

# Journey to Inclusion

Fully Engaging Women Clergy in the  
Church of the Nazarene



60-Minute Workshop



Interactive Session

LAT: 19°08' N • LON: 20°23' W

# Ground Rules for Today



Speak from "I" statements



Listen to understand, not to defend



Anonymized stories only—no naming names



Discomfort = Growth



Focus on systems, not individuals



Civil, respectful dialogue

# The Challenge We Face

40%

of newly ordained clergy  
are **WOMEN**



2023 Ordination Data



The Gap

## Leadership Opportunities

1.6%

Only 1.6% of large churches (average weekly attendance (AWA) > 350) have **female lead pastors**

80%

of female pastors serve churches with **under 50 attendance**

95%

of female pastors serve churches with **under 100 attendance**





# A Critical Shift in Thinking

## Old Approach



### Eliminate Bias

Attempts to remove unconscious bias from individuals (like trying to remove terrain from a map)



Impractical and unlikely — bias is neurologically and morally neutral

S



## New Approach



### Foster Inclusion

Shifts behaviors from exclusion to active integration (charting a new course)



Actionable — focuses on behaviors & systems

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# The Inclusion Map





# Acceptance: The Welcome



## Waypoint 2



Reception in a space  
previously unavailable



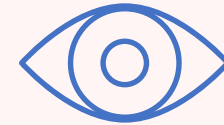
Seat at the table



Physical presence

Physical presence in the room

 **Road Hazard**



## OBSERVER

You are visibly present,  
but powerless and silent.

### Missing Path Elements



Acknowledgment



Action





# Acknowledgment: The Voice



## Waypoint 2



Given space to  
speak and be heard

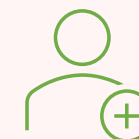


Participating in  
decision making



Voice is amplified to  
others

 **Road Hazard**



## TOKEN

Asked to speak,  
but not welcomed or impactful.  
Idealized representation of entire group

### Missing Path Elements



Acknowledgment



Action



# Action: The Impact



## Waypoint 2



Tangible deeds and visible changes



Policy shifts and resource allocation



Noticeable behavior adjustments

 Road Hazard



## ISSUE

Treated as a problem to solve, rather than a person to value.

### Missing Path Elements



Acknowledgment



Acceptance





# Accountability: The Standards



The overarching element  
that sustains inclusion



Noticing when exclusion  
returns



Advocating for change



Creating systems that  
maintain integration



**REROUTING**



**APATHY**

Inclusion dissolves over time  
due to lack of care.

# Why Partial Inclusion Fails

1

## OBSERVER



Acceptance Only

### In the room, but silenced.

Welcome without voice or power creates a passive spectator who cannot contribute meaningfully.

2

## TOKEN



Acknowledgment Only

### Asked to speak, but not welcomed.

Voice is solicited for optics, but the person remains excluded from the core group and decisions.

3

## ISSUE



Action Only

### Treated as a problem.

Tangible changes target the individual ("fix them") rather than the system, dehumanizing the person.

4

## INTERACTION



Accept + Acknowledge

### We hear you, but we can't change.

Welcomed and listened to, but the system refuses to adapt, leading to frustration and burnout.

5

## INVITATION



Accept + Action

### Join us, but become like us.

Welcome with changes that require assimilation.  
Fails to value unique differences

6

## INTERVENTION



Acknowledge + Action

### We'll change, but stay over there.

System adapts based on feedback, but keeps the person physically or relationally distant.



# The Exclusion Model

Dead End 01



## IGNORANCE

Failing to **listen** or understand the unique needs and reality of the outsider.

Dead End 02



## INACTION

Knowing about the exclusion but **doing nothing** to change behaviors or systems.

Dead End 03



## REJECTION

Actively **keeping someone out** or refusing to welcome them into the core group.

Dead End 04



## APATHY

Lack of care or **accountability**, leading inclusion efforts to dissolve over time.





# The Journey from Exclusion to Inclusion





# The Journey from Exclusion to Inclusion

## Map Legend: The Analogy



**Majority Group**  
Hairless People

Make all town laws

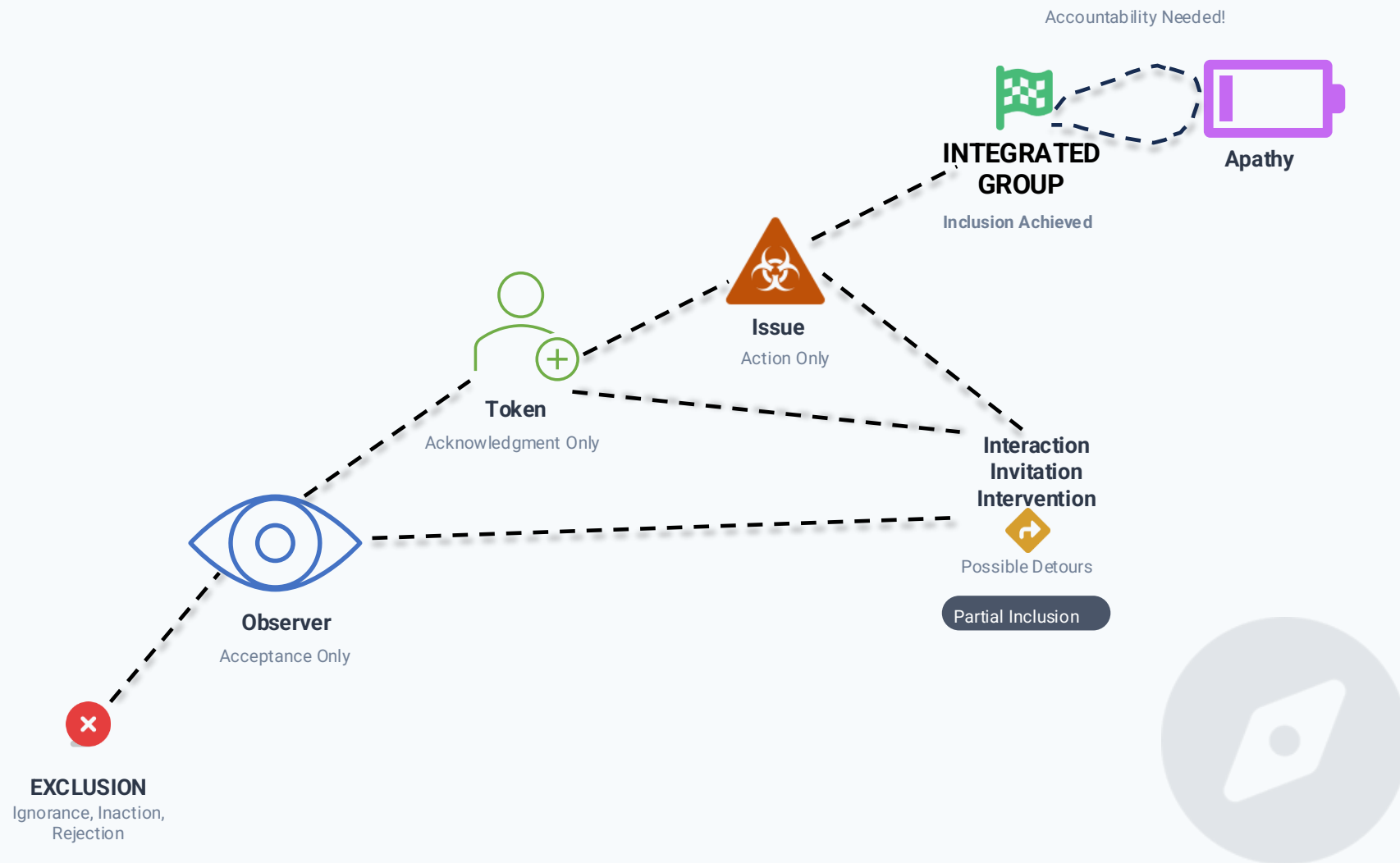


**Outsider**  
Person with Hair

Needs salons/shampoo



Town banned hair products.  
Need for inclusion journey  
begins.





# Jesus Smashes the Patriarchy



📖 John 4

## Woman at the Well

Jesus engages in a deep theological conversation across gender, ethnic, and moral barriers, revealing his Messiahship to her first.

★ Breakthrough: Theological conversation across barriers



📖 Matthew 15

## Canaanite Woman

A foreign woman advocates for her daughter. Jesus listens, engages with her argument, and grants her request, praising her great faith.

★ Breakthrough: Persistent advocacy rewarded



📖 John 8

## Woman Caught in Adultery

Religious leaders use her as a pawn. Jesus refuses to condemn her, elevates her humanity above their traps, and restores her dignity.

★ Breakthrough: Human dignity over condemnation



# How Jesus Modeled Inclusion



**ACCEPTED** women into spaces they were culturally excluded from



**ACKNOWLEDGED** their voices, theology, and needs



**TOOK ACTION** that elevated their status and humanity



Demonstrated that inclusion reflects the **Kingdom of God**



# Our Biblical Foundation

“

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

**Galatians 3:28**



*"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."*

**Galatians 5:22-23**

**⊘ These biblical truths are incompatible with exclusion.**



# Real-World Application

We will navigate through five anonymized scenarios to identify exclusionary patterns and chart a course for inclusive alternatives.

1



## The Excluded Resume

Hiring barriers based on gender assumptions

2



## The Forced Chaperone

Policing professional boundaries unnecessarily

3



## The Pigeonholed Board Member

Stereotyping gifts and leadership roles

4



## The Family Question

Inappropriate criteria for ordination/placement

5



## The "Troubled Church" Trap

Systemic placement bias based on gender





# Scenario 1: The Excluded Resume



## The Situation

A church board refuses to interview or even consider an experienced female pastor's resume solely based on gender assumptions.

### Identified Roadblocks



Rejection



Ignorance



## Path Forward



Implement **blind resumes** (names removed) for initial screening to focus solely on qualifications.



Establish **objective criteria** for the role before reviewing any candidates to reduce subjective bias.



Provide **scriptural education** for board members on women's ordination prior to the search process.



# Scenario 2: The Forced Chaperone



## The Situation

A District Superintendent mandates a third-party chaperone for two pastors of different genders intending to carpool to a conference, preventing confidential professional dialogue.

### Identified Roadblocks



Rejection



Ignorance



## Path Forward



**Consult both pastors** directly to ensure they are comfortable with the driving arrangement.



**Offer a chaperone** as an optional resource only if requested by either party.



**Trust clergy** to set appropriate professional boundaries that make sense for their own contexts.



# Scenario 3: The Pigeon-Holed Board Member



## The Situation

A gifted female pastor is appointed to a board but immediately assigned to be the recording secretary, despite inexperience in that area and regardless of her actual leadership strengths.

### Identified Roadblocks



Token



Inaction



## Path Forward



Invite people to participate based on their **actual strengths and professional gifting**, not gender stereotypes.



**Rotate administrative roles** among all members so no single demographic always bears the secretarial load.



Create **term limits** for leadership opportunities to ensure broader participation and diverse voices.





# Scenario 4: The Family Question



## The Situation

A female ordination candidate is asked when she is planning on getting married or having kids and how that will affect her career plans.

### Identified Roadblocks



Rejection



Ignorance



## Path Forward



Standardize **interview questions** to focus strictly on gifts, graces, and calling for all candidates



Affirm that opportunities will be offered based on **merit and calling**, not marital status.



Provide training to ministry boards on **appropriate and legal** questions to ask during ordination interviews



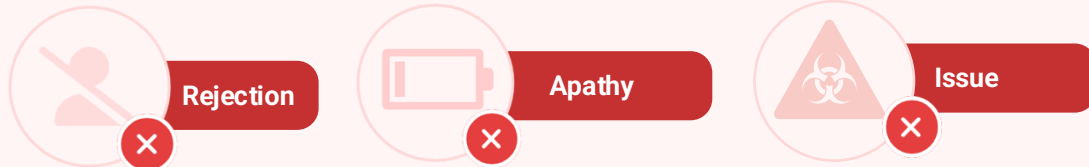
# Scenario 5: Church in Trouble



## The Situation

A District Superintendent only offers female pastors roles in struggling churches, labeling those who decline as "troublemakers" while withholding opportunities in growing churches.

### Identified Roadblocks



## Path Forward

- 1. Create **objective placement criteria** for ALL church sizes to ensure fair opportunities for every pastor.
- 2. Establish an **intake process** for pastoral resumes and maintain a list of interested pastors of all genders to present to thriving churches
- 3. Provide training to ministry boards on **appropriate and legal** questions to ask during ordination interviews
- 4. Combine smaller churches into **circuit rotations** with district funding to support sustainable ministry.
- 5. Provide **robust mentoring** and support for ALL pastors assigned to struggling congregations, regardless of gender.



# The One Commitment Framework

## Research Insight

Studies show that organizations who make just **ONE commitment and implement it**, make a substantial difference in the culture of inclusion.

**1% Bias** Creates exponential harm on the journey.

**1% Inclusion** Propels us exponentially forward.



## What's YOUR one commitment?

Small course corrections create massive change.



# One Commitment Options

Choose a waypoint on your map. Here are eight concrete, impactful actions you can take to chart a course for inclusion.



Propose **blind resume process** for pastoral searches



**Audit** ballots and nomination reports for gender representation



Reach out to **mentor or sponsor** women clergy



**Interrupt** the next biased comment in a meeting



Invite a **small church pastor to preach** at a district event



Create **objective placement criteria** for all roles



Lead a **Bible study** on women in ministry



Hold leaders accountable for **gender equity** in various spaces





# The Church of the Nazarene's DNA

1908

## Origin Point



### Mary Lee Cagle

#### The Advocacy

Advocated for explicit language in the Manual affirming God's call on women to preach, ensuring clarity from the start.



### Phineas Bresee

#### The Decision

Argued for a gender-neutral "apostolic privilege," believing specific affirmation was unnecessary because the call was obvious.



### The Result

#### Unintended Consequence

Women's call was made **invisible** in founding documents. Without explicit protection, cultural bias eventually eroded their leadership roles.



## True North

Our heritage is rooted in advocating for the poor, the hungry, and those on the margins.


**This is who we are.  
Let's live it fully.**

# Why Accountability Is Essential

## Without Accountability


 A "thing we tried once"

 A temporary initiative

 Performative rather than transformative

## With Accountability

 Systems change permanently

 Exclusion is noticed and corrected

 The journey continues



# Your One Commitment Today

 Chart your course (5 minutes):

1

What is ONE specific action you will take?

Mark your destination...

2

What is your timeline? (When will you do this?)

Set arrival time...

3

Who will hold you accountable?

Your co-pilot...

4

How will you know you succeeded?

Arrival confirmation...



## Share Your Coordinates

Turn to the person next to you and share your One Commitment. Speaking your destination out loud increases the likelihood of arrival by 65%.

 **Begin The Journey**





## A Prayer for the Journey

*God of the margins,  
You have always called the overlooked.  
You elevated Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan  
woman, the Canaanite woman.  
Help us to honor **ALL** whom you call.  
Give us courage, wisdom, and persistence.*

Amen.





# Inclusion Is a Journey



Not a Destination: A Recurring Commute



**Waypoint 1:** Welcome women clergy into ALL spaces where decisions happen.



**Waypoint 2:** Listen to, value, and elevate their unique voices and insights.



**Waypoint 3:** Change systems and policies, not just add individuals to broken structures.



## ACCOUNTABILITY

### The Navigation System:

Notice and advocate immediately when exclusion attempts to return.

← Commute Path



# Additional Resources

## Navigation Tools



### Church of the Nazarene Manual

[nazarene.org/manual](https://nazarene.org/manual) →



### Harvard Implicit Association Test

Scientific tool to uncover hidden biases. Take the "Gender-Career" test.

[implicit.harvard.edu](https://implicit.harvard.edu) →



### Women Clergy Resources

[USA Canada Clergy Council](#) →

[Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy](#) →

## Guidebooks for the Journey



### She Leads

By Robbie Cansler

An examination of how God uses women throughout scripture



### The Making of Biblical Womanhood

By Beth Allison Barr

How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth. Historical analysis.





# Thank You

## Journey to Inclusion Workshop

*You have reached a milestone, but the journey continues.*



Email

[Insert Email Here]



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