

Podcast – Season 2 – Carol Bostridge

Season Intro

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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 – Carol Bostridge

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Helen and Carol	<p>Helen Cameron Today I'm speaking to Carol Bostridge. Welcome Carol. You've retired since taking part in Project Violet. Could you say what your ministry role was then and what you're doing now?</p> <p>Carol Bostridge So I was a Regional Minister within the London Baptist Association. I retired at the end of July. And I'm now doing a mixture of voluntary roles including working with Lewisham Foodbank, with Spurgeon's College and a little bit with the London Baptists as well.</p> <p>Helen Cameron Great. Perhaps I can take you back to the beginning of your ministry. Can you tell us a bit about how you entered Baptist ministry?</p> <p>Carol Bostridge Well, I used to be a maths teacher, and then became the church worker at Crofton Park Baptist Church, which was very varied role. And within that, because I was doing a little bit of leading and speaking occasionally I thought I'd go off to Spurgeon's College one day a week, just you know, so I felt a little more able. But as I did that, I sensed it was... God was very gracious. This was a step-by-step call, encouraged by the tutors at Spurgeon's, encouraged by the senior minister in Crofton Park. And so I went through ministerial recognition</p>

and then into ministry. And actually, the senior minister of Crofton Park left and after some prayerful heart searching, I then became the minister of that church.

Helen Cameron

Thank you for sharing that journey. Now, you came into the first group on Project Violet, what was the question or issue that you looked at? And why was it important to you?

Carol Bostridge

I looked at marital status and ministry. And I think that was twofold: I had gone into ministry as a divorcee with two small children. And remember some of the uncomfortable, and I think probably now inappropriate, questions that I was asked and some of the assumptions that were made. And then in my role as Regional Minister, as I sought to support some women in ministry, again, I was noting they were telling me some of the things that have been said to them, or the lack of support or, you know, just things I'd love to know more about. How does singleness, being a divorcee or being married? Well, how does that affect ministry at all stages of ministry?

Helen Cameron

So that's quite an ambitious agenda. Can you say how do you actually go about doing the research?

Carol Bostridge

What I did was to, first of all found seven or eight women in ministry that I knew reasonably well. And that included some single women divorcee, and married and explored with them. They were very gracious to me. I'm very open and honest, as we explored things from original calling MRC training, settlement, ongoing ministry. And at that point, those were quite open conversations. And from their answers, I was then able to formulate four short questionnaires. I think realizing that there's there was a mountain here, so people wouldn't tell me everything about everything. So split it into shorter questionnaires, if you'd like that before, during, and after sections, and then those questionnaires went out to all the women ministers in London, they didn't all get all of them were randomly spread them out. And it's from the results that came through from those that I was then able to put the report together.

Helen Cameron

Thank you, I can see your background as a maths teacher shining through there. And that's a very systematic balancing of interviews and questionnaires. So thank you for describing that. And I guess the final question is, why do you want people to read your report?

Carol Bostridge

I've just gone back and just read it myself, because it was a little while ago I did it. There are things in there that still sadden me and shock me and frustrate me, but also a sense of, 'It wouldn't take much to put a lot of this right'. And actually realizing actually some of this applies to men as well as women. There are ways that we could improve this process and the ongoing support to people and so I really would urge people to read it to read it prayerfully and then to put into action some of the suggestions that are there, because we can make a really

	<p>positive difference to the experience both of women's lives and men's, as we look at issues surrounding with singleness, divorcees, marital status.</p> <p>Helen Cameron Carol, thank you for that encouragement for people to go to the website and download and read your report. Thank you for talking to us today.</p>
	Music

Season Outro

Helen	<p>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. www.projectviolet.org.uk</p>
Jane	<p>And don't forget to tell others about the Project Violet podcast. You can follow us on Facebook and X formerly Twitter.</p>
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