

**THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF THE PASTOR'S WIFE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH: A  
CASE STUDY OF CHURCHES IN SOMERSET WEST, WESTERN CAPE.**

by

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*The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary.*

## DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.



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Leschenne D Rebuli

September 2008

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my wonderful husband, Daryl, for whom I hold great respect and admiration, without his consistent prayers and loving encouragement, this work would not have been completed. I thank my parents and brother who have loved me unconditionally and encouraged me to be and do my very best in all things. To my 'original' pastor and his wife, Reginald and Valerie Lush who are exemplary models of Christ-likeness and who have never wavered in their support and prayer for me. To my supervisor, Kevin, for his patient encouragement and wise counsel, I sincerely thank him. To my colleagues at SATS who have provided the opportunity to chat, debate, deliberate my thoughts and have given me seven wonderful years of fellowship. To all the pastors' wives who gave of their time and knowledge for this research and who give of themselves tirelessly for the encouragement of others, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds... and all the more as you see the Day approaching" Heb. 10:24-25. The Lord has brought about all these things (1 Cor. 10:26) and to Him belongs all the glory (Eph. 3:20, 21).

With a grateful heart,  
Leschenne  
September 2008

## SUMMARY

This research discusses the role of the pastor's wife in the local church, with special emphasis on wives living in Somerset West, Western Cape. Ten pastors' wives from a variety of churches in Somerset West town were interviewed to determine the situation praxis. Each wife interviewed shared with regard to her experience as a pastor's wife, expected role within the church and current life situation.

A biblical investigation was undertaken to establish biblical directives for the pastor's wife and the local church with regard to her role. Focus was placed on her distinctiveness as a uniquely created woman, her design as a wife or helpmeet and her identity as a child of God. Examination of 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2 revealed responsibilities of those women called to serve in the church, whilst Proverbs 31 was examined to determine qualities belonging to the ideal wife.

A comparison of the situation praxis and biblical model revealed that pastors' wives understood their role as wives but lacked confidence with regard to their specific role in the church. Evidence suggested that wives did not have sufficient support of friends or congregational members, nor focused education or training. Most wives were very happy in their role as a pastor's wife and undoubtedly supportive of their husband and his ministry.

Recommendations were made to implement programmes within the church to create awareness of wives' needs and identify ways in which to support wives and their families. Further recommendations were made to provide wives with better access to resources for self-directed learning where necessary.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. The Research Problem

#### 1.1.1. Background to the Problem

White (1986:23) said “the pastor’s wife is the only woman I know who is asked to work full-time without pay on her husband’s job, in a role no one has yet defined”. Dobson (2004:20) completed a study on the role of the pastor’s wife in the United States of America during the 1990’s through a survey and found differences regarding the perceived role depending on the size of the local church.

Although some in-depth study in the USA has occurred regarding the role of the pastor’s wife there is very little study available in defining or establishing the role of the pastor’s wife from an African or South African perspective. Swart (2003) in her Masters thesis discussed the experiences of fifteen wives married to clergyman within the Dutch Reformed church in South Africa. She identified ways in which her life and others had been influenced as a result of being married to clergyman and presented ways in which others can care for and support such women.

Often those men called to pastoral ministry are already married. Those wives may have married engineers, lawyers or businessmen, never anticipating a call into full-time ministry. While a wife may be responsible for household chores or raising the children or may even be in full-time employment, she has certain expectations placed on her as the wife of a pastor.

The role of the pastor’s wife has often been shaped by an evangelical mindset of a legalistic and traditional view. A preliminary study of the pastor’s

wife reveals that her role is poorly defined and is often subject to specific denominational rather than to scriptural requirements.

Traditionally the pastor's wife has been recognised as a person within the church who is considered a non-paid church helper. The pastor's wife is someone who, like her husband, is theologically equipped, administratively capable, child-friendly and hospitable at all hours of the day or night. She is seen to be the person who will meet the needs of the women within the congregation whilst never going through difficult or discouraging times; a 'super woman' of sorts. The following, although American, are caricatures of the 'typical' pastor's wife:

The pastor's wife is the only woman I know who is introduced by her husband's profession.... The pastor's wife is the only woman I know who is asked to work full time without pay on her husband's job, in a role no one has yet defined.... The pastor's wife can have just about anything she wants, so long as someone gives it to her, she can make it herself; or she can buy it for half price; even then, she may feel compelled to explain where she got it. (White, 1986:11, 23),

Applicant's wife must be both stunning and plain, smartly attired but conservative in appearance, gracious and able to get along with everyone, even women. Must be willing to work in church kitchens, teach Sunday school, baby-sit, run multilith machine, wait table, never listen to gossip, never become discouraged, (Norland, 1972:12).

Cullen (2007) shares an advertisement for the pastor's wife:

HELP WANTED: Pastor's wife. Must sing, play music, lead youth groups, raise seraphic children, entertain church notables, minister to other wives, have ability to recite Bible backward and choreograph Christmas pageant. Must keep pastor sated, peaceful and out of trouble. Difficult colleagues, demanding customers, erratic hours. Pay: \$0.

Although the above advertisement is fictitious and possibly humorous many of the statements made were consistent with studies done by White (1986) and Dobson (2004). Due to the experience of many American pastors' wives it was understood that the church did not adhere to a biblical understanding of the role of the pastor's wife. Then developed a question of

the South African pastor's wife: does she experience the same 'stardom' as that of her American counterpart? Are unrealistic expectations placed on her? Is the church adhering to biblical principles with regard to the role that the pastor's wife may or may not play?

### **1.1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The objective of this study is to ascertain how pastors' wives in Somerset West understand their roles within the local church and to evaluate how well current praxis in the sample churches lines up with a biblical perspective on the roles and responsibilities of pastors' wives.

The following constitute the major questions that I will seek to address in this research:

- What is the current situation regarding the role of the pastor's wife in the context of churches in Somerset West, Western Cape?
- How does the current situation compare with the biblical requirements?
- What biblical principles are needed to assist the pastor's wife in understanding her role in the local church in the South African context?
- What teaching does the local church require in order to understand the role of the pastor's wife in the local church biblically?

### **1.1.3. Elucidation of the Problem**

Misconceptions are widely held concerning the role of the pastor's wife in the local church by both the church and the pastor's wife. Such misunderstandings cause major problems in terms of expectations and involvement in the local church ministry.

As opposed to other positions in the church, like elder or deacon, there is not a specific job description or list of duties that depict the role of the pastor's wife. Each wife is different and possesses different spiritual gifts. Placing her in a uniform office may limit her capabilities and purpose in the church, if indeed she has a specific purpose within the church. As there is currently no defined role for a pastor's wife, identifying her purpose is necessary.

Whether through particular need or biblical understanding, the church, in the past, has included the pastor's wife into the life of the church. She is frequently seen to be a prominent person in the church who is responsible for performing certain functions. Expectations are placed on the pastor's wife and have continued to be placed on her over the years for the simple reason that she is married to the pastor and therefore must be involved in the church.

#### **1.1.3.1. Delimitation of the Study**

There are significant challenges to establishing the role of the pastor's wife in an African context, since the context differs from region to region. Due to the limited number of evangelical churches within the town boundaries this study will limit itself to ten wives of full-time senior pastors, with specific focus on churches in Somerset West, Western Cape area. This study has been limited in order to provide more qualitative feedback, providing an opportunity to speak closely with wives in a safe environment.

Interviews (qualitative methodology) provide the opportunity to experience more fully the role of the pastor's wife as I interact privately with individual wives. Confining the sample size to a specific town gives me the freedom to speak to wives across denominational barriers without encountering diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore any disparities observed should not be due to cultural differences and will not play a role with the outcome of the research.

#### **1.1.3.2. Definitions of Terms: Concepts relating to the Pastor's Wife**

It is essential that certain terms be identified in order not to misunderstand key concepts. These terms will be discussed and defined in the section below.

For the purpose of this study, the following terms relating to the pastor's wife, will be understood in light of the definitions presented below:

**Pastor:** (deSilva 2004:739) *episkopos* or *presbyteros*, a person or persons responsible for the overall care of a

congregation. The 'overseer' is usually only referred to in the singular. For the purpose of this study 'pastor' will be a generic term for minister, lead elder, preacher and reverend.

**Elder:** (deSilva 2004:740) *presbyteros*, one of a group of elders responsible for the spiritual well-being of a congregation (1 Tim. 3).

**Pastor's Wife:** a woman married specifically to a senior pastor or elder.

**Pastoral couple:** a husband and wife both called and employed by the church, both receiving a salary.

### 1.1.3.3. Value of the Study

This study will be of value to practical theology and the local evangelical church in educating congregations on the function, purpose and specific role of the pastor's wife.

By answering key questions, a suggested role of the pastor's wife can be identified and compared to the situation praxis in order to determine any needs to be addressed by the church and/or the pastor's wife. Recommendations can then be made to suggest improvement or commend correct practice.

It would be advantageous for this study to establish the expectations of both the church and the wife and compare these findings to a biblical perspective. This will provide a foundation on which to establish useful recommendations for the church.

This research will seek to cover the following objectives:

- To conduct a situation analysis of pastor's wives in churches in the Somerset West area, Western Cape (Chapter 2).
- To present the biblical role of the pastor's wife in the local church (Chapter 3).
- To present practical proposals to assist the pastor's wife and the congregation in understanding and accepting her biblical role in the

local church, with special reference to churches in Somerset West, Western Cape (Chapter 4).

## **1.2. The Research Plan**

### **1.2.1. The Research Design**

The LIM (Cowan 2000) research model will be used for this study. Smith (2008:206) defines practical theology, in contrast to Biblical Studies or Systematic Theology, as the application of theological study to life and ministry. The LIM model presents an ideal framework in which to discuss the role of the pastor's wife in the local church. Cowan's model is not only used to identify the situation praxis but then demands a contribution to the situation praxis becoming more in line with the biblical command of such practices (Smith, 2008:207). A workable solution is required for the problem to be corrected and praxis brought in line with the Word of God.

This research will need to rely upon empirical research, more specifically interviews with pastors' wives in Somerset West, Western Cape. Whilst many books have been written concerning Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Ministry, with specific reference to the life of the male pastor, few scholarly works have been written specifically for the role and ministry of the pastor's wife. Family matters are dealt with on a limited basis within Pastoral Ministry books. Most often one chapter is devoted to the importance of family life, the wife, children, leisure activities, etc. (e.g., Prime and Begg 2004; Adams 1984; Bryant and Brunson 2007; Macarthur 2005). Although little concerning the pastor's wife is written in such books, testimonials by pastors' wives have been written, for the encouragement of other pastors' wives. There are also many websites which cater to the specific needs these wives face. These books and websites, amongst others, will be consulted as well as formal interviews with local pastors' wives in Somerset West.

It is the purpose of this study to evaluate current praxis of the church in light of biblical guidelines to inform future praxis. I will personally interview ten pastors' wives from local churches within the boundaries of Somerset West, Western Cape, South Africa in order to discover the situation praxis, revealing

the current situation of each wife. Through understanding the role, needs, insights, joys and grievances as well as the faced expectations of the church on the pastor's wife, one can identify where the situation praxis is inconsistent or similar to the biblical instruction for the wife of a pastor.

### **1.2.2. Methodology for Chapter 2: Empirical Research**

The empirical research component of this study will involve qualitative research, the collecting of first-hand information through one-on-one interviews. Personal interviews with ten pastors' wives<sup>1</sup> will be carried out in order to identify their roles, responsibilities and involvement in the local church and community. Each wife will indicate how she views her role and how the pastor views the role of his wife in the church.

A qualitative study is beneficial for a number of reasons. First, the diverse nature of pastoral settings in South Africa means finding a stereotypical pastor's wife role would be impossible. A qualitative study provides the opportunity to do an exhaustive study of a very small population. Second, to appreciate the typical pastor's wife requires an interview approach; surveys, or a quantitative approach, may not achieve the same depth of insight necessary to understand her role. Qualitative research allows me to carry out in-depth analysis of a small population that represents an exhaustive sample of pastors' wives in Somerset West.

This chapter will also include a review of the current situation but addressing the answers to each question asked of the pastor's wife. The identification of strengths and weaknesses will provide a foundation for recommendations in chapter 4.

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<sup>1</sup> An attempt was made to meet with all of the pastors' wives in Somerset West and only 10 wives agreed to meet together for this research endeavour. Many of the wives who were not available indicated their schedules were too busy, as they either worked full-time or were not interested. The few wives who did not respond to two contact attempts were not pursued further.



### **1.2.3. Methodology for Chapter 3: A Biblical Perspective on the Role of Pastors' Wives**

Key concepts belonging to the pastor's wife will be discussed in chapter 3 with specific attention given to her creation as a woman (Gen. 1:27), purpose as a wife (Gen. 2:18; Prov. 31) and calling as a believer (Jn. 1:12, 13). A brief look at the importance of women's involvement in the local church will be undertaken through a variety of literary resources beginning with an overview of women in the early church. An in-depth look at 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2, using various scholarly commentaries and articles, will provide insight into the characteristics of the elder's wife and her responsibilities in the local church. Thus providing a holistic view of the role of the pastor's wife in the local church from a biblical perspective.

### **1.2.4. Methodology for Chapter 4: Opportunities and Recommendations**

This chapter will discuss the way forward and biblical guidelines regarding how to assist the pastor's wife in understanding her role in the local church and helping the congregation to understand the role of the pastor's wife. Highlighting positive measures churches may already be taking to redefine the biblical role of the pastor's wife in the local church.

## **1.3 Summary**

In light of the preliminary evidence presented, the role of the pastor's wife is in need of investigation. Through personal interviews with pastors' wives in the Somerset West, Western Cape area, research will be gathered to determine the situation as it is within the local churches. This information will be analysed and evaluated in light of biblical principles.

The biblical perspective on the role of pastor's wife will require an in-depth look at various scriptures (Gen. 1:27; 2:18; Prov. 31; 1 Tim. 3:11; Ti 2), together with a brief overview of early church history with regard to woman's involvement in the church. As we will discover, the role of the wife within scripture offers fundamental principles adding to and clarifying her role

specifically as a pastor's wife. We will briefly touch on the importance of knowing her identity in Christ in order to fulfil her spiritual commitment to God.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Situation Analysis: The Pastor's Wife in the Local Church**

Chapter two will be devoted to displaying and analysing the empirical research component of the study. After a brief ethnographic profile (identity analysis) of the Somerset West town, the empirical research will be discussed question by question. The questions asked and answers received from pastors' wives in one-on-one interviews from Somerset West churches will be provided together with an analysis of responses. This will uncover the situation as it is within Somerset West. Informal discussions with church leaders and congregational members' views will be incorporated into any observations relevant to the study. I will answer some key questions to discover the current role of pastors' wives in the local churches.

#### **2.1. A Brief History and Demographic Profile of Somerset West, Western Cape, South Africa**

##### **2.1.1. The History of Somerset West**

Indigenous people, named the Strandlopers (beachcombers), originally inhabited Somerset West. This town is located in the False Bay coastal area, at the base of the Helderberg Mountains. The Dutch East India Company controlled the Cape in the late 1600's, at the time the then appointed governor, William Adrian van der Stel claimed most of the land. He created a farm called Vergelegen where he lived until 1708 ([www.swest.info](http://www.swest.info), 2007).

Whilst the Cape was under British control, the farmers, working the Vergelegen farms, requested permission to build a church. The new Governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, granted their request. The church still stands today and is still operational. This historical monument is located on Church Street in the centre of town. Subsequent buildings were erected around the church and a village was created which was named Somerset in

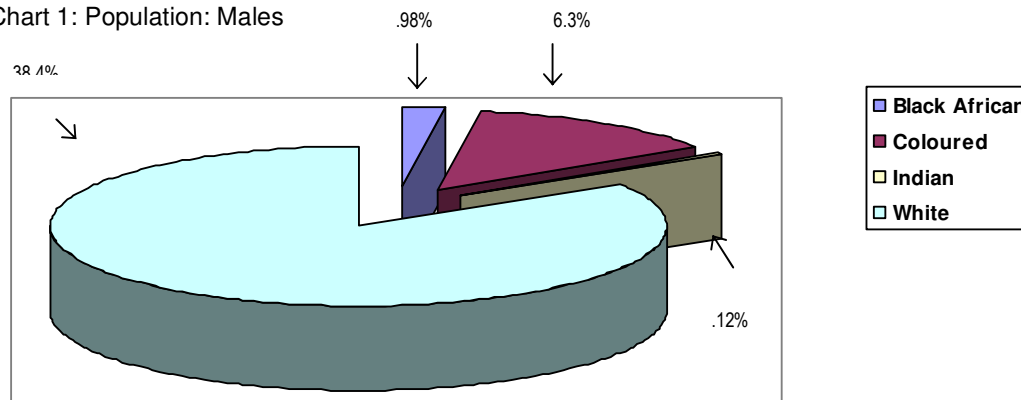
1819, in honour of the Governor. The town was later renamed to Somerset West to distinguish it from a similarly named town in the Eastern Cape, Somerset East.

The entire Helderberg region is renowned for its scenic beauty, flora and fauna, wine, fruit and historical heritage ([www.swest.info](http://www.swest.info) 2007). Somerset West is situated approximately 50 kilometres from Cape Town and 6 kilometres from “Die Strand” a coastal town and beachside of the Atlantic Ocean. Today Somerset West is home to a large young professional and family orientated community as well as a healthy retirement community. The town is predominantly an affluent white area with coloured and black population groups in the adjoining towns of Macassar and Lwandle.

During the last census taken in 2001, the population of Somerset West was 30,232 (Statistics South Africa).<sup>2</sup> The largest population group at the time were white English speaking 35-54 year old females. Statistics taken from the census are discussed in the next section.

### 2.1.2. Demographic Profile by Gender (see also Appendix 3)

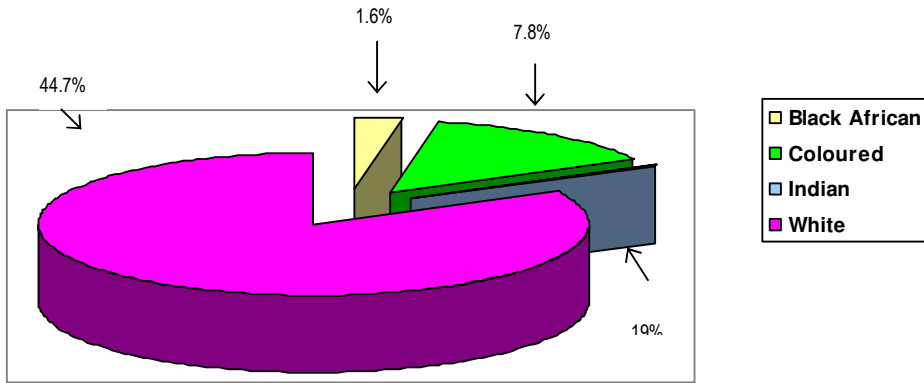
Chart 1: Population: Males



<sup>2</sup> Supplied by Strategic Development Information and GIS from 2001 Census data supplied by Statistics South Africa. Available on the internet <http://www.capetown.gov.za/censusinfo/Census2001-new/Suburbs/Somerset%20West.htm> Accessed 06 July 2007

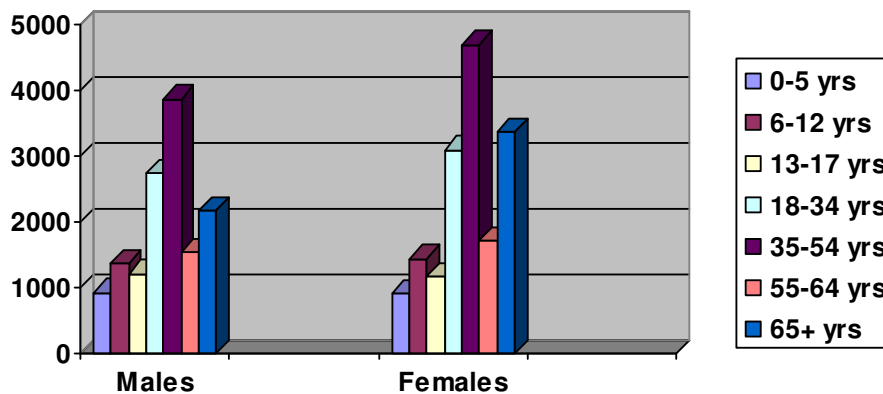
This chart indicates that the majority of the male population of Somerset West is White followed by a small population of Coloured inhabitants.

Chart 2: Population: Females



The above chart illustrates that the majority of the female population of Somerset West is white followed by a small population of coloured inhabitants. There are slightly more female residents in Somerset West than there are male residents, in fact, 54.2% of the population is female.

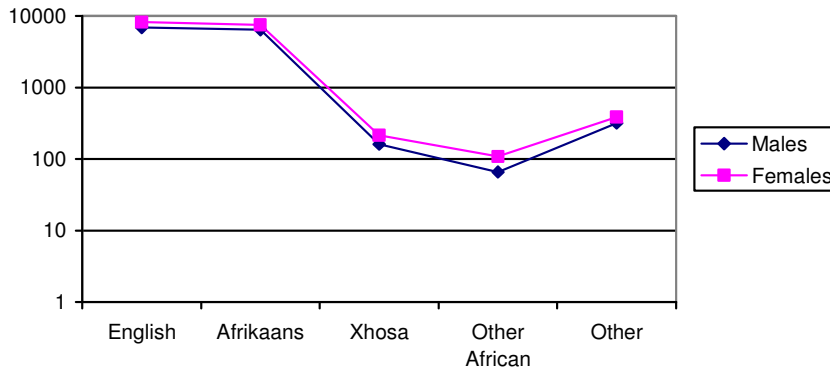
Chart 3: Age: Male and Female



This chart points out that the average age of a Somerset West resident in 2001 was between 35 and 54 years of age. There are fewer residents in

retirement age than working citizens, 18.4% of the community are of retirement age whilst 58.4% are of working age.

Chart 4 Languages: Male and Female



The above chart identifies a marginally larger (3.5%) English speaking population of 49.7% to a 46.2% population of Afrikaans speaking citizens. This is an interesting fact as many of the churches within the town boundaries of Somerset West are Afrikaans speaking denominations. This may indicate that fewer English speaking citizens attend church or that English speaking churches are fewer but larger in size.

From the above charts and statistical information it can be concluded that the average citizen of Somerset West in 2001 was an English-speaking white female between the ages of 35 and 54.

### 2.1.3. Churches in Somerset West

There are approximately 20 Protestant churches within the town boundaries of Somerset West, excluding the Catholic Church, one Kingdom Hall and two Seventh Day Adventist Churches. Due to the limited number of churches within the area, requirements concerning congregational size were not limited. However, this study does delimit itself to wives of full-time senior pastors, a total of ten participants. Due to the limited availability of pastors' wives and the importance of qualitative research parameters, a small number of wives were treated intimately, as case studies.

The wives interviewed for this research project are associated with the local Protestant churches.<sup>3</sup> Due to the confidential nature of this research (Mouton, 2001:243-244), the identity of the pastors' wives and their church names will be codified for the sake of anonymity.<sup>4</sup>

## **2.2. Research Methodology**

The aim of this study is to define the role of the pastor's wife in the [local] South African church context from a biblical perspective.

For years, I sat in my own home church in Canada and viewed my pastor's wife with awe. She always looked perfect, walked with grace, smiled incessantly and could play the piano and lead worship for hours. My personal perceptions were related to putting my pastor's wife on a pedestal and identifying some 'saintly' characteristics through her lifestyle and practice. It has been evident over the years of watching many pastors' wives that my expectations of them, although sincere, were often misguided. I was perpetuating the misconception of their sainthood without appreciating the unique and wonderful individual God had created them to be. The emphasis is rightly placed on their identification with God, their Saviour, as opposed to the role of their husband within a particular church surrounding. I began to question whether the pastor's wife was indeed meant to be a prominent member of the church. Is she a leader simply because she is married to the 'guy in charge'? Does she hold an office on the executive? Are there specific responsibilities and functions she is required to perform? As mentioned previously, my pastor's wife sang beautifully, played the piano and led worship most Sunday mornings. I was surprised to attend other churches where wives did not do the same. Instead I found wives who gave children's talks every Sunday morning, others running women's ministries, others running counselling seminars, youth or children's Sunday school ministries and the list goes on. I found that these women were often leading or ministering in some capacity, as though it were expected and part of their role

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<sup>3</sup> For a list of church names and denominations see Appendix 4.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of the questions posed is attached as Appendix 5.

in the church. Whilst in one particularly large church I attended the wife did nothing except look exquisite, smile and greet people with her husband as parishioners left the building.

Information and resources regarding the role of the pastor's wife come predominantly from the United States. Although their experiences may not all be relevant within the South African context many similarities exist with regard to personal characteristics and difficulties faced. White (1986:11-12) identified the wives who contributed to her survey to be talented, creative, conscientious and caring individuals. One wife in particular shared with White her current responsibilities:

I am the church secretary, office manager, bookkeeper, assistant music director, adult teacher, children's church coordinator, district representative of women's ministries, organist, member of a trio and of a choral group. I help supplement the family income by working part time as a school teacher. My husband and I have two children....

We, as congregational members, have a general misconception that our pastors' wives are involved in everything for everyone as volunteers. The above mentioned example of a pastor's wife, who seems continually overburdened with responsibilities, is a classic example and may vary only slightly from congregation to congregation. White (1986:13) identifies some of differences between wives married to pastors and wives married to a man in any other profession, namely that of identifying the wife within her husband's vocation. A wife of a doctor is rarely (if ever) introduced as the "doctor's wife", or the wife of a professor is not introduced by her husband's vocation as the "professor's wife". Why then has the church taken to introducing the wife of the pastor within the context of his vocation? Does it stipulate a certain job responsibility for her? Should her identity be found in her husband's vocation?

Dobson's (2004:13) quantitative research survey to pastors' wives in the United States identified some key needs pastors' wives face such as setting boundaries, friendships, dealing with congregational expectations, support of one's husband and finding one's calling in the church. In Swart's (2003:50-59) Master's thesis regarding ministry to Dutch Reformed clergymen wives, she



identifies some key issues with regard to hurt in their lives; issues such as loss of self, congregational expectations, marriage relationship, friendships and their spiritual relationship. From both research endeavours a common theme emerges, the role of the pastor's wife in the local church is undefined and yet identified as a known and prominent role in the life of the church. Dobson (2004:15) explains the term pastor's wife as "a 'title' for a part of one's life that is not a career, a position, and for some not even a calling or perceived role. Being the wife of a pastor is not a job". With this stated, a key question to ask then is what is the role of the pastor's wife? Is she a valued or undervalued member of the congregation? Is she aware of her role and/or responsibilities, if indeed she has either? Does she have any needs? Is the church aware of her as a person, church member, church leader, etc.? These questions and others will be addressed in the upcoming sections.

### **2.2.1 Empirical Research: Interviewees**

The research objective in this study is to identify the role<sup>5</sup> of a group of people (Soy, 1997), namely, pastors' wives within the area of Somerset West. It is my desire to listen to their stories, observe them within their church environment and find out if a distinct role belonging to the pastor's wife exists within their context.

The LIM research model has been used for this study to identify the situation practice. This research model, developed by Prof Michael A. Cowan who is a professor of practical theology at Loyola University, provides an ideal template to engage the "world as it is" and the "world as it should be" (Cowan, 2000). He identifies a correlational association between the world and our traditions with that of scripture.

This model was chosen because it lends itself to the importance of identifying and analysing the situation praxis, without prejudice or assumption. Later, the theological tradition and biblical instruction for the pastor's wife in

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<sup>5</sup> "proper or customary function". role. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/role> (accessed: August 25, 2008).

the local church will be discussed in Chapter 3. Once the situation *as it is* practiced in the local church is identified, a comparison of the theory and praxis is undertaken to determine any areas that may need improvement in Chapter 4. Any recommendations for further consideration in research will be detailed in Chapter 5.

As this study lends itself to empirical research within such a limited number of subjects, it is necessary to identify the pillars of qualitative research with particular reference to case study research. Soy (1997) uses Robert K. Yin (1984:23) to define case study research as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”. The phenomenon, or hypothesis, with regard to the role of the pastor’s wife in the local church is yet undefined. Not many have attempted to identify the role, responsibilities and/or requirements for the pastor’s wife and fewer still have gone to her, in her real-life context to discover the unique pressures she faces. Garson (2002) sets forth five types of case studies as indicated by Jensen and Rodgers (2001:237-239), the *comparative case study* is identified as “a set of multiple case studies of multiple research entities for the purpose of cross-unit comparison. Both qualitative comparisons are generally made”. It is this type of case study I wish to focus on. Ten pastors’ wives will form multiple case studies; a comparison between the cases will indicate any pattern-matching (Tellis, 1997). Should pattern-matching occur it will increase confidence in the theory, or hypothesis, as indicated by Tellis (1997).

A package containing a covering letter introducing myself with a copy of the approved research proposal was created for each pastor’s wife. This package also included a copy of the survey and interview questions with a self-addressed stamped envelope for wives who were unable to meet face to face.<sup>6</sup> This information together with a Prospectus from the *South African Theological Seminary* was personally presented to the pastor, church secretary or directly to the pastor’s wife at the local church.<sup>7</sup> The wives were

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<sup>6</sup> As a result, all interviews occurred face-to-face.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 6 for an information sample collection of information.

not specifically selected; they were offered the choice to be interviewed. If the pastor's wife consented to meet with me a date and time was set for the interview. Interviews would take place at the convenience of the pastor's wife. Meetings usually took place in a private home or church office. One telephonic attempt was made to follow-up pastors' wives who did not initially respond positively to the request for an interview. Some time after the interview I attended a morning church service to view the wife within the context of her church environment.

The collection of first-hand information through one-on-one interviews with ten pastors' wives was conducted in approximately one two-hour session. It took 18 months to interview all 10 wives. Interviews were carried out in order to identify their roles, responsibilities and involvement in the local church, if any, and community.

Each pastor's wife that consented to meet with me understood that the church name, her identity and that of her husband would remain completely confidential.

### **2.2.2 Empirical Research: The Interview Questions and Answers**

In this section, the responses to questions will be reviewed and discussed by comparison and contrast between the pastors' wives interviewed as well as existing literature where possible. Key observations will be highlighted under each question. However, no recommendations will be made at this point; these will be reserved for chapter four. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the current situation with respect to the roles of pastors' wives in Somerset West.

Strict measures have been taken to ensure the privacy of the pastor's wife, her family and church congregation. At no time will this private information be available to the public. Due to the number of respondents, it would not be logical to determine any statistics from the information received from pastors' wives within the Somerset West region. General conclusions will be made and where possible these conclusions will be compared to existing research. Although the number of respondents is few the contributions each

wife made to understanding the role of the pastor's wife by sharing her story is valuable. Each wife shared honestly and openly concerning their ministry, struggles, joys and feelings relating to marriage and the church.

### **2.3 Short Questions**

The following short questions were asked in order to gain insight into each wife's particular situation. The answers written below are an accurate reflection of the intent of each pastor's wife, where necessary (for privacy) names or sensitive information may have been changed without detracting from the message of the pastor's wife. A unique code has been formulated so that the author is aware of which respondent is answering but no one else is privy to this information.

#### **2.3.1 What is your church denomination?**

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, denominations are not revealed, however, in some cases denominations are responsible for indicating a particular function a pastor's wife is required to fulfil.

#### **2.3.2 Approximately how many Christians are in membership at your church?**

<b>22B5q:</b>	51-100
<b>23B3w:</b>	Over 201
<b>34D5p:</b>	101-150
<b>12B1s:</b>	151-200
<b>22B3q:</b>	Over 201
<b>23C2y:</b>	51-100
<b>12B5t:</b>	Over 201
<b>44D3w:</b>	Over 201
<b>12B4z:</b>	Over 201
<b>22B4w:</b>	Over 201

Most of the wives interviewed for this study were members of congregations larger than 200 members. Those who had churches fewer than 200 members participated actively in the church in a number of roles, from Sunday school teacher to caretaker. Wives belonging to churches with over

200 congregants were nominally involved or not involved at all. This general observation may indicate the needs within the church are greater with a smaller congregation; alternatively, a smaller number of congregants mean fewer workers within the church and, therefore, the wife feels a greater need to assist the church and her husband in growing the church. This observation may be worthy of further study. Often in smaller congregations pastors work from home. Prime and Begg (2004:262) indicate that “pressure points” occur when the pastor or elder is not available and the wife is present. They indicate that the pastor’s wife must often step in to help wherever possible. Wives from larger congregations expressed that they were able to be involved in activities they were passionate about instead of feeling pressured to be involved in areas outside of their interests, while wives of smaller congregations generally expressed involvement in many activities within the church.

### **2.3.3 To which population group do you belong?**

**22B5q:** White  
**23B3w:** White  
**34D5p:** White  
**12B1s:** White  
**22B3q:** White  
**23C2y:** White  
**12B5t:** Coloured  
**44D3w:** White  
**12B4z:** White  
**22B4w:** White

The wives interviewed were predominantly English speaking, white females at an average age of 45. This observation keeps in line with the citizen statistics of Somerset West (2001) indicating the average citizen is an English-speaking white female between the ages of 35 and 54. The research conducted for this project would not be relevant within the black African community. No black African pastors’ wives reside within the boundaries of Somerset West town. Future research should be done to establish the role and needs of black African pastors’ wives in their local communities as their roles may or may not differ from the role and needs of their white

counterparts. Further research in this area would be of great value to the church and theological community in Africa.

#### **2.3.4 How many years have you been in ministry?**

<b>22B5q:</b>	6-10
<b>23B3w:</b>	6-10
<b>34D5p:</b>	Over 21
<b>12B1s:</b>	11-15
<b>22B3q:</b>	16-20
<b>23C2y:</b>	Less than 5
<b>12B5t:</b>	11-15
<b>44D3w:</b>	Less than 5
<b>12B4z:</b>	6-10
<b>22B4w:</b>	Over 21

On average, most of the wives had up to 10 years experience in ministry. Interestingly, just over half of the wives indicated they were in full-time ministry. All wives indicated that they were involved in ministry, either part-time or full-time, even if they were not fulfilling a certain task within the church.

Years of experience became a very important question in understanding the stages at which a wife found herself. Wives with less ministry experience seemed to struggle with perceptions of congregational members whilst the more experienced wives had learned to become more confident and sure of who they were, being realistic and understanding of congregational expectations.

Wives varied in relation to age and years of service; they also differed in stages of life, whether a new mother, mother or grandmother. Mothers with young children often expressed a need for more privacy and family time, whilst mothers with older children or children who had left home expressed a desire to spend more quality time with their husbands.

### **2.3.5 How many years have you been serving at your current church?**

<b>22B5q:</b>	6-10
<b>23B3w:</b>	Less than 5
<b>34D5p:</b>	Over 21
<b>12B1s:</b>	6-10
<b>22B3q:</b>	11-15
<b>23C2y:</b>	Less than 5
<b>12B5t:</b>	Less than 5
<b>44D3w:</b>	Less than 5
<b>12B4z:</b>	Less than 5
<b>22B4w:</b>	6-10

In contrast to the number of years most wives had been in ministry, the majority of wives had spent less than 10 years at their current church. Two wives were within their first year at the local church while others had been with the church for approximately five years or slightly more. Two wives indicated that they had been with their current church from its inception.

Adjustment to new surroundings is sometimes difficult. Expectations that congregational members may often come into play when a new pastor's wife is welcomed into a church. If the previous wife was retired and had been considerably involved in the church many vacancies would have been left for the new wife to fulfil. However, if the new wife is a young mother it is unlikely that the new pastor's wife would take up any of the vacancies. This may cause church members to become upset or disappointed by the new wife's seemingly disinterested attitude. Any such disturbances within the church should be immediately addressed by the church leadership and the congregants to understand the level of involvement the wife is able to meet without harm of unrealistic expectations being placed on her. Such support from her husband or church leadership is invaluable.

### **2.3.6 Is your husband the ... senior pastor/assistant pastor?**

The ten wives interviewed for this research project were married to the senior pastor of each respective church.

### **2.3.7 Were you aware of your husband's calling to full-time ministry prior to getting married?**

<b>22B5q:</b>	no
<b>34D5p:</b>	yes
<b>12B1s:</b>	yes
<b>23B3w:</b>	yes
<b>22B3q:</b>	yes
<b>23C2y:</b>	no
<b>12B5t:</b>	yes
<b>44D3w:</b>	yes
<b>12B4z:</b>	yes
<b>22B4w:</b>	yes

It is difficult to say at the outset of a marriage where a couple will be in five, ten, or twenty years. The evidence of an ever-changing world is a constant. A man or woman may have two or three major career changes in his or her lifetime, thereby making the commitment made at the outset of the marriage very real and often challenging. Couples who are saved during married life or experience a definite call to full-time Christian ministry may have difficulty adjusting to the new lifestyle. It is important that couples seek godly counsel endeavouring to learn all they can of the new life to which they have now committed.

The wives interviewed for this research project vary in age and years of married life as well as years of ministry service. Most wives were aware of their husband's calling to the pastorate at the outset of their marriage.

Those wives who were aware of their husband's calling prior to marriage are often called to the same or similar ministry. While some wives may rise to the challenge and embrace this lifestyle, many experience burnout and depression at times (Haggard, 2004:24). Most of the wives interviewed saw their husband's profession as his own calling and did not consider themselves a specific part of his ministry, although they considered themselves to be in full- or part-time ministry. On average, the wives identified a distinct ministry within their own particular gifting.



Two wives indicated that they were not aware of their husband's calling to full-time ministry prior to getting married. In both cases the couple came to know the Lord after they were married. After being married approximately 20 years these husbands committed to full-time ministry and left their secular professions. Each wife was happy to enter into ministry with her husband, not feeling any resentment to the calling and life change.

Much of the literature available regarding pastors' wives is written by pastors' wives, for pastors' wives, the general attitude of these authors is that whether the pastor's wife is aware of her husband's calling prior to marriage or it becomes known after marriage the wife is called with her husband into ministry (Haggard, 2004:14). Some authors quote scripture passages as, "the two shall become one flesh..." (Gen. 2:24) to point out the wife is duty bound to church ministry along side her husband (Haggard 2004, Senter 1979). Most wives interviewed believed that their primary calling was to meet the needs of their husband and to serve him and their children, their involvement within the church came secondary or as they were able.

**2.3.8 Do you consider yourself to be ... in full-time ministry/in part-time ministry/an unpaid pastoral assistant or fellow servant with your husband/other?**

- 22B5q:** Full-time ministry
- 23B3w:** Full-time ministry
- 34D5p:** Full-time ministry
- 12B1s:** Part-time ministry
- 22B3q:** Full-time ministry
- 23C2y:** Full-time ministry
- 12B5t:** Part-time ministry
- 44D3w:** Part-time ministry
- 12B4z:** Part-time ministry
- 22B4w:** Full-time ministry

Some denominations will seek to hire a pastor/wife combination, the term identified in Chapter 1 as *ministerial* or *pastoral couple* (a husband and wife both called and employed by the church, both receiving a salary).

Churches may prefer this as opposed to a pastor only. The understanding is that a *pastoral couple* serving in the church is a stronger and more effective combination for tackling congregational needs. Churches may provide a salary for the pastor's wife if specific job functions are required of the wife, whilst other churches will see her involvement as a labour of love and afford no financial remuneration. Three wives interviewed in this study were hired by the church to fulfil specific roles for the church, namely, secretary.

Several of the wives interviewed considered themselves to be in part-time ministry and the majority felt they were in full-time ministry. An interesting observation to note is that some of the wives who indicated they were in full-time ministry also worked in part- or full-time paid employment outside of the church. The foremost reason expressed for this outside employment was to supplement the household income.

### 2.3.9 Who determined your role in the local church?

2.3.9.1	The elders of the church determined what my involvement would be in the church
2.3.9.2	My husband determined what my involvement would be in the church
2.3.9.3	I determined what my involvement would be in the church
2.3.9.4	A combination of the above

- 22B5q:** A combination of the above
- 23B3w:** Myself
- 34D5p:** My husband
- 12B1s:** Myself
- 22B3q:** Myself
- 23C2y:** Myself
- 12B5t:** Myself
- 44D3w:** Myself
- 12B4z:** Myself
- 22B4w:** Myself

Most wives determined their own role within the church. In one instance, the pastor or husband determined how the wife should be involved in the church with the wife's agreement. Another wife committed with her husband and church leadership to be involved as much as was needed until

congregational members could be raised up to take her place. Although one particular pastor's wife indicated that she chose her role within the church, she was expected by the denomination to fulfil a leadership role in the women's ministry to which she agreed.

This question is particularly important in understanding the scope of the role of the pastor's wife. If each wife is responsible for determining her role within the local church, we can presuppose each role would be different, as each wife is different, enjoys different ministries within the church and is gifted with different spiritual gifts. It would therefore be unrealistic to determine a specific role for pastors' wives within the local church based on any model. The underlying assumption would be that she would be involved if and when she was able, not limited to any particular function, like teaching Sunday school or running the ladies ministry, but whatever role God placed on her heart to fulfil. In order to keep everyone content, a wife may "choose" her role within the church, feeling pressured to fulfil her husband's or the congregation's expectations and thereby accepts to take on a task simply because she feels obligated to keep others happy.

It is true and very relevant that many churches hire the pastor's wife to fulfil a certain function within the church and may therefore have a set job description. Many ministry couples will focus their time and energy on fulfilling requirements specific to their job description, often wives being responsible for ministering to the ladies within the congregation. This assigned role is acceptable when it is a paid position. Presumably, the employment process will seek an individual who has this gifting and calling and the wife enters the position with open eyes and fair expectations.

### **2.3.10 Have you ever received a job description?**

- 22B5q:** No
- 23B3w:** No
- 34D5p:** Yes
- 12B1s:** No
- 22B3q:** No
- 23C2y:** Yes

- 12B5t: No
- 44D3w: No
- 12B4z: No
- 22B4w: Yes

The majority of wives had never received a formal job description from the church. Although it was understood by one denomination that the wife be involved in the ladies ministry of the church, the wife agreed to the requirement without a specific job description. Those wives who had received a job description from the church indicated that they were hired by the church to fulfil a certain position within the church like secretary or office manager, a paid position. One wife indicated her job description dealt with issues pertaining to her role as *pastor's wife*.

**2.3.11 Describe your role in the local church: observer, participator, educator, leader, none of the above or other**

- 22B5q: Participator, Educator, Leader
- 23B3w: Participator, Leader, Support to husband
- 34D5p: Other: Active member
- 12B1s: All of the above, and caretaker
- 22B3q: Leader
- 23C2y: Leader
- 12B5t: Observer
- 44D3w: All of the above, and Counsellor/Mentor
- 12B4z: All of the above, and Role Model/Facilitator/Encourager
- 22B4w: Outreach Manager

This question received many different responses. Many of the wives felt they were 'all of the above' and more. The majority response was that of leader. The concept of the pastor's wife being just another someone in the congregation was banished when a commonality of expectations surround her role as a *leader*, in some way, whether intended or not, exists. Why would these wives believe they were leaders? In what ways were they leaders and who expected them so show themselves as leaders? Some wives indicated they lead the ladies group or a particular ministry and so therefore being seen as a leader is obvious. Others indicated they were seen as leaders simply

because their husbands were in essence leading the church. The onus of leadership automatically fell on them because of their husband's position. Haggard (2004:130) says that pastors' wives are leaders; often, whether they like it or not, the congregational members look to them for guidance or as an example. While Dobson (2004:147) indicates that although pastors' wives are viewed as leaders because they are married to the pastor, they should not be viewed any differently from a Christian within secular employment who serves within the church. Each Christian is an example of Christ and should offer sound biblical guidance and leadership regardless of to whom they are married.

If a pastor's wife is indeed a leader for the simple fact that she is the wife of the pastor, then our viewpoint, in my opinion, is skewed as any office or position becomes 'unofficial'. However, if she is seen as other Christians to be an example and influential in her faith our view point has merit and the responsibility of leadership falls to her, the pastor and family members. One of the earliest pieces of literature written regarding the role of the pastor's wife was a small book written in 1832 entitled *Hints to a Clergyman's Wife*, the author sums up her role as follows:

Her peculiar situation gives her much influence over the parish in which she resides, and this talent she will assiduously endeavour to employ, as far as possible, to the honour of her Lord and Master. The very circumstance of the Clergyman being the individual to whom the people look for religious instruction and counsel, necessarily throws a measure of influence into the hands of his wife. ... The influence of a Clergyman's wife is of a twofold nature. It is partly derived from her husband's connexion with the parish, and partly from her own individual character and exertions. As the wife of their Minister, the female part of the parish will naturally look to her for counsel and direction. (Hints 1832:21-22)

It is evident from the scriptures that leadership is not everyone's gift (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:6-8) nor responsibility, however, exemplary lifestyle is (Col. 3:7-10). Leadership, in this sense, is not seen as a position or office but as the power to influence; this function of 'pastor's wife' is 'unofficial' within most churches. The pastor's wife becomes responsible for the influence she casts

upon the female population of the congregation that seeks her advice or example of Christian faith.

**2.3.12 Do you believe that the church needs to be educated on the role of the pastor's wife in the church?**

- 12.1 Definitely yes
- 12.2 Perhaps yes
- 12.3 Definitely no
- 12.4 Uncertain

- 22B5q:** Perhaps yes
- 23B3w:** Uncertain
- 34D5p:** Definitely yes
- 12B1s:** Definitely yes
- 22B3q:** Definitely yes
- 23C2y:** Definitely yes
- 12B5t:** Definitely yes
- 44D3w:** Uncertain
- 12B4z:** Uncertain
- 22B4w:** No

The majority of wives felt that the church needed to be educated on the role of the pastor's wife in the local church. Of those that felt this was a necessity, the majority understood the role to be non-standard in nature. These wives also believed that scripture taught about the role.

Some wives indicated that whether scripture spoke specifically about the role of the pastor's wife or not the congregational members were to understand their position in the church.

Wives discussed the need to be, in a sense, unnoticed. They wished to express their involvement in the church as a regular church member and not particularly a leader or office holder.

Those wives who felt the church did not need to be educated on the role expressed either a church congregation that understood them or felt there was insufficient reason to educate members; indirectly the churches to which these wives belonged had over 200 members.

**2.3.13 Do you believe Scripture teaches about the role of the pastor's wife in the local church? Yes/No/Uncertain**

**22B5q:** Yes  
**23B3w:** No  
**34D5p:** Yes  
**12B1s:** Uncertain  
**22B3q:** Yes  
**23C2y:** Yes  
**12B5t:** No  
**44D3w:** No  
**12B4z:** No  
**22B4w:** No

Wives were divided on the answer to this question. Those wives who agreed that scripture taught on the role of the pastor's wife spoke mostly of their role as a wife primarily and as a Christian believer. Some were uncertain as to teachings specific to the role while others agreed that no scripture spoke specifically to the role of the pastor's wife. Although there are no scriptures specifically relating to the role of the pastor's or elder's wife within the church body, scripture has a great deal to say regarding the role and responsibilities of the wife. There again, volumes of literature have been written on our responsibilities as Christian believers within the body of Christ. As Christian believers, our understanding of scripture is fundamental to our understanding of who we are and what role we play within our church community.

**2.3.14 Are you encouraged to use your spiritual gifts in your local church?**

**22B5q:** Yes  
**23B3w:** Yes  
**34D5p:** Yes  
**12B1s:** Yes  
**22B3q:** Yes  
**23C2y:** Yes  
**12B5t:** Yes  
**44D3w:** Yes

**12B4z:** Yes

**22B4w:** Yes

Each wife indicated that she was encouraged to use her spiritual gifts within the church. However, during discussions with pastors' wives, a few wives indicated that they were sometimes requested to perform tasks within the church that are outside of their gifting, but are nevertheless considered part of their role by a denomination or executive board. This is mostly evident with the churches affiliated to the Baptist Union of South Africa where the wife of the senior pastor assumes the role of the head of the women's ministry within the church. Although this may not be a hard and fast rule as each church is autonomous in nature, it is however true of many churches within the Union.

### **2.3.15 Who encourages you to use your gifts?**

- My husband
- The church leadership
- The ladies group
- Individuals
- No one

**22B5q:** All

**23B3w:** Holy Spirit

**34D5p:** Husband, Church

**12B1s:** Individuals

**22B3q:** Husband, Church, Individuals

**23C2y:** All

**12B5t:** Husband

**44D3w:** All

**12B4z:** All

**22B4w:** All

Most wives have the support and encouragement of church members, husbands and church leaders to use, explore and develop their spiritual gifts within the church. Freedom is exercised as a few wives indicated that they were called upon to perform certain tasks or functions outside of their gifting. Not all wives believed they had the gift of hospitality but were often called upon to be hospitable, whilst other wives did not have the gift of leadership



and yet were called upon to fulfil certain functions of leadership within the church body. Most wives indicated that they felt privileged to be the wife of the pastor and involved in ministry so the involvement was not necessarily burdensome.

### **2.3.16 Do you feel obligated to participate in church functions?**

- 22B5q:** Yes
- 23B3w:** Yes
- 34D5p:** Yes
- 12B1s:** Yes
- 22B3q:** Yes
- 23C2y:** Sometimes
- 12B5t:** No
- 44D3w:** No
- 12B4z:** No
- 22B4w:** No

The answer to this interesting question was divided amongst the wives interviewed. Wives who felt obligated to attend church functions mostly felt that it was the expected thing to do as the pastor's wife, not necessarily because they would simply benefit from the event. One wife expressed that although she sometimes struggles to go because she is busy or tired she is often blessed by attending the events. Another wife expressed her guilt at not attending certain church meetings because she was a mother of young children and needed to be home with them, fearing that church members would not understand her responsibilities to her family. Frances Norland offers insight into what some wives go through:

the romantic outlook of a life of service together grows dim when children come along, producing numerous family commitments. Often the wives will need to find part-time or full-time jobs to supplement household income due to financial burdens, producing time constraints. The pressure of attending many church functions often produces emotions of guilt, resentment or even anger (Norland, 1972:88).

Although some wives struggle emotionally, other wives do not seem to have a problem being less involved in church functions. Wives who did not

feel obligated indicated that they attended only the meetings that they really wanted to attend. They did not make themselves scarce or cease to attend any church events but they felt no obligation to attend meetings simply because they were married to the pastor. This attitude seemed to come from those pastors' wives who were more experienced and who had been transparent regarding their commitment of involvement within the church. They were able to deal with the expectations of church members and be honest regarding their willingness and availability to commit to certain activities, groups or events. Ultimately, these wives appeared more confident in their position as a pastor's wife and church member.

**2.3.17 If yes, for what reasons do you feel obligated to participate in church functions?**

- 4.1.16.1 because I'm the pastor's wife
- 4.1.16.2 it's the expected thing to do
- 4.1.16.3 the church leadership expects it
- 4.1.16.4 my husband expects it

- 22B5q:** It's the expected thing to do
- 23B3w:** Because I'm the pastor's wife
- 34D5p:** Because I'm the pastor's wife
- 12B1s:** It's the expected thing to do
- 22B3q:** Because I'm the pastor's wife
- 23C2y:** It's the expected thing to do

The responses received to this question are interesting because the onus of the feelings belong to the pastor's wife and not to someone else. In their minds they understand that they attend church functions either because they are the pastor's wife or because they feel others expect their attendance. The expectations arise from the wife as opposed to others, although some event may have occurred to solidify this expectation within the mind of the wife. If it is the expected thing to do, whether by the wife or a congregational member, the role of the pastor's wife is unclear and expectations should be clarified in order to avoid guilt and/or frustration to the wife. If expectations are unrealistic then clarification would rest upon the church leadership to make sure any misguided assumptions are resolved and understood. The wife

needs also to be clear as to what she commits to and what she does not wish to commit to, making sure that her obligations are fulfilled where necessary.

### **2.3.18 Do you find it easy to make friends within the church?**

- 22B5q:** Yes
- 23B3w:** Yes
- 34D5p:** Yes, not close friends
- 12B1s:** Yes, not close friends
- 22B3q:** Yes
- 23C2y:** Yes, not close friends
- 12B5t:** No
- 44D3w:** Yes, not close friends
- 12B4z:** Yes, not close friends
- 22B4w:** Yes

A common thread developed as each wife answered this question. Generally, wives were friendly and made friends easily, yet very few had a close friend in whom they could share deeply. Most wives indicated that either their husband or a close family member were amongst those with whom they could share their struggles honestly and openly without fear of judgement. Some wives were asked, in addition to this question, if they were friends with other pastors' wives. Many were acquaintances but few were friends. This may be an interesting topic of research as many wives would benefit from encouraging one another, as only a pastor's wife is aware of what another pastor's wife may be going through. However, the dynamics of a relatively small town may cause difficulty in developing a sound friendship. Some wives expressed a desire to have such a close friendship but were reticent for a few reasons namely, knowing who to trust, showing favouritism and confidentiality.

### **2.3.19 Why or why not?**

- 22B5q:** I have many friends but am careful not to be too close to any one person.
- 23B3w:** I find it easy to make friends and have a close friend. I've learned to test and trust people.

- 34D5p:** Unable to confide in people because I am the pastor's wife. Discretion is needed.
- 12B1s:** Unable to confide in people because I am the pastor's wife.
- 22B3q:** I'm very careful who I trust.
- 23C2y:** Unable to confide in people because I am the pastor's wife.
- 12B5t:** People like to be friends with me, status within the church or need counselling, etc. for selfish reasons rather than just to be friends with me.
- 44D3w:** Unable to confide in people because I am the pastor's wife.
- 12B4z:** Unable to confide in people because I am the pastor's wife.
- 22B4w:** Many staff within the church are my closest friends.

A pastor's wife may know many things about fellow believers within the congregation because her husband may choose to confide in her regarding certain situations, as happens naturally within a marital relationship. Trust is crucial as well as discretion. Wives may tend to err on the side of caution when it comes to sharing anything personal to a church friend. Depending on the character of the friend the pastor and his wife could be under trial for any misspoken word. Dobson (2004:46) offers advice to young pastors' wives, "It is important, especially for those who realize that they need a few close friends, to use wisdom in choosing who their friends are and for what purpose". Similarly, Senter (1979:88) indicates that it was always understood that a pastor's wife was to be a "friend to all and close companion to none", however, she implores pastors' wives to carefully seek out a close friendship or two so as to avoid the loneliness that comes from surface friendships. A couple of the wives interviewed shared a few bad experiences trying to maintain friendships, sometimes feeling used or unfairly judged by their church friends and felt safer to withdraw from keeping any close friends within the church. Some found it easy to make friends, but relied on family members to fulfil the role of a close friend. Due to time schedules having close friends outside of the church was not always possible and work relationships did not necessarily lead to any close friendships.

## **2.4 Interview Questions**

The nature of the interview questions were more probing in order to gain further insight into the background and experience of each pastor's wife.

It should be noted that an informal conversation often occurred during interview sections, thus both the author and respondent were able to share personal struggles and encouragement. On average interviews lasted two hours. The answers written below are not verbatim due to grammatical editing or certain name changes (for privacy) which have altered the wording without detracting from the message of the pastor's wife.

**2.4.1 Were any resources made available to you as you took on this role, as the pastor's wife? If so, what were they? Did you find them helpful? Do you think you would have benefited from reading any resources?**

**22B5q:** I have had some but not as many as I would have liked. The pastor's wife role varies so much it would be difficult to write something for everyone. The most helpful book for me was *One with a Shepherd*.

**23B3w:** No. I haven't read anything about pastors' wives and don't think I would want to, it doesn't interest me. If there is a need to educate myself about an issue or topic, like counselling or for a bible study then I will do that but I think each pastor's wife situation is unique and don't feel I can box them in.

**34D5p:** I was able to attend a 'Preacher's Wives Club' whilst husband was attending Bible School, once a week for four years. It had a very practical aspect to it, if I were to help an up-and-coming preacher's wife I would recommend something extremely practical and hands on learning.

**12B1s:** Nothing – Later on I discovered another pastor's wife in the same denomination who wrote some books they were easy to relate to and somewhat helpful.

**22B3q:** None.

**23C2y:** Husband studied and there was nothing for pastor's wives on campus. Personally, Joyce Meyers has been a 'mentor' in a sense and her ministry has been very encouraging. I feel my primary role is that of being my

husband's wife and not primarily the pastor's wife. I've done many informal seminar studies to help in leadership development and dealing with spiritual warfare.

**12B5t:** None. A relative gave *The Private Life of a Minister's Wife* to me but otherwise no one was around to assist me and no resources were sourced to help me.

**44D3w:** No literature or books were readily available or given to the pastor's wife which may have been very helpful to me. I have had many friends who have been pastor's wives over the years but they were not open about their particular role. Family members who were pastors' wives were helpful and gave advice.

**12B4z:** Teaching at Bible College I was able to attend a group. Also good role models in my life that have helped me. Ministers' wives conferences (by denomination) that I have attended were also helpful to me.

**22B4w:** No – there was a monthly meeting for ministry wives at the school my husband attended. I went once but found them extremely unrealistic, prescriptive and narrow-minded. I did not want to be placed in a 'mould' to be something that I wasn't and that God did not call me to be.

Wives were generally uneducated when it came to understanding the role of the pastor's wife. Although some information was available it was not always helpful. Some wives were able to source resources to assist or encourage them while others simply learnt as they were immersed in the role. Books were general and American in culture, also unrealistic at times. A couple of wives indicated a support group was made available to them but did not necessarily meet their needs. They spoke of a mould into which each individual wife was to fit in order to be a "good pastor's wife". Many of the wives indicated at the outset of their interview that they felt they were not the 'norm', as far as the typical pastor's wife was concerned. What became evident after many interviews was that the 'non-typical' pastor's wife was is the 'norm'. By showing that each wife is an individual, obtaining resources

suitable to each wife could be impossible. However, common struggles become apparent as shown through many writers (Dobson 2004, Senter 1979, Haggard 2004, Norland 1972, Somerville 2005, White 1986, etc.). This guidance provided by experienced pastors' wives is helpful and may be easier to find with access to internet and home delivery services.

**2.4.2 Do you pursue a career or any hobbies outside of the church? If so, what are they? Why do you pursue a career or hobbies outside the church?**

**22B5q:** Not at this time because of family obligations. Reading is my hobby for now. The ministry needs have been great and have kept me busy.

**23B3w:** Not a career really. I have a job which covers costs, I am able to work half days and look after the kids. I enjoy reading and coffee with friends, these are my hobbies for now.

**34D5p:** I have a part-time job (afternoon's only). Never use to work while the children were at home. I do crafts every other Monday with other ladies from the church; I enjoy it and like to be around people. I don't have a lot of time for much else.

**12B1s:** I currently have a full-time job during the days and look after church cleaning and maintenance when necessary. No time for hobbies although I enjoy painting, exercising and crafts but my talents are used more in a crisis rather than for relaxation or fun.

**22B3q:** I have a full-time job – financial obligations with kids in varsity, etc. I have been working for a total of 10 years outside the church/home. I don't have any hobbies, but am involved in women's ministry at the church.

**23C2y:** I am very creative and talented, making a lot of crafts which is becoming more of a career now. I am somewhat of an entrepreneur and we need the income to supplement our household expenses.

**12B5t:** Yes. I am a full-time educator. I am sociable and enjoy visitation. Otherwise, I do not have any hobbies to fill my time, I am very busy with

school and being a wife and mom to our 1 year old daughter. This is what I enjoy doing the most.

**44D3w:** No. I am a pensioner so I do not have a job but am quite busy in helping my husband with visitations (elderly) or teaching the less privileged in the daughter church in Macassar. This keeps me busy.

**12B4z:** I am a qualified teacher; however due to family and church responsibilities I have chosen to stay at home with my children. So I am not working presently but may decide to at a later stage. At the moment my family takes up my time and energy.

**22B4w:** I am the full-time Outreach Manager at our church. I am focused on being a good mother to my children. I enjoy mission trips to Sri Lanka. I studied and was a Social Worker for 20 years with a private practice of counselling and social work. I enjoy hosting ladies camps on self-reflection and growth. I love my family life and am passionate about people. I love bringing people together.

The issue of employment has been an interesting one as it relates to the pastor's wife and her role within the local church. Most of the wives interviewed are employed both in and out of the church mainly to supplement the household income but also, in one case, because it was a career choice. Some authors (Haggard 2004, Senter 1979) are of the opinion that pastor's wives should not work outside of the home or church, even if the church does not formally employ them. Norland (1972:154) offers the wife some advice on exercising discernment in making a value judgment as she considers whether she should accept employment, also believing that the wife's priority is to her husband and his ministry. Pastors' wives are in the ministry together with their husbands and would therefore need to be focused not only on the needs of their husbands but also on how they can be involved more fruitfully within the church. Senter (1979:99) indicates that although the job may belong to her husband in practice and expertise, it also belongs to the wife in interest and support. Senter explains that she understands this to mean being of "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Their understanding gives credit to wives who for one



reason or another must work but inevitably believe they will miss the blessing of ministry. These wives have created a career role as the pastor's wife. Dobson (2004:15) indicates that the title 'pastor's wife', to her, does not denote "a career, a position ... not even a calling or perceived role. Being the wife of a pastor is not a job". For those wives who have chosen not to participate full-time in the ministry of the church in a position, her role as 'leader' may still remain. In a survey taken of American pastors' wives in 1993, Dobson (2004:104-105) indicates that less than 12 percent of the wives worked for the church, whilst 42 percent worked outside of the home and a further percentage worked privately at a home-based business. She promotes the opportunity of working as a way of actively engaging in emotional and mental health care for a pastor's wife and a way by which interaction between the husband and wife is individual but supportive.

It is obvious that as a married couple one's life intertwines with that of their spouse and issues of work or home life are discussed. One's involvement within a spouse's life/ministry is inevitable; however, understanding one's boundaries and limitations is exceptionally important. The role of the pastor's wife in the local church is fundamentally related to the tasks assigned to her by the church leadership. If there are very few or no assigned responsibilities the pastor's wife has agreed to fulfil then she should feel free to pursue a career or necessary employment outside of the church as this may also open up further possibility for ministry.

#### **2.4.3 Do you enjoy your role as the wife of the pastor in the local church? Give reasons for your response.**

**22B5q:** Yes. I believe it is a calling. I have joy and peace in serving God because I believe it is His plan for me.

**23B3w:** Yes. I generally enjoy my role, it is not a heavy burden although it lacks the freedom of being a 'normal' person, not seen as the pastor's wife but just myself.

**34D5p:** Yes, I enjoy being the wife of the pastor. I enjoy people.

**12B1s:** Yes, I enjoy being the wife of the pastor. I love the Lord and desire to be involved in ministry.

**22B3q:** Yes, I love people and seeing God working in their lives.

**23C2y:** Sometimes, the beginning was difficult but now I feel more secure in who I am.

**12B5t:** Yes, I love being the wife of the minister, I am proud of my husband's work.

**44D3w:** Yes, I enjoy working and teaching people, being involved in visitation with my husband.

**12B4z:** Yes, it is a privilege.

**22B4w:** I enjoy being involved in church but not because I am the pastor's wife but because I enjoy the work.

Without a doubt, each wife indicated that she enjoyed her role as the wife of the pastor. Wives enjoyed their roles for various reasons, mainly a) being made aware of God's work in the lives of believers and new Christians, and b) being proud of their husbands and knowing they are fulfilling the call of God on their lives. Most of the wives enjoy being involved in the church in some way without being expected to attend all functions or participate in all meetings. Each wife showed an appreciation for church and/or mission ministry. A few wives indicated that they believed their role as the pastor's wife was a calling, not necessarily just acceptance of their situation in life but a ministry opportunity set apart for them to do.

#### **2.4.4 Do you feel well-equipped for this role? Give reasons for your response.**

**22B5q:** Sometimes the counselling part of my role is overwhelming and yes, I would like further training. On the other hand, I see how God has equipped me even though I didn't know it.

**23B3w:** I feel better now as I have had more life experience than when I first started. Because of the experiences that I've had I am better dealing with certain issues like knowing how to grieve and relate to people who need comforting. I am self-confident and I enjoy women of all ages and get along well with others.

**34D5p:** Sometimes yes, sometimes no. When called upon to counsel others I do not feel well equipped, as I have not had any formal training.

**12B1s:** No, not very much. We were married young and I became a mother young, so the focus on equipping myself was elsewhere.

**22B3q:** Marginally, there are times I wish I had the opportunity to do studies with my husband.

**23C2y:** Sometimes, I don't feel equipped enough in the area of counselling or more spiritual issues.

**12B5t:** No, not really. I feel I could be better equipped to be more supportive to my husband.

**44D3w:** Yes, I feel fairly confident in my role. I am more mature and believe God has called me to trust in Him.

**12B4z:** Yes, I feel I am well-equipped, I have a formal background in education and am confident in the gifts the Lord has given me.

**22B4w:** Yes, I have been in secular work for many years and it has been a wonderful adjustment to be in ministry full-time the last 5 years. Having that background, I am fairly confident.

Generally, wives did not feel well equipped for the role of the pastor's wife. Some wives felt well equipped because of their formal education or employment background. Others indicated their feelings of inadequacies stemmed from a lack of formal education specifically in areas relating to ministry, i.e., counselling. Specific tasks a wife is called upon to perform,

whether leading a Bible study or assisting in a counselling session may leave her feeling vulnerable, fearing criticism because of her lack of training.

Assumptions or expectations of the pastor's wife often arise because of the work their husbands do or training their husbands have had, thinking the wife has had a similar training or background. Often wives are seen as 'more spiritual' than other ladies and are called upon to pray for meetings or events simply because being married to a pastor may indicate a higher level of spirituality. Wives who felt inadequate often mentioned a lack of time to retain a consistent devotional life. Dobson (2004:95) indicates that guilt sometimes sets in and feelings of failure or hypocrisy are experienced due to a lack of devotional life. Some of the wives interviewed indicated that they would have benefited by some education or assistance regarding their role.

#### **2.4.5 What are some of the most rewarding aspects of being a pastor's wife?**

**22B5q:** Seeing growth and change in people's lives.

**23B3w:** I enjoy getting to know people and being involved in the women's ministry. It is a privilege to have people (women) share with me, they place their trust in me and I honour that.

**34D5p:** It pleases me when congregants recognise my husband's value. It is rewarding for me to be able to support my husband in his life's work. Hearing of people come to know Christ and being a part of others coming to know Christ as Saviour is very rewarding. Being available to help and encourage others.

**12B1s:** At this point in time, I do not feel much reward with regard to being a pastor's wife. It is difficult for me and I am frustrated at times. I find comfort in knowing that I am fulfilling God's purpose and plan for my life right now.

**22B3q:** I love seeing believers being saved, especially the young people. I love people and love to see God at working in their lives.

**23C2y:** Developing relationships with people – helping and watching them to grow in the Lord. Experiencing the miraculous

**12B5t:** Hearing the thanks and praise of my husband’s ministry, to know that he is touching lives and helping others.

**44D3w:** Seeing the appreciation and joy of people who have been helped and benefited from my involvement in their lives.

**12B4z:** Seeing my husband being able to accomplish what he needs to do. Seeing new people come to Christ and get involved in the church.

**22B4w:** Being married to the pastor! Being able to be the first to hear of miracles and exciting things God is doing in and through lives of the congregational members. To experience the care and appreciation from members, their general good will.

Positive responses from the pastors’ wives indicate a true appreciation for the work of the Lord within the local church and a general sense of pride and admiration for the ministry of their husbands. Many wives indicated their love for people and ministry, showing sensitivity to the work of the Lord and often wanting to or enjoying being personally involved. One wife expressed her outlook regarding being a pastor’s wife was unrewarding. The frustrations and expectations placed on her have been overwhelming. It is common for a wife to feel overwhelmed or burnt out at some point during her ministry, as life gets busy and out of control. Her own expectations, her husband’s expectations and perceived congregational expectations mount up and cloud her mind with feelings of inadequacy and guilt.

Generally, wives who did not have the responsibility of small children at home were confident and appreciative of the ministry years within the church, feeling privileged and the role rewarding. Those who found friends within the church felt supported and encouraged to continue in the ministry.

#### **2.4.6 List some of the greatest needs you face in your church life, home life, personal life and spiritual life.**

**22B5q:** With regards to church life I find a lack of commitment and follow-through of others causing great needs within the church. Concerning home life, I would like more time with my husband and as a family. My personal life, being from America, I miss my family and being away from them is difficult. I would like to strengthen my prayer life; I find this to be my greatest spiritual need.

**23B3w:** At this stage of my life with small children I struggle to sit through an entire service without interruption, but it is coming. I would like to be more involved, to help as a door steward or at the sound desk but it is difficult with small kids and am looking forward to when I can do more in the church. I could use more sleep in my home like, personally I am doing very well. Spiritually, I need deeper and longer quiet times, also for my prayer life to get to deeper intercessory prayer.

**34D5p: TIME!** Generally, I feel blessed with my involvement and experiences within the church. I have Wednesday's off to do my thing, like shopping, relaxing, etc. Weekends are for family (to spend with children and grandchildren). I spend my lunches with my husband every day as the evenings are often rushed and there is no time to chat. I make time for personal devotions when I can in either the morning or evening.

**12B1s: TIME!** I do not have any time out of my busy life to do just what I need or want to be able to do. While currently living at the church manse (beside the church) it does not give our family the opportunity of owning our own home. Financial security is a great need and I often find myself thinking about that. I know I need to spend more time with the Lord but I'm just going through a time now that I find it difficult.

**22B3q: TIME!** This is mainly due to my job commitment. I would love to be at home now, not working, but practical aspects of a son in varsity means I cannot be involved in ministry at present. Not being able to give time to what is important to me is difficult and I go to bed feeling guilty some times,

because certain things are left undone and I have no time to take care of them. My husband loves being home and with the family and for that I am very grateful.

**23C2y: TIME!** I need to learn to manage my time effectively to meet the many daily needs – in all areas of my life. I try to keep a balance between the spiritual and fun so that I am not too wrapped up in one or the other. I've learned not to feel guilty when I cannot attend a church function or do something in/for the church.

**12B5t:** I need quality time with my husband. The church work tends to take up all of his time day and night (with different meetings) and often on days off too. I have the challenge of being a new mother at 38 years old and have had to reorganise home-life and work-life. I have yet to really find my calling within the church, some ministry or work that God wants me to be involved in. I am considering teaching a young ladies group but at the moment I am just focusing on learning to be a mother and wife.

**44D3w:** There are no needs within my church life, the church is very supportive and accepting and I am not limited, restricted or expected to do anything within the church community. I need private time with my husband/family, as there are often interruptions. Personally, I could use a close friend, other than my husband, to share things with and confide in.

I make time for the Lord and the development of my spiritual life which is important to me. I really enjoy that time.

**12B4z:** With regard to my church life I need to be more mission minded/get out of my comfort zone. My home life is good but could use a little more money for the extra things (but very content!). Personally, I need more time to relax and have time out; my kids keep me very busy. I also need more time to study God's Word.

**22B4w:** I don't have any needs in my church life. I enjoy the care and support received from my cell group and I enjoy attending the services. I would love more time at home and with husband. I would also love more quiet time to

study the Word and be able to quote more scripture from memory. Spending time memorising scripture is important to me.

One overwhelming need most wives specify is that of lack of time (or time management skill). As this may be a common need for most people and not exclusively a need of pastors' wives it may not be regarded as a real need. However, many wives specifically indicated they wanted more time with their husbands who were often not only busy during working hours but also in evening meetings, services on weekends and on call for emergencies. This may be common of other professions like doctors, policemen, etc. However, the difference is in the wife's justified or unjustified responses.

A wife of a professional may feel cheated or deprived with the amount of time the husband spends working and be justified in her feelings, while a pastor's wife will often feel guilty if she expressed such feelings. Because the husband is doing "God's work" the inconveniences are warranted and any anger, resentment or frustration she feels is unjustified. Thus, she may keep quiet, not allowing herself to express her discontentment to her husband for fear of tension in the home. Bare (1998:13) in her doctoral dissertation cites Douglas' definition of the church as a "seductive mistress which demands all a man's interest, time, and emotional involvement".<sup>8</sup> Bare goes on to say that the wife who resents the lack of time with her husband is faced with the feeling that she is also "resenting the time he gives to pleasing God". How then does the pastor's wife compete with the one who holds her husband's interests, time and emotions, when this "other woman" is *GOD*? It is evident that although every woman in today's fast-paced society struggles to find free time in her busy day of working a career, running a home, fetching and carrying children, pleasing a husband, a pastor's wife must now also find emotional strength to allow her husband opportunity to fulfil his *calling*. Whilst she attends church meetings, leads a ladies Bible study, hosts congregants for supper, etc. The overwhelming responsibilities often lead to and feelings of guilt result in a shaky family situation (Bare, p.16).

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<sup>8</sup> Douglas, William. 1965. *Ministers' Wives*. New York: Harper & Row. p. 206.



**2.4.7 Have you established any boundaries in relation to your involvement within the church? If yes, have these boundaries been conveyed to the church? To what extent has the church honoured these boundaries?**

**22B5q:** Yes, very much. The boundaries have been honoured and encouraged.

**23B3w:** Yes, I have clearly defined boundaries. I've never really had to verbalise them, people just know, seems to come naturally and the church or people definitely honour those boundaries.

**34D5p:** Not really. There is a general expectation of the congregation that I be the one to organise events, i.e., a kitchen tea or stork party for the other women in the congregation. I am able to subtly delegate many of these tasks. My husband has made an effort to establish ministry leaders and delegate responsibilities, assisting in the tidying of the church hall, setting up for services, etc. so I do not need to think of those issues. I work in the church in the mornings and at a secular job in the afternoons.

**12B1s:** No, not really. Only that I don't feel comfortable teaching or preaching in the church, but the odd bible study meeting is not a problem.

**22B3q:** We have established some boundaries over the years but very few boundaries were necessary, mostly (95%) evasive. There was a tendency to get firm with boundaries, but usually only on an individual basis. If certain issues were expressed, the church leadership was usually very understanding and accommodating.

**23C2y:** Yes. I learned to say 'no' when necessary and give input when required. I limit my involvement to my specific gifts.

**12B5t:** Yes and no. I do not get involved with anything simply because I am the wife of the minister – I choose what I believe I ought to be involved in, as the Lord leads me. I need to be more assertive in setting boundaries and then abide by them as much as is possible – my biggest concern is the time our

family has together and to make it a family commitment to protect the time set to be just us together.

**44D3w:** I enjoy visiting the older members of the congregation and working at the church in Macassar teaching children and a group of ladies. This is where I want to be involved and express my gifts. I do not (and will not) lead the ladies ministry or teach children's church and the leadership is supportive of that commitment.

**12B4z:** It depends on the situation. We take Tuesdays off and people have learned not to bother us. Other than that we don't have too many boundary problems.

**22B4w:** Yes, at one of our previous churches we lived in the manse and found the members had an 'open door' policy and did not respect our privacy.

Now that we live in our own home members do not usually show up uninvited – they are quite polite and caring regarding our private lives.

It is important to note that the life and ministry of a pastor varies between administration, spending time with people and preparation and teaching of scripture. His work is with and directed to people, God's flock (Adams, 1984:5). The pastor ministers to people who may be in crisis, in need, sick or those who simply need encouragement. Because the pastor door is never closed, in this sense, his time is often not his own unless purposefully stipulated. Creating boundaries is often necessary in order to spend quality with his family. Adams (1984:32) indicates that the most important part of a pastor's life ought to be his family because of the emphasis that scripture places on this aspect of his character. Pastors' wives feel the strain when their limited time with their husband is disturbed. Most wives indicated their boundaries were fairly well established and had few problems. Others did not have set boundaries or require specific boundaries, feeling that the congregation respected their private family times.

#### **2.4.8 To what extent is the church aware of your role in the church?**

**22B5q:** Fully aware. Because the church is new, we have been able to teach on everything the church needs to know, including my role. People know that I have filled in where necessary but am giving away many of my responsibilities as and when people are available to take over these functions.

**23B3w:** I have no idea.

**34D5p:** I find that the church is becoming more aware of our need for private time together. I find it begins with the ministry leaders, if they are doing their jobs and respecting our private lives then the rest of the congregation will too. Everyone knows who I am and what I do in the church.

**12B1s:** Little to not at all.

**22B3q:** I think most women are aware of my ministry in the church, although I am very limited as to what I can do in the church because of other commitments.

**23C2y:** The church knows who I am and where I stand on matters of involvement in the church. There is a common understanding that I am a 'normal' person and this reduces any improper expectations of my behaviour or responsibilities.

**12B5t:** They are aware that I am the wife of the pastor and would like me to be more involved but I am choosing not to be right now with the way my life is right now.

**44D3w:** Not aware at all.

**12B4z:** They know about our day off. It is in the notices. I am not very involved and I don't think people know what I do.

**22B4w:** They know that I am the OM<sup>9</sup> for the church. I have found that when the congregational member's attention has been redirected toward others, to serve outwardly they do not start placing the spotlight on inward members of the congregation, like myself. They focus more on the needs at hand.

The wives indicated that congregational members were either very aware of their involvement within the church or not aware at all. The 'role' of the pastor's wife was determined by what they did or did not do within the church, not necessarily understanding that this is the 'norm' for all pastors' wives but specific to individual wives.

Most congregational members would not necessarily be aware of what the pastor's wife does or does not do unless she is a ministry leader of sorts. It was noted that congregations fewer than 200 members tended to have a pastor's wife who was more involved in ministries within the church. It may be said that larger congregations may not account for the role of the pastor's wife within the church, as her involvement may be more of a participator as opposed to a leader.

#### **2.4.9 To what extent is the church appreciative of your role?**

**22B5q:** Very much, shown in many ways.

**23B3w:** Yes, they are not negative or there has been no gossiping. I generally feel much loved; there is no feeling of being disliked. I am very blessed.

**34D5p:** I think generally the church is very appreciative of my role in the church.

**12B1s:** I think certain people appreciate my role or me. Some see me as a friend and someone easy to talk to about anything while others (usually older members) view me as the pastor's wife and therefore should take on or assume certain responsibilities.

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<sup>9</sup> The 'OM' is a paid position within a specific church at which this wife is employed.

**22B3q:** Yes, I believe the church does appreciate my involvement.

**23C2y:** I'm not sure.

**12B5t:** They appreciate when I can be involved but expect more of me.

**44D3w:** I don't know.

**12B4z:** I think they appreciate my input.

**22B4w:** Yes, very much.

Expectations of congregants vary according to understanding and experience of prior church life. The older generation tend to seek a caring, hospitable minister's wife who supports her husband by leading some aspect of the church where he is not gifted, like worship, for example. She may also be known as the homemaker, mother and chairman of the women's league.

The younger congregants often seek a counsellor, teacher or role model. It is rare to find a congregant who is unaware of whom the pastor's wife is. However, the more modern Christian, when asked, will not expect anything from the pastor's wife within the life of the church, it is understood that she is involved wherever she is needed.

Few wives indicated that they felt appreciated for the work they do or for the work done by their husbands. Most wives were not sure if they were appreciated for their role in the church. This may indicate that they are not very visible in their involvement within the church or that many of the congregants simply do not seek out to thank or support their pastoral couples.

#### **2.4.10 Would you consider yourself the pastor's wife or simply the wife of the pastor?**

**22B5q:** Pastor's wife.

**23B3w:** Wife of the pastor.

**34D5p:** Both – I think this depends on the role and expectations of others. I feel that the members who have been at the church for a long time consider me to be the pastor's wife whilst the newer church members recognise me simply as the wife of the pastor and have little expectation of any role in the church.

**12B1s:** Wife of the pastor.

**22B3q:** Wife of the pastor.

**23C2y:** Wife of the pastor.

**12B5t:** Definitely, the wife of the minister. I am not defined by my husband's job.

**44D3w:** Wife of the pastor.

**12B4z:** Both, primarily the wife of the pastor, but there is definitely no getting away from being a pastor's wife if you want the ministry to grow and be effective.

**22B4w:** Definitely the wife of the pastor. My identity is not in my husband so much as I am confident of who God has made me to be.

Most wives indicated that they saw themselves to be the wife of the pastor and not a pastor's wife. Although a seemingly uninteresting question, there is a difference between a pastor's wife and a wife of a pastor. The subtlety lies in placing the correct identity on the wife. If one is the wife of the pastor, her identity lies in being the wife, whereas if she is a pastor's wife the identity belongs to the husband and his vocation. A few wives indicated that they were both, whether willingly or unwillingly, as they were not able to separate themselves from who their husbands are and what he does. It would be interesting to research further the state at which wives feel they are no longer identified as pastors' wives and instead as individuals.

#### **2.4.11 What message would you wish to give to the church if given the opportunity to speak frankly?**

**22B5q:** Christ died for you. It's not too much to ask that you sacrifice for Him. Always give your best, not just your 'leftovers'.

**23B3w:** My passion and concern about the church would be about the very low attendance at the prayer meetings. I would want to speak frankly to the church about this issue and the extreme lack of commitment of young families who do not put God first in their lives, it is difficult but it can be done. I don't feel the men are setting examples for their families.

**34D5p:** I would like to hear words of support for the pastor – I find a lack of commitment to the church and pastor in general and would want members to be faithful in their commitments to support the pastor and the church, to encourage him more. I get frustrated when people are critical of the church, i.e., worship, especially when they have no part in church functions.

**12B1s:** The leadership needs to assess if the pastor's wife is simply to be a support to her husband only or to be a support to both the church and her husband. If the latter, then a financial remuneration should be in order. I desire to be a team player, a part of the very important ministry team as a full-time or part-time paid member, not a person who is over-burdened with responsibilities and yet has many other non-church related responsibilities to endure. One or the other but not both.

**22B3q:** Do everything to make the pastor's children feel loved, cared for, remembered, etc. You cannot 'over do' involvement in the kids lives, in a positive way. Get rid of the 'unwritten expectations' of kids in church and school – from a behavioural aspect. As parents, we make a conscientious effort to guard our kids against negative aspects of the church. We allow them to decide for themselves without allowing them to become bitter or biased in their opinions. I would want the leaders of the church to know what the gifts of the pastor/his wife are and then set them free to use those gifts most effectively, rather than do what traditionally a pastor or his wife may be expected to do.

**23C2y:** Serve God – I want to be the best partner I can be for my husband. He is my priority, after God. I will love, accept, defend, support and be loyal to my husband's calling. Don't put God in a box. Don't be a people pleaser.

**12B5t:** Allow us (as a pastoral couple) to have a private life, give much more needed space to allow us free time to do family things. Respect days off and family time (after hours), etc.

**44D3w:** I would want to tell them to reach out to those in need, there is tremendous need and suffering. Don't judge people so easily or too quickly.

**12B4z:** Nothing specifically. That I need their prayer and that with 3 young children I won't be able to be as involved as I would like. That we are still young and don't know everything. I'm still learning.

**22B4w:** I would urge congregational members to take good care of their pastors and the pastors' families. Respect them and their privacy. Pray for the pastoral families daily.

Answers to this question were most interesting; wives felt comfortable and were encouraged to share openly. There was a general call to congregational members to a) love and serve God completely, b) be committed to the church, c) respect and support the pastor and his family, and d) understand who I am (as the pastor's wife) and how I fit in.

At times, wives expressed at times dissatisfaction with congregational members' commitment to the ministry of the church and members' expectations were often unrealistic. As members would expect the church to run in a certain way without being participants within the church, wives were not pleased with the criticism and expressed a desire to see church members more involved and passionate about serving God and local church.

One wife indicated that as church members focused more on the ministry and needs of the church their focus would be less on unimportant issues, such as, her role within the church. A general need to be understood



as a church member or Christian and not necessarily a prominent person within the church was expressed.

#### **2.4.12 What message would you wish to hear from the church?**

**22B5q:** We are so blessed by our spiritual family. I know they love us, they care for us and I am always encouraged by them.

**23B3w:** I would want to hear that they are committed to prayer and the ministry of the church. I would like to hear more preaching with conviction so that the church responds.

**34D5p:** We stand 100 percent behind you and your husband as a ministry team.

**12B1s:** I don't know. There is little to no support for me in a small church, no one to share with or confide in, not even other pastor's wives within the denomination. There is a lack of support from my husband within my family life which infringes upon ministry life as well.

**22B3q:** Nothing – the church has been most appreciative.

**23C2y:** I would like to know that God's love and grace are evident in and through our lives and ministry. That we are effective in ministry. A realisation and understanding that we are human.

**12B5t:** Continued appreciation for my husband's ministry and sacrificial time spent away from the family.

**44D3w:** Acceptance for who I am.

**12B4z:** The message I would like to hear is that they understand and that they don't even expect me to be as involved as I am.

**22B4w:** Appreciation for the pastor's work.

This question afforded the opportunity for wives to express a need they felt was not addressed. Some wives expressed that they already felt very appreciated and looked after, whilst others urged congregational members to

show support or appreciation for the pastor, his family and the ministry of the church. Wives also expressed a need to be accepted for who they were and what they had to offer the church. Pastoral support is often an oversight of the church.

Roberts (1995) in his book offers practical ways in which church members can encourage and show support to the pastor and his family. Dobson (2001:169) too urgently requests that the church pray for the pastor and his family. In both this question and the previous question wives indicated that the pastor and his family need the support and appreciation of the congregation. Further research should be done in this area to establish whether this is seen to be a problem in local churches so that this issue may be addressed.

#### **2.4.13 What particular struggles faced over the years as a pastor's wife?**

**22B5q:** I have had to realise that I can't be all things to all people. The truth is I have an audience of one – God.

**23B3w:** Getting too close and personally involved with people and issues which as backfired and hurt me. I've learned to be cautious and know who to trust, not to get too involved.

**34D5p:** The church needs to be aware of the pressures they place on the pastor's family. Often the children struggle with expectations of being 'perfect' and different to normal children. Children live in a glasshouse. Congregants react and over react with decisions made. However, our family as a result grew stronger through the struggles. There were heavy pressures and expectations on the family to be examples – as if we had the only right and proper way of doing things and were criticised if a mistake was made.

**12B1s:** Lack of finances – I don't feel there is a proper salary for pastors, there are no bonuses etc. If the church is in financial difficulty, the pastor is either not paid or paid less. I have felt that the marriage relationship comes last in our family, the church and its needs are of more importance than

immediate family requirements, this has been a terrible struggle over the last while.

**22B3q:** A rebellious son – who has now come right. As a young couple our weekends were terrible because they were always busy, I felt very alone.

**23C2y:** False expectations.

**12B5t:** Conflicts and issues with members of the congregation and learning to deal with negative relationships toward my husband. I feel I have an over-involved husband and this can be a struggle at times.

**44D3w:** There have been very few struggles over the last 8 months of being a pastor's wife. My husband is a widower so I felt a little apprehensive coming in as the new pastor's wife knowing that they all knew his previous wife and loved her, but I have been mostly accepted and welcomed.

**12B4z:** Loss of close friendships in the church. People leaving the church when things are taken personally or out of context. It hurts when they leave because they don't like my husband's preaching, etc. Changing expectations people had with the previous minister and his wife who were older and very involved in church ministries.

**22B4w:** At the beginning of our ministry lives I was worried about what might be expected of me as a pastor's wife but I became more comfortable in myself and abilities. I experienced some false expectations like one time the ladies commented on the previous wife and all her accomplishments (going with her husband on visitations, etc.) and involvements, but that was not me. I emphasised that there are many wonderful ladies in the church who are able to perform certain tasks better than myself and I will do what God has called me to do, at the time it was to be home with my children and be a good mother and a supportive wife and that is what I did.

The wives had faced various problems throughout their years of ministry experience, including unrealistic expectations, unfair comparisons and loss of friendships and congregational members. It is very evident that

wives are affected emotionally while being involved in the church where their husband ministers. Bare (1998:26) discusses the significance of a few empirical studies conducted with pastor's wives in the 60's which indicate similar frustrations:

Denton's work (1965) provided the groundwork for four major themes noted often in later studies: Role Confusion (regarding role expectations), Lack of Time (and its impact on the ministerial family), Loneliness (over 2/3 discussed feelings of loneliness), and Lack of Privacy (due to being public church servants). Denton also delineated three major role categories of pastors' wives according to their amount of involvement in the career of the husband: aloof participants, supportive participants, and incorporated participants.

Few wives indicated a lack of privacy as one of their struggles, although time was definitely a problem, as were role confusion and feelings of loneliness. In Douglas' (1965) research he finds that lack of finances or "financial strain" becomes a struggle together with the four found by Denton (Bare, 1998:27). This need was very evident amongst the pastors' wives interviewed, an interesting finding in a fairly affluent society. Lack of finances was one major reason wives chose part- or full-time secular employment.

#### **2.4.14 Do you have any regrets concerning your role as a pastor's wife?**

##### **If yes, what are your regrets?**

**22B5q:** No, none.

**23B3w:** Not yet. I take everything as a learning experience.

**34D5p:** I would've liked to have had the opportunity to do studies but couldn't because I already had children at the time my husband was completing his studies.

**12B1s:** I regret not putting action to opinions or comments sooner at the founding of the church. Getting married too young without the opportunity of experiencing life, I feel I may have rushed into married life and motherhood and would've like the opportunity to be more involved in ministry.

**22B3q:** I do regret not having the time/opportunity to study as my husband did.

**23C2y:** None. I am constantly aware that God is able to be everything when we lack the ability.

**12B5t:** None – it's a choice I've made, I knew the calling my husband had when we married, and I knew that it was his calling and not mine particularly so the ground rules were set up front. I love my husband and am very proud of him and his work.

**44D3w:** None.

**12B4z:** Taking opportunities to help people in their time of need. Not becoming involved enough in people's lives.

**22B4w:** The only regret was that I didn't join church ministry earlier. I worked as social worker for 20 years and I really enjoy the Christian environment I work in now.

A few wives had no regrets concerning their role as the pastor's wife, understanding the choice they had made and enjoying the adventure of life in ministry. Some wives indicated their regret for not taking the time or affording the opportunity to study. This may present a need for further research, if wives are willing to study on a practical level without a high level of pressure. Bare (1998:30) notes that this kind of self-directed learning is most common amongst pastors' wives as opposed to any other kind of wife. Formal training may not be practical, is often time-consuming and very costly, however, could warrant the effort if in a needed field, such as counselling.

One wife indicated her regret of not being involved more when the opportunity arose. Another indicated her desire to have participated full-time in church ministry sooner. Only one wife indicated her regret in getting married too soon without having the opportunity to be involved in other things.

#### **2.4.15 General Comments Expressed – open time of sharing:**

**22B5q:** My husband and I are missionary church planters. In some ways, that makes me different from most pastors' wives. I can't imagine doing anything other than what I am doing right now. If I were giving advice to a new pastor's wife, I would tell her that she is her husband's only cheerleader at times. Be his *helpmeet*. See things in *seasons*. Communicate your heart without lumping on guilt. Be sensitive to the times when he is ready to discuss matters, understand his needs without neglecting your own so that all needs can be met effectively.

**23B3w:** If I were giving advice to a younger pastor's wife or someone just starting out I would say, be yourself. Don't try to live up to others' expectations. God will call you and your husband to a church where they need someone just like you – with your gifts and personality. Be there for your husband, support him in every way he needs. If he is happy, everyone in the family will also be happy. Important to know your role as a wife and mother comes first. If the church encroaches on that family time then pull back. You need someone to talk to, whether your mom, sister or very close friend, someone who is totally 'safe'.

**34D5p:** I find that the role of the wife and her role as a pastor's wife are one in the same, to support her husband in his life's work. I am very happy at where they are now. I do not have anyone who can mentor me and I am not currently mentoring any particular young lady, although I am available to all for advice and encouragement.

**12B1s:** I feel burnt out at the moment and very forgotten and unimportant at home. I cannot give as much as I would like to in the church because of the family burdens. I feel very close to giving in and have considered leaving my husband and the church but I know that the Lord is helping me through this difficult time.

**22B3q:** I am very blessed to have a husband who has always been available when needed. My husband loves his home and family and wants to spend time with us, which makes a difference to those who simply want to be in

ministry and afford all time and every phone call to ministry purposes. We've had huge changes from early years in ministry to later years, the most difficult being the first 10 years when the kids were young and still in school. I remember I was frustrated because there is not always a 'knock-off' time or a job description for the pastor. A new couple needs clear expectations from the deaconate and must set clear boundaries up front, they also need to feel they are able to express all their burdens and hardships with the council so that the church can be very supportive to the couple when necessary, giving them the required time away when needed. There are often miscommunications between you and the church, or vice-versa, unrealistic expectations on both sides, how they see your role, especially if you are the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> pastoral couple to come along, you should not be expected to fill any bodies shoes, but rather be free to walk in your own. Misconception of some churches that they are getting 'two for the price of one' – those wives who work in the church should receive a salary from the church. If the husband is called, the wife is also called – she must be aware of this calling. Beware of gossip which can easily hurt you and/or your friends within the church. Ideally – it would be wonderful to have a senior couple mentoring a new pastoral couple, whether in the church or from another, prayer partners are also necessary, also a mother figure to support the wife.

**23C2y:** None.

**12B5t:** None.

**44D3w:** If giving advice to a potential pastor's wife I would tell them that we are privileged with very personal information regarding parishioners lives, so it is of utmost importance that we remain confidential, discreet, sober in judgment, etc. I would also tell them to respect their husband's need to study and give him the needed time for preparation of his sermons. Try to separate private and church life as much as possible – although your husband is on duty 24 hours a day and busy most evenings be determined to invest in your private life. There is a great emotional involvement and it is important to be each other's best friends.

**12B4z:** No two ministers' wives are alike and so there will always be the expectation from what the previous minister's wife did and when she leaves they would've gotten used to what she does and then the new minister's wife will hear what she did (directly or indirectly) feeling like she would have to 'measure up' or 'fill in'. Each minister's wife will bring to the ministry her talents, own spiritual life, personality and upbringing to the church. She needs to serve God in the light of His Word and with her diversities and the church needs to give her time to show them how she will best do this, knowing that she first has responsibilities to her husband and family and then the church.

**22B4w:** I would encourage young pastors' wives to be themselves, be true to who they are and to know their identity, enjoy who God has made them to be and not try to fit a 'expectation mould', they cannot be someone they are not. Enjoy your husband/children – give them a supportive, realistic environment in which to live and come home to. Walk a close relationship with God, not because you are expected to but because you need it.

This question was, by far, the one I most looked forward to asking. Although labelled, General Comments, we were able to discuss any topic, including any advice the wife would give to a woman starting out in ministry as a pastor's wife. The advice could be summed up in five broad areas which are listed in no particular order, 1) Support your husband, 2) Talk about ministry expectations, 3) Trust in the Lord and spend time with Him, 4) Make your home a haven, and 5) Be a friend and make friends. Each of these issues seemed to be vitally important and invaluable in assisting wives to grow and embrace life as the wife of a pastor.

As most wives were aware of their husbands calling prior to marriage their support and agreement to be in ministry was obvious. All of the wives were not averse to being in ministry and indicated they were in either part- or full-time ministry, alongside their husband. The older wives appeared to be more confident of their roles and were happy to offer advice to those younger, understanding their needs and struggles. Older wives were also more relaxed in their roles and more accepting.



## **2.5 Identifying the Role of the Pastor's Wife in the Local Church**

Understanding the role of the pastor's wife is not easy as there is no mould or template available. Each wife is unique and establishes her role within the church according to her situation. Most wives experience similar struggles throughout their church life and can offer great support to each other, especially new or young wives. Encouraging wives to cope with many different kinds of pressures from family responsibilities to church responsibilities and often job responsibilities through friendship or mentoring can decrease the risk of burn out or loneliness.

It became evident whilst interviewing pastors' wives that each wife was unique within her church context and life situations. However, three groups of wives were quickly identified, firstly, wives with young children, secondly, wives with older children still living at home, and thirdly wives with no children living at home, who were often grandmothers. For each group of ladies different issues become relevant, depending on their stage in life.

It was not very clear as to the leadership role pastors' wives play within the local church, as it is not a formal office or position; however, many wives are placed in leadership over a particular ministry and therefore are a leader in some way. Outside of a specific leadership position, wives who are not leaders still play a leadership role through example or influence. A pastor's wife is married to the most visible member of the church leadership and is therefore seen as one who has power to influence others. As many Christians simply attend church and absorb all that the pastor says without much objection, believing that his word is truth and authoritative, so too will be any word spoken by the pastor's wife to many women within the congregation. The role of the pastor's wife is thus summed up at the very basic level of one who has the ability to influence the thoughts and behaviours of another so she is then to be an example and support of the Christian faith.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

Preliminary observations indicated that pastors' wives are generally happy being the wife of the pastor. They are able to see and hear first hand of

conversions to the Christian faith or experience encouraging moments in the lives of their parishioners. Most of the wives enjoy being involved in the church in some way. All the wives indicated that they were encouraged to use their particular gifting within the church.

Some wives felt pressured to attend most church functions, this together with running a household, holding a part-time or full-time job often became too much to bear. The difference between most modern wives and pastors' wives is that they often feel guilty for not attending church functions, at times organising, leading and/or participating in them.

Most wives simply expressed the need to be understood and regarded as a normal church going Christians. Although their husbands are in full-time ministry, the family was not. Most wives were very protective with any comment regarding their children, often feeling their children were unnecessarily criticised by parishioners.

The majority of wives interviewed for this research project held part-time or full-time jobs. A few of the wives pursued careers by choice while others had to meet the needs of their family by acquiring an additional income through vocational work. Few wives had formal qualifications, many indicated one of their regrets was not being able to study, particularly counselling or biblical studies.

In the next chapter, it will be necessary to uncover a biblical response for pastors' wives. What does scripture say about her role within the local church? Who is the pastor's wife? What does history have to say about her role within the local church? We will discuss these questions and others in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### **A Biblical Perspective on Woman, Wife and the Pastor's Wife**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the biblical perspective on the role of pastors' wives. I will seek to identify her as a *woman*, a *wife* and a *believer*. There are no explicit passages prescribing specifically what the role of a pastor's wife in the local church should be, so I will seek to uncover characteristics of the elder's wife and her responsibilities in the local church, by examining 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5. A discussion on the role of the wife, with special emphasis on Proverbs 31, will reveal common misconceptions. A brief look at the importance of women's ministry in the local church will be considered from both a historical perspective and concerning today's church. The biblical basis of this study is vitally important for establishing a mandate that the local church may adopt when considering the role of the pastor's wife.

#### **3.1. The Creation of Woman**

Scripture speaks in detail regarding the creation of the woman (Gen. 1:26-27), her fundamental role as a wife (Gen. 2:18, Prov. 31:10-31) and her identity in Christ and responsibility as a follower of God (Jn. 1:12-13). These three components should not be separated as each is an integral part of a woman. The pastor's wife is first and foremost, in her existence, a woman. When she understands the reason for her creation, she will be able to build upon it as a foundation to establish her purpose and realise fulfilment in life as she is placed in different roles and positions.

### 3.1.1 Created in the Image of God: Genesis 1:26-27

The climax of creation came on the sixth day as God created humankind, "...male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). Genesis 1:26 and 27 has been analysed and dissected extensively. Many scholars have deliberated over the concept of being created in God's *image* or in His *likeness*. What does it mean to bear the image of God, to be created in His likeness? The importance of this phrase, in my opinion, exists in that God created humankind to bear His image, causing us to acknowledge, even on the most minuscule of levels, His existence (Rom. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:21, Eph. 4:24). Shelley (1988:5) indicates that God's image does not refer to anything physical, but rather to humanity's spiritual nature.

Frame (1991:227) points out that both men and women are created in God's image. He identifies that humankind *resembles* and *represents* the God. He (p. 230) explains that humankind represents God in the world and is under His Lordship exercising "control, authority, and presence in His name." He concludes that men and women equally bear the image of God "in their sexual differences, even in their differences with regard to authority and submission." Sailhamer (1994:13) shares the view of Frame; he says that, "The creation of humankind is specifically noted as a creation of 'male and female,' stressing the fact that God created 'man' as 'male and female.'" He (p. 14) suggests that God is creating a home suitable for humankind, speaking into existence the world, the light, day, night and all living things prior to creating humankind, emphasises the significance of man as the only creature created to bear God's image. This insight is important in the understanding that humankind is identified as 'special', a unique part of creation. Woman in and of herself is a specially created being.

God gives human beings purpose in Genesis 1:26 by commanding them to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Humankind was the only creation that was to bear God's image, to represent and be most like Him. God gave the command to be fruitful and to rule over every living creature. He gave food to His creation and saw that

everything was very good. Sailhamer (1994:14-15) explains that two purposes are provided by the author of Genesis for the establishment of humankind. Firstly, placing humankind in the Garden denotes the purpose of fellowship. God establishes a relationship with His creation. Secondly, God's purpose in creating humankind was for them to worship and obey Him. Our obedience is an act of worship to our Creator, which results in constant fellowship with Him. God, in His creation of man and woman, demonstrated care and purpose. God established a union between male and female in that of husband and wife. This joining together expresses God's own personal relationship within Himself; in essence, His unity. This concludes that the most reflective expression of the complex unity of God is found in the joining of male and female as husband and wife (Lazenby, 1987:65).

Lazenby (1987:65) shows that human beings, male and female, are pictured as created in the image of God, "a mystery as 'male and female' correspond structurally to 'the image of God'". Lazenby tends to focus primarily on the incompleteness of either gender without the other, thereby indicating the unity of the male and female within the sexual relationship of husband and wife to *image* God equally. He concludes by saying that "being in God's image implies an equality of the sexes that allows each to assume similar duties and roles in the Church and in society as a whole" (p. 70). Thus, woman was created to *image*<sup>10</sup> her Creator, as she shares a union with man.

Finally, Fitzpatrick (2003:21, 36) identifies the female, as well as the male, as created in God's image. *Each* becomes an equal representation of God. She identifies six key aspects in which men and women image God, namely, in calling humankind to *rule, relate, reproduce, reflect, rejoice* and *rest* like Him (p. 30). In each of these areas male or female equally represent God. Fitzpatrick does not claim that they, together, in union, image God. Individually each male and female will image God, thus differing from the view

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<sup>10</sup> By actively "imaging" one's Creator, I am seeking to show that one *displays* God's character and person. Rather than simply bearing God's image, as one might wear a jacket, it is a continuing reflection of God's divine character. Therefore, we may *image* God in a specific situation, as we feed the hungry or give a wise counsel to a wayward believer or on a continual basis as we display unconditional respect to our husband.

of Lazenby. On this point, I believe Fitzpatrick is truer to the biblical evidence than Lazenby. Both man and woman equally represent God. Each human being is created to bear God's image, therefore this could not be limited to a husband and wife relationship. Single Christians need to understand they are created in the image of God. However, the completeness found in the marriage relationship must be considered, as a Christian couple become one (Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:31) they become the image of God in unity.

### **3.1.2 Summary**

It is evident from scripture as well as different scholars that God created both male and female in His image. He created them equal and distinct; He created them for unity and purpose. We, as male and female, bear the image of our Creator. Our likeness is that of God's, in the way we unite with our spouses, rule of creation and reflect God's character. With this as a foundation, let us explore the unique purpose of woman.

### **3.2. The Purpose of Woman**

In Genesis 2, the author describes God's creation of woman from man's side. By pointing out the unique creation of the wife, who is first and foremost a woman, the author of Genesis desires to emphasise her purpose and intimate relationship to her husband. Ortlund (1991:100) points out that God within the perfection of His creation found that there was "one deficiency in Paradise. The man needed 'a helper suitable for him.'" Ortlund claims that God did not immediately produce a suitable helper, He first allowed Adam to name all the animals and find that there were no creatures suitable for him, a process of self-realisation. Genesis 2:19-20 indicates that God first formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Once the creatures were all named it was clear that no suitable helper was found for Adam.

God created woman from the very flesh of man. Using one of man's ribs God formed woman indicating his equal, match and partner in life (Shelley, 1988:5). Eve was created as Adam's partner, equally in God's image and called to glorify God (Fitzpatrick, 2003:35). The identification of one as a

*helper* has often brought the connotation of one who might be inferior. However, within Scriptural context, the identification of Adam's wife as his most suitable *helper* is one of profound placement. Let us examine the term "helper".

### **3.2.1. Helper: Genesis 2:18**

The word *helper* (Hebrew noun: 'êzer) is used 21 times in the Old Testament. It is most often used to describe God as a helper (Schultz, 1980:660). The word in relation to the creation of Eve denotes function (Patterson, 1995):

The phrase "comparable to him" (Heb. *kenegdo*, lit. 'corresponding to what is in front of him'). Designed as the perfect counterpart for the man, the woman was neither inferior nor superior, but she was alike and equal to the man in her personhood while different and unique in her function.

Piper and Grudem (1991:408-409) point out that God has created woman as man's loyal and suitable assistant to help tend the Garden and for procreation. The function of Eve is not less valuable to the maintenance of the Garden or to the furthering of mankind but the shared responsibilities involve each accomplishing complimentary tasks.

Peace (2005:49) attests to the fact that both man and woman were created to bear God's image. However, due to the fact that man was created first and given the responsibility to rule over the earth it becomes woman's responsibility to be a helper suitable for man as he carries out his ruling. Each person performs different roles within the relationship, each equally important and of worth, however distinct in authority. Many feminist theologians will disagree with Peace contending the idea that females are in some way subordinate to their male counterparts. As Rosenzweig (1986:277-80) points out, God instructs humankind to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over all creation *equally*. The usage of the Hebrew term 'êzer, according to Rosenzweig, denotes far more than the English term *helper* can offer. The term indicates an "indispensable companion".

The significance of defining the specific creative purpose in woman for understanding her role as a wife is vital, for the two are unmistakably intertwined. Should a woman be single, her primary purpose is to image her Creator and to glorify Him; she is singly focused (1 Cor. 7:34). Should a woman be married, joined to a man, her primary responsibility is to image her Creator and to glorify her husband (1 Cor. 11:7). A woman joined to a man, in marriage, is called to be his *'ezer*, “a helper suitable for him”, one to provide help or relief, one who surrounds, one who comes alongside and one who comforts her husband, an indispensable companion” (Harris, et al. 1980). Fitzpatrick (2003:39) ably identifies this calling as:

a wife who is reflecting God's helping character desires to sustain or uphold her husband; she strengthens, comforts, and seeks to protect him. Because of her love for the Lord and for her husband, she endeavours to dispel his fears by being trustworthy and gracious. She leans for strength upon the Lord so that she might share that strength with her husband. In her heart he finds shelter and protection from the world; he finds a companion who offers him what he really needs: help in his God-given calling.

It is evident that a wife could never fulfil her husband's all-encompassing needs, as only God can. However, it is also evident that God's calling for the wife is that of great responsibility and elaborate care which can only be ministered through the gifting and grace of the Holy Spirit, a strength her husband may praise her for (Prov. 31:28).

Aside from Genesis 2:18, the other major biblical passage dealing with the purpose of a woman is Proverbs 31:10-31, which teaches about the responsibilities of a godly wife, I shall now examine this text.

### **3.2.2. Wifely Responsibilities: Proverbs 31:10-31<sup>11</sup> Explored**

It would be very easy to become caught up in gender role debate<sup>12</sup> as we look at specific responsibilities assigned to wives within the marriage

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<sup>11</sup> Proverbs 31:10-31, is a poem, written in the form of an acrostic, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in proper order (MacDonald, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> For further reading regarding the gender role debate, see Appendix 1.



relationship. For the purpose of this study, it is not necessary to enter this debate. It is important to note that male and female, although equal in worth are formed differently. They are not only different physically, but also psychologically (Culver, 1987:45). After the fall of man, both Adam and Eve were identified for certain roles. God instituted that Eve would bear children and nurture her family (Gen. 3:16), and that Adam would find hardship as he worked the ground to produce food (Gen. 3:17-19). From this standpoint, we acknowledge woman's place within the family and alongside her husband.

With the above in mind, it is important to recognise the wife's responsibilities in light of a particular passage of scripture. Due to the numerous qualities presented in Proverbs 31:10-31 regarding the tasks of the *noble* wife, it seems logical to limit the study to this passage of scripture. This passage of scripture illustrates a wide range of activities the wife may engage in, varying her role and sphere of influence. Thus, the wife is not limited because of her gender or position, but rather she is praised in her gender and position (vv. 28, 29).

The Proverbs 31 woman is renowned for her "superior achievement in every area of life" (Hawkins, 1996:19).<sup>13</sup> This passage of scripture is a perfect description of a *noble* wife's duties and accomplishments. The NIV uses the word *noble* (v. 10) to translate the Hebrew word *ḥayil*. The basic meaning of *ḥayil* "strength"; other nuances derive from this root idea (Harris, Archer, & Waltke 1980: sec. 624a). When applied to a wife in Proverbs 31:10, the word refers to a woman who is strong in character, hence *virtuous* (Harris, Archer, & Waltke, 1980: sec. 624a; Brown, Driver & Briggs, 2000: s.v. 2; Gesenius & Tregelles, 2003: s.v. 3), yet retains the nuance of one who is able or capable (Koehler et al. 1999: s.v. 2). One can determine that the wife spoken of in Proverb 31 is a virtuous, capable and morally superior. The *noble*, *capable* or *virtuous* woman is not a mythical creature but rather a womanly role model.

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<sup>13</sup> Hawkins explores the identity of the noble wife in relation to Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9. He finds that the noble wife has qualities relating specifically to being a wife and mother (vv. 11, 15, 21, 23, 27, 28), who is a model or example of a wise woman but is different to Lady Wisdom. Lady Wisdom is the personification of wisdom. Hawkins (1996:19) aptly points out that neither wisdom nor folly can be limited to a single gender.

Although some women and scholars will claim that the accomplishments of the noble woman are a “harsh yardstick by which to measure shortcomings” (Hawkins, 1996:20), others will view this passage as something to which to aspire.

This poetic passage of scripture identifies a godly woman who is able to find fulfilment in her home, community and career (Shelley, 1994:910). The noble woman is committed to the good of her husband and family (vv. 12, 15, 21, 27, 28), she is godly, wise and kind (vv. 10, 20, 25, 26, 29, 30), she is industrious and productive (vv. 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 27), she is an entrepreneur and leader (vv. 15, 16, 18, 24, 26), her character and that of her husband is praiseworthy (vv. 23, 30-31). Many more adjectives could be used to describe the noble wife; however, the crux of the matter lies in her character and her relationship to her God. She is one who “fears the Lord” (v. 30).

It is evident that her responsibilities encompass a wide range of activities relating to her core purpose, which, in my opinion, is to *image* her Creator and *help* her husband. Everything that she does relates to these two concepts. She reflects God’s character as she extends her hand to the needy, gives wise counsel and protects her household (vv. 20, 25, 26). She helps and works in unity with her husband, seeking to provide for his basic needs, that of clothing and food, establishing businesses and maintaining them, bringing security and respect (vv. 11, 12, 13-25). She rules over creation as she plants her vineyard, uses natural materials and protects her family from the elements (vv. 13, 16, 21, 24, 27).

Both McGee (1981) and Wiersbe agree that the noble woman is a real *helpmeet* to her husband; Wiersbe (1991) points out that “*her heart* is faithful to the Lord and to her husband” (vv. 11-12, 30). Falwell (1994) aptly points out that “the real worth of a woman is her devotion to God,” he goes on to reference Tate (1971:99) who emphasises that the noble woman is a “person in her own right who takes a full and honored place in the life of home and Community.” These scholars and many others identify the noble woman’s godly characteristics and her purpose, in that of relating as *helper* to her husband, but they do not identify these qualities as a reflection of her Creator.

Patterson's article (1991:369) proposes that the noble woman has no other purpose than "to meet the needs of her family in the best possible way." In Poythress' article (1991:244), he indicates that the noble wife, who is entrusted with God's property and the management of people, always shows others respect, as they are created in God's image.

It is the author's opinion that the noble woman, although created in the image of God, also reflects the image of God in and through her godly characteristics as she manages God's creation and interacts with God's people. She is a model helper that God intended for man as she shows goodwill toward him (Prov. 31:12). This woman is strong and able to do all that God has called her to do with the special gifts He has placed in her. We can identify from this passage of scripture and through scholarly resources that the noble woman is not limited to working *within* the home, but that her efforts are always directed to that of *imaging* her Creator and *helping* her husband, thereby *establishing* her home.

Now that the biblical responsibilities allocated to the wife have been identified, it must be noted that she is unable to perform her responsibilities outside of her relationship to God. Hawkins (1996:22) explains that she has chosen "to anchor her life on the 'fear of Yahweh'". It is vital that special reference be made to highlight the attitude in which she lives her life. She takes her role and responsibilities seriously and enjoys them. This is not done in her own strength; her strength comes from the Lord, for whom she has great reverence (v. 31). This gives her momentum to live unselfishly for the good of her family. Today's woman will struggle to meet any of these responsibilities outside of her relationship with Jesus Christ.

With the understanding that the noble woman relies upon God for her strength let us explore in further detail the significance of the *Christian* woman and wife. A woman who firmly establishes her identity in Christ builds upon this foundation and is able to do great things with God. I will investigate the importance of the *believing* wife.

### 3.3 The Christian Woman

The Christian woman is a believer in Christ. She has submitted her life to His authority, confessed and repented of her sins and seeks a deeper personal relationship with her God (Jn. 3:36; 1 Jn. 1:9). We have identified the pastor's wife as a woman, a wife and now seek to identify her as one in Christ, a believer, who is striving to become more like Christ and her ideal equivalent, the *noble woman*.

#### 3.3.1 The Importance of *Identity Awareness*

It is important that a pastor's wife understands her biblical womanhood – the reason for her existence, her purpose and her identity in Christ. This knowledge brings confidence to fulfil her calling, thus, honouring God by supporting her husband and actively serving alongside him and within the body of Christ. This point, although seemingly simplistic, is important for any person. Women often find their identity in their husbands or in a prominent figure within their lives, sometimes even their children (Dobson, 2004:37). Men often find their identity in their vocation and not in a person (Eggerichs, 2004:196). Dobson (2004:37) relates how identity awareness, for the unbelieving wife,<sup>14</sup> could present a problem should the husband pass away. Her whole reason for existence is threatened and she may begin to have feelings of worthlessness as one lacking any purpose.

Culver (1987:46-47) explains the differences between men and women, specifically in their biological make-up. He claims, through scientific research, that women are more sensitive to their environment and therefore have a more nurturing and social nature. They quickly and easily form a nucleus of supporters who are available in a time of crisis to which they can identify. This circle of friends will often lift up a widow, giving her comfort and support, but ultimately her *identity* is in crisis. Women are relationship driven

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<sup>14</sup> Dobson only alludes to the unbelieving wife on the premise that the believing wife (although she may be affected in a similar way) should be secure because her identity resides in Christ and not solely in her husband. A wife should grieve the loss of her husband but the believing wife has the security in knowing that she is not lost with her husband because her identity remains secure in Christ. As a believing wife her identity should not be in crisis.

creatures and therefore find it natural to establish their identity primarily in their husband. However, if a woman understands her relationship with Christ, her identity is fixed and secure in Him (Eggerichs, 2004:126), allowing her to be a more confident woman, a better mother and wife (or widow) and ultimately a better servant of Christ, committed in every way to serving Him.

In scripture a female believer can be identified as a *daughter* (child) of God (Jn. 1:12, 13), a *joint-heir* with Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17; Gal. 3:26-29) and a *vessel* or *temple* of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:17). As a believer, she becomes a part of the body of Christ and is endowed with spiritual gifting (1 Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Pet. 4:9). In Romans 12, Paul urges his readers to evaluate themselves honestly, not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. A healthy self-image is vital in understanding self worth. Shelley (1994:1566) indicates that true self worth stems from understanding one's identity in Christ and accepting how God made and gifted each believer.

### **3.3.2 Ministering through Gifts**

As a woman of God, if the pastor's wife becomes aware and confident of her identity, she is free to use the unique personality and special gifting God has given her. In Hybels' study (2004:24-25), he emphasises that each believer is called to the priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), a priesthood which was ushered in by the events in Acts 2. This priesthood consists of all disciples of Christ, living in submission to Him, giving their bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1) and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, so that each can minister and serve others. It is not the gift that one receives which becomes important but that the gift is used to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10). The spiritual gifts God gives to His son or daughter, in Christ, are complementary to his/her personality and calling.

Patterson (1995) indicates that Christian women are challenged to open their homes without grumbling (1 Pet. 4:9). Given the need for hospitality, this may or may not be the wife's spiritual gift, but is necessary for the encouragement of the believers. One is not limited to his/her spiritual gifting but is responsible to be ready to serve regardless of his/her gift and even

more so within their area of gifting. Patterson goes on to say that the balance of a woman's priorities must be kept in perspective. Her relationship with God, as well as to her husband and children if she is married, must come before the others in her life and special service within the community.

MacDonald (1995) indicates that each believer has received a gift from God, "a special function to perform as a member of the Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 29-31; Rom. 12:6-8). These gifts are a *stewardship* from God. In other words, spiritual gifts are not to be used for selfish gain but for God's glory and for the good of others. Schreiner (1991:215) agrees; he indicates that women may possess all the spiritual gifts that men do. They are able to function as fully integrated members of the local church. Schreiner goes on to point out that there is more scriptural evidence for women in ministry than for restrictions against women in ministry.

The topic of spiritual gifts<sup>15</sup> is far too vast to discuss fully in this research project. However, if we understand that each believer is equipped with a spiritual gift from God, endowed and sustained by the Holy Spirit, then the believer can begin to explore his/her involvement within the church. This involvement, as indicated above, is one that is voluntary as it stems from a right relationship with God where one's identity is found securely in Christ.

### **3.4 Woman in the Early Church**

Women have experienced incredible growth and decline within the church since its inception. The involvement of women in the early church, according to Kroeger (1997), was vast, serving as leaders of house churches, deaconesses and prophetesses. These converted Christian women were zealous about their service. However, as the church became more public the role of women serving within the church became less frequent, mostly due to societal stigmas (Torjesen 1997). Today, many women are free to function within their spiritual gifting and calling. For the purpose of this study it is important that we take a brief look at the positions women held in the early

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<sup>15</sup> For further reading regarding spiritual gifts see Appendix 2.

church so that a foundation for the biblical role of the pastor's wife can be established.

### **3.4.1 A Brief Historical Context**

Kroeger (1987:28) explains that in the first century Greco-Roman women were passionate about their religion. In fact, Kroeger states that "as disadvantaged, neglected and repressed members of society, [they] often turned to religion as a release and escape." These women were known to be aggressive and free in their cultic worship. She goes on to point out that churches during the Apostle Paul's time were filled with such women converted to faith in Christ. Kroeger states that "women who lacked any sort of formal education flocked to cults that were despised by the intellectuals."

According to Torjesen (1997), the orthodox biblical position of women in the early church details a limited public ministry, that is, prophesying, leadership. This may have been due to their social stature. Christianity was very much a 'poor man's faith' in the early establishment of the church. As Christianity moved up the social scale, from lower-class to middle and upper class involvement of women in ministry often became restricted. Women were limited by their social status and married women were scarcely seen outside of their homes, with the exception of church work, as this was deemed to be inappropriate (Torjesen, 1997). However, societal limitations did not seem to stop these women from service or church study.

Freedman (1992:958) indicates that roles of women varied from culture to culture in the Mediterranean region. Whilst in Athens women married to citizens were predominantly house-bound others in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Egypt worked their own businesses, served in public office or had important roles in religious cults. Freedman identifies a patriarchal framework existed through the Roman Empire.

Kroeger (1997), points out that by the early 300s these:

[H]igh-born Christian women seized upon the study of the Bible and of Hebrew and Greek. The circle of Roman women who studied with Jerome in the late 300s showed such scholarship that he thought nothing of referring some church elders to Marcella for the resolution of a hermeneutical problem. By the early 400s,

Augustine could declare that “any old Christian woman” was better educated in spiritual matters than many a philosopher.

Kroeger goes on to speak of the incredibly generous acts of service for which Christian women were revered. However, many faced opposition from their families for spending monies helping the poor. Freedman (1992:960) offers that evidence shows an attempt at reformation of the patriarchal structure of family and society, a reformation that took place “in Christ.” This reformation ultimately led to a greater stability and equality in the marriage structure and to “greater roles in the church both for married and unmarried women”.

The responsibilities of these women, predominantly female deacons<sup>16</sup> (1 Tim. 3:11) and widows<sup>17</sup> (1 Tim. 5: 1-16) were adapted from directives in 1 Timothy 5, according to Kroeger (1997). The widows, Karras (2005:96-116) points out, were consecrated women who had certain liturgical functions but were not ordained members of the clergy. They were responsible for praying for the concerns of the church. The younger widows, *virgins*, and those serving as deacons were given the more laborious tasks. They would be responsible for visiting, encouraging, serving communion and praying with other women, the sick, instructing in purity and holiness and ministering to the poor.

Torjesen (1997) claims that the *Didascalia*<sup>18</sup> (XV) forbade women to teach in the church but that, as described in *Didascalia* (III), the widows, known as the “altar of God”, who were being taken care of by the church were responsible to meet the needs of the women in the congregation and to always be in prayer for the ministers. Older widows involved in preaching and

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<sup>16</sup> Female deacons were considered to be those women who were quite possibly unmarried women or widows who were young enough to remarry but took a vow to remain unmarried (Kohler, 2002:1).

<sup>17</sup> Widows were over the age of remarriage and considered ‘legitimate’ widows as indicated in 1 Timothy 5:1-16, (Kohler, 2002:1).

<sup>18</sup> *Didascalia* is defined by Kohler (2002:1) as a Greek work, in eight books, containing regulations of Church life. The work is better known under the name of “Apostolic Constitutions,” the full title being “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles [composed] by Clemens, Bishop and Citizen of Rome—Catholic Didascalia.”



teaching began to create conflict and were later restricted to their homes. Torjesen points out that by the middle of the third century women who were very active in church ministry, through evangelism, baptising, teaching, interpreting scripture, etc. found conflict resulting from a concern that “such activity was inappropriate for women according to Greco-Roman society” (Torjesen, 1997). Controversy also arose due to possible scandal relating to widows teaching ‘lies’. It was discovered in *Didascalia* (III) that restrictions put on Christian wives were then similarly placed on widows serving in the Church, thus they were restricted to their homes and to prayer for the church. House churches, which were the norm for that time, became much more public and into the 4<sup>th</sup> century women’s involvement within the church became scarce.

According to Torjesen (1997), the *Statutes of the Apostles*,<sup>19</sup> indicates that the problem of women’s leadership shifted from the ministry of the widows to the ministry of female deacons. Only three widows were to be ordained – two were to function as intercessors and one to minister to women when they were sick and confined to their homes. The ministry of male and female deacons was primarily the ministry of good works; however, part of their responsibilities involved a service of the Eucharist. A controversy arose over the female deacons being involved in serving the Eucharistic and thus brought about the end to women ministering within the church completely.

The lack of women’s involvement within the church was only restricted for a time. As the church shifted from a private sector, of house churches, into a public sector of formal buildings and ordinations, the role of women in the church became strained. Torjesen attributes this to the role of the wife within the house church (first and second century), her natural domain, trying to exercise her leadership responsibilities within the public sector where the church now was. Freedman (1992:960) indicates that understanding the tension between the “family of faith and the physical family was a key to understanding the new roles women could play in the church”. Women had

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<sup>19</sup> A church order of the early 4th century.

many commitments, indicating a wide range of responsibilities required of the wife. Bellan-Boyer (2003:52) says that,

Women lived their lives in the tension between social standards that required women to stay indoors and hidden away as the coveted symbols of honor and shame-based cultural systems; and economic forces driving them out an into the fields and the streets of the city.

The Hellenistic woman of the day had no authority outside of her home and was not able to exercise any of the leadership responsibilities; thus her ministry was limited to ministering to other women (Torjesen, 1997). MacDonald (1996:213) points out references made concerning married women, widows and virgins found in historical documents of that time indicates “fluidity with respect to the roles adopted by women.” Both Bellan-Boyer (2003:55) and MacDonald (1996:215) explain that many Christian women found houses together in order to escape marriage to a pagan. These women often did great work within the church. Widows were reassigned the responsibility of ministering to women within the congregation and to share the truth with pagan women. These widows were to train up the younger women, teaching them to be good wives, support the poor and provide for the sick. However, we learn from Karras (2005:96-116) that the female diaconate eventually ended. However, Karras goes on to explain, due to the various needs of the community of believing women during the Byzantine period (tenth through thirteenth centuries), the church had to recognise the need for women’s ministries and therefore a few women would carry out prescribed pastoral and liturgical functions.

In summing up this brief look at women in the early church, it is important to note that women were involved actively within the life of the church, specifically widows and deaconesses. It has been established that the wife, within early church settings, was not a predominant figure in the church due to her responsibilities at home, as well as, societal restrictions. It is not evident from historical resources that the wife belonging to the elder or leadership of the church was actively involved in church ministry; however, this may be debated from a Scriptural context.

### 3.4.2 1 Timothy 3:11: The Female Deacon

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul describes requirements for elders and deacons. Caught in the middle of the passage is verse 11, with instruction to the *wife* or *woman* in reference to the ministry of a male deacon, as follows:

“In the same way their wives are to be women worthy of respect not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.” (NIV)	“Women must likewise be dignified not malicious gossips but temperate faithful in all things” (NASB)
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There is some debate over the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:11. If one reads the NIV, a natural assumption would be the identification of wives married to deacons. Most translations have used the term *wives* or *wife*. However the question arises, why are there no stipulations regarding the wife of any other church leader? Lewis (1979:168) offers that wives of elders were not able to assist their husbands with regard to their primary responsibilities namely, preaching and teaching. However, deacon’s wives were able to serve along side their husbands as and when the need arose. Lewis aptly points out that this understanding limits the scriptural context, “what about those [wives] tied down with a large family responsibility? To whom does he [the deacon] turn to for womanly assistance?” This interpretation would reason that those women who were not able to serve alongside their husbands (due to family responsibilities) negatively influence the husband’s probability of obtaining the office of deacon.

Knight (1991:353) suggests that the only plausible translation of this passage should rest with that of *wives*, otherwise the verse within the passage appears abrupt. He goes on to say that the reference to Phoebe (Rom. 16:1) as a *servant* of the church is a non-technical term, used ‘unofficially’. If one agrees with Knight then it must be concluded that wives belonging to deacons, those who serve within the church, have requirements placed on their character which they are to uphold, separating them from

other wives with the congregation as well as wives belong to elders or those higher up in the leadership of the church.

MacDonald (1995) does not lend himself to the interpretation of the passage as specific to the wife of a deacon but to a woman in service to the church. With further investigation into the text, the Greek term translated “wives” literally means “any adult female”, married or unmarried. Danker et al. (2000) suggest that the Greek word *gunē* can be translated as either *woman* or *wife* and within the context of 1 Timothy 3 they favour rendering it as *wives* because the discussion revolves around the responsibilities of male deacons. Therefore the male deacons were also responsible to have “wives whose dress, conduct and speech are exemplary and befitting their position as wives of deacons.” The most common translation would be that of wife but it is not limited to such as the phrase does not include a modifier (Schreiner, 1991:214). Lewis (1979:169) offers that the conjunction translated, “in the same way” in the NIV or “likewise” in the NASB, distinguishes a new and distinct group being discussed. Schreiner (1991:505) suggests that Paul was referring to female deacons as he omits any moral qualifications specific to wives of elders. Schreiner holds to the fact that women cannot be elders but offers evidence that women functioned as deacons within the church. Some scholars (Schreiner 1991, Madigan 2005, Lewis 1979) and churches have agreed to this interpretation thereby justifying the appointment of female deacons. However, there is no determined consensus.

It is most probable that the reference to woman in 1 Timothy 3:11 is not limited to the wife of a deacon (Vine, 1996). Many scholars have pointed out the notation to Phoebe in Romans 16:1, a servant (*diakonos*), identifies the concept and acknowledges the appointment of female deacons. Fitzmyer (2004:592) concurs; he states that no possessive pronoun is found in the original Greek and therefore *wives* cannot be the correct interpretation. The author of 1 Timothy is clearly discussing those who have responsible roles to play within the church. The phrase (*hōsautos*) translated *likewise* or *in the same manner* is also scrutinised. The use of this adverb suggests the author is presenting a new group within the list of offices, but not necessarily a new

office. Fitzmyer's understanding is consistent with that of Lewis and Schreiner regarding the phrase *likewise* or *in the same way*, suggesting that the author is identifying a distinct group of people. The term may also mean *after the same manner*, as if to say, the women must *also* be trustworthy. Indicating the qualifications for deacons similarly apply to women in service.

The qualifications listed for the *female deacon* as indicated by Fitzmyer (2004:592) consisted of three positive and one negative qualification, namely 1) worthy of respect, 2) temperate, 3) faithful in all things, and 4) not malicious talkers (gossips). It is plausible that the female deacons assisted the male deacons with various responsibilities in service to the church. Within these responsibilities, the author of 1 Timothy sought to emphasise the respectful attitude, which was to accompany these women in service, to take their responsibilities seriously out of reverence for God, being faithful to Him. Understanding that women are relational creatures by nature, cautioning how they spoke would have been an essential part of their discipline.

### **3.4.3 Titus 2:3-5: Mentoring Women**

As previously discussed, a distinct group of women called *widows* operated within the life of the church as intercessors. Other women operated within the church as servants or deacons. However, there is a special call to older women, that of *mentoring* (Titus 2:3-5). This call is not distinguished as an official office within the church but rather it is an encouragement by the author to Titus to teach older women to take heed to the way they lives their lives so that they can train the younger women accordingly. This is an invaluable ministry according to Schreiner (1991:222-223).

The responsibility of older women to instruct the younger women regarding a life of godliness is understood as a role of *mentorship*. Smith (2000:157) indicates the action being translated in verse four as "an apprenticeship style of teaching, personal demonstration and assistance." Patterson (1995) calls this *spiritual mothering*, "a relationship that suggests training in order to develop sound judgment and wisdom." She goes on to point out that the *older women* were not necessarily limited by their age but

were most definitely more spiritually mature women. This role involves not only teaching but also a 'hands on' type advisory role; one who guides and shows by example what is being taught. This is not limited to women within perceived leadership positions of the church, nor is it required solely of pastors' wives to mentor, but of all older women within the church. Smith (2000:157) points out that the training that was to take place was predominantly to newly married ladies, keeping in mind that women who were married in that time did so at a much younger age than present day women do.

The relationship that developed between older and younger women within the church was in no way formal or structured but rather nurturing (Patterson, 1995). Many churches today have an established women's ministry operating. However, it is not always clear whether this ministry relates primarily to side-by-side mentoring or simple encouragement in day-to-day life. According to Smith (2000:159), the older women were to train the younger in three aspects, namely, relationships with her family, sexual purity, and management of their households. When the young women loved their husbands and children, maintained sexual purity and managed their household with skill and an agreeable nature they did not discredit the Gospel of Christ.

The importance of the relationship between the older and younger women is significant, especially when discussing the role of the pastor's wife within the church. She is not only a woman offering advice and guidance to a younger woman but she may also need to be on the receiving end of the same kind of ministry. Very often Christians tend to look to the pastor's wife as a role model, and yet in many ways she requires a role model herself (Haggard, 2004:6-8). Her needs should not be overlooked when seeking to place women in mentoring positions.

#### **3.4.4 Summary**

As indicated previously, women have played important roles within the life of the church historically and currently. The debate often centres on

feminist theology, women in leadership or wifely submission, however, for the sake of this research these debates are a nonessential study. The significance relates to women, specifically pastors' wives, being an active part of the church and ministering one to another through guidance, advice, support and mentorship.

### **3.5 Identification of the Pastor's Wife**

The pastor's wife in her existence, purpose and calling is no different from any other woman within the church; she is simply married to the man God has called to lead a particular local church. Her identity remains in Christ as a believer first and foremost and she is called to exercise her spiritual gifts within the church. Her role relates primarily to her position as wife. There are no references in scripture regarding the responsibilities an elder's wife must perform. It has been established that 1 Timothy 3:11 speaks of the female deacons who ought to be a "women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." Wives are called to respect their husbands (Eph. 5:33), to be a helper (Gen. 2:18) and to care for and nurture their children (Tit. 2:4, 5) thereby meeting the needs of the family. There is no biblical basis on which to institute a particular role for a pastor's wife. However, if a pastor's wife were called to ministry within the church alongside her husband, specific duties would need to be established by the church. 1 Timothy 3:11 does not deal specifically with responsibilities or duties but rather with the attitude and moral lifestyle of the potential servant (Schreiner, 1991:220). Schreiner (1991:218) identifies the moral standards required of one in service and then emphasises the importance of women exercising their spiritual gifts; this denotes function.

#### **3.5.1 Pastors' Wives and the Church: Called to Full-time Ministry**

The understanding of the role of the pastor's wife within the local church is ambiguous. If I have effectively established that no biblical mandate is evident for her, then the primary role she undertakes is that of all women, namely, a woman, wife (and mother) and believer. Common problems exist amongst church leaders; lack of knowledge, lack of understanding, lack of

interest, in general, a conforming to societal or denominational tradition rather than exploring the truth. The perceived role of the pastor's wife may stem from biblical views regarding the responsibilities of the wife with regard to being a helper to her husband. However, the wife's role, as helper, does not extend into the area of the husband's vocation. Women in most societies are more likely to perform the role of the homemaker and constant support to her husband without extending her influence into his work environment. Today there are instances where the wife will help run a business from the home or may go into the office on occasion to perform certain tasks that may not necessarily relate to the particular function of the husband. Generally, husbands and wives work separately. It is very rare to find the wife of the surgeon accompany him into surgery, unless of course she happens to be an assisting doctor. The call to a wife to be a helper to her husband will be primarily in relation to their home life.

Paul, in his discourse with regard to the rights of the apostles (1 Cor. 9), says in verse five, "Don't we have no right to take a believing wife, as do the other apostles, and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?" Here is shown evidence to the fact that many of the apostles were married, specifically Cephas or Peter. MacDonald (1995) suggests that Paul did not marry because he knew that he and his wife would not be entitled to the support of the churches. However, Peter and the other apostles were married, and quite possibly were accompanied by their wives on ministry journeys. Paul is stating that he would have just as much right to be married and enjoy the support of the Christians for both his wife and himself. MacDonald points out that the expression "to take along a believing wife" refers not only to the right to marry, but also to the right of support for both husband and wife. The interesting fact is that the wife of Cephas is never mentioned by name or by position, other than the fact that he had a wife. Her role or responsibility within the church may have simply been to perform her wifely duties, at home.

Dobson (2004:21) refers to a statement made by Mrs Anna' E. S. Droke's husband (a minister); he said, "A minister's wife has no more call to



public duty than any Christian woman in the congregation”.<sup>20</sup> The significance of this statement is that it was made in 1914 indicating that the role of the pastor’s wife and her involvement in the church has been an unresolved issue for almost one hundred years. The church has taken the role of these particular women and in many cases extended her role into the environment of the husband’s vocational position. Should a woman and specifically a pastor’s wife have a calling to ministry within the church, she should be welcome to fulfil that calling, whether as a paid employee or agreed volunteer. However, should a wife not be called to full-time church ministry, she ought to function within her primary role and spiritual gifting.

The stresses of being a pastor’s wife, as revealed by many authors (and pastors’ wives), are evident regardless of whether a woman is called into full-time ministry with her husband or not called to ministry. The pressures of living a certain lifestyle are both tiring and unrealistic. Dobson (2004:25) urges all pastors’ wives to come to terms with the fact that they are prominent figures within the congregation and are often seen as role models. Nevertheless, the pastor’s wife is not an official office within the church. Being married to the pastor should not imply that she *must* fulfil certain functions; she is a woman of God, as many other women in the church. The behaviour of any woman in ministry or leadership must be conformed to that of 1 Timothy 3:11, that is, she must be “worthy of respect”. Moreover, as a wife, she should be praiseworthy (Prov. 31:30). However, the simple fact that she is married to the pastor does not require of her any service or place her in a position of leadership. A wife called to full-time ministry may often assume this position but a position of leadership must be assigned to a suitable candidate.

Although trained for ministry and a graduate from a Christian college, Dobson (2004:27) testifies to the fact that she felt, in many ways, unprepared to be a pastor’s wife. Her mentor, also a pastor’s wife, and ‘on the job training’ were her only preparations for her role as a pastor’s wife in local church

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<sup>20</sup> Droke, Anna E. S. 1914. *The Diary of a Minister’s Wife*. New York: Eaton & Mains, p. 61-62.

ministry. Dobson (2004:37) calls women who are pastors' wives to embrace the fact that their husbands are pastors. She admits that they may experience unrealistic demands on their time and abilities however, should the wife willingly accept the position and be open regarding certain boundaries she will be happier and more fulfilled in this position. With respect to Dobson, it is my opinion that pastors' wives do not have a position in the church, unless called by God and the church to fulfil a particular office. Being the wife of the pastor may not be an instant calling as we will discuss in the next section.

### **3.5.2 Pastors' Wives in Leadership: An Unknown Calling**

Haggard (2004:6) said "pastors' wives have borne the image of women overburdened with expectations and limitations, living under a microscope." Haggard points out that and their children are expected to be exemplars of Christian virtue while bearing unique pressures on their private and public lives. The pastor's ministry is not the only vocation that imposes on the family unit; however, being *'in ministry'* often imposes numerous emotional stresses on the family. What alarm, if any, should be raised when a wife of a pastor is not called to full-time church ministry? Surely, as a woman and wife, her primary responsibilities are to take precedence over her church involvement. She is usually not 'hired' to work along side her husband and therefore the church may have no claim on her. This pastor's wife ought to be confident to perform her primary functions as freely as other women believers.

From traditional Judaism (Mamre 2007), women's obligations and responsibilities were different from men's, but no less important. Their focus was on being a homemaker and raising children. With today's modern, highly educated and independent woman, the home life seems confined and archaic. Unfortunately, various feminist movements have brought about a revolution to the whole definition of woman within the post-modern era. Her traditional role is no more. A modern embodiment allows her extensive freedom. Her freedom and empowerment have become banners that many celebrities and politicians are waving.

Edwards and Mathews (2002:27) describe the *postmodern*,<sup>21</sup> non-Christian woman as one who wants transformation. These women are described as “daughters of feminism”, now left behind. They may attend church searching for authentic community and family. This, according to Edwards and Matthews, is evidence that they want to fulfil their basic and fundamental roles. Wives of pastors who were called to ministry later in life<sup>22</sup> tend to struggle more with the pressures and expectations placed on them (Dobson, 2004:19, 23), questioning not only the traditional mindset of a church but also within the home.

Some churches assign specific responsibilities to the wife of the pastor simply because she is married to the pastor. A classic example is that of *Chairman of the Women’s Ministry*. This may or may not be within the spiritual gifting of the pastor’s wife. Dobson (2004:23) indicates that not every pastor’s wife is pressured to fulfil certain responsibilities. She points out that predominantly non-traditional churches allow wives to be free to serve within their gifting and as the Lord leads them while the more traditional churches are focused on their intended expectations and very rarely waver. Dobson (2004:31) goes on to say that, those wives who are not called to full-time ministry but have resolved to live a life that pleases the Lord will seek to honour their husbands, making him their ‘ministry’. Thus, they allow their outward expectations to be reflective of God’s love, regardless of whether

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<sup>21</sup> **postmodernism**, term used to designate a multitude of trends in the arts, philosophy, religion, technology, and many other areas that come after and deviate from the many 20th-century movements that constituted modernism. ... In general, the postmodern view is cool, ironic, and accepting of the fragmentation of contemporary existence. It tends to concentrate on surfaces rather than depths, to blur the distinctions between high and low culture, and as a whole to challenge a wide variety of traditional cultural values. "Postmodernism." *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*. Columbia University Press. 30 Jun. 2007. <Reference.com <http://www.reference.com/browse/columbia/postmoder>>. Accessed 30 Jun 2007.

<sup>22</sup> A common trend is occurring with regard to ‘second career’ clergy entering into ministry. Often realising a call to ministry later in life these pastors will change their career to seek a more fulfilling vocation. Pulpit & Pew indicate that 56% of current senior or sole pastors of congregations in the US are in their second career. Second-career clergy include all clergy who reported working in another occupation for more than five years before deciding to become a pastor (Carroll, 2002:1). Two wives indicated that their husband was a second-career pastor and were supportive of his decision to enter into ministry. They did not indicate difficult in the transition but felt confident of their role as they were more experienced in life and confident of who they were as people.

they are involved within the church, as may be expected by the church leadership.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

A woman is created to glorify God and be in fellowship with Him. Her purpose as a wife is to help and bless her husband, as well as nurture and grow her children. Her identity is formed in and through her relationship with Christ. She is called to be a faithful minister of God's grace both in and out of the church. When we understand this to be ideal for each woman we can begin to specify extra qualities related to specific assignments or positions within the church. The pastor's wife finds her primary position in the fact that she is a woman and wife. She is a believer who is to function within her spiritual gifting in the local church. There is no biblical mandate regarding role or responsibility of the pastor's wife. At most, moral characteristics are required of women in ministry as well as general spiritual characteristics responsible of all believers.

The ideal, from a biblical perspective, for the pastor's wife is that of any woman who is specifically influential in her conduct, to function effectively as a woman of God, to support her husband and be an active member of the local church. Older women would have much to offer the younger pastor's wife in equipping her with the knowledge of homemaking. The older pastor's wife would have much to offer younger women within the church as a mentor or advisor. This ministry is valuable and necessary.

Now that a biblical background is established for the pastor's wife and the situation in practice is identified, a comparison of the situation practice and ideal model can be made.

In the next section of this research study, I would like to look at opportunities and practical recommendations as uncovered through discussions with pastors' wives. How can the church define and appreciate the role of the pastor's wife, as well as support and uphold the pastoral family? What support can Christians offer to their pastor's wife? What can pastors' wives do to understand their role, make it their own and begin to

move outward to help future pastors' wives? These and other issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### Opportunities and Recommendations

Now that both the real-life situation and biblical analysis is complete, it is imperative that a comparison is done in order to evaluate any areas that need attention, ultimately asking the question “what must we do?” (Cowan, 2000). This chapter will be dedicated to identifying any inconsistencies between the scriptural mandate and situation praxis. Recognising needs of pastors’ wives and introducing opportunities to meet those needs will be considered. Many opportunities exist for wives to gain identity and fulfilment as they serve in the home and local church.

What practical steps can be implemented whereby a congregational member can understand and appreciate the pastor’s wife, her family and the ministry they dedicated themselves to? What must compel the pastor’s wife to seek guidance and education in her role as an influential member of the local church in order to minister effectively along side her husband? These questions shall be addressed practically in this chapter, as they are vital to providing a way forward for the local church.

#### **4.1. Introduction: Identifying Inconsistency and Uniformity**

As previously discussed there is no designated position or office within the church labelled “pastor’s wife”. This is also true from a scriptural perspective. Some churches employ the pastor’s wife, together with her husband as a *pastoral couple*, in order to fulfil certain tasks within the congregation and/or minister alongside her husband so that the needs of female congregants are met. In this case, it would be assumed that the church leadership have a set contract and job description so that expectations are clear and responsibilities are met.

The majority of pastors' wives who are not employed by the church do not receive a job description, or a detailed plan on what is expected of the pastor's wife. The role is unique to each woman married to a pastor serving in the local church. However, although she may not hold an office or be involved in the church in any leadership position, she is often seen to be a leader amongst women, an example of Christian virtue, grace and love, a friend at all times.

Thus, the role of the pastor's wife may be summed up in one word or phrase, namely, having the ability to *influence*. Influence, as defined by Oxford Dictionary (2004), is "the capacity to have an effect on the character or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself". Having a leadership role such as this denotes character obligations. As Paul indicates to Timothy (1 Tim. 3:11) when discussing the character of the deaconess within the church he speaks specifically of her required character traits, as one who has the ability to influence another's behaviour. The pastor's wife has been afforded the opportunity, whether by choice, agreement or marriage, to be a part of church ministry together with her husband and is therefore responsible for her Christian character. This is not very different from many people who find themselves in a visibly influential position, such as a role model.

Is it correct then to assume that all pastors' wives must presume a position of 'deaconess' within the church, simply because of her ability to influence others? No, I do not think so. This assumption is unfounded because of the function associated with the deacon(ess) as one who fulfils a particular service within the church (Schreiner, 1991:220), which may or may not be the case for most pastors' wives. Dobson (2004:23) believes that "women of visibility and influence in the church ... wives of any kind of ministers are observed and therefore are role models for others".

If one claims to be a Christian, one may find oneself in such an influential position whereby he or she are looked upon as an exemplar of all things 'Christian'. Such a position within the church may hold even more

pressure because one becomes an example to those who are already called to be examples. As the Apostle Paul said, “Follow my example,<sup>23</sup> as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1), so too those in Christian leadership have a greater responsibility to model the same directive to the believers around them. *It is my recommendation that each church reviews the visibility of the pastor’s wife as an important issue of discussion and consider very clearly as to how she will influence the congregation.* It may not be necessary to formulate a specific job description as she may not be working within the church, but she and the leadership would need to understand exactly what expectations she may face. Thus affording every opportunity to speak of her role, although not a biblically distinguished list of duties, but a leadership decision as to what is expected of her.

Most wives indicated throughout their interview that their primary role or responsibility was to be a helpmate to their husband. Those wives who still had children at home made it clear that their time was to be devoted to their family and any church related activities would come later. A biblical response for a wife and mother would be to firstly grow her knowledge and identity in Christ, secondly, meet the needs of her husband and family and then finally be involved in other activities. How then can the church respond to the pastor’s wife and the needs of her family?

#### **4.2. Recommendations: Church’s Response**

There are a number of practical ways in which the church can respond to the needs of the pastoral family, as a source of friendship, encouragement and support. Hoge and Wenger (2005:198) indicate that the second major reason pastors leave the pastorate is a lack of support primarily shown by the church leadership. This is a sad reality for many men (and women) serving the local church. How important it is for the church, and more specifically the church leadership, to show support for their pastor and family in times of conflict, burnout and victory.

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<sup>23</sup> The NASB indicates, “be imitators”.



#### 4.2.1. Directives to the Body of Christ

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians Paul provides the believers with instructions to respect those over them in the faith. May (1999) offers, “the community's response of honor to its leaders is the highest form of acknowledgment of their ministry work”, he shows that Paul urged the Thessalonians to honour their leaders in order to affirm the gift of leadership placed on them by the Holy Spirit. Keathley (2008) says that “a church is not truly complete and functioning as God intended without an appointed leadership according to the guidelines of scripture (1 Tim. 3:1f.; Tit. 1:5f.; Heb. 7:7, 17; 1 Thes. 5:12, 13)”. Thus, we understand that as God directs and anoints those for leadership, it is fitting and good for those who follow to honour their leaders, acknowledging their call to ministry.

Paul then instructs the Thessalonians to “love” their leaders and to honour them “because of their work” (1 Thes. 5:13). Pastoral leaders are not to be placed on a pedestal or esteemed because of their dynamic personality. The instruction was because of the work the pastor(s) does amongst the people. Keathley (2008) offers some advice concerning the love of those in church leadership:

Leaders are to be esteemed highly *in love*. ... This would include all the things that constitute the guidelines of Scripture for loving one another. It would include the negative like refusing to gossip, malign or criticize them to others. But it also included the positive like helping in ministry, expressing thankfulness, appreciation, and providing for them financially in an adequate, God-honoring way (see Gal. 6:6-9; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). Churches need to examine what they are doing that demonstrates their esteem and love for their leaders. Too often all leaders hear or experience are the negative complaints.

I believe, as Christians, we are to respond to God-appointed leadership in a godly way. Firstly, the church needs to understand that they are human, *accept* them as sinners “saved by grace” (Eph. 2:8) and therefore needing fervent prayer (Jas. 5:16). Secondly, Christians are commanded to *respect* those over them in the Lord, which very often translates practically into showing *appreciation (value)* and *love* (1 Thes. 5:12-13) which is our third mandate. Wiersbe (1989) offers similar recommendations regarding the

church's responsibility toward their spiritual leaders, namely, *accept them, appreciate them, love them* and then finally to *obey them*. As congregational members, *obeying* the spiritual leadership God has placed over them results in peaceable living (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thes. 5:14), this is our fourth mandate.

Understanding the above directives may produce a congregation that not only appreciates their pastor(s) more but will also approach them with care. It is not easy for a pastor to approach his congregation with a message on honouring the God-anointed leadership. Pastors may feel quite awkward discussing their need to feel appreciated and loved and yet this biblical command is vital in the life of the church. It is recommended that the church leadership appoint an elder or deacon (apart from the pastor) who will call the congregation to respond biblically to the church leaders, more specifically to the appointed pastor(s). The above is a brief description of scriptural requirements; the following sections will provide more practical recommendations.

#### **4.2.2. Church Leadership Support for Pastors' Wives**

It is quite common to hear of pastors' fraternals offered to pastors within particular denominations or geographical areas. Some denominations (e.g., Assemblies of God, Baptist Union) have annual meetings for wives of pastors within the denomination as well. The church leadership should be supportive and encourage the pastor and his wife to attend as many meetings or conferences as is necessary in order to grow and find comfort and support from people of similar situation. The church leadership should discuss issues with love, respect and sensitivity when dealing with the pastor's wife. Understanding her primary function as a wife and/or mother should help them to guard any unrealistic expectations.

It is recommended that the church leadership is clear and up front concerning their expectations of the pastor and his wife. They should also educate the church members regarding the roles and responsibilities of the pastoral families. A clear opportunity would be at a new members' class or periodically at a general meeting. If possible, pastoral support can be included

within a job portfolio of a deacon. Thus, he/she (together with one or two others) will be responsible to make sure they are encouraged and supported appropriately.

#### **4.2.3. Church Member Support for the Pastor's Wife and Family**

There are few books available that offer church members advice on how to care for and support their local pastor and his family.<sup>24</sup> Roberts (1995) offers good practical guidelines as to the needs of the pastoral family, which would need to be altered from time to time depending on each situation. Dobson (2001) engages the reader into the needs for supporting one's pastor emotionally and practically. Rubietta (2002) offers sound advice on loving and supporting one's pastor, including a practical Bible study a small group can do to educate themselves on the issue. Loving and respecting our pastoral families is a scriptural directive. It is not common for a pastor to preach a sermon on how best congregational members can help and support his family. As a congregational member one may not see the need to look after the pastor (elder) or show him any additional kindness. This attitude, however, is incorrect. Those who give of themselves for others, not usually having the freedom to ask for assistance or help, require support prayerfully, financially and emotionally (Roberts, 1995:144-145). This does not mean to say that believers are to spend their time focussed on supporting one's pastor, but it does mean an effort can be made, from time to time, that acknowledges and appreciates the labour of one's pastor. Swart (2003:102) indicates that when asked, her wives wanted to be asked if they needed assistance or care before being overwhelmed with unnecessary support. It is essential that those who wish to support their pastoral families as caregivers do not become a burden to the pastoral family and it would therefore be appropriate to first receive permission from the pastor's wife for the offered assistance. The average pastor's wife of Somerset West is a busy one. As previously indicated (Chapter 2), she is not only in full- or part-time ministry; she may also be employed outside of the home.

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<sup>24</sup> For a list of these works see to Appendix 7.

Supporters of the pastors' wives and pastoral families are called primarily to prayer, on a regular basis. It is really up to the two or three people that take on this ministry as to how to serve and support their pastoral families, but a simple 12 month plan can be adopted. Roberts (1995:56) has a few practical and fun suggestions, everything from sending cards of encouragement to taking the kids out for a night and leaving the pastoral couple with a catered dinner and a basket of breakfast goods. Thinking creatively and caringly will bring about fresh ideas that are specific to the couple. *Supporting* does not necessarily mean it has to be an expensive outing or a monthly spa retreat. Something small every now and again will reassure your pastor's wife and the family that they are appreciated, thought of and cared for. Sometimes just spending time with others in an informal environment is sufficient to know people enjoy being with you as a person.

Books are a great source to educate congregational members to encourage ministers. A good church library could offer such books. It is recommended that each church ministry leader work through a book once a year in order to keep it fresh in members' minds. Another option would be for churches that have new members' classes to include a discussion time and practical study on supporting the pastors and their wives; this will make the interaction unique to the church.

#### **4.2.4. W.I.F.E. Programme**

From listening to pastors' wives and their individual situations, I would be hard-pressed to create a profile of the "typical" pastor's wife. There are, however, common characteristics and needs among women who are married to pastors. I have developed the following W.I.F.E. programme to encourage, support and help pastors' wives and their families by mobilising women within the congregation to take up ministering to the pastoral family (or families). This programme can be adapted to fit the needs within a specific church.

Essentially, a woman or group of women agree to support a pastor's wife. By understanding that they are primarily a **W**oman and wife, secondly, that their **I**dentity is in Christ and thirdly, they are **F**ree to move and work

within the church as God enables them so that they are **E**ncouraged to encourage others and be better wives, mothers and church members. Let us look at each of these points in more detail.

**W**oman/Wife: as previously identified in chapter three, a woman was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and called to be a helper (Gen. 2:18). Dobson (2004:23) observes that a possible lack of biblical understanding regarding God's intended role for the woman may be a cause of unhappiness amongst pastors' wives. Helping wives to develop as women and mature in their understanding of what it means to be a wife may assist young pastors' wives to find greater joy in making their first priority service to their family. Thereby avoiding unnecessary time spent on fulfilling unrealistic expectations in the church. Her life and family come before serving the needs of the church.

**I**dentified in Christ: A key question asked to pastors' wives during my interviews was whether they considered themselves to be the "pastor's wife or the wife of the pastor". Most wives indicated they were most definitely the "wife of the pastor", quick to identify themselves distinctly from their husband's vocation. Other wives indicated that they could not separate themselves from being the pastor's wife, that they were identified both as one with their husband and separate from him. Dobson (2004:37) speaks of the importance of identity awareness. Often women will tend to identify themselves as their husband's wife. As a believer in Christ one assumes a new identity, that of "child of God" (Rom. 8:16, 17). This aspect to the W.I.F.E. programme is essential; wives ought to understand that they belong to God; they are unique as His children. Development of their relationship with God is key, not so that they become independent from their husband's but that they are able to draw their confidence from this relationship in order to build upon the other relationships in her life.

**F**ree to be: Many of the wives interviewed did not have a significant problem with being over-involved in the church. No one was pressured to perform certain tasks or functions within the church. Few felt that they were expected to be or fulfil certain expectations. This is commendable

and a point to note within modern evangelical churches within Somerset West. The concept behind “free to be” is simply to help the wife to discover her place within the church body. One wife indicated that she did not know what her ministry was to be in the church. Others, due to family circumstances, were not as involved as they wished to be. Few wives indicated that they were doing exactly what they wanted to do and were fulfilled in their ministries. The aim of “free to be” would then be to assist the pastor’s wife to find fulfilment in her role within the church, no matter what stage of life she finds herself.

**E**ncouraged to encourage others: One concern found disheartening amongst pastors’ wives I was the need amongst some pastors’ wives who were overwhelmed by their situation. Most wives were at a stage in their life and ministry where they were content. Many of these wives had a wealth of information and experience they could offer other wives who were struggling. One objective of the W.I.F.E. programme would be a mentoring relationship to be established between the pastor’s wife and another pastor’s wife. Alternatively a mentoring relationship should be established amongst ladies within the wife’s congregation.

Developing ideas for interaction with the pastor’s wife and her family is not difficult. It takes a little organisation and creative thinking. Table 1 offers a suggested six-month W.I.F.E. programme:

Month	Event	Date/Time	Who?	Cost
January	New Years Flower Bouquet	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> 7pm	Jane	homemade
February	Romantic Dinner ‘Gino’s’	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> 7:30pm	Leschenne to organise	R200
March	Card of encouragement	Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Jen	R5
April	Girl’s night out – pizza/movies	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> 6pm	Jane to organise	Each pays own cost
May	Card of encouragement	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Leschenne	R5
June	Coffee and Muffins	Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Jen	R10

*Table 1: W.I.F.E. Suggested Programme*

Events of encouragement may differ depending on the pastor's wife, her availability and stage in life. The most important thing is that the wife feels loved and supported by her church family, not simply because she is the pastor's wife but also a person who needs fellowship.

The role of the pastor's wife is unique to the woman. She is called to minister to the needs of her husband *and* be willing to share him with others. She needs the support of friends, family and church members in order to accomplish this challenging task. The church will certainly benefit if the pastor's marriage is vibrant and healthy, so doing something that will allow quality time together for the pastoral couple should be made possible at least once a year.

When the pastor's wife is encouraged to be a woman (perhaps treated with a manicure) and to build her relationship with Christ (through a good book or an afternoon 'off'), she will feel accepted as the person God has made her to be with more self-confidence. Not only will she know who she is in Christ, but she will also be more confident to move in this freedom. All will know the encouragement she feels as she expresses this encouragement to others. Most wives are great encouragers and giving people who desire to be a blessing. I believe that those who know they have a cheerleader in life will be encouraged to cheer on others.

The pastor's wife is first and foremost a child of God. This, of course, links her to every other Christian woman, yet there is one unique aspect. While this is the foundation for all she is as a woman, wife, and perhaps mother, many may expect her to be fully mature from the start. She needs to be seen as a sinner, saved by grace who is *becoming* all God intended her to be. Others must give her the freedom to grow and mature in Christ. This freedom from unrealistic expectations should enable her to walk in confidence and humility.

The W.I.F.E. programme is a simple programme but can be an effective way of insuring the pastor's wife and her family is nurtured. If administered by a deacon(ess) it means that one is paying attention to the

needs of those ministering and meeting the spiritual needs of the church and community members.

### **4.3. Opportunities: Pastor's Wife's Response**

As the wife of a pastor there are many opportunities for ministry and self-improvement. As a servant within the church, she would be responsible to fulfil her role accordingly or at times be called upon to lead a Bible study or do counselling. As a wife and mother of young children, her primary responsibility would be caring for her family, as children do not come with instruction manuals; guidance may be required in certain situations. As an older lady within the congregation, she (and others), would benefit greatly from a mentorship programme and/or Bible study group. It would be most beneficial for a pastor's wife to educate herself as much as is possible through reading relevant literature and additional training where necessary.

#### **4.3.1. Self-directed Learning**

An area of concern for pastors' wives may be in the area of education. Those wives who had earned formal or informal qualifications indicated a greater sense of self-confidence. Those who did not have the opportunity to do any studies indicated that they would have benefited from a basic counselling or Bible course.

In her doctoral thesis, Bare (1998:1) introduces a comparison of literature available to pastors' wives that would assist them through self-directed learning:

This journey undertaken to learn how to succeed as a MsW [minister's wife] is an especially arduous one because there is no declared college major of "Minister's Wife", which leaves the wife to put together for herself her own course of study. MsWs who have traversed the path of self-directed learning to be a MsW have responded to a paucity of information by publishing numerous handbooks for others. Although written to offer advice and encouragement and not specifically education intended, these books have nevertheless served as a source of instruction for women pursuing self-directed learning to be a MsW.



Bare (a pastor's wife herself) evaluated 35 books offering advice, encouragement and/or education to pastors' wives regarding their role, of the 35 books 32 of them were written by pastors' wives. Bare's point is that although autobiographies may not necessarily be helpful all the time, they do offer some comfort and help. Most known literature for pastors' wives focuses on her identity as a child of God (relationship to God), wife (relationship to husband), and mother (relationship to children) indicates Bare (pp.31-32). As the role is unique to each pastor's wife, it would be difficult to equip her fully for ministry, but general assurance is helpful.

Wives do have the option to educate themselves for more specific needs, such as counselling, through a number of formal or informal studies. Distance learning educational institutions exist that provide opportunity to study at their own pace and from the comfort of their own home.<sup>25</sup> Although it is not common to find a course on how to be a pastor's wife, it is not necessary since each role is unique; however, there are many general subjects or specialised fields on which one can focus.

The handbooks that Bare speaks of generally reflect common expectations placed on pastors' wives but could become more practical by focusing on developing their character or personality in order to make their position within the church a positive experience. It is unlikely that books entitled, *Five Steps to Learning to Counsel and Love the Unlovable* or *Ten Steps to Becoming an Hospitable Domestic Goddess* would not appeal to the pastor's wife. She may see these as unrealistic or unattainable goals but the character development of *loving unconditionally* or *showing acts of kindness* are qualities *all* believers can be working on, in order to become more Christ-like. In essence, wives should not be forced to purchase unnecessary literature; however, it is evident that specific books are helpful and encouraging.

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<sup>25</sup> For more information regarding accredited distance learning programmes contact the South African Theological Seminary, [www.satsonline.org](http://www.satsonline.org).

Swart (203:102) in her masters thesis interviewed fifteen wives of clergyman belonging to the Dutch Reformed church. These wives indicated the following when asked about formal training for wives within their particular denomination,

[T]his preparation for the spouses of clergy while their husbands are still studying addresses the following topics: Who you are; What you can do; The marriage relationship in the parsonage; Looking at the ministry through the wives' eyes and speaking about the different seasons of one's life.

As indicated by a few wives in Somerset West, opportunities were given to them to attend classes while their husband was studying and found the topics unhelpful. Some wives indicated that they felt they would have benefited from some type of formal training but opportunity, time or finances were hindrances.

A more cost-effective way of seeking guidance can also come from online help. There are a plethora of websites set up simply to encourage and educate pastors' wives.<sup>26</sup> They provide a platform for interaction amongst other pastors' wives, helpful guidelines, encouraging devotionals and further resources. Cullen (2007) identifies the web as an opportunity pastors' wives should grab hold of, she says, "older PWs [pastors' wives] are more apt to consider themselves 'first ladies', turning to the Web for networking and recipes; PWs new to the job use it to question the expectations and express their frustrations". Cullen goes on to indicate that the Web is a place where wives can share openly and honestly without fear of feeling inadequate.

#### **4.3.2. Nurturing Friendships**

One of the most overwhelming needs amongst pastors' wives who interviewed was that of nurturing close friendships. Due to their husband's position in the church wives felt they were either not able to have close friends because of possible gossip or showing favouritism. Although these are real problems that must be avoided, discretion can be used to know in whom one

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<sup>26</sup> For a list of websites, see Appendix 8.

can place her trust. It is vital that wives have someone, either a close family member or a trusted friend, in whom they can rely. Many wives indicated that their husband was their closest friend, which is admirable. However, it may not always be practical or fair to the husband. Every woman has a unique personality and need the community of female friendship.

It is strongly recommended that wives find a trusted friend, whether an older woman within the church, a neighbour, family relation or work colleague in whom they can confide and share hopes, goals, frustrations and victories. Gone are the days where the pastor's wife must be a lone iceberg on a sea of exemplar lifestyle, which includes a life of thousands of acquaintances and no special friends. There is no 'typical' pastor's wife, no model, no template and no job description. The pastor's wife is a woman within the church that requires care, love and direction, just like the other women in the pew and friendship is a non-negotiable. Cullen (2007) says that "Loneliness is a running theme among pastors' wives". Dobson (2004:46) concurs; she also indicates that developing loving friendships is necessary and biblical (1 Pet. 1:22). Senter (1979:87) discovered that she needed "a friend with whom there could be *mutual* load-bearing" (italics added), she could not simply continue being a friend to others but she too needed to allow someone to be a friend to her. It is true, many pastors' wives are privy to sensitive information but they have learned how to be discreet.

Pastors' wives would do well not to share intimate marital woes with just anyone. A wife can take her time pursuing a close friendship, testing the waters and growing in confidence. Senter (1979:89) shares that "I need special relationships.... But I also need to build my friendship with care.... Not everyone should be my close friend". Dobson (2004:47) believes that, if the wife's relationship with the Lord and her husband are a top priority, then her friendships will develop sincerely and be loyal to her priorities.

Somerville (2005:87) encourages the pastor's wife to seize the opportunity and create appropriate friendships, as much as possible. Dobson (2004:110) concurs; she found that approximately 75 percent of her survey respondents had at least one close friend outside of the church and a similar

statistic to wives with friends in the church. The remaining respondents felt guarded and resisted developing close friendships with female congregants. Loneliness is a common feeling understood by many pastors' wives. These women, according to Somerville (2005:84), often turn to something, like sport, shopping, food, and so on, to keep from feeling hurt or forgotten. She recommends spending time in God's Word and developing one's character if the reality of loneliness becomes overwhelming.

It cannot be overstated that women need encouragement from other women. Wives should be free to nurture special friendships.

#### **4.4. A Clear way Forward for Pastors' Wives**

Each wife interviewed for this research in some way or another contradicted the 'typical' or traditional view of the role of the pastor's wife. There was no 'typical' or 'idealist' model. Each wife is a unique individual with a unique calling and different role to play within her respective church. We will discuss the most important similarities between the wives in this section and recommend five areas where the pastor's wife can seek further learning.

##### **4.4.1. Supporting the Husband**

The most evident commonality between pastors' wives was the determined support of their husband. They showed faithfulness to their husband and his ministry work to which God had called him. Most wives expressed their pride in the work their husband did and gave testimony to the sacrifices he makes. However, wives also expressed a desire to spend more time with their husband, sometimes feeling forgotten or too rushed to have a proper conversation. Quality family time was very important and not easy to achieve. This, of course, is not always limited to a family in ministry. However, feelings of insignificance and guilt can occur because of the husband's involvement in ministry.

Two books of exceptional value regarding women in marriage are *The Excellent Wife* by Peace (2005) and *Helper by Design* by Fitzpatrick (2003).<sup>27</sup> These books are not written specifically for pastors' wives, but offer valuable insight into the role a woman plays as a wife and support to her husband, regardless of his profession. As a wife lovingly and respectfully meets the needs of her husband, he is likely to respond in a loving and caring way (Eggerichs 2004).

A key to supporting one's husband is clear and honest communication. Dobson (2004:159) encourages wives to show their husband they are "in his corner", and are often his only cheerleader. Wives need to be honest in sharing their feelings without undermining or causing the husband to feel guilty. Husbands must make the time to listen to their wives and understand their needs. There is an art to effective communication and it is recommended that both the pastor and his wife keep the lines of communication clearly open (Fitzpatrick, 2003:98-100). It was expressed by many pastors' wives that their husband was their best friend, with whom they were able to share everything. This is commendable and vitally important.

#### **4.4.2. Unrealistic Expectations**

Few wives in my sample population indicated that they felt pressured by unrealistic expectations from church members or leaders. One interviewee indicated that unrealistic expectations were not as commonly observed in her experience as a pastor's wife, in the South African context, as those experienced by many American pastors' wives. Those who did feel they were expected to do certain things because they were the pastor's wife felt that pressure resided mostly with the older members of the congregation or simply with those expecting a new wife would pick up where a previous wife left off in relation to ministry involvement. Haggard (2004:145) expresses the importance of not allowing unrealistic expectations to be placed on the wife:

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<sup>27</sup> See 'Works Cited' for full bibliographic information.

Most of these expectations have become part of our church cultures, yet they have no biblical basis and place unnecessary burdens on us and on our husbands. If we seek to meet unbiblical expectations such as these, we'll do our churches a disservice by allowing our congregations to remain immature and dependent on us.

A healthy church will usually seek to encourage and release the pastor's wife to be the person God has created her to be and to allow her time and space to excel in the role and responsibilities of being a woman of God, a supportive wife and dedicated mother, in turn the congregation will be fulfilled.

Communicating up front as to one's expected involvement within the church can help to avoid unnecessary feelings of guilt and unrealistic expectations. It would be beneficial for the church leadership to revisit the wife's position and involvement, on an annual basis, as situations and responsibilities change in her life.

The pastor's wife, either of herself or of her husband's work or her children, can often interpret expectations as criticism. Somerville (2005:71) offers that such expectations can destroy one's joy for ministry and in turn negatively affect one's outlook on the church. She indicates that in such circumstances to pastors' wives ought to keep no record of wrong, ultimately they are to love, show kindness and forgive, quickly (pp. 72-73). This kind of attitude is only possible when one is devoted and dependent upon the Lord and is seeking to walk in obedience to His commands. However, when deep hurt occurs through false or unrealistic expectations, Somerville recommends that the pastor's wife should seek godly counsel, an accountability partner, someone who is able to draw alongside and pray or minister to her (p. 79). This brings us to trusting in the Lord (Prov. 3:5, 6).

#### **4.4.3. Trusting the Lord**

Finding time to develop and maintain a vibrant spiritual life was not always possible for each wife. Most wives indicated their desire to spend more time with the Lord in quiet time and prayer. Wives with young children found it almost impossible. White (1986:123) indicates that "setting a time, especially when you have young children, can be difficult.... Making time to

maintain your spiritual self must become a matter of personal priority". Although most wives understand that having to deal with small children is a phase in life, it can often be a lonely time. This situation could be alleviated by having an older wife mentoring a younger wife. Sitting down for a half hour or hour each week (even with the children) could be an encouraging time spent in prayer and God's Word.

It is impossible to foresee every problem that would await a pastor's wife; however, many authors (Somerville 2005, Dobson 2004, Haggard 2004) encourage making the effort to spend time with God whether they are working through a problem situation or experiencing God's goodness and great joy. Dobson (2004:94) offers, "No single activity is more important than spending time with the Word of God, unless it is the prayer time in which you beseech God to activate his Word in your life". Haggard (2004:26-27) concurs, she shares that "as I drew closer to God, my intimacy with Him became the foundation on which everything else He had to teach me would be built. ... It gave me the confidence that God values my life that I count to Him".

Possessing a spiritual life is not a 'nice to have'; it is a true necessity, not only for pastors' wives but all Christians. The fact that many wives are not having quiet times with the Lord reveals a great need and may be evidence or symptom of burn out. Spending quality time with the Lord will help to prevent burn out. Somerville (2005:14-15) indicates placing one's priorities in order, seeking time with God, will focus one's role and decided input to the body of Christ. It is less likely that pastors or their spouses will be involved in undue activity when they are listening to Him.

#### **4.4.4. Making the Home a Haven**

One image of the 'typical' pastor's wife may conjure up ideas of a simple, yet cheerful and devoted woman. Someone who is prone to hospitality, who encompasses the full range of culinary art and perfect housekeeping ability. This is not an accurate picture of the real pastor's wife. Hospitality is a spiritual gift and a special function within the church. Making one's home a haven for the husband and children may be a necessity at

times. Many of the wives interviewed expressed they wanted their children to experience life as 'normal' children, without the unnecessary expectations placed on them to be 'perfect' children. Norland (1972:36) encourages the pastor's wife by observing, "... the atmosphere of your home is more important than the perfection of your furnishings, appointments, cleanliness and order". White (1986:165) sees hospitality as a joy and commends each pastor's wife to open her home to visitors. She indicates that a loving home is more important and memorable as it creates lasting friendships. Providing hospitality or being hospitable also "builds unity as a couple". Somerville (2005:191) points out that because hospitality is practiced most commonly in the home it becomes an act of service that the wife can enjoy alongside her husband without feeling overwhelmed to perform certain functions within the church.

A 'haven' designates a *refuge or place of safety*. Although hospitality is an important and noble task, the pastor's wife can make the effort to create a haven for her family to retreat to, a peaceful place that is secure. Pastors' wives desire this for their families and many indicated, in the general advice that they would advise future pastors' wives to create a home where not only strangers were welcomed but where their children and husband would know they take first place. This also meant that wives made an effort to guard specially assigned 'family times' and committed to certain boundaries when necessary. Dobson (2004:69) points out, "our [wives and mothers] responsibility to minister to our family is more important than looking for other ways to serve the Lord". Family times, Dobson indicates, may not seem "as spiritual" as attending certain church functions but are sometimes more important. Maintaining a good balance is essential (p. 72) and is often a challenge, as most interviewees indicated that they worked outside of the home, mostly due to financial necessity.



#### 4.4.5. Mentoring<sup>28</sup>

A mentoring programme can be a very good source of encouragement and accountability for pastors' wives. I found that the younger wives struggled to find time and energy to balance their many responsibilities, whereas the older wives were more confident and had already survived the experience of being a young pastor's wife. This experience is invaluable. If it is not possible for a young pastor's wife to seek the help and guidance from an experienced pastor's wife, then approaching a senior and godly woman of her congregation may be worthwhile. More experienced, older pastors' wives would benefit from coming alongside a younger member of her congregation or perhaps a younger pastor's wife where possible. Titus 2 offers guidance to older women within the church to come alongside younger women. In order to teach them to "love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God" (vv. 4-5). I believe this verse encompasses many of the struggles faced by young woman, but is not comprehensive enough to perhaps meet all the needs of a young wife and mother. Understanding who she is as a woman, created in God's image, as wife (helper) to her husband, mother to her children and as a believer in God's household are all important aspects.

Although Bare (1998:162) indicates that mentoring has flaws, Wilson (2001) shares that mentoring can be a positive contribution that involves the caring and loving of another "In our view, care is a facet of love and, like the Apostle Paul, we suggest that it is the greatest of the virtues. At the heart of any successful mentor relationship is genuine care and concern for the protégé". It is certain that a true and honouring friendship must exist between the older and younger woman. Bare (1998:162) contends that mentoring is not always ideal due to the sensitive and private nature of the life of the pastor's wife. She may feel uncomfortable to open up and speak freely. This, I

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<sup>28</sup> For "Creative Ideas for Building Relationships (How to Mentor and be Mentored)" see Appendix 9.

believe, is something that would need to be addressed between mentors and mentored; a security must exist in order to establish a trustworthy relationship.

Many young pastors' wives often need the reassurance and understanding that phases in life pass. Some young mothers lack the concentration to focus on their spiritual lives with the demands of family life. A mentor would be able to help her focus and grow in her relationship with the Lord. Stuart (2005) shares that mentoring

is a ministry that intentionally develops friendships among women of different generations. Women invest in the lives of each other through encouragement, guidance, listening, laughing and loving. The goal is to form strong and lasting relationships that are a source of support, growth and strength.

Johnson (2008) concurs, she says that

when a woman is encouraged to become all that God intended, she becomes a role model for younger women of satisfied womanhood and fulfillment. She is personally satisfied and makes a significant difference in every part of her world.

Although some wives indicated that they were too busy to fit one more commitment into their schedule, I would strongly recommend that the older wives make time to reach out and offer their love and experience to a younger wife in need. Those younger wives must make a mentoring relationship a priority in their lives, not only will it benefit them but it will also help them to take manageable steps, living each day as it comes.

#### **4.5. Chapter Summary**

In summary, I have attempted to answer the question, "what must we do"? I have addressed some specific needs faced by pastors' wives and suggested a clear way forward for both the local church and the pastor's wife. Cowan (2000) indicates that, "Responsibility for theological reflection leading to committed action rests finally not with church officials or academic scholars but with members of local communities of faith". Each individual local church must respond correctly identifying the role of the pastor's wife and is responsible to care for and protect their pastoral family through prayer and

consistent encouragement. Pastors' wives, in turn, should seek to understand their role within their particular context, being true to the person God has called them to be without falling prey to a particular expectation or mould placed on themselves by others or their own belief.

By understanding the biblical role of the pastor's wife in the local church, I have come to conclude that she is firstly a woman, created uniquely as a person with specific gifts and talents (Gen. 1:27). Secondly, a wife, given to a man to come alongside him as his helpmeet (Gen. 2:18) and thirdly, she is a child of God and member of the body of Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17). Her role is that of uniqueness, support and influence. It is in the next chapter that I will summarise and conclude this research project.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conclusion**

#### **5.1. Review of the Research**

This study sought to identify and define the role of the pastor's wife in the local church. Tradition, in many ways, has determined the role of the 'typical' pastor's wife to be a humble unpaid worker in the church, who gives of herself freely in various capacities to work alongside her husband.

It was my intention to discover the situation praxis of churches in Somerset West, Western Cape and then to identify the biblical directive for the pastor's wife and make a comparison. I anticipated that there was a lack of understanding regarding the biblical role of the pastor's wife, both by the church and the pastor's wife within the South African context.

##### **5.1.1. Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this research was to discover the current situation regarding the role of the pastor's wife in the context of churches in Somerset West, Western Cape. In order to determine the current situation, it was necessary to speak to local pastors' wives. Managed correctly, this research would answer the following questions:

- What is the current role of the pastor's wife in the local church?
- How does the current situation compare with the biblical requirements?
- What biblical principles are needed to assist the pastor's wife in understanding her role in the local church in the South African context?
- What teaching does the local church require in order to biblically understand the role of the pastor's wife in the local church?

A clearer understanding of the role of the pastor's wife would add significant value to the field of practical theology as well as to the local church in educating believers of the function, purpose and value of the pastor's wife. It was the purpose of this study to establish whether a role existed for pastors'

wives and to what extent wives understood and were aware of their role. A biblical study of the pastor's wife was undertaken to identify any scriptural directives related to the pastor's wife that would identify her within her context.

This study was to determine whether a biblical role existed for the pastor's wife and to confirm whether this role was correctly implemented in the church. A clearly defined role of the pastor's wife would enable correct expectations to be maintained by both the pastor's wife and the church.

### **5.1.2. Methodology of the Study**

Using the LIM model of practical theology, a set of interview questions was developed and ten local pastors' wives were interviewed. Each wife agreed to meet with me for up to two hours. Wives were open and honest concerning their roles and whether they believed they could be separately identified apart from their husband's vocation. Wives volunteered to be interviewed; no one was paid or coerced into giving an interview.

A study of scripture was undertaken to determine the 'world as it should be' (Cowan, 2000). The pastor's wife was identified as a woman, a wife and a believer in Jesus Christ. As discovered through the author of 1 Timothy, those women in ministry required certain character qualifications for ministry which were identified and discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis.

In light of both the situation praxis and the biblical study a comparison was made to recognise any areas requiring attention. Where appropriate, literature regarding the pastor's wife and her role within the church was reviewed. Although little has been written about the pastor's wife, she above all other 'professionally' or 'vocationally' referred to wives, like military wives, has more literary aid (Bare, 1998:23). Many books written by pastors' wives gave insight into their lives and guidelines as to how to handle certain situations or adjust to lifestyle changes.

## **5.2. Conclusions of the Research**

As White (1986:23) points out in her book, “the pastor’s wife is the only woman I know who is asked to work full-time without pay on her husband’s job, in a role no one has yet defined”. She described the role of the pastor’s wife as yet to be defined. It became evident throughout this research that pastors’ wives in Somerset West did not work full-time without pay on their husband’s job. They did work, whether in the church or in secular employment, either by choice or necessity, but were not confined to the church. Wives, in most cases, were in charge of their lives and were responsible for the amount of time they decided to give to the church. They determined their involvement and were free to work within their spiritual gifting. Many wives felt confident of their role as it pertained to their husband and family without feeling great obligation to attend church functions or participate in church ministry.

### **5.2.1. Conclusions regarding the Role of the Pastor’s Wife**

As indicated in Chapter 4, I have come to understand that the pastor’s wife is primarily a woman, created to image her Maker and designed uniquely as a person with specific gifts and talents (Gen. 1:27). Secondly, she is a wife, given to a man who has been called by God into pastoral ministry; she is to come alongside her husband as his helpmeet (Gen. 2:18). Finally, she is a believer in Christ and member of the body of Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17), called to fulfil Christian duties amongst the people of God. Her role is that of uniqueness, support and influence. She creates her role and is not defined or limited by congregational or leadership expectations unless she agrees to a functioning position within the church.

Bare (1998:174) indicates that “Today, the emphasis is on the MsW seeking to be her own person, not apart from her church, but in relation to it as a fulfillment of who she already is”. Bare goes on to explain that the pastor’s wife is a person, a wife and a mother, someone who understands she is the “thermostat of the home—setting the climate for successful interactions”. Although she is the wife of the pastor she is not bound by the

perceived limitations of this role. Bare indicates that being a pastor's wife "crosses all facets of her lived world, but being a MsW is not cosmically definitive for her persona." The contemporary pastor's wife, according to Bare, "at least in principle, has the right to be her own person, to pursue personal goals, to have private alone time, and to even pursue a separate career".

Through discussions with local pastors' wives, it has become evident that the 'typical' wife does not exist and there is no mould in which to place the pastor's wife. Many wives worked full or part-time jobs outside of the church and home; some of them pursued careers but the majority simply supplemented the household income. Most wives were in control of their involvement within the church and were aware of any expectations by the church leadership. The majority of wives understood that their primary responsibility lay in meeting the needs of their husband and family. Although most wives felt pressured to attend church functions simply because they were the wife of the pastor, few allowed that pressure to dictate their actions. Several wives were aware of their husband's calling to ministry prior to marriage and agreed that his calling did not necessarily dictate their particular involvement in the church.

### **5.2.2. Conclusions regarding the Education of the Pastor's Wife**

Some wives indicated that they were unaware of scriptural guidelines regarding their role as a pastor's wife. Others were aware of their role, simply as a wife and church member. Bare offers advice to educators as they consider educating the pastor's wife:

Adult educators need to take another look at the population of MsWs to provide appropriate learning tools and strategies. Though some tasks of the MsWs lived world cannot be taught, transformative learning can result from shared knowledge and experiences. (Bare, 1998:182)

As an important woman within the church I find it vital that she receive as much support as is necessary for her to be able to function effectively, as a wife, mother and influential 'first lady' of the church. Swart (2003:202), provided some guidance as to potential topics of study for the pastor's wife,

namely, “Who you are; What you can do; The marriage relationship in the parsonage; Looking at the ministry through the wives’ eyes and speaking about the different seasons of one’s life”. Such guidance is valuable and important to note. I believe wives are interested in learning something that is relevant to their situation, including skills that will assist them as they grow into their ministry as a pastor’s wife. Basic and practical skills such as counselling, developing Bible studies or time management may prove to be worthy lessons. Upon identifying particular topics I would focus a potential curriculum on the following five areas as indicated in Chapter 4: 1) Identity awareness, 2) Marriage relationship, 3) Focusing on the Spiritual life, 4) Developing ministry skills and 5) Nurturing friendships and mentorship.

Those wives who had been pastors’ wives for a longer period of time felt confident in their role and were more aware of their needs. Wives who had formal education also expressed a confidence in their role as a pastor’s wife. Any expressed need for education or training was mostly limited to specific skills. Younger pastors’ wives expressed a greater need with regard to understanding their role and ministry in the church.

### **5.2.3. Conclusions regarding Educating the Church**

Most wives felt that the church needed to be educated regarding their role within the church. Very little literature exists regarding educating the church on the role of the pastor’s wife in the local church. Most books tackle this issue from the perspective of supporting one’s pastoral family, through prayer and various encouraging activities.

Scripture does give guidelines as to the education of its members with regard to respecting and obeying church leaders. It would be beneficial for churches or church leadership to take the opportunity and present the church with effective ways in which they can look after the pastoral families entrusted to them. Development of a curriculum for church education, with regard to care of leaders within the church specifically, may be an area in need of development. It is unknown as to how many churches in South Africa have implemented a care programme for their pastors.



Roberts (1995) and Dobson (2001) offer good advice to churches with regard to supporting the pastor and his family. Both authors are of the opinion that church members need to be told about how to look after their pastoral families and when to seek help for overburdened pastors. Although their focus is specifically on the pastor awareness can be extended to incorporate care of the pastor's wife as well.

### **5.3. Recommendations of Further Research**

Several options exist for future research in the field of pastoral family care. One may investigate care programmes for churches to implement that will help congregants to show value for the work pastors and pastors' wives do within the church. It would be advantageous to establish whether this is seen to be a problem in local churches so that this issue may be addressed.

One definite need for further research exists amongst black African pastors' wives in order to identify their role in the local black African church. It is necessary to understand the needs of black African pastors' wives in their local communities as their role may or may not differ from the role and needs of their white counterparts.

It is recommended that research be conducted to establish a suitable educational programme be found for new pastors' wives or wives of pastor's-to-be. An evaluation of existing, often dated, materials should be undertaken in order to produce useful and realistic education for up and coming pastors' wives.

### **5.4. Summary: Significance of Findings**

At the outset of this research I anticipated that 'a clearly defined role of the pastor's wife will enable correct expectations to be maintained by all concerned' (pg. 12). As this study comes to a close and further research is pursued I am convinced that a clear understanding of the role of the pastor's wife will both help and improve the influence of the pastor's wife in the local church and will develop a clear understanding of the role of the pastor's wife with realistic expectations and defined goals in the church. As the pastor's

wife is enabled and supported, she, in turn, may increase in confidence and respect; thus growing her as a person and encouraging her to pursue ministry activities in the church. Because the pastor's wife is a unique person she will bring a unique and personal quality to her ministry. As she pursues a quality relationship with God, ministry to her husband and children will be her primary focus and she will be an example to other women in the church as a key figure to emulate. As a pastor's wife, her most influential area of leadership is seen to be her primary focus of ministry; that is her husband and family. As she supports and upholds her husband she will be a godly example of a woman, wife and believer.

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## Appendix 1

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## Appendix 3: City of Cape Town - Census 2001 - Somerset West

### City of Cape Town - Census 2001 - Somerset West

#### Demographic Profile

*Compiled by Information and Knowledge Management from 2001 Census data supplied by Statistics South Africa*

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE BY GENDER

### Ethnic Group, Age, Education, Language

Somerset West						
<b>ETHNIC GROUP</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Black African	297	0.98	471	1.56	768	2.54
Coloured	1,904	6.30	2,361	7.81	4,265	14.11
Indian/Asian	36	0.12	57	0.19	93	0.31
White	11,599	38.37	13,507	44.68	25,107	83.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,836</b>	<b>45.77</b>	<b>16,396</b>	<b>54.23</b>	<b>30,232</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West						
<b>AGE</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
0 - 5	924	3.06	916	3.03	1,840	6.09
6 - 12	1,376	4.55	1,435	4.75	2,811	9.30
13 - 17	1,212	4.01	1,161	3.84	2,373	7.85
18 - 34	2,736	9.05	3,099	10.25	5,835	19.30
35 - 54	3,877	12.82	4,706	15.57	8,583	28.39
55 - 64	1,533	5.07	1,710	5.66	3,244	10.73
65+	2,178	7.20	3,369	11.14	5,547	18.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,836</b>	<b>45.77</b>	<b>16,396</b>	<b>54.23</b>	<b>30,232</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West						
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL OF ADULTS (20+)</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
No schooling	69	0.31	105	0.47	174	0.78
Grade 1 - 6	219	0.98	333	1.49	552	2.47
Grade 7	126	0.56	224	1.00	350	1.57
Grade 8 - 11	1,324	5.92	2,066	9.24	3,390	15.16

Grade 12	3,351	14.99	4,684	20.95	8,035	35.94
Certificate with less than grade 12	177	0.79	258	1.15	435	1.95
Cert/dip with grade 12	1,830	8.19	2,540	11.36	4,370	19.55
Bachelor's degree	1,044	4.67	1,005	4.50	2,049	9.17
Bachelor's degree and diploma	524	2.34	574	2.57	1,098	4.91
Honour's degree	390	1.74	361	1.61	751	3.36
Higher degree (master's or doctorate)	832	3.72	317	1.42	1,150	5.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,887</b>	<b>44.23</b>	<b>12,468</b>	<b>55.77</b>	<b>22,355</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West						
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
English	6,857	22.68	8,158	26.98	15,015	49.67
Afrikaans	6,433	21.28	7,527	24.90	13,960	46.18
Xhosa	162	0.54	216	0.71	378	1.25
Other African	66	0.22	108	0.36	174	0.58
Other	318	1.05	387	1.28	705	2.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,836</b>	<b>45.77</b>	<b>16,396</b>	<b>54.23</b>	<b>30,232</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West						
<b>WORK STATUS - ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE Aged 15 to 65</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Employed	6,102	50.66	5,086	42.23	11,188	92.89
Unemployed	489	4.06	366	3.04	855	7.10
<b>Economically Active Total</b>	<b>6,591</b>	<b>54.72</b>	<b>5,452</b>	<b>45.27</b>	<b>12,044</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West						
<b>WORK STATUS - ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE Aged 15 to 65</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Scholar or student	1,294	17.33	1,207	16.16	2,501	33.49
Home-maker or housewife	27	0.36	2,031	27.20	2,058	27.56
Pensioner or retired person/too old to work	750	10.04	1,083	14.50	1,833	24.55
Unable to work due to illness or disability	147	1.97	114	1.53	261	3.50
Seasonal worker not working presently	69	0.92	48	0.64	117	1.57

Does not choose to work	132	1.77	283	3.79	415	5.56
Could not find work	149	2.00	133	1.78	282	3.78
<b>Economically Inactive Total</b>	<b>2,568</b>	<b>34.39</b>	<b>4,899</b>	<b>65.61</b>	<b>7,467</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>Somerset West</b>						
<b>OCCUPATION OF LABOUR FORCE</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Legislators, senior officials and managers	1,267	11.32	435	3.89	1,702	15.21
Professionals	1,603	14.33	963	8.61	2,566	22.94
Technicians and associate professionals	801	7.16	888	7.94	1,689	15.10
Clerks	249	2.23	1,071	9.57	1,320	11.80
Service workers, shop and market sales workers	711	6.36	528	4.72	1,239	11.07
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	54	0.48	18	0.16	72	0.64
Craft and related trades workers	480	4.29	87	0.78	567	5.07
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	192	1.72	33	0.29	225	2.01
Elementary occupations	273	2.44	576	5.15	849	7.59
Undetermined	472	4.22	487	4.35	959	8.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,102</b>	<b>54.54</b>	<b>5,086</b>	<b>45.46</b>	<b>11,188</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<b>Somerset West</b>						
<b>INCOME OF EARNERS (PER MONTH)</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
0 - R1 600	702	6.27	1,341	11.99	2,043	18.26
R1 601 - R6 400	1,945	17.38	2,518	22.51	4,463	39.89
R6 401 - R25 600	2,765	24.71	1,134	10.14	3,899	34.85
R25 601 - R102 400	580	5.18	78	0.70	658	5.88
R102 401 or more	111	0.99	15	0.13	126	1.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,102</b>	<b>54.54</b>	<b>5,086</b>	<b>45.46</b>	<b>11,188</b>	<b>100.00</b>



## HOUSING PROFILE

### Type of Dwelling, Ownership, Household Income

Somerset West		
<b>TYPE OF DWELLING</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
House or brick structure on a separate stand or yard	8,069	71.83
Traditional dwelling/hut/structure made of traditional materials	129	1.15
Flat in block of flats	597	5.31
Town/cluster/semi-detached house (simplex; duplex; triplex)	1,600	14.24
House/flat/room in back yard	263	2.34
Informal dwelling/shack in back yard	98	0.87
Informal dwelling/shack NOT in back yard	21	0.19
Room/flatlet not in back yard but on shared property	67	0.60
Caravan or tent	12	0.11
Private ship/boat	0	0.00
Not applicable (living quarters is not housing unit)	377	3.36
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,233</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West		
<b>DWELLING OWNERSHIP</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Owned and fully paid off	4,909	43.70
Owned but not yet paid off	3,429	30.53
Rented	2,113	18.81
Occupied rent-free	404	3.60
Not applicable	377	3.36
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,233</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Somerset West		
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME (PER ANNUM)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
0 - R19 200	1,538	13.69
R19 201 - R76 800	3,277	29.17
R76 801 - R307 200	4,940	43.98
R307 201 - R1 228 800	1,264	11.25
R1 228 801 and more	214	1.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,233</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Appendix 4: Churches in Somerset West

<b>Somerset West</b>		
<b>Churches</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
Abundant Life	Gant Centre	852 5278
All Saints Anglican Church	Oak Street, Somerset West	851 7043
LIFE Assembly of God	C/O Lobelia & Firgrove Roads	855 2329
Somerset West Baptist Church	C/O Hendrickz Street & Louw Avenue	852 5220
Bizweni Community Church	Bizweni Centre, Bizweni Lane	855-3592 851 2042
Church of Christ	C/O Lourensford & Irene Avenue	854 8168
Christ Church - Church of England	C/O Helderberg College & Old Stellenbosch Roads	855 3379
Full Gospel Street	Drama Street	851 2140
Helderberg Christian Fellowship	Hottentots Holand High School	852 7748
Methodist Church	15 Coronation Avenue	852 5303
Methodist Church of Southern Africa	Kerk Street	852 1210
N.G. Church Helderberg	82 Firmount Weg	851 5582
N.G. Church Hottentots Holland	C/O Cloetenberg & Gordon Street	852 5004

N.G. Church Somerset-West	C/O Dirkie Uys & Andries Pretorius Street	852 1787
United Church	C/O Andries Pretorius & Bright Street	852 3281
The Bay Family Harvest Church	Gants Centre	853 7771
Mountain View Baptist Church	Hazelden Dr. Heritage Park	855-2088
Friends Christian Fellowship		855-5646
Pinkster Erfenis Bediening (1819)	Kerk St.	853-7001
Methodist Church	49 Bakkerskloof Rd	855-4103
Hottentots Holland Covenant Community Church	Box 1601 Somerset West	851-2042
Methodist Church	27 Victoria St.	851-2345

## Appendix 5: Questions asked to Pastors' Wives Interviews

### Questionnaire:

#### Short Questions:

1. What is your church denomination?

2. What is the size of your church?

3. To which population group do you belong?

4. How many years have you been in ministry?

5. How many years have you been serving at your current church?

6. Your husband is the ...

- senior pastor of your church
- assistant pastor of your church

7. Were you aware of your husband's calling to full-time ministry prior to getting married?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you consider yourself to be in...?

- Full-time ministry
- Part-time ministry
- Neither

9. Who determined your role in the local church?

- The elders of the church determined what my involvement would be in the church
- My husband determined what my involvement would be in the church
- I determined what my involvement would be in the church
- A combination of the above

10. Have you ever received a job description?

- Yes
- No

**11. Describe your role in the local church...**

- Observer
- Participator
- Educator
- Leader
- None
  
- Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you believe that the church needs to be educated on the role of the pastor's wife in the church?**

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

**13. Do you believe scripture teaches about the role of the pastor's wife in the local church?**

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

**14. Are you encouraged to use your spiritual gifts in your local church?**

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

**15. Do you feel obligated to participate in church functions?**

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

**16. Do you find it easy to make friends within the church?**

- Yes
- No

**Would you like to read the finished thesis?**

- Yes  If yes, please supply your email address:
- No

**Thank you so much for taking the time to fill in this survey!**

Your assistance in this is greatly appreciated.

**Leschenne Rebuli**

**Interview Questions:**

**1. Were there any resources made available to you as you took on this role? If so, what were they? Did you find them helpful? Do you think you would have benefited from reading any resources?**

**2. Do you pursue a career or any hobbies outside of the church? If so, what are they? Why do you pursue a career or hobbies outside the church?**

**3. On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being ‘not at all’)**

**3.1 Do you enjoy your role as the wife of the pastor in the local church? Give reasons for your response.**

1      2      3      4      5

**3.2 Do you feel well-equipped for this role? Give reasons for your response.**

1      2      3      4      5

**4. What is the most rewarding aspect of being a pastor’s wife?**

**5. List some of the greatest needs you face in the following areas:**

**Church life:**

**Home life:**

**Personal life:**

**Spiritual life:**

**6. Have you established any boundaries in relation to your involvement within the church? Have these boundaries been honoured? To what extent is the church aware of your boundaries?**

**7. To what extent is the church aware of your role in the church?**

**8. Would you consider yourself the pastor's wife or simply the wife of the pastor? Do you understand the difference?**

**9. What message would you want to give to the church if given the opportunity to speak intimately?**

**10. What message would you want to hear from the church?**

**11. What particular struggles faced over the years that you believe are specific to your role as the pastor's wife?**

**12. Do you have regrets you have in relation to your role as a pastor's wife?**

**General Comments:**

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## **Appendix 6: Bare's List of Literature for Ministers' Wives**

### **Informal Contributions:**

1851: The Itinerant's Wife: Her Qualifications, Duties, Trials and Rewards by Rev H.M. Eaton

1939: The Making of a Minister's Wife by Johnson

1942: I Married a Minister, by Golda Bader

1943: The Shepherdess by Arthur Hewitt known as "the first handbook for Ministers' Wives" (p. viii).

1944: Papa Was a Preacher by Porter

1946: Inside the Parsonage by Howell

1947: Without Halos by Cochran

1948: The Parson Takes a Wife by Sheerin

1949: For Heaven's Sake by Smith

1950: Parsonage Doorway by Gebhard

1956: No Wings in the Manse by Frist

1959: As the Years Go By by Raley

1964: The Pastor's Wife and the Church by Pentecost

1967: A Hat on the Hall Table by Davis

1968: The People on Second Street by Moore

1970: Heirs Together: A Collection of Inspirational Advice for Ministers' Wives by Dees

1971: The Adventure of Being a Wife by Peale

1978: Finding Fulfillment in the Manse by Damp

1978: A Parsonage Pantry by Wiseman

1978: Especially for Ministers' Wives by Wiseman

1979: The Pastor's Rib and His Flock by Carter

1984: A Growth Guide for Ministers' Wives by Montgomery

1985: Confessions of a Preacher's Wife by Spray

1995: Married to a Pastor's Wife by London & Wiseman, eds.

### **Formal Literature**

1953: The History of the Parson's Wife by Watt.



1962: The Role of the Minister's Wife by Denton  
1965: Ministers' Wives by Douglas  
1980: What's Happening to Clergy Marriages? By Mace  
1980: Who is the Minister's Wife? by Ross  
1983: The Minister's Wife: Her Role in Nineteenth—Century American Evangelicalism by Sweet  
1988: First Ladies of the Parish: Historical Portraits of Pastors' Wives by Tucker  
1988: Counsel for Pastors' Wives by Langberg

### **HANDBOOKS BY DECADE OF PUBLICATION**

1942 The Pastor's Helpmate Douglass McDaniel  
1950 The Pastor's Wife Carolyn Blackwood  
1950 Handbook for Ministers' Wives Welthy Fisher  
1956 How to be a Preacher's Wife and Like It Lora L. Parrott  
1963 The Better Half of the Ministry Freda O'Neill  
1966 The Minister's Wife: Person or Position? Marilyn Oden  
1968 How to Be a Minister's Wife and Love It! Alice Taylor  
1972 The Unprivate Life of a Pastor's Wife Frances Nordland  
1974 Underground Manual for Ministers' Wives Ruth Truman  
1977 This Call We Share Martha Nelson  
1981 The Private Life of the Minister's Wife Betty Coble  
1981 The Pastor's Wife Today Donna Sinclair  
1982 The Privileged Woman Joy Haney  
1987 Tips for Ministers and Mates Mary Bess  
1995 I'm More Than the Pastor's Wife Lorna Dobson

## **Appendix 7: Works on How to Care for your Pastoral Family**

Awasum, Toby. 1997. *Ministering to your pastor: how to serve God's servant of the harvest*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers.

Dobson, Lorna. 2001. *Caring for your Pastor: helping God's servant to minister with joy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

Hoge, Dean R. and Wenger, Jacqueline E. 2005. *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.

Langford, Daniel L. 1998. *The Pastor's Family: The Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities*. Philadelphia, PA: Haworth Press.

Roberts, Wes. 1995. *Support your local pastor: practical ways to encourage your minister*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress Publishing Group.

Rubietta, Jane. 2002. *How to keep the pastor you love: caring for ministers and their families*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP.

## **Appendix 8: Online Support for Pastors' Wives**

<http://www.withpurpose.com/>

<http://www.rockdove.com/pwsupprt.html>

<http://www.smolderingwickministries.org/wives.html>

<http://pastorswives.org/>

<http://sarahstent.com/>

<http://Illministries.org/>

<http://www.justbetweenus.org/>

<http://www.pastorswife.net/>

<http://www.parsonage.org/articles/married/index.cfm>

<http://rebelliouspastorswife.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.gpwn.tv/>

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Pointe/5892/Prayerpraise.html>

<http://accidentalpastorswife.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.lovengodlovenpastorswives.faithweb.com/custom2.html>

<http://www.homeschoolblogger.com/Academy252>

<http://youngpastorswife.blogspot.com/>

<http://kevintessa.wordpress.com/>

**Appendix 9: Creative Ideas for Building Relationships (How to Mentor and be Mentored)** by Debbie Stuart, 2005 available at [http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=4755](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=4755)

1. Share a time when you were aware of God's presence, help or timing in your life.
2. Read a chapter in the Bible every day; share once a week what the verses said to you.
3. Read the same book, a chapter a week, and discuss what you have learned.
4. Keep a daily journal describing how you have seen God in your life that day. Share some highlights with your partner each week.
5. What concerns have been on your heart lately?
6. Pray daily for your partner. Initiate praying together.
7. As you pray about specific problems, discuss how God has been answering your prayers.
8. Write a simple note or poem expressing your love or appreciation for your partner's being willing to be your friend.
9. Give a heart-felt hug or touch.
10. Could you give an encouraging word? (Proverbs 17:22)
11. Drop off a surprise gift of two mugs you have made or bought.
12. Give a simple green plant – to grow as your friendship grows.
13. Call to sing or wish "Happy Birthday."
14. Simply call to ask, "How are you?"
15. What is your talent? Could you make a simple memento for your partner?
16. Give a bookmark you made or bought.
17. Share a favourite dessert.
18. Meet for coffee, tea, breakfast, lunch or dinner (don't forget going for dessert).
19. Share a normal activity: a walk, sporting activity, errand, meal, etc.
20. Attend a Bible study together.
21. Can you make an apple pie, balance a budget or make bread together?