

# **Network Formation Report**

Canadian Christian Women's Collaborative Network  
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## Thank You

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I am also grateful to Rick Hiemstra who has been a mentor, guide, and valuable sounding board for this project. Thank you to Joel Gordon for helping convene this group of women and to Ilana Reimer for her guidance and contributions at every stage of this project.

My hope is that the needs of women identified in the surveys and listening circles will be met in meaningful and tangible ways, to the glory of God.

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## Executive Summary

This report examines the findings and themes from surveys and listening circles with women leaders recruited to participate and consult on the formation of a Canadian Christian Women's Collaborative Network. Women were asked about their experiences in their local church and vocational contexts and asked about the key needs and issues women face in Canada. They were also asked to comment on the potential structure and function of a Network.

Survey data showed significantly more women were satisfied with the opportunities available to them in their vocational context than in their local church. Factors contributing to satisfaction included feeling valued in the workplace, having access to opportunities for growth, and experiencing equal treatment as their male peers. Women were dissatisfied by gender-biased practices and traditional hiring practices in the workplace. Over fifty per cent of respondents said gender bias, work-life balance, and lack of role models were challenges they encountered in their profession.

Over one-third of women in the sample attended churches where their personal convictions that women and men should share leadership in the local church were not practiced and about two-thirds of women attend a church that matched their personal convictions.

Women said they were satisfied with their local church when they felt valued, included, advocated for by male peers and superiors, and saw women represented in various levels of leadership. Women who were dissatisfied with the opportunities in their local church said they were undervalued or ignored, excluded from leadership opportunities, or did not agree with their church's interpretation of scripture concerning gender roles. Cases where women's exclusion was not explicit in policy but existed in practice also led to dissatisfaction in the church. The survey showed symmetry between denominational and local church practices concerning women and men in leadership.

The most frequently cited issues that respondents said women faced in Canada were the gender wage gap, systemic gender bias, and violence against women. Personally, respondents said they needed better mentoring networks and safe spaces for development and growth.

Women who participated in listening circles identified community, voice, and safety as the three main categories of need for Christian women in Canada. Women identified unhelpful expectations and assumptions as barriers to flourishing and said the Church was at risk of losing women if it did not address lack of representation, moral failure, inequitable practices, and stereotyping. Participants said women flourish in contexts where they receive encouragement and benefit from examples of courage and sacrificial investment from key people.

## Introduction

This document is a condensed compilation of two reports commissioned by the Women's Network steering committee. The survey report presented the findings from 63 survey responses with women leaders invited to participate and consult on the formation of a Women's Network (see Appendix A for more about the sample). The second report presented qualitative findings collected from live listening circle sessions with 30 women and six asynchronous responses who expanded on the findings from the surveys and provided input on proposed Network structures and research initiatives.

Survey responses were collected between March 2, 2022, and March 15, 2022, through the SurveyMonkey platform. The surveys were designed to collect demographic information to better understand the respondents. We also purposed to understand the experiences of women in their local churches and vocational contexts and ask about the key needs and issues they face as Christian women in Canada.

The samples recruited for the survey and listening circles unfortunately lacked representativeness and some diversity quotas the steering committee was hoping to achieve. More about the sample and limitations Appendix A and B.

Thirty women agreed to participate in a Zoom consultation process through listening circles on May 12, 2022. Six asynchronous written responses were also received via the SurveyMonkey platform. Demographic information was not collected for listening circles; however, participants were primarily recruited from the survey sample meaning representative data from these sessions remains low.

Initially, this project envisioned in the structure of a council and was referred to as a Canadian Christian Women's Council. However, after receiving listening circle feedback and in consultation with the steering committee, the structure has shifted from a council to a network.

**The findings from this report should be limited to describing the needs and challenges of women leaders who were recruited for informing and shaping a Canadian Christian Women's Collaborative Network and should not be used to make representative assumptions about Canadian Christian women in general.**

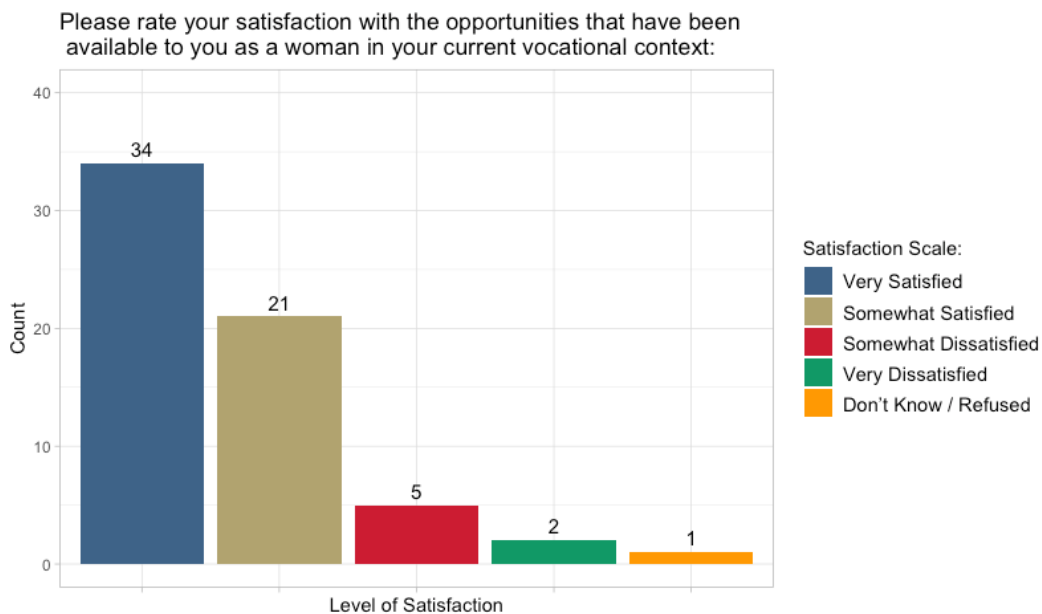
# 1. Survey Data

## 1.1 Vocation

The steering committee identified that the Women’s Network would be made up of Christian women leaders, but these women would not be limited to women in ministry. Therefore, understanding women’s vocational experiences was an important priority for this survey. Women were intentionally recruited across a broad range of sectors, however women in church and ministry leadership still accounted for over one-third of respondents (See Table A5 and Appendix B for more information about the vocations represented in this survey).

To better understand how women understand and interpret their experiences in professional settings, we asked them to rate their level of satisfaction with the opportunities made available to them as women in their vocational contexts.

**Figure 1.** Respondents’ level of satisfaction with opportunities available to them in their vocation.



Significantly more women (ten) were satisfied with the opportunities available to them in their vocational context than those in their local church. Respondents were asked to describe the factors that contributed to their sense of satisfaction/dissatisfaction in their vocation. These qualitative responses were analyzed and coded for themes and similarities explained below. Some of the themes parallel the factors that contributed to satisfaction or dissatisfaction at church while others diverged.

## Value

Like satisfaction ratings in the local church, women said they were satisfied in their vocation if they felt like they were an asset to their workplace:

- “I have had significant and meaningful input in determining the way our organization serves our staff and our communities.”
- “I appreciate it when my bosses and faculty offer ways to support their women employees. I love when they make time to hear women's concerns and put women in positions of power, which contributes to a broader corporate perspective.”

According to these responses, women felt valued when they were:

- **contributing in meaningful ways:** “I have had significant and meaningful input in ... our organization,”
- **heard:** “they make time to hear women’s concerns,”
- **represented and promoted:** “put women in positions of power,”
- **an integral part of organizational culture:** “contribute to a broader corporate perspective.”

Many of these factors that contribute to being valued in the workplace are applicable in the local church. Value can likely be widely applied across contexts and pursued in concrete and practical ways, as the women suggest above.

## Opportunities and Equal Treatment

Women who were satisfied with their vocational experiences described the availability of opportunities as a contributing factor. They understood opportunities as instances where they were able to use and showcase their skills and gifts, uninhibited:

- “I have opportunities. I am fully respected by my colleagues, leaders, etc.”
- “Women in all areas of Leadership. - CEO, COO ... and Content Creators. In my current position, I have been given every opportunity that I wanted or needed.”

According to some responses, however, the availability of opportunities did not negate the existence of barriers that prevent women from pursuing them. This indicates that making opportunities available is not the same as implementing change or achieving a desired effect:

I have progressed in my role becoming Director within 3 years, have been invited to speak cross-regionally and globally and privy to decision-making tables, however, there still exists a barrier to the highest levels of leadership (President's Cabinet, Lead Team etc.) which are still dominated by older white men.

This woman said she had been given several opportunities in her role, but she still saw barriers to advancement in her career. It is possible that her perception of her future career is indicative of systemic bias or an issue of incumbency. In contrast, another woman noticed that despite offering opportunities for advancement to women, many turned the opportunities down, “Many of the ... staff women do not take the leadership roles they have been offered.”

These responses show the nuance needed in conversations about vocational opportunities. One woman felt she had lucrative opportunities available to her in her current role but did not see future growth opportunities. The other woman noticed the opposite problem, “the number of women in leadership does not reflect the opportunity there is.” In her situation, the barrier to more women in leadership was not opportunity. This suggests there are other factors that prevent women from pursuing roles with more leadership responsibility. These are worthy of exploration but not outlined in her response or explored within the scope of this survey.

Responses that referred to equal treatment as a satisfying factor in vocation were like those that mentioned opportunity, but they were framed in terms of sameness to their male counterparts. Their opportunities were available simply because gender was incidental to their job duties or performance:

- “I have not encountered any blocks within my work because I am a woman.”
- “No gender bias, equal acceptance in leadership roles for men and women.”

These responses present a stark contrast to the women who were dissatisfied with the explicit and implicit exclusion from positions of teaching and governance in their local church (see Section 1.2).

### Freedom

Some women mentioned the importance of freedom in their responses about satisfaction in the workplace. One woman said freedom meant the flexibility to fit a role to her strengths: “I have had freedom to serve in leadership roles according to my gifts and skills.”

Other women framed freedom in terms of autonomy. One woman said she “set the tone” for her ministry in contrast to disappointing experiences she had in other organizations, “I started this ministry, so I have set the tone. However, the last two ministries I worked for being a woman caused me to hit a glass ceiling and not allowed to move any higher in the organization.” Another implied that partnering with another woman meant they had a shared understanding about the culture they wanted to achieve in their business.

### Support

Some women mentioned the importance of feeling supported and encouraged in their vocational pursuits:



- “My pastor has always encouraged me publicly with my writing ministry. However, this is not the case of [sic] every church. Although, there are not many opportunities to show case my work.”
- “My male bosses give me a lot of independence in my work and do not question my abilities. They are encouraging and uplifting.”

Most of these women mentioned the importance of feeling support and advocacy within their workplace by organizational policies, colleagues, and supervisors. However, the first woman quoted mentioned how her pastor encouraged her personally and publicly in her work. This suggests that support contributing to vocational satisfaction can be received outside of one’s workplace.

### Satisfaction and Compromise

As we will see with church satisfaction responses, some satisfactory ratings come with caveats. A few women who said they were very or somewhat satisfied with their vocational opportunities said they felt this way despite certain obstacles. These are often related to lack of advancement opportunities, implicit or explicit sexism, and outdated policies. Women likely still found satisfaction in their vocations because they mentioned seeing change and improvement in their workplaces, or their current workplace was simply better in comparison to other experiences:

- “Support for leadership growth and opportunities, not quite equal to men but MUCH better than in the church.”
- “Changing leadership has allowed for new ideas and theologies to come through. Can see a future for younger [women] leaders.”

One woman said that in a Christian context, “I am not sure if a woman would be considered for the CEO position. This is more of a ‘sense’ rather than anything in policy.” Her response suggests that some barriers are implicit, perhaps placating a donor base or catering to Christian sub-cultural perceptions, rather than being able to pinpoint an explicit policy that inhibits women from attaining certain high-level leadership positions.

A few women mentioned they felt vocational satisfaction because they had a strong sense of purpose in the work they do. A woman’s strong call to her work seemed to help her overcome obstacles or tolerate systems of inequality. Half of the women who mentioned having this sense did so despite rejection from the church:

- “My passion for making the Church a place of belonging for everyone came from my lived experience and was fueled more so by an experience of rejection by a church.”
- “I was able to work outside of the local church and found satisfaction in that.”

### Vocational Dissatisfaction

Some women cited gender bias as a contributing factor to their sense of dissatisfaction with the opportunities available to them in their vocational context. Responses were coded as gender bias any time gender was mentioned as limiting a woman's job opportunities, or advancement within a company/organization. Gender bias also included feeling unheard, unappreciated, and undervalued by colleagues and supervisors at work because of one's gender:

- "The gender labelling,<sup>1</sup> expectations, and subsequent performance evaluations lead to gender bias and discrimination in my last two [vocational] contexts."
- "[I am] not ... listened [to] the way a man is."

In these responses, no one cites specific policies that lead to these practices, but they functionally exist in their day-to-day work experiences. This confirms a similar trend we found in dissatisfactory ratings within the church: functional inequality leads to dissatisfaction even if equality is promoted at a policy level.

Other women cited hiring patterns that reflect historically gendered roles as a factor contributing to dissatisfaction. While these practices are not explicitly misogynistic, the traditional power dynamics tended to make women feel less valued or limited in their vocations:

- "I am often quite aware of being a female in a male dominated arena ... it is something I feel in how I am sometimes spoken to and treated."
- "Positions within our [organization] continue to fall along traditional gender lines. Women classically hold predominantly volunteer ministry positions. Paid positions held by women are predominantly administrative or fall within traditionally acceptable areas."

Since most of these experiences of gender bias or discrimination are anecdotal, it is hard to point to concrete ways that it can be eliminated in a workplace. The factors that contribute to satisfaction, however, suggest organizations need to evaluate themselves at a cultural level, rather than merely a policy level.

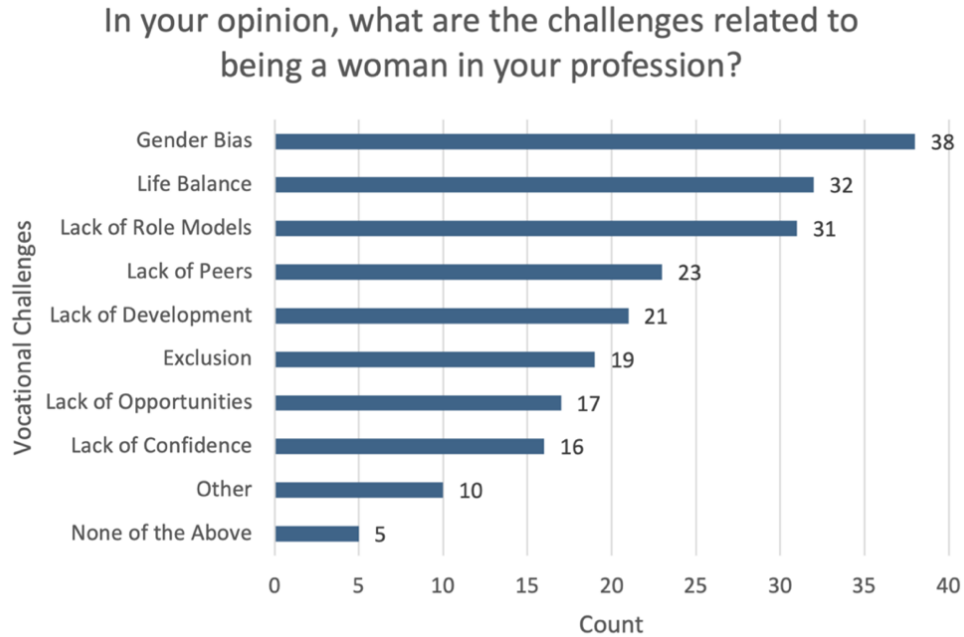
## Vocational Challenges

The last question concerning vocation in the survey asked about common challenges women faced in the workplace. Since this survey was not informed by a literature review or qualitative interviews to determine a range of responses, members of the steering committee provided their expertise informing a range of challenges that professional women would identify with. Collected responses are displayed in Figure 2 below.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender labelling refers to the process of defining characteristics as inherently masculine or feminine. Kristina M. Zosuls et al., "The Acquisition of Gender Labels in Infancy: Implications for Sex-Typed Play," *Developmental Psychology* 45, no. 3 (May 2009): 688–701, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014053>.

**Figure 2.** Challenges respondents face in their professional context.<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Respondents were asked to select all the challenges they experienced in their vocational context, therefore the number of responses collected exceeds the number of respondents who participated.

Gender bias was the most commonly cited response among the women who took this survey, with life balance and lack of role models following. In the next section, gender bias and life balance also rank high among respondents as they assess issues facing women more broadly. Informed by the write-in responses women provided in the survey, gender bias was understood as any limits to opportunities, or advancement within a company based on gender, and feeling unheard, unappreciated, and undervalued by colleagues and supervisors because of one's gender.

Women who listed other challenges mentioned experiencing ageism, racism, harassment, and lack of partnership between men and women in their professions. One woman wrote "geographical limitations" as a challenge she experiences in her vocation. It should be noted that this survey sample lacks representation from women in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces (see Table A2 and Appendix B)

## 1.2 Women in Leadership and Ministry Practice

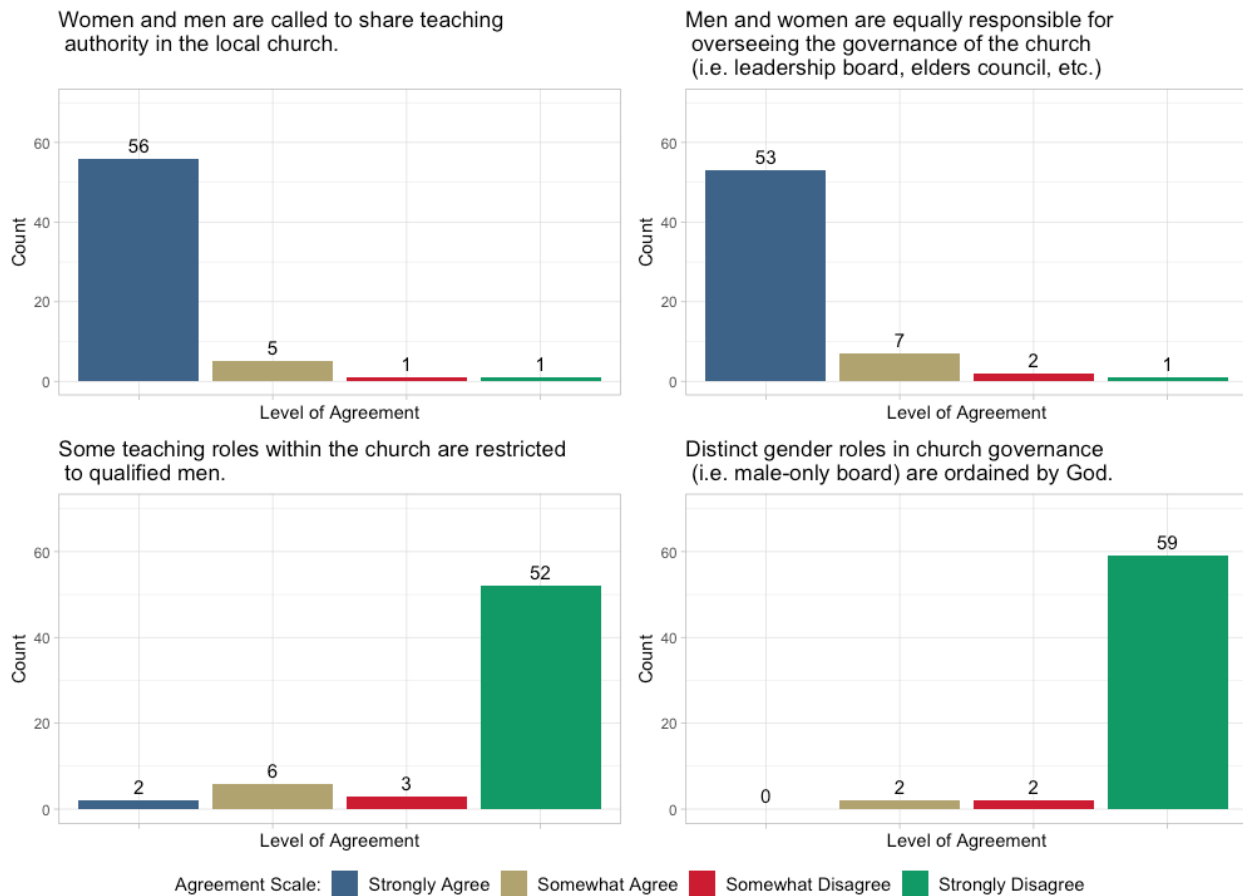
Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements<sup>2</sup> regarding women's and men's roles in the church. A series of three questions were designed to understand respondents' personal convictions regarding their theology of women and men in church-related leadership, and their perceptions about the practices within their local church

<sup>2</sup> Statements were developed from two organizations that advocate for different views on gender roles, especially as they pertain to church leadership: [cbeinternational.org](http://cbeinternational.org) and [cbmw.org](http://cbmw.org).

and denomination. For this report, *church leadership* will be a catch-all term referring to the exercise of teaching and governing authority in a church or denominational context.

The steering committee was clear in not wanting to emphasize egalitarian<sup>3</sup> and complementarian<sup>4</sup> labels and create unnecessary division during the Network formation. The purpose of these questions was to differentiate between women who do not hold leadership roles because of their theological convictions and women who do not occupy these roles because of other barriers.

**Figure 3.** Levels of agreement with statements about local church teaching and governance.



Most women in this sample agreed local church teaching and governance should be exercised and shared between qualified men and women (see Figure 3 above). While a few respondents agreed that teaching roles were restricted to qualified men, no respondents strongly agreed distinct gender roles should be maintained in church governance.

<sup>3</sup> Egalitarian interpretations of Scripture focus on mutual submission between genders and their functional equality.

<sup>4</sup> Complementarian interpretations of Scripture emphasize an ordered view of church and family in which pastors/elders and husbands function as spiritual heads.

A significant portion of the women in this sample work in church and ministry settings (Table A5). This likely means many of the respondents approve of women in church and ministry leadership and therefore our sample is biased toward a more egalitarian rendering of church leadership. It is safe to say most of the women who have been invited to the Network consultation have a posture toward pursuing gender equity in church leadership, but no assumptions should be made about evangelical women in the wider Canadian landscape.

It is interesting to compare respondents' individual convictions about gender roles (Figure 3) with the practices in their local church (Table 1). Since behaviours are easier to measure than beliefs, we asked respondents to indicate which practices they observed in their local church context rather than asking them to speculate about their church's level of agreement with each statement. For this reason, we adjusted the wording slightly, so the statement corresponded to a practice while still paralleling the statements respondents answered about their personal views (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Respondent's local church practices in governance and teaching, counts.<sup>a</sup>

| <b>Statement about local church practice</b>                                                                 | <b>Count</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Women and men share teaching authority.                                                                      | 40           |
| Men and women share responsibility for governing the church (i.e., leadership board, elders' council, etc.). | 40           |
| Some teaching roles within the church are only held by qualified men.                                        | 24           |
| Distinct gender roles are maintained in positions of governance (i.e., male-only board).                     | 13           |

<sup>a</sup> Counts do not add up to the total number of responses (n = 63) because respondents were only asked to select practices they observed in their local church.

Most respondents indicated they observed equal distribution of teaching and governance roles between women and men, but the counts do not match those reflecting women's personal convictions concerning these practices. For example, according to Figure 3, sixty-one women agreed that women and men should share teaching roles, but Table 1 indicates only forty women saying this was a practice in her church.

Comparing the number of local church practices and personal views concerning the statements that affirm gender equality in church leadership, over one-third of women attend churches where their personal convictions that women and men ought to share leadership are not practiced at their local churches.

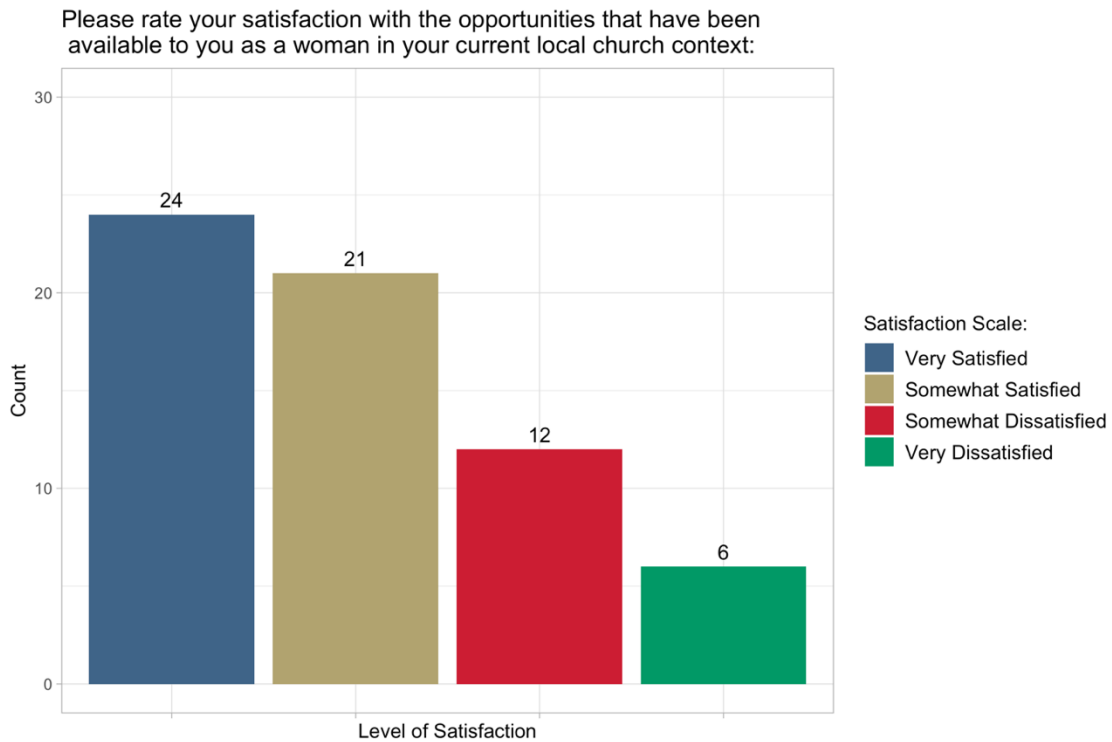
### Satisfaction at Church

Previously, we asked about views and levels of satisfaction in their vocational contexts. To better understand how women understand and interpret their local church practices, we asked

a similar level of satisfaction question regarding the opportunities made available to them as women in their local church.

Over two-thirds of women (45 total) in our sample expressed a sense of satisfaction with the opportunities available to them at their church (Figure 4). Eighteen women expressed some sense of dissatisfaction. We will see in the next section, that fifty-five of the women out of sixty-three said they were very satisfied / somewhat satisfied in their vocational context. Section 3 will explore vocation and vocational satisfaction more in-depth, but it is noteworthy that more women found satisfaction in the opportunities provided through their vocation than in their local church.

**Figure 4.** Respondents' level of satisfaction with opportunities available to them in their local church.



The survey included a qualitative write-in question after respondents rated their satisfaction at church asking participants to describe the factors that contributed to their sense of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the opportunities available to them as women. During analysis, the qualitative responses were grouped together by theme or category to better understand what women look for, or struggle with, at a local church level. These categories are discussed below.

## Value and Advocacy

Responses from our sample revealed that women were more satisfied with their local church opportunities if they felt valued in the church setting. Women understood value in terms of practices that consulted, appreciated, and implemented their opinions and perspectives:

- “I have felt my contributions were valued and appreciated.”
- “My voice is heard in staff meetings, and I don't feel left out of decisions being made as a pastoral team.”

Conversely, some of those that said they were dissatisfied with their church said it was because they did not feel like they were valued in their church, despite having a position or knowledge that would be an asset. Two respondents said they felt ignored or unheard, describing the absence of those practices that the women quoted above said contributed to their sense of value:

- “I have been a deacon in our church in past, however, in that capacity, I felt that the male deacons did not really listen to either of us two women very well.”
- “I have been ignored when I have offered to share my knowledge ... I regularly provide training and lecture in higher academic institutions and at ministry conferences. ... I have only spoken in women's ministry events and children's ministry events, both headed up by women. None of the male pastors have attended anything I have done.”

Notice that one respondent said she felt undervalued by the male pastors in her church, but the other said her voice was not heard by those who shared her role as Deacon. This suggests that hierarchical treatment can still be in effect even when a hierarchical relationship is not explicit in the roles women and men occupy. Women who were satisfied at church said that a contributing factor to this was the advocacy of men. They mentioned feeling supported and encouraged by male peers and colleagues in practical ways:

- “[M]ale colleagues have stood with me in practical ways, coaching and offering encouragement, and have also stood in solidarity when facing resistance or opposition.”
- “I am deeply grateful for my pastor who sat me down and told me that he saw leadership/pastoral potential in me, and I truly believe that (alongside wisdom/encouragement from others and a lot of prayer) is the reason why I am now the associate pastor and planting a church.”

These responses paint the opposite picture of those who felt ignored by their male peers and superiors. A woman earlier described her pastors having never attended anything she's done; the last woman quoted said her pastor affirmed and encouraged her leadership potential. The difference in encounters with men in leadership led to completely different satisfaction assessments of their local church.

## Inclusion, Exclusion, and Representation

Another factor that led to a sense of satisfaction for respondents in our sample was the degree to which they had unrestricted access to the same opportunities as equally qualified and gifted men in their local church. Women who felt included said that both teaching and governing opportunities were available to them based on their gifting and maturity rather than gender:

- “We are invited to participate to [sic] our local church regardless of our gender.”
- “Women are free to serve based on gifting, skill and maturity.”
- “Women are included along with men in all areas of ministry.”

Closely tied to inclusion was the importance of representation. Some women who said they were satisfied at their local church mentioned the importance and impact of seeing women occupy teaching and leadership roles:

After being raised in churches that did not affirm women's calling by God to preach and spread the gospel, it was SUCH a relief to finally be a part of a church ... where every part of the ministry was open to the best person for the job.

One woman who said she was “somewhat satisfied” said there was still work to be done in achieving equitable representation in her denomination, “It is still very difficult for qualified women to find senior leadership roles in our denomination. 95+% of senior leadership roles are held by men.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, women who felt they were restricted from certain opportunities communicated a sense of dissatisfaction with their church. These women often distinguished between governance and teaching, however. They understood their exclusion from positions of governance as something that they were intentionally barred from based on their gender:

Leading our women's ministry for many years did not ever once afford me the opportunity to sit on any leadership committees or participate in any significant discussion regarding the issues our church was facing ... It was also made very clear by lack of inclusion with budgeting and decision-making responsibilities that women were less than or not welcome. Trying to create an administrative structure for women's ministry that was sustainable, and current was given no consideration.

This response, among others, pointed to the effects of lack of representation when women are excluded from governing structures. The woman quoted above who works in women's ministry mentioned seeing the effects in her access to budgetary and administrative support. Other women suggested that all-male boards/elders “lack[ing] female insight or direction” means their interests are not represented at a leadership level resulting in a dissatisfying church experience for them.

Compared to governance, which seemed to be intentionally restricted, some women who were dissatisfied with the availability of teaching opportunities saw this as withheld from them



arbitrarily, “I have a gift for teaching and preaching and this has not been afforded to me in my local church and broader denomination.” She observes that she simply has not been invited to teach. For this woman, gifting is what qualifies her to teach, not her gender, but she has not been given opportunities to put her gifts to use, nor does she mention how or if her gifting has been acknowledged or recognized by her local church.

Another woman said, “I get invited in other churches to speak but not my own church.” This is different than how women described their exclusion from governing roles, which implied that opportunities to participate did not exist. Here, women believe the opportunities are available, but they have not been invited into them.

This could mean that churches or denominations that subscribe to male headship may be more explicit about having all-male governing structures but are less clear about women in teaching roles. Certainly, some women in this sample believe they could be invited into teaching opportunities in their local church and are dissatisfied that they are not, so they have found outlets outside of their local church. It would be interesting to know if these women would continue to attend and serve in their churches if explicit policies restricting women’s teaching roles existed.

#### Satisfaction and Compromise

Some women in our sample indicated they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their opportunities at their local church but expressed in the comments that this came with compromise.

One woman gave the opportunities made available to her a satisfying rating but said she experienced obstacles attaining her leadership role. “I have had to ask, prove myself, and “knock on doors” to get these opportunities that a lot of the time have been given to male candidates who have been less qualified, experience [sic], and educated.” Her sense of satisfaction could conceivably come from the gratification of having fought so hard to attain her role, but “beating the system” does not necessarily mean the system changed to allow other women the same leadership opportunities. Based on her account, the satisfaction she expressed about the opportunities available to her can reasonably be credited to efforts and tenacity, but not to the equitable practices of her local church that welcome women into equal partnership.

Two other women who said they were satisfied in their church and currently occupied leadership roles said they experienced resistance that undermined their authority as leaders in the church:

- “There are those who tolerate my leadership, but do not always affirm it or sometimes actively work against it.”
- “Have found white male authority persists and can at times undermine female leadership.”

For these women, it appears their churches have practices that permit women in leadership, but the people required to work with and for them undermine their authority. Here, we see that **a sense of satisfaction can be curbed by functional exclusion even though structurally, women are included in leadership roles.**

One woman shared about the structural *and* functional inclusion she experienced in her church:

We don't only hold the belief that woman [sic] can lead and hold positions of power/influence in the church but live it out through our staff ... myself and my male co-worker share the equal responsibility of the work. I am an equal partner in the ministry. Even with our volunteer leaders, evidently, most of those positions are held by women.

For this woman, it was the lived experiences of being valued as an equal partner that contributed to her sense of satisfaction. The women in the previous section who were waiting to be invited into teaching positions were less satisfied because functionally they did not experience equality even when policy did not explicitly prohibit them. Responses from our sample suggest practices that promote inclusion led to a more satisfactory church experience than policies.

#### Other Factors Contributing to Dissatisfaction

Although fewer women said they were dissatisfied with the opportunities made available to them as women in their local church, they had more reasons to account for their sense of dissatisfaction. Some women said they were unhappy that opportunities in the church were based on female stereotypes rather than their individual gifting or interests.

Other women were more direct in saying their exclusion was based on blatantly biased practices in the local church. For example, one respondent said, "Spiritual gifting in areas of leadership [is] not recognized because of gender; women do not have equality in position titles."

These accounts mainly concerned women's vocational roles in the church, and the lack of equality in position titles (and likely pay) despite equal qualifications. Based on the responses in this survey, lay women who are dissatisfied at church blame stereotypes for their limited opportunities, but those who are dissatisfied with their local church at a vocational level appear to be more disillusioned by the systemic bias at work and name the issue more directly.

One woman of colour said that the intersection of sexism and racism was a factor in her sense of dissatisfaction with the opportunities available to her, "as a Black woman I am often invisible to church leaders."

Finally, as we suspected from the disparate responses between church practices and personal views in Section 1, we know that some women attend churches that practice male headship despite their personal agreement with gender equity in church leadership. So, when asked to describe what factors contributed to their sense of dissatisfaction, some women simply said

they do not share the same interpretation of Scripture on matters of gender as their local church:

- “Patriarchal system bias and theology.”
- “Theological differences in [the] interpretation of Scripture.”

A question for further investigation would be to ask women why they attend churches where they are dissatisfied with the opportunities made available to them.

### Denominational Practice

We also asked women in our sample to assess their denomination’s practices concerning women in leadership. Denominational teaching varies by polity, so the survey simply asked about the distribution of governing practices between men and women. Again, the wording was slightly adjusted for these statements to suit a denominational context.

**Table 2.** Respondent’s denominational practices concerning men and women in governance, counts.<sup>a</sup>

| Statement about denominational governance                            | Count | NA |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----|
| Women and men share responsibility for leadership.                   | 40    | 23 |
| Some roles within the denominational are only held by qualified men. | 27    | 36 |

<sup>a</sup> Respondents were only asked to select practices they observed in their denomination. If a statement did not apply to a respondent, it was recorded as NA (not applicable).

Since the question measuring male-only leadership practices did not imply that these positions were held at the exclusion of women, some respondents affirmed that both statements were true of their denomination. Despite the oversight in framing the second statement, the data showed a similar spread of gender equality in denominational leadership practices that existed in churches: forty respondents (two-thirds).

Two-fifths of respondents said some denominational roles were only held by qualified men. Subtracting the three responses that seem to be in excess (no other statement about restricting leadership to men exceeded 24 responses), the number of women who see male-only leadership in their denomination reflects a similar proportion to those who see male-only practices in their church (one-third), suggesting most respondents understood the second statement based on the pattern of previous questions.

The results from the denominational question reveal that there is symmetry between denominational and local church practices concerning women and men in leadership. One of the qualitative statements left by a respondent highlighted that “95+% of senior leadership roles are held by men.” She suggests a denomination affirming women in ordained and senior leadership might still prevent women from holding these roles in practice because their existing

structures of leadership have remained unexamined or biased in some way. There are likely several reasons why women might be missing from these roles, however, requiring further study.

### 1.3 Issues

The final priority for this survey, other than gauging interest in a consultation process, was to ask respondents about the issues they faced and issues women faced more broadly across Canada. First, respondents were asked to list the top three pressing issues they believed women faced in Canada. Almost all respondents provided three responses, except for two. The results are tabulated in Table 7 below.

**Table 3.** Responses<sup>a</sup> to “In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues facing women in Canada today? Please list your top 3.” Counts by total responses, counts by category.<sup>b</sup>

| Issue                                               | Count | Issue Count | Category          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| Gender bias                                         | 18    |             |                   |
| Women’s voices not heard/taken seriously            | 6     |             |                   |
| Systemic patriarchy                                 | 3     | 32          | Gender Inequality |
| Unequal opportunities                               | 3     |             |                   |
| Need for male approval/Viewed as a threat to men    | 2     |             |                   |
| Gender wage gap                                     | 20    |             |                   |
| Finances/Wealth management                          | 4     |             |                   |
| Poverty/Economic disparity                          | 4     | 31          | Finances          |
| Meaningful work and livable wage                    | 2     |             |                   |
| Financial barriers to higher education              | 1     |             |                   |
| Work/Life balance                                   | 12    |             |                   |
| Work and motherhood                                 | 9     | 27          | Work / Home       |
| Unequal division of labour at home                  | 5     |             |                   |
| Affordable childcare                                | 1     |             |                   |
| Violence against women (sexual, physical, domestic) | 18    |             |                   |
| Mental health                                       | 2     | 24          | Health / Safety   |
| Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls     | 2     |             |                   |
| Lack of self-care                                   | 2     |             |                   |
| Lack of leadership opportunities                    | 8     |             |                   |
| Gender bias in workplace                            | 6     | 18          | Work / Leadership |
| Lack of representation in leadership                | 3     |             |                   |
| Lack of flexibility in work options                 | 1     |             |                   |
| Second class citizens at church                     | 3     |             |                   |
| Lack of women in church/denominational leadership   | 3     |             |                   |
| Lack of clarity on women’s role in the church       | 2     | 14          | Church / Theology |
| Patriarchal theology                                | 2     |             |                   |
| Hyper/Complementarian theology                      | 2     |             |                   |

|                               |   |    |                   |
|-------------------------------|---|----|-------------------|
| Lack of abuse training        | 1 |    |                   |
| Lack of empowerment           | 1 |    |                   |
| Insulation/Lack of community  | 9 |    |                   |
| Marriage                      | 3 | 14 | Relationships     |
| Racial reconciliation         | 2 |    |                   |
| Distorted self-image/Identity | 6 |    |                   |
| Lack of confidence            | 3 |    |                   |
| Recovering from COVID losses  | 2 | 14 | Society / Culture |
| Elitism                       | 1 |    |                   |
| Environmental stewardship     | 1 |    |                   |
| Polarization                  | 1 |    |                   |
| Lack of mentors               | 6 |    |                   |
| Lack of leadership training   | 2 |    |                   |
| Lack of resources             | 2 | 11 | Development       |
| Support for young women       | 1 |    |                   |

<sup>a</sup> A total of 185 responses were received from 63 respondents. Responses were not ranked.

<sup>b</sup> Categories were assigned at the discretion of the data analyst. Other categories or arrangements of the data could reasonably apply.

For clarity and consistency, responses were grouped into categories. If respondents mentioned gender bias as a general issue, usually existing at a systemic and societal level, it was categorized in the gender inequality category. If they provided more context and referred to practices in the church or the workplace, the responses were categorized accordingly.

Most responses fell into the category of general gender inequality; however, the gender wage gap was specifically mentioned the most. It is also noteworthy that violence against women was mentioned just as often as gender bias.

Issues pertaining to church and theology fell surprisingly low on the list. However, since the question asked about issues women in Canada faced more broadly, respondents may have intentionally considered non-Christian experiences in their answers. Matters of church and theology ranked much higher in the question about obstacles respondents faced later in the survey.

### Needs

Next, the survey posed a qualitative write-in question asking respondents about their own needs as Christian women in Canada.

**Table 4.** Responses<sup>a</sup> to write-in question “What do you as a *Christian* woman in Canada need to flourish?” Counts by category.<sup>b</sup>

| Needs of respondents                                                  | Count |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Likeminded Community/Mentorship                                       | 24    |
| Opportunities/Development                                             | 14    |
| Better ecclesial practices (theology/inclusivity in the church, etc.) | 7     |
| Full equality                                                         | 6     |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Other                                | 5 |
| Understanding from/Education for men | 4 |
| Adequate representation              | 2 |

<sup>a</sup> Only 62 responses were received for this question.

<sup>b</sup> Categories were assigned at the discretion of the data analyst. Other categories or arrangements of the data could reasonably apply.

The dominant response for women in this sample was the need for a like-minded community with which supportive mentorship was included. The responses are listed below at length to communicate how frequent and similar the needs were among our sample. Keep in mind, respondents in our survey did not choose from a pre-populated list but identified this need on their own:

- “Mentorship from those in a similar position to myself, and opportunities to be heard and grow in faith.”
- “Support networks, peer connection, mentorship.”
- “Professional role models (I have great personal role models in my life!)”
- “Community of women leaders for mentorship, encouragement.”
- “Stronger mentoring networks.”
- “Connection with other Christian women in leadership roles.”

Notice how community was identified low on the list in Table 7 as a need for women more broadly but was highest by a margin of 10 when women leaders assessed their own needs. This suggests **women in leadership feel a particular burden of isolation they do not perceive women in other roles experience to the same degree.**

The second most popular category of responses had to do with the need to be invited into safe spaces for growth and encouragement:

- “I need safety, opportunity, and support.”
- “Teaching, encouragement, opportunities.”

Issues surrounding development were ranked lowest in Table 7 showing again, that when respondents in our sample considered women’s broader needs, they tended to differentiate them from their own.

The third category labelled “better ecclesial practices,” included responses that directly and indirectly pointed to scriptural understandings that do not promote women as equal partners in ministry. For example,

- “I need Christians to stop promoting hyper-complementarianism as if it is the only Biblical approach to gender roles; and as if this is a salvation issue.”
- “I need churches who [sic] care about me. I need churches who care about my wellbeing more than they do keeping the men who would subjugate me happy. I need churches to have an ounce of moral courage and to stand up and say, ‘No more.’”

These responses call for more charitable characterization of egalitarian practices and better support and advocacy for women in the church. Many of the responses above suggest that churches that teach “men are slightly above women” lead to women feeling uncared for, misunderstood, unsupported, and subjugated. The responses above do not necessarily call for discarding complementarian theology altogether but criticize extreme interpretations and practices that fail to dignify women and vilify other interpretations of Scripture.

### Obstacles

The final survey question asked respondents to describe some of the obstacles they faced as Christian women in Canada. Like the previous question about needs, this question was focused on the personal obstacles experienced by the respondent. The responses are tabulated below:

**Table 5.** Responses<sup>a</sup> to write-in question “What are some obstacles that you face as a *Christian* woman in Canada?” Counts by category.<sup>b</sup>

| <b>Obstacles faced by respondents</b> | <b>Count</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Church / Theology                     | 20           |
| Systemic bias                         | 18           |
| Time / Finances                       | 8            |
| Community                             | 5            |
| Other / None                          | 5            |
| Lack of representation                | 3            |
| Self-imposed barriers                 | 2            |
| Interpersonal challenges              | 1            |

<sup>a</sup> Only 62 responses were received for this question.

<sup>b</sup> Categories were assigned at the discretion of the data analyst. Other categories or arrangements of the data could reasonably apply.

Compared to the needs listed in Tables 3 and 4, issues concerning the church rose to the top of the list in Table 5 when respondents were asked to think about obstacles they personally face. Some of the responses echoed those in the previous section, condemning harmful theology and practices that particularly limit women in leadership, but also translate to disrespect and subjugation:

- “The lack of respect of women and [their] calling to the church”
- “Billy Graham rule<sup>5</sup>/archaic patriarchal norms/old boys' club”

Two respondents said they did not face any obstacles in their ministry roles but used their responses as an opportunity to speak at length about the obstacles they saw for other women in ministry. One said:

<sup>5</sup> “The practice of not being alone with a member of the opposite sex other than one’s spouse,” David Roach, “The Billy Graham Rule Goes to Court,” *Christianity Today: News & Reporting*, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/august/billy-graham-rule-sheriff-north-carolina-lawsuit.html>.

While I personally have had many opportunities to lead in the broader Christian community, I am saddened to see how so many evangelical churches continue to restrict women to certain prescribed roles. I grieve for many young, godly, capable young women who cannot find a place to serve within the evangelical church community, and end up going to other denominations, or leaving the church. What a loss to evangelicalism.

One woman identified as a complementarian but agreed there were patterns in the church that did not value or accept women in ways she saw men valued and affirmed:

While I believe that God has given different roles and authorities to men and women, I don't believe that the church (as I've seen it) has done a good job of valuing men and women the same. Without the value there, I haven't felt as free to use my voice or gifts as I don't believe they'll be accepted or celebrated as much as I see men's gifts welcomed or celebrated.

This woman provides a rare example from our sample where a respondent subscribes to complementarian theology, but believes it is poorly applied in her context. Her response suggests that complementarian theology should have a narrower scope of application and should not affect how women are valued or treated in the church.

Three respondents notably mentioned the intersection of gender and race, mentioning the increased obstacles women of color and minority ethnicities face in church settings. One woman said oppression of women is active “especially ethnic specific churches” while others say women’s spaces “lack...minority representation.”

Other respondents identified more general obstacles in the church that did not have to do with gender, like biblical illiteracy and the prevalence of hypocrisy.

The other most cited obstacle was issues related to systemic bias. Most responses referred to gender bias, but some included racial bias as the prevailing obstacle they face. These short answers resembled the responses detailing respondent’s dissatisfaction at church and in their vocation:

- “Lack of opportunities to lead and flourish.”
- “Assumptions about who I am and what I can speak into are limiting.”
- “Structural bias against women in some contexts; structural sexism that is often unrecognized.”

These responses suppose there are systems that impose and uphold gender-biased assumptions and limitations on women, and respondents tended to view their male colleagues and superiors as perpetuating these systems. As an example, when asked what obstacle she faced, one woman simply replied, “men.” In Table 8, some women suggested they would benefit from men who better understood the issues and disadvantages women face. A similar



solution would likely address the obstacles the respondents listed above. The Network is currently designed to partner with men on future priorities as an opportunity to exemplify cooperative co-labouring as women and men.

Time and finances were frequently mentioned as an obstacle for the women in our sample as well. Considering our survey sample counted the gender wage gap as the most pressing issue facing women in Canada, we expect this to come through more personally as respondents evaluated the obstacles they faced. However, lack of time was mentioned just as frequently as finances:

- “No time and no money.”
- “Non-stop busy mentality. The guilt and shame of having to stop an overly full schedule to have a sick day or eat a meal with your family.”

Some women suggest their lack of time is self-imposed, however other data from this survey suggest lower pay, lack of community, and bearing primary family responsibilities might contribute to feeling overburdened and out of time.

The tone of responses seemed to change when the question was reframed to understand respondent obstacles rather than respondent needs. Responses to the previous question asking about needs seemed to assume that something could be done to improve respondent flourishing. Responses to the question about obstacles were more honest, and sometimes helpless, as if these obstacles could not be overcome.

## 2. Listening Circle Data

On May 12, approximately 30 women, divided into four discussion groups, participated in a consultation process referred to as “listening circles.” The consultation was organized into three breakout sessions with a facilitator and notetaker from the steering committee in each discussion group. Informed by the survey data, the first breakout session was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of Christian women leaders, the barriers they face, and the successes they have witnessed. Participants also consulted on the structure of the Women’s Network and avenues for research that are not included in this public report.

Themes that were raised from the listening circles are organized by responses to the questions asked by the facilitator and reflect high-level summaries from notetakers rather than direct quotes.

### Needs

**What are the big picture needs you believe most Christian women in Canada share that should be prioritized or addressed?**

### Community

Most groups acknowledged the need for a community of support for women to combat isolation in their various spheres. Some women expressed the desire to have women who walk “beside,” those with whom they can relate and experience a sense of solidarity. Women in positions of leadership tended to want intentional community in the form of mentorship. These women expressed the desire to have someone “ahead,” who could pass on wisdom from being “farther down the road” or pave a way for them to take on more responsibility.

### Voice

Listening circles also identified the need for women to have a voice that is welcomed and wanted beyond mere tokenism. Voice means one’s ideas, knowledge, and perspective have the authority and weight needed to make an impact. Voice was sometimes characterized as something that was lost over years of feeling limited and devalued, or something that is circumstantially lost in groups when men are present.

Another participant identified loss of voice internally, saying women need to gain confidence and believe in their value as a way to reclaim their voice. This suggests someone took the value of their voices they once had in the past. Notably, these women seem to have lost a sense of significance attached to their voices. Amplification, or “reclaiming one’s voice” implies being heard and respected and having a voice that is regarded as authoritative and necessary.

Listening circle responses suggest there are internal and external barriers to amplifying women’s voices. External barriers notably included men, the church, and racial/systemic bias.

## Safety

Addressing abuse and ensuring safety for women to process deep hurt and resentment was identified by three groups as a need for Christian women that should be prioritized and addressed. One group pointed to clergy abuse and the need for putting systems in place for safe reporting and whistle-blower policies. Other groups recognized the need for safe and healthy places to process and share hurt and grief. Several participants who responded asynchronously through a survey mentioned concerns about misogyny or patriarchal attitudes in churches, suggesting these views can negatively impact how women are treated or how they view themselves.

## Barriers

### **What barriers do you face in engaging or flourishing in Christian ministries, churches, and organizations?**

Most groups reported barriers having to do with expectations and unhelpful assumptions about what women can and should do. Women mentioned behaviour, dress, and leadership. One woman said men expect less of women, others said their credentials are devalued or disrespected. Another participant said that even with the opportunity to prove oneself, the bar is always shifting, and women end up striving to no purposeful end.

One survey respondent spoke about the lack of support, opportunities, and mentorship available for single women and single mothers. A few survey respondents said opportunities for women can hinge on stereotyped roles such as “‘women’s lunch’ kind of things,” “crafts and hospitality” or children’s programs. This leaves out women who have professional expertise in other areas. Describing how women outside the Church could perceive these stereotyped roles, one respondent said, “Young women don’t relate to stereotypical pastor’s wives or typical Christian female role. [These roles are] seen as out of touch and foreign to the world they live in, or want to live in.”

## Risks

### **Where are we most at risk of losing the engagement of women of all ages in the Canadian Church?**

Participants said the church was most at risk of losing women in the areas of representation, categorization and tokenism, moral failures, and inequity.

## Representation

Even though women are overrepresented in the church, many participants were concerned about their lack of representation in leadership. They suggested being able to see oneself in leadership is important to a sense of belonging. One participant reported seeing women leave churches because they did not see a place for their daughters.

## Categorization

Two listening circles expressed concern over categorizing women too simplistically, for example, categorizing women as “single” or “mother,” thereby valuing women based on their belonging to a certain sub-group. A researcher in another group said these kinds of assumptions and categorizations often have a negative impact on women’s career advancement. One group said women who are tokenized are pushed into similar one-dimensional categories, leading to exhaustion and disillusionment.

A survey respondent said that single women, working women, and women without children can feel “substandard.” She said this kind of categorization discourages or limits women from exercising their gifts of leadership.

## Moral Failure

Many groups identified moral failures in the church that affect people’s faith and their participation in the institutional church. One group emphasized the need for churches to be a safe place, citing lack of accountability and boundary violations as reasons women leave or are unwilling to join. One participant said, “can my daughter’s faith sustain another leader’s betrayal?” while another shared, “my faith can’t sustain another Hillsong fiasco.”

## Inequity

Broad concerns about inequity also characterized some of the listening circle conversations. One group mentioned the need for sustainable financial compensation, moving beyond the perception that a woman’s income is “secondary,”<sup>6</sup> especially in male-dominated fields.

## Successes

**Can you name one thing that was done well to help you flourish in your context (church, ministry organization, etc.)?**

An encouraging portion of the listening circles was a time for appreciative reflection on how participants had been set up and supported to flourish in their context. Popular responses included encouragement from key people, examples of courage, and sacrificial investment.

## Encouragement from Key People

Many participants highlighted the importance of being championed by important figures in their lives. For one person, it was a family legacy of including women; others talked about the importance of men, and male pastors specifically, encouraging and supporting women. A few groups mentioned how higher education institutions were places they experienced unprecedented support and encouragement, especially from faculty.

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<sup>6</sup> Meaning the second or supplemental income in a household

### Examples of Courage

Some participants pointed to ground-breaking organizational practices that encourage them to continue striving in their own contexts. One group referred to women occupying unprecedented positions of authority, such as Compassion Canada's recent appointment of Allison Alley as CEO. Others found encouragement in seeing women promoted or granted flexible work options to accommodate family obligations.

Another group said people with power who recognize the gap in how they support women and address it in practical and meaningful ways contributed to their sense of flourishing. One group mentioned this in the context of the Church, saying theological shifts towards women's participation at all levels of leadership were significant for women to flourish in the Church.

These examples are labeled as "courageous" because participants perceive organizations are typically inhibited by fear of backlash and repercussions from donor bases, constituents, or church members.

### Sacrificial Investment

One participant mentioned the importance of women, and especially women of colour, sacrificing their time to mentor and disciple younger women. Another group said it was important for men to provide opportunities for women.

## Conclusion

This document represents the dominant themes and ideas respondents raised in response to the steering committee's survey and listening circle discussions. Some of the topics and emphases in this report may differ from the priorities the Network ultimately decides to carry forward.

The weaknesses of this report are the lack of representativeness in our sample and the bias toward egalitarian norms of leadership. Underrepresentation and selection bias are to be expected considering the methodology used to recruit respondents (see Appendix A). Observations and conclusions from this report should not be used to characterize evangelical women beyond those recruited for the purpose of shaping the Women's Network.

Some of the main themes that surfaced from the survey responses were:

- Functional equality leads to more satisfaction than equality merely at a policy level.
- About one-third of women who believe qualified women and men should occupy roles in church leadership attend a church that does not practice it.
- Most women identified different needs for women in Canada than their own needs as Christian leaders.

Themes the listening circles process highlighted:

- A need for elevating women's voices, personally and corporately.
- A desire for networking and sharing of stories and resources.
- A desire to address systemic issues, such as clergy abuse.

In response to the data collected through the surveys and listening circle process, the steering committee refined the following mandate as they pursue the next steps for Network formation:

Imagine a world where God's Kingdom purposes are fully realized through women and men flourishing and co-labouring alongside each other to serve Christ. Women have faced persistent barriers to that vision, and we have the opportunity to affirm the inherent value of women as image-bearers who represent God uniquely. The Canadian Christian Women's Collaborative Network will be a think tank and convener of women leaders across a range of sectors who will provide research, resourcing, and collaboration to amplify female voices, honour women's contributions, and co-create a world where women and men flourish.

Thank you to those who participated in the consultation process to discern the formation of a Canadian Christian Women's Collaborative Network. We hope the findings from this report are

constructive and trust a future Network will serve to support, strengthen, and encourage women in Canada.

## Appendix A: Methodology

The target population for this survey was a curated list of Christian women leaders in Canada nominated by a steering committee for a future Canadian Christian Women’s Collaborative Network. We generated our sample by inviting members of the steering committee to nominate female leaders in Canada who reflect a broad range of age, region, ethnicity, marital status, professional expertise, and theological tradition. Unfortunately, limited language capacities meant only English-speaking women were recruited. Since we did not set recruitment quotas, some populations are under or overrepresented in this sample. Appendix B provides more commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of the sample.

The committee compiled a list of 152 names to which they sent a survey on March 2, 2022, using the SurveyMonkey platform. A follow-up email was sent to the 97 respondents who had not yet participated in the survey on March 9, 2022, and the survey closed on March 15, 2022. We received a total of 65 responses, 64 of whom consented to participate in the survey, 63 who provided usable answers, and 54 who opted to learn more about the consultation process for the formation of a Network.

Thirty women participated in the listening circles on May 12, 2022, from 1–2:30 p.m. EST. The session was divided into three parts:

1. Needs of Christian women leaders
2. Network structure and priorities
3. Research possibilities

Participants were divided into the same four groups, each with a facilitator and a notetaker. The facilitators asked the questions and kept the conversation moving while the notetakers took high-level notes of the conversation's key points. The groups came together to reflect briefly on each section before returning to their individual groups for the next section.

When recruiting through a referral sample, as our sample did, there is a risk of self-selection bias where only the most interested respond. Those who recruit participants usually nominate people they know well or who share similar views and perspectives as they do, therefore the representativeness of the sample is not guaranteed. The findings of this survey should be limited to describing the needs and challenges of women leaders who were recruited for informing and shaping a Canadian Christian Women’s Collaborative Network and should not be used to make representative assumptions about Canadian Christian women in general.

The following tables (A1-A6) describe the sample that was recruited for this survey.

**Table A1.** Respondents by age

| <b>Age</b>                | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 18 – 24                   | 1                  |
| 25 – 34                   | 7                  |
| 35 – 44                   | 10                 |
| 45 – 54                   | 20                 |
| 55 – 64                   | 18                 |
| 65 +                      | 7                  |
| Prefer not to answer / NA | 2                  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>65</b>          |

**Table A2.** Respondents by region

| <b>Region</b>             | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| British Columbia          | 14                 |
| Alberta                   | 5                  |
| Saskatchewan              | 0                  |
| Manitoba                  | 1                  |
| Ontario                   | 38                 |
| Quebec                    | 2                  |
| New Brunswick             | 0                  |
| Nova Scotia               | 1                  |
| Prince Edward Island      | 1                  |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 1                  |
| Northwest Territories     | 0                  |
| Yukon                     | 0                  |
| Nunavut                   | 0                  |
| Prefer not to answer / NA | 2                  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>65</b>          |

**Table A3.** Respondents by ethnicity

| <b>Race / Ethnicity</b>      | <b>Respondents</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Black                        | 4                  |
| Caucasian / European origin  | 48                 |
| East Asian                   | 6                  |
| Indigenous / Native Canadian | 2                  |
| Latin American               | 0                  |
| Middle Eastern               | 2                  |
| South Asian                  | 1                  |
| Southeast Asian              | 1                  |
| West Asian                   | 0                  |
| Prefer not to answer / NA    | 1                  |



|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>65</b> |
|--------------|-----------|

**Table A4.** Respondents by marital status

| <b>Marital Status</b>     | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Single                    | 8                  |
| In a relationship         | 2                  |
| Civil partnership         | 0                  |
| Married                   | 51                 |
| Separated                 | 1                  |
| Divorced                  | 0                  |
| Widowed                   | 1                  |
| Prefer not to answer / NA | 2                  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>65</b>          |

**Table A5.** Respondents by vocation

| <b>Vocation</b>                        | <b>Respondents</b> |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Administrative / Office support        | 1                  |
| Agriculture / Conservation             | 1                  |
| Arts / Media                           | 5                  |
| At-home parent / Caregiver             | 0                  |
| Business / Accounting                  | 0                  |
| Church                                 | 14                 |
| Consulting / Strategy                  | 5                  |
| Design / Architecture                  | 0                  |
| Education                              | 5                  |
| Engineering                            | 0                  |
| Entrepreneur                           | 1                  |
| Finance                                | 2                  |
| Fundraising                            | 1                  |
| Government / Policy                    | 0                  |
| Healthcare                             | 1                  |
| Hospitality / Tourism                  | 0                  |
| Human Resources                        | 1                  |
| Information / Communication Technology | 0                  |
| Legal                                  | 2                  |
| Non-profit / Charitable organization   | 9                  |
| Marketing / Communications             | 2                  |
| Mental health / Psychiatry             | 2                  |
| Ministry Organization                  | 10                 |
| Real estate                            | 0                  |
| Retail / Sales                         | 0                  |

|                           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Research                  | 1         |
| Retired                   | 0         |
| Science / Technology      | 0         |
| Trades / Services         | 0         |
| Prefer not to answer / NA | 2         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>65</b> |

**Table A6.** Respondents by theological tradition

| <b>Tradition</b>                      | <b>Respondents</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Anabaptist                            | 7                  |
| Anglican                              | 1                  |
| Baptist                               | 16                 |
| Holiness                              | 12                 |
| Pentecostal / Charismatic             | 8                  |
| Pietist / Free                        | 1                  |
| Reformed                              | 4                  |
| Restorationist                        | 0                  |
| Other evangelical                     | 1                  |
| Non-denominational                    | 7                  |
| Interdenominational                   | 2                  |
| No current denominational affiliation | 4                  |
| Prefer not to answer / NA             | 2                  |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>65</b>          |

## Appendix B: Sample strengths and limitations

One of the early objectives raised by the steering committee was to invite and assemble a wide range of women in leadership across Canada. Observations and considerations about the sample's strengths and limitations are made below.

### Age

Table A1 shows that by age, over half of respondents fall into the 45-64 age range. This indicates that younger women are either lacking in positions of leadership or the steering committee struggled to access and/or solicit responses from women under the age of 44.

### Region

According to StatsCan, 2021 population estimates show<sup>7</sup> that 38 per cent of Canada's population live in Ontario and 13 per cent in British Columbia, so we expect to see a proportionate number of responses coming from these two provinces. In this sample however, these regions are overrepresented, especially Ontario, and significant representation is lacking from the Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

### Ethnicity

Table A3 shows that most respondents (48 total) in this sample were of Caucasian/European descent. It is difficult to recruit a representative sample for ethnicity because data about Christian women leaders of colour or other under-represented groups do not exist widely enough to set quotas. Intentionally inviting and including a diverse sample of women is the best strategy for the limitations we have in research and recruitment currently. Table A3 organizes the respondent sample by ethnicity.

### Marital Status

Most women sampled in this survey indicated they are married, and 10 respondents said they were single or in a relationship (Table A4). It is important to represent the needs of never-married Christian women as this is a growing population in evangelicalism.<sup>8</sup> The average age of women at first marriage was 29.6 in 2008 (the last year Statistics Canada published this data) with an upward trend since 1971.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 17-10-0009-01 Population estimates, quarterly](#)

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Wormald, "Chapter 3: Demographic Profiles of Religious Groups," *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog), May 12, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/chapter-3-demographic-profiles-of-religious-groups/>.

<sup>9</sup> "The Canadian Marriage Map" (Cardus, May 2020), <https://www.cardus.ca/research/family/reports/the-canadian-marriage-map/>.

## Vocation

Twenty-four respondents said they had church (14 total) or ministry-related (10 total) occupations, representing over a third of the professions in the sample. The next most common answer was among those who worked for non-profit or charitable organizations (9 total). Some of these might be faith-based organizations where respondents simply chose “Non-profit/Charitable organizations” because it appeared first in the list before “Ministry organization.” The sample is notably missing women who lead in Business / Accounting, Government/Policy, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) sectors, among others (See Table A5 in Appendix A).

## Theological Tradition

Women from Baptist traditions (16 total) and Holiness traditions (12 total) are well represented in this sample with respondents from Anabaptist, Pentecostal and Non-denominational traditions coming in around seven responses each. According to EFC’s 2020 affiliate data, Pentecostals are expected to represent over 30 per cent of evangelical congregations in Canada.

Four respondents said they had no current denominational affiliation, which is substantial enough to keep in mind when thinking about how to represent Christian women and where to find them. The sample had one respondent from a Pietist / Free tradition, no responses from the Restorationist tradition, and included some historic Protestant (mainline) responses from the Anglican Church of Canada and Presbyterian Church of Canada. Because of the small size of the sample, the results are best presented by tradition rather than individual denominations.