

Created in the Image of God

A Report on the Woven Consultation Day
for Christian Women Leaders

December 6, 2014

Produced by Emmanuel Gospel Center

Funding provided by Imago Dei Fund

Thank you to our Community Partners

Thank you to the many individuals, congregations, pastors, leaders, volunteers, and members of the community who contributed to the success of the Consultation day and the production of this report. A special thank you to Rev. Ramonita Diaz, Rev. Sylvia Johnson, Rev. Gloria White-Hammond, Rev. Lorraine Anderson, Anne Freeman, Rev. Roberto Miranda, Carolina Barrutia-Leon, and Rev. Gregory Bishop for their prayers, support, encouragement and advice.

Thank you to our Sponsors

Imago Dei Fund

Congregación León de Judá

Gordon College

Women in Leadership National Study

Thank you also to all who contributed to producing this report

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Woven Consultation Day Report

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Introduction

Why a Consultation Day

Christian churches believe that all people, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, are created in the image of God. Yet, often the Church falls short of honoring that image. Anecdotal and statistical evidence shows that women face disproportionate levels of violence, discrimination and challenge at least as much in churches as out.

When the Applied Research and Consulting department of the Emmanuel Gospel Center (ARC@egc) launched a 3-year initiative to **“Ignite” gender justice in Greater Boston’s** churches, we started by talking with women. As part of the Initiative, we worked with Christian leaders and churches to design or strengthen strategies to support women leaders. Before designing anything, however, we needed to understand the unique ways that individual women already feel supported or hindered, and what obstacles they encounter.

Through the generous support and partnership of the Imago Dei Fund and other partners, on December 6, 2014, ARC@egc hosted the **Woven Consultation day**, a safe space for diverse Christian women leaders to gather and share stories about the supports they experience and challenges they face as Christian leaders. At the Consultation day, women acted as consultants, sharing their experiences and insights with us to help shape the design of the Ignite Initiative.

What We Can Learn from Woven & this Report

At Woven we asked women direct questions about their supports and challenges. Participant feedback was diverse, but some central and important themes emerged. One interesting thing we learned is that the women felt most encouraged when supported in relationships where they feel they are fully known. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, 38% of the women reported they do not regularly connect in meaningful ways with other women leaders. **Participant feedback like this not only offered key insights into how women leaders can be better supported, but also illuminated potential strategies Christian leaders and churches can employ to remove obstacles and discrimination.**

Read on to find out more about who attended Consultation day and what they shared about the supports they experience and challenges they face. Learn more about how you and your church can better support women to live in the fullness of their calling. Find out what’s next for the Woven Network and what you can do to join us as we endeavor to Ignite Gender Justice in Greater Boston’s churches and Christian communities!

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

Experiencing Support & Encouragement

- Women wanted to connect.
- Women wanted to feel fully known.
- Women were encouraged by supporting others.
- Women’s support networks were diverse.

Experiencing Challenge and Discrimination

- Challenges were both internal and external.
- Many women experienced leadership differently in church vs. in secular settings.
- Women felt sexualized or shamed because of gender.
- Women often felt denied a “seat at the table.”

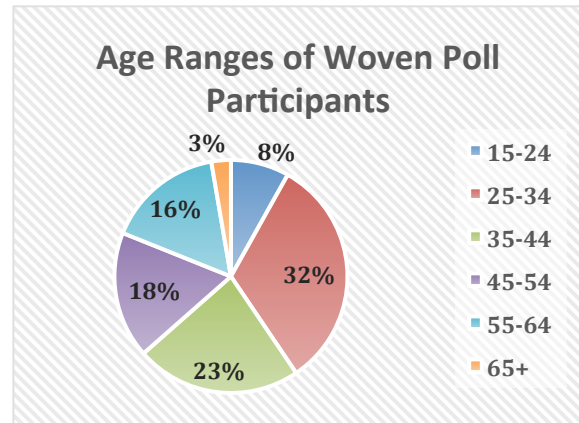
Responding to Challenge

- Women persevere through the pain of exclusion and rejection.
- Women embrace their own worthiness and authority.
- Women need male allies and advocates.

The Consultation Day

Who Attended

Over 80 women attended Consultation day, and over 70 completed polls from each of three polling sessions. Christian women leaders gathered from 35 towns, with almost two-thirds coming from outside of the city of Boston. They represented over 50 churches, with just over 11% working professionally as pastors, priests, ministers, or chaplains. Over half reported working in education or in the not-for-profit sector, but careers were as diverse as student, artist, businesswoman, at-home-mom, and medical professional.



The group varied in terms of ethnicity, age, and theological belief. Just over 40% were women of color. Attendees were especially diverse in terms of age — with ages ranging from the teens to the seventies. The largest age range reported, at 32% of poll participants, was 25-34 years. **The women represented a wide spectrum of theological beliefs, ranging from conservative to progressive.**

The 123 who registered were more denominationally and ethnically diverse than the eighty-plus who attended (Appendix A). The larger group of Woven respondents, including those who indicated interest but would be unable to attend, was even more diverse. **Conservative women and women of color who expressed strong interest were disproportionately unable to make it work with their schedules.** Also, we received feedback that registering online is counter-cultural for some of the groups we were recruiting.

Capturing the Women's Stories

The Day's Agenda

CONSULTATION DAY AGENDA

The Woven Consultation day agenda divided the day into four Sessions:

- **Session 1: Consultation Groundwork**
Critical understanding and tools for being and working together
- **Session 2: Our Stories of Empowerment, Encouragement & Support**
Sharing stories of our strengths and documenting insights for research & action
- **Session 3: Our Stories of Challenge**
Sharing stories of barriers & injustice; identifying areas for long-term change
- **Session 4: Our Prayers of Petition & Discernment**
Calling out to God and caring deeply for one other

The Woven Consultation day agenda prioritized values of **safe space** and **diversity**. For a detailed description of what we did to build diversity and create a safe space, or to read about what we learned in the process, please see our **Woven Methodology** (Appendix B.)

Data Collection

We collected participant feedback in each of the four sessions. Sessions 2 & 3 provided opportunities for women to share their thoughts and stories. The bulk of the findings in this report are gleaned from the feedback we received from those two sessions.

Both Session 2 and Session 3 opened with two courageous women sharing stories for the plenary. Participants individually completed personal reflection questions and then shared personal insights and stories at tables of up to eight persons. Women also completed polling questions, on paper and by text, which provided greater detail about their personal backgrounds. Selected poll results were projected to the large group, to give participants a sense of how other women had responded. Session handouts captured the reflection, discussion and polling questions (Appendix D).

What We Learned From Women

Plenary Stories about Support & Encouragement

C's Story

C, a key leader at an academic institution, described her journey to find a group of friends with whom she felt she could share her whole self, rather than just a fragmented, incomplete part. She explained the ways in which that group of women had supported one another through some of life's most joyous and most painful moments. C's story exemplified the power of friendship and the joy of feeling fully known.

E's Story

E, an undergraduate student, shared how encouraged she felt when a young woman she was mentoring began to realize her potential as a leader. E described herself as someone who had received a lot of mentorship and support in her own journey in leadership. Sharing what she has learned and the tools and resources she's been given served as an inspiration and confirmation in her own leadership development.

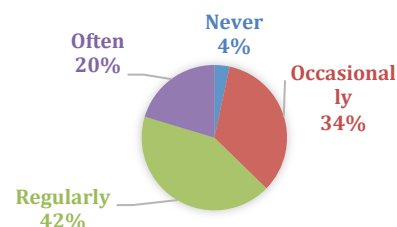
What We Learned about Support & Encouragement

Women wanted to connect

Out of 60 respondents to questions of support and encouragement, **62% were connecting regularly in meaningful ways with other women leaders, but a substantial proportion, 38%, were not.** Further inquiry is needed to understand **why** a large portion of women do not have

the opportunity to connect with other women leaders and **how** to support them in doing so. We also asked women what support looked like for them.

How often do you have the opportunity to connect in meaningful ways with other women leaders?



“I identified with E in that she had mentors who poured into her and in return she [pours] into others. [It’s] so important in all stages of a woman’s life to have mentors and to mentor others when able.”

Women Wanted to Feel Fully Known

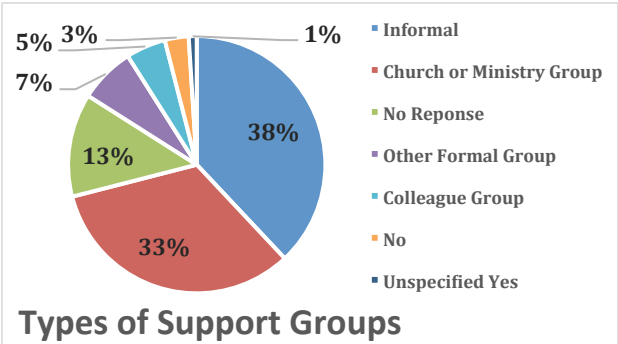
Women longed to have a space where they feel safe being completely themselves. This theme emerged especially from responses to C’s story. Thirty respondents noted this longing, many specifically mentioning the pain associated with not having a place where they could be or feel fully known.

Women Were Encouraged by Supporting Others

Women described supporting others out of a place of having received support themselves. They felt encouraged by both giving and receiving support. Twenty-six respondents specifically mentioned the importance of mentorship in leadership development.

Women’s Support Networks Were Diverse

Of the women who said they participate in supportive groups, 38% did so informally. These informal groups provide connection based on friendship, versus group membership. The next largest category, Church or Ministry Group, represents the experience of 33% of respondents. Ministry groups were most often “small groups” or women’s ministries.



Because such a large group of women rely on church-sponsored groups as their main support system, it is important that churches continue to offer and develop such opportunities and structures for connection. Participants listed groups, organizations or networks they know of that effectively support Christian women leaders (Appendix E).

What We Learned about the Experience of Challenge & Discrimination

Plenary Stories about Challenge & Discrimination

G’s Story

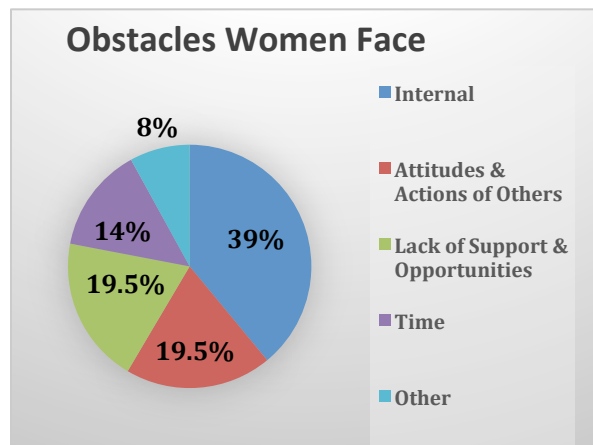
G, an attorney and ministry leader, described how critical it was for her professional development to have mentors and supportive colleagues who are men. She told the story about reaching out to a male pastor for a meeting and guidance when starting a ministry similar to his. She received an email explaining that, on principle, he did not meet with women. G shared how it made her feel hurt, disappointed and even dirty, as if she were someone the man needed to protect himself from. G compared her experience to the story of Esther, saying, “How can I be an Esther, if no one will be my Mordecai?”

F's Story

F a clergy woman and medical professional, shared about her struggle to understand her own worthiness, authority and value as a church leader and image bearer of Christ. She described her multiple identities and explained how at times her “seat at the table” (that is, her right to be in leadership) had been called into question because of her gender, ethnic or sexual identity. F highlighted how **it was a process for her to be able to own her own worth as an individual and right to be a church leader.**

Challenges were both internal and external

Thirty-nine percent reported that the most significant obstacles they currently face, that make it difficult to grow in ministry, were caused by their own attitudes or circumstances. **Internal obstacles included things like self-doubt and low skills.**

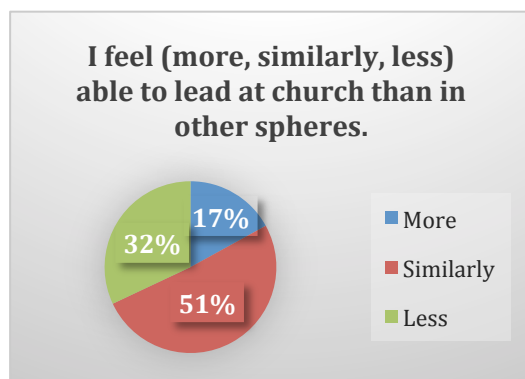


The next two most prevalent categories of challenges represented *external* obstacles beyond the women’s direct control: *attitudes and actions of others* and *lack of support & opportunities*. Together these two categories accounted for almost 40% of the most significant obstacles that women faced.

These obstacles included direct discrimination or exclusion by others and not having effective or adequate support systems or chances to exercise leadership skills. **Churches looking for ways to better support women in leadership can be proactive about facilitating and promoting opportunities for women to practice their leadership skills and creating a culture where discrimination is not tolerated.**

A significant proportion experienced leadership differently in church vs. secular settings

When asked as a multiple choice poll whether they felt similarly, less or more able to lead at church than in other spheres, most women felt similarly or more able to lead in church settings. Still, 32% did not. In their open-ended reflections, some respondents suggested that the Church is lagging behind secular settings in supporting and empowering women leaders. Some women shared that Woven was the first time they began to question why this might be.



Many respondents shared stories of experiences similar to G’s story, where male leaders refused to work with them closely, citing propriety as the reason. Some reported confusion about this

tendency and **noted that this mentality is only found in churches and not in secular settings where they interact with men regularly.**

Women felt sexualized or shamed because of gender

Many women described how gender bias and discrimination caused them to feel shame, as though they were perceived as bad or dangerous. In fact, many respondents resonated with G's story of the leader who would not meet alone with women and attributed G's pastor's reaction to a tendency on the part of some male Christian leaders to perceive women as a potential threat. **They described this portrayal of women as "shaming," "dehumanizing," or "making them feel dirty."** This may point to an opportunity for further research and understanding, as well as for expanded training in churches on engaging in cross-gender relationships that are respectful, safe, godly and empowering for both men and women.

"[I'm] questioned in my role in Christian communities, [and] so often having to defend my right to be there, where in non-Christian settings my leadership capacity and competency are not questioned at all."

A woman resonating with G's frustration

Women often felt denied a "seat at the table"

Women expressed concern and frustration about the lack of access to various leadership positions. They conveyed the desire to "have a seat at the [leadership] table" with the men in their churches and ministries. Women who felt unjustly excluded ranged from being adamant that women deserve equal access to all church leadership positions to understanding the doctrine behind the exclusion, but still questioning its Biblical legitimacy.

How Women Respond to Challenge

Women persevere through the pain of exclusion & rejection

Several women noted the pain that comes from experiencing rejection and the resolve required to **push through the discomfort.** One woman wrote that **she was hurt by "the intense pain that comes along with people doubting your vision, especially when that doubt is due to gender."** Another described the depth to which these hurts can penetrate, "*the experiences that cut deep and affect you forever and take your breath away.*"

Many who identified with the pain of G and F's experiences also identified with their perseverance and courage to push through obstacles. One woman said, "***These women took moments of challenge and continued to believe in the vision that God had provided for***

"I've watched many women have limits forced on their freedom to serve [and] use their gifts because of gender bias. I've also seen doors open in my lifetime...."

them.” Determination here is seen as a strategy to push through internal doubts and external trials. **Accessing the perseverance to keep moving forward through adversity was strongly connected to the women’s views of self and beliefs about how God views them.**

Women embrace their own worthiness & authority

A lot of women resonated with F’s story about needing to embrace and own her worth and authority as an image bearer of Christ.

Women described their struggles against external messaging and inner thoughts that made them question their authority.

The question of worthiness was often tied to identity, specifically gender identity, but also racial and ethnic identity and sexual orientation.

Embracing a godly self-image helped women push aside the voices telling them they are unworthy, undeserving or unwelcome, in leadership or in the church community. **The Church, and others who want to support**

women in the fullness of their calling, can do so by reinforcing Biblical messages of acceptance and daughtership.

“I understand the sacrifice it takes to let others rise up, and wish I knew men who were willing to displace themselves even a tiny bit so women could lead.”

“Men are not our enemies, I feel quite strongly about this. If we think of ourselves as victims, we will act as victims.”

Women need male allies and advocates

Respondents argued that if all people are to be valued in churches equally, Christians, both men and women, need to work creatively together to empower women. In other words, gender justice cannot happen if it is seen only as a “women’s issue.” Some women described how lucky they were to have men in their lives who support them and noted the significance of being united with men in the pursuit of gender justice. Others expressed frustration with the perceived unwillingness of men in their churches to share leadership with women.

Diverse Reactions & Areas of Disagreement

While Session 2 reflections revealed strong themes and similarities in how women experienced *Support & Encouragement*, Session 3, on *Challenges & Discrimination*, yielded significant diversity and contrast in women’s experiences. A handful of respondents said they did not understand, identify with, or agree with the two stories of challenge shared from up front. One respondent thought G and F’s stories were **“leading.”** She wrote, **“I didn’t feel like I closely identified with either story. I find myself trying to understand the opposition in each story.”** Another respondent felt some women talked too much about discrimination, reinforcing the notion that different women experience challenge differently.

Different Views on Women in Ministry Positions

While we worked hard to nurture an environment where extreme differences in viewpoints and demographics could co-exist, we could not find women with conservative or traditional beliefs about gender roles who were available to speak from up front.

Partially as a result of this gap, **some women expressed feeling on the outside of the conversation, especially when it came to views on women in ministry.**

One participant felt left out and looked down on because of her traditional beliefs about women in Christian leadership. In response to the question, *What (if any) aspects of the stories are puzzling or unclear*, she shared how hard it was for her to understand and relate to much of what was being discussed, particularly around the issue of women in head leadership positions. In response to the question, *What in the session was unclear or confusing*, she wrote, ***“My own feelings of confusion and sadness that what I believe is God’s will is oppressive, or that I just haven’t had the same revelation as these women. It’s as if people [here] are waiting for me to be on board with women in ministry without respecting my view as acceptable.”***

This was a vivid reminder that where a majority viewpoint gets all of the “airtime,” some may feel their voices are not welcome in the conversation. It reinforces the need for strong outreach and continued collaboration across theological perspectives so that Christians can learn from and respect women who hold a variety of beliefs and viewpoints.

Different Beliefs about Cross-Gender Relationships

Another area of notable viewpoint diversity was on the topic of sexualization and shaming. Even though many women sympathized with how G felt about the pastor who does meet with women, a few disagreed with her interpretation of the events. One woman pointed out that the pastor’s refusal to meet with G represents a norm in ministry. That is, pastors often limit one-on-one time with people of the opposite gender to avoid the appearance of impropriety. ***“I think [G] needed to be a bit more informed or sensitive to the Christian environment and how to move in that sphere...a women in ministry would or may have understood the response [from the male leader] differently.”*** This remark implies the interpretation of events viewed as discriminatory by some might differ based on cultural or doctrinal backgrounds and practices that women associate with their faith or leaders.

A woman using still another lens for processing G’s story offered an alternative interpretation of the Esther story, suggesting that Esther was being used, not supported, by Mordecai. She wrote, *“The Esther story can be interpreted in many ways, not just as empowering, but also as abusive.”* These comments make it clear: the ways that women feel challenged are not universal. **To be effective in supporting a woman or group of women, churches first need to understand their unique and individual needs and perspectives. This can only be done by asking.**

What’s Next for Woven

Following Up on the Consultation

Asking Better and Better Questions

The Woven Consultation day focused on the “*what*” questions. The goal was to understand the women’s experiences. Follow-up research and inquiry will explore *why* women have the challenges and levels of support they’ve reported and *how* the Church can better support, empower and release women in leadership.

Building & Supporting Networks of Advocacy & Support

Engaging the Whole Church

Through the Ignite Initiative, ARC@egc is committed to supporting women as they overcome adversity and embrace their worthiness as image bearers of God and as Christian leaders. This job requires the whole Church, both men and women, to work together. Over the next three years, we will help build support and advocacy networks that include men and women. We will also continue to survey and convene the Woven Network to ask how and when they would like to see men get involved in Woven. We will provide targeted technical assistance to support them as they take action on these ideas.

Ongoing Support of Cohort Groups

ARC@egc will continue to resource and support existing Christian women's networks and ongoing cohort groups with technical assistance in research and strategic planning. Some groups are well established, but we will also help others to form, based on common interests, ministry, affiliation or geographic location. These groups will enable like-minded women to support one another and collectively discern ways to take action toward gender justice in Greater Boston. **Our technical assistance will include training and support for groups that want to engage in more research and assessment or take next steps together.**

If you are interested in more information about cohorts groups, please email Stacie Mickelson at smickelson@egc.org or visit the cohort webpage at egc.org/woven-cohort.

Sharing What We Learn & Convening Leaders

ARC@egc will continue to collect, compile and report what is being learned in the cohorts and other convenings and conversations. We will periodically publish and share "what we are learning" reports similar to this one. Those findings will be a foundational part of our next Consultation day in 2016. We also expect to incorporate deeper levels of participation and leadership from the cohorts into the design and execution of the next Woven Consultation day. **By July 2015, we will share ways to get involved in the planning and leadership of our next consultation.**

The Ignite Initiative, 2015-2018

The Woven Network's cohorts and consultations are one part of ARC@egc's larger 3-year Initiative to *Ignite* gender justice in Greater Boston. *Ignite* is grounded on the belief that the Church is commanded **to confront injustice and violence and to be a place of sanctuary and refuge. We believe the Church can and will lead a culture shift toward communities that value, support and protect all people.** *Ignite* specifically focuses on justice in the areas of Christian Women's Leadership and Gender-Based Violence. In the near future, we will be excited to share projects we are developing to explore ways the Church and Christian leaders in Greater Boston can be better prepared to effectively address all forms of violence in churches, families and communities.

Appendices

- A. Attendees & Non-Attending Registrants List
 - B. Woven Methodology
 - C. Preparing Participants for the Consultation Day
 - D. Consultation Day Documents
 - E. Groups & Networks that Support Christian Women Leaders
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APPENDIX A — Attendees and Non-Attending Registrants

Attendees*

*Because some women who attended did not check in at registration, a few names may be missing.

	First & Last Name	City	State	Church
1.	Collette Allen	Brockton	MA	Water of Eternal Living Life Ministries
2.	Charmaine Arthur	Boston	MA	Crosstown Church International
3.	Rachel Ashley	Beverly	MA	North Point Evangelical Presbyterian
4.	Geraldine Baez	East Boston	MA	Congregación León de Judá
5.	Julita Bailey	Quincy	MA	Highrock Quincy
6.	Dana Baker	Medford	MA	Grace Chapel
7.	Bria Ballhausen	Boston	MA	River of Life
8.	Julia Bartos	Wenham	MA	Highrock Salem
9.	Ellen Bass	Roxbury	MA	River of Life Church
10.	Cynthia Bauer	South Hamilton	MA	First Presbyterian North Shore
11.	Margaret Benefiel	Dorchester	MA	Beacon Hill Friends
12.	Jacqueline Benton	Gloucester	MA	Community Church of East Gloucester
13.	Tracy Bindel	Jamaica Plain	MA	Cambridge Community Fellowship
14.	Miriã Birney	Cambridge	MA	Cambridge Community Fellowship
15.	Michele Breene	Weston	MA	Grace Chapel
16.	Makeeda Brooks	Boston	MA	Charles St. AME Church
17.	Letitia Bynoe	Boston	MA	
18.	Annaliese Calhoun	Boston	MA	Reality & Church of the Cross
19.	Eleanor Chalmus	Boston	MA	Pentecostal
20.	Diane Childers	Franklin	MA	Faith Community Church of Hopkinton
21.	Eva Clarke	Dorchester	MA	Life Church
22.	Kristen Coats	Lebanon	NH	Valley Bible Church
23.	Betsy Cowan	Jamaica Plain	MA	Covenant Congregational Church
24.	Hallie Cowan	Northborough	MA	Church of the Nativity
25.	Kristi-Lynn Craig	Salem	MA	Highrock Northshore
26.	Janel Curry	Wenham	MA	Christ Church
27.	Hillary Davis	Hamilton	MA	The Gathering Salem
28.	Sarah Durfey	Boston	MA	South End Neighborhood Church
29.	Jacqueline Dyer	Lynn	MA	Peoples Baptist Church
30.	Allegra Dziejcz			
31.	Consuela Elugardo	Wenham	MA	Arabic Evangelical Baptist Church
32.	Nika Elugardo	Jamaica Plain	MA	Congregación León de Judá
33.	Alison Engstrand	Chestnut Hill	MA	StoryHeights Church
34.	Debbie Ennis	Billerica	MA	Grace Chapel
35.	Lisa Fortuna	Melrose	MA	Episcopal
36.	Jennie Fournier	Boston	MA	Immanuel Community Church
37.	Anne Freeman	Roslindale	MA	River of Life Church
38.	Ariel Fusaro	Jamaica Plain	MA	Christ the King
39.	Kristen Gandek	Wenham	MA	Trinity Church & Park St Church
40.	Krystal Garcia	Jamaica Plain	MA	Christ the King

41. Bonnie Gatchell	Wakefield	MA	Orchard Fellowship
42. Alicia Greenaway	Milton	MA	Faith Christian Church & Bethel AME
43. Pascha Griffiths	Arlington	MA	Grace Chapel
44. Judy Hall	Boston	MA	South End Neighborhood Church
45. Kat Hampson	Quincy	MA	Highrock Quincy
46. Brynn Harrington	Salem	MA	Highrock North Shore
47. Martha Heassler	Gloucester	MA	
48. Natasha Hope	Natick	MA	Westgate Church
49. Laurie Hopper	Boston	MA	Living Water
50. Cynthia Hymes Bell	Boston	MA	Morning Star Baptist Church
51. Donna Johns	Hyde Park	MA	Jubilee Christian Church
52. Nicole Johnson	Jamaica Plain	MA	Mars Hill Fellowship Church
53. Emily Jones	Needham	MA	Redeemer Community Church
54. Leah Knight	Lexington	MA	Grace Chapel
55. Cicia Lee	Cambridge	MA	Highrock Covenant Church
56. Debbie Lee	Brookline	MA	StoryHeights Church
57. Heidi Lee	Boston	MA	Highrock Quincy
58. Sung Yun Lee	Boston	MA	Aletheia Church
59. Jin Min Lee	Roslindale	MA	
60. Bianca Llanos	Lynn	MA	Candelero de Dios
61. Carmen Maianu	Cambridge	MA	Highrock Arlington
62. Jasmine Marino	Saugus	MA	Vineyard Community Church
63. Jess Mason	Haverhill	MA	Free Christian Church
64. Christine May	Melrose	MA	Park Street Church
65. Valerie McGowan	Waltham	MA	Grace Chapel
66. Kerri McLaughlin			
67. Florecita Mejia	Chelsea	MA	Congregación León de Judá
68. Stacie Mickelson	Jamaica Plain	MA	River of Life Church
69. Catherine Miller	Randolph	MA	Congregación León de Judá
70. Misty Miller	Jamaica Plain	MA	Calvary Chapel in the City
71. Katie Milway	Wellesley	MA	Redeemer Community Church
72. Sara Mitchell	Boston	MA	South End Neighborhood Church
73. Shavonne Moore	Jamaica Plain	MA	Bethel AME Church
74. Denise Myers	Dorchester	MA	Bethel
75. Jen Najem	Pelham	NH	Community Christian Fellowship
76. Mirielle Nauman	Wenham	MA	Highrock Northshore
77. Lori Nelson	Dorchester	MA	St Paul AME Church
78. Nickey Nesbeth	Boston	MA	Bethel AME Church
79. Laura Neves	Malden	MA	Charles St. AME Church
80. Sue Noonan	Wakefield	MA	Netcast
81. Suzanne Norwood	Haverhill	MA	Grace Chapel
82. Claire O'Connor			
83. Jennifer Oakley	Hingham	MA	South Shore Baptist Church
84. Anna Obert	Wenham	MA	Evangelical
85. Lisa Oelerich	Derry	NH	Grace Chapel
86. Temi Ogunbodede	Hyde Park	MA	Pentecostal Tabernacle
87. Jocelyn Peirce	Woburn	MA	Grace Chapel
88. Tonia Petty	Boston	MA	International Community Church
89. Zorangeli Ramos	Somerville	MA	Greater Boston Vineyard
90. Daiana Rodriguez	Dedham	MA	Congregación León de Judá
91. T.Adaiah Rojas	Boston	MA	Jubilee Christian Church

92. Gretchen Saalbach	Somerville	MA	Greater Boston Vineyard
93. Sharon Sabin			
94. Ana Sampaio	Everett	MA	Christ The King
95. Hannah Schundler	Danvers	MA	Highrock North Shore
96. Karen Sherritt	Jamaica Plain	MA	Ruggles Baptist
97. Monalisa Smith	Roxbury	MA	Jubilee Christian Church
98. Dana Staley	Somerville	MA	Cambridge Community Fellowship Church
99. Kelly Steinhaus	Medford	MA	Journey Church
100. Brooke Sulahian	Melrose	MA	Grace Chapel
101. Deidre Tao	Cambridge	MA	Pentecostal Tabernacle
102. Christina Tinglof	Boston	MA	Covenant Congregational Church
103. Lucy Tsai	Millville	MA	Faith Church
104. Crystal Tullos	West Roxbury	MA	StoryHeights Church
105. Linda Turnbull	Boston	MA	Bethel AME
106. Sierra Vaughn	Boston	MA	Tremont Temple Baptist Church
107. Debra Veth	Hingham	MA	Highrock Quincy
108. Samantha Veth			
109. Deborah Washington	Brookline	MA	Old South Church
110. Ruth Wong	Wellesley	MA	Hope Fellowship Church
111. Alycia Wood	Medford	MA	Reality
112. LeSette Wright	Boston	MA	Tremont Temple Baptist Church
113. Grace Yeh	Boston	MA	Park Street Church
114. Yaliang Zhao	Andover	MA	Chinese Christian Church of New England
115. Rama Ziegenhals	Essex	MA	First Congregational Church of Essex
116. Alicia Ziegler	Roslindale	MA	Reunion Christian Church

Non- Attending Registrants

First & Last Name	City	State	Church
1. LorraineAnderson	Boston	MA	International Community Church
2. LizaCagua-Koo	Dorchester	MA	The Gathering Christian Fellowship
3. Shirley Cardona	Somerville	MA	Congregación León de Judá
4. Adriana Delossantos	Salem	MA	Fuente de Vida Eterna
5. Ramonita Diaz	Boston	MA	
6. Sarah Gautier	Roslindale	MA	Congregación León de Judá
7. Jennifer Jukanovich	Wenham	MA	Christ the Redeemer
8. Alexandra Knowles	Boston	MA	n/a
9. Galina Kouptsova	Seekonk	MA	Olive Tree Ministries
10. Megan Martelle	Cumberland	ME	Vineyard Church of Greater Portland
11. Valerie McGowan	Waltham	MA	Grace Chapel
12. Florecita Mejia	Chelsea	MA	Congregación León de Judá
13. Christina Meneghini	Boston	MA	Highrock Arlington
14. IvyNgo	Boston	MA	Vietnamese Church
15. Lisa Oelerich	Derry	NH	Grace Chapel
16. Cicily Shaw	Randolph	MA	Greater Life Baptist Church
17. Martha Vedrine	Mattapan	MA	Boston Missionary Baptist Church
18. Kathleen Verna	Roxbury	MA	Cross Town Church International
19. Carolyn Villar	Salem	MA	North Shore Assembly of God
20. Naomi Wilshire	Roslindale	MA	Defenders Boston Church

APPENDIX B — Woven Methodology

Preparing a Safe Space

We invested significant time in learning from leaders, both women and men, about how to prepare the agenda, how to be intentional in our facilitation techniques, and how to encourage recruiting in ways that promoted safety and inclusion for the whole range of potential participants. We learned from leaders in intercultural ministry and borrowed from their models on creating “safe space” for the discussion of issues that, historically, have been contentious and even divisive within Christianity. **Our intention was to create a space where women felt not only included, but also valued, respected, and even loved, regardless of their viewpoints or backgrounds.**

We defined “leader” broadly. All Christians are called to lead. Leadership can be in formal or informal roles, in church, community, workplace, or family. We clarified that **Woven is for “Christian women in leadership” not only “women in Christian leadership.”** This choice seemed to help engage women who may have been hesitant to get involved, based on their type of work, level of education or other factors.

Throughout the Consultation, we set the stage for participants to be equally inclusive, emphasizing that women had chosen to participate based on their love for Jesus and belief that all people are made in the image of God. These values were shared by every participant regardless of other differences.

Diverse Sponsorship & Support

In addition to Imago Dei, the funding sponsor, Congregación León de Judá (CLJ), Gordon College, and Women in Leadership National Study sponsored the event. Sponsorship looked different for each sponsor.

Imago Dei not only provided financial support, but also helped brainstorm community and network connections. They supported recruitment of sponsors and partners who were diverse in terms of theology and areas of ministry. Importantly, the staff at Imago Dei provided encouragement, prayer support and a sounding board for planning.

Congregación León de Judá provided a beautiful space that fostered a sense of valuing participants. Their logistical and technical assistance, childcare, and prayer support were top notch. CLJ leadership also invited women from their networks.

Gordon College — specifically the President’s Cabinet — provided extensive strategizing support and recruited students and educators. Gordon was also central in the strategic development of participant research questions and convening lead researchers from the Women in Leadership National Study to share their time, research advice, and expertise.

Taking the Time to Listen

Because we prioritized inviting diverse voices and understanding the needs of women from many different groups, we needed to take time to talk, listen and build on our relational networks. **We spent about three times more on this aspect of the planning than we**

anticipated. Specialized outreach often involved multiple interactions to build rapport and trust, listen to stories, and understand how our participants conceptualize gender justice. The registration questions also gave space for women to educate us in advance about their backgrounds and viewpoints (Appendix C.)

It took time to respond to the wisdom and expertise of partners who minister to various communities of women. For example, a deaf interpreter taught us how to respond to the needs of deaf women and women who are hard of hearing. She patiently instructed us on how to make the women feel welcome. After numerous email exchanges, phone calls, and edits to our language and programming, we made our way up a steep learning curve. **This is just one example of both the importance and the time-consuming nature of taking an inquisitive and research-grounded approach to building networks and relationships that cut across culture and ideology.**

Using a Cohort Model to Promote Diversity & Safe Space

We invited women to lead cohorts of potential participants prior to the Consultation. This was done in response to the hypothesis that **creating safe space and building unity are easier when women have already established relationships with other women than when they are meeting for the first time. Therefore, if women met in cohorts prior to the Consultation, this would facilitate the development of relationships during the Consultation itself.** This was done in part by having cohort leaders invite 8-10 women from their networks to Woven. They tried to meet with 2-3 of those women to discuss and report back on some questions we provided. We also provided a prayer guide for unified intercession. (Appendix C).

A driving purpose of the cohort model was to encourage a significant corpus of participants to attend Woven with women from their networks. cohorts also provided a rich source of ongoing data as they shared the notes from their past and future conversations. More women expressed interest in cohort groups than were able to meet before the Consultation. **We gathered responses from 4 cohorts and encouraged all cohorts to continue to meet.**

Connecting network-to-network was a more effective model for recruitment and engagement than connecting individual woman-to-woman. Cohorts served as a comfortable base for women who weren't used to sharing personal stories with groups, and provided an important source of engagement and data collection for women who could not attend. In the future, smaller group cohort gatherings will be critical both to continued engagement of participants and for engaging women with less flexibility to take a full day off.

Using Technology for Data Collection & to Build Connection

On the Consultation day, we used both personal reflection and polling questions to stimulate conversation and gather data about participants. The responses to text poll questions were projected live in front of the audience. Seeing instant results to the polls not

only allowed for immediate feedback, but it also served as a way to draw women in while showing them more information about their fellow participants. It also provided real-time example of the diversity in the room, a point we tried to reinforce throughout the day via multiple methods.

Key Learning about Agenda & Structure

Participants were encouraged to respond only to questions they felt comfortable answering. For this reason, the number of respondents varies by question. The women's responses and notes on the collected color-coded survey handouts serve as the primary source of data for this report. Though the women's responses gave us ample information to analyze and report on their personal experiences, we were not able to adequately capture the quality and content of discussions that took place at the tables. At future Consultations we will have participant researchers at each table to serve as facilitators and note takers to ensure we capture the rich dialogue as it unfolds.

APPENDIX C — Preparing Participants for the Consultation Day

Woven Registration Questions

- 1) Last Name
- 2) First Name
- 3) City
- 4) Zip
- 5) State
- 6) Address
- 7) Phone
- 8) Email
- 9) What church or churches do you primarily attend?
- 10) Do you require childcare?
 - a. If you require childcare, tell us the names and ages of your attending children.
- 11) In what ministry context(s) do you lead?
 - a. Please include your ministry or organization name(s), if applicable, or a brief description.
- 12) What is your primary occupation?
 - a. If it is the same as your ministry context, you can type, "Same as above."
- 13) Would you like to learn more about becoming a "cohort" leader for the Woven Consultation?
 - a. I'd like to learn more about becoming a cohort leader.
 - b. I am or plan to be a cohort leader.
 - c. Not at this time.
- 14) Would you be willing to do an interview during the Consultation for the Woven video?
- 15) What does the term "gender justice" mean to you?
 - a. What other phrase(s) would you prefer to describe empowering women to walk in their God-given identities?
- 16) Do you or a potential attendee you know prefer the use of a translator?
 - a. Please specify which language(s)?
- 17) Do you require ASL interpretation or an assisted listening device?
- 18) Please describe any dietary restrictions.

Cohort Meeting Questionnaire & Notes

Instructions to Cohort Leader

Please meet for about 45 minutes with at least 2-3 of the women you invited to Woven. Discuss the questions below, and capture general notes, themes, and quotes from your discussion using this form. Each woman should be asked the question and have an opportunity to respond.

The Applied Research team at Emmanuel Gospel Center will review your notes to identify and report on general themes and statements but will not publish names or information that identifies the speaker to people not present in the discussion group.

You can print out this form and take hand written notes, or use the electronic version. Afterward, please email your notes to smickelson@egc.org by **December 6** or mail them to Applied Research, 2 San Juan St, Boston, MA 02118.

Discussion Member Names (optional):

Discussion Questions

1. What is your HOPE?

- a. Discuss what you think are the **major needs** for women in your community. What are the **changes that you want to see** in the lives of individual women, our communities and the Church?

2. What is your CHALLENGE?

- a. Discuss the **obstacles** you have faced or are still facing in fulfilling the call of God on your life. What are the **challenges** that women in your community face in becoming all that God has created them to be?

3. What is your STRENGTH?

- a. Discuss your unique gifts, talents and assets. What unique strengths do women bring to the Body of Christ?

Woven Consultation Prayer Guide Pray for Unity in the Church

John 17:23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

- ❖ That the kingdom come and the Lord's will be done, here on earth, here in the Church, here in Boston, as it already is in heaven.

- ❖ That the Church in Boston would be known for its love and care for its people and communities.
- ❖ That our cultural and theological differences would not impede our unity under Christ, but rather be the birthplace of beauty and creativity.

Pray for Women in our City

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- ❖ For those who are lonely, afraid or discouraged: may the Lord be their peace and hope.
- ❖ For those who nurture (the mothers, spiritual mothers, aunties and caregivers), that the Lord be their strength and renewal: may they guide, teach and love the next generation with love that is beyond the bounds of this world.
- ❖ For those who suffer violence, trauma, insecurity and unrest: may the Lord rise up and deliver them into the hands of safety, may justice and peace flow in the city.
- ❖ For those struggling to know their worth: may they find rootedness in Jesus, may they see themselves as daughters of the most high God.
- ❖ For those who continue to labor and invest in the kingdom: may their arms be strengthened and their spirits renewed.

Pray for the Woven Consultation

Colossians 3:14 Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

- ❖ That it can be a safe space where all women can come as they are to share their stories.
- ❖ That we all might come with open hearts and listening ears.
- ❖ That we could learn from one another and discern together the Lord's prophetic word to us.

- ❖ That the Holy Spirit would protect His work, that discord, offense or agenda would not distract us from listening to His voice.

APPENDIX D — Consultation Day Documents

Woven Women’s Leadership Consultation Day Agenda

8-8:30 Registration, Breakfast & Welcome

Connecting with the women in the room and entering into the day.

8:30-9:15 Session 1: Consultation Groundwork

Critical understanding and tools for being and working together.

9:15-10:30 Session 2: Our Stories of Empowerment, Encouragement & Support

Sharing stories of our strengths and documenting insights for research and action.

10:30-10:45 BREAK

10:45-12 Session 3: Our Stories of Challenge

Sharing stories of barriers and injustice; identifying areas for long-term change.

12-12:45 LUNCH (provided)

12:45-1:45 Session 4: Our Prayers of Petition & Discernment

Calling out to God and caring deeply for one other.

1:45-2 Next Steps

Exploring opportunities for further connecting and working together

Session One: Consultation Groundwork

Text Poll Questions: Let's Practice!!

Write in or circle the answer first, then text the appropriate **CODE** to the number "22333."

1. First Name:

Text: **667218** [your first name]

2. Last Name:

Text: **497800** [your last name]

3. Town or Neighborhood:

Text: **667219** [your town or neighborhood]

4. Age:

15-24 – Text: **497828**

25-34 – Text: **497834**

35-44 – Text: **665786**

45-54 – Text: **665809**

55-64 – Text: **667216**

65+ – Text: **667217**

5. Marital Status:

Single – Text: **667223**

Married – Text: **667227**

Widowed – Text: **667228**

Divorced – Text: **667229**

Remarried – Text: **667230**

Other – Text: **667231**

6. Number of Children:

Text: **667234** [the # of children you have]

7. Highest Level of Education:

Less than High School **667236**

High School Diploma or GED **667237**

Some College **662368**

Associate Degree **662369**

Bachelor's Degree **667238**

Master's Degree **667239**

Professional Degree **662398**

Doctorate Degree **667240**

8. Working Status:

Working full-time (more than 32 hours a week) **667241**

Working part-time (8-32 hours a week) **667245**

Primary caregiver (of children, elderly parents, etc.) (full-time) **667247**

Student (full-time) **667250**

Temporarily unemployed (but actively seeking work) **667251**

Retired or of independent financial means **667253**

Unable to work **667260**

9. Denomination:

Text: **718103** [your denomination]

Session Two: Our Stories of Empowerment, Encouragement & Support

Session Two Intro Text Poll Question

Write your answer, then text it to “22333,” after typing in the appropriate CODE.

What is one word that captures a quality or characteristic that you value or admire in other women leaders?

Text: **717886** [one word or phrase]

Reflection Questions

1. **What stood out in or caught your attention about the stories told?**

2. **What do you identify with very closely, either about the stories or with the speakers themselves?**

3. **What (if any) aspects of the stories are puzzling or unclear?**

4. Do you have a supportive group in which you participate regularly? (Y/N)
 - a. If yes, then please describe.

5. Please list any groups or networks that you know about effectively supporting Christian women leaders

Discussion Question

1. At your tables, share a specific story about the ways you have been encouraged or supported as a Christian leader. What particular elements of your experience positively impacted you?

2. How do these stories help you think about what you need to fulfill your potential as a leader?

3. Complete the following sentence: I feel most confirmed/encouraged in my calling to be a leader when...

NOTES:

Session Two Closing Text Poll Questions

Write in or circle the answer first, then text the appropriate **CODE** to the number “22333.”

- 1. How often do you have the opportunity to connect in meaningful ways with other women leaders?**

Never **714852**

Occasionally **714853**

Regularly **714854**

Often **714855**

- 2. Text a word or phrase describing one strategy you practice to increase your effectiveness as a leader?**

Text: **714845** [one word or phrase]

- 3. Text a word or phrase describing ways we can empower the emerging generation of women leaders.**

Text: **714844** [one word or phrase]

- 4. During your reflection time, you listed groups or networks that effectively support Christian women leaders. Text the name of the most helpful support from that list.**

Text: **714847** [one word or phrase]

Discussion Questions

- At your table, share about a time where you were discouraged, discriminated against and/or felt disempowered as a Christian leader. How did you respond?
- In light of these stories, what does the Church need to do to better support women leaders?
- I think that one of the greatest obstacles that Christian women leaders face is...

NOTES:

Session Three Closing Text Poll Questions

Write in or circle the answer first, then text the appropriate **CODE** to the number “22333.”

1. I am aware of and/or think about ways my leadership is affected or influenced by my gender

Always **714848**

Often **714849**

Sometimes/occasionally **714850**

Never **714851**

2. Text a word or phrase that describes one obstacle you currently are facing that makes it difficult to grow in leadership.

Text: **714860** [one word or phrase]

Session Four: Our Prayers of Petition & Discernment

Name:

Sphere:

Supports

What relationships, groups, resources or tools have functioned as key supports for you in this sphere?

Challenges

In this sphere, what relationships, stereotypes, policies or institutional barriers have been obstacles to your growth and success as a Christian women leader?

Prayers

Briefly describe your prayer for women leading in that area.

Session Evaluation

EGC Woven Consultation: December 6, 2014

Overall, how would you describe your Woven Consultation experience?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

What is your opinion about the facilitation style and format?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

What is your opinion about the logistics for today's Consultation?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

There was enough opportunity for discussion.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

I would like to participate in future Woven Consultations.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please tell us what activities or sessions were helpful to you and briefly explain why.

Please tell us what activities or sessions were unhelpful to you and briefly explain why.

Was there anything you needed that was not available or not provided?

Do you have any other suggestions or comments for helping us improve future events? Was there anything missing that you would recommend we consider?

Do you want to be included in future communications regarding Igniting a Gender Justice Initiative in Boston?

- Yes, please include me in future communications.*
- No, I am not interested in future communications.*

APPENDIX E — Groups & Networks that Support Christian Women Leaders

All Girls Allowed

American Baptist Churches USA

Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women

Black Ministerial Alliance- Clergy Women United

Boston Rescue Mission

Change for Christ

Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE)

Christina Gray Ministry

Emmanuel Gospel Center (EGC)

Evangelical Covenant

Evangelical Spiritual Directors Network (ESDN)

Gathering for Hope

Gordon College- Office of Community Engagement

Gordon College- Women IN

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary- Women Pastors Group

Grace Chapel- Mom to Mom

Grace Chapel- Joy Bible Study

Imago Dei Fund

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

Jubilee Church- Chosen Vessels

Leadership Conference of Women Religious- Catholic Church

Life Together Fellowship

Massachusetts Communities Action Network

Proverbs 31 Ministry

Selah

Spiritual Director International

Synergy

Unite Boston

Youth
