

## Podcast – Season 2 – Amutha Devaraj

### Intro

	Music
Jane	Hello, I'm Jane Day, Centenary Development Enabler for Baptists Together
Helen	And I'm Helen Cameron, Research Fellow at the Centre for Baptist Studies at Regent's Park College Oxford. Together we are the co-leaders of Project Violet.
Jane	Welcome to Season 2 of the Project Violet podcast. Project Violet is a research project investigating women's experiences in ministry whilst developing women ministers. We are trying to understand better the theological, missional and structural obstacles women ministers face and identify ways forward.
Helen	In this second season, we will introduce you to some of the women who have taken part in the project and the research they have done.
Jane	We hope that listening to these episodes will help you engage with the findings of the project which can be found on the Project Violet website.

### Interview – Amutha Devaraj

	Music
Helen and Amutha	<p><b>Helen Cameron</b> In this podcast episode, I'm talking to Amutha Devaraj. Welcome, Amutha.</p> <p><b>Amutha Devaraj</b> Thank you for having me here with you. And it is a great opportunity to share.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> What is your current ministry role?</p> <p><b>Amutha Devaraj</b> I am currently the Baptist minister of the church in Ashurst Drive Baptist Church. And the church is located in Gants Hill, and it is in Ilford, which is in the Northeast region in London Baptists.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> How did you enter Baptist ministry?</p> <p><b>Amutha Devaraj</b> I come from a Hindu background. So I came to the UK in 2008. I was baptized and I came to the Lord and the ministry, it started in 2016, when I came through Baptist accreditation process. I started as a minister-in-training in the local church, where I have been for from 2006 onwards, and God brought me an opportunity to serve in this way to the church I belong. And I started studying</p>

theology then in 2016, in Spurgeon's College, and then the church, the same church called me as they are now. And after three years of NAM here now, I'm serving in the same church as their fully accredited Baptist minister. And it is like, working for home. I always say that. It is a beautiful ministry God has opened for the Baptist church.

**Helen Cameron**

What did you do before ministry?

**Amutha Devaraj**

Yes, before the ministry, I was a researcher. I worked in Japan after completing my PhD in material science back home in India. And in Japan, seven to eight years. You spent there in an academic way. And then we came here as a family together to the UK in 2005. And I was working in Imperial College in the Material Science Department. And I was researcher, and I did different research in material science, and also civil and environmental science department. And then I worked in a green cement production company within Imperial College itself. So it was a long journey in the academic side. And in 2016, I started having a calling from God asking, like, 'Come and follow me.' And I have been thinking, 'Yes, Lord, I'm following you, but in what capacity I didn't understand.' And then he called me and said, 'Leave the net, and follow me' – what he said to Peter, then it was affirming that I should leave what I am doing in a secular place, and following Him completely in this ministerial route. And I then started exploring in London Baptists and seeing what that call would be. And then slowly, the doors were opening towards this church ministry. And then I identified this is the calling he has put in me. So I started following it. And slowly he has brought me through this journey. And I am here really enjoying serving him.

**Helen Cameron**

What was the question or issue you looked at in Project Violet?

**Amutha Devaraj**

The topic I have chosen to do my research and to bring it into discussion is understanding the journey into ministry for Asian women. And I would like to reflect my own personal journey into this ministry. That's why I chose this topic, like how the Asian women can see themselves putting forward into the ministry, church ministry, and during this course of Project Violet on this topic that helped me to look back my whole life and learn few things which I have experienced through this journey. And by sharing this with the other people, especially Asian women, I believe that this would enable them and kindle them to take a step forward to get into the ministry or any leadership role in the church ministry. So having that in mind, I thought, 'Okay, this is the topic, I'm going to look on it.' And since personally I can reflect my own life, I thought it would be easier to bring out the outcome into discussion.

**Helen Cameron**

What did you do for your research?

**Amutha Devaraj**

	<p>Actually, I kept to my story, my personal story of God’s calling and calling into his salvation, and then to his service, as an anecdote of this project. And then I reflected on why not many other Asian women coming into ministry, and what really stops them. I then did research on existing, already available database to see how many Asian men firstly, involved in the Baptist ministry, and in the other white denominations as well. And seeing that result from the database research, that helped me to understand why women are in a very minority way, or you can count numbers, that they are coming up into the ministerial calling. And this really assisted me to understand why women are unwilling to take up this ministerial calling. Then I involved the local church congregation. And I’ve chosen different age groups, different genders, and different ethical backgrounds, to obtain their views about the Asian women in the ministry. And then I finally summarized all the outcome I have received. And then theologically reflecting on that, and putting it forward a few practical things that can be initiated at the end of the project, which will be really supportive in the future.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> Why do you want people to read your report?</p> <p><b>Amutha Devaraj</b> I think there are three points I can see. Like one is that this would enable men and women to think about the other side, which was unattended, or unnoticed until now. And also, second one, I believe that this would enhance the interest in the coming-up new, younger generation to take this as a challenge in putting forward for this noble ministerial calling. And thirdly, I trust this would lead Asian women to think about in this perspective, if they have not so far, how to take this as a challenge or how to enjoy the experience of what I had, to move forward into the church ministry.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> Well, that’s been really encouraging to hear about your own journey to hear about your passion for the research you’ve done. And then some good reasons to encourage people to read what you’ve written. Thank you so much for speaking with us in this episode.</p>
	Music

## Outro

Helen	Thank you for listening to this episode of the Project Violet podcast. We invite you to go to the website and download the reports if you have not yet done so. <a href="http://www.projectviolet.org.uk">www.projectviolet.org.uk</a>
Jane	And don’t forget to tell others about the Project Violet podcast. You can follow us on Facebook and X formerly Twitter.
	Music