free, and therefore the conversation is flexible enough for the participant to feel free and express their thoughts and feelings openly. During the course of the interviews, unstructured interviews also allow the researcher at any point to enquire about the answers of the participants, or to express their own thoughts and feelings on the subject if needed.

3.8.2 Open-ended questions

To obtain sufficient information from participants during the interview process, the most appropriate data collection techniques were considered and applied to the study. Interviews which consist of open-ended questions is used as a research tool to collect information from participants. This is one of the most suitable methods employed to gather the correct information from ordained ministers. The questions in the official questionnaire are constructed in such a way that they fall in line with one another to create reliability. This gives participants the ability to respond with flexibility and confidence in their answers (Sefatsa, 2021:24). The data collected will consist on the lived experiences of Coloured women clergy who have been affected in both positive and negative ways in the URCSA regarding their ordination. Once this data is collected successfully from the empirically-based study, a model will be

designed for assisting these women by means of pastoral care. The theory of Positive Deconstruction and grounded theory will be buttressed by the interviews conducted during the process of data collection. This methodology remains the most appropriate for the purpose of this study.

3.8.3 Electronic interviews

Before the interview process begins, the interviewer must be fully prepared with the necessary tools. It is important to have the 'recorder' ready for the interviews. All interviews conducted should be recorded using either video or audio tools, especially when conducting unstructured and semi-structured interviews. These kinds of interviews may cause the researcher to forget to write all the information down, or the researcher may generally be unable to do so. When recording the interviews, it is important for participants to grant permission to be recorded, whether through visual or audial means. Once the research participant is ready to begin the process of interviewing, it is important for the researcher to ask for their permission to begin recording the conversation and begin with the interview (Alsaawi, 2014:152).

The methodology used in this thesis are typically semi-structured and informal methods. There are common methods of data collection, such as conducting interviews, strictly observing multiple social interactions and events, and collecting relevant documentation and analysis of the collected content.

Interview questions can range from being completely unstructured to being highly structured, however, they may still remain open-ended as means of collecting information. The most common technique in this regard is using certain questions as "probes," which will then act as reasons to ask further questions (Sofaer, 1999:1110).

Before conducting the interviews for this qualitative research, the Department of Practical Theology and Missiology in the University of Pretoria granted approval of the proposal for the study. This included evidence of the process of informed consent to research participants, as well as how consent for this study was acquired, and the manners in which confidentiality were addressed.

In order to collect data for this research, WhatsApp call interviews were conducted with research participants for approximately 30-60 minutes per interview. Each of these electronic WhatsApp call interviews were semi-structured according to a preliminary questionnaire and many of the questions asked required in-depth responses. Additionally, journal notes were taken and all the interviews were recorded to later transcribe the answers. A total number of 6 ordained clergywomen from the URCSA answered the preliminary open-ended and semi-structured interviews. Before the interviews for the study were officially conducted, the Cape Synod was informed of this research to assist in uncovering the concerns of this thesis. During the interview process and corrections were made to the study as necessary to highlight the important sections of the research. The preliminary interview questions and additional questions developed later during the interviews were asked in an attempt to inspire research participants to answer the questions with confidence, to be honest, and to openly participate in the interview process. A preliminary questionnaire is labelled in this thesis as Appendix A. This gives leeway for the collected data to be considered dependable and credible (Smarr, Disbennett-Lee and Hakim, 2018:3).

3.9 Participants

Before the researcher can begin with the practical step of interviews for the thesis, it is important to know how participants are selected. It is more beneficial to use self-selection than to resort to random selection, because during the interview selection process, all participants should grant permission to the interviewer for the interviews to proceed. Seidman (2012) contends that there is no such thing as an approach which is purely arbitrary. Bryman (2008) argues for the use of purposeful sampling as another method to select the correct participants. Additionally, the following is believed regarding purposive sampling, "Purposive samples are the most commonly used form of non-probabilistic sampling" (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006:59; Alsaawi, 2014:152).

This research relies heavily on the information given by participants. The women identified as participants have gained knowledge from their personal experiences as ordained or preliminarily ordained ministers within the URCSA family. This gives

reason for their importance toward the research study, as they are able to speak from both personal experience and observation. As it pertains to selection, Coloured women from URCSA denominations across the Western Cape Province in South Africa will be approached and consulted for the purpose of the study. Regarding ethical concerns, all participants will remain confidential and all information given will be noted with anonymity. As it relates to the depth and the quality of the information provided, Mouton et al (1990) motivates that all researchers should “accept as a general principle that the inclusion of multiple sources of data collection in a research project is likely to increase the reliability of the observations.” Denzin coined the term *triangulation* to refer to the use of multiple methods of data collection (Mouton et al, 1990; Koopan, 2019:106).

The research journey begins with finding the appropriate data. It will be easier to notice how interesting empirical research may be once the correct data is collected. The intention is to ensure that the world is seen in a fresh light through this collected data. The obtainment of appropriate data will provide sufficient material to build a foundation for analysis. The best data samples are full of detail, focused on the topic at hand, and are full. Rich data reveals how participants view the world, their feelings, their intentions and their actions. In addition, it highlights the context in which they live and how their lives are structured (Charmaz, 2006:14).

Once we begin the journey of uncovering how research participants view and make sense of the experiences they face, we are able to analyse and understand their actions and the meanings behind them (Charmaz, 2006:11).

3.10 Sampling

As it pertains to sampling, the qualitative research method employed intends to find as much relevant and valid evidence on the study as possible. According to Potter (1996:104) the two most important words to note here are ‘access’ and ‘relevant,’ as access is reflective of the concern of practicality, while relevant is reflective of the validity of the information (Potter, 1996:104; Koopan, 2019:107).

Flick articulates that ‘sampling’ has mainly been associated with the need to identify the most appropriate cases for a study from a bank of existing cases, and this is an

action that could only be performed individually (Flick, 2007:30; Sulumba-Kapuma, 2018:81). Each individual research study is expected to select the most appropriate representation of participants willing to be interviewed for the study, so that the best information could be used as data. Coloured women clergy needed for this study, although few, are far spread out throughout the Western Cape Province, and therefore have varying experiences and narratives to share on the same journey of ordination. The researcher was not able to individually interview each ordained woman, and therefore uses sampling. A representation of Coloured women clergy from various Uniting Reformed Church congregations was selected and interviewed on their experience to obtain relevant data. It is important to start the process of sampling by first identifying an appropriate target market.

Samples must be chosen with careful consideration when conducting a research study. According to Henning et al (2004), one important motivating aspect of research is the willingness of the people to speak. Those who are willing must be prepared to journey with the study in its attempts to gain additional knowledge on the topic at hand (Henning et al, 2004:71; Koopan, 2019:107). Struwig et al (2001) advocates that it is beneficial for research samples to be purposely selected as opposed to randomly selecting samples. This is primarily because the success of qualitative research relies heavily on the richness and depth of the collected data. By choosing purposeful samples, it can be expected that rich data and the appropriate evidence will be collected for the study (Struwig et al 2001:122; Koopan, 2019:107).

To reiterate, the following groups of participants have been chosen as interviewees for the purpose of this study: Coloured women clergy who are presently ordained ministers in the URCSA. These participants all possess first-hand knowledge and experiences of the processes of female ordination within this denomination.

3.11 Data analysis

Marlene L. Martin (2009:79) gives the definition of data analysis as follows: “a mass of words generated by interviews or observational data (Martin, 2009:79; Koopan, 2019:108). The data collected during the WhatsApp interviews will be analysed in this section of the thesis.

Analysing data consists of a multitude of activities, both within the quantitative and qualitative research groups. When it comes to research that looks at behavioural patterns, it is common to rely on quantitative analysis and a variety of statistical procedures for the study. Methods which usually need statistical techniques would be used most often in this instance. Methods that used statistical techniques and procedures are believed to be more favourable in research fields, because it is easier to identify answers through these techniques (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:70).

Once the first set of data has been collected, the analysis of the information should begin. The primary analysis will assist with determining what should be focused on and which strategies can be implemented when more data is collected. This is an effective way for the researcher to sift through the data and easily identify any potential errors and correct them. By doing this, the instruments used, questions developed and even the adapted methods could be changed, and even adapted or refined at any point during the process of collecting data. This will ensure that the results provided were driven by the applied methods (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009:190-191).

Once the data has been successfully collected, it will be placed into different categories or segments. After the completion of the Zoom interviews with research participants, transcripts of the interviews conducted will be organized and placed into the same categories and themes will then be created from the information. The developed themes will assist the researcher in finding common responses to the interviews.

According to Rubin and Rubin; “Data analysis is the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence- based interpretations that are a foundation for published reports...Analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing and combining materials from the interviews to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative” (Rubin and Rubin, 2005:201; Sulumba-Kapuma, 2018:83).

3.12 Healing methodology of Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction

Plaatjies van Huffel (2019) has indicated that Coloured women are struggling with ordination for various reasons, ranging from patriarchy, to availability of congregations, to educational and economic hindrances. These women are the backbone of the church, and while they pastorally care for others in their daily lives, it would be beneficial to provide them with an equal level of support.

As an undergrad university student, Pollard recalls the purchase of his first car, and mentions that the chassis of the car as well as the body were functioning acceptably. Unfortunately, it is apparent that nothing else positive could be said about that car. The engine had been worn-out and simply refused to cooperate, the "pathetically" crunching gear box of the car would cause pure embarrassment when used, and the suspension was broken, also bringing no sense of joy to the owner. Pollard reminisces somewhat positively about the car, stating that despite the car not having much use, it was sufficient enough in its working condition to get him to where he needed to be.

Later on, Pollard was informed of the availability of another car, which was an exact model of the one he already owned. This new car had recently been in a car accident and as a result was written off immediately, but fortunately many of the newer parts in the vehicle remained in great condition. He immediately set out to buy the new car, and began to take both cars apart completely. The intention of tearing these cars apart was not a form of negatively deconstructing a vehicle, or an act of vandalism on the vehicle. Instead, this was a way to perform positive deconstruction, similar to the work of a mechanic.

Pollard emphasizes that during this process, he would be paying attention to each part of the vehicle to identify which parts were best suited for the job. Anything that was good, was kept. Anything that served no purpose was thrown away. After working on both cars for a while, Pollard put the individual pieces back together and started his 'new' car. Even though there was not much of the original car still remaining, the new one worked well. Pollard recants in his book *Evangelism made slightly less difficult*, "Some parts were good enough to keep. Most of them had been replaced. But I wasn't sad, I was delighted-for I had something far better" (Pollard, 1997:44-45).

The story presented above can be used as an example of how to work with people in a productive manner, so that they are led to deconstruct and reconstruct their own worldviews in a helpful way. The original car bought by Pollard serves as a metaphor for the thinking patterns of many in the church with more traditional mindsets. Some members in the church are ignorant when it comes to the experiences that women face in ministry and how they contribute to those experiences. The application of Pollard's deconstruction method will develop a new and interesting way to pastorally care for the affected women.

The narrative relayed about Pollard and the deconstruction of his first care gives me insight into the level of importance of going on a journey with the participants of the study. It is beneficial to the study to understand what the worldviews of the participants are, to learn what they know, to understand why they believe in this worldview, and to empathize with how they feel in relation to others around them. As the researcher I will learn from the experiences of the participants in the study.

Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction as a healing methodology may be beneficial when applied alongside the research design of the study, as the URCSA family may have a healing methodology to pastorally care for Coloured women affected by ordination experiences.

3.13 Ethical considerations

During the research process it is important to consider the intellectual coherence of the study, as well as moral and ethical standards. The research should not be deleterious to the participants of the study, and the dignity of all individuals involved should be maintained, whether indirectly or directly (Bless and Smith 2013:28; cf. Bloomberg 2016:161; Matshobane, 2020:92).

This researcher has upheld the ethical standards of the University of Pretoria by sending a written letter of consent to the participants of the study, and the researcher was then given permission to conduct interviews with them. It would not serve a purpose for the initial data during the early stages of the analysis to be 'earth shattering or clever.' Instead, it is more important for the analyst to consciously consider what the acquired data truly means (Corbin and Strauss, 2015:91).

Much of the study requires participants, who are Coloured women, to speak on an experience based on race. This means that a definition for the term “Coloured” is needed to bring a sense of unity to participants, although they are spread out geographically. Therefore, this thesis makes use of the definition of “Coloured” presented by Erasmus and Pieterse (1999): “‘Coloured’ refers to those South Africans loosely bound together for historical reasons such as slavery and a combination of oppressive and preferential treatment during apartheid, rather than by common ethnic identity. For us, the identity ‘coloured’ is sometimes seen as overlapping with ‘Black’ and always with ‘African’” (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999:169).

The researcher was responsible for ensuring that all the participants of the study remained aware of what was taking place at all times. This means that the interviewing process had been explained to the participants and they had received consent letters to ensure they were aware of the nature and purpose of the interviews. This allowed the participants the freedom to contribute as much information as needed for the purpose of the study.

3.14 Researcher’s consideration

This research study involves sensitive material on the lived experiences of Coloured women that I, as the primary researcher, may find triggering. In the event that any part of the research becomes triggering or in any way affects my mental health, I will promptly avail myself to the counselling services available at the University of Pretoria as needed. This will ensure that I remain objective during the research study and the process of collecting data and will reduce the potential of bias. This will additionally contribute to the successful completion of the study.

3.15 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter investigated the required methodology for the research study. The methodology used in the study acted as a contributing model for the healing methodology intended to care for Coloured women and their experiences with ordination. For this reason, the study employed a qualitative methodology

accompanied by Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction. The purpose behind this thesis is to identify the experiences of the limited number of Coloured women clergies, and to understand how they feel about their journey through ordination. This chapter identified the methodology needed for the research to be conducted accurately. The chapter identified the manner in which the research would be conducted fairly, how the researcher would go about reaching the answers to the research question, and using an appropriate model for pastoral care for the study. The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework of the study, to assist the reader with understanding what the research is about, and how this would best be applicable to the research.

These methods were helpful in identifying the primary concerns. By acknowledging the lived experiences of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA, it highlights the need for a pastoral care model for the affected women. This model will be beneficial for the URCSA Cape Synod women clergy. The next chapter will look into the ordination of women in the context of the URCSA. This showcases how women have reported experiencing ordination in the church.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined and discussed the research methodology that was followed in the study. This chapter of the thesis contains a detailed discussion of the issues surrounding ordained Coloured women clergy in the URCSA and the existing cultures of the denomination. In Chapter Two, literature sources were used in order to discuss the differing experiences of women in ministry and the life experiences of Coloured women in this regard.

The focus of this research is primarily on the URCSA and Coloured women undergoing ordination under this denomination. The varying experiences that women face undergoing ordination will be discussed in this chapter, as well as looking into the historical position of women in the URCSA and their contributions to the church during that time. As the URCSA is known for having a history of gender insensitivity, this will be discussed in this chapter to highlight the impact of gender in the ordination process of the church. Additionally, a section of this chapter is dedicated to the realities that Coloured women face in the workplace in South Africa, and finally, a black African perspective on the ordination of women in various denominations.

Just as times and seasons are continuously changing, the church should also accommodate this and adjust to these changes by encouraging different forms of ministry and mission, even in the manner that the unchanging gospel message is shared. The purpose of the church has mainly been to participate in God's mission and to acknowledge how this mission has shaped the life of the church in the past and at present (Croft, 2008:3).

4.2 A history of women ordination in the URCSA

In the year 1957, a series entitled *Lex orandi* published a class of studies related to the sacrament of orders. Two articles in this class mentioned the meaning of *ordination* (ordination) and *ordo* (order) within Christianity (Macy, 2008:27).

Historically, ordination consisted of six fundamental criteria to solidify its validity. They will be described below. These six requirements were brought forth by Jean Morin in the Reformed church in the 1900s, and is quoted as follows: “Such an ordination required (1) that the ritual be called an ordination, (2) that the ritual be celebrated at the altar by the bishop, (3) that the hands be laid upon the one to be ordained, (4) that the stole be placed on those to be ordained, (5) that the ordained receive communion under the forms of both bread and wine, and, most important (6) that the ordination be one of the “major orders,” that is, priest, deacon, or subdeacon” (Macy, 2008:23-24). This applies to my research because this thesis is based on traditional practices found in the Reformed church.

To maintain faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the modern world, it is important to be aware of and to respect the need for “self-theologizing” held by many feminist scholars and women globally. Many Christian and Reformed communities consist of people who incorrectly cite the Bible. Many of these individuals only refer to sections of Scripture which advocate for unequal participation in ministry of men and women within the church. This takes place with multiple Scriptural references, such as referring to a certain version of the tale of Adam and Eve; referring to the idea that God was reincarnated strictly as male in the form of Jesus Christ; and the idea that the twelve disciples of Jesus were exclusively male (Rosenhäger and Stephens, 1993:76). This brings to light the question of whether the ordained women clergy have experienced marginalisation by means of having the bible quoted incorrectly to oppress them. This question will be addressed during the interviews and the pastoral care methodology of the thesis.

In ancient Biblical civilization the cosmoses were considered to be divided entirely by gender. This resulted in the lives of men and women being described as completely parallel worlds. All roles, places, objects and tasks were assigned by gender and considered according to the gender of the assignee (Neyrey in Moore and Anderson, 2003:44). The affect that this has on the ordination of women in the church will be explained and understood later in the thesis.

In Biblical times, the ministry of mourning the deceased was almost entirely considered the ministry of women. During the time of the early church, the ministry of women and their positions in the church would increase in range and numbers. This

is reflected in the greetings that Paul sends to the Roman church. In this greeting it is evident that a third of the population greeted by Paul is female (Belleville, 2005:36).

Romans 16:1-2 says the following: “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church of Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me” (Bible, 2011:1904). This serves as an example that women like Phoebe in the Roman church were very involved in the ministry of Jesus. Women in the URCSA Cape Synod continue this legacy by aiming to be ordained in the church. This thesis aims to journey with them on the road to ordination.

Female deacons played a vital role in the practical aspect of the ancient church and were widely acknowledged for this responsibility. Women were often permitted to enter into spaces where men were forbidden, and would participate in activities that were not appropriate for male ministers to perform (Belleville, 2005:48).

Language filled with androcentrism has been the topic of much discussion through the last few years. When scripture is read within the church or read according to the liturgical standards of the church, it further adds to the narrative that the Bible is filled with exclusively male bias, language and culture (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1986:43). This thesis will briefly dive into scriptural references used by the church to either support or refute the ordination of women.

If one were to read the New Testament, it becomes evident how vital education of theology truly is, as ecumenical knowledge is important for the lives of Christians. It allows them to give to others what is required from them. The Scripture speaks about Apollos in Acts 18 who was considered an eloquent and enthusiastic teacher of the works of Jesus. Despite his capabilities, two women named Priscilla and Aquila were aware of his shortcomings, and understood that Apollos required more thoughtful knowledge of the teachings he presented in the synagogue. If we are to avoid teaching false doctrines, we need to develop a profound and detailed understanding of the Scripture (Phiri, 2013:65).

The Protestant Reformers have made great strides in the development of the Reformed church, including participating in redefining the existing doctrine of the church at the time. Multiple illustrations were constructed for Protestant Reformers,

including defining them as a “community of believers,” and alternatively referring to them as the “priesthood of all believers” (Rosenhäger and Stephens, 1993:77).

It is believed that the Reformers placed a great amount of emphasis on the church remaining a community of believers and maintaining the traditional understanding of how ordained ministry worked within the existing framework of the “priesthood of all believers.” However, despite this, Protestant church congregations and communities continued to maintain the hierarchal model used during institutional practices. As a result, women were not permitted into ordination, which meant that women were not able to maintain the theological insights that the church held as a practicing “community of believers” (Rosenhäger and Stephens, 1993:78). I opine that while modern female ministers are not directly expected to uphold these traditional understandings of ordination that were historically held, many female ministers may be coerced into upholding these beliefs by the church through restricting their ability to lead effectively. This opinion will be investigated during the interview process of this study.

4.3 The pioneering role of Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel

After her ordination into the DRC onward, Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel has contributed to the church and society by performing lecturing duties at Stellenbosch University and providing others with pastoral care. She also served on multiple international and national theological and humanitarian structures throughout her career. She became the first woman actuary to serve the URCSA Cape Synod in 2002, serving two consecutive terms between 2002 and 2010. Following this, she became the vice-moderator of the URCSA general synod in 2008. Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel was then elected as the moderator of the general synod in 2012, becoming the first female to serve in this position in the Reformed church. She was also elected to serve as a vice-president for the World Council of Churches in 2013, making her the president for the African continent (Flaendorp, 2014:54). I opine that the achievements of Plaatjies-van Huffel served as pioneering and inspirational for Coloured women entering ordination into the URCSA, despite her own experiences of challenges during ordination, as she mentions below.

Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel started her journey in the context of the apartheid ideology, and in a society that maintained the oppression and marginalisation of women in South Africa. She acknowledged that she was a part of the group of people being oppressed and marginalised. She went on to enrol at the University of the Western Cape for a theology degree despite the odds being stacked against her. There was no guarantee that once she completed her studies, she would become an ordained minister of the DRC. After enduring many challenges in her journey, Plaatjies-van Huffel was ordained as the first ever female minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. A year after she was ordained into the DRC, she wrote an article for the official newspaper of the URCSA. In the article, Plaatjies-van Huffel spoke on how she experiences being marginalised as part of a vulnerable group of people in ministry: “Thus far nothing has changed in the church. The theological training could not assist women to transcend centuries of ecclesiastical undertones. Through the centuries, perceptions were created that a minister must be a strong male leader. Children, congregants and colleagues have reduced women ministers to second-hand theologians” (Die Ligdraer, 1993: Flaendorp, 2014:58).

I opine that the pioneering work of Plaatjies-van Huffel is inspiring for Coloured women seeking to enter into ordination. As a Coloured woman who has not yet undergone ordination, the journey of Plaatjies-van Huffel leads me to question whether I would face similar experiences in the modern context. Mercy Oduyoye, Christina Landman and several pioneering women in ministry have faced similar experiences in both Western and African contexts. This thesis will uncover whether the same journey is still ongoing in my own denomination.

South Africa was in a socio-political and pre-democratic state that caused the Dutch Reformed Mission Church Synod in South Africa to reconsider its policies and ultimately accept the Belhar confession as the official confession of the church in 1982. The acceptance of the Belhar confession does not directly affect the ordination of women into the DRC. It does, however, call for a sense of equality in the church based on resisting practices that cause segregation.

The confession presented a Christian perspective on the suffering and the racism experienced in South Africa. Plaatjies-van Huffel has traced the origin of the suffering and racism of the people back to the Dutch Reformed church and its

decisions to segregate the church in 1857. The church showed support of the segregation policy of South Africa during this time by separating the church's Holy Communion services into different racial groups (Flaendorp, 2014:60-61). It is possible that by outlawing segregation as a practice in 1982, this paved the way for more Coloured people in ordination in the DRC. This later contributes to the increasing number of Coloured women seeking ordination in the URCSA.

4.4 The pioneering role of Christina Landman

While it remained uncommon for women to serve as ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church at this time, Landman recalls the events that led to her ordination. She had just returned from attending an evening church service one night while she was in Standard 9, currently known as Grade 11. Her father had expressed distain and disappointment in the sermon presented that night, and alluded to the idea that it was of a low standard. He then turned to his daughter and said without hesitation: "Ek dink jy moet 'n dominee word." This translates to, "I think you should become a reverend." This conversation sparked an interest in Landman, and although she did not immediately enroll for a Theological degree, she was admitted for a BA Administration at the University of Pretoria. She would go on to graduate at the top of her class, an achievement enhanced by the fact that only 20 men had remained in the class by the end of the course. This, however, was not enough to grant her admission into the Theological Seminary of Pretoria University to pursue her theological studies. She recalls that on registration day, she came in contact with a professor in the faculty who took the application form from her and simply explained: "Vroue studeer nie hier nie," translating to "women do not study here" (Landman, 2019:5). That was the beginning of her suffering in church spaces, let alone her journey through ordination.

After successfully completing her studies with the University of South Africa (UNISA), Landman was officially licensed and considered a proponent of the Groote Kerk located in Pretoria in Bosman Street on 18 November 2006. The Groote Kerk had previously been identified as a beacon for many of the state activities for the historical Dutch Reformed Church, as the church used this congregation inter alia to

proceed with the inductions of the State Presidents during the Apartheid regime (Landman, 2019:8).

Landman (2010a:3) advocates for the intention behind Public Theology to be a threefold aim. “According to Landman (2010a:3) the first aim of Public Theology is to bring the needs of the voiceless to the public arena. The second aim is for Public Theology to present itself as a site for dismantling the religious discourse that sustain race and gender-based discrimination. The third aim is to deconstruct these harmful religious discourses and rescope them as healthy societal practices that will bring healing to those who suffer discrimination and are deprived of their human dignity” (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2014:78).

4.5 Women clergy and gender in the URCSA

When the URCSA officially began to ordain women in its congregations, only a few adjustments were made to correct the image and status that ministers were known to have. However, it is believed that there are patriarchal systems which exist in the URCSA, and regarding these systems and anthropology of the URCSA, very little change has taken place (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:3). The ordination journey of Christina Landman (2019) highlights the reluctance of women to welcome women into the ministry. This is evident by her former lecturer stating, “Vroue studeer nie hier nie,” which translates to “women do not study here.”

Similar to the lived experiences of Beyers Naude, many male theologians from the Afrikaans Reformed tradition would grant women the right to speech only on condition that men could speak on their behalf. In his autobiography, Naude does not attempt to empower women to become active agents in the transformation of society. Instead, women are placed in a private sphere within a familial context. Women are constituted as playing nothing more than roles that would be seen as stereotypical and traditional (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2008:113). The literary sources employed on Christina Landman and her pioneering contributions to feminist theology are indicative of similar systems in the Afrikaans Reformed tradition and the greater denomination of the Dutch Reformed Church during this time.

Plaatjies-van Huffel affirms that as the first woman to be ordained in the DRC and the first feminist scholar of the URCSA, she has directly been exposed to gender insensitivity within the church on multiple occasions. This is evident in the idea that once she became the minister of the DRC in 1992, multiple congregants left the church, citing her ordination as the reason for their departure (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:3). This was a large part of her journey in ministry and had a great effect on her own ordination into the DRC. Covert types of patriarchal systems and gender insensitivity are not publicly portrayed in the URCSA (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:3).

In instances of gender insensitivity in the church, much of it takes place in public spaces where it can be seen with ease. Regulations have been occasionally implemented on what can and cannot be included in synod meetings where certain debates take place. One of these regulations include instances where men have actively prevented conversations about gender from being spoken on or encouraged. Some women claimed that they were limited in terms of using resources or were denied the use of resources. In more extreme cases, when ministerial job appointments and elections take place, it is said that these processes are manipulated. Ryan (2007) recalls that some examples of these insensitivities include: “censuring; silencing those who challenge patriarchal forms, practices and structures” (Ryan 2007, 9; Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:3-4). These gender insensitivities may have an effect on the ordination of women in the church.

Plaatjies-van Huffel claims that the URCSA denominations is unsafe for ordained female ministers. This denomination is not aware or considerate of the personal sacrifices that many of these female pioneers in the church have made in an effort to become ordained in the URCSA (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:3-4). The struggles of Plaatjies-van Huffel lead the researcher to question if the lived experiences of current female ministers in the URCSA are of a similar narrative, and whether the struggle of ordination is still prevalent today.

Furthermore, the tale of the first woman to be ordained in the DRC does not give the harrowing tale that one would expect. The story of Rev Plaatjies-van Huffel is not the tale of successful pioneering, but instead a tale of a woman armed with strategies for survival in a ministry that has never been prepared to house and care for pioneering women. Since her ordination in 1992 until the present day, no programs have been

put in place to monitor and address the challenges that ordained women face within the URCSA family. As long as the church refuses to look within itself and acknowledge the struggles that ordained women are burdened with, the image and hopes brought forth in the Belhar Confession cannot be identified as reality to the family of the URCSA (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:6).

What is the value of differences of gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in leaders in the church? Are the place of origin and gender less important than the gender of the potential leader? It goes without saying that gender is a factor and that the leadership of women has had a great influence within the church in the 21st century. “The man in the long black robe” served as the only known model for the ministry of God only a few years prior. Women were either discouraged from entering the ministry, or blatantly told that they were not permitted to be ministers or pastors. This was believed to be influenced by patriarchal structures within the URCSA. In some cases, acknowledging the differences between men and women and accepting that each gender has a different method of ministering to people could put the idea of church equality at risk, as women are inferred as the weaker gender and unable to handle the ministry. Women have been stereotyped as being more caring, considerate and softer than men in some studies on the analysis of the development of women, leading to these studies being criticized. When women are eager to affirm that they can handle the concept of leadership, it could occasionally lead to women being unwilling to acknowledge differences in gender. Sociolinguist Deborah Tannen believes that this is because these differences may be used as reasons to deny people of opportunities (Willhauck and Thorpe, 2001:85). While this study does not investigate the qualities that women possess and how this impacts their leadership, it does cause the researcher to question whether some women are undermined in their leadership positions as a result of these qualities. This will be highlighted during the interview process of this thesis.

Nel (2019) wrestles with a question about pioneering women in the ministry: What role can and should women’s ministries, and the lay leaders involved, take on as they partner with churches about the struggles that ordained ministers and theologians in the professional field face? An educational theorist named Wenger (1998) expresses that these ministries imply that they act as “communities of practice” and aim to acknowledge and fight the effects of patriarchy.

The URCSA should aim at becoming a space for the liberation of God's people and a community where people are able to practice this liberty. Black women should be empowered in their attempts to construct new churches so that modern society can address and in-effect alter the allegedly patriarchal nature of the secular world in multiple spheres. Wenger (1998) believes that we need to understand the need and definition of practice in this context as "collective learning over time, results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations" (Wegner, 1998:45; Nel, 2019:3-4).

Nel (2019) expresses feeling a sense of pain when drafting this contribution. She adds that the number of existing limitations may potentially obstruct visions for a new united community of faith between men and women, which becomes a daunting experience. Monumental strides have been made within the URCSA family through the 25 years at the time of the writing of Nel's article of the church's operation. The published works and leadership analyse ordination through leadership skills of women in the field of theology and those with leadership positions within the CWM.

It is consequential that we take a closer look at the existing relationship between the history of colonial missionary. This means analysing the colonial memory that the women's associations have and the relationship they have to how they could currently function in modern faith communities. The challenge faced by Plaatjies-van Huffel pertaining to the theological-anthropology and its relationship to the undergrid patriarchy is not a victory that has been won yet, and it needs to be further addressed. This is difficult for the URCSA to overcome, however, other church in the African Reformed tradition have faced similar instances as they continue to seek relevance. These churches aim to build a new church in unity, a community that encourages healing and liberation for future generations (Nel, 2019:13).

4.6 Coloured women in the workplace

For the purposes of this work, 'Coloured' refers to those South Africans loosely bound together for historical reasons such as slavery and a combination of oppressive and preferential treatment during apartheid, rather than by common ethnic identity. For us, the identity 'coloured' is sometimes seen as overlapping with 'black' and always with 'African' (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999:169).

This racial history of division was known to exist alongside patriarchy, as women are considered subordinate to their male counterparts regardless of their racial background. All women-regardless of their race-were expected to exist primarily as homemakers, legally citing them as “minors” in their own homes. Hutson (2007) supports this statement by quoting: “In the 1930s, women began to move to urban areas in search of work. However, laws and regulations made it very difficult. The most common ways for women to make money were through brewing beer, domestic work, and casual work on farms owned by whites (Baden, 1999). Women struggled to enter the work force, which in turn shocked many as women were (for once) attempting to do something different in society, rather than conforming to societal norms” (Hutson, 2007:84).

However, when women found employment eventually, women of black, Asian and Coloured racial backgrounds were placed in careers as unskilled workers in factories and domestic workers. Their white counterparts found employment as administrative assistants and jobs with primarily female workers, such as teachers and nurses. The cultural history is believed to have a potentially significant impact on the futures of black Coloured, Asian and white heritage in their behaviour as leaders (Littrell, 2015:563). At the time of this study there is very little research documented about the statistics of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA. The limited resources of statistics further illustrate the need to document the journey of Coloured women in the ministry space of the URCSA.

A study conducted by Littrell (2015) on the race and gender differences in workplaces across South Africa indicate the realities of Coloured women and their employment struggles. Although the sample size used during this study contain a statistical analysis that is deemed reliable, the small sample size of managers and employers who are Coloured give an indication of the substantial discrepancies between the Coloured genders and those of other sub-samples used in the study. The analysis of this data gives an estimate of the dissimilarity that exists in the sub-samples and indicate that there is a large inconsistency between the participants who are Coloured males and the other groups, all of which had lower scores. The sample of Coloured females in the study appeared to be the most dissimilar as the scores provided were generally higher than other scores (Littrell, 2015:575). The researcher affirms that there are very limited sources to contribute to statistics on

how Coloured women clergy experience their work environment. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to these limited sources by investigating and documenting the experiences of Coloured women clergy as they undergo ordination in the URCSA Western Cape Province.

During the period of the early 20th century, the lives of many South African citizens were filled with poverty, living conditions consisting of malnutrition and poor housing if any, a poor educational system, households where the breadwinners were unskilled labourers, illiteracy, extremely low wages if any income, and terrible lifestyles. An estimate of 56% of Coloured women in South Africa were domestic workers in 1960, with an approximate number of 3.6% of Coloured women being professional workers in the technical field. By the early 1970s, there was a decline in statistics from 56% to 43.8% of Coloured women who were domestic workers. There was also an increase from 3.6% to 6.2% of Coloured women in the field of professional worker or technical worker (van der Merwe, 1976:17-18; Plaatjies van Huffel, 2011).

As it pertains to black African people, the majority of the population were in circumstances where they were forced into unskilled labour, or semi-skilled labour positions to find employment. The Women's Mission Society instructed a delegation to visit the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in 1924 with a twofold purpose. The first purpose is to address the concerns of the society at the time, and the second purpose is to advocate for the establishment of an organization exclusively for Christian women (Acta NGSK 1924:24; Plaatjies van Huffel, 2011).

A formal member of the Women's Mission Society in the executive committee named Mrs McGregor submitted a formal motion on behalf of Coloured people. This motion was accepted in 1928 by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and put into action. Taking into consideration the harsh living conditions of the majority of Coloured people in the church, a meeting was requested the Right Honourable Administrator. The hope was to seriously look into the painful living conditions of the people, and potentially improve their well-being and housing conditions. Another intention behind this meeting was to request the Right Reverend Synod would send a request to the Right Honourable Administrator to improve the lives of Coloured girls. These girls would be professionally trained in nursing positions to further

contribute to the well-being of their communities. Mrs JWL Hofmeyr further recommended that many young women in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church enter training programmes as Christian social workers. The training provided was to be done in line with the expectations of the Women's Mission Society's executive committee (Skema NGSK, 1928:21; Plaatjies van Huffel, 2011).

4.7 The story of Mrs Benny's identity and name change

The following story of Mrs Benny aims to illustrate the lived experience of one Coloured woman in the Western Cape Province and the oppression she acknowledges that she faced in the workplace. This thesis will further investigate whether this reality is present for other Coloured women in the Western Cape Province in the URCSA workplace.

Mrs Benny is a Coloured woman from a poverty-stricken background and who was 48 years-old at the time of Erasmus' (2000) research. Mrs Benny was raised in an area called Vrygrond, an informal settle in the city of Cape Town, close to the Muizenburg area. This is also where she spent a large part of her life after adulthood. Her mother first found employment as a factory worker, later finding work as a domestic employee. Her father initially worked as a farm labourer with white farmers on their land, later being employed as a worker for the City Council and a caretaker. Once she had successfully completed Standard Six of her formal education, Mrs Benny went on to find employment in a garment factory as a unionized worker at age 16, where she began receiving a consistent salary to support herself. She would later go on to find several jobs in the area of domestic work, maintaining religion as a central part of her life (Erasmus, 2000:74).

Mrs Benny's employer is only able to continue with her personal narrative of being known as 'Madam Joan' by denying Mrs Benny of her own name-a name shared by both women. This act was possible through the instilment of the 'violence of whiteness in a context shaped by white racism.' By giving her a new name, Mrs Benny's white employer is subsequently able to negate her identity (Erasmus, 2000:77). While the story of the identity alteration of Mrs Benny is not one related to gender, it serves as an example of the prior experience of one Coloured woman in

the workplace during the Apartheid regime. This is believed as an experience shared by multiple people of colour during this time in South African history.

As a Coloured woman on the first day at her new job, Mrs Benny finds herself negotiating the difference in her name and the name of her white employer in context of the racial dominance of the Apartheid regime. While it is completely normal for an individual to understand that their identity has much to do with their birth name, this common privilege is instantly taken away from Mrs Benny. Her birth name is easily replaced by a stranger. The recognition that she has always maintained with herself has been tampered with effortlessly. Additionally, factors such as class and racial dynamics contribute to the idea that the employer refuses to address Mrs Benny by her surname either. Despite the reality that her identity had been stripped from her by her white employer, Mrs Benny maintained her composure. She decided to maintain the self-respect she held and continued 'putting [her] pride in [her] pocket' instead of addressing this situation, and chose instead to stay at her job to avoid returning home to children without providing for them. The simple act of telling her story means that Mrs Benny has rejected this negation of her identity. By acknowledging this experience and insisting on remembering it, she controls her dignity and the level of integrity she has in her identity (Erasmus, 2000:77).

In her interview with Mrs Benny, Erasmus (2000) recalls that Mrs Benny credits much of the realities she experienced to her race, and mentions that this has firmly shaped some of her behaviour in the workplace. "So being a coloured and being woman has its disadvantages I would say because your situation doesn't allow you to stand up to her and say no you don't call me that then I rather leave. I couldn't. Because if I do that then I go home to what? To my hungry children. So it means you have to put your pride in your pocket sometimes...And I hate (emphatic) the name Doris...(laughter) until today." (Transcript 3, Interview 2: 5-7) (Erasmus, 2000:76-77).

The story of Mrs Benny is a powerful illustration of the struggles that she faced as a Coloured woman in the workplace during her early years in the Western Cape Province. This interview probes the researcher to further question how other women in the Western Cape experience the workplace today, and whether or not women clergy experience oppression in the URCSA Cape Synod Coloured. This is investigated during the interview process of the research.

4.8 The Christian Women's Ministry concerns in the URCSA

Landman (2019) recalls her own experiences in an African and a Coloured congregation and her dress code requirements as a woman minister in the church, "In a black congregation I would dress in the CWM (Christian Women Ministries) uniform with the minister's gown and preach on empowerment; in a brown congregation I would wear black and white clothes with a hat under the minister's gown, and preach mainly how a personal relationship with Jesus Christ touches and changes the person's heart and behaviour" (Landman, 2019:9).

It is important to focus on women's contributions to the church, which the researcher believes are preceded by their experiences during their ordination process. Plaatjies-van Huffel (2019) however, argues that we should not focus strictly on the access that women have into ordained and leadership positions. It becomes a risk that once the focus is primarily on women's access into these positions, that other mechanisms that may cause exclusion in the church would not be accurately addressed. These mechanisms include cultural and racial systems, and power structures between men and women in the church. This could highlight the idea that the women in the URCSA (such as the CWM) are concerned about how women who are ordained in the church could survive. Women in the church are often divided when they are required to show their support for both women who are ordained and for women belonging to the church's women's organisations. This could be a concern when women need to find solidarity from various women's groups in the church, particularly in consideration of their mutual experiences of being oppressed and marginalised in the church (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:11).

As it pertains to the ecumenical delegation of the church, the URCSA has a longstanding history of women being included in the process. However, when decisions about gender and racial representation in ecumenical meetings and gatherings take place, it is evident that women are selected strictly and are often cherry-picked. These women are either selected from the Christian Youth Movement (CYM) or the Christian Women's Ministry (CWM) as representatives of the women in the URCSA during these occasions (Plaatjies-van Huffel, 2019:17).

4.9 Coloured women and leadership in the URCSA

The URCSA is known for its strong values and even stronger commitment to upholding the integrity of Scripture. According to the official church order of the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, there is little to no room for discrimination within the congregation. Article 1 of the church order stipulates that “Those who have been called and who have been called and who form ‘Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa’ are part of this Church of Christ” (1997:9). This applies in circumstances with people who have different intentions in the church. It applies in situations where people intend on becoming official members of the congregation, and people who seek leadership positions in the congregation as well. Anyone who wishes to become a deacon or an elder within the church is informed beforehand that the congregation actively participates in the election of elder and deacon positions by means of a voting system, and that members are often encouraged to apply, as stated in Article 7 of the church order (1997:12). Concerning the work of those who have been ordained into a congregation within the URCSA community, Regulation 16 has the following to add; “Officials who under supervision of the regional synod will serve the church in a wider connection and a particular field of service will be called or nominated by the Synodical commission under instruction of the regional synod and in co-operation of the particular commission of the regional synod that will supervise the determined field of service.” I opine that the URCSA Church Order speaks on equality between all members of the body of the church. This thesis investigates whether equality is practiced in the URCSA Cape Synod as instructed in the church order as it pertains to the ordination of Coloured women clergy in the church.

None of the important points of order mentioned in the URCSA church order make mention about the gender of a leader in their congregation. The church order does, however, stress the importance of maintaining respect and being considerate of the authoritative figure in the church, being the leading pastor in the congregation. Despite the emphasis of respect for authority in the church order, Coloured women are continuously expected to prove themselves as worthy of the leadership positions they already hold. Coloured women are expected to tolerate being ruthlessly questioned, undermined and disrespected under the ruse of gender, age and cultural systems encouraging this treatment. These systems indicate that when women lead,

their leadership capabilities are of less value than that of a man. While the Coloured community across South Africa do not share a unanimous cultural belief system, many Coloured people rely on their religion and spirituality and guidance through life. Examples of these beliefs are evident in communities such as the Cape Coloured community, where the majority are of Islamic faith, and many Coloured people in Johannesburg believing in Christianity. Erasmus and Lombaard (2017:1) argue that spirituality is able to contain an aspect of social and cultural influence, and that spirituality contributes to the values that a society may hold, especially in a particular cultural setting.

Women have also historically been objected to treatments based solely on their gender. It is believed that in the first place, women were maligned in manners that were personally harmful and painful from the beginning of the fourth century. Secondly, as women, it is important to create direct separation between men and women to establish women in their own right. Women should clearly establish themselves as leaders in the church. There must be a clear attempt to establish the territory of women and mark their boundaries as it pertained to men and their current paradigm in ministry. It is imperative that women know who they are and their position in working within the church (Becker, 1996:14).

4.10 Black women and ordination in the church

Sekano (2007) in his masters' thesis provides a detailed reflection of the personal experiences from two women in his nuclear family during his youth in the struggle of ordination. Sekano is the third born child from a family of eight. His mother, the eldest of his sisters and two of his brothers-in-law had all been theologically trained and become ordained pastors, as well as himself (Sekano, 2007:6). His mother was permitted to participate in teaching the women in the congregation, and his sister was asked to act as the youth leader and on occasion permitted to educate or give sermons to women (Sekano, 2006:6-7). The treatment that was received by these women in ministry became stressful and so difficult that his sister had become physically ill. Church leadership was informed of the struggles that the Sekano pastor was facing and made no attempts at helping her recover and recuperate from this illness. Instead, the leaders made harmful statements about her condition,

stating their belief that God is acting in vindication for the family which has resulted in their daughter becoming ill. This deleterious treatment resulted in Sekano's sister not only resigning from her position, but leaving the congregation altogether in search for a church that could give her a sense of fulfilment and liberty. However, she struggled with this endeavour until she started her own ministry in conjunction with her husband. Sekano's mother left the same church shortly after and joined numerous churches over time until she found solace in a congregation.

Sekano recalls being annoyed by the constant movement of his mother and sister in these churches as the community had resorted to calling the family names. People in the community would ridicule the family and say, "*Ba Sekano ke bo tseni tswi.*" This means that the Sekano family does not stay in one church congregation for a long period of time (Sekano, 2007:7). In this congregation, females were always seen as second place to the males and this made the Sekano pastors aware of the fact that they would face oppression in the church. This is because the leadership of the church was intended for the benefit of men and would not help women, or encourage them to minister in the church. The church showed no acknowledgement of the formal education of women in ministry, including their attainment of theological diplomas in a renowned and respected theology institution (Sekano, 2007:6).

Aside from meeting occasionally during personal encounters, theologians and leaders in the church are not believed to regularly communicate with members of different denominations. The lack of social communication may also impact the ministry of the lead pastor, as they may not be willing to listen to the members of their own congregations. When this occurs, the theologian is only able to speak on their own behalf. The theologian is not able to identify the current challenges within society on a deeper level (Phiri, 2013:91).

In the 1990s there was a greater awakening to the reality that those who are ordained in ministry in different churches face an enormous level of pressure and stress. It is easy to identify the symptoms associated with kind of stress in the lives of people who are unable to find balance and remain consistently busy. In some cases, people work too much and spend too little time on leisure activities. Some people have too many activities taking place and do not find enough time to enjoy stillness. In some instances, people spend too much time engaging in superficial

conversations and not enough time investing in deeper friendships and relationships (Croft, 2008:17).

There are severe consequences for the clergy who are affected by these high levels of stress. The effects can be identified by the increasing number of marriages negatively affected by clergy stress, healthy relationships in the church are broken or damaged, and more clergy report experiencing burnouts and stress-induced breakdowns. The most common effect is that in terms of the effectiveness and energetic impact of the church dies down as the ordained ministers feel more stressed during the ministry (Croft, 2008:18).

The Circle of Concerned Women have always advocated for the ordination of women and equal treatment in the church. In their proceedings, the Circle have clearly indicated that women should be included in the convocations that are required within inauguration. One of the goals of the Circle includes, "To publish documents for the academic study of religion and culture." The Circle of Concerned Women have mentioned this clearly, as they believe that during the nine years since the gestation of the Circle, many conversations were held with many groups of women in the field of theological studies. Many of these women were still completing their university degrees, and have expressed that their primary-and sometimes only-concern was their ordination.

The Circle remained concerned with the ordination of women into ministry. This would not, however, going to conceal the idea that many communities in Africa are made up of people from different faiths. Additionally, culture and religion were very misogynistic during this time, further pushing for justice in the lives of women (Oduyoye, 2019).

Cecily P. Broderick y Guerra speaks on how her ordination in a North American congregation is impacted by her racial heritage and her gender, "As an ordained female of mixed race, African and Hispanic American, I find myself selecting placements from jobs clergy males, of all races, and Caucasian females refuse to consider. Understanding this aspect of my story enables me to accept my professional hardships, take responsibility for acquiring skills my work requires, and strengthens my resolve to empower church members to address hardships they confront" (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:124).

The examples presented above serve as representation of the ordination experiences of both Western women and African women across multiple generations. The examples above claim to have had negative experiences with male clergy and patriarchal structures during their ordination. This thesis will investigate whether the same is true for Coloured women clergy in the URCSA Western Cape province in South Africa.

By 2002, there was approximately 393,000 clergymen and clergywomen in the United States of America, with 55,413 members (14.1%) of this population as women (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2002). In 2014, the number of ordained clergy members in the United States had increased to 443,000 members, and clergywomen made up approximately 18.6% of this population, which is 80,538 female members (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014). This showcases a significant increase in clergy members in 12 years. Of the 433,000 clergymen and clergywomen in the United States, Asian women made up 6.9% of the population with 29,877 members, Hispanic/Latina women made up 7.5% with 32,475 members, and African American women made up 8.3% of the population with 35,939 members (Smarr, Disbennett-Lee and Hakim, 2018:1). At the time of this research, very little documented statistics of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA were in place to compare to South African statistics.

Thomas (2013) contends that within the student population of seminary training, African American women make up approximately 50% of the black population. However, despite these numbers, women have been granted fewer opportunities to be leaders in their congregations. Female graduates in these seminaries are typically not considered for roles as leaders within congregations, they are usually not accepted for roles in pulpit ministry unless there are no other options, and are the last option available for opportunities of employment (Smarr, Disbennett-Lee and Hakim, 2018:1).

4.11 The positives of women ordination in the URCSA

It is possible to live the dream of Christian ambiance in the African culture when believers are held responsible according to the ecclesiastical account of Christianity. In order to rectify the treatment of women, responsibility should be placed on all

religious groups to promote and encourage the appropriate treatment of women in society, as well as maintaining the traditional and empowering structures that exist within certain African cultures. Rectifying the treatment of women means acknowledging legal codes in a way that is understandable for society. The world of academia should also be accountable for and question what is prioritized in our studies. It specifically looks to women's studies, humanities studies and the combinations of these studies into gender factors with regard to other related fields of study (Oduyoye, 1995:15).

In the modern world the ordination of women into the church as well as their ability to equally contribute to God's ministry is extremely important. The ordination of women becomes even more valuable when considering the idea that churches should understand themselves in a religious and culturally pluralistic context of the world. The church can therefore be seen as a foretaste of how God reigns, and an indication of the Good News. It is difficult to convince the men and women on the benefits of ecclesiastical practices. who regularly congregate in the church of this idea, as increasing numbers of congregants appear to be moving further away from institutionalized churches. However, it may still be argued that ecclesiastical practices were ordained by a divine presence, despite the evident demonstrations of certain cultural values and practices taking place in churches. There may be a greater challenge since God is considered as male within the Jewish and Christian faiths, which creates certain obstacles in dialogues with members of different faiths. Therefore, it is unlikely that one can consider the role of women in the ministry of God without obstacles. One should also be considerate of the theological and philosophical assumptions that exist in the background of institutional churches and its practices (Rosenhäger and Stephens, 1993:81).

4.12 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter of the study highlighted the ordination experiences of women from both the Western and African parts of the world across varying generations. This chapter also focused on the traditional culture of the Coloured community and within the URCSA and the DRC. In some instances, men are raised to believe that a patriarchal environment is the norm and men are superior by nature. These beliefs

form their perspective of society as a whole. The modern world, however, needs for men and women to venture jointly into the ministry and lead the church in unity. This understanding will benefit women in ministry greatly, as they will be made aware of the value they possess. The next chapter will demonstrate the recorded and documented interviews conducted with willing research participants. These interviews were conducted to collect data on the lived experiences of Coloured women clergy in the URCSA Western Cape Synod.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews a detailed explanation on the lived experiences of Coloured women clergy during ordination in the URCSA. There is very little known and documented on the challenges and the experiences that women of colour experience during ordination. The interviews conducted during the study have brought to light some perspectives on what women face during these times. These lived experiences are narrated by the women who are currently or have previously gone through ordination in the URCSA denomination in various forms.

In a general sense, when one thinks of the word ‘interviewing,’ the first thing that comes to mind is the illustration of a group of two or more individuals in a conversation. In the field of research, interviews are considered a common method of inquiry. Interviews lead people to believe that they are conducted to highlight the interests of the interviewer in the lives and stories of the interviewees, primarily because of the value that the stories hold (Seidman, 2012:8-9; Alsaawi, 2014:150). Another manner of defining interviews is that it can be understood as follows: “Interviews deal with thinking and talk that are later transformed into texts” (Nunkoosing, 2005:699; Alsaawi, 2014:150).

Modern society continues to shift further away from the ideologies of an ordained minister with strict and specific roles within the church. Ministers are no longer strictly required to hold responsibility of leading the people of God in worship services, partaking in practices involving pastoral care, and educating the younger children and youth on the principles of religious faith. Instead, society is moving toward visions of ministers who possess the skills to lead the people of God effectively and to contribute to building faith communities who are focused on the mission of God and bringing this mission to the earthly world (Croft, 2008:12).

5.2 Open-ended questions

When conducting a study using the grounded theory method, it is beneficial to make use of an open-ended questionnaire. This creates the opportunity to shift interview

questions toward a detailed conversation surrounding the topic at hand. Ensuring that the questionnaire consists of questions that are non-judgemental and open-ended will motivate research participants to speak on unexpected topics (Charmaz, 2006:26).

Charmaz (2006) contends that “Qualitative interviewing provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight.” The interviewing process can and most likely will expose the subjective views of all parties interviewed (Charmaz, 2006:28-29).

The method of interviewing that takes place in this thesis is similar to a conversation-style interview, where multiple questions were asked of the research participants. The questions asked during the interviews granted permission for the research participants to answer the questions at their own discretion and to the extent that they wish (Bryman, 2008; Alsaawi, 2014:151). This meant that during the interviews, the interviewer would seldom interrupt-if at all-to grant the research participant full freedom in answering the questions. This has resulted in an “ethnographic interview” style, where the interviews take place in a relaxed and comforting environment (Dörnyei, 2007; Alsaawi, 2014:151).

Unstructured interviews are an effective method of conducting research, primarily because of its flexible nature concerning time and the content of research. Additionally, unstructured interviews can be altered to best suit the research questions of the study, as well as the number and type of participants. It may also be suited to the lifestyle of the researcher and be more effective than other qualitative research methods (Lee and Lings, 2008:218). The purpose of this method of research is to dig deeply into how the research participants acknowledge and experience their own opinions, experiences and their feelings. Unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews are similar, however, there are clear differences between them. Lee and Lings (2008) acknowledge the differences as follows: “While unstructured and semi-structured are the essentially two ends of continuum, they provide a useful contrast. In a totally unstructured interview, the interviewer will at the most use a few brief topics, sometimes just one to prompt the interviewee, who is then allowed to respond however they want. Probing by

interviewer is only done to follow up points of interest or to keep things going on smoothly. Conversely, the semi-structured interview is guided by a more detailed topic guide which will contain some fairly specific questions to ask, and likely ways of probing, examples to ask for and so on. There remains a lot of flexibility to follow up individual points, but in general the same questions will be asked of each interviewee” (Lee and Lings, 2008:218).

5.3 Ethnography

Ethnography refers to actively recording the lived experiences of a certain group, and therefore, will require that the researcher participate and observe attentively in the social world, milieu or the community of the participants. There is a greater need than simply observing the circumstances of the study subjects. This is because it covers a multitude of aspects of the participants’ lives in their community. An ethnographic study includes a variety of data collection tools, such as documentation, maps, diagrams, photographs, and in certain instances, transcripts from questionnaires and interviews (Charmaz, 2006:21).

The qualitative research model of ethnography includes the researcher observing the research participants as a group with similar cultural backgrounds, value systems, language, behaviour or even belief systems. The researcher is then required to immerse themselves in the way that participants live their daily lives. The researcher will be able to understand the behaviour and patterns that result in the general psychic of the research group (Creswell, 2013:90-96).

An ethnographic approach is suitable for this study because the research participants all currently work and reside in one province and are of the same racial background and gender. All of the participants are Coloured women and are located in the Western Cape Province in South Africa. Additionally, all the research participants work under the same Synod and church denomination, where they undergo the same ordination process as per the requirements of the URCSA.

5.4 Participants

Meaningful conversations and dialogue begin to unfold when there is a sense of desire and willingness from all of the participants, as the participants are able to and prepared to work from their own experiences. The participants are expected to have personally dealt with the reality that they have lived through, instead of operating from a point of theoretical perspectives born out of a supposed reality. In addition, everyone is expected to share their personal experiences with full truth and humility, and in doing so, it is done with sincerity for the experiences of the person they are engaging in dialogue with. During conversation, it may come about that their dialogue partner may share the same experience (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:46). Engaging in dialogue is about more than attempting to convince others of someone's particular perspective. Instead, it is about seeking out a deeper knowledge of reality (Russel, Gnanadason and Clarkson, 2005:47).

In the research proposal of this thesis, the researcher mentioned the intention to interview twelve women clergy. The researcher sent a formal request to the Scribe of the URCSA Southern Synod and approached twelve women who have undergone ordination in the Western Cape Province, to interview the women through Zoom calls as part of the research study. The ordained women were first informed about this study and their permission for online interviews was requested. The research participants were informed that the information collected during the interviews are used strictly for research purposes. The research findings would also be used as a contributing factor to the pastoral care method of Positive Deconstruction for the benefit of the women clergy who were ordained.

From the preliminary sample of twelve participants, six women agreed to the interviews. It is believed that the best method of selecting research participants should be that participants are objectively selected, and should therefore not be acquaintances or friends of the interviewer (Walker, 1985:30; Sefatsa, 2021:60). This criterion was used to identify the appropriate research participants for the study. The neutrality and the objectivity of the researcher was upheld by this criterion. The women who were willing to participate in the research study signed the sent consent forms and therefore consented to be interviewed and have the interviews recorded. The consent form includes the following information: The purpose of the research study, the duration of this research study, the procedure of the research, the general

expectations of the interviewees by the researcher, the rights of all research and the confidentiality of research participants. The research participants were between the ages of 25 and 65. All of the participants were ordained ministers in the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa.

The interviews that were conducted are detailed below.

5.5 Interviews

Mercy Oduyoye (2001) believes that the stories we share with other about the things that bring us pain and joy are sacred tales. Although these stories cause us to feel vulnerable, if we are not willing to share them, we will not successfully build a community filled with solidarity. These stories serve as examples of the paths we endured with God and the struggles we have faced to come to a feeling of true humanity. These events in our lives have allowed us to receive the blessings that God has planned for us (Oduyoye, 2001:21).

During the interview process, clergywomen were free to speak on their experiences with ordination in the church. This was not an easy process, but many of the participants understood the importance of the study. When a researcher asks questions and considers the potential answers that they could receive, they are put in a position to see themselves as 'the other.' This helps to develop an understanding of how the problem is perceived by the participants (Corbin and Strauss, 2015:91).

During the course of my interviews, I held a similar position to Dr Zimitri Erasmus in her interview with Mrs Benny. Many similar traits were found between Erasmus as the researcher from a particular life setting and myself from a very similar setting. Mrs Benny lives as a 48-year-old woman of Coloured origin and is from a poverty-stricken background. She was born and raised in an informal settlement near Muizenburg in the greater Cape Town area, an area known as Vrygrond (Erasmus, 2000:74).

Erasmus' interview took place in Mrs Benny's home over a number of days and included both physical meetings and telephone conversations. "The exchange between Mrs Benny and myself reveals some of the consequences of the research

for my own subjective experience. Being a historically classified coloured woman myself and from initially working-class parents, there is a sense in which I am *from* parts of Mrs Benny's world. I recognized some of her cultural references and shared some of her experiences. This was manifested in moments of recognition between us. Simultaneously, being middle-class now and having a sense of cultural distance from the worlds of working-class coloured women enabled me to see and value the particularity of her world" (Erasmus, 2000:79).

Similar to the bond between Zimitri Erasmus and Mrs Benny, I, too, built a relationship with some of the participants during this research. This relationship was strengthened by the similarities in our race, cultural background, gender, and our mutual interest in the URCSA denomination ministry.

By the end of her interview, Mrs Benny informed Erasmus: 'Now I can see what you are doing. It's not that you are wanting to scratch in people's business. You're wanting to find out how people lived' (Erasmus, 2000:75). While many of the questions asked during the interview process appear to be an invasion of privacy, the purpose behind these questions is to understand the lived experiences of participants and not cause them to feel exposed or violated in any manner.

During the course of the interviews, it became evident that the participants were reminded of some emotional points in each of their journeys with the church. The researcher then began to understand that this research was not only about investigating the lived experiences of the affected women, but to provide care giving to those in need. This would be beneficial to both the current ministers in the church to help them heal from the concerns in the past, and to assist incoming ministers with the challenges they could potentially face in the future.

Before the unstructured and informal interviews were conducted with research participants, the researcher what they investigated and discovered in the literary sources about the study, as well as what presuppositions were identified as experiences that the affected Coloured women clergy could have undergone during their ordination into the URCSA. These assumptions were discussed with the supervisors of my study during multiple meetings. The researcher recorded the answers of the participants and made reflective notes detailing the presupposed emotions and reactions of participants during the interviews conducted. The

researcher was open-minded and allowed the participants to express themselves without judgement. The interviews were conducted and recorded through WhatsApp using both voice notes and detailed notes, and lasted for approximately 60 minutes each. The researcher avoided interruptions while participants answered questions and allowed participants to give details on their journeys freely without censorship. Responses were quoted directly; however, names and geographic locations were changed and aliases were used to preserve the identities of all participants. Once answers were completed, the researcher confirmed all responses with participants before results were published so that participants could confirm that their identities were accurately concealed. The researcher documented notes of the non-verbal feedback of all participants detailing the emotion behind their responses, the pauses, tone of voice, and notes on her own reflections of the response to the questions.

5.5.1 Participant A (Alice)

- a) Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?

In my current congregation, men and women are not always treated the same. Men are still in charge in some instances and functions, committees in the church structure and hierarchies.

- b) Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?

There is no policies in place. The Belhar Confession spoke about Gender and Equality in URCSA and our broader communities and our country.

- c) Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?

Most women are more active in the church i.e., church council and doing events and fundraisings. Most women are in the church councils, and chairpersons of commissions. The Christian women movement are well represented.

- d) In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your ministry, both in a positive and negative way, if any?

Tradition assisted in inequality in the church definitely. Many congregations did not transformed yet or fully in their view and perceptions of woman leadership and their roles.

- e) Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?

URCSA did appoint a counsellor to conduct Pastoral Care to its members. But not in particular for women.

- f) Does your current church congregation value your contributions to the ministry based solely on your theological qualifications? Kindly expand on your answer.

My church did treat me with respect. It may differ from other places and contexts. Male clergy still have to take the long road when it comes to equality. Most female ministers are called to congregations. Most congregants accepted female church council members and as functionaries.

- g) When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

I think women became part of the face of URCSA as men, youth and children. We still need to look into equality in the church. We must [have] courageous conversations and [be] prayerful for this. It all goes back to our homes. Differentiation of roles and girls and boys, and men and women. Parenting skills, etc.

5.5.2 Participant B (Bethany)

- a) Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?

I have been nearly 18 years in the ministry and I currently the treatment I am getting from my congregation as female minister is good. It could be that they are more open to having a female than a male. I found also that the men in our congregation do not mind being under the leadership of a female.

- b) Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?

N.A

- c) Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?

In our congregation, females are occupying more of the leadership roles. Our church council consists of 14 members, and all are women. Even in our youth and Sunday school, the executive are mostly women. Our `dagbestuur` consists of only females. It is only in our building commission, that we find that it consists mostly of men. So, in our congregation, the females are leading the congregation.

- d) In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your ministry, both in a positive and negative way, if any?

I won't say church doctrine, I would rather say that patriarchy and traditions had a negative effect, in the past, in my ministry. Some people still believe, and here I include church councils, and many a times, Konsulente, that women should not be called as ministers as only men can do that. Women are still seen to raise their kids and not be leaders. This will be a stumbling block for women ministers until church councils change their mindsets, and teach church members that it is

ok to call a female minister. In the same breath, I think that male colleagues are also a stumbling block to their female colleagues. Many a times, they will rather call a male than a female.

e) Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?

In the Cape Synod, no. But a few of our female Reverends realized the need to get together and encourage one another. We had our very first retraite in 2021 with Prof Elna Mouton as facilitator. The Moderamum of the Cape Synod had a one-day meeting with us to discuss our issues. This happened of course before the General Synod. They still did not get back to us on any matters that arose from that meeting. But we try and get together on our own.

f) Does your current church congregation value your contributions to the ministry based solely on your theological qualifications? Kindly expand on your answer.

No. Also my experience. As I have stated earlier, I have been in the ministry for 18 years and experience in the ministry helps.

g) When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

Do you mean that males get treated differently than female reverends? As mentioned earlier, a discussion was held with the Moderamum, no feedback or follow up happened. Letters were written from the female reverends to various organizations in the Cape Synod. I don't think that the church is serious about the issues that female ministers are facing. Or they don't know how to deal with it, or don't want to deal with it.

5.5.3 Participant C (Candice)

- a) Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?

When I speak about theological simulation, I'm talking about big discussions or the discussions that were just, you are protestant, you are in that tradition, and people nowadays want to be free. They don't want to be in boxes. And so how do you navigate that for instance when there is just a box? And at that time, and the particular box that I'm referring to is a box that we were part of you know, but not that you are being put into those boxes. It is just structured, it is a framework to which we ascribe, it made us who we were. Over and above that, the theological discussions were moving forward, taking the church forward, taking the diversity into context. Taking the differences that we share amongst one another and the differences in terms of who we are. Being relevant with that kinds of discussions was difficult for the group where I was to a point where I became maybe too radical for their liking and that I felt, yoh, okay. So now I am in this, it is too small.

- b) Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?

Coming from a different denomination via community of faith-the large congregation where I was, being accepted, I don't know what happened because my documentation was submitted and all of that was given through to Synod and at Synod level there was a discussion or something where the decision of appointing some ministers. So, the decision was that I be ordained, be legitimized and so on and everything was fine. And but then I could not do the communion because I was told to be beroep and ordained with the laying of hands. Now I had to make a decision now, I'm an ordained minister coming from a registered university, just different ways-I did the B stream and the VGK did the A stream. The difference was it was not compulsory for us to do the languages and so then, so I had to basically decide now is it worth going back to whoever, fighting now about my status as a

minster, as an ordained minister working in a Western Cape community already, being the chairperson of the Western Cape community interdenominational forum where everybody knew me as reverend.

c) Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?

Sometimes being a woman and when they look for a scribe they automatically want to look to a woman and I graciously in my previous years at other churches I said no, I will not be secretary for you. Because I have the same capabilities as you have and why can't you?

d) In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your ministry, both in a positive and negative way, if any?

We do have our difficult times, everybody has stuff where people don't necessarily agree with you and have your moments, I'm not talking about that because I heard there it is your leadership that will assist you there and your community that will assist you with that.

e) Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?

I had lovely support. The support was very good in terms of people making sure that the pastor, the minister, is well looked after. They made sure of that. But when it came to pastorally, I think they would want to know whether we were okay. My family and I were okay, you know, but when it came to taking the church further in terms of big discussions, I think they were...some of them...and the church currently is struggling. And so, ministry for me as a woman in the other church was never difficult, I must admit. No, it was not. It was never difficult, I never had any troubles when I listened to the late Professor Plaatjies when she was speaking about a baptism that would go very wrong for her, because she was a woman. I can tell you that I have not experienced that.

- f) Does your current church congregation value your contributions to the ministry based solely on your theological qualifications? Kindly expand on your answer.

Absolutely! Absolutely. If I could just make-I had some of the ladies who were talking about not being allowed into church for instance spoken of very poorly. And it gets to the fact that, it's because you are a female that you can't lead us, because you are female. Those kinds of things, no one ever said that to me. In fact, someone made the comment that it's because we have a female minister that things are different.

- g) When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

This particular brother, he said one day when I went to visit him. He told me that we need to acknowledge that we made a mistake. So, I asked him what do we need to acknowledge. He said we made a mistake. And the mistake is that we can never have democracy like that in the church, and you can never have your minister in a powerless position. So, I said oh, okay. That it beautiful. But I never felt that I was in a powerless position. The only time I really felt that and when I thought of the words of brother Avery was when the chairperson, when I differed greatly from the chairperson and where I had to put my foot down by saying that I am the minister and I determine literally, spiritually where this church would go, visually. And we need to gel the two. So, if you come from a different world, you need to listen to me, and we respect one another. So that is the big one where I literally heard the words of this brother ringing in my ears that day.

5.5.4 Participant D (Danielle)

- a) Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?

So, what I've experienced from the church council, from congregation members, it's just really, I am enjoying myself. I've enjoyed myself since the word go, and I've never experienced or felt like the church council is treating me a certain way or different because I'm a female minister. I obviously don't know what it is like or what to look out for and what it is when people call you and to journey with the church council, because this is my first congregation. But what I've experienced and what I have heard in the past, I've heard horror stories of female ministers complaining of how they are being treated by their church council and their congregation members. A couple of years ago I am coming on in the church ever since I was 14 years old-I'm 47 this year-so I came from the ranks of the church through Sunday to the youth to being on the church council to where I am now. And when I was, the youth, I spent a lot of my years serving on youth structures in the church-in the Uniting Reformed Church and at some stage I was chosen as the Vice Chairperson of our region, of the Cape Region on the CYM level, and the Chairperson was, he was a Zulu, he was from Kwa-Zulu Natal, and I had it very difficult working with him. And every time when we have meetings, we talk about strategy and we talk about this and that, he always felt threatened with my presence, the things that I put on the table, it was always shot down, it was always put aside and ignored. But then, a Coloured guy or a black guy would say exactly the same thing and then it was this big thing about 'oh let's do it, it can work' hoo haa. And I felt, it was difficult for me, and there I could honestly see it's about me being Coloured and I'm female. And that didn't sit well with the Zulu Chairperson. And obviously, well, there was a few other guys on the board as well. They made this big hoo haa, I'm the first female on the Cape region executive for the CYM ever, I made history, and I'm not just a female, I'm a Coloured, that was also history. But in reality, no one has actually made a kopskyf yet, a lot of the congregations and a lot of the leaders on the panel that served with me were still very much racist and sexist. So, that in itself was first-

hand experience, it was difficult. Now that I am in ministry here in the Western Cape, I still need to see what is transpiring, because so far, the only exposure that I had as a minister dealing with other ministers in our profession, it's been good so far.

b) Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?

I, like I said, it's got a lot to do with your personality, just a little bit of, on the personal note for myself. I'm a divorced woman, and when we were in our final year, some of the younger students in our class made fun of me and said, 'You know what aunty D, you know that you are gonna be the last person from our group that are going to be called into a congregation. And now we would laugh and joke amongst each other and they, and I was like, 'Why are you saying that? Why can't I be called first?' 'No, because churches want a man, you know, it's not a big thing in VGK for female ministers to just be called. We are new at this whole female minister thing. So, it, we are a lot of males in this class, so, you know, the males will be called first. And then this whole thing about jy moet getroud wees. Because congregations don't wanna struggle with a unmarried male in their congregation because hy gaan vol vrouens wees and a lot of things. So, so, the married guys that were in our class. You guys are moving in front of the line because you are male, you are married. You've got that stability that a lot of congregation people want. Aunty D, you are divorced, you are a woman you are going way back to the line. I think you gonna be called last.' And we were licensed. I think we were about 18 that were licensed. And I'm like, 'Oh my word, that doesn't sound good. It makes me just go into my, oh my word are you sure I'm gonna be called last?' 'Yes, aunty D, just brace yourself, we all gonna be in the ministry and you still gonna wait because people are only gonna call you when they see there's no one else, because all the other proponent were called.' And I'm like, oh my word, this sounds like a horror movie. In retrospect, I was the first one that was called out of all the proponente. And that was, that's a

testimony in itself for me as a female minister. I was upfront with all the interviews that I went for, I was upfront with the church council.

c) Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?

N.A.

d) In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your ministry, both in a positive and negative way, if any?

I think that uhm, I have not experienced anything sexist about me coming into the congregation. I think that, uhm, as person in itself I'm very liberated. I'm very open-headed, I look at things from different perspectives, you know? And I didn't go into the ministry and into the congregation already feeling sorry for myself. 'Oh, I'm a female minister. I'm gonna' have this hard time with the church council and congregation members.' I didn't go into ministry with that attitude.

e) Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?

Well.... I think to, to, to, to a big extent, apart from the finances, they are experiencing me in a positive way. They are happy that I'm there, and they can learn a lot from me. I can say the same. I've learned a lot ever since I've been here. But the previous minister left the congregation because he was stealing their money. Now they, and that is one of the concerns that the treasurer has got. He doesn't want me to work and be involved with the finances because they are still dealing with a lot of their money has been stolen in the past and the money is just gone. And that's one of the reasons why they got rid of their minister. There is, they had court case on court case court case, which they won, uhm, but it's

got to do with a lot of other stuff that the minister did wrong. But one of the things was the fact that the minister stole money and could never justify some of the withdrawals, the cash withdrawals that he was doing. They also had two or three big functions that everyone raised money for-thousands of rands-it's just gone. And it was meant to be for a fence that they want to put around the church. Til today, there's no fence, the money is gone, the minister's gone, and so, they've got that in their mind ministers steal money, keep the minister away from the money. So, they look at me and it's difficult for me to do my work because hulle kyk vir my met daai agterdog at the back of their mind wanneer gaan jy nou onse geld steel nie? Uhm, so, I've got a double-wammy that I need to lead, I need to be calm, I need to be friendly, I need to be pastoral, but I also need to be tough and I also need to shake them and make them understand, jy, look here, this is not the past, I'm not him, the previous minister. Let us be objective, let us be open minded, let me do my work, let me guide how I'm supposed to, and don't be afraid, everything's gonna be okay. So, it's a little bit of pastoral care that I also need to slip in while being this tough minister, this is what we're gonna do, this is the way forward.

- f) Does your current church congregation value your contributions to the ministry based solely on your theological qualifications? Kindly expand on your answer.

As an auditor I've worked with white males for 20 years being the underdog. I'm a Coloured female that made it in the accounting profession. And they, people are surprised. They like, 'Waaat? Well, what do we have here?' So, I think my boldness and my strength is one of the things that draw people to me, even though I can be very blunt and hard sometimes, especially when it comes to meetings and tasks that need to be performed, I can be very hard on people. But when you journey with me you will see arg jinne maar sy's ook maar net n' puppy. So, I think your personality weighs heavy. Yes, your academics. You need to be qualified, but its, it really, when it comes to the congregation and to do the

work in a congregation, your personality weighs, it really weighs a lot. Uhm, ja uhm, ja, ja, if I can put it that way.

- g) When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

There's actually no difference, I can't see any difference. From a formal point of view there's obviously a big difference because I'm their minister now, they look at me, they speak to me, they treat me a different way, but it's nothing extraordinary from when I was just a student or someone waiting to be called. And I think, maybe I should just mention this, I think that your own personality really, really weighs heavy as a female minister, because I've seen and I've heard a few female ministers complaining about how they are being treated in their congregation, by congregation members, by church council, by fellow ministers, you know, as colleagues, and then I often listen to them and think to myself, 'But maybe it's because of your own personality that clashes with some of the people. It's not so much that people don't accept you as a female minister, maybe it's just your own personality. You don't have a way of speaking with people, you don't have a way of communicating, and you cannot journey with people. Maybe it's that.' I often started asking these type of questions when we as female ministers, we had a meeting with our moderator of the church at once stage, a couple of months ago.

5.5.5 Participant E (Esther)

- a) Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?

Dit is nie problem nie. Jy kan voortgaan as bruin vrou in (removed) gemeenskap.

(It is not a problem. You continue as a brown woman in this community)

- b) Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?

Vol aanvaarbaar imdat hulle die Woord van God nodig het.

(Full of gratitude because they need the Word of God)

- c) Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?

Vroens is nie problem nie. Net sommige mans.

(Women are not a problem, but some men are)

- d) In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your ministry, both in a positive and negative way, if any?

Dit is nie so n' groot problem niw. Sommige hou vas aan hulle wit kultuur se agtergrond.

(It is not necessarily that big of a problem. Some people hold onto their white culture and history)

- e) Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?

As (removed) vrou moet jy hard prober om nie jou leierskap te laat faal nie. Tree op met selfvertroue op.

(As a woman, you need to try hard to ensure that your leadership does not fall. Show up with self-confidence)

- f) Does your current church congregation value your contributions to the ministry based solely on your theological qualifications? Kindly expand on your answer.

Soms moeilik, maar gaan Voort met die werke en tolk moet altyd beskikbaar wees.

(Sometimes it is difficult, but you need to continue with your work and make sure you are always available to help)

- g) When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

Sommige hou vas aan die verlede dat net mans leierskap moet wees en nie vrouens nie.

(Some people cling onto the past which says that women should not be in leadership, and that only men should be)

5.5.6 Participant F (Farrah)

- a) Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?

Men and women are 50/50 represented in the church leadership. By times men will still be viewed as traditional stronger leaders than women depending on the task etc.

- b) Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?

On Presbytery (Ringsvlak) level woman are represented in the structures and decision making. On Synod level woman are represented in the leadership level of URCSA.

- c) Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?

There is a consciousness amongst congregants that women should be visible in church leadership. It can still happen that women are excluded deliberately. This is a growing process and a journey which may differ from contexts, culture, age and language.

- d) In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your ministry, both in a positive and negative way, if any?

I would say in the past it was more difficult for women as leaders and leading. Tradition caused this perception and treatment towards women. In some areas and cultures women are still not utilised according to their capacity and qualification, training, experience and knowledge.

- e) Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?

N.A.

- f) Does your current church congregation value your contributions to the ministry based solely on your theological qualifications? Kindly expand on your answer.

N.A.

- g) When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

In my congregation the minister didn't treat me so well and won't give me extra exposure or sermons on certain important days, etc. Or just side line you in certain situations and decision making.

5.6 Interview analysis

When analysing the information collected in the research, it is important to consider a vital point. This point is that the interviewer should diligently reflect on what has been collected during the interviews. The information that is collected should be carefully transcribed and labelled into the appropriate categories and themes. This should be conducted regarding the information collected during the interviewing process and the knowledge that the research participants have shared (Seidman, 2012; Alsaawi, 2014:154).

To analyse the data collected for this thesis, a total of 12 interviews were conducted electronically through Zoom calls with Coloured women clergy from the Western Cape Province as research participants. A journal was used to take written notes of the observed attitudes and actions of the research participants during the interviews, and the researcher's own presuppositions of these actions. After completing the interviews, each recorded interview was transcribed to further compare with the notes taken in the journal. The transcriptions and the journal notes of the interviews were then compared against each other and the presumptions of the researcher to ensure minimal bias from the researcher, and that the data was collected with integrity and diligently. Once the notes were analysed, several statements given by the research participants were placed into categories according to their phrases to interpret which of the responses were directly related to the study. The phrases and themes identified were connected to the major research questions in the interview process which were focused on the lived-experiences of Coloured women clergy undergoing ordination in the URCSA. The conclusion of this research involved a basic description of the experiences of the participants and the themes that emerged during the interviews.

Sometimes using video conferencing is not the best method of data collection, as some topics are sensitive and participants may express strong emotions during the interviews. The researcher will not be able to physically comfort or build rapport with the interviewee in this instance (Irani, 2018; Labinjo, 2021:2). Some participants may find a positive side to video conferencing, however, as it has advantages regarding sensitive topics (Labinjo, 2021:2).

The video conferencing data collection method is not intended to replace the traditional methods of conducting interviews. However, this interview method could be a time and cost saving way to conduct qualitative research. Existing literature has emphasized the reliability of Zoom as an efficient qualitative data collection tool for various topics, even in instances of sensitive subjects such as abuse or mental health (Mabragana et al., 2013; Labinjo, 2021:4-5). While they may be potential technical limitations when using Zoom, they can easily be conquered by learning how zoom works, becoming familiar with the programme and being trained on how to use it. Literature has noted that Zoom is a complementary and promising approach

to how qualitative researchers can generate rich and informative data for their studies (Archibald et al., 2019; Labinjo, 2021:5).

5.7 Recordings of interviews

Some of the benefits of using Zoom include that Zoom sessions can be recorded, live projects can be engaged in using real-time, and users can share screens easily by using this platform. Zoom also provides users with quality audio and video, and performance including wireless-sharing (Keanu, no date; Labinjo, 2021:2). Zoom has categorically expressed that they do not have access to any meetings held by users, including interviews and sessions in the form of video and audio files. This is done with the exception of the account holder authorizing permission to view these files, unless so required by the law for security reasons. Only the holder of the account or third person participants have the authority to access all the electronic data available on Zoom (Zoom Privacy Statement, 2021; Labinjo, 2021:2).

In spite of the potential bias that may exist, conducting phone interviews is a common occurrence in the academic field. Researchers are able to include multiple research participants for their study from various geographic locations, as traveling to conduct interviews are not required. Musselwhite, Cuff, McGregor and King (2006) present multiple advantages for this method of data collection: (1) Phone interviews are economically efficient for both the researcher and participants. Because researchers and participants are not required to travel for the interviews, the researcher is able to search for more participants, which increases the potential for more accurate and bigger data collection. (2) Phone interviews minimise the potential disadvantages of conducting in-person interviews. The researcher is able to take notes of the interview out of sight of the participant which will make them feel more comfortable. Response bias is potentially reduced as facial expressions cannot be seen during the interview. Because anonymity is easier to maintain during phone interviews, the research participants may be more forthcoming with their responses. (3) The interview and research participants may maintain a more appropriate relationship for the purpose of the research. (4) The quality of data collected is considered greater as bias is restricted. Further support and supervision could be given during phone interviews, and participants who struggle with reading and writing

are able to verbally participate in the research study. Brannen (1988) supports this by asserting that research participants will therefore be less fearful and more open in their responses to the interviews, as they are under the impression that they may not meet the interviewer once the research is complete. By fostering this anonymity, there is a greater sense of detachment between the interviewer and participants (Knox and Burkward, 2009:4-5).

5.8 Journal notes and transcripts of interviews

Journal writing is an art that can be interpreted in a multitude of forms. Many of the interpretations give meaning to the information written down and are subsequently understood and constructed based on a multitude of factors; the genre of information, the narrative methods employed, and the cultural surroundings and background of the researcher and the participant (Janesick, 1999:507).

The idea of compiling a comprehensive and reflective journal will assist the researcher in identifying the critical parts of interviews conducted for qualitative research. This is because the researcher acts as a research instrument by compiling journal notes. A review of the literature surrounding journal writing has revealed that while it is considered an 'ancient technique,' this form of data collection is recently being discussed as a valuable component within qualitative research assignments. Journal writing can be seen as an effective source of research data. This set of data includes reflections from the researcher on their own role during the study. It is a helpful method of becoming aware of the role and responsibility of the qualitative researcher as a data collector. Qualitative researchers occasionally receive criticism about their uncertainty in research, as they are not clear about their objectives or their role in the study. Journal writing can be used as an effective technique of achieving the aims and objectives listed in the study, and can provide the reader with a description of the role of the researcher in the study (Janesick, 1999:506-507).

During the course of my interviews with participants, it became evident that recording the interviews would include some limitations. In some instances, research participants would revert back to their native language of Afrikaans. It, therefore, became important that I-as the researcher-was able to understand and effectively translate the answers of the participants from Afrikaans to English for the purpose of

the study. This was done to ensure that the study is fulfilled. Although the Afrikaans language may not have been a concern for this study, the researcher still bore the responsibility to ensure that all the collected data was accurately translated from Afrikaans to English.

The responsibility of ensuring that all written transcripts are drawn up properly lies strictly on the shoulders of the researcher. In some cases, the researcher may not accurately convey what was said during the interview, resulting in the participant being misquoted or misunderstood. Another contributing factor is that the personal ideology or the theoretical perspective of the primary researcher may directly influence the results of the interviews (Alsaawi, 2014:155).

It is vital that before any recordings take place, that recording devices are pre-tested to ensure usability. If recording devices are not tested, the device may not accurately produce recordings of sufficient quality needed for the study. One reason for this may be the result of poor background during the recording. Poor background noise may cause a compromise in the quality of the recording data collected during the interviews. Another challenge that may arise from collecting research data by use of recordings could be that the recording tapes may be lost in the course of the research study, or the sequence of the session may be mixed up in the process. To avoid such instances, it will be helpful for the recording to be played and for transcriptions of the recording to be conducted immediately once the interview is concluded. Video tapes can therefore become as much a challenge to the gathering of information as it is a benefit.

It is better to transcribe information that is collected through audio than it is to transcribe information that is collected through video. By transcribing what was recorded during an audio tape, it is easier to narrate the story of a participant and the narrative can be heard clearly and audibly. I opine that this limits the potential difficulties that may come with the transcription and the interpretation of audio data

5.9 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter discussed how the sources for this research were collected. Ordained women were able to ethnographically narrate the experiences they have undergone

during ordination. The stories narrated are unique as they present a detailed understanding of how women are treated and affected by ordination in the URCSA. This study has highlighted the current reality of how ordination into the URCSA is experienced within the Cape Synod, as well as how the church continues to treat women who undergo ordination in the church. During the interview process, ordained women were free to speak on the experiences that they endured when they were ordained. The interview process was more challenging than expected, but it produced valuable results. By documenting and narrating the stories of the participants and providing a platform for these women to relive their experiences, some of the women became emotional during the interviews. The next chapter will look at the pastoral counselling of the affected Coloured women clergy resulting from the treatment experienced in their workplace.

CHAPTER SIX: HEALING METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

The central theme of this chapter involves the counselling and healing journey of those ordained women affected by oppressive systems in the church. The affected parties are Coloured women clergy in the URCSA who have been and continue to be discouraged despite their ordination into the ministry. These women have been affected by the church during the ordination journey into the URCSA. As a result of historically patriarchally supportive cultures and systems in the Reformed Traditional Churches in South Africa and in the greater Coloured community, systems where women have experienced being silenced and restricted in the church have been rampant under the URCSA for years. These actions have resulted in the URCSA moving from being transformative agents of racial and gender equality, to an arena existing with underlying and conflicts that remain swept under the rug.

Throughout history and into the modern world, there was and is a consistent breakdown of the unspoken structures of hierarchy found in societal norms. Communities aim and intend to be relatable to each other, both as the community and as individuals in the community. People prefer to be known by their names as opposed to their titles. The interview between Erasmus and Mrs Benny further

substantiates this belief by Croft, as Mrs Benny articulates, “So being a coloured and being woman has its disadvantages I would say because your situation doesn’t allow you to stand up to her and say no you don’t call me that then I rather leave. I couldn’t. Because if I do that then I go home to what? To my hungry children. So it means you have to put your pride in your pocket sometimes...And I hate (emphatic) the name Doris...(laughter) until today.” (Transcript 3, Interview 2: 5-7) (Erasmus, 2000:76-77).

Members of the community also intend to and are excited about opportunities to actively participate in the church and the church’s life and that of the congregation. It is generally assumed that outsiders who join the church seek more than to simply attend the Sunday morning church services. These are people who seek for a sense of community and for the opportunity to participate in and sharing with others on the life of church. This is also inclusive on the aligned direction of the church and the processes of decision-making (Croft, 2008:10).

It is imperative to minister in healing to the individuals who feel obstructed and traumatized by the ordination culture of the church, not only for the reverend experiencing these systems, but for the sake of the congregation they lead. This is vital for the well-being of these women because these systems often leave some ordained women feeling powerless in their own congregations, and this feeling of helplessness could potentially affect their ministry. These women are in need of healing and understanding, and with help of mentors and the power of the Holy Spirit, they will find the comfort and healing that they need. The congregations being led by the ministers experiencing these systems should assist with providing pastoral care to their leaders with support. Because many of these acts are done discretely, by patriarchal members of the church, many may say that they were not aware of the experiences of their ministers.

6.2 Pollard’s theory of Positive Deconstruction

A lot of the understanding that I have on the Positive Deconstruction model is located in chapter three of the study in methodology. The most important part of the healing methodology is to understand it and apply it to those affected by oppression within the church. The first step is uncovering what should be ‘deconstructed’ or

'taken apart' and applied to the healing and comforting journey of the oppressed Coloured women clergy.

Pollard (1997) states that here are two mistakes that have been primarily made when it comes to the process of positive deconstruction. The first mistake that evangelists make is assuming that positive deconstruction is not a necessity. In instances where this belief exists, it becomes easy to assume that the best course of action is to pray for others or simply to continue loving them. The second mistake evangelists made is to assume that the only working course of action is to use positive deconstruction. During the religious world of the 1970s many evangelists believed that the best method of evangelism would be "ungagging God." They believed that if they could force the gospel on to non-believers, that people would see the error of their ways and find themselves running to churches to convert to Christianity (Pollard, 1997:45-46). This manner of thinking leads me to consider how during my own childhood, many older Christians used the Bible and God to scare children into believing in God and remaining obedient, with phrases such as "If not, you will go to hell." I am reminded of the words of Reverend Benjamin Cremer, a campus minister from the Cathedral of the Rockies. Rev Cremer quotes, "Imagine of our Christian view of the End Times was: Centered on preparing for Christ rather than an antichrist. Centered on the mark of the lamb rather than the mark of the beast. Centered on preparing for redeeming the earth rather than escaping it. Centered on hope rather than fear." It is my contention that this may have been a more effective method of evangelism during this period. This, however, was not the case. During the 1980s a different attempt at evangelism was made by using the "celebration evangelism" technique. By seeing born again Christian people dancing, singing, and waving hands around, it was assumed that people would be interested and convert to Christianity. Again, this was not the case (Pollard, 1997:45-46).

The Biblical teachings of Jesus stand parallel to the idea brought forth by Pollard about taking an older mindset and replacing it with a newer and better one. While much of the Bible stands in opposition to the ordination of female pastors, it is important to mention that the apostle Paul does not directly prohibit women from becoming pastors. If one were to observe the text of Acts 2:17-18, it reads as follows:

“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your young men will see visions,
Your old men will see dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
And they will prophesy.” (Bible, 2011:1802).

It becomes apparent that in Joel, God intends to pour out his Spirit on men and women across the world and encourage them to prophesy. Not every event that was mentioned in Joel 2:28, 29 took place on the morning in the text. When the text mentions the “last days,” it is inclusive of all days, even the ones that take place between the first and the second comings of Christ. It is also seen as another method of referring to “from now on.” Similarly, in Numbers 11:29 when Moses speaks, he desires for Yahweh to pour out his Spirit onto everyone. During the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent out to the entire world and all were able to receive it, including the men and women of the world, those who were held in slavery, the Jews and even the Gentiles. Everyone was now able to receive the goodness of the Spirit should they choose to do so. This manner of thinking was considered revolutionary for the first-century Jewish world (Bible, 2011:1802).

Joel 2:28-32 (LXX) contains an extended quotation which speaks on multiple points on the proclamation of the apostolic. Firstly, ecstatic speech is considered a phenomenon and identified alongside prophecy as a biblical gift and works directly with the Spirit of God just as other biblical gifts do. Secondly, this phenomenon speaks about ‘the last days,’ however, should be considered as taking place before the last ‘day of the Lord.’ In verse 17 Luke exclaims that the original text mentions a greater eschatological dimension. Thirdly, the promise mentioned in verse 17-18 includes gender, social class and age. The Lord pours His Spirit out on ‘all flesh,’ and anyone can receive salvation if they are among ‘whoever calls on the name of

the Lord' (Barton and Muddiman, 2013:1028). With the above in mind, let us now analyse how healing comes into caring for the affected women clergy in the URCSA.

6.3 Pastoral care

It is imperative that during the healing process, the counselee and the counsellor remain in a space where stories can safely and comfortably be shared. Many people experience level of confusion and pain in their lives that are so intense that they should be handled with the utmost consideration and respect. The pastoral counsellor has a responsibility to act as a guide and an interpreter for the counselee (Gerkin 1984:39; Human, 2009:162).

Irrespective of their qualification, a counsellor does not know more about the life of an individual than the person who has experienced it. Ultimately, being a good and dependable counsellor is not for the good of the counsellor, but remains about what is beneficial for the counselee (Human, 2009:162).

The researcher is of the understanding that the bulk of this research has to do with caring for the research participants. During the interviews, the majority of the research participants indicated that the church did not prioritize the need for mentorship and pastoral care for female ministers. The affected ministers have impressed upon the researcher that much of the pastoral care between ministers is done through a personal network of mutual support and friendship, and not offered by the church during ordination. The ministers often found great support and encouragement from church members, however, did not find the same support from their superiors. In addition, many of the ministers were expected to fill roles based on their gender and not their qualifications, which have impacted their ability to lead in their congregations. This gap in the ministry of Coloured women leaves the ministers with a need for a support system.

By helping people through their trials and showing care during trying times, the counsellor lives their inwardly desires to assist counselees with living their daily lives the best way they can. It is therefore, important to ensure that the counsellor is skilled and well-trained in order to help with making the best decisions for the counselee. The counsellor should know what they are skilled in and spend sufficient

time expanding and developing these skills. In addition, one should consider whether there is enough time spent on the ethics involved in counselling (Human, 2009:162). Participant F noted the following during the interview process, “In my congregation the minister didn’t treat me so well and won’t give me extra exposure or sermons on certain important days.” It is vital that during the process of pastoral care, the counsellor takes note of the counselee’s current skills and abilities in the ministry and continues to encourage the minister in their skills.

The counsellor should remain aware of the power imbalance between themselves and the counselee, and to remain considerate of the well-being of the counselee. The pastoral counsellor should acknowledge that their identity in this regard is to be upheld with dignity. There should be mutual humanity between both parties, and the identity of the counsellor should remain rooted within humility. The counsellor should be equally willing to share as opposed to being in a position of superiority (Campbell, 1986; Human, 2009:163). A healthy relationship between the counsellor and counselee is not something that can only be hoped for, however, as Lynch (2002) gives the following explanation: “Where such power imbalances exist in human relationships, it is useful to think in terms of limits or boundaries that are placed on the actions of the more powerful partner to protect the vulnerability of the weaker one” (Lynch, 2002:61; Human, 2009:163).

During the interview process, Participant D made the following statement regarding her journey through ordination: “I obviously don’t know what it is like or what to look out for and what it is when people call you and to journey with the church council, because this is my first congregation. But what I’ve experienced and what I have heard in the past, I’ve heard horror stories of female ministers complaining of how they are being treated by their church council and their congregation members.” This statement caused the researcher to note that by admission of Participant D, women clergy in the URCSA Cape Synod are willing to experience pastoral care with other female ministers and mentors. This further illustrates the need for pastoral care among women clergy who are affected by ordination in the church.

6.3.1 A pastoral care model of healing

Masango in Phiri (2013) contends that the practice of Practical Theology has been among humans for all of existence. Practical theology is needed mainly among people who have been violated, abused or broken by deleterious systems and harmful people (Phiri, 2013:744).

Clinebell explains how to apply pastoral care for the benefit of society: “Pastoral care and counseling involves the utilization by persons in ministry of one to one or small group relationships to enable healing empowerment and growth to take place within individuals and their relationships...Pastoral care is the broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing and growth within a congregation and its community, through life cycle” (Phiri, 20013:745). The interviews conducted with the research participants highlighted that patriarchy is still present in the URCSA. To facilitate deeper healing and relationships within the URCSA denomination, it is beneficial to apply mentorship with women from the community as a healing method for the affected women.

As it pertains to the Reformed tradition, pastoral care has primarily been performed by the church pastor, who takes on the teaching role within the church by default. Pastoral care can either take place within the pulpit or the homes of congregants. This statement calls for the recollection of Edwin Muir’s summary of Calvinism within the Scottish tradition entitled, ‘The Word made flesh here is made word again.’ Richard Baxter, in his academic work entitled ‘Gildas Silvianus’ or ‘The Reformed Pastor’ provides a sufficient example of a tradition such as this. In this work, Baxter identifies seven functions of the pastoral: converting those who are still unconverted into being believers; providing advice for those who have enquiries after they have already others; overseeing of the families that serve in the church congregation; visitations and prayers for the sick; condemnation of those who have no shame or remorse; and the exercise and maintenance of discipline. The doctrine can be used as a template for guidelines on how to minister to the healing of the affected URCSA women. Mentorship in terms of helping the affected women clergy and providing them with additional resources to minister to their congregations provides a sense of empowerment to the affected women.

The list provided highlighted the importance of using the correct doctrine and ensuring that the appointed minister is a good teacher and overseer for the congregation. The entirety of Baxter's approach to the field of pastoral care can be summed up by Eduard Thurneysen, a Barthian theologian from the 20th Century. Thurneysen quotes, 'Communication to the individual of the message proclaimed in general to the congregation in the sermon' (Campbell, 1986:3).

Society has been shifting further away from traditional concepts many have held about the purpose and roles of ordained ministers. Earlier expectations of ministers were that they were primarily responsible to lead the worship services in the church, do the work required to provide pastoral care for the church, and educating young people and children in the church on faith. Modern day expectations of ministers are leaning more towards using their acquired skills to contribute in building communities where faith acts as the foundation for how the church operates. This will further encourage the church to show the mission of God in the world (Croft, 2008:12).

Being the lead pastor of a church, congregation comes with the power and authority given by that office. The role of any leader is to present advice, to direct operations and to protect their flock. Many female ministers end up frustrated and confused by their circumstances despite attempting to serve their congregations. This is because they are required to subject themselves to having their authority questioned by the same congregation they have to lead, because this is the only way for them to be accommodated or accepted (Sekano, 2011:4). By providing the affected women clergy with mentorship by women clergy who were in previous leadership roles, the current women clergy will develop a deeper understanding of their congregation and will feel more empowered to lead their congregations to the best of their own abilities. This will contribute to the healing of the affected women clergy.

6.4 A biblical hermeneutic for the healing of clergywomen

An additional factor that positively contributes to healing is the ability to correctly interpret Scripture. In an article written by Sarojini Nadar (2005), she acknowledges that churches in Africa are not able to separate themselves from the Scripture. However, African churches were able to recognize how Scripture has historically been used to oppress individuals when interpreted incorrectly. Therefore, to

introduce the church as a place where all are equal and justice is encouraged, it is important for the Scripture to be interpreted in a more liberating manner.

One example of such liberation is an opinion from Madipoane Masenya (2005), who contends that Christian people should refrain from using the Bible as a weapon to justify the enslavement of others. Instead, we should use the Gospel as a resource intended for the spiritual liberation of those in need of salvation. Akintunde agrees with this, opining that the bible is filled with references intended for the empowerment of women. Her hope for this is that the same conclusion is reached. Conversations pertaining to patriarchal structures indicate that African culture often consists of multiple forms of patriarchy and the obstruction of equality (Phiri and Nadar, 2005:22). I opine that in the same way that Masenya and Akintunde were able to liberate themselves from patriarchal structures, it is possible that the women in the URCSA Western Cape Synod will feel empowered with the correct pastoral care and mentorship from women who have overcome the challenges of ordination.

6.4.1 Bible verses on the ministry of women

Luke 8:1-3 speaks about an event where women accompanied Jesus along with the disciples. Once this was done, Jesus went to different towns and villages and spoke about the gospel of God's kingdom to those who were willing to listen. He travelled along with his disciples and they were accompanied by some of the women who he had previously pastorally cared for by expelling them from demons and illnesses. Among these women was Mary (known as Magdalene), who had had seven demons expelled from her body by Jesus. Joanna, the wife of Chuza was also present, as the manager of the household of Herod. Another pivotal woman named Susanna was present, along with many other influential women in the Bible. These women agreed to follow Jesus and continued to support him and the twelve disciples by their own means and methods. Jesus was the reason women were lifted from being degraded by society and were no longer forced to serve, but instead could receive joy and enjoy the service and the fellowship of others. Jewish customs at the time forbade women from learning from their rabbis. When Jesus permitted women to travel along the journey through the towns with him, it became symbolic of how God sees everyone as equal. The women who followed Jesus used to their own money to

travel and support Jesus. They acknowledged how much they owed him, because of his works in driving demons from them and healing them from their illnesses.

Luke 8:1-3 serves as a Biblical example of the commitment that women have maintained throughout history to the ministry of Jesus. The same way that the women in Luke were committed to Jesus and his work, the current URCSA female ministers remain committed to the ministry of Jesus. This is evident in the fact that all 6 participants had expressed feeling called to the ministry.

These biblical verses allow us to dive into the people who were key contributors of Jesus' ministry. Those who were often in the background of Jesus' ministry were less visible in the bible, however, they were often supportive of the ministry works of those found in the spotlight. This becomes an example of how if one offers their resources to God's ministry, it does not matter whether or not they are in the spotlight.

After the ministry recovered from stagnation, Jesus continued with his main purpose in preaching the gospel of God to all people. During this time, the twelve disciples travelled with Jesus, along with other women whom Jesus had cured of infirmities and demonic spirits. These women were physically injured and psychologically affected.

The researcher opines that while the women in the Bible were physically and psychologically injured during their travels with Jesus, in the same way, the current URCSA Cape Synod ministers are psychologically affected by the patriarchal structures in their own ministry with Jesus. It is important that while these women continue to preach the gospel, they should not do so while broken and affected by patriarchal structures. Instead, Pollard's theory of Positive Deconstruction should be applied to the current structures so that healing can begin.

Mark 15:41 speaks to the adventures of a group of loyal women in the Bible who travelled from Galilee to Jerusalem with the twelve disciples. In this passage, Luke explicitly highlights that this group of women were part of the journey to associate them with the disciples as they accompanied Jesus. Mary Magdalene was the first woman mentioned, most likely because she was the first woman to notice that the tomb was empty in all the gospels. During his ministry, Jesus casted out seven demons from Mary Magdalene, and therefore, he became a witness to the severity

of her sickness. Jesus did not see her sickness as a witness to her morality or her character. Mary Magdalene was considered a righteous woman in the eyes of Jesus.

Another follower of Jesus was Joana, the trusted wife of Chuza who was a steward of Herod during this time. Joana was a woman of noble social standing and was also part of the group of women who ascended to the tomb. Susanna was also mentioned among the women, and was known to provide resources for Jesus and the twelve disciples during their journey. Many of the female followers of Jesus were known to be wealthy and used that wealth to support Jesus throughout the book of Acts.

Acts 16:15 introduces us to Lydia, a woman who hosted the Apostle Paul and his entourage while they journeyed through Philippi. It may even be possible that Luke may have temporarily resided there, and may have been one of the last to leave once the rest of Paul's entourage had left, as written in Acts 20:6. It is possible that Luke was paying attention to women's contributing roles in the ministry of Jesus based off his own experiences that can be found later in the gospels (Barton and Muddiman, 2001:937). To articulate that God advocates for social equality within the church. This is evident as the Bible contains multiple examples of how women have impacted and contributed to the ministry of Jesus.

6.4.2 Scriptural basis for pastoral care:

In the same way that Jesus had instructed his apostles about pastorally caring for people, the church should pastorally care for the affected URCSA women clergy. The Biblical principles for pastoral care found in Ephesians 4, Luke 19, and Mark 2 serve as examples of this pastoral care.

Ephesians 4:11-13 brings to light the idea that Jesus instructed the apostles to pastorally care for others, and later this instruction was given to all believers.

Therefore, by accepting this task, the pastoral counsellor accepts the call of Jesus to help others, accept others and to visit their fellow man, as instructed in Luke 19:10.

The pastoral counsellor also agrees to approach the people of God as a whole, as instructed in Mark 2:1-12.

The instruction written in Ephesians 4:11-13 reads as follows: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all

reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attending to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Bible, 2011:1982).

God instructs his followers in Matthew 28:18-20 to bear the responsibility of going out to the world and making disciples of all nations. This responsibility includes preaching to others, teaching them, healing the sick, nurturing those in need, providing administrative assistance, and building with others along with many other small tasks. If we were tasked with obeying this command as an individual, it would not be possible. Many believers would give up this task without trying. However, God calls his believers to act as members of the body of Christ. Some believers are able to perform one task, while others are able to perform another. By working together, it is possible to obey God’s command better than if one person were to do it alone. It is human nature to often overestimate what one is able to achieve on their own. At the same time, human nature will allow oneself to often underestimate what a group is able to achieve. However, the body of Christ is able to achieve so much more together than what the individual human mind is able to comprehend possible by working alone. If the church continues to work alone, the fullness and the glory of Christ is able to work is able to come to fruition. (Bible, 2011:1982). The Bible should be used to heal the affected women clergy and not to tear them down.

When Luke 19:10 speaks of how the Son of Man needed to seek those who were lost, it speaks to the need for pastoral care among URCSA women clergy as they appear to have no pastoral care in this regard. In the Bible, Jesus told the story of how the son of Abraham, Zacchaeus, was lost, it caused shock to his audience. It was difficult for the audience to comprehend that an unpopular tax collector such as Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham. They were in denial about the possibility that a son of Abraham would find himself lost. In the same way, many ministers in the church find themselves conflicted at the possibility that a minister and pastoral counsellor themselves may not be receiving pastoral counselling. However, it does not matter what heritage a person comes from, as having faith in God is more valuable than one’s ancestry. In the same way, getting pastoral care is more important than being known as a minister of God.

Jesus always brings those who are lost back home, and reminds them that they belong to the kingdom. He is not concerned with their background or their prior

lifestyle. Once a person has received faith, they are made new. When sharing the Gospel with others, it is important to do so in love and with a courteous approach. It will allow us to maintain the effectiveness of the message. We are also granted the chance to make the most of our fleeting opportunities to share the Good News on Christ.

It is important to pay attention to what the Bible says as well as additional literary sources. One reason for this is because the Bible is currently being used as a tool to undermine and discourage women's leadership in the church. The Bible is presented as being against women's leadership, while that is not the case. This is why the process of Positive Deconstruction is important for the purpose of this study.

The name of the process is labelled "deconstruction" because it gives the participating individual the opportunity to deconstruct, or to tear apart, their personal belief with the intention to analyze it from a unique perspective. This is done with the hope that the participant may discover an alternative perspective or worldview. Positive deconstruction intends to acknowledge and affirm the truthful attributes that these individuals possess. In addition, positive deconstruction will continue in assisting them in uncovering the inconsistencies in the worldviews they already have (Pollard, 1997:44).

By deconstructing the patriarchal structures that exist within the URCSA Cape Synod, the church becomes aware of the concerns of its ministers. The affected women clergy can name and identify systems and structures that cause them harm and change them to become more welcoming and inclusive for all. It is important to deconstruct systems which negatively affect women's leadership in the church. This will allow more female leadership to safely enter ordination in the URCSA.

6.5 The healing journey of URCSA clergy women

Once the caretaker begins to act consistently and deeply participates in caring, their own character will cause them to care for others and begin helping them. As a result of having personally experienced the sense of real failure and feeling lost-in the same manner that it is felt by other-the way that care is offered is done steadfastly and with wholeness, as this would be grounded in the reality of humanity. The

individual offering care and those being cared for cannot strictly be observed as existing on opposing ends of a divide that should be brought together by the knowledge possessed by the caring person. Pastoral care as a practical act is grounded in human mutuality; and not in knowledge and expertise. Pastoral care can take place because we exist within a common and mutual humanity that contains fallibility and intrigue (Campbell, 1986:15).

The feminist movement has made massive investments in the concept of equality, and as a result, much of the movement was heavily criticized. In addition, much investment was made in promoting antifeminism and gender essentialism to members of the church and being critical of feminism as “a well-articulated socio-political agenda.” This leads to questioning why Parsons still makes the addition to identify with an entirely pro-feminist position. Three reasons are presented for this. Firstly, the movement can tolerate and make room for nuanced positions like these and is not identified as monolithic. Secondly, under a patriarchal society, men undergo “spiritual malaise.” Dealing with spiritual malaise is considered a form of suffering, however, is also seem as a mandatory part of a political fight against dominating patriarchal systems. It is also considered the mythopoetic movement of men and is able to accurately handle the malaise. Thirdly, the movement arranged by men can learn much from women’s and feminist movements (Moore, 2003:15). I opine that the most appropriate method of healing to apply in this regard is to focus on the positives of promoting a gender-neutral and pro-feminist leadership role in the church. This will break down patriarchal barriers in the church, so that the affected women clergy can begin seeking appropriate counselling.

Human (2009) in her master’s thesis cites a response from a research participant on his interview on receiving therapy in ministry. The responded mentions that they fear that ministers may cause more harm than good in therapy sessions. It is therefore important to understand the boundaries of the counselee in order to know when they should be referred to receive additional help (Human, 2009:168).

6.6 Counselling tools and methods for affected women clergy

This study will employ the counselling tools developed by Sefatsa (2021) in his doctoral dissertation. Sefatsa uses the term ‘counselling tools’ instead of ‘strategy.’ A

strategy can be used to plan counselling sessions, while the counselling tools can be used as assistance to wield positive and healing results. During the planning for counselling sessions, the key factors need to be accurately identified to assist in healing the tension between the ordained Coloured women and the church. In a congregation where tension affects the church structures because of the female leadership, it is vital that counselling is offered to assist the church. However, when tension exists among the leadership of the church, members of the council should be offered with lessons about fairness and equality. In this instance, it may ensure that these tensions do not find their way to the congregants and become a regular occurrence (Sefatsa, 2021:181).

This study used Zoom interviews as a method to uncover the lived experiences of Coloured women in their ordination. The women who were interviewed were made aware of the intention of the research and agreed to speak freely on their journey through ordination. As the women clergy opened up about their experiences, they were able to express their concerns, many of which had been kept secret for many years. The interviews revealed a feeling of relief in the women as they had never been given an opportunity to speak on this journey. This opportunity has helped many of the research participants feel heard and understood. This was not an easy process, and participants had occasionally been reluctant to answer questions. However, the healing process had started.

During the interview, Participant B began to share some of her pain by stating, “I won’t say church doctrine, I would rather say that patriarchy and traditions had a negative effect, in the past, in my ministry. Some people still believe, and here I include church councils, and many a times, Konsulente, that women should not be called as ministers as only men can do that. Women are still seen to raise their kids and not be leaders.” This resonated with the researcher that in order to begin the healing process, one must first acknowledge the problems that require healing. The first step to positive deconstruction is knowing that which requires deconstruction.

While Campbell (1986) refers to seeking out those who are lost and keeping them protected from harmful behaviours are the characteristics of the shepherd, Sekano (2011) refers to them as tools. These tools will be strategically placed and further elaborated on. This is an attempt to develop a pastoral model to dismantle the

marginalizing systems of female ordination in the church. Campbell has listed the following tools, which will be used in this thesis to assist the affected Coloured women clergy:

- **Seeking out the lost:** Already ordained Coloured women clergy should be supportive of incoming female clergy who are in the process of ordination and claim to experience obstruction in their journey as a result of patriarchy in the church. This support should be done in an attempt to create gender equality and justice in the church.
- **Rapport:** Already ordained women clergy should begin by creating a rapport between the incoming clergy and themselves to act as mediators and a support system. Male clergy members cannot counsel female clergy at this point in their journey into leadership because they may be perceived as threatening or intimidating. However, women who have undergone similar experiences can effectively understand and counsel incoming clergy women. Once a relationship of trust and honesty has been established, the clergy women will feel free to open up in the therapy sessions. This will act as the beginning stages of uncovering what problems exist in the church, how these problems came about, and how healing can take place.
- **Conscientization:** This includes making the participants aware of their current situation. The counselee will be informed of their rights in the church as a member of the denomination and a leader in their congregation. This may contribute to an open dialogue between the affected women clergy and the already ordained women.
- **Translation and interpretation of Scripture:** It will contribute to gender sensitivity in the church by using Bible versions that are gender considerate, such as the New Living Translation. Additionally, the church should consider a translation that shows a deep hermeneutical study, an understanding of the meaning behind the texts and those who will read it, what has motivated the writing and what the texts mean in a modern context. Forming a doctrine should be based on more than one text so that all consulted texts focus on the important issues.
- **Restoration of Imago Dei:** It is important for incoming women clergy in the URCSA to find restoration of the image of God to help them find confidence in

their abilities and to succeed in their ordination and upcoming prospects for leadership.

Romans 8:29 provides a biblical basis for that need by stating:

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

1 John 3:2 is a reminder that God’s plan for humanity is to ensure a Christ-like human race. As people become more Christ-like, they are prone to discover who they truly are and who they were originally created to be. It is important to learn how people can conform to the likeness of Christ. This can be learned by reading and adhering to the Word of God, by studying the Gospels and the life that Jesus had on earth, by remaining filled with the Spirit, and doing Christ’s work here on earth.

Restoration Gen 1:26-27

“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Our self-worth as Christians can find a strong foundation in knowing and accepting that we are made in the image of God and share many of the characteristics of God. Our worth is not based on worldly possessions or achievements, our physical appearance or how loved we are publicly.

We should, instead, be reminded that our worth is found in being made in the image of God. We are able to look at ourselves in a positive light because we are made in His image. By looking down on ourselves or criticizing how we are made, we indirectly speak negatively about God’s creations and all the abilities we were made with. When you understand that you are worthy, you are able to love God entirely. You will learn to know who God is personally and to positively contribute to the people around you. Both men and women were made in the image of God. Neither gender is made more or less in the image of God, as both genders were created equally. Men and women have been placed at the highest peak of the creation of God since the beginning of time. Neither gender is considered more or less valuable than the other.

- **Church administration:** The counselee should be aware of how the church structures their leadership, including their rights and how they can go about expressing their grievances. The counselee should also know when to express these grievances and how they can further escalate their concerns to the appropriate parties should they feel it has not been properly addressed.
- **Leadership Empowerment:** Counselees should be properly educated on how they can successfully lead the church and how to remain focused and react appropriately to the challenges and the potential obstacles their journey may hold.

1 Samuel 30:6

“David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.”

Once they became aware that they could lose their families, David’s soldiers became fearful. They started turning against him and would occasionally consider killing him. They chose to find someone to place the blame on instead of orchestrating a rescue plan. However, once David looked to God to find his strength, he began searching for the solution to the problems instead of an excuse. Counselees in this regard should be encouraged to look for solutions to the problems they may face during ordination.

- **Affirmation of female leadership:** The counselee should be reminded of their achievements and their hard work. It is not by accident or favour that they are in the ordination process, but by the work of God and their dedication to serving in ministry.
- **Support and protection:** The already ordained women clergy in the church who have encountered constraints in their ordination should be encouraging and motivating to incoming women clergy. This will encourage the church to be supportive of one another.

Romans 12:13

“Share with the Lord’s people who are I need. Practice hospitality.”

There is a wide difference between social entertaining and Christian hospitality. With regard to social entertaining, the focus is on the host and the home being in a spotless condition. The food for guests must be abundant

and prepared to near-perfection, and the host should remain in a relaxed mood with good-natured intentions. In contrast, Christian hospitality focuses on the well-being of the guests. The needs of the guests become the primary concern of the host, whether it be the need for accommodation, healthy food, someone to talk to, or to be accepted.

Hospitality can take place around any dinner table where food is provided in the form of canned soup. The host and the guest can even participate in doing chores together and Christian hospitality will still be present. Christian hospitality should be offered in any instance, as no one can be too tired, busy or lack enough wealth to be hospitable and entertain others.

This research contends that if Coloured women clergy who have already been ordained can support and encourage women entering ordination to continue in their ordination, future incoming ministers will find the motivation to serve their congregations effectively and according to the word of God.

6.7 The need for mentorship of incoming women clergy

The female ministers who were interviewed for this research study have indicated that their congregations did not have a formal pastoral care and counselling method for incoming female ministers and have mentioned that there is a need for care in this aspect of ministry. This gap within the church calls for the need for mentorship for incoming female ministers who can be counselled and led through their ordination and spiritually and emotionally prepare them for ministry. This can be done through formal counselling classes or through lay ministry counselling and mentorship.

Relationships between mentors and mentees can either be conducted formally or informally. Formal mentoring relationships in the workplace have commonly been arranged when an organisation sees the need for development within the careers of employees and will match mentors and mentees for this purpose. Informal mentoring relationships are commonly spontaneously conducted and typically take place because of psychosocial circumstances. These relationships help the mentee with increasing their self-esteem and their overall confidence, as well as assisting them with enjoying their common interests and helping with further emotional support (Premkumar, 2007).

Regarding mentoring, there are three primary assumptions that contribute to the nature of how mentoring takes place:

1. Mentoring can be an impactful experience and can contribute to the growth of both the mentee and the mentor in the relationship.
2. The process of mentoring involves participating in engagement, which has the highest success rate when done in collaboration between the mentee and the mentor.
3. The process of mentoring becomes reflective and needs the mentee and mentor to be dedicated and prepared (Wong and Premkumar, 2007).

During her time with the URCSA, Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel often took a particular interest in the well-being of female theology students. She would often assist these female students in dealing with the challenges they faced at Stellenbosch University. Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel would provide the women with advice on how to handle their concerns, as she was a renowned lecturer and female minister and would give guidance based on this criterion. She believed that the challenges women dealt with in ministry were still a battle to face in the modern era. When female theology students were concerned about their calling into ministry, the Curatorium of the Western Cape Synod would regularly refer these students to Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel for consultations and advice. She was able to provide these students by continuing to share her experiences within the church as a female pastor actively ministering to others (Flaendorp, 2014:61). The question now comes in with understanding how to heal the women who are affected by these situations. It would be beneficial for the affected women clergy to receive effective mentorship and guidance from their respective pioneers while they are in the process of undergoing ordination.

Human (2009) emphasises the importance of counsellors being aware of their own limitations and their boundaries during pastoral care. This belief is supported by Hiltner (1949:232) where he further explains that when a counsellor is under supervision, they are better able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses regarding providing care for others. During Human's research, one participant mentioned a consideration to take note of. The participant mentioned the need for a supervisor or a mentor who is able to offer solid, constructive and honest advice to

their counselee. In the same way, the counsellor who is still under supervision should be open and willing to learn in the process (Human, 2009:175).

6.8 The inclusion of the URCSA church

Sulumba-Kapuma (2018) reminds us of the value of the church in the healing journey of women, by stating, “The church is a powerful instrument that can heal people, because it represents Christ amongst her people. Whenever the church avails herself closer to the needs of the people, they see God working on the side” (Sulumba-Kapuma, 2018:248). When the church is absent in times where its members and its leaders need help, they may begin to feel as though they do not belong. By actively participating in the healing journeys of women clergy, the affected women will be reminded that they are not alone and can find support from their congregations and their communities.

The sexism that women would experience in leadership positions is often done by people who feel threatened by influential women. The people who typically inflict this sexism on others believe that their male privilege gives them permission to cause pain and project their ambitions on to women in leadership. This level of sexism was curbed by the URCSA denomination. At the time of writing this article, the only women who were in office were Professor Christina Landman and Professor Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel who had been elected into the office of national leadership in the URCSA. A seminar entitled “URCSA 25 years” was held between 12-13 April 2019 by the University of Free State in an attempted to celebrate 25 years of the URCSA. During this seminar, Professor Plaatjies-van Huffel and Professor Landman articulated on their journeys with the church to illustrate how gender discrimination played a role in the liberatory ethos of the URCSA. The racial, class and gender discrimination that was known to take place in the URCSA has been overshadowed by the current ethos of Belhar. This ethos is inclusive of justice, equality and unity (Landman, 2019:13).

Landman says the following regarding the doctrine of the URCSA: “Much has been written about the way in which the Confession of Belhar deals with justice, albeit lacking focus on justice towards women. The Confession of Belhar favours an image of God that honours God as the God of justice” (Landman, 2006:285). During the

interview, Participant F noted that they could not discuss the effects of the church doctrine on their ordination or their current ministry in the church, however, expressed that they were taken aback by the question. The interviewer identified reluctance and sadness in the voice of the participant when they answered this question. I opine that although the interviewer did not outright express sadness, it was clear that the question triggered a negative memory that the participant had not yet uncovered until the interview took place. While 4 research participants spoke positively on the URCSA Cape Synod, it is evident by this question that aspects of the effects of the church doctrine on the ordination of women leaves something to be investigated.

6.9 Transparency in the healing journey

The Coloured women clergy interviewed in this research have expressed being negatively affected by the church, stating that they feel marginalized, oppressed and unappreciated during the ordination into the denomination. The women do not feel safe in the church, and there is a lot of healing required before they are able to trust the pastors in their congregations with these concerns. In addition, the historically patriarchal systems of the URCSA denomination have contributed to the silence surrounding these issues. Once these patriarchal systems are known to still be in place, it is difficult for the church to ignore the problem. The church must acknowledge that women clergy have been marginalized and side-lined as a result of these systems. By considering this, the church may be reluctant to assist the women with the harmful systems and advocate for equality in the church. The church may enter the counselling session with the affected women clergy in the event that the women fear further marginalization and oppression in their congregations.

When the therapy sessions take place, the person seeking counselling should be willing to speak the full truth. By telling the truth, it will assist the counsellor in identify the root cause of the problem. This will result in the counsellor assisting to develop an appropriate healing methodology for the church and the affected women. If the affected women were not entirely transparent and honest during the therapy sessions, the chances of receiving proper assistance become less. Healing in therapy is possible when the counselee and the counsellor are entirely trusting of

and comfortable with each other. It is easier for an individual to open up once trust has been established. Without trust, this is more difficult. In some instances, the counselee may feel unsafe or uncertain during therapy sessions and hide important information that could assist them in their healing journey. The counsellor should ensure that the environment is safe and trusting, so that the counselee is comfortable being entirely truthful.

Professional ethics relies heavily on the trust established in the relationship between counsellor and counselee. The professional should earn the trust of the client during therapy sessions in order to accurately act on behalf of the client. Bayles (1989) describes a “fiduciary” model regarding this. There are seven characteristics that Bayles (1989) acknowledges seven characteristics that a professional should possess to be a trustworthy counsellor: The counsellor should be honest and diligent in their work. They should also possess a level of candour and be competent, as well as loyal to the counselee. Finally, they should have discretion and maintain fairness (Bayles, 1989:79; Human, 2009:173). The church should actively participate in applying the biblical principles of pastoral care to a ministry for ministers. It is vital that Coloured women clergy can establish and receive appropriate pastoral care from their own congregations. The researcher believes that if the congregations of the ministers were willing to offer counselling to their female ministers, the healing process can begin.

The sensitivity of the subject discussed calls for the pastoral counsellor to remain equally as sensitive, non-judgemental and understanding of those in need of counselling. In this case, the affected Coloured women clergy will not begin their counselling session with a pre-conceived feeling of condemnation or judgment from their counsellor. These pre-conceived feelings may leave the affected women clergy feeling unsafe and judged, making it difficult for them to be vulnerable and transparent about their experiences during their ordination journey. It is vital that the counsellor remains open and understanding to the affected women clergy so that they can be transparent, allowing for the therapy and healing process to begin.

In Human’s (2009) masters’ thesis, all research participants responded that pastoral counselling has often felt like a “sink or swim” circumstance. The counsellor should understand the boundaries that their own knowledge will have, and that they will

learn how to be better teachers by experience and time. However, one research participant articulated that the minister should not be so conscience that they do nothing (Human, 2009:169).

6.10 Preliminary conclusion

In the start of this chapter, the research study intended to analyse the concerns that Coloured women clergy have undergone during their ordination in the URCSA and suggest an appropriate healing methodology for the affected women, who have recalled feeling marginalized and side-lined in the church. During this research, it became evident that a healing methodology was indeed needed for the women clergy, as well as the church denomination entirely. This is because the research should remain focused on the healing of the Coloured women as they journey through ordination. If the research focused on those implementing the marginalizing systems, it may have failed to focus on the women who need more healing. This may create a system where more women go through similar experiences and will not receive the help that they need.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Chapter seven concludes the thesis by discussing the findings obtained throughout the research procedure, recommendations for other scholars, and a conclusion on the study. Many of the literary findings in this thesis link directly to the struggle for power within ordination in the URCSA, as Coloured women are often required to remain submissive, as shared by Plaatjies-van Huffel (2014) yet use their strength in instances that strictly benefit others. The findings in this thesis will be based off answers given in the interviews conducted.

Much of the South African understanding of Christianity remains influenced by the Western world, however, its members remain of African descent. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa continues to uphold many Western traditions (Phiri

and Werner, 2016:108). This may contribute to the understandings of the ordination process that participants in the study have.

Matshobane contends that the struggle for power in the church is one that remains a continuous phenomenon, one that could potentially influence a multitude of institutions, particularly institutions that require a strong sense of leadership. Similar struggles may also be found within the government sector, in business or even in religious institutions. In addition, a comparative study made with additional literature found in the libraries of the University of Pretoria, the University of South Africa, and Stellenbosch University. Much of the literature and doctrine of the South African understanding of Christianity remains influenced by the Western world, however, members of the church remain of African descent. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa continues to uphold many of the Western traditions found in churches across South Africa (Phiri, 2016:108). This perspective was not commented on or addressed by any of the research participants during the interview process.

It is possible that if teachings on liberation and positivity are made of importance to the denomination of the URCSA, women clergy will receive the treatment of true humanity and be liberated during their ordination. Teachers and pastors who speak on the Gospel in churches should learn to distinguish between history and the Scripture. There should also be a distinction between the words that men say in the Bible, and the songs, poems and prophecies written in the Word. The Gospel belongs to all who are willing to receive Christ, and everyone should be able to receive liberation. All God's children should prophesy and share the Gospel with the world. This will allow men and women to live peacefully among each other and share the Gospel with others. The liberation of women in the church will encourage more women to seek ordination.

7.2 An overview of the study

The purpose of this research was to investigate the lived experience of Coloured women clergy in their ordination journey into the URCSA. My assumption entering this study was that many women undergoing ordination in the URCSA are marginalized and mistreated as a result of the underlying patriarchal nature of the church. This preliminary assumption was proven accurate during the interview

process of the research, as many of the women clergy interviewed had raised experiences and feelings of being sidelined. This is addressed in the findings and recommendations of the research. Women are treated unfairly in the church based on their gender and not their abilities. Many research participants have expressed that their male counterparts receive more support and higher chances of employment during their ordination than they do.

Chapter one of this thesis provided an introduction to the study, the problem statement, the aims and objectives and an outline of the chapters in the research.

This research was concerned with the topic of the ordination experiences of Coloured women in the URCSA Cape Synod. It has acknowledged how Coloured women deal with ordination before and during their ministry. This reality was analysed and explained during this research and the women pointed out how ordination affects their previous and current ministry. The following aims and objectives were part of this research and are listed below:

- The aim of this research study was primarily to uncover the ordination experiences of Coloured women in the URCSA, and to journey with them regarding how they navigate their ministry within a male-dominated field.
- This research investigated the experiences that Coloured women who serve as ordained women clergy face in their positions within their congregations under the Cape Synod.
- This research investigated whether the historically male-dominated culture of the URCSA is still in operation in congregations with female Coloured ministers and pastorally deconstructed this concept.
- This research implemented the Positive Deconstruction model of Pollard as a healing methodology in order to empower the Coloured women clergy in the URCSA who have journeyed with ordination.

The aims and objectives of this research have been accomplished, to the best of my knowledge and understanding. Many of the research participants expressed the need for pastoral care in their ordination journey. The healing methodology of Pollard was applied to address this need.

Chapter two presented a foundation for the literature surrounding women's ordination from multiple sources. The literary sources that were reviewed in this

study provided a clear view of the ordination experiences of women in various church denominations from Western and African backgrounds, and the role of the church in this journey. The literature highlighted some of the concerns that women have during their ordination. Therefore, different sources mentioned the various opinions and ethnographic details of women undergoing ordination and the need that arises for pastoral care. Many of the sources had openly identified patriarchal systems within church denominations as a primary cause of women's marginalization during this journey. The sources which highlighted the constraints of women during ordination was supported by both African and Western sources. Scholars such as Plaatjies-van Huffel (2014), Landman (2019), Phiri (2014) and Phiri and Nadar (2005) were implemented to showcase the experiences of women in ministry. The literature review also noted that sources about Coloured women undergoing ordination were limited.

Chapter three detailed the methodology based on scholars employed during the research. Interviews were used to help the Coloured women clergy unpack the journeys of their ordination and express their truth. A qualitative research methodology contributed to the in-depth method of understanding of this research to uncover the truth about the ordination of the women clergy. In addition, the grounded-theory approach buttressed the qualitative method of the study. The research method helped women clergy speak openly about their individual journeys and the treatments they had undergone in the church. The assumption of this study was that many of the research participants would be reluctant to participate or be truthful during the interview process. This assumption was proven incorrect, because many of the women were open and forthcoming about their journeys.

Chapter four primarily emphasized the ordination journey of Coloured women in the URCSA denomination. It highlighted the varying experiences that women from the same race and church have undergone. Women have historically been affected by the ordination systems in the church; many women were restricted from completing their ordination which affected their ability to contribute to the church. Some literary sources revealed that historical doctrines and systems in the URCSA have not been practically changed and that women are still marginalized and obstructed from ordination today despite gender-inclusive alterations in the church doctrines. Gender

and race differences were discussed in this chapter to bring to light the impact of these factors on ordination in the church.

Chapter five consisted of the primary sources of the research. The affected women clergy were approached and interviewed to gain ethnographic knowledge. A total number of six research participants were interviewed. The answers collected in the interviews show unique experiences because they come from Coloured women in ministry; a group not commonly interviewed. During the interviews, the feelings, movements and expressions of the research participants were recorded and documented as part of the data collection and analysis. It was easy to notice the relationship between the words and the physical movements of the participants. The needs of the participants could easily be identified; therefore, an appropriate pastoral care model could be recommended.

Chapter six gave the recommended pastoral care model that can be used to start the healing journey for the affected women clergy. Positive Deconstruction theory of Pollard and the pastoral care approach of Human and Campbell were used to support the need and methods of pastoral care for the research participants.

During the interviews with the women clergy, many of them relived their ordination journeys and found it uncomfortable to speak on at times. While it was difficult to speak on this topic at times, the research participants understood the importance of compiling this research.

7.3 A brief summary of findings

After interviewing six Coloured female ministers who have undergone ordination in the URCSA Cape Synod in the Western Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa, the researcher identified that many participants often feel marginalized during their journey. The emotional responses of the research participants highlighted that female ministers in the church do not regularly feel heard, valued and pastorally cared for during their ordination journey by the URCSA denomination itself. The researcher was pleasantly surprised to realise that many of the female ministers would be verbal and express their concerns with the church when they face marginalization during their ordination. This, however, did not always lead to

resolutions. Some research participants expressed that they were treated as ‘salary earners’ or mere employees in their congregations, and occasionally were not treated with the same respect as their male predecessors.

By disclosing information for the purpose of this study, the research participants changed the perceptions of how Coloured women experience ministry in the URCSA. Each participant brought to light the importance of their ministry, the treatment they experienced, and how their race, gender, cultural background and qualifications contributed to their lived experiences in the URCSA. By narrating the struggles that they faced, the participants were not only allowed to experience a sense of growth and freedom, but they also showcased their internal struggles and how they could find peace in their struggles by providing assistance to other URCSA women in ministry. By speaking openly on their experiences, the research participants found their circumstances more tolerable as they found support with others. The stories that were shared showed the need for mentorship and to allow others to have more positive experiences. The participants were given a “voice” during this process.

7.4 What new information came out of my research?

The interviews and the research were able to confirm the initial assumption that women in the URCSA experience patriarchal marginalization during their ordination journey. The aim of this research study was to investigate the lived experiences of the ordination of Coloured women and how their ordination in the Cape Synod is undergone. Additionally, the study aimed to empower the incoming ministers undergoing ordination in their journey. The researcher has identified the following potential factors that could impact the implementation of a solution to the marginalizing aspects of Coloured women in ordination.

- It is the responsibility of the church to pastorally and regularly check in on its female ministers and follow up on their well-being during their ordination journey.

These follow up meetings should not end once the ministers are ordained, however, because many of the ministers often need guidance and support during their early time in ministry.

- This sort of policy should be encouraged so that the incoming serving ministers continue to feel supported and valued in their congregations.
- The church can identify previous senior female ministers in each of the congregations with female ministers who will guide incoming ministers in their journey with ministry. It will not only strengthen them but help them feel less alone. The older ministers will understand the value of their role in journeying with the incoming ministers and will be trained to support them based on prior experience.
- The spouses of prior and incoming ministers can be considered beneficial to the assistance of incoming women clergy, as they have experience in serving in the church as well as an understanding of how ministry is perceived from an outside perspective.
- Church congregations should conduct services on the value of women's leadership in ministry which may address how women are undermined and often marginalised in ministry. This may assist members of the congregation with understanding the challenges that women encounter before entering ministry.

7.5 Has my assumption been addressed by my literature or interviews?

Several writers have written about the stumbling blocks that result in women not being ordained as ministers. This assumption was brought into the URCSA denomination in order to understand whether the same concern exists in congregations in the Western Cape with Coloured women are clergy members. These assumptions suggest several stumbling blocks found from scholars of both African and Western literature. This has been tested as I conducted recorded interviews with Coloured women clergy in the URCSA from various communities in the province of the Western Cape, to investigate whether these women have the same concerns identified in the literature.

The study of Coloured women in ministry is relatively uncommon, therefore, literature surrounding this study was limited. There are multiple sources on women in ministry, however, very few of the sources address Coloured women in the church or the

ordination of women in particular. This study attempted to contribute to the greater body of knowledge of the ordination journeys of Coloured women. According to the answer provided by Participant F regarding how other URCSA female ministers have experienced ordination, many women have been restricted from speaking on their experiences in the church, making it difficult to find participants. Many of the women who were approached as participants expressed feeling nervous about participating in the study, as they are currently employed by the congregations that they claimed have impacted their ordination. As a result, these women feared losing their jobs or facing repercussions should their identities be revealed during the study. It was my assumption that the women clergy in the study had experienced similar ordination journeys as the women in the literature review of this thesis. This assumption was proven accurate as research participants have expressed feeling marginalized on their journey, mainly as a result of being female ministers. Some participants mentioned feeling validated in the church as ministers, yet have acknowledged that patriarchal structures did affect their ordination.

7.6 Challenges of the study

The challenges faced during the course of the research can be identified under three headings, which are listed as follows:

- Gathering data
- Load-shedding
- Literature review
- Providing care for URCSA Cape Synod ministers

7.6.1 Gathering data

There were multiple methods of obtaining the required data. Since this research employed a qualitative research method, however, the data was obtained by using online in-depth interviews with various participants. Because of the sensitive nature and the geographic specifications of the research topic, the researcher faced multiple challenges.

The initial aim of the research was to capture the ordination experiences of women from Coloured clergy across various provinces in South Africa. Upon further

investigation, however, it became evident that the confidentiality of participants may have been compromised. Because of the limited number of ordained Coloured women in the URCSA, it may have been easy to identify a specific minister based on her answers during the interview process. This may have compromised the trust between the researcher and participants and affected their work in ministry. To maintain the confidentiality of the research participants, the researcher opted to conduct the study with clergy women from the Western Cape, where the majority of URCSA Coloured women were ordained.

The research participants were located in the Western Cape Province in South Africa while the researcher was located in the Gauteng province, making it difficult to conduct in-person interviews. The researcher then opted for online Zoom interviews to record and transcribe the data collected to accurately capture the responses of participants.

Conducting phone interview are beneficial for the further anonymity of the research participants, as the researcher provides participants with a pseudonym so that they could not be identified (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Knox and Burkard, 2009:5). The research participants are able to detail their personal experiences once anonymity is arranged (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004; Kvale, 1996; Lowes & Gill, 2006; Knox and Burkard, 2009:5).

7.6.2 Load-shedding

South Africa is experiencing a crisis with the electricity supply of the country currently. There is a shortage of the structural supply of electricity, resulting in the country experiencing one of its most difficult challenges. It is a possibility that load shedding will continue indefinitely because much of the South African infrastructure generating electricity is becoming old and is approaching the age of replacement (Findt, Scott and Lindfield, 2014; Goldberg, 2015:1). One technical difficulty that may result from the use of Zoom interviews during the thesis is being affected by a poor internet connection due to load shedding. This will make it difficult to hear and record answers given by participants during the interviews. To deal with the problem of internet connection, it was important for the researcher to inform participants to familiarize themselves with how zoom works and the problems that may arise.

Participants can familiarize themselves with how Zoom video conferencing works by means of a discussion with the researcher about the tool checklist of the app before the interview process begins. It would be beneficial for the research and collecting data and becoming familiar with the tool by conducting preliminary video conferences before the research interviews take place. This would result in both the participants and the researcher being well prepared for the research interviews (Labinjo, 2021:3-4).

During this study, load shedding became a hurdle as the researcher attempted to conduct qualitative interviews using Zoom as a communicative platform. This resulted in the need to use alternative methods. The researcher then used WhatsApp phone calls and written questionnaires to conduct interviews with research participants.

7.6.3 Literature review

The topic of women's ordination has been written on many times by feminist theologians from South Africa, and womanist theologians from Northern America. Men and women have written on this topic primarily focusing on the journeys of black women. In an article entitled 'Gender insensitivity in the URCSA,' Plaatjies van Huffel (2008; 2011) gave a detailed explanation on how her own ordination journey affected her perceptions of ministry within the Dutch Reformed Church. Mercy Amba Oduyoye (2001) has been a pioneering feminist theologian representative of the values brought forth by the Circle for Concerned African Women, and has participated in compiling ground-breaking research about the ministerial lives of black African women. Additional scholars have focused on feminist values within ministry, such as Christina Landman (2071), who presented the perspective of Afrikaans women in ministry in earlier generations, Roxanne Creasy Jordan and Sajorini Nadar (2009) who spoke on international perspectives on feminist ministry, Madipoane Masenya (2012) who gave a perspective on African women in ministry, and Bonita Nel (2019) who provided an understanding of Coloured women in the workplace.

Other research areas in pastoral care focus on the oppression of women in leadership roles in ministry from various racial backgrounds and denominations. The

contribution of this research to the field of Practical Theology is to investigate the lived experiences of Coloured women as a minority in the church and their introductory journey into the URCSA as they are first ordained. Contributions of the researcher to this study indicate that a pastoral care method is needed for research participants who have been negatively affected by the ordination systems in the URCSA Western Cape province.

7.6.4 Providing care for URCSA Cape Synod women

During the course of some of the interviews, raw feelings surfaced for some of the participants. The researcher would then skip over some questions or ask them in a different format for the purpose of the research. While the participants relived the experiences of their ordination journey, it became evident in their tone that they often felt marginalized and undermined as a result of their gender. This was surprising for the researcher as many participants had expressed feeling content under the URCSA Cape Synod, yet, simultaneously expressed feeling marginalized in their role as incoming minister.

Therefore, it became necessary to explore alternative expressions of the experiences of research participants, and that other possibilities could be opened in this regard. The possibilities include that the future research of Coloured women in ministry in the URCSA is substantiated by the current research presented by the research participants of this study as they allow access into their lives and ministries. It is fortunate that during this study, none of the participants had expressed concerns regarding having their identity exposed. This allowed for the interviews to be conducted with freedom and transparency. As the researcher, I am hopeful that the research participants of this study feel comfortable and encouraged to continue speaking on the realities of female ministry in the URCSA.

The challenges endured during the study highlighted the reality of the research and the lives of the interviewees. The ethnographic information gathered showcased the raw and unfiltered realities that these women have undergone. The humanity of the participants and the constraints they have faced became more prudent during the study. It became more important to preserve the dignity of participants by maintaining ethical standards and accurately quoting participants. The research

study continued to uphold the standards of the University of Pretoria and maintain respect during the interviews. The researcher contends that in order for marginalisation to end, justice and freedom should exist in the church. Freedom is part of the mission of God and will always prevail over the marginalisation and obstruction of God's people. It is therefore important that women in the ministry to understand that they have been ordained by God and must be guided with love and support to explore their freedom in Christ.

The findings of this research have brought to light the importance of education and mentoring for the researcher. It is not only important for male pastors to study and interpret the Bible in an appropriate manner, but that male pastors should undergo gender-neutral theological training too. Female pastors should undergo similar training, as this will allow them to be aware of the kind of education and mentoring that takes place in the church. It is possible that some women may have been indoctrinated or manipulated using marginalising texts and scriptures to convince female ministers to accept maltreatment within the church. It therefore becomes obvious that within the area of understanding and studying the Scripture, the bible is not always being used as a tool for liberation in the church. It is therefore important that education takes place in the church to enlighten and liberate female pastors in the URCSA.

7.7 Proposed pastoral care model

This research study found that Coloured women clergy have experienced difficulty during the ordination process, which has contributed to the low number of Coloured women in leadership ministry. The women who experience these challenges can be counselled for pastorally by the URCSA church to bring healing to the affected women and to encourage more women to be ordained. This research study has uncovered a potential pastoral care model which the church can implement to pastorally care for the affected women clergy.

During this research, it became apparent to the researcher that, it is not only the individual congregations of the ministers that have affected Coloured women in their ordination, but that the URCSA denomination in entirety may encounter similar concerns.

The pastoral model that may work for the URCSA family is to empower women who are already ordained to encourage newly ordained female ministers or those in the process of ordination to continue in their journey. The ordained women would work with those undergoing ordination and act as mentors and motivators for the denomination. They would be available for advice, encouragement and guidance. The experiences undergone by the ordained ministers would help those undergoing ordination, as the experienced women will be able to guide their mentees based on prior knowledge. These mentees will have someone to confide in and to ask questions about this journey. If there are concerns such as marginalization or gender-based discrimination, the ordained women should report these occurrences to the church Synod to protect the well-being of those undergoing ordination. This pastoral care model will empower Coloured women undergoing ordination and women who are already ordained to act as healing agents to others in the church.

There are multiple other church denominations where people are installed into the office of the church as a pastor, yet the 'pastors' are not asked for their theological qualifications. These churches maintain that the most important thing is the ability of the 'pastor' to read the Scripture. In some extreme cases, these pastors are not even able to read. They tell their congregations that their words and sermons are led by the Holy Spirit. These pastors often require members of their congregation to read Scriptures on their behalf and are known to misinterpret the meanings of the texts. It is not wrong for the Holy Spirit to guide and direct those who should provide others with Scripture and sermons. All Christians should look to the Holy Spirit to guide them in their ministry. However, it is imperative that ministers who should lead others in Scripture should be correctly trained. They will become better ministers when they can accurately read scripture, do sufficient research, refer to the correct texts and accurately interpret the meanings of the scriptures. To show oneself as an approved individual, one should study correctly (Sekano, 2011:196-197).

7.8 What are the other things I could not complete which will be placed as recommendations

This research only focused on women who are already ordained. Several research participants have expressed having a difficult experience in their ordination journey

within the URCSA. Therefore, I recommend that research be conducted on women who are reluctant or unwilling to be ordained in the URCSA, as well as other denominations. To journey with research participants and discover the challenges and the experiences that women go through which cause them not to be ordained in the denomination. While engaging with the stories given by research participants, it was valuable to recall that their experiences were not the end of the journey, both for women's ministry in the URCSA and academic literature surrounding this topic. The affected women were provided with a platform to express their pain and to find fulfilment in the telling of their truth. It is equally important to speak on the lived experiences in its entirety. This is beneficial for the honest disclosure of information, and the reactions that the participants may have. This forms part of the whole story.

The lives experiences of clergy women in the URCSA Cape Synod were told with the intention to share their stories, and perhaps to change the narrative around women's ministry. This change in the narrative gives the opportunity to add a turning point to existing literature. These stories could potentially change the perspectives of the researcher of this topic, by providing deeper context into the gravity of the lived experiences of the ordained women clergy. Additionally, it provides the research participants with a sense of liberty to speak freely on what they have gone through. This is mainly attributed to the idea that as the researcher engaged with the process of positively deconstructing the information collected during the interview process, it was brought to light that while this journey was difficult, it has a positive outcome. Sharing these experiences may lead to a positive and virtuous outcome of liberty. This is why positive deconstruction becomes a lengthy and fulfilling process. This process requires participation from everyone, as the belief systems of both the researcher and the research participants are brought into question.

The church should have a system in place that will assist women seeking ordination in their journey. The body of the church that ordains ministers should encourage women who are already ordained to guide incoming ministers as mentors. This will give the incoming female ministers the tools and encouragement they need to effectively serve in their congregations. Reports on the experiences and suggestions for further guidance of incoming ministers should be documented and submitted to the URCSA regularly. It is possible that should there be any concerns or strife within the church as it pertains to its leadership, this should be listed in the reports made for

the church, as meetings about these concerns may not initially run smoothly. Some attendees may excessively attend meetings late or be absent, there may not be positive responses, and some additional issues may be raised. This tool can be used to highlight the value of excellent leadership in the church, as these great leaders will be fully aware of the ongoings in the church. They will be able to help where it is needed (Sekano, 2011:202-203).

CONCLUSION

The church should be responsible for the pastoral care of ordained women who are affected by the marginalizing ordination systems undergone by women clergy. Women who are ordained deserve to experience encouragement and support from the members of their congregations. The denomination of the URCSA should assist in providing women with emotional support and counselling sessions for their concerns, first before undergoing ordination to prepare them for the journey, and during the ordination process for a long-term effect. This may be challenging for the historically patriarchal church of the URCSA. It is important for the church to organize counselling for its ministers, to help these women adjust to the challenges they will face. This will give them guidance in dealing with similar challenges when they arise.

The URCSA denomination is large and continues growing, however, the number of Coloured women in ministry is not growing at an equal rate. The number of Coloured women clergy available for assistance may not be sufficient to provide care for each new minister. The church should then equip current female ministers with the skills and expertise to adequately counsel incoming ministers with their journey. To effectively care for incoming female Coloured ministers, the church should empower and encourage them in their journey by providing them with the skills they need. Current ministers should be provided with the skills to be responsible for assisting incoming female ministers. Current Coloured women clergy should work jointly with incoming Coloured female ministers to find encouragement.

Appendix A: Preliminary Interview Questions For Coloured Women (URCSA Clergy)

The questions listed below are preliminary questions which will be asked for research purposes during the interview process with participants. This is done in an effort to understand the experiences and feelings of women who were ordained into the URCSA family and serve in leadership positions. It will help in uncovering how women experience ordination in the church. These questions will be asked to Coloured women in different URCSA congregations around the Western Cape.

1. Will you kindly share with me the treatment that you are experiencing from men and women within your congregation, especially in your leadership as women?
2. Are you aware of any policies placed for you in your ordination that may hinder your work?
3. Kindly share with me the role of women within your congregation?
4. In what way has church doctrine been used as a stumbling block in your ministry?
5. Are there any structures placed in the URCSA that pastorally care for women clergy?
6. Looking at gender and your qualifications, does your church respect those qualities?
7. When you were a lay person and now in your role as a clergy woman, is there a way that you can discuss the differences in treatment?

Appendix B: Letter Of Introduction And Informed Consent For Participation In Academic Research

Title Of the Study:

Aspects of the experience of ordination by URCSA female ministers in the Western Cape

Researcher:

Daryll Janine Curtis

Master's degree in Theology (MTh)

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U17281432

You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research area, namely Practical theology. Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document *before* the start of the study. If a child is 7-17 years and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-17 years are also required to sign an assent form.

- **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is to find out the experiences of Coloured women clergy through ordination in the URCSA and how to pastorally journey with them. The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request. No participant's names will be used in the final publication.
- **Duration of the study:** The study will be conducted over a period of 1 December 2022 and its projected date of completion is 30 June 2023.
- **Research procedures:** The study is based on the ordination journey of URCSA Coloured women in the Western Cape. The participant may note that the study will additionally be based on scholars who have researched ordination in Western and African contexts, such as Plaatjies-van Huffel (2019), Landman (2020) and Brown (2002). The data of this study will be based on the pastoral care model of Pollards, the method of Positive Deconstruction (Pollard 1997). The research will consist of a qualitative research methodology, which will be based on questions directed interviewees during the online interviewing process.
- **What is expected of you:** To pastorally journey with URCSA women in their ordination into the church.

- **Your rights:** Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. You, as participant, may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify any issues pertaining to this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document. There is no remuneration (payment) attached to participation (you may not demand compensation for taking part in the study)
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be treated as confidential, and the participants will be kept anonymous, according to the ethical guidelines of the University of Pretoria. Data will be kept confidential, and/or their organisations will be kept anonymous.
- The relevant data will be destroyed, should you choose to withdraw.
- **Remuneration:** No money / fees gifts or any form of reward will be awarded / offered / can be expected by co researchers / respondents / participants at any time during the research

WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research. I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: _____

Researcher: Daryll Janine Curtis

Date: _____

Contact number of the Researcher:

0747651971

VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT *(Only applicable if respondent cannot write)*

I, the researcher, have read and have explained fully to the respondent, named _____ and his/her relatives, the letter of introduction. The respondent indicated that he/she understands that he/she will be free to withdraw at any time.

Respondent: _____

Researcher: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

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