

Exercise on Women in Ministry

Research by Kirsten Birkett commissioned by the office of the Bishop of Maidstone

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Abstract: women working in ministry in complementarian churches were surveyed to determine where they felt that their ministries could be helped, and to investigate possible problems that may contribute to lack of satisfaction in ministry. While in a number of cases poor pay and lack of meaningful oversight is a problem, one of the main issues emerging was the desire for proper training. Support in the form of organised networks of women in ministry is also desired.

Introduction

Following the publication of 'Fellow Workers' and the discussions that have followed, there is a need to think more strategically about the encouragement of complementarian women's ministry in conservative evangelical churches. Despite the report *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, produced by the Church of England's Faith and Order Advisory Group in 2007 and the subsequent advice from Ministry Division articulating the types of ministry that might flow out of this: *Discerning the Diaconate*, relatively few female candidates have come forward from conservative evangelical churches. Research was therefore commissioned by the Bishop of Maidstone to investigate what steps could realistically be taken that all women in ministry consider would help their future ministries to flourish.

The brief for this research asked to explore issues such as:

- line management
- operating ethos of church – including its overall approach to complementarian ministry
- training needs for women in ministry
- the nature of women's and men's ministry
- recognition, affirmation and licensing of lay ministers
- consideration of ordination routes
- financial support for training
- need for local support groups
- higher national profile for women's ministry and the permanent diaconate
- the need for monitoring by churches of the involvement of women in their ministry
- the availability of job opportunities and the constraints to mobility.

The project was designed to explore what women in complementarian ministry identify as help that could be given by the Bishop of Maidstone, but also with the more basic questions in mind: How satisfied are complementarian women with their ministries, and what are the causes of their satisfaction/dissatisfaction?

There has been little direct research on women in complementarian Church of England ministry since Carrie Sandom's report, 'Fellow Workers in Christ', in 2002 . It is a small group, and a distinct one. The Church of England generally views women in

its ministry as those who are ordained, in roles that would be interchangeable with men's ministry. Indeed, there is a general ethos in many Church of England circles that 'ministry' means 'ordained, sacramental ministry', in some cases exclusively.¹ Women who are not ordained, even if employed fulltime in Anglican churches, are often not be considered 'in ministry' by the Church of England, and so are not included in studies or statistics.²

The current study was begun with a number of 'working hypotheses', collected from what little research has been done, and from anecdotal evidence through knowing women in complementarian church ministry. These were:

1. Women in complementarian church ministry would likely be complementarian by conviction, and not troubled by complementarian doctrine in itself.
2. There may be considerable dissatisfaction with their ministry situation in practice.
3. This dissatisfaction may be primarily driven by:
 - Poor financial provision/safety
 - Poor levels of pastoral/personal support from the incumbent³

These hypotheses were tested against the survey data.

¹ I can remember hearing a woman, who was ordained to presbyter, but at that particular moment without permission to officiate, although occupied fulltime in the church in which her husband was incumbent, declaring 'I have no ministry'.

² They will also not have the financial or legal protection provided by the Church of England as an institution.

³ Both of these were noted as (sometimes serious) problems for single women in ministry, in the research published in *Evangelicals Now* in 2016. Rebecca and Eleanor, 'Serving as a single woman', *evangelicals now*, Feb 2016, p. 17; 'Single women: when it goes wrong', *Evangelicals Now*, April 2016, p. 15.

Researcher positionality

I am a complementarian, evangelical, single Christian woman, and I have been employed full-time in para-church ministries since finishing my PhD in 1993 (Christian publishing, theological training). I have usually been very much in the minority as a woman in my workplace, sometimes the only woman, but always paid the same as the men in equivalent jobs and rarely feeling discriminated against, although often feeling very unsupported. I have written and spoken extensively on complementarian views from the Bible, and an evangelical understanding of feminism. I am ordained presbyter but by choice have no intention of leading a church. I have had 1 year PT, 0.5 years FT employment in church ministry. This ended legally but abruptly, demonstrating an instance of job insecurity in women's ministry.

Who are the women in complementarian ministry?

There were 83 replies from around 150 women contacted. It is difficult to know exact numbers of those contacted, as a number of the email addresses given were church office addresses, sometimes the same for several women, so we don't exactly how many were passed on. As it is we have an estimated 55% response rate, which is a little disappointing if all the women on our lists were indeed contacted. There could be various reasons for not answering: lack of time, or not seeing the importance, are two. However given that we do not have direct contact with some women, it could be that they did not receive the survey, and could be missing out on other information from the Bishop of Maidstone that is relevant to their ministry. If these women are indeed under the Bishop's pastoral care, it is suggested that the Bishop's office ensure that there are direct ways of contacting them.

The responses received also raised another interesting question: two of the respondents identified themselves as minister's wives. Both regarded themselves as

women in ministry in complementarian churches, which is indeed what they are. This raises a question which it is beyond the capacity of the present study to investigate: what is the position of the minister's wife in today's churches? The widespread cultural assumption that men and women, even married, are independent individuals with independent careers, is not necessarily held by Christians. However, the impact of this cultural shift is often seen in the minister's wife having her own working life outside of the church and home. It certainly should not be assumed that the minister's wife is automatically an unpaid worker in the church. Yet many wives do carry out a great deal of formal ministry, without pay or recognition. How many minister's wives are in fact women working in complementarian ministry, may even have an official position within the church, but were not contacted/did not realise they could answer the survey? Should they be considered under the oversight of the Bishop of Maidstone?

Two church wardens also answered the survey, which may indicate that incumbents have varied views as to what counts as 'doing ministry'.

The age range of respondents was from 25 to 83; 3 widowed, 2 divorced, 42 married, 32 single.

What kind of ministry are they doing?

There were a range of ministries and job titles, mostly pastoral church work with women and families. 22 jobs seemed to be exclusively with children or youth. Two were to do with evangelism/mission. Two church wardens responded, and there were a few specific parachurch ministries identified (although the respondent's employment was through a church): Christians Against Poverty, work with women in prostitution, work with the homeless, and counselling.

41 specified full-time work (5-6 days/week). 9 did not give a level (all volunteers). 29 worked various levels of part-time (4 or fewer days/week).

16 were unpaid; two paid nominal amounts. Some did not specify or gave descriptors such as 'Church of England salary', 'Curate's salary', 'Minimum wage'. The highest salary worked out at £50 000 per year pro-rata for a woman working 2.2 days/week, but this was an outlier in the church ministry jobs. Of those below £30 000 pa, only 8 specified that housing was also provided. Of the 26 being paid the FTE of £20 000 or less, only two also had housing provided. The survey asked for salary, and did not specifically ask if housing was also provided; it could be that some respondents did not think to mention it.

Of the single women, one was working full-time unpaid, one for a nominal amount. 14 single women were employed full-time on less than £30 000, with no mention of housing; four on £20 000 or less. (Pension contribution was not explored.)

Discussion

It is acknowledged that ministry workers are generally on a lower rate of pay than jobs with equivalent responsibility in secular work; also that in general, funds are limited for ministry. However, if women working fulltime are paid less than £20 000 pa with no housing included, then this is too low. It would also be surprising to find that men doing equivalent work in churches were on similar rates of pay (comments below demonstrate that there are certainly cases where men are paid more than women, for the same job in the same church). This might bear further investigation. This data on pay suggests that the working hypothesis (that dissatisfaction may be driven by poor financial provision/safety) has some support.

Satisfaction in ministry

The respondents were asked questions about their levels of satisfaction in ministry, the level of support they receive, how well resourced they feel, and their satisfaction with the awareness of their ministry in their churches. Then they were asked for their opinions of the complementarian stances of their churches.

Question: How do you feel in your ministry job?

Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
	6 (7%)		31 (37%)	43 (52%)

Question: How supported do you feel in your ministry role?

Not at all supported	Somewhat supported	Very supported
2 (2%)	28 (33%)	50 (60%)

Question: How well resourced do you feel in your ministry role? (eg adequate time, money for expenses, outside help)

Not at all resourced	Somewhat resourced	very well resourced
	39 (47%)	40 (48%)

Question: How satisfied are you with the awareness of your ministry in your church?

Very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied
	5 (6%)	10 (12%)	31 (37%)	32 (39%)

Discussion

It is encouraging to see that 52% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' in their ministry job; and that 60% felt 'very supported', and 48% felt 'very well resourced'. A lower 39% were 'very satisfied' with the awareness of their ministry in their church.

33 women (40%) answered both 'very satisfied in ministry' and 'very supported'. Only 17 (20%) answered in the highest category for all four questions (satisfaction in ministry, support, resources, and recognition).

Two women answered 'not at all supported' in their ministry role; apart from that it is good to see that no one placed herself in the lowest category for any question (although it remains unknown whether those who might have been in the lowest category for one of these questions simply did not return the survey). 6 (7%) felt 'somewhat dissatisfied' in their jobs; 5 (6%) were 'somewhat dissatisfied' with the awareness of their ministry. It is unfortunate to see any women dissatisfied with their ministry conditions at all; but it is encouraging to see that the response skews towards the upper satisfaction levels.

Complementarian stance of the church

Question: How do you think the complementarian stance of your church helps your ministry?

The answers were classified as positive, neutral, or negative. Positive answers were those that expressed approval of the complementarian stance of the church. Neutral answers were those along the lines of: 'I'm not sure it makes a difference either way', and negative 'I'm not sure it does...'

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Total:	64 (77%)	5 (6%)	7 (8%)

All those who answered gave at least one sentence in reply; some answers were quite lengthy. Several themes emerged:

It gives complementarian women freedom in their ministry:

I'm not expected to do things I'm not comfortable with.

I am wonderfully free to minister to women and children without being pressurised.

It frees me up to disciple and train women.

Gives helpful parameters to ministry:

It gives me guiding principles for the extent of my role.

My role is clearly defined and I'm not having to work through what I should or should not do

It means that women are valued:

Women are valued as equal.

I think it ensures my role is seen as important and valued'.

I am definitely seen in the staff team as a valid member of staff. I am included in decisions, and my opinion is listened to.

It increases the amount of ministry to women:

I think teaching to women has increased in quantity and quality.

It ... means our church leadership is convinced women's ministry is worth investing in because they are convinced the church as a whole will benefit from this.

Question: How is [the complementarian stance of your church] not helpful?

Ten women answered that there was no way in which the complementarian stance was unhelpful. Others all had something to say about difficulties they encountered through ministering in their churches. Again, there were several themes:

Outsiders or congregation members resent it

I think many of the younger women find complementarian theology difficult to accept which can sometimes be a barrier to discussing the gospel.

I think it is a barrier for younger women/teenagers who think it is unfair, and whose view of God's goodness is challenged by it.

I've ... struggled with some women (especially older women) really wanting to see me preaching or leading, for example, and with them almost feeling personally offended that I'm not.

Outside the church – people misunderstand us as misogynistic.

Fails to help women in ministry

I think there has been a neglect in training women for ministry because sometimes there isn't a clear idea or discussion about what ministry of women may involve.

[T]here's more of an obvious pathway/expectation for men my age – you go to Oakhill, curacy and then become a vicar who leads a team. That isn't as clear for women.

The emphasis on recruiting and training men for pastor teacher roles means historically we haven't thoroughly thought through how best to train female ministry interns.

[S]ometimes women's ministry is devalued - for example despite there being many more women than men within the congregation, the men's worker is full time and I am part time. We have a large staff team with a disproportionately high number of men on the team (not all of whom preach), given the make up of the congregation. When lockdown happened I was furloughed, while the men's worker wasn't.

As a woman, and because I don't have an official status or a theology degree, it feels like my input isn't valued, and so I feel like a lesser member of the staff team.

Women and children's ministry isn't very valued by the congregation. What the vicar does is the important thing.

Complementarianism can be used to justify blatant sexism. I am paid roughly the same as my male equivalents, but they are given housing and have their bills paid.

It's not helpful when my minister makes comments such as 'I took a hit hiring a female youth worker, because I could get a man to do some of the preaching'.

Effectively means women's work is isolated/men not working with women

I think it sometimes gives a false impression that men and women should work very separately in churches.

If the men do not involve women in their ministry (sharing ideas, prayers, vision – taking feedback and input) the result is basically women being shut out of the church ministry.

I think our church like many others also has some vestiges of the culture which sees men fearful to talk to a woman (particularly a single woman) lest it be misinterpreted. I think this is particularly there when it comes to working relationships in staff/leadership team.

Too many unknowns

There are areas in which I am unclear exactly how the leadership feels about women serving.

Sometimes the lines feel a bit too blurry, which I think can cause confusion.

Question: Is there anything about the complementarian stance/ implementation of complementarian principles that you would like changed?

10 respondents did not answer this question, and a further 17 expressed that they wanted nothing changed. The other answers expressed these themes:

More clarity/better taught

I think I would like to keep it on the agenda and spoken openly about from the incumbent as historically it has only been an 'issue' when major decisions in the life of the church have been made.

Clear teaching on what submission is and is not, what the role is of the man as a servant leader who is humble and gentle, rather than lording it over a woman, would help.

Spell out more clearly what Bible teaching opportunities there are outside of the pulpit to mixed groups within the congregation... this 'grey area' is the main frustration for women both in the congregation and on staff.

that lack of discussion of these issues means that in fact there are examples of discrimination

Some clarity on the goodness of complementarity (I think it's how God made us to be!) would be really helpful – and an attitude that really encourages women to be well trained in theology and ministry.

Better relationships

Sometimes there can be a little bit of a fear of women, rather than embracing relationships as brothers and sisters serving together.

At conferences no one is interested in speaking to me - I have a picture on my phone of the ReNew conference of lines of men with their backs turned to me.

[W]hat I would love to see is a complementarianism that would honour the single women by just making clear the helpful and expected dynamics of a godly working relationship. This spares the single woman from having to figure it out or be the one

to have to ask the awkward question (which can sometimes be side-stepped) and be wrong-footed by inconsistencies. I think it would also make them feel less like a potential "contaminant" who has to be kept at a safe distance.

More positivity towards/encouragement of women's ministry

*I think it's important that we think about what women **can** do, and perhaps acknowledge things that women might even be more suited to than men, and enable them to do it, not just make comments about what women shouldn't do.*

I think recognising the value of women's ministry and working hard at showing true equality with difference.

[T]here are many gifted women who are not being used in the church because men are favoured while women are overlooked and not considered.

[S]eeing more women employed to do ministry within the church would be of huge encouragement to the women in the congregation.

I think women, and especially trained women, can have a lot to offer in terms of sermon feedback, reviewing services/events, thinking through pastoral care for church family members etc but I guess most aren't given the opportunity to do so...

[M]y male colleague who was a trainee for my first two years in this job is now in the same role as me as a male counterpart, but he is involved in high level decision making in our ministry area and I am not. He is also actively pursued as to what his next ministry training steps will be, because it is assumed he will become a rector, whereas I have had to chase down various avenues for further study myself.

[W]e still feel more permitted than pursued... Often we're left to our own devices etc – the answer to any request is more often than not 'yes' but the initiative doesn't usually come from the guys.

Correlations

These results were compared with the satisfaction levels in ministry (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied). There is some correlation between the answers to complementarian stance of the church, and ministry satisfaction. The 'very satisfied' group gave no negative answer to 'How do you think the complementarian stance of your church helps your ministry?', the 'somewhat satisfied' gave some

negative answers but many more positive, and the 'somewhat dissatisfied' group gave as many positive as negative. Only women in the first two groups wanted nothing changed in the complementarian stance in their churches. All three groups demonstrated the same themes in their comments.

How do you think the complementarian stance of your church helps your ministry

	Positive response to complementarian stance	Negative	Neutral
Very satisfied	33		7
Somewhat satisfied	28	2	
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	3	

How is it not helpful?

	Nothing unhelpful
Very satisfied	6
Somewhat satisfied	4
Somewhat dissatisfied	
Total	10

4 women wanted more preaching for women (under the authority of the pastor), spread across the three groups.

Discussion

As expected, women working in complementarian ministry on the whole agree with a complementarian stance – they would not be in these churches if they did not. There were a few respondents who (to varied extent) did not agree with complementarian theology, and had found themselves working in their churches through accident (church merger) or working in a parachurch ministry that was largely separate. However these were not the women who had the most negative comments to make (or were in the most dissatisfied group).

As can be seen, even in the 'most satisfied' group, the majority had some comment on how the complementarian stance of their church was unhelpful. Most of those dissatisfied, or frustrated, with the complementarian stance of their church, were frustrated because it was not really being implemented in line with the stated theology. 'Equal but different' was being interpreted as 'Separate', and all too often in practice, 'unequal', as seen above in some of the comments: unequal in pay, in inclusion in church strategy, and in the way women were encouraged for their future.

Relationship with incumbent

Two questions were asked to evaluate how well the respondents related to incumbents.

Question: Do you think your incumbent understands the challenges you face being a woman in ministry? If you are able, please give examples.

Yes	37
No	11

Somewhat	15
Don't know	5

The examples given demonstrated a number of themes:

Pay and holidays

Generally he is very willing to listen if I raise an issue. Eg: I felt the holiday policy wasn't working for me as a single woman (I was required to take whole weeks at a time, I wanted more flexibility to go away with friends for a few days at a time) and it was changed on my request. He has also created a pay scale for non-ordained staff such as myself, the children's worker and our music director which shows recognition that staff in these roles struggle to see a career pathway.

Particular issues for married women

Yes. Flexibility with having young children is very helpful.

The added pressure of being a mum rather than a dad.

I also feel a tension between my work role and that of wife and mother that he seems unaware of. I think he can rely on his wife to care for the home and family, and I am still trying to do the same whilst working

They [male staff] are all married (to lovely godly women) who take care of the home and their children (whilst also working in 2 examples) however general household upkeep/child care is done by them, and so don't understand those challenges of being not just a working mum – but a "ministry" mum.

[A]s I am married with a family, there is no expectation that I spend evenings on work.

[H]e has a wife at home to cook and clean and shop and deal with any family issues and I don't think that he realises how long all those things take to do on top of work.⁴

Pastoral load

During the pandemic, it was recognised that the pastoral load that I carried was significant and demanding – I was encouraged and affirmed, even though much of it

⁴ NB This is not only an issue faced by married women.

was unseen. I was spared from too much of the higher profile and visible responsibilities.

[O]n his own admission he didn't really understand women which is why I was appointed! ... I don't think he understood the emotional impact of ministry, nor what pastoral work amongst women was like.

My incumbent is incredibly supportive and is always willing to listen. In the past when I have raised concerns he has been very humble and receptive.

However, I don't think he always understands how emotionally exhausting my role is eg meeting up with a woman or teenage girl for a walk usually involves listening to personal details of their lives (more so than with men) and trying to respond in a wise and Biblical way, and I'm not sure he fully understands how tiring that is.

No, I don't think he has a clue! ... Even simple things, like the women's ministry taking time and being relational in nature would be good things for him to be reminded about.

I probably find it harder than him to switch off from ministry and get headspace and relax.

He is less emotional than I am and finds it hard to understand why I am often overwhelmed with my role. He doesn't understand that women often take longer to process things, and that they often need a bit more time to deal with things.

Relationships

I found it noticeable on my Cornhill training course that many of the young men training for ministry found it hard to relate well to female coursemates. Avoidance was often the currency of the day, rather than working hard to relate to the women who were in the minority in that context.

Guidance

I wasn't given a job description or much supervision/guidance and was unsure how to relate well to the team (especially the men)....My experience of the lack of definition and ambition in women's ministry has been a real challenge for me to overcome.

I'm not sure they understand the need for/encourage me to seek training/counsel from older/wiser women – it's down to me to apply to/look for opportunities like this.

[T]here are things he doesn't understand probably because we've never talked about them. Such as how strange it is to know that however experienced you become, you will never be the person "in charge". Not that I want to be in charge, but just that that is a thing one has to cope with compared with doing a secular job.

He doesn't quite understand how much I need his backing when people disagree with how I run things like children's ministry. I have to make a lot of decisions and have a lot of responsibility, but at the end of the day I don't have much power or authority.

I [had] less attention or mentoring as a full time church apprentice than a 1 day a week youth worker or male volunteers interested in preaching.

General encouragement and interest

He listens to me with empathy, gives helpful advice, and also asks for my opinion. I feel safe to share my perspective in meetings, and he also takes initiative in making regular meet ups. ...He also takes initiative in suggesting women's ministry resources to me and asks how the ministry is going. But he also doesn't micromanage, but trusts me to do the role I've been employed to do.

Yes I feel he makes a real effort to understand but you really have to be a woman to see how tricky it can be to try to do the Godly thing and serve in a humble way.

Yes – he's checked to make sure that I have a support network around me.

Not really... Because he does not look down on me, I don't think he is aware of some of the ways other men might and the impact that that has.

He had no idea how difficult it was that having 'run' the church [during an interregnum] to be suddenly stood down from doing anything in public without any explanation. He has not included me in local gatherings of clergy – in preaching groups etc – which had been my previous enjoyable experience ... He forgets to tell me about meetings that I could attend but of which he alone is informed as the minister.

In a recent conversation about complementarianism I think they were taken aback by some of the comments and remarks made by the women in the meeting (all complementarian) in regards to how things can be phrased more helpfully when speaking about complementarianism.

Question: Do you think your incumbent would welcome a session on how to manage female staff better? If not, why not?

Yes	40
No	10
Don't know	14

Discussion

It seems that, while most women are happy with their incumbents, there are a number of issues on which the incumbents/supervisors could be better educated, whether they realise it or not. Women in ministry work differently from men, in a way that is probably highlighted more than any other profession. To treat women who are equals in worth, working differently, takes some thought; but it is an area in which Christians should be doing better than their secular colleagues, not worse.

The answers to this second question (Do you think your incumbent would welcome a session on how to manage female staff better?) revealed not just whether the respondent thought her incumbents would welcome such a session, but whether she thought he needed it. Almost all of the 'yes' answers (especially in the Highly Satisfied group) were accompanied by comments to extent that he was already doing a good job. Some 'No' answers added 'because he doesn't need it', five suggested it would be because he didn't realise he needed it.

Correlation

	Highly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
Do you think your incumbent understands the challenges you	Yes: 24 (56%) No: 6 Somewhat: 5 Don't know: 3	Yes: 16 (52%) No: 3 Somewhat: 8 Don't know: 1	Yes: 1 (16%) No: 2 Somewhat: 2 Don't know: 1

face being a woman in ministry?			
Do you think your incumbent would welcome a session on how to manage female staff better?	Yes: 24 (56%) No: 4 Don't know: 5	Yes: 13 (42%) No: 5 Don't know: 7	Yes: 3 (50%) No: 1 Don't know: 2

There did not appear to be strong correlations between the answers to these questions and the level of satisfaction with ministry. The same themes emerged across all three groups.

What would help?

We now turn to what women in complementarian ministry think would be most helpful in improving their ministries. Respondents were asked to order five options, with 1 being the most helpful, and 5 the least helpful. Below is listed the number of respondents who put '1' in each category; ie, the thing they thought would help the most.

Question: Which of these would most help your ministry? Please rank them in order.

Answers with '1' (ie most helpful) ranking:

More meetings with incumbent/ line manager	9
More recognition of your ministry within the church	8
Clearer job description/role	9
Official status eg ordination	7

Professional development eg conferences/ training	33
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The category that had far the most '1' answers was 'professional development eg conferences/training'. Each of the other categories had roughly equal numbers. This pattern was the same across all three groups of ministry satisfaction levels.

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
More meetings with incumbent/ line manager	6	7	1
More recognition of your ministry within the church	2	6	
Clearer job description/role	7	2	1
Official status eg ordination	3	2	1
Professional development eg conferences/ training	18 (41%)	12 (38%)	4 (66%)

Given that one of the 'working hypotheses' was to do with frequency of meetings with supervisors, respondents were asked about the existing frequency and whether they would like this to change.

Question: How often to you meet with your incumbent/line manager?

	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	1-2 times per term	Less often/not regularly
Very Satisfied	16 (37%)	4	6	4	10

Somewhat satisfied	10 (32%)	2	5	2	6
Somewhat dissatisfied	4 (66%)		1	1	
Total	30 (36%)	6	12	7	16

Discussion

Around a third of the women meet with their incumbent/line manager (it is usually the incumbent) every week or even more often. Most of these specified 1-1 meetings, it is possible a few meant weekly staff meetings. Around another third met at least 1-2 times a term, and the other third considerably less often, or had no regular meetings at all. There is no particular correlation between the frequency of meetings and satisfaction with ministry.

Question: Would you like this to be more or less?

Perhaps more informative results came from the next question, which asked 'would you like this to be more or less?'. It seems that more meetings are better, across all groups. No one wanted less frequent meetings. All women meeting weekly or fortnightly with an incumbent wanted it to stay the same. Of those meeting monthly, all were happy with this frequency except for one who wanted to meet more often. Of those meeting 1-2 times per term, three would like to meet more often and the others the same. Of those with infrequent or irregular meetings, all but one wanted to meet more often. Even the one exception (from the 'somewhat satisfied in ministry' group) was not straightforward: she commented, 'Because I don't find [my incumbent] helpful I'm happy not to meet! I had a period where I met with a couple of churchwardens, which was really quite helpful, but since they moved on they said they "don't think you need a line manager" ...'. In other words, she appreciated more frequent meetings, but with a more helpful person. Another women (from the

'somewhat dissatisfied' group) said 'More – but only if the nature of them changed. I have sometimes had more meetings...but normally would leave just feeling very frustrated'.

Question: Is there other support that you would like? (eg a local or national support group for women's ministry, women in ministry conferences, contact with other women in ministry)

Both local support groups for women in ministry, and women in ministry conferences, were mentioned by almost every respondent. A lot of those who reported very satisfied in their ministry indicated that they already had these measures in place. However it appears that many women are not yet linked up with such networks, and would like to be. Eight women spoke specifically of the desire to have a mentor, possibly an older or more experienced woman in ministry.

Four women mentioned that they would prefer conferences for men and women in ministry generally, three of those specifically saying they did not enjoy 'women only' events.

I'm nervous that some women's support groups make 'women's ministry' a sideline rather than a valued part of the whole.

I find women only things weird.

To be honest, I often find that conferences aimed at women tend to be a bit theologically light, and dare I say it, 'dumbed down'. And if it's something run by PT, always has the same speakers.

Only one respondent specified that she did not want support from outside her church, preferring her network of support within in. Everyone else who gave a descriptive answer expressed a desire for support from outside, through the large conferences, smaller local support groups, or mentoring.

Training

Respondents were asked a number of questions concerning training; what they had already, whether they thought this was adequate, and what they would like.

Question: What training in ministry have you had? Please tick all that apply.

Ministry apprenticeship for at least 1 year	28 (34%)
Cornhill	14 (17%)
Bible college such as Oak Hill	16 (19%)
Biblical counselling course such as Christian Counselling and Education Foundation (CCEF) or Bible Counselling UK	15 (18%)
Other (please state)	Non-accredited courses such as local church or gospel partnership training course 28 (34%)

Question: Do you think this training was adequate for your job?

Yes	47 (57%)
No	24 (29%)
Possibly	1

Question: Has anyone in your job encouraged you to have further training?

Yes	41 (50%)
No	29 (35%)

Question: What further training would you like to have?

Theological college accredited course (Oak Hill)	30 (36%) (PhD 1)
Cornhill	26 (31%)
Specific training in ministry to women/children/families or evangelism	12 (14%)
Biblical counselling or other pastoral training	22 (27%)

Other training mentioned: admin, teamwork, mentorship, local Bible brainstorming group, centralised CMD.

Two respondents mentioned that doing training without adequate work time allowed is not helpful.

Question: Would you explore further training if funding was available?

Yes	51 (61%) (as long as there was a job to come back to, and work time allocated)
No	12 (14%) (5 specified 'not at the moment'; 6 at or past retirement age)
Maybe	3

Correlation

	Highly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
Ministry apprenticeship for at least 1 year	33 (76%)	8 (10%)	5
Cornhill	16 (37%)	5 (16%)	2
Bible college such as Oak Hill	17 (40%)	1	1
Biblical counselling course such as	15	0	

Christian Counselling and Education Foundation (CCEF) or Bible Counselling UK			
Non-accredited courses such as local church or gospel partnership training course	24	6	2

	Highly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
Do you think this training was adequate for your job?	Yes: 26 No: 16	Yes 19 No: 7 Possibly: 1	Yes: 4 No: 1
Has anyone in your job encouraged you to have further training?	Yes: 20 No: 15	Yes: 18 No: 12	Yes: 3 No: 2
What further training would you like to have?			
- Theological college accredited course	18	8	4
- Cornhill	22	4	
- Specific training in ministry to women/children/families or evangelism	9	2	1
- Biblical counselling or other pastoral training	18	4	
Would you explore further training if funding was available?	Yes: 34 No: 9	Yes: 12 No: 3	Yes: 5

Discussion

There is some correlation between levels of training and ministry satisfaction. More of the group who are highly satisfied have had training, and higher levels of more formal training (all those who had attended Oak Hill were in this group). But the clear message, across all groups, is that women in complementarian ministry would like more training.⁵ This is the case, even if they felt their current training was adequate for the job initially. There is a clear desire for continuing development and learning. Those who specified they did not want further training, or did not answer, were almost universally of retirement age or near it, or had some pressing immediate reason why they could not do it.

Future planning

The next series of questions asked about thinking through future options, for a lifetime in ministry.

Question: Has anyone in your job talked about a different ministry job or role in the future?

Yes	9
No	53

Question: Would you like to discuss your life trajectory or pathway in ministry, or explore different ministry opportunities for the future?

⁵ The numbers are, disappointingly, very similar to those in Carrie Sandom's study of 2002. *Fellow Workers in Christ*, p. 19.

Yes	17
No	25

Several 'no' answers specified reasons eg:

I only just started my current job	3
I am about to retire	2
I am happy where I am	4
People are already discussing this with me	3
Maybe in the future	4

Question: Would you like to discuss this with someone outside your church (eg with Bishop Rod or someone in his team)?

Yes	23
No	37 (but maybe in the future: 8)
Possibly	4

Question: Do you think there are enough jobs for complementarian women in ministry?

Yes	8
No	29
Don't know	17

Comments:

Not outside children's work (commented several times)

I think lots of women are encouraged to do apprenticeships, but at the end of that there is not always an obvious next step... Then, further down the line, there aren't enough women to do women's worker jobs, because not enough women have been able to remain in ministry and gain experience.

I think my boss [X] is unusual in that the FIRST person he wanted to employ was a woman. I wonder if some people lack imagination about ministry roles in general and can only imagine employing a man who is a copy of the senior pastor.

Yes, there is plenty to do in pastoral care, teaching and training of women within the church both formally (paid roles) and informally (voluntary). However, not all churches recognise the need for specific women's ministry.

[W]hile I think this is often due to lack of resources rather than conviction, I sometimes think that if that conviction was stronger then the resources could be found! Perhaps that is unfair, but I have seen/heard of churches raising money for all sorts of things when it is needed and so it could be raised to pay for a women's worker.

I also find it hard to locate where churches advertise their ministry jobs. I wish they were better advertised!

I assume that for many churches where finances are tight the money will probably be spent first on a male pastor and then administration.

If the pastor isn't encouraging/equipping/deploying all of his congregation for ministry for personal and corporate growth then he either needs a new job (because he's misunderstood what his task is) or needs help.

Correlations

	Highly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
Has anyone in your job talked about a different ministry job or role in the future?	Yes: 6 No: 26	Yes: 3 No: 21	Yes: 0 No: 6
Would you like to discuss your life trajectory or pathway in ministry, or explore different ministry opportunities for the future?	Yes: 12 No: 25	Yes: 16 No: 11	Yes: 6 No: 0
Would you like to discuss this with someone outside your church (eg with Bishop Rod or someone in his team)?	Yes: 8 No: 24 Possibly: 3	Yes: 11 No: 12 Possibly: 1	Yes: 4 No: 1 Possibly: 1
Do you think there are enough jobs for complementarian women in ministry?.	Yes: 3 No: 18 Don't know: 12	Yes: 5 No: 11 Don't know: 5	Yes: 0 No: 6

Discussion

As we go down the scale of satisfaction, the desire to talk about future options increases (as would not be surprising). However in all groups there are a number who

would like to think about the future and discuss that with someone. There was a definite majority opinion that there are not enough jobs for women in ministry, and those jobs that do exist are usually to do children's work. Many women were aware of the financial restrictions churches face, but a frequently expressed opinion was that if women's ministry were more valued, money could be found for it.

Ordination

Respondents were asked about ordination and their opinions of it in the next series of questions.

Question: Do you have a recognised Church of England title (eg lay reader, ordination)

Yes	7 (4 specified deacon, 1 reader with PTO, 1 lay reader)
No	69

Question: Has this helped you in your ministry? Please explain.

There were a range of responses to this.

Having a recognised title helps/would help	9
Not having a title helps	2
Not having a title hinders	3
Makes no difference	6

Comments:

I think the fact that I come from years of experience working in secular organisations and that I haven't always just been a ministry person helps.

I think not having a recognised title is detrimental – in terms of others willingness to accept your role e.g. in hospitals

I wonder if a recognised title would acknowledge the training a person has had. It perhaps signals capability to discuss theological and leadership issues and doesn't limit expectations of women.

Yes, it is a recognised qualification for prison chaplaincy and has been a good base

I don't have to waste time at diocesan meetings ;)

All of those ordained thought the title helped their ministry in various ways, except for one who thought it made no difference. Some without a title found the lack a hindrance and thought having a title would help their ministry.

Question: Would you like to explore a further level of recognition?

Yes	7
No	38
Maybe	11
Don't know	7

There was a lot of ambivalence, eg:

[Y]es if it serves the Gospel but I don't feel I need it.

Perhaps, if it would help to engage with people better.

I am ... concerned about the direction of the Church of England

I'd only want to explore it if I was convinced it was for the good of ministry and women in ministry and not just about recognition in and of itself.

Question: Can you see potential benefits to your ministry in being ordained?

Yes	17
No	32

Don't know/maybe	19
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Few answers were an unambiguous 'yes' or 'no'; most had further comment.

I think the theological training would be useful and the official recognition give authority to the role.

No – not being ordained hasn't been a problem.

[Having] the same qualification as the preaching team would be helpful.

Think it might complicate the roles a bit.

I think the accountability and support it offers would be really useful.

I think that the hoops that I'd have to jump through would add significantly more work and time than would benefit long term.

No, particularly given my dioceses' position on what it thinks the purpose of being ordained to the permanent diaconate (it seems to view it as a self-funded role for people who wish to work almost exclusively in social outreach). I would be willing to explore it if I felt it would benefit gospel ministry.

Within the circles I work in, probably not. It doesn't feel like you can 'climb the ladder' very high within women's ministry ... If anything it feels like being ordained would scare evangelical employers away

[B]eing ordained might be at risk of reinforcing something I am not with - the principle of egalitarianism

The main reasons given in favour for ordination were: opening opportunities to minister, helping the cause of complementarianism, and providing funding for training.

Question: Would you be interested in being ordained presbyter without being an incumbent/main church leader?

Yes	4
No	26
Maybe	6
Don't know	3

Comments:

If it was more recognised and done in a way that clearly held to complementarian principles

Perhaps, though I'm not sure what impact that might have on finding ministry jobs

I don't know what a presbyter is – is it different to being a deacon?

No as I wouldn't feel comfortable with the promises in the ordinal regarding leadership and oversight.

Sorry – I have no idea what this is

Question: Do you think that ordination to the permanent diaconate should be more visible/encouraged within the Church of England?

Yes	34
No	7
Don't know	30

Comments:

Not sure what this means!

No, I am wary of people seeking a title for the sake of it and it detracting from service to God and His people.

Are there other ways of acknowledging/recognising set-aside ministry?

Yes, I think it should be more encouraged, because we need theologically trained women in complementarian churches.

[T]o help women going to Bible college to be the norm.

I think it's a valid role, but I don't think there's the money in the CofE to pay for roles (clergy roles are being cut not expanded). Nor do I think it is seen as distinctive role and many churches don't want a curate who can't preside and aren't happy preaching. Let's be distinctive in encouraging lay roles. I'm also concerned about giving a false sense of hope to women if we try and flood the system with ordinands and then there are no jobs.

Yes definitely, but I think it might be too late to effect real noticeable change in this area.

I've not heard of it before, so it doesn't seem very visible to me!

I don't know what the permanent diaconate or the presbyterate are... I just googled them but was not helped by the definition

Question: Do you think ordination to the presbyterate without being the main church leader should be more visible/encouraged within the Church of England?

Yes	40
No	7
Maybe	8
Don't know	21

Comments:

Absolutely. Although it needs to cater for women who don't feel it's appropriate to preach.

Not sure. To my mind, being ordained to the presbyterate is concomitant to being an elder/male leader. Would it help or confuse complementarian models?

I can see how ordination could be useful for those in assistant/associate roles as well, whether male or female.

Yes definitely I would like it to be possible for women to be priested, and thus able to lead occasional Communion Services but without the pressure of expectation of becoming a leader in the local church.

I guess for some women wanting to be chaplains this might be helpful.

I think the role of the diaconate is more appropriate for women.

Yes. I think that it would benefit churches to not only have a Vicar as pastoral leadership, but also other church leaders who can share pastoral and leadership ministry – having grown up in a non-denominational church, I think this is something that nonconformist churches have got right in their structure of lead pastor/pastor and then church elders who also have pastoral/leadership ministry within the church.

I think as the Church of England is removing posts and not renewing them this would be quickly used to leave women in those leadership roles

I don't know what the difference is between deacon and presbyterate.

Correlations

	Highly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
Do you have a recognised Cof E title?	Yes: 6 No: 36	Yes: 1 (lay reader) No: 28	Yes: 0 No: 5
Does/would having a title help?	Yes: 9 No: 2 No difference: 1	Yes: 3 No difference: 5	Yes: 0 No: 1 Maybe: 4
Would you like to explore a further level of recognition?	Yes: 4 No: 22 Don't know: 7	No: 15 Yes: 3 Maybe: 7	Yes: 0 No: 1 Maybe: 4
Can you see potential benefits to your ministry in being ordained?	Yes: 10 No: 17 Don't know: 6 Maybe: 3	Yes: 6 No: 14 Maybe/don't know: 8	Yes: 1 No: 1 Maybe: 2

Would you be interested in being ordained presbyter without being an incumbent/main church leader?	Yes: 3 No: 24 Maybe: 4 Don't know: 3	Yes: 5 No: 15 Don't know/maybe: 9	Yes: 1 No: 2 Maybe: 2
Do you think that ordination to the permanent diaconate should be more visible/encouraged within the Church of England?	Yes: 16 No: 4 Don't know: 17	Yes: 15 No: 3 [1 should be totally different track of ordination for women] Don't know/maybe: 11	Yes: 3 No: 0 Maybe/don't know: 2
Do you think ordination to the presbyterate without being the main church leader should be more visible/encouraged within the Church of England?	Yes: 26 No: 2 Maybe: 7 Don't know: 10	Yes: 11 No: 4 Don't know/ maybe: 11	Yes: 3 No: 1 Don't know: 1

Discussion

There does seem to be a lot of confusion about ordination. It is somewhat disturbing that some women working as full-time paid employees in Anglican ministry can be almost unaware of ordination structures within the Church of England. Nonetheless the amount of support for ordination being more visible and encouraged, even to presbyter (without being church leader), is surprisingly strong.

There are no strong correlations between opinions about ordination and satisfaction levels, although it is notable that all the ordained women were in the 'highly satisfied' group.

Given that ordination is available, recognised in the Church of England, and still potentially provides funds for training, this may be a way forward in improving women's ministry experience in complementarian churches. More education about the possibilities would be needed, and honest disclosure about the hostility and lack of understanding that might be encountered during the process. However, if more women went forward, with backing from the Bishop of Maidstone, this could start to be addressed.

Particular support from the Bishop of Maidstone

Finally, the respondents were asked to comment on what help the Bishop could give them. One suggestion was made: a series of meetings; then respondents were asked to give any other suggestions they could think of.

Question: If Bishop Rod offering a series of meetings, such as exploring ordination, or exploring ministry opportunities in the Church of England, would you be interested in attending?

Yes	27
No	28
Maybe	12

I think some positive news about ministry opportunities in the church of England would be helpful.

It is not something I am currently considering but I would be interested in attending an initial meeting to outline the possibilities in case it is something I should explore.

Not at my age I fear – but yes twenty years ago!

Yes to ministry opportunities in the Church of England, but not to exploring ordination as it currently is set out in the CofE.

I might attend a meeting if it was encouraged by people I trust (the leaders of the women in ministry conference perhaps) and if it was easy to access (say at a women in ministry conference).

Question: Can you think of any specific support that Bishop Rod could offer you in your ministry?

Many expressions of thanks for the offer were given. Suggestions were:

Support in general

Maybe general affirmation and encouragement would be good and an occasional event with experienced women in complementarian ministry sharing wisdom and encouragement.

Local support and training

Guidance/advice on working with older women who generally and sincerely hold to an Egalitarian position. I wonder if he could ask churches to organise a 360 degree review of their women in ministry, and provide a good template that includes ministry gifts that are sometimes overlooked?

A concern for me year by year is helping our ministry trainees find suitable roles to move in to. I would love church job adverts for women at complementarian minded churches to be collected in one place so they are more accessible. I think this would also raise awareness of the number of jobs available and encourage more women to consider paid ministry roles within the church.

I'm one of many women working in complementarian church of England churches who haven't been ordained or been through theological colleges. Other women will be more involved or connected within C of E spheres, than I am but it would be great to see a training or support for those women, who like me, may fall between those cracks. Support in pursuing different employment or ministry opportunities would be great.

I'm always grateful to attend conferences – Bishop Rod spoke at the Chelmsford Anglican Bible Conference a couple of years ago which was excellent – more general support, like this is great.

I am grateful to Bishop Rod for his considerable contribution to raising the profile (in the Church of England) of Women's leadership within a complementarian context. I would value him continuing to do this.

I think that it would be good if there were some required accountability/professional development related to how you are performing in your role (in terms of skills, but also godliness etc). Whether this should be provided by one's own church or the wider CofE, is another question.

Perhaps details on ministry training.

Any kind of support network. I have none.

Helping men understand complementarian ministry

Now 30 odd years on, I think a key thing to establish for younger women would be a close link forged with like minded men and women at theological college. Women can only ever have a fulfilled complementary ministry if the male minister enables it. Men must really come to understand that a woman can only have a biblically modelled ministry if the man she is working with ensures it. The minute she tries to negotiate it she finds to her shame that she is moving away from her understanding of headship.

The main thing would be to keep training male church leaders in how to train, equip and work with women.

Send survey/appraisal to church aiming to help them think about this topic?

The main way is to know that Bishop Rod is supporting my incumbent – as my incumbent then will be even more support to me in my ministry. I think also it would be great if there were events in our ‘constituency’ such as the Renew conference, that modelled complementarianism better – perhaps Bishop Rod has a voice with these organisations?

I do think it would be a really fantastic thing if many senior incumbents from our ‘constituency’ were prepared to attend a training session on relating well to and supporting female colleagues – that would be so fantastic if Bishop Rod could organise that!

He could support my vicar. I sometimes wonder if my vicar was being supported in a meaningful way if it would model to him how to support his own staff...

I think the best thing Bishop Rod could do to support me in my ministry is to pastor my pastors – they in turn will be better able to pastor me.

Financial

I am sure he prays for us which is the main thing and supports our ministry.

Finance to offer a decent liveable wage for young women to be able to have the women’s ministry job would be very welcome. Many women I know would love to work for the church but cannot live on the wage often offered!!!!

Correlations

If Bishop Rod offering a series of meetings, such as exploring ordination, or exploring ministry opportunities in the Church of England, would you be interested in attending?

Highly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied
Yes: 11 (26%) No: 18 Maybe: 8	Yes: 13 (42%) No: 9 Maybe: 3	Yes: 3 (50%) No: 1 Maybe: 1

Discussion

Many women, it seems, would be interested in hearing from Bishop Rod about ordination and/or ministry opportunities in the Church of England, and while the percentage of those interested increases as the satisfaction in current ministry decreases – which might not be surprising – even those who are in highly satisfied in their current ministry are also interested in finding out more. Taken along with the interest expressed in having someone to talk to about future options, it seems there is opportunity here to help women simply through being more engaged in their lives and thoughts about the future. Given that the entire numbers are relatively small, it is not beyond reason that Bishop Rod’s office could provide pastoral support on an individual basis at least intermittently. This, it seems, would be welcomed by many of the women surveyed.

Conclusions

Culture is changing, and a lot of situations that were previously thought of as normal, or not thought of at all, are now being identified as needing work. This is not all ‘woke-ism’. Part of it is a (good) changing of society to become more equitable, and to recognise the nature of power in informal structures as well as formal ones. It is, in many cases, a genuinely new way of thinking and seeing.

It is a good result when collectively we are able to realise that some people are being treated unfairly, and to do something to remedy that. It is an opportunity to learn

anew what the Bible says about people and relationships, and look again at how we are acting to make sure that it conforms with the Bible. In some cases we will reject new trends – such as those that encourage sexual immorality. In other cases we will rejoice that we can now uncover and change ways in which unnoticed sinfulness has been tolerated in the church just as it has been in wider culture. Certain aspects of how power structures can be harmful have been recognised in conservative evangelical culture recently. I believe that the way in which women are employed in conservative evangelical churches is in danger of being another.

To some extent this employment itself is new. It is only relatively recently that women's ministry has stopped being almost exclusively run by female volunteers. Whether or not that is good or bad is beyond the scope of this study; the fact remains that now most women, especially single women, cannot afford to be volunteer workers supported by some other means. Even those women who can afford it, should not necessarily be expected to do so. For women to be involved in ministry leadership today will probably mean their formal employment.

Yet there is not really any kind of uniform, well-thought out employment structure. This is the case across the Church of England in general, even where women have simply stepped into the same incumbent structure that men have occupied. It may be that such thinking is especially absent in complementarian evangelical churches, where the nature of complementarianism varies from church to church, and between individuals within churches. This is the situation that the Bishop of Maidstone is currently addressing, of which endeavour this study forms a part.

In some ways, it is not as though conservatives are particularly backward in this. The secular workplace still struggles to understand how men and women may work together equitably, and most of the church's 'good' work practices are copied from the secular workplace (eg equal pay, line management, job descriptions). 'Workplaces' are in a sense a modern invention; men and women working together where they are

not family, but are equally employees, is a very recent thing. We are all breaking new ground here.

The employment of men in anything but the incumbent's role in Church of England churches is also very poorly thought through. There have been curates for centuries, but there are still no established guidelines of what the expectations are of employing, overseeing and training curates.⁶ There is little guidance on what good practice is, how they should be treated, workload and so on. Even for the main pastor, the wide variance in episcopal practices, and the frequent broken relationships between conservative pastors and their bishops, means that there are probably very few instances of good employment practice for conservative rectors, either.

There seems to be even more haphazard practice in the employment of women. Women are often not treated as being equal to their male colleagues.

I'd like to be treated the same as my male colleagues – while recognising the differences! Am beginning to think it's unachievable in this life (respondent comment).

Yet if we believe that women should be in ministry, this needs to be made realistically possible, and it will require time and money. Time, for proper investment of pastoral care and guidance in ministry – at least as much as is given to men. Money, for proper pay and provision – at least as much as is given to men. At times, because we honour the difference as well as equality, women may even require more.

The world purports to hold women as being equal to men. We hold to that, and more than that – that they are also different. This is better than just holding to

⁶ Conservatives probably value this: for example, the stringent rules for POT instituted in some areas are often seen as a grand waste of time by evangelical curates.

equality alone, because it honours God, and recognises reality. Let us strive to make our witness one that offers something better than what the world can give.

Recommendations

Recommended: The Bishop of Maidstone explore ways of creating realistic theological training paths for women, recognising 1. The need for 'a job to come back to' if a woman leaves a ministry job for fulltime training, and 2. the necessity for flexibility especially for women with children. Ongoing CMD is also recommended and needs to be allowed for in 'work' time.

Recommended: The Bishop of Maidstone, possibly through his team, 'gets to know' the women who are working in the churches under his oversight so there can be personal encouragement and development. This could involve, or begin with, meetings (possibly via Zoom) to talk about lifetime ministry.

Recommended: The Bishop of Maidstone looks into ways of encouraging/enabling peer support networks for women in ministry, perhaps including mentoring relationships.

Recommended: The Bishop of Maidstone institutes an accepted pay scale for women in ministry, equivalent to what would be expected for a man doing the same job.

Recommended: The Bishop of Maidstone describes what he thinks 'complementarian ministry' is. This would help to eliminate some of the difficulties experienced by women in knowing what to expect from their jobs. It would also help to eliminate conditions that may be arising from misogyny, present or inherited.

Recommended: the Bishop of Maidstone issues guidelines on how incumbents/supervisors are to care for female employees, eg including minimum

frequency of meetings, and some guidelines as to what those meetings should include (ie spiritual/pastoral, separate from planning/business meetings).

Appendix: Survey with cover letter

Dear sister in ministry,

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project that I am undertaking on behalf of Bishop Rod Thomas. He wishes to find out how he might encourage complementarian women's ministry in conservative evangelical churches

Please download and fill in this survey. It should take no more than 30 minutes.

All your answers will be confidential, and will only be seen by me. I will be writing a report for Bishop Rod, with all identifying information removed. The report is for the use of Bishop Rod and his team, and may not be published more widely. All data received by me will be destroyed after the report is written.

PLEASE SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO ME at krbirkett@gmail.com. If you would rather not use email, please post to me at 1a 1 The Crescent, Barnet EN55QQ.

You are free not to answer any questions if you would rather not. If there is anything you would like to know before you complete the survey, please email me at krbirkett@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Kirsten Birkett

Survey on women in complementarian ministry

What is your name?
What is your age?
What is your marital status?
How many days per week are you employed?
What is your pay?
How many years have you had a ministry job?

What is your ministry position?
Please describe your duties.
Do you have a job description? If so, what is it?

How do you feel in your ministry job?

Very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied
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How supported do you feel in your ministry role?

Not at all supported	somewhat supported	very supported
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How well resourced do you feel in your ministry role? (eg adequate time, money for expenses, outside help)

Not at all resourced	Somewhat resourced	very well resourced
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How satisfied are you with the awareness of your ministry in your church?

Very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied
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How do you think the complementarian stance of your church helps your ministry?
How is it not helpful?
Is there anything about the complementarian stance/ implementation of complementarian principles that you would like changed?
Do you think your incumbent understands the challenges you face being a woman in ministry? If you are able, please give examples.
Do you think your incumbent would welcome a session on how to manage female staff better? If not, why not?

Which of these would most help your ministry? Please rank them in order.

More meetings with incumbent/ line manager	
More recognition of your ministry within the church	
Clearer job description/role	
Official status eg ordination	
Professional development eg conferences/ training	

We now explore some of these in more detail.

How often do you meet with your incumbent/ line manager?
Would you like this to be more or less?
Is there other support that you would like? (eg a local or national support group for women's ministry, women in ministry conferences, contact with other women in ministry)

What training in ministry have you had? Please tick all that apply

Ministry apprenticeship for at least 1 year	
Cornhill	
Bible college such as Oak Hill	
Biblical counselling course such as Christian Counselling and Education Foundation (CCEF) or Bible Counselling UK	
Other (please state)	

Do you think this training was adequate for your job?
Has anyone in your job encouraged you to have further training?
What further training would you like to have?
Would you explore further training if funding was available?

Has anyone in your job talked about a different ministry job or role in the future? Yes/no
Would you like to discuss your life trajectory or pathway in ministry, or explore different ministry opportunities for the future?
Would you like to discuss this with someone outside your church (eg with Bishop Rod or someone in his team)?
Do you think there are enough jobs for complementarian women in ministry?

Do you have a recognised Church of England title (eg lay reader, ordination)
Has this helped you in your ministry? Please explain.
Would you like to explore a further level of recognition?
Can you see potential benefits to your ministry in being ordained? Please explain
Would you be interested in being ordained presbyter without being an incumbent/main church leader?
Do you think that ordination to the permanent diaconate should be more visible/encouraged within the Church of England?
Do you think ordination to the presbyterate without being the main church leader should be more visible/encouraged within the Church of England?

If Bishop Rod offering a series of meetings, such as exploring ordination, or exploring ministry opportunities in the Church of England, would you be interested in attending?
Can you think of any specific support that Bishop Rod could offer you in your ministry?

Thank you for your time.

I would like to contact women in different ministry roles to talk in more detail about some of these issues. It would probably be by phone or Zoom. Would you be willing for me to contact you?

If there is anything you would like to speak to me about concerning this survey, please email me on krbirkett@gmail.com.

*Sincerely,
Kirsten Birkett*