



Glossary of Terms

ADVOCACY | The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. For the full affirmation of women in ministry and leadership in Baptist life to be realized, public support must be demonstrated with not only the words we speak, but also with the actions we do ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

ALLY | One that is associated with another as a helper: a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle. A person cannot self-identify as an ally. Rather a member of the minority or marginalized group must recognize an individual as an ally. The work we do at BWIM is immensely more effective when men partner with us to learn how to be good allies for women in ministry ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

BIAS | Any thought or action that discriminates or disproportionately favors one person or group of people over another based on superficial or inaccurate perceptions of the person or group. ([Penn State](#))

GENDER BIAS | Prejudiced actions or assumptions arising from the belief that women are not equal to men ([EIFGE](#)).

HIDDEN/IMPLICIT BIAS | Includes the subconscious feelings, attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes an individual has developed due to prior influences and imprints throughout their lives. Individuals are unaware that subconscious perceptions, instead of facts and observations, affect their decision-making. We all have hidden/implicit biases (Shah & Bolen, 2023).

EXPLICIT BIAS | The traditional conceptualization of bias. With explicit bias, individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups. ([Department of Justice](#)).

BIGOTRY | Obstinate or intolerant devotion to one's own opinions and prejudices. ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

DECOLONIZATION | Process of identifying, challenging, and revising or replacing assumptions, ideas, values, and practices that reflect a colonizer's dominating influence and especially a Eurocentric dominating influence. ([Merriam-Webster](#)). It aims to dismantle colonial power structures and restore Indigenous sovereignty. For women in ministry, decolonization is significant as the subjugation of women is often rooted in colonial ideologies. For women of color and Indigenous women, decolonization is especially crucial as they experience the compounded impact of racism, sexism, and



the historical trauma of colonization. The work of decolonization often intersects with gender equity work, aiming to challenge patriarchal norms and empower women within religious and spiritual contexts.

DISCRIMINATION | The act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability ([Merriam-Webster](#)). According to BWIM's last *State of Women in Baptist Life Report*, 86% of women in ministry experience obstacles to their ministry because of their gender.

EMPOWERMENT | 1) The act or action of empowering someone or something: the granting of the power, right, authority to perform various acts or duties. 2) The state of being empowered to do something: the power, right, or authority to do something ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

EQUALITY | The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities ([Merriam-Webster](#)). Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources and opportunities, regardless of their circumstances.

EQUITY | Fairness or justice in the way people are treated. ([Merriam-Webster](#)). Equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. Sometimes this means that more needs to be given to those who have been traditionally marginalized to reach.

GENDER | Socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, boy, or gender diverse person, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. ([WHO](#)).

GENDER PAY GAP | The difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men. It is calculated by measuring the ratio of women's median earnings to men's median earnings for full-time workers ([Mitchell](#)). It is exacerbated for many women of color, with Hispanic and Black women experiencing the largest gaps relative to white, non-Hispanic men. According to BWIM's most recent *State of Women in Baptist Life Report*, 49% of women in ministry said they were not paid equally to their male counterpart(s).

GENDERED ROLE | A culturally and socially determined set of expected behaviors, attitudes, and [characteristics](#) based on concepts of masculinity and femininity. ([Britannica](#)).



HARASSMENT | Illegal behavior towards a person that causes mental or emotional suffering, which includes repeated unwanted contact without a reasonable purpose, insults, threats, touching, or offensive language ([Cambridge Dictionary](#)). According to BWIM's latest *State of Women in Baptist Life Report*, 1 in 4 women have been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted while working and serving in their ministry setting.

HORIZONTAL VIOLENCE | Non-physical, hostile, aggressive, or harmful behavior directed at colleagues in the workplace. These actions can manifest in various ways, including: snide, belittling, or sarcastic comments, public humiliation, gossiping, and bullying. In the context of the conversation about gender equality, this is behavior we see between women who have been treated poorly and whose opportunities for service have been limited (Snively & Smallwood, 2024).

INCLUSION | The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences ([College of the Environment](#)).

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE | 1) Spoken and written language that intentionally avoids word use that is needlessly gender-specific or exclusive, for example using humankind instead of mankind or chairperson instead of chairman. 2) The use of male, female, and non-gendered imagery and metaphors in a balanced way to express the truths we know of God. ([Episcopal Dictionary of the Church](#)).

INSTITUTIONAL SEXISM | Includes policies, practices, and norms that perpetuate inequality by restricting opportunities for women ([Boston University](#)). This kind of sexism is entrenched in the very culture of organizations and churches. Rooting it out of faith communities often requires a paradigm shift.

INTERSECTIONALITY | Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, it is the complex and cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

MISOGYNY | Hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

OPPRESSION | A situation in which people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom ([Cambridge Dictionary](#)).

PATRIARCHY | 1) Social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent



and inheritance in the male line. 2) A society or institution organized according to the principles and practices of patriarchy ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

Patriarchy has been used to marginalize women and sustain male dominance in the church. Patriarchy, as a system of gendered hierarchy and male dominance, is not a peripheral feature of Christianity, but a foundational element woven into its very spiritual framework. Patriarchal ideologies are enshrined in theological doctrine, church practices, and social structures. Patriarchy is the reason organizations like Baptist Women in Ministry exist.

PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE | All violence that creates or maintains men's power and dominance. All violence that avenges the loss of men's power. All violence against oppressed genders that contributes to the normalization and institutionalization of male superiority and female/non-binary subordination (hooks, 1984).

PREJUDICE | 1) An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, group, race, or their supposed characteristics. 2) An adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge ([Merriam-Webster](#))

PRIVILEGE | 1) A right or immunity granted as a particular benefit, advantage, or favor. 2) To accord a higher value or superior position ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

SEX | A set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy. Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed ([WHO](#)).

SEXISM | An ideology based on the belief that one sex is superior to another. It is discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping based on gender, and is most often expressed toward women and girls ([CDC](#)).

BENEVOLENT SEXISM | Attitudes about women that seem positive in tone, (eg, women should be cherished) but nonetheless connote inferiority to men based on fragility, lack of competence, or need of help and protection (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

HOSTILE SEXISM | Beliefs and behaviors that are openly hostile toward a group of people based on their sex or gender (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Misogyny, or the hatred of women, is an example of hostile sexism. People who hold views that are hostile and sexist may view women as: manipulative, deceitful, capable of using seduction to control men, and needing to be kept in their place.



INTERNALIZED SEXISM | Occurs when women enact learned sexist behaviors upon themselves and other women ([Bearman, Korobov, & Thorne, 2009](#)). Some of the results of this involuntary internalization process are self-doubt, self-hate, self-censorship, plus doubt or mistrust of and competition with other women and girls.

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY | Disparities in wealth, resources, and other outcomes that result from discriminatory practices of institutions such as religious, legal, educational, business, government, and health care systems. Structural inequalities result from power imbalances when one group has historically set the rules that intentionally or unintentionally exclude others from access to wealth, resources, and opportunity. Structural inequalities can significantly hinder women in ministry by limiting opportunities, perpetuating discrimination, and reinforcing power imbalances ([Center for High Impact Philanthropy](#)).

SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION | Historical and organized pattern of mistreatment that is based on a person's identity, and that is supported and enforced by society and institutions. Systems of oppression can manifest in economic, social, political, and cultural systems ([National Equity Project](#)).

THRIVE | To progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances. ([Merriam-Webster](#))(Oxford Language).

TOKENISM | the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual, racial, or gender equality within a workforce ([Merriam-Webster](#)).

References

Addressing Bias: Rights, Responsibilities, and Responses. (2021). Pennsylvania State University.

<https://www.knowyourrightsandresponsibilities.psu.edu/pages/bias/bias-the-basics>

Cambridge Dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/>

Diversity Equity Inclusion Glossary. (2025). College of the Environment. University of Washington.

<https://environment.uw.edu/about/inclusive-excellence-office/inclusion-resources/diversity-equity-inclusion-glossary/>



European Institute for Gender Equality (EIFGE),
https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1320?language_content_entity=en.

Gender and Health. (2025). World Health Organization.
https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1.
<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/gender-and-health>

Genderism, Sexism, and Heterosexism. (1 September 2023). Center for Disease Control. https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsdp/health_equity/genderism.htm

Glick, P. & Fiske, S.T. (1996). The ambivalent sexism inventory: Differentiating between hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(3). 491-512.

Inclusive. An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church. (2024). The Episcopal Church.
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/inclusive-language/>.

The Lens of Systemic Oppression. National Equity Project.
<https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/lens-of-systemic-oppression>.

Merriam Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

Mitchell, Molly. *Why the Gender Pay Gap Persists in American Business*. (2024 Apr 4). The Darden Report. Darden School of Business. University of Virginia.
<https://news.darden.virginia.edu/2024/04/04/why-the-gender-pay-gap-persists-in-american-businesses/>.

Shah HS, Bohlen J. *Implicit Bias*. (2023 Mar 4). In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2025 Jan–. PMID: 36944001.

Snively, Elizabeth Snively and Smallwood, Rebecca, RN, MBA, (September 20, 2024).
<https://www.relias.com/blog/5-ways-to-reduce-horizontal-violence-in-healthcare>

What is Structural Inequality. (2025). Center for High Impact Philanthropy. University of Pennsylvania. <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/what-is-structural-inequality/>