

## Podcast – Season 2 Script – Pam Searle

### 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 – Pam Searle

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Helen and Pam	<p><b>Helen Cameron</b> Today I'm speaking with Pam Searle. So welcome, Pam.</p> <p><b>Pam Searle</b> Hello, Helen.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> Start by telling us about your current ministry.</p> <p><b>Pam Searle</b> So I'm a minister at Sutton Baptist Church and Sutton is in London. And it's a town centre church. And I started there in 2019. And I'm still here, having managed to get the church through COVID and various other big deals, and we're seeing change and growth. And it's a great church.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> That's wonderful. Thank you for sharing that. I'm wondering whether we can go back to the beginning of your ministry, and you can tell us how you came to be a Baptist minister.</p> <p><b>Pam Searle</b> Yes, of course, I attended a church, not too far from here in Sutton: Purley Baptist Church. And I was mentored by Peter Noddin and Pam Bryan, the</p>

ministers at the time. And I recall going back to see Peter and, and saying to him, that I felt that there was a bit of a nudge for calling and it was quite wonderful that he said 'about time too', and that was the start of a very great journey. I had had a calling as a younger teenager, but felt that actually it was probably right, what my parents said, you know, learn a bit more about life before you go into ministry. And the rest is history really?

**Helen Cameron**

Oh, that's wonderful. It's good to hear people's stories and how they came to respond to God's call. So you took part in the third group of Project Violet co-researchers? Can you tell us what you looked at in your research and why it was important to you?

**Pam Searle**

So my research looked at the decline experienced by women ministers within ministry, Baptist ministries, specifically. And it really struck me that having got close to coming out of ministry myself, I felt, you always seem to think you may have experienced this, but that when you're going through a hardship that it's only you that's going through that. And it's all it's very personal. But once I began to feel a bit stronger, I started to talk to one or two other ladies, women ministers, I started to realize that actually, it wasn't just me with these troubling experiences. And these weren't isolated incidences. And so I felt the nudge to sort of just sort of delve a bit deeper. And the deeper I went, I realized that actually that the pain that I suffered in ministry, and the pain that a number of women who have suffered and come out of ministry, it wasn't stopping. And they were left quite badly scarred. And so I wanted to see if there's something that I could do to encourage women ministers, and to even excite some women who are looking at ministry, and then, you know, Project Violet seem to emerge, it seemed as if it was all a big answer to prayer. That, you know, here am I considering why this happened to me, hearing what's happened to other women as well. And then hearing from Jane about Project Violet, it was so exciting. And it's great to see God at hand.

**Helen Cameron**

Thank you. So it sounds as if your research came from a mix of personal experience and having listened to the stories of others. How did you actually go about conducting your research?

**Pam Searle**

So I made a point of making sure that I stuck to you know, the ethical guidelines, you know, which you have to, I started to ask a few women, you know, if they would be prepared to share their stories. As you can imagine, a lot of women said no, because they wanted, you know, that was a chapter in their lives that they had left and was still quite raw. So those that said that they would be prepared to share their story. I wrote some questions for them. They had sight of the questions beforehand, so that nothing was a surprise. You know when dealing with this sort of subject, there can't be any surprises. Because you're dealing with quite a painful subject. You know, where the hurts have occurred. So I tried to speak to some women who have come out of Baptist ministry, and some women who are still in that is ministry. And just if you like, surviving.

	<p><b>Helen Cameron</b> That sounds, I mean, it sounds as if there’s a lot of courage from those women to share their stories with you. And some really challenging listening on your part. Now, you’ve written up some of the learning that came from those interviews into a report, which is going to be available for people. Would you like to just say why you would like people to read your report.</p> <p><b>Pam Searle</b> So I want to nudge people into realizing that we shouldn’t be trying to survive ministry – we should be, well, enjoying it for a start. And it should be that we feel encouraged to be in ministry, by all being accepted for who we are, and not feeling that we have to be pushed into a sausage machine, so to speak. You know, God has called us as women, individual women, to share the gifts and skills that he has given us. And so that’s really the encouragement that I want to pass on that any woman that has been called should be able to minister. To walk into ministry with those gifts, and not experience racism, sexism, and should be treated as an equal. When you read my report, you will see that there are a number of reflections where women have stated that they weren’t treated as equal. And we serve a God who, who loves each of us. And he doesn’t pick and choose as to who he loves. He loves us, because He has called us as, as his children. And so I would, I really want people to read the report, and learn from the report. And afterwards, I’m praying that the Baptist Union will look at this and say, we’ve got a lot of learning to do, and how can we make things better? You know, there’s a lot of history, but God always looks to the healing and to preparing people. There are a lot of young women out there who would like to come into ministry. How can we encourage these women to come into ministry, into Baptist ministry, and want to learn from us who served – you know, I’ve been in it a little while now – and journey with them. So whether that’s, you know, for us to be able to mentor and to grow with them, I don’t know. But I know that God is in this and that he will journey with Project Violet, and where the Baptist Union sees it developing and growing.</p> <p><b>Helen Cameron</b> Thank you very much. Thank you for sharing that hope with us. And I just encourage people to go onto the website now and read your report. Thanks very much, Pam.</p> <p><b>Pam Searle</b> Thank you</p>
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### Season 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.

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