

ABSTRACT

IDENTIFYING GENDER WORLDVIEW ROADBLOCKS

TO THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN:

A CASE STUDY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA

by

Stephen Nalde Yarkum

Perhaps the most significant ambiguity, frustration, and vulnerability women face in their work in churches today is their refusal of the ordained ministry. While women have found personal spiritual inspiration in contributing to mission work in Nigeria and a good number of women are today enrolled at seminaries for theological education, women have often found themselves struggling with the issue of gender disparity imposed by church tradition and they have become casualties of church doctrinal struggles.

In the religious climate of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, the impetus toward greater equality of women and men in ordained ministry in many respects is stalled. The concept of the division of labor between sexes and the notion of women's subordination to men affect virtually women in all spheres of endeavor. The findings of this project revealed that women are regarded as acquired property, second-class citizens, and experience lack of economic and leadership opportunity comparable to men.

In this study, I examined the ecclesiological problems surrounding the ordination of women into pastoral ministry and claim that the issue of excluding women from the ordained ministry is a sociological contrivance that oppresses women and blocks their

opportunity from articulating their spiritual gifting and ministry conviction in the Church of Christ in Nigeria.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

The area of concern that arose in my mind was the nature and scope of leadership roles open to women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria to which I belong. The women are active in the church as directors of Sunday school and church elders and are also involved in training pastors in the church's theological schools to serve local congregations, but I do not see them involved in the area of ordained leadership in the church, which is disturbing. Something must have been holding them back:

I am indeed very happy that I am reaching Silver Jubilee year in my theological line. But when I sit back and think about what I have achieved, enjoyed or actually did with the possession of my theological education, I feel very miserable that I could not do much for the Lord's service. The fact that I am a woman has deprived me of opportunities that are given to male pastors. I notice this discrimination even now although I studied the same degree and the same courses as my colleagues.

One example out of many I share here below. I was once given the privileged to preach on a Sunday morning. After the sermon, a student who was undergoing pastoral training was allowed to give the benediction while I was asked to come away from the pulpit. He nicely walked up to the altar to give the benediction. So I felt that the young ones who were doing theology could give benediction and assist in the Lord's Supper but I was not allowed to do so just because I was a woman. (Joy 134)

This assertion was the testimony of a young theologically trained and educated woman named Bhanumathi, a victim of patriarchal gender discrimination; however, the story of Bhanumathi has been the experience of many theologically educated women in the churches today. Susan Penfold shares a similar experience, saying, "Some of the attitudes towards me, as a woman candidating for church ministry,... were both rigid and oppressive, showing little acknowledgement for my humanity" (126).

This study was concerned about the gender issue within the Church of Christ in Nigeria. The issue of gender equality in ministry is like other prejudicial issues affecting

human relationships. Women are not seen as being good as men or as possessing the same abilities as men. Consequently, women's place in ministry is restricted to supportive roles. As a distinctly evangelistic denomination and its developing sense of identity, the mission of the Church of Christ in Nigeria is to develop and proclaim a holistic gospel of Jesus Christ that aims at achieving a dynamic transformation of the body of believers and society (Gutip 170). Women within the local church form part of this identity for which the Church is known and of which it is proud.

Ironically, gender distinction tends to mirror the meaning for corporate existence for the local church. The abilities, roles, and pastoral ministry calling of women in the local church are often not recognized. The worldview that God reserves certain positions of religious authority to men drives the thinking and beliefs of the church.

Consequently, the prospect for the women who sense called to offer to the cause of the gospel, are met with stiff resistance. A line is drawn that divides men and women from sharing equal opportunity in ministry. The line that women within the local church are severely prevented from crossing in their ministry endeavors is the ordination paradigm.

A preventive or restraining stereotypical worldview of womanhood is so entrenched within the local church because the church safeguards the issue beneath the canopy of theological claims. Consequently, women's sphere of roles is restricted to parachurch ministry such as Sunday school teaching, primary and secondary school teaching, teaching in theological schools, singing (choir), and serving food and drinks to men during meetings and conferences. The local church believes that leadership in terms of pastoral care and ordination are basically functions that only men can fulfill.

The inherent traditional worldview that women and men differ critically from one another, and as such should have gender-specific roles of unequal status both at home and within the assembly of believers, dominates the polity of the local church. The local church does not seem to recognize or give consideration to the role of the Holy Spirit's power in calling believers to preaching ministry regardless of gender.

Sadly, this practice poses concern and often denies women the opportunity to articulate their spiritual gifts, and it is most frustrating especially to those who sense God's call into pastoral ministry to serve for the good of the church and to the glory of God. Incongruously, the church is comfortable with the liberation theology of slavery yet still struggles over the liberating power of Christ for women who are suffering the same kind of oppression and marginalization as slaves.

Arguably, this idea might not be too far from the usually implicit cultural biases and prejudices against women prevalent in most traditions and cultural practices of the people where the church is originally rooted. Cultures of almost all traditions tend to endorse the worldview of gender distinctions. I presume the church imbibes this idea from cultural assumptions and interprets the Scripture in the light of these assumptions.

I see the issue of excluding women from the ordained ministry as a sociological contrivance that oppresses women and blocks their opportunity from articulating their spiritual gifts and ministry conviction. In introducing his earthly ministry, Christ made the following announcement:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19, NIV)

Christ personally made this statement as he introduced himself to the people of his hometown in Nazareth. Drawing from Isaiah 61, he categorically spells out the purpose of his ministry and the meaning of the gospel, which includes basically the proclamation of freedom for the captives and the liberation of the oppressed and the downtrodden.

The crucial issue is to what degree this good news that Christ preached has been translated into a reality in the lives of the women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria as they are being sidelined and whose lives are yet to experience the liberation power of the gospel owing to this line of discrimination that the church tradition introduced without recourse to God's purpose of new creation in Christ, which was to establish a community of persons made in God's image. The gospel of Christ is about transformation: being in Christ means being a new person. "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun" (2 Cor. 5:17, NLT).

Context of the Study

Nigeria is a country with diverse religious beliefs, varying ethnic groups, with varying languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. The religions in Nigeria tend to vary regionally. Christianity is concentrated in the southeast portion of the country while Islam tends to dominate in the north of the country. Animist religious practices include traditional religious belief systems such as Igbo mythology in the eastern part of Nigeria. African indigenous religious tradition affirms a Supreme Being who exercises control over minor deities. The religion is also founded on the belief that ancestors maintain active presence in their daily earthly lives (Korieh and Njoku 129).

Christian pluralism in the city of Jos Plateau state, where my research is mainly concentrated, is manifested by the presence of diverse overseas mission related churches

and African indigenous church ministries. The imperative object that needs to be explored is the root of the disparity and prejudice, which has come to be part of the people's culture, for which the nation was not known. A glimpse into the history of Nigeria as a nation helps to throw light on the root of this marginalization or exclusion and discrimination against women, which is currently being experienced within the local church. This root is traced through the following models:

1. Nigeria in precolonial and colonial eras,
2. Sudan United Mission (SUM), and
3. Church of Christ in Nigeria.

Precolonial Era: A Brief History

Archaeological evidence suggests that societies have been living in present-day Nigeria for more than twenty-five hundred years. The borders of modern Nigeria were not created until the British consolidated their colonial power over the area in 1914.

Location and Geography

Nigeria is located in the Gulf of Guinea, just north of the equator in West Africa. It borders Niger (Niger) on the north, Cameroon on the east, the Atlantic Ocean on the south, and Benin Republic on the west. Nigeria covers an area of over 356,669 square miles, over (923,768 square kilometers). Nigeria has three main environmental regions: savanna in the north, tropical forest in the central region, and coastal wetlands in the southeast. Nigeria's current capital city is called Abuja (Nwafor 20).

Demography

Although the population figures of Nigeria have been conflicting due to political maneuver by different interest groups, many commentators on Nigeria's recent population believe that the population of the country stands at over 100 million people. Multiethnic tribal groups speaking different languages inhabit Nigeria (Nwafor 22). However, three major tribal languages are recognized nationwide: the Hausa language in the north, the Yoruba language in the southwest, and the Ibo language in the east.

Nigeria as a country derived its name from the River Niger, which dominates much of the country's landscape. The word "niger" is Latin for black. The River Niger has two inlets that divide the country into three parts. The other branch is called River Benue.

Between the eleventh century and the European colonial conquest, the area in and around Nigeria was home to a number of sophisticated and influential societies. Before the British rule, the multiplicity of the tribes had constituted themselves into powerful kingdoms and empires with complex systems of government, very much independent of contact with Europe. The kingdoms were Borno in the northern part of Nigeria and Ile and Benin in the southwest.

The Empires were Fulani and Yoruba. The Fulani Empire, which existed and ruled most parts of the Savannah in northern Nigeria, was later called Kanem Borno Empire after the conquest and annexation of the former kingdom of Borno. The Ibo in the eastern part of Nigeria lived loosely as city-states without a well-organized kingdom or empire as the case in the north and south. Extensive trading networks were going on among these societies (Crowder 31).

The Benin kingdom, under the leadership of Ewuare, before the arrival of the Europeans, was highly organized with a strong military system, which gave it control of a large area of the coast that extended to Lagos. Michael Crowder describes the situation:

It seems then that Benin City, with its defensive walls, its large army, its hierarchy of chiefs, its elaborate court ceremonies, must have been based on something more than subsistence agriculture. It probably carried on considerable trade with its immediate neighbors, as well as Oyo and the northern states. Possibly, it supplied slaves for the Hausa markets, though we have no definite evidence of this. What is remarkable about Benin, and indeed Oyo is that both of them were purely African states, whose growth was stimulated neither by contact with Islam nor Europe. (56)

This expression shows how powerful different ethnic groups were and how dominant they were in different regions of the country before the arrival of the Europeans.

Women's Role in Nigeria before the British Colonization

In the precolonial days, Nigerian women traditionally played a more significant role in society. Before the coming of the Europeans, Nigerian women's roles in many communities include providing for her family by means of economic support. Their traditional responsibility required their economic independence, and women were not left behind in terms of power sharing.

Because of the significance attached to womanhood in the precolonial Nigerian societies, children in many ethnic and tribal groups used to bear mothers' names as their surnames and not their fathers. The women's roles were not seen as complementary to the husbands' as is the case today, but men and women were viewed as compatible and congruous partners in all spheres of life.

Because of the historical significance of a name, until today some families in northern Nigeria bear women's names as their last name. Such names include, for

example, Dan Amariya, Dan Kande, Yar Kofi, Lar Mukwom, Kyem Bai, Napgang Shetu, and Amina Ramat.

The Nigerian early culture and mores highly respected women and valued them as powerful. As a result many ethnic groups in Nigeria have either songs or proverbs that describe the significance and greatness of a woman. “Mother is gold, Mother is valuable gold that we cannot purchase with money” are popular words in a traditional Yoruba society (Western Nigeria). The Yoruba people also have a proverb that says, “Iya ni wura, baba ni jigi,” meaning Mother is gold, Father is a mirror. Nuances such as these underscore the value of women in precolonial Nigerian societies.

Economics and women. Economically, women in precolonial societies were extensively involved in agricultural production and market trade. Women never stayed back and allowed men to work as the only breadwinners for the families. Women have always had some economic power and influence in Nigerian society through family connections and trade unions. Women in precolonial Nigerian society constituted economic landscape in a number of ways. Their predominance in market transactions, as sellers and buyers, enables the acquisition of control over an important sector of economy.

Politics and women. As regards politics, women in pre-colonial Nigeria were an integral part of the political setup of their communities. For instance, in precolonial Borno (Nigeria), women took active parts in the administration of the state or community. They held very important offices in the royal family as the *Mejira* (Queen mother).

In addition, women also played a vital role in the political history of ancient Zaria, a province in present-day Nigeria. A woman warrior, named Bakwa Tukur, who later received the title Queen Bakwa Tukur, founded the city of Zaria in the sixteen century. After the death of Queen Bakwa, her daughter, Amina Bakwa, inherited her mother's warlike nature, honed her military skills, and became famous for her bravery and military exploits. History says that Amina built a high wall around Zaria in order to protect the city from invasion and extended the territory beyond Bauchi, a province in northern Nigeria. Because of her military ability, the people of Kano and Katsina paid tributes to her (Niane 275).

Amina had only a male child who later inherited the political leadership of the city of Zaria. This development brought about the change in the Zaria emirate from female to male leadership. Her great legacies included the creation of the strong earthen walls around the city, which was the prototype for the fortifications used in all Hausa (Muslim) states in Nigeria today, and her many conquests and subsequent annexation of the territories extended the borders of Zaria, which later grew in importance and became the center of the north-south Sahara trade and the east-west Sudan trade. According to D. T. Niane, Amina was the first in Hausaland to own eunuchs and kola nuts. In her time all the products of the west were introduced into Hausaland (275).

Women healers and priestesses. Healing in practical term restores physical health and brings warmth or relief to a person. In the precolonial era, Nigerian women in many communities played the roles of traditional priests and health providers. Such women were referred to in Yoruba land as *babalawo*. The word "baba" among the Yoruba in western Nigeria and the Hausa in northern Nigeria means "Father." Hence,

women priests and healers were referred to as fathers. S. Nadar and I. Phiri observe: to say that the role of healing had been a preserved of the male among the Yoruba would be an understatement. They further stated that male traditional priests did consult the women priests and healers during periods of crisis, hence the popular saying among the Yoruba, “O, d’owo eyin iya mi,” which means I am leaving everything to you, my mothers (164).

Yoruba women, in particular, feature prominently and make use of health care. The cultural construction of Yoruba patriarchal society stipulates that the women have the responsibility to provide child and family care. At an early age, Yoruba women are socialized into folk medicine and are proficient in the diagnosis and treatment of simple ailments. In sum, women more than men are custodians of health (Nadar and Phiri 161).

European modernization and change in women’s role. However, the situation changed with the arrival of the colonial administration and Christian missionaries. Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Nigerian culture generally was very receptive to women leadership. Sadly, Nigerian society experienced dramatic change in its culture when the colonial administrators and missionaries arrived and introduced Western education. When schools were opened, children who were admitted in the schools were asked to enroll in class, using their fathers’ names instead of their mothers’ (Turaki 7). Additionally, more emphasis on education was placed on the boys than the girls. At this time the idea of male headship became very crucial, a situation that was not so much in practice during the precolonial days.

Under colonialism, the Nigerian social environment was nurtured under religious and cultural intolerance, racial (tribal) inequality, differential and preferential treatment of ethnic groups... Inequality and ethnic or tribal hierarchy led to institutionalization of superior-inferior status and sociopolitical roles to different ethnic groups within the colonial hierarchical structure (Turaki 7).

However, the co-optation of Nigerian men into western gender stereotypes did immeasurable break to modern sociopolitical culture of Nigeria. Male bias was massively built into policies, programs and structures of government.

Commenting on similar development, Maria Rojas says, “With the incorporation of Nigeria into the international economy as a supplier of raw materials, new patriarchal conceptions of appropriate social roles for women dictated by colonial administrators and missionaries changed the women in economic, and therefore social endeavors”

Mohammed I. M. Jumare Yakubu and A. G. Saeed offer the following insight:

Colonialism marked the beginning of the end of most structures of the traditional societies. A system was constructed where women lost a great deal of authority and the opportunity to participate in decision making due to their exclusion from all levels of administrations. (509)

The restrictions that colonial governments placed on women changed the position of women in indigenous societies. In Nigeria, the colonial state passed legislation restricting women, indirectly preventing them from performing their duties towards their families. The extent of the changes inspired many Nigerian women to hold a series of protests throughout the colonial period against particular colonial policies and against colonialism itself. Colonialism disrupted the traditional system of production in the indigenous Nigerian societies, enforced social inequality and introducing oppressive forms of social stratification throughout the state.

Indeed the colonial administrators and Christian missionaries introduce into Nigerian societies the assumption of European patriarchy. Their concept of the role of women in society differs greatly from the Nigerian traditional context. The colonial

administrators' idea was that women belonged in the home, engaged in child rearing and some other exclusive female domestic chores.

Allison M. Moore observes that from 1790 until 1980, Puritan men could be disciplined in church for failing to control the actions of their wives and children, and laws allowing husbands to beat their wives also were part of the United States' legal inheritance from British common law (26).

Joseph N. Weatherby, Emmit B. Evans, Reginald Gooden, and Dianne B. Long make similar assertions:

The pre-colonial world had a variety of cultural arrangements. Living in clans and extended families, women's lives had been shaped by centuries of local customs.... There is no doubt that they shared power and responsibilities in order to survive. Certainly their human experiences are reflected in every historical and geographic context. Western colonization, however, pushed aside the traditional patterns and introduced new concepts and requirements for private and public gender. They placed primary emphasis upon women's reproductive function and role of rearing and nurturing children. Women's lives were considered to be limited to this private or internal sphere of home and children, while men were considered to operate in the public or external sphere, managing matters outside the home.... Spanish and Portuguese colonizing efforts brought Catholicism and macho attitudes that diminished the roles of indigenous women. (76)

Many commentators on the Nigerian social environment blame Western colonizers for introducing new concepts for private and public gender into Nigerian societies that apparently reformed the local custom of gender equality. As Rojas asserts, "The colonizers expected African societies to consider women as subordinate to men because Europeans considered women subordinate to men. They thought if a woman obtained financial independence she might not give her husband and his family their entitled respect" (2). This idea is erroneous as financial independence may not necessarily be a reason for a woman to disrespect her husband.

Women in Nigeria, therefore, were disadvantaged badly by the imposition of colonial rule and its code of law. Education was generally meant to emancipate people from ignorance and oppression. Ironically, this goal was not the case in Nigeria as colonial education emphasized preparing women for domestic sphere rather than public leadership.

Sudan United Mission (SUM). The Sudan United Mission (SUM) activities in northern Nigeria during the colonial era emerged as a result of the American revival of 1858, which sparked similar revivals in the British Isles (Shagaya 453). John N. Shagaya states further, “Evangelism can be described as a tendency, which transcended denominational boundaries and lent itself to ecumenical activities” (453).

Two great missionary organizations that operated basically in the northern part of Nigeria in the nineteenth century were Sudan United Mission and Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). These missionary organizations were both influenced and supported by the free Churches of England, America, and Canada.

The history of the Church of Christ in Nigeria says that, a German man named Dr. Karl Kumm from Osteride, Germany, and his wife Lucy Kumm founded the organization known as Sudan United Mission in 1902. The organization was first called Sudan Pioneer Mission. The name was later changed in 1904. The change was in line with the concept of greater Sudan (Shagaya 453).

The Sudan to which the pioneers referred was not only the territory of the present Republic of Sudan but it was a reference to all the territory across the continent south of the Sahara. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a lot of the colonial boundaries were in a state of flux, and greater Sudan encompassed a very vast area of Africa,

extending from the coast of Nigeria to Cameroon, Benin Republic in the west, Chad, the Anglo-Egyptian area, and Sudan farther east. The main aim of the mission was to halt the advance of Islam across this vast territory of Africa. A growing feeling in missionary circles at the time was that time was running out if they wished to check further southern expansion of Islam, hence, a great sense of urgency to work among the traditional religionists who had not yet been converted to serve as a barrier to the expansion of Islam (Shagaya 454).

Karl and Lucy Kumm sensed this call to go to Africa to preach the gospel. Their initial plan was to focus on the Muslim communities because of lack of much missionary activity within the typical Muslim communities in the Sudan. Having raised financial support for the mission, the Kumms also received the support of three other missionaries to go with them to Africa. Dr. Ambrose, Mr. John Bateman and Lowry Maxwell offered to be on the team (Shagaya 455-56).

As the missionaries arrived in Nigeria in 1904, Kumm headed to the office of the British Governor General (Lord Lugard) in Lokoja, Nigeria, to inform him about their mission in northern Nigeria, then known as the Sudan interior. The Governor General suggested that the missionaries should not go into the interior Muslim community but should move to Wase, a town in the southern Plateau State of Nigeria, to work with the hill tribes around the town of Wase (Shagaya 456).

The mission work in Wase was unsuccessful. The party decided to move to Langtang, a town where I was born and raised. The work continued in Langtang, though slow, with a good record of new converts. Shagaya asserts that the reason for the slowness of the work in Langtang was not as a result of threat as it was in Wase, but the

indigenous people could not discern the difference between the missionaries and the British colonial political officers who came to collect taxes from the people with military escort. The issue of slavery was also part of the problem because people were scared whenever they noticed the presence of the white men (458).

The missionaries, however, worked hard to break these barriers, hostilities, and lack of confidence between them and the indigenous people by being involved in their culture and community activities and by offering gifts to differentiate them from the slave raiders and tax collectors.

Karl and Lucy Kumm's team had their first church plant in Langtang in 1907, and subsequently the gospel spread to other areas within the present-day Plateau state, Nigeria, and beyond. The Gindiri Bible College where I presently teach was also opened in 1933 for the purpose of training pastors to advance the preaching of the gospel. The SUM also developed other branches with missionaries from South Africa, the United States, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, France, and Cameroon.

Church of Christ in Nigeria

The Church of Christ in Nigeria emerged as a result of the missionary activities of SUM pioneered by the Kumms. The Church is one of the branches of the Sudan United Mission and is one of the fastest growing churches in Nigeria today. It has branches in all six geopolitical areas in Nigeria and also some neighboring African countries.¹

¹ Church of Christ in Nigeria, Dutch Reformed Church (DRC).
 Nongo U Kristu Ken Sudan hen Tiv (NKST), Danish Lutheran (DL)
 Ekklesiyar Yan'Uwa a Nigeria (EYN), Church of the Brethren Mission (CBM)
 Nigeria Reformed Church (NRC)
 Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN)
 Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN)
 Evangelical Church of Christ in Nigeria (ECCN)
 Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN)

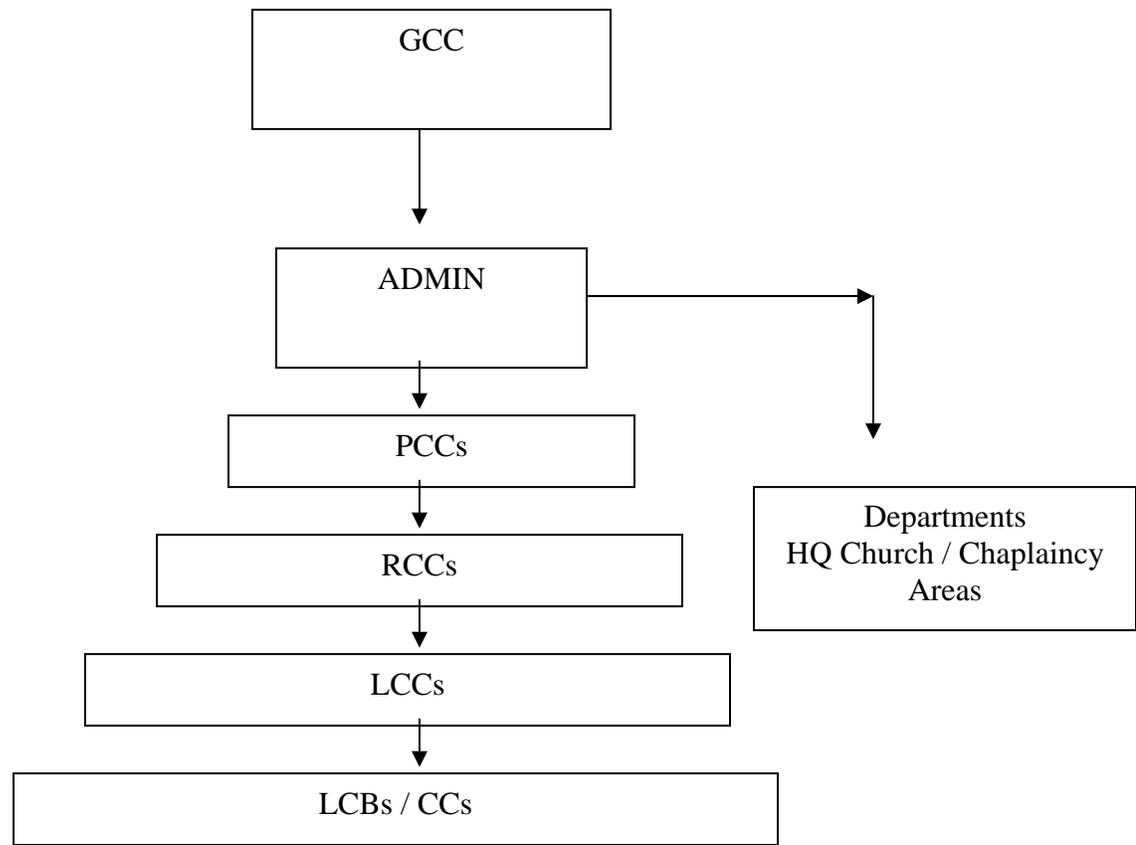
The church was registered in 1959 under the Lands Perpetual Succession act in Nigeria as the Plateau and Bauchi Church of Christ in the Sudan. Shortly after the registration of the church, the missionaries handed over the leadership of the church to indigenous people. As a result, the role of the mission was changed from being the primary owner to that of partner, giving moral, financial, and human resources support. The church's mission emphasis today is to preach a wholistic/holistic gospel.

Growth and Expansion

With the first local church planted in Langtang, many more local congregations have sprung up into local church councils (LCCs), Regional Church Councils (RCCs), and Provincial Church Councils (PCCs). The administrative structure has several offices, including that of the president, general secretary, and departments such as personnel, health and social services, missions, evangelism and church growth, finance, education, internal audit, information and communication technology, and chaplaincy areas.

Figure 1.1 shows the administrative structures and levels of authority of the Church of Christ in Nigeria. The Provincial Church Council meets regularly with the president to make decisions on some slight administrative issues concerning the church while major issues are referred to the General Church Council (GCC) for final decision. The General Church Council meets twice a year. It can meet more than twice a year when the need arises or for any emergency that may call for an extraordinary session. The Regional Church Council forms the main body of the General Church Council.

The Local Church Councils meet at the regional council levels. Similarly, the local church board or church committee also meets at the local church council levels.



KEY

1. GCC-----General Church Council
2. ADMIN-----Administration
3. PCC-----Provincial Church Council
4. RCC-----Regional Church Council
5. LCC-----Local Church Council
6. LCB/CC-----Local church board/congregational committee

Figure 1.1. Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) structure, showing levels of authority.

Women's Fellowship

Women's fellowship, otherwise called *Zumuntar Matan Ekklesiya*, is an arm of the church's evangelistic mission originally set up to carry out evangelism primarily among the women. This evangelistic arm of the church was inaugurated in 1942 at the fellowship gathering of all the branches of the Sudan United Mission, which took place in Gindiri, then headquarters of the Sudan United Mission in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Shortly after the inauguration of the leaders of the women's fellowship, the branches spread like a wildfire forming the fellowship in all districts, local church **councils, and every unit of the church where women were found.**

By mid-fifties the fellowship has grown so large that the women wanted a larger conference for all members, and so in 1955, about five hundred women attended a gathering at Gindiri.... And another was planned later, when over one thousand women attended a four-day conference, which resulted in much blessing (Nanwul Gutip, 256).

Though the women fellowship was originally aimed at reaching the women with the gospel in Nigeria, its evangelistic effort presently has gone beyond just reaching the women but also reaching Muslim and all non-Christian communities.

Acknowledging the evangelistic efforts of the women, Nanwul Gutip further explains that the women's fellowship has done a great deal of work in the Churches and has supported in many ways. In recent years it has been most noticeable the way that their choir has developed. The women have proved to be keen on local melodies and the use of traditional and modern musical instruments. They continue in outreach activities and there are special evangelistic efforts by the whole Region, the various districts and

the local churches. It would be difficult to estimate the blessing that has come over the years through the women's fellowship. There has been enormous progress from the days when few women could read or take any responsibility. Many thousands have been encouraged in their Christian lives and sphere of service. With more and more educated women in occupations there will inevitably be changes in the pattern of the work. (256).

This record attests that the power of God is also upon women, urging them to preach the gospel. However, in spite of these evidences, the church has continued to close the door to women's ordination. Perhaps, the church is still being immersed by the colonial cultural ideology of gender and often reads the Scriptures and appropriate biblical texts to suit the cultural expectations inherited from colonialism.

Nigerian Constitution and Women's Rights

One of the legacies of the British colonial rule in Nigeria is the Constitution. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land; its provisions have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Constitution was first written in 1945 to mark the real turning point in Nigeria's progress towards independence.

The Constitution has undergone several reviews since it was written in 1945. The last review was done in 1999, which took into consideration the issues affecting the generality of the lives of Nigerians such as religion, gender, education, economy, and the rights of women, among other things.

The rights of women and gender equality in Nigeria are stated clear in the nation's Constitution reviewed in 1999. The respect for right is justice for humanity. In other

words, disrespect for right is a denial of the freedom and dignity of a person or persons, thus the end result is resentment.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, chapter four, section forty-two, clearly guarantees every Nigerian the following fundamental rights: the right to personal liberty, the right to dignity of human person, and the right to freedom from discrimination. Furthermore, chapter two section fifteen, of the Constitution states that “discrimination on the grounds of sex shall be prohibited.” Also, section seventeen upholds that “the social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. The sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and enhanced.”

The rights of women instituted in the Nigerian Constitution are consistent with the ideals of humanism and the justice of God. Ironically, in a country such as Nigeria, where the rights of women are clearly stipulated in the Constitution, women within the body of Christ are still suffering the issue of gender discrimination.

Global Context

The issue of women’s discrimination or inequality is not peculiar to the Nigerian situation. Women face this situation globally not only in the Christian ministry sphere, but politically, economically, socially, and educationally.

On the global scale, as the United Nations facts and statistics show, women make up one-half of the world’s population, do three-fourths of the world’s work, and receive just one-tenth of the world’s salary (Uchem 12). Following a similar trend of thought, Tiago V. de V. Cavalcanti and Jose A. Tavares give an index of gender inequality basically in four areas: economic and political participation and access to health and educational inputs. They asserted that South Africa has the highest position among the

African countries in terms of gender discrimination. The United States ranks twenty-third among the Western countries, and the Philippines tend to be a little better country among the Asian countries.

Commenting further on the vulnerability of women, Cavalcanti and Tavares assert that:

In the labour market, women receive lower pay than men when performing the same tasks offering the same skills, experience, and educational backgrounds. This so-called gender wage-gap discourages female labour force participation, with direct negative effect on output. The lower rate of participation of females is a universal empirical phenomenon.

Women have continued to experience and suffer the problem of gender differences in many parts of the world.

Similarly, the “Report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace, and Security” dated October 2002 highlights findings on the vulnerability of women:

1. That women do not enjoy equal status with men in any society.
2. Women and children are disproportionately targeted in contemporary armed conflicts and constitute the majority of all victims. Women and children also constitute the majority of the world’s refugees and internally displaced persons.
3. During conflicts women and girls are vulnerable to all forms of violence, sexual violence, rape, torture, sexual slavery, trafficking, and prostitution.
4. The use of sexual violence as strategic and tactical weapon of war places women at increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS,
5. Lack of land and property rights and lack of access to or control over resources threaten women’s livelihood,
6. Armed conflict also changes social structures and relationships. Women face marginalization owing to their low status, and,
7. Women encounter discrimination and human rights abuses, exploitation including domestic violence, and are disadvantages from laws, policies, and programming that do not take their concerns into consideration (12).

The reports of the secretary general confirm the reality of discrimination against women. Furthermore, in Europe, Romani women face severe burdens and obstacles in addition to the discrimination and the dearth of opportunities with which all Roma are confronted, the Romani women grapple with subjection to patriarchal norms, rules within Romani society, and particularly the ill treatment of Romani women by different groups in society.

Romani women bear a double burden, of both racial and gender discrimination. They are discriminated as “Gypsies” by the majority society, which views them as members of a marginalized and often despised group. However, at home, Romani women are often considered inferior on the basis of their gender in a community that is led almost exclusively by men. (17)

The experience of the Romani women in Europe shows how widespread the issue of gender disparity is among women.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the roadblocks to the ordination of women (from the perspective of male leaders) of the Church of Christ in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

Research Question 1

In what ways are the leadership’s values, attitudes, and beliefs against the ordination of women shaped by the indigenous culture and worldview of the people?

Research Question 2

In what ways does biblical understanding shape the leadership’s attitude against the ordination of women?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, I need to define some principal terms I consider important in this project to help readers understand my perspective on this issue.

Church

The word *church* has its root from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means a general gathering of people in some kind of assembly. The New Testament understands the word *Church* to refer to the visible expression of the gathered followers of Jesus Christ who have been grafted into a community created by God, under the banner of Jesus Christ, embodying in an anticipatory way the life and values of the new creation.

The word *church* is very significant in this research because it is the focal point of the study. Additionally, I need to examine its implication to the study. The church is the focal point of the Christian faith (Gutip 1). Today, the church could be rightly viewed as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, the temple of God, a household, a family, and a new creation, a new Israel. These images typically articulate what the church is and invite believers to see themselves in the light of these images to become more like Jesus. Before Christ's departure to heaven, he commanded the disciples:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. (Matt. 28:18-20)

The command Christ gave was to the church, the body of believers to preach the gospel to the world. This command is binding on all believers irrespective of gender.

Colonialism

The word colonialism is defined by C. L. Barnhart as the policy of a nation seeking to extend or retain its authority over other peoples or territories (53). Weatherby, Evans, Gooden, and Long also define the term colonialism as the relationship between groups of people in one country who are subject to the authority of the people in other country (17).

Colonialism describes technically the relationship between the dominant and the dependent nation states. Colonialism was originally an honor meant to bring the weaker states into mainstreaming economically, politically, socially, educationally, and religiously. Westerners were certain that they were destined by history to act as the trustees for the less fortunate colonial world. President William McKinley thereby justified the annexation of the Philippines on the grounds that the United States would bring Christianity to the islands. For many Westerners, the expression “white man’s burden” was both a challenge and an honor (Weatherby, Evans, Gooden, and Long 18). Ironically, colonialism today is not seen as an act of honor but a weapon for economic exploitation and political domination.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming, according to Weatherby, Evans, Gooden, and Long, means bringing women into the regular economic, political, and social life enjoyed by men (90). The concept actually stresses strong commitment to equal opportunities for men and women. It identifies the divide between sexes and emphasizes that man and woman are both created in the image of God and are made equal to serve God in that capacity.

Ordination

The word comes from Latin *ordinare*, meaning, “to set in order” or “to organize.” In later Latin, the word comes to mean “to appoint to office” (Elwell 869). Traditionally, ordination confers power and authority on a person to act and be established in the hierarchy of orders.

Spiritually, the outward calling of a person to ordained ministry, should correspond to and be consequent on the inward calling of the Holy Spirit. This assertion means that ordination is not just the mundane work carried by human beings but a fulfillment of God’s divine plan in a person’s life. This sphere is further expanded in Chapter 2.

Worldview as a term in English is coined from the German word *Weltanschauung*. *Welt*, is the German word for “world” and *Anschauung* is the German for “view” or “outlook,” a concept fundamental to German philosophy. The term technically refers to the framework of ideas, a wide world perception and belief systems through which an individual interprets the world around him or her and interacts with it. It is a set or cluster of beliefs and practices a person holds about the most important things of life such as values, attitude, knowledge, history, God, and humanity (Samples 19-21; Eckman 13).

Worldview can be compared to a pair of glasses. The way a person makes sense of the world is contingent upon that person’s vision. What a person considers to be a reality is shaped by the glasses the person wears. Kenneth R. Samples says that these assertions may be right or wrong or a combination of both depending on the visual clarity

or distortion given by the glasses (20). Worldview is not only personal, it is also social. Everyone and every community has a worldview because everyone or every community thinks about the big question of life to some degree. This thought has an increasing effect in developing the individual's broad outlook on life.

Methodology

This research project was an exploratory study that made use of a research questionnaire and telephone interviews. It employed a qualitative research method as discussed by William Wiersma and Stephen G. Jurs (155-222), utilizing descriptive and narrative methods. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with twenty participants representing a fair sample of key church leadership within the church denomination.

The goal of the project was to identify the worldview roadblocks to the ordination of women into pastoral ministry in the Church of Christ in Nigeria. Each person was interviewed by telephone conversation. The interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

As earlier stated, my research procedures employed a qualitative and semi-structured interview method. Semi-structured telephone interviews included a researcher-designed protocol. The dissertation project methodology encompassed two main areas: library and field research.

During library research, I perused relevant materials on the topic of identifying barriers to the ordination of women. The material ranged from books and articles in academic journals to some online scholarly articles written by both men and women

relevant to my project topic. The qualitative procedures attached high importance to the views of the participants.

The field research was conducted in Plateau state, Nigeria. I personally interviewed some key stakeholders and some prominent male members within the church denomination through telephone conversation to find out their worldviews towards the existing trend of denying ordination to women.

Pretest

On 7 May 2008, I conducted a seminar with a focus group at the college of theology in Gindiri Plateau state, Nigeria. The purpose of the pretest was to check whether the issue is worthy of a research topic. The focus group consisted of men and women from different congregations who are trained theologians and are currently involved in ministry within the local church as teachers in secondary school, Bible college, elders in the churches, and office administrators. I invited colleagues and some church members and provided them with questions on the issue of identifying roadblocks to the ordination of women. The group brainstormed together and provided a broad picture of women's experiences and the agony of discrimination and concluded that that the topic was a needed field of study.

Instrumentation

The research questions designed were used during the telephone interviews. Telephone interviews share many of the advantages of face-to-face interviewing such as high response rate, correction of obvious misunderstandings, and possible use of probes (Robson 282). The research was focused on two groups of people, namely, some key church male leaders and men.

I provided a notebook, which I used to write down the discussions on phone. Sequentially, question was first written down, and marked as question (1) or (2), as the case may be. Then the response to the question was written beneath the marked question. In addition, any question arising from the response of the participant that required further explanation was noted along with and any statements made by the respondent that appeared unclear. I asked the respondents to repeat themselves (Robson 270).

Accordingly, with the help of a research assistant, I made interactions with key leaders and some influential church members to gather their agreement and consensus. The research assistant helped in collecting the telephone numbers of some of the key leaders I was unable to meet personally and passed the telephone numbers on to me. The telephone numbers of the participants were collected only when they indicated interest to participate in the interview. When the person was open to the research, the research assistant proceeded to collect the person's telephone numbers but when a person objected or was not willing to be part of the research interview, the person was ignored. The role of the research assistant was very important because of the fluctuation of telephone network problem Nigeria sometimes experiences. In a case where I had difficulty contacting a participant from the United States due to the person's location in Nigeria or network failure, a research assistant did the interview on my behalf with the same set of questions, and the responses were later transmitted to me.

I focused on the church leaders because they are the policy makers, and I wanted to find out what shaped the leaders' understanding of the current belief on the leadership of women in ministry.

The same questionnaire was used for all the participants because I wanted to understand groups' worldviews on the issue of ordination, whether their understanding was biblically or culturally guided or both.

Participants

The participants focused in this research study were those selected key leaders in the church and also selected key church members. Because of the significance of the research topic of this study, I focused on some stakeholders in the church who I believe have good experience as policy makers to respond pragmatically and rationally on the research topic. The age of the participants was not an issue in this study as most church leaders in my denomination range in age from 40 years and up.

The majorities of the church leaders are ordained ministers and are either pastoring churches or are in office full-time. Some of the other key lay church member participants are not as educated but are very active and committed Christians.

Data Collection

The means of collection of the data was through telephone interview discussions. I noted down the responses of the participants. I also took into account every point the participants made. With the help of a research assistant, I collected information from some of the participants that I could not personally reach. Because of fluctuation in telephone network and difficulty in setting up convenient interview time with the participants, the whole interview process took a period of four weeks.

Delimitation

This research did not intend to cover all aspects of gender issues or women's issues experienced within the local church. I restricted the research to the aspect of

ordination of women because ordination of women seems to be one of the strong issues that women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria are highly discriminated against. Women have already been in ministry, serving in different capacities as seen in the history of the church. Many of them are trained theologians and are teaching or training pastors and involved in leaderships position as elders and doing evangelistic work in different aspects of the church's life but the door to ordination is still closed to them. This study, therefore, sought to identify the factors or the dynamics behind this roadblock.

Variables

The variables in this research study were multidimensional. First was the issue of gender and ordination of women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria. Intervening variables that may have affected the results of the study involve primary church demographics such as the leaders as policy makers and the views of men on the issue. These findings would impact the results of the research.

The study also sought to discover the willingness and honesty of the pastors/leaders to respond concerning the personal ability of women in Church leadership.

Significance of the Study

Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt. 9:37). What led Christ to make this statement could be the vulnerability of the people he saw. They were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Christ then urged the disciples to ask the Lord for more workers in the field.

However, contemporary church tradition seems to work against this injunction as it continues to cut off a great section of Christ's workers by denying women the opportunity to use the gifts they possess and to serve in whatever way God calls them to the ministry. The traditional view that women and men differ fundamentally from each other and so should have radically different gender-specific roles of unequal status or opportunity in the church needs to be changed with the concept of individual gifts, conviction, and ministry calling that affirms the fundamental equality of women and men in the body of Christ as a new community.

Tradition by itself is not evil. The undisputable fact is that God's grace has been experienced through the church's tradition in various ways through history, such as the teaching about the nature of God, Christology, humanity, and the way of salvation. However, tradition should not be placed above the Bible or be regarded as entirely accurate:

Tradition should always be examined with suspicion for evidence of its tendency to take sinful patterns of human behavior and enshrine them as normative. Jesus spoke of this tendency when he upbraided the Pharisees, saying, "You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men. (Merrill 13)

The danger comes when Christians recognize tradition much and above the Scripture. Then the gospel message will make no impact in the lives of the people. In other words much emphasis on tradition will affect the effectiveness of the Scriptures as a gospel of liberation.

Any specific response to human spiritual need is a ministry response. Examples of Christ meeting human needs during his lifetime which includes eating with tax collectors (Mark 2:13-17), healing the sick and meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the

needy (Luke 17:11), and Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman, which led to her repentance and the repentance of many other people in her town (John 4:7).

Inculturation and Its Implication to Nigerian Women

The ministry intervention intends to provide a program that would be helpful to members of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, on whom my research is focused, to be engaged in a learning development that would lead them to the basic understanding and believers' identity in Christ and to transform the leaders' negative attitude toward the ordination of women.

As asserted earlier, the root of much of the problems underscore women's subordination to men within the church and consequently leads to women's denial of equal opportunity within the traditional church structure is assumed emanates largely from an influential culture presumably directly borrowed from the colonial worldview and missionary enterprise. My intervention in identifying these roadblocks was basically focused on the Nigerian contemporary cultural perspective of a woman and how the leadership of the Church of Christ in Nigeria understands the biblical teaching and the meaning of Christ's good news, given the total mind-set of Jesus' inclusive attitude in regard to women, Jesus' unconventional behavior of eating with tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2:13) and Christ's purpose of the ministry and the meaning of the gospel, which underscores freedom and liberation for all (Luke 4:18-19).

Inculturation of the gospel in Nigerian culture is very important to teach people the meaning and purpose of Christ's coming into the world. Similarly, Scott A. Moreau and others share the following view on the issue of inculturation of the gospel:

Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience

not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about “a new creation.” (475)

Inculturation, therefore, is the process of bringing into harmony a particular cultural expression with the good news of Jesus. The inculturation of the gospel actually looks to the culture of the insiders and integrates the gospel at the root of the people’s culture, values, and ideals.

I believe evangelization would lose much of its impact and effectiveness if it fails to take into consideration the culture of the people within the milieu in which it operates. Therefore, to overcome the gender roadblock to the ordination of women into ministry, the concept of inculturation of the gospel must be thoroughly taught and emphasized. The process was developed using the following steps.

Dialogue

In this dialogue, the concept of inculturation of the gospel was emphasized with a focus on a reassessment of the people’s culture prior to the precolonial history of Nigeria. My belief is that when the gospel is contextualized with regard to Nigeria’s precolonial history, a time when women shared power with men and their abilities and leadership potential were highly regarded, respected, and acknowledged by men, the good news message would be appreciated as a gospel of liberation and equal opportunity for both men and women. The gospel is better understood and appreciated when its images are presented using practical examples within people’s cultural context rather than seeing or preaching the gospel to people in a foreign cultural context.

Inculturation and Justice

I mean filtering the culture to see which aspect or aspects appear to be in harmony with the teaching of the gospel and which are not. Those in harmony would be preserved and those contrary to the good news of Christ would be discarded. Therefore, my intervention in emphasizing the idea of inculturation did not intend to encompass all or bring into harmony all Nigerian cultural expressions, as not all Nigerian cultural practices are congruent to the gospel ideals. For example, the aspect of excluding women from ordained ministry on the basis of the cultural concept of gender inferiority touches on the very identity of believers and shows no justice for women consequently, it should not be preserved.

One of the core values of the church of Christ in Nigeria is to preach a wholistic gospel. Interestingly, a wholistic gospel paradigm carries on its shoulders both sexes. It recognizes the role, place, and significance of every member within the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5). The word *wholistic* or holistic mission or gospel, as the case may be, intends to correct a traditional one-sided understanding of mission, which majors on males as the only group of people God calls into ministry. It touches also on the aspects of economic and political emancipation of the members of the body of Christ. My intervention in this sphere would help the church understand the missing link in its theology of wholistic mission if women are excluded from holding certain positions of power in the church.

Theological Framework

Addressing the Galatians, Paul said, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male

or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:27-28). Paul asserts that by faith in Christ believers have become one in the family of God. Believers’ new life in Christ means equality not in terms of physical and economic strength, necessarily, but in terms of spiritual strength, calling, ability, and service.

Believers have a universal priesthood by their faith in Christ, male as well as female. Peter refers to believers generally as a “holy” or “royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). “Women, who, like men, are incorporated by baptism into the body of Christ and so made to be priests ... are to this extent qualified to become priests in the individualized meaning of the term” (Jewett 23). The church’s goal should reflect this new life in Christ by focusing on two dominant paradigms such as liberation and empowerment of women through ordained ministry.

The Bible, on the whole, offers believers some perspectives that should help guide believers’ thinking on the relationships between men and women in regard to the challenges church ministries face today. Jesus’ words echo the sentiment that believers are not to do the ministry in isolation from one another. Jesus categorically prayed that Christians should be one, just as he and the Father are one, so that the world might believe that Christ was indeed sent by God (John 17:21).

To inject gender sentiment in ministry, therefore, would amount to creating a stormy environment within Christian ministry and would, in essence, entail lack of recognition of spiritual gifts among women and in so doing women’s faith in Christ may be weakened as their sphere of ministry is conceived to be that of complementary and supportive roles only. God does not see women as an inferior class or their roles as supportive only. God works with women in every dispensation as important, capable, and

valuable instruments. The striking lifestyle of many women in the Bible shapes part of the Old Testament and New Testament stories, which believers meditate on today. For example, the prophetic ministry was one of the highest functions in the Old Testament. It was the duty of the prophets to act as the correctors to the assemblies of the people of God and to stand in judgment against them in their temple practices in times of moral decadence (Amos 5:21; Isa. 1:10). Prophets had the power to denounce the people's wrongdoings and to pronounce the termination of kings (e.g., David and Saul). Fascinatingly, the Bible refers to several prophetesses and portrays them as exercising the same kind of authority within the religious sphere as their male counterparts (Huldah, Miriam, Deborah; 2 Kings 22:11).

The irony today is that women are being judged based on physical strength and social and material influence. Christ did not judge women based on any of these influences. The women like men were measured on personal faith in God. The story of a widow in Mark 12:41 is a classical example. The woman was a widow who demonstrated great faith and had her own sort of apostolic power. In today's perspective, being a widow speaks of a time of loss and loneliness, but her experience might be quite different from the present-day perspective. It may be a complete time of dependence upon others for livelihood.

In the verse just foregoing the widow's story, Jesus had denounced the attitudes of the typical religious leaders of the day, listing their sins as always desiring hero worship, looking for places of prominence, devouring widows' houses, and, for the sake of appearance, saying long prayers (Mark 12:40). As the Bible says, Jesus and the disciples watched a good number of well-to-do individuals marching forward and dropping their

impressive sums in the temple's offering box, from the abundance of their possessions. The poor widow quietly came and put in two small coins. Jesus commended the widow for demonstrating an act of faith. Commenting on the act of the widow, Dr. J. Ellsworth Kalas states, "She is the kind of person on whom our Lord intended to build the kingdom of heaven" (48).

Furthermore, within biblically defined spheres of authority such as creation, family, state, crisis, and church, women are seen navigating alongside men. This development means that God divinely appointed women to lead together with men.

In creation, God chose women as co-regents with men over nature (Gen. 1:26-28; Heb. 2:6-8). In Hebrews, the Greek word *anthropos* is used to mean humanbeing, including both genders. Paul did not use the word *ager* meaning man as male. In Genesis 1 the use of the plural pronoun, "Let them rule" (vs. 26).

In the state, God gives authority to female magistrates over the male citizens. The Bible has records of the Queens of the nations serving authoritatively over the men (e.g., Sheba; 1 Kings 10:1; Esth. 1:9). Furthermore, the Bible commands every believer including man and woman to submit to every authority God instituted among his people. This command includes both male and female authority.

The Bible offers several instances where women worked and took leadership position over men, giving direction on how things should be done in time of crisis. Abigail commanded her servants to "Go on ahead." (1 Sam. 25:18-19). Additionally, a well-to-do woman told her servant to "Lead on" (2 Kings 4:8, 24).

Furthermore, Sheerah was the overseer of a huge construction project, lower and upper Beth-horon (1 Chron. 7:24). In the Church, God sends both men and women to

minister to his people. “I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam” (Mic. 6:4).

Therefore, among his people, including the church, God also gives women spiritual authority over men.

Overview

The literature review of Chapter 2 looks into the issue of women’s ordination to Christian ministry and the changing role of women in Nigerian society and the church. Focus for the study was also drawn from reflections on women leadership models in the Old and New Testaments, the role of the Holy Spirit in impacting believers for ministry, the ordination of women in church history, and the concept of the church as a new community of believers. Other sources looked into in Chapter 1 were those that have to deal with solutions to the problem such as the inculturation of the gospel.

Chapter 3 sets the stage for major research in this study and tells how this qualitative study was organized and presented by laying out structured interviews. The chapter also explains how the interview answers were collected and interpreted.

Chapter 4 reports the significant findings and impact.

Chapter 5 provides a summary and interpretation of the findings with conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

The review of the literature takes into consideration previous documented works relating to the research topic with special focus on issues of women's leadership in the Scripture and the ordination of women into ministry. Other sources on which the review focuses were those that have to do with some key significant passages being used by those who oppose the idea of women's leadership and ordination into ministry.

The views of those who agree and those who do not agree with my positions on the leadership and ordination of women were critically examined. As a way of integrating the body of literature and to narrow the focus and selection, I have chosen key passages that are commonly used to debate women's leadership in the church.

Argument against Women's Leadership in the Church

Many scholars support the arguments that women should not be admitted to the order of ministry or to leadership in the church due to their nature and what the Bible says or teaches about women. Linda L. Belleville, Craig L. Blomberg, Craig S. Keener, and Thomas R. Schreiner maintain that the leadership of men over women is indicated by the fact that when the disobedience occurred in the Garden of Eden, Adam was rebuked before Eve (Gen. 3:12). They assert that if God were truly egalitarian, Eve would have been reprimanded first because she was the one who first ate the fruit. God spoke to Adam first because Adam bore primary responsibility for what happened in the garden. This recognition, therefore, signifies a man's leadership over a woman.

Belleville, Blomberg, Keener, and Schreiner argue that male leadership is not just the result of the Fall, but it is God's divine plan for man and woman since before the Fall.

God initiated roles distinction between Adam and Eve: (1) that Eve was created to be a helper, (2) that God created Adam first before he created Eve, (3) that the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was given to Adam. (4) that Adam exercised his leadership by naming the creature including Eve, and (5) that Eve was tempted and not Adam (288- 98).

Similarly, Wayne Grudem and John Piper assert that God has ordained only men to have the responsibility to lead, while women have a complementary and supportive role and even when a woman has to pray and prophesy in the church, she must be under the authority of male leadership (138). Many opponents of women's leadership assert that when Aaron was appointed by God to serve as Israel's priest, Aaron's sons were appointed to serve with him (Exod. 29:4-9). Similarly, in Numbers 1: 47-58, when the tribe of Levi was appointed to replace the firstborn in each family to assist with tabernacle and temple responsibilities, only the males were counted (Num. 3:14). Therefore, if women were not priests or assistants in the Old Testament, they should not be ministers today (Brown 77-84).

Also commenting on 1 Timothy 2, Judy L. Brown states that the restriction on women's didactic ministry stems from God's creation mandate and not from cultural situation at Ephesus (311).

Haye Van Der Meer advances a similar argument that if women were allowed or approved by God to be priests or to administer a leadership office in the church, then apparently Mary the mother of Jesus would have had to hold a priestly office in the church in her days. God did not so will. Not even baptism was entrusted to her, for in that paradigm, she would have baptized Christ (10). Matthieu Wagemaker, on the other hand,

argues that women should be admitted to ordained ministry in the spirit of *koinonia*. The concept of *koinonia* implies no separation between Jesus Christ and the Church as it is his body (59-63).

In the light of these arguments, the crucial passages and stories in the Scriptures to which traditionalists frequently refer in defense of their positions against the leadership of women in the church, would be examined. Furthermore, for the purpose of precision, the Old Testament, especially the book of Genesis, provides a better milieu or environment for focus.

Genesis 1:26: Created in God's Image

The traditional view on gender discrimination points particularly to the stories of Genesis 1, 2 and 3, which converse about Eve being made out of the rib of Adam and the Fall, which is arguably attributed to Eve. These developments, according to the traditionalists, call for women's second place or inferiority status in all spheres of women's lives.

In her own view, Mary J. Evans observes that the undisputed fact that the traditionalists' view of a woman seems to ignore is that the redemptive work of Christ restores humanity to the complete existence in the image of God, which is described in Genesis chapter one: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule....' [I]n the image of God He created him; male and female he created them" (vss. 26-27, NASB). The creation of humankind as male and female is an integral part of God's decision to make humans. The idea of humanity finds its full meaning not in the male alone, but in man and woman (12).

In a similar vein, Gilbert Bilezikian argues that the designation “man” as it appears in Genesis 1:26 is a generic term for human beings that encompasses both male and female. This argument according to Bilezikian is made apparent in Genesis 5:2, which says, “He blessed them and named them man in the day when they were created.” Bilezikian believes that both man and woman are God’s imagebearers, therefore, finding no basis in Genesis 1 to restrict or to confine the image of God to males alone (22).

Apparently, the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God fundamentally means that human, both male and female, is God’s representative on earth and both should rule over all the earth (Wenham, Carson, France, and Motyer 61).

Genesis 1:27-28: Authority to Co-Rule

So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. (RSV)

God’s design as seen in (vs. 26) pragmatically moves to action in (vss. 27-28). The design uses the term “man” (singular) who was made in God’s image. However, God’s divine decree has fulfillment not only in male as one person, but two persons (man and woman). Man inevitably came as male and female. The divine mandate for both of them before the Fall was to have dominion over the earth. They were authorized to operate as God’s commissioned agents by virtue of the fact that they both bear God’s image. “Since both man and woman bear the image of God, they are both assigned the task of ruling the earth, without any reference to differentiation on the basis of sex” (Bilezikian 24).

Sharing the same view about the image of God, Walter Brueggemann believes that:

The image of God in the human person is a mandate of power and responsibility. The task of domination therefore does not have to do with

exploitation and abuse but it has to do with securing the well-being of every other creature and bringing the promise of each to the full fruition. (32)

The Bible does not state that man (Adam) was mandated to have dominion over the woman (Eve) and creation within God's creation design, but the task of leadership over the creation and relationship between Adam and Eve was that of mutuality in equality. The issue of supremacy of one over the other is alien to the text.

Bilezikian further argues that in allocating spheres of authority to the creation, God assigned some limits to firmaments, sets boundaries to the process of production. God ordains specific environments for the proliferation of each species and carefully structured the ecological links among humans, plants, animals, birds and the entire created universe. God carefully organized them in hierarchy of order. However, no indication that such a hierarchy existed between Adam and Eve (25).

In his submission, A. F. Harper states, "The image was distributed without distinction to the male and to the female, making them both equal before God" (35). Therefore, as man and woman have equal value and standing before God, the exercise of ministry within the Christian community, which involves the exercise of authority, should be carried out without any gender bias or prejudice as well. Speaking in the same vein, William A. Dyrness, in his book, points out that a great dimension of the biblical account is often overlooked whenever the question of women's ministry is discussed, and it has great implications for Christians seeking to give a witness to Christ. God's highest purposes are realized and reflected in the creation of Adam and Eve. The significance of the image lies in what man and woman are created to do. The command said that Adam and Eve be fruitful and have dominion (rule) over the creation (Gen. 1:28).

This authority was the basic command God gave to man and woman, what they are created to do, the basic lordship of man and woman is their fundamental responsibility that God gave Adam and Eve to carry out. As a matter of fact, a person cannot reflect God while standing still, similarly, he or she cannot reflect God alone. Believers are made to live and function in relationship. This corporate existence is a reflection of the image and fulfillment of God's purpose. "The helper that God provides for man is someone to stand over against him literally a power equal to him" (Dyrness 35). Dyrness emphasizes that the connotation of the image in Adam and Eve is equal service to God.

Genesis 2:18-25: Woman Taken from the Man

Genesis 2 is one of the passages being used against women's leadership in the church. Traditionalists advance four major arguments from this passage to indicate that Genesis 2 teaches and supports the subordination of woman to man, woman's complementary role and man's superiority and domination over her: (1) that woman was created after man and is therefore secondary to him. (2) that a woman was taken from the man and is therefore secondary to him, (3) that a woman was named by the man and is therefore subordinate to him, (4) that a woman was created to be a helper for man and as such is subordinate to him.

These arguments appear to be logical and conclusive, but the validity of these arguments when viewed in the light of biblical teaching is doubtful. The order of creation does not signify superiority of either being or function. Evans commented on the issue of superiority that:

To assume that being created first implies superiority in any sense must mean that chapter 1 implies that the animals are superior to man and

chapter 2 that they are superior to women. The text clearly suggests neither of these things; therefore the force of the argument is lost. In fact there is no indication in Genesis 2 itself that temporal priority is of any particular significance (14-15).

Though Paul makes a similar argument when addressing women's issues in 1 Timothy 2, when he said he does not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man. For Adam was formed first, then Eve (vs. 13). Paul believes that a woman was second in the order of creation and so should be in subjection to man, though Paul does not draw out the implication of this statement. Evans commented, "If subordination is not to be found in the Genesis creation narratives when interpreted within their historical context, then it is possible that Paul also is not using the argument in that way" (15).

For Eve being made out of the rib of Adam, Wenham, Carson, France, and Motyer assert, "Eve was not made out of Adam's head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be loved" (62). The order of creation should not be used as reason for disparity between men and women.

John C. B. and Ellen Low Webster assert that the passages of Genesis 2 and 3, by context, should be interpreted to give women superior status over men because the man (Adam) was made from the mud and the woman (Eve) was made from the man after Adam had been purified from the dust. The material of the man was totally mud, but the material of the woman was human flesh with the full image of God because the woman was made after the man had become a living being (Gen. 2:7). The statement, "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23), should be interpreted in terms of equality of woman and man because both were stalks of the same material. Furthermore, the Bible

affirms that man and woman were both created in the image of God and both were given the authority to rule (114).

Though the Bible records that the serpent deceived Eve to eat from the forbidden fruit, believers should understand that God blamed all of them—man, woman, and serpent. None was exempted from the sin of disobedience:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned... [D]eath reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam. (Rom. 5:12-13)

Christ came to heal this broken relationship between God and humanity. Christ's purpose of coming was to liberate. Liberation expresses the aspiration of the oppressed. Christ makes humanity truly free. He enables humanity to live in communion with one another and with God. Therefore, incorporation of women into the service of Christ must remain the church's primary goal and concern. The issues of "helper" as stated in the Bible and God's choice of a man's rib to form a woman should not take preeminence, supersede, or take precedence over what Christ has accomplished in the life of the Church and the Great Commission Christ entrusted to the Church. God's image is not reflected in any sexual category, but it is reflected only in the community of humankind, a community of male and female.

Most English translations of Genesis 2:20 describe Eve as a "helper." A helper is normally considered as a person of lower status or position to the helpee. Some new English translations (e.g., New Living Translation, Today's English Version) use the term "companion" and not "helper," thus showing that Eve had an equal status to Adam.

Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8: Consecration of the Priests

The word *ordination*, as defined in Chapter 1, is the separating, setting apart, or commissioning and consecration of particular person(s) by the church for the work of Christian ministry. In the Old Testament, the ordination of persons to the service of God is indicated by the phrase “to fill the hand.” This phrase is usually translated “consecrate” or “ordain” (Butler 289).

In other words, ordination is the appointment or installation of religious officials called by God into ministry. The assumption is that the ritual is the confirmation of what God has started and has acknowledged in the life of a person. The basic elements that go with ordination or consecration are the placing on of hands, anointing with oil in some cases, and clothing with garments (priestly regalia), an indication of priestly office as in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8. The anointing of persons signifies the divine choice of God in the life of the persons as leaders of the people (1 Sam. 10:1; Vyhmeister 61-70).

The question remains whether women receive the laying on of hands. In the light of Leviticus 15:19-33, Ben Witherington, III suggests that women should not be priestesses because of the precepts found in Leviticus 15. A woman is vulnerable to uncleanness during her monthly menstrual period. A priest must be clean and holy at all times in order to offer sacrifice (8).

Female Authority in the Old Testament

Part of the cultural issue that halts the ordination of women into ministry has to do with the wrong view of a woman. Rebecca Merrill expresses additional views, blaming the situation as arising from men’s egoism. She asserts that men tend to be uncomfortable accepting the leadership of a woman because a woman is thought to be subordinate;

therefore, granting ordination to her would amount to elevating her to a position of authority equal to man. To prove that the leadership of a woman will under no circumstances mean a revision in the order of creation or a violation of God's law, Merrill explains or asserts that the function of a prophet, King, and Judge as reflected in the Old Testament is a replica or model of an ordained minister nowadays (189-91).

A prophet is one who speaks for God to the people. A judge pronounces judgment and a leader directs the affairs of the people. If such role models are reflected in the Scriptures and women functioned in both of these offices as prophets and judges alongside men in those days (Old Testament) and men paid attention to women, then men should not have difficulty accepting the leadership of women today. Merrill makes reference to the image of God in which both man and woman were created and that gives the fundamental biblical principle that every human being stands on equal ground before God. She asserts that gender ought not, in and of itself, limit a person's status or ministry opportunity because men and women are both children and heirs of God (19).

God called Deborah to leadership and prophetic ministry in Israel. She responded positively to God's call. As a female leader in the era of the Old Testament covenant, she stands as an example in history, indicating God's original intention for women to be included in leadership positions (Judg. 4-5). Her leadership was a blessing and a force for righteousness. As Merrill states, "God had a definite and purposeful hand in Deborah's rise to power, which shows that there is nothing inherently unfitting or immoral about a woman occupying a position of civil or spiritual authority" (190).

The call of Deborah as a prophet and her appointment as a judge and ruler over the house of Israel (Judg. 4:4) is sufficient evidence and an ideal model showing how

God respects both genders and that God's Spirit works in the lives of both men and women. Because of God's power upon Deborah, her words of prophetic wisdom were respected and obeyed. The Scripture does not say that only women took her counsel as authoritative or that her judgment was peculiar to private matters and not to the public realm. The Bible records all Israelites came to her for counsel and had their disputes decided (vs. 5), which suggests Deborah's leadership was equal to that of the men in Israel. The Bible says, "The Lord raised up judges who saved them [Israelites] out of the hands of these raiders" (Judg. 2:16). This statement applied to all judges of Israel, and, definitely, Deborah was one of them. She was part of this salvation that came to the Israelites through their leaders.

Huldah, like Deborah, was an outstanding prophetess who worked at the time of King Josiah. She was identified as the wife of Shallum, the keeper of the wardrobe (2 Kings 22:14). She was a remarkable Old Testament model who predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. King Josiah was one of Judah's few righteous kings, and during the reign of King Josiah, the high priest found the book of God's law in the Temple where it apparently had been lost during the many years of apostasy and idolatry (Merrill 192).

When King Josiah encountered the contents of the book of God's law, he was terrified at how God might have been irritated at the nation's defiance. The king sent people to find a prophet who could tell him what to do. The people went straight to Huldah and not to any other male prophet such as Jeremiah who was very prominent at that time. Huldah, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, spoke the word of the Lord to the men, and her words were taken seriously and authoritatively accepted. Consequently, the nation was purged of idolatry and restored to obedience throughout Josiah's reign.

Huldah must have been considered and regarded as an authority of considerable prominence if the king could consult with her and obeyed her message in regards to morality or spiritual matters:

The closest a prophet could come to being “authorized” would be for a public official to seek out and accept as authoritative that person’s prophetic words (as King Josiah did with Huldah). Moreover, since the public prophets, including Josiah, were also sought out for private consultation, there is no reason to assume that Huldah’s private counsel to King Josiah was the only sort of prophetic function she ever performed. She could well have prophesied publicly also. (Merrill 193)

Huldah was seen as a capable and efficient woman who could render good counsel to the king on matters affecting the nation of Israel. Her words received good attention.

Esther was a queen in the palace at the time of King Xerxes’ reign. Esther was from Hebrew stock and was chosen to serve the king because of her beauty and attractiveness. The Jews in the whole province of the kingdom of Xerxes were facing a critical situation of being completely destroyed by Haman. God intervened in a special way to save the lives of his people, and the means God used to deliver the Jews was Esther (8:11).

Esther risked her life to save her people (Israel) from destruction. She was a very disciplined, determined, and committed woman to the God of Israel. Her firm and courageous leadership resulted in the deliverance of the people of God. The feast of Purim was set up as a memorial of Esther for her diligent fearlessness and prudence.

God also used other women in the Old Testament as leaders such as Miriam (Exod. 15:20). Miriam, the sister of Moses, was one of the three siblings whom God chose to lead Israel out of Egypt. The Bible refers to her as prophet, the function she

played soon after Israel's escape from the pursuing Egyptian army. As part of the celebration, Miriam led Israel into the song of victory (Exod. 15:20).

Hannah, the mother of Samuel 1 Sam. 1:1, is a typical example of God's inclusive plan for women. Furthermore, the story of the Queen of Sheba, her encounter with King Solomon (1 Kings 10:1), shows that God has a definite and purposeful hand in women's leadership. Solomon did not denounce her leadership as a queen in her country when she visited him. Solomon gave her a warm reception and exchange of ideas, gifts, and blessings. If this encounter were not in line with God's divine design, a prophet would have been sent by God to Solomon to denounce the meeting with the Queen of Sheba.

Lucy Mabery Foster, in defining what the word ordination means, and its significance to the church and the ministry of women, says:

The stand people take on ordaining women depends on the variables such as ones' ecclesiology, particularly the definition and the significance of ordination with regards to the functions it permits, the qualification it requires and one's interpretation of the Scripture with regard to the ministries a woman is permitted to perform" (58).

Traditionally, ordination in the church today means choosing and appointing certain individuals with strong conviction for ministry to hold a position of pastoral leadership, including preaching, administering the ordinances, and overseeing the affairs of the congregation. In other words, ordination is a way of designating those God has called into ministry.

Foster believes that Hebrew priests, Levites, prophets, kings, and judges were solemnly ordained or set apart for their special roles. Though Christ did not ordain anyone by symbolic act of ceremony such as the laying on of hands, he did call, appoint, and commission the twelve apostles. These various calls and appointments by Christ,

Paul, Barnabas, and a host of others is what was later recognized and referred to as ordination in the early Church (54-55).

The New Testament, Acts, and the Pastoral Epistles provide the principal passages regarding ordination. Prayer, fasting, and laying on of hands are mentioned in the sending of Paul, Barnabas, and others (Acts 13:1-3). Traditionally, ordination confers power and authority on the person to act and be established in the hierarchy of orders. Deborah was an example, a woman who played a number of vital leadership roles, and her call and ascension to leadership in Israel was acknowledged by God (Judg. 4:9).

Ordination assumes a theological aspect to one's entry into the Christian ministry, a conviction that God calls one to ministerial work, meaning one does not simply decide to be a minister as people choose to enter any other profession. Entering Christian ministry comes as a result of the conviction and call of the Holy Spirit. God can call women as he does men to be leaders in his Church and to serve in local church congregations or assemblies of God's people like men. Women are not less capable than men in piety, zeal, spiritual endowment and learning. Robert Saucy and Judith K. Tenelshof believe that because by definition the Church is a spiritual context, women should be expected to have spiritual roles in the context of the church community (273).

Furthermore, ordination is tied with the power to act. It accords or confers the ordained person full power and authority to function, perform a duty, lead, and act on behalf of an organization or community of believers and to represent the body of believers in different capacities, serving as watchmen for God, bringing to the divine attention matters of earthly consequence (Fretheim 276).

Men and women tend to have different attitudes towards power. Power possession tends to be a struggle between men and women in many church denominations, and part of the difficulty women face in ministry today has to do with way power is viewed in the church:

Men see power as discrete quantity. Men do feel that if they share power they will have less of it. While women on the other hand, see power as something that increases in quantity as it is shared. It is possible that a woman's denial of her gifts and her abilities and her reluctance to attempt new things ... represents another form of sin, the sin of refusing to become the person God designed her to be. (Mathews 125)

Alice P. Mathews believes that God's power is universal and it is given to both men and women to equip them for ministry. The following statements summarize Mathews' conviction about power:

1. God's power is given to women as well as to men for the blessing of the world.
2. Women need to know that they have gifts and are indwelt by God's mighty Spirit for the purpose of serving Christ and others in the world.
3. Jesus also promised his followers that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon them, enabling them to become witnesses to him.
4. God always wraps his use of power in divine love. Neither men nor women should use power if it is not wrapped in love.

Another fascinating and enthralling work worthy of reviewing in the arena of women's ordination is written by the founder of the Free Methodist Church, Bishop Benjamin T. Roberts.

Bishop Roberts had a radical, social, and biblical vision on the issue of women's ordination. He documented a persuasive insight into the misinterpretations of the Scripture that have negatively inclined thinking on the issue of women's ordination. He

not only advocated the ordination of women but also campaigned for free pews in the church and freedom from slavery. The purpose of his writing was to compel the Free Methodist Church to see reason for the ordination of women into ministry. As a result of his vision and conviction about the calling of women into ministry, the Free Methodist Church takes its place among many other Christian church organizations that accord women the honor of being ordained as ministers of the gospel:

I have written this book from a strong conviction of duty. Christ commands us to let our light shine. There is no reason why this subject should not be considered as calmly and candidly as any other. We should not refuse to examine in the light of Scripture and of reason because any apprehension of dreadful consequences if some women should be ordained. By the Friends, for over two hundred years, woman has been accorded the same rights as man, and yet she has lost none of her womanliness in consequences. Among no class of people are women more true, and modest, and domestic, and noble, and refined and given to every good work than among them. (7)

Roberts encouraged the church not to have any fear regarding the ordination of women.

One of the benefits of women's ordination, as Roberts observes, was giving women equal rights in the church, which also leads to giving them honor and equal rights in the state. If the church, which is the body of Christ and light to the world, fails in its endeavor to liberate women from marginalization, it should expect the ongoing struggle for the emancipation of women. The church should set the precedent because Christ's gospel is all about liberation.

Roberts asserts that when some church individuals proposed the question of abolition of human slavery, many leading churches in the United States opposed the idea. They wanted the practice of slavery to continue. The church safeguards itself under the canopy of Scripture, using the master-servant relationship.

A lot of people taught and supported the idea of slavery, claiming it has the authority of the Bible. Later, many Christians generally understood that people who expressed the prevailing sentiments, acknowledging the practice of slavery, were mistaken on the subject.

In the same vein, the question of women's ordination and ministry appears too controversial and disputable among evangelicals. Janet Wootton observes that the church on both sides of the argument perceives the matter or the campaigning for the ordination of women as secular, stressing that the focus of the argument moved charismatic to human right. Ordination is no longer an issue of a few extraordinary gifted women, as in the early Methodism (87). The issue of ordination has become a competition from women that men are not comfortable with (Schaper 38).

However, the essence of Roberts' reference to slavery was to let the church understand that denying women the opportunity to be ordained is oppression, marginalization, and suppression. In comparison, Roberts seems to suggest or prophesy that as the issue of freedom of slavery was misunderstood by the church from the onset but was later admitted. Similarly, the issue of women's ordination would be accepted or refashioned at a later time. Roberts stresses the fact that Christianity should remodel the condition of women because the gospel teaches that Christ came to liberate (Luke 4:18-19).

The main objection to the ordination of women is that it is contrary to the plain teaching of the New Testament. The church understands that all true ministers are called of the Holy Ghost, but the call also needs human endorsement as the tradition requires. One's call must be acknowledged and ratified by the church before one is allowed to

function or be accepted to work within the body of believers. The successor to Judas was so appointed, as described in Acts 1:15-26.

Ministry of Women in the New Testament

Lucy Mabery Foster argues that proofs in the New Testament show Jesus' positive attitude toward women's ministry. Women took part in Jesus' and Paul's ministries and how they influenced the early missionary movement. The response of women to Christ's ministry was wonderful. They were first at the cradle and last at the cross (66). If women were so instrumental, influential, and active in Christ's ministry, were also the first group of people who witnessed Christ's resurrection from the dead, and were also the first group of people whom God first sent through the angel to announce to the world the victory of Christ over death (Matt. 28:7), ironically, today women are being barred from ordination and public ministry in the Church.

The Samaritan woman had the distinction of being the first one to carry the gospel of salvation to her people (John 4:1-26). Her name was not mentioned, but she had a good knowledge about her religion and history. When she encountered Jesus at the well, she became a discerning disciple immediately. Many people in her town believed the gospel as a result of her testimony (vs. 39). Jesus did not denounce her witness because of her gender. Because of her testimony, the people in her town extended an invitation to Christ to stay with them. Christ stayed in the town for two days and many more people became believers (John 4:40).

Furthermore, the involvement of women in church ministry continued even after Christ's death and resurrection. A good number of women served as leaders of house

churches. In fact, some were even involved in the planting of churches and nurturing them, thereby helping to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28.

Priscilla and Aquila were co-missionaries with Paul in Corinth and Ephesus (Acts 18:1-4 24-28). Priscilla and her husband Aquila were very instrumental in planting a church in their home (Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19). When mention is made about the church in their home, Priscilla's name always comes first (Acts 18:26), showing that Priscilla was an important figure in planting the churches or for establishing house churches. This evidence shows that Priscilla was a very gifted woman and was called to ministry.

Phoebe is addressed as a deaconess. She was undoubtedly one of the elders in the Cenchrea Church (Rom. 16:1). The word servant could be translated *deacon* or *deaconess*. The word *diakonos* is translated *deacon* throughout the New Testament. Addressing Phoebe as sister might imply that she was Paul's coworker just as Paul would address Timothy as a brother.

Many Bible commentators believe that the use of the word *servant* for Phoebe was not correct. Phoebe was as much a deacon as Stephen or Philip (Maxwell 68):

The only reason people should be ordained to office is to recognize them as having spiritual gifts for building up the body of Christ. And if the Holy Spirit has gifted a woman for helping build up the Church, then the Church should recognize those gifts and provide for their use in the Church.... Churches should not push women in leadership roles just because they are female in order to rectify the imbalance built over the years. This would deny the New Testament principle of electing persons based on their qualifications for service and not because of their gender, and will result in the weakening of the Church. (Foster 58-59)

Leadership is given by God, and if a woman senses that God is calling her to leadership in the church, the church should not make it hard for her. I agree with Foster that the call

to ordain women should not be to rectify the gender imbalance but should be a sincere conviction that God wants the women to serve.

1 Corinthians 11:3 and 14: 34-35: Paul's Commands

Harmonizing 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 has great significance because some of the frequently quoted biblical texts that traditionalists regard as universally mandating women's subordination to the spiritual authority of men and restricting the women from admission into pastoral work and ordained ministry are located in these passages:

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. It is just as though her head were shaved. (1 Cor. 3-5)

One important thing that requires understanding in this passage is that Paul was using a local cultural argument. Paul, in some cases, employed a transcultural argument when he wanted to make a transcultural point to draw the attention of his audience. The issue of head covering is one of those local cultural concerns Paul was addressing.

However, Paul's argument in this particular passage encompasses two analogies. The first analogy concerns a woman's literal head (that is part of her body) and her figurative head (her husband). The second analogy is her artificial head covering (veil) and her natural head covering (hair). Furthermore, the principle of *wordplay* should not be ignored in Paul's writing. Paul used the principle of *wordplay* as he understood his audience. "Although an argument based on a play on words may sound irrational to us today, to many ancient readers it would have made sense" (Keener 32). Also commenting on the same passage, G. K. Beale and D.A. Carson observe that people's understanding

of Paul is complicated by the fact that he engaged in wordplay, alternating between literal and metaphorical referents (731).

However, Paul said the man is the head of a woman. The “man” here possibly means the husband, and head of the “woman” here possibly means wife. To be the head of something today usually means to be in charge and to control.

In fact the word *head* has several meanings and interpretations. The word sometimes means “authority,” sometimes means “prominent, partner, honor, or respect, source, base” (Keener 32). Context is the key in determining how a particular term is being used in a given passage, and the context here indicates nothing about the husband’s authority.

The mistake that most scholars make is the one-sided or lopsided interpretation of the word *head* to mean *authority* without looking at the other possible meanings. Craig Keener observes that the modern sense of *head* is rare, though not unknown, in the ancient Greek. The oldest Greek lexicons do not attest this meaning. In other words, *leader* is not a very common meaning for the Greek word for *head* (32).

Furthermore, Paul talked about the headship of man over a woman relating to Christ’s relationship to the Church with God being the head of Christ. The passage here seems to project a hierarchical model instead of a web-like model. Paul saw the relationship between God the Father and God the Son as head over the earthly (man and woman). Furthermore, the use of the word *head* should be understood in terms of *source* rather than power or authority e.g., the head of a river is basically referring to the source of the river or water and not the authority of the river. Paul talked about *source* much more than authority of man over a woman (Keener 32-35).

Again, a close look at Paul's wordplay shows that Paul was speaking of the natural honor accruing to the head as a very important part of the body, suggesting that women or wives by virtue of the creation order owe their husbands honor and reverence. Husbands may receive glory and honor from their wives or shame and respectively as Christ receives glory or shame from the behavior of men. C. K. Barrett shares the same view: "Paul does not say that man is the lord of the woman; he says that he is the origin of her being" (248). However, Pat Ennis and Lisa Tatlock believe that women are called to be submissive to their husbands, that God has ordained or divinely appointed and that husbands function as the head of the wife. Husbands are the authority within the marriage relationship at home (66-67).

1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Women Silent in the Church

Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

At first view, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 would appear more restrictive and authoritative toward women's speaking in the church. Several arguments have been offered on this passage to show that Paul's instruction in this text applies to women in every culture and the instruction actually means total silence and a timeless prohibition on women.

Paul was concerned with the issue of discipline during worship services and was not dealing with the issue of teaching. He had earlier in 1 Corinthians.11:5 acknowledged the prophetic and prayer ministries of women within the community of believers. "Paul

cannot mean that women are not allowed to speak at all, since in chapter 11 he discusses their authority to pray and prophesy in the worship service” (Beale and Carson 743). Paul affirms the unity and oneness of man and woman when he says, “In the Lord however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman, but everything comes from God” (vs. 11). Apparently, Paul was carrying on the preceding argument concerning order in this context. He was simply correcting disorder during worship or the fellowship of believers (Clouse and Clouse 32-34).

In summing up his understanding and interpretation of these verses, Keener asserts that Paul was addressing chiefly uneducated women who were disrupting the service with irrelevant and inappropriate questions. The immediate remedy for this situation was for them to stop asking such improper questions, and the long-term solution was to educate them (70).

In general, the reading of the Scripture requires believers to see God in a new way and to understand that the revelation of God’s word to humanity is progressive and not open and close.

Ellen R. Davis and Richard B. Hays speak much and profoundly on what the stories of the Scripture mean. They believe that the stories are progressive and not stamped and sealed. The stories of Scripture bear witness to a larger story that is living and not finished, hence, theological interpretation must push beyond viewing the Scriptures as projecting a self-enclosed, already accomplished totality of meaning. The past meanings the stories are thought to contain are not important, but the present meanings they continually provoke in the community of faith are (116).

The same Spirit of God that speaks through Paul in Galatians 3:28 and 1 Peter 3:7, affirming believers' sonship, oneness, freedom, and inheritance of God's kingdom through grace, cannot again speak to Paul to exclude women from being partakers of this grace of leadership:

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, and all who have been united with Christ in baptism, have put on the Character of Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus,... heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:26-29, NLT)

In this chapter, Paul also makes a very serious statement in verse 15 that no one can put aside this covenant that was duly established, the promises that were given to Abraham. He further states in verse 17 that the law introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established. Paul's reference to the teaching of the law probably has the Genesis creation narratives in mind with their implications for order and propriety in relationships between men and women.

However, people who oppose the issue of the ordination of women and church leadership believe that in salvation, believers are one. No distinction between Jew and Greek, slave or free, male or female. However, the issue of responsibility for feeding the flock of God, administering sacraments, and teaching sound doctrine is gender restrictive, meaning these later aspects of responsibilities are male functions only.

However, the root of male's prejudice or domination over women is presumed came as a result of the Fall in Genesis 3. Male domination is not an order of creation. Men and women both share the *imago Dei*. This image is a social and divine reality. In this image, God intends for women and men to be companions and to serve together. However, two timeless truths that believers need to know or recognize in this text are (1)

no one, whether male or female, should disrupt services (1 Cor. 14:34-35), and (2) any person, man or woman, should learn the right doctrine before he or she is allowed to be ordained and to teach or preach.

1 Timothy 2:1-15 (Context)

The passage in Timothy is also one of the most quoted by many traditional churches to deny ordination to women. Apparently, Paul here imposes the idea of silent as he did in the Corinthians church. Apparently, the action of Paul may be based on any of the following possibilities: (1) Paul might have changed his mind after he had written 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, (2) he might have imposed the rule on new converts the same spirit of quiet submission that was appropriate for novices in his day, (3) Paul was probably giving a principle to the church that they must learn the basics before trying to challenge a teacher, and (4) Paul might have given the instruction as a guide against heresy within the church.

The word used here for *silent* in general refers to respectful attention or quiet demeanor (Keener 108). It is a demonstration that Paul again was concerned about correcting certain attitude as in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. Paul's statements can only be understood clearly when the texts are critically examined within Paul's cultural and situational context.

First, this letter was written to Timothy, Paul's emissary. Provisionally, the church in Ephesus was undergoing a serious and difficult time. Two major issues faced the church in Ephesus at the time: (1) The church was facing persecution, and (2) heresy was going on in the church.

The Jews and the pagan religious leaders were in the forefront of the church's persecution at Ephesus. Furthermore, the issues of heresy and false teachings within the church were prevailing. These situations no doubt informed the writing of the letter to Pastor Timothy. Basically Paul had concern for Timothy as a young pastor and for the church, which was also young and under Timothy's care.

In addressing these issues, Paul went back and forth repeatedly between them. This back and forth style of writing is referred to by theologians and academicians as literary interchange or A-B-A-B structure or literary context (Cunningham and Hamilton 207).

A careful look at these passages in Timothy shows that Paul puts more emphasis on some verses or issues than others. Paul's statement is very particular with an overall purpose that God intends that all people should be saved.

The particularization in this passage is God's intention for men and women. Paul refers to women generally and then switches to address a particular woman. The first object of Paul's discussion is *women*. The second object is still the issue of feminism but a particular female, a woman. Then Paul switches back to talk about women, again using the plural term.

The issue seems to be very vague and contradictory when the context is not carefully examined. The question is whether or not Paul is making a sweeping statement that women should not teach, particularly in this church where Priscilla had been a founding leader along with her husband Aquila. Priscilla and her husband were great missionary assistants to Paul, as Paul was well aware. Therefore, concluding that Paul bars women generally from teaching in the church knowing that the church in question

was founded by Priscilla when she and her husband spent much time teaching and correcting the errors of Apollos and training him for spiritual growth and church leadership is ironic (207).

In addition, Paul instructed the church in Rome to receive the woman minister Phoebe. Phoebe was a deacon of the church in Cenchreae in Corinth. Paul cannot contradict himself by giving Timothy contrary orders not to allow women generally to teach in the church.

Here again, judging from the development at the time, Paul issued these injunctions by common sense. Paul might not have meant the exclusion or prohibition of women in general from teaching as many complementarians might have conceived. The state of affairs at the time called for cohesion in the lives of believers, for encouragement for them to stand firm as they pass through persecution at the hands of unbelievers. Creating a chasm between men and women would have been an added stress to the church, which was struggling to survive under persecution.

Paul's core issue as he observed that situation in the church was evident. His intention was to encourage the believers to take prayer as their sole victory as they pass through the heated situation in the hands of the pagans. Paul had a good knowledge of the situations in the church, and he was tackling them one after the other. The first was the need to encourage the church to be prayerful in the face of their trial. He told them to pray in every possible way, not to be lacking in prayer, not to ignore any little situation, and to exclude no one in their prayer. Paul believed that devotion to prayer could sustain and strengthen the church.

Turning from speaking to the congregation generally, Paul focused his attention to address a section of the people, using the Greek word *aner* for *males*. (1 Tim. 2:8). He desired that men should live aboveboard in terms of spirituality and not to listen or pay attention to the heresy going on within the circle of unrepentant teachers.

Paul turned to address women generally (1 Tim.2: 9). He was concerned about something indecent, particularly among the ladies (their manner of dress). Ephesus was one of the cities that had serious records of moral decadence. Immoral ladies in Ephesus generally dress badly to attract men to them. When some of these women became believers, they still tended to bring into the church that same idea of alluring and revealing dress. Paul believed that such practices were not good to be seen within the body of believers as ostentatious dress was a mark of promiscuity, so he spoke against it. Believers were to watch their physical appearance and instill holiness that was part of their divine calling.

Paul then addressed a woman again: “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she must be silent” (1 Tim. 2:11, NIV). In this verse Paul does not say, “women,” but a “woman.”

Different authorities thought particularly on this verse. Some believe that Paul excluded women from only one activity. Others see the statement as proscribing two different activities, yet others view the statement as a general restraint Paul placed on the didactic ministry of women (Bilezikian 174). Paul was concerned about marriage and family relationships based on the culture of the Ephesians. He was trying to inject spiritual behavior to control arrogant attitudes among married women in the homes. If Paul’s statement is viewed to mean a general restriction to the didactic ministry of

women, then it would contradict his laudable statements on women such as Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, and Junias (Rom. 16:1).

Christological Argument

Christology is a field of study in Christian theology that is concerned with the nature of Jesus, how the divine and human are related in his person. The word *Christology* comes from two Greek words meaning Christ or Messiah. In other words, Christology is the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Though Christ is God, he came into the world in the form of a male human being (John 1:1-18; Isa. 9:6-61:1), and his purpose was to save and to create a new world, a new context that his hearers would be a new people that this new context demanded (Wright 46-70).

The opponents of women's ordination assert that because Jesus was male his representatives in the ordained ministry must be male. The ordained persons must be biological replicas of Jesus Christ. Pastors are often seen as models and symbols of Christ. References are often made to Old Testament personalities such as Moses, Aaron, or Joshua who mediated between God and the people.

The opponents of women's ordination and leadership in the Church further argue and point to the fact that Jesus and Peter selected only men for the prestigious apostolic office, asserting that Christ handed to no woman the power of conferring sacraments, stressing that Peter did not choose a woman as a witness to replace Judah in Acts 1:24 Merrill, (11). The argument apparently is that in coming into the world as a man and choosing only men as his disciples, Christ set a standard for the Church today to imitate.

This assertion poses the issue of significance. What counts in Christ's coming is not his maleness, but the salvation he brought. The great declaration of Christ's

Incarnation in the New Testament emphasizes the humanness of Christ above his maleness. As John says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). In Philippians 2:7, Paul uses the Greek word *anthropos* (human) rather than the gender specific *anner* (man) Christ became human to save and not male to save; therefore, Christ’s maleness was not important for salvation, just his humanity. Christ came to fill the hungry, to proclaim release to the captives and to set free those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18; Heslam, Gorringer, Griffiths, and Held 118-19).

However, the fact that great biblical personalities such as Moses, Aaron, and Joshua stood as mediators between God and the people does not mean no woman in the Old Testament functioned as a mediator between God and the people. The Bible teaches that believers are all children of God. “But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12, NLT). Commenting on the issue of gender, Stanley J. Grenz and Denise M. Kjesbo assert that no clear reason is stated in the Bible that gender should disqualify a person from representing a local congregation within the wider fellowship or representing the Church in society (201). In his submission, Canon H. Wilson argues that if ordained clergy represent Christ, women can also represent Christ because man and woman were both created in the image of God. Because all are created in the image of God, all have the ability to represent God (51-54).

Some Church Fathers’ Worldview of a Woman

Christian history has been taken for granted that women should not be accepted to positions of ordained clergy merely for the reason that they are women. When theologians pause to talk about the issue, their remarks have always reflected their view of women over against their view of ministry.

The response of some early Church fathers to the question of what is woman has always been that she is a “devil’s gateway, weaker vessel, slow of understanding, unstable in mind, and liable to deception” (Jewett 5; Merrill 13). “Women’s sexuality was perceived as a fundamental problem. It was seen as a snare of the devil to draw men away from purity into lust” (Storkey 98). The drama of the Garden of Eden, the eating of the forbidden fruit, is still ringing in the minds of many people, and, as a result, a woman is seen as the genesis of evil. Her failure in the Garden has automatically disqualified her from holding any position of authority within the fellowship of believers. For the traditionalist, a woman was the one whose disobedience destroyed humanity and humanity’s image and glory of God. Many Church fathers were aided and supported in this deep distrust of the female by their view of human sexuality. The perception of their culture then was that men are made or ordained to rule and women are to obey. Therefore, the concept of superiority of a man over a woman is highly held. Consequently, prejudice concerning the leadership of women prevails strongly.

Many Church fathers argued that the people to be admitted to the holy orders must not be those whose personal presence is not likely, in a liturgical or sacramental atmosphere, to exercise any distracting effect upon worshipers of the opposite gender. They claim that the New Testament warns against a lustful look and admonishes women to dress modestly (1Tim. 2:9). They assert that if a man stands in the pulpit, the average woman is not unduly affected by the man’s appearance, but if a woman stands there, men being men, their thoughts would not be on the words spoken. The speaker would become the center of attraction.

In response, Paul K. Jewett bluntly disagrees with the position of the traditional Church, claiming that the reasons are weak, not strong enough to exclude women from ordination to ministerial office. He argues further that if Eve plucked the fruit that was the reason for the ruin of humanity, Mary, on the other hand, was the handmaiden of the Lord by her fiat of humble submission (Luke 1:38), bringing salvation to all humanity. Nelson Hayashida expresses a similar view that women are human beings of dignity, not sexual beings of a lower caste (38). Furthermore, in his reaction on the position of the traditional church concerning women's leadership, a renowned theologian L. E. Maxwell asserts that:

Christianity in a large measure revokes the curse, which the fall [presumably] imposed on women, and Christ made the sexes more equal by coming as a man, and being born of a woman. He not only raised the standard of our common humanity by wearing our human nature, but he took the bitterness out of the woman's lot by honoring and adopting motherhood. From that time all motherhood became brighter and holier. We believe the contention by certain Church leaders that a woman shall have no public voice violates the balanced teaching of the Bible. (16)

If men are weak and deficient in charisma to the extent that their attention is always distracted whenever a woman stands before them, then they might be the most unqualified for ministry. Women give lectures in universities and many mixed gatherings, meaning that not all of them affect the lives of men. Jewett explains that if male students have learned to concentrate on lectures by a woman without the aid of a curtain, no obvious reasons that male parishioners cannot achieve a similar discipline in a worship service when all the proprieties are observed (9). Jewett laments that if this assertion is a true position of all men, then men are truly bankrupt spiritually. Therefore, the issue is not that women are not capable to be admitted into ordained office, but the

whole point boils down to the cultural perception attributed to the subordination of women in all spheres of their lives.

Women and Spiritual Gifts

The role of spiritual gifts is very important in ministry. People go into ministry as they feel convicted or led by the power of the Spirit. The question yet to be tackled is whether the gifts of the Spirit are gender restricted. In this arena, John MacArthur has great insights into the work of the Holy Spirit. In the context of spiritual gifting, Ephesians 4:16 supplies believers with the understanding that every person has a part in the church and is instrumental to the growth of the church as a body of believers. This growth is made possible as the Holy Spirit empowers the church to function.

John MacArthur comments, “Spiritual gifts are controlled by the Spirit, given by grace from God, used to serve the Body, and empowered by the Lord” (24). Spiritual gifts are supernaturally conferred on believers with a purpose to strengthen the Church. In other words, the gifts are God’s gracious enablement to help the people of God as individuals in various unique ways to do the work of God in the Church and in the world.

Three passages in the New Testament vividly describe these gifts: Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Corinthians 12. The passage in Romans 12 discusses the talents, abilities, and various functions that God gives to all believers. Ephesians 4 identifies peculiar offices of leadership and ministry that God bestows on the Church. In 1 Corinthians 12, supernatural signs, and wonders, and miracles took place as a result of the direct operation and power of the Holy Spirit. These various gifts are identified and

are also called the *charismata*, and some people refer to them as equipping and motivational gifts.

The Greek word for gifts is *charismata*, the plural form of *charisma*. It is also related to the Greek word *charis*, which means grace. Two Greek words are basically used in the New Testament that speak of or describe the term *spiritual gifts*. The first is the *pneumatika* from the words *pneuma* (spirit) and *pneumatika* (plural), which means things that result from the *pneuma* (spirit). The second is the *charismata*, which also means things that result from *charisma* (spirit).

The gift of prophecy means divinely inspired utterance or speaking under the divine power of God to edify others (1 Cor. 14:3; Rev. 19:10).

The gift of ministry means service rendered to others with particular reference to the Church. The Greek word *diakonia* is a broad word that covers a variety of services including the work of deacons within the body of believers (Acts 6:1-6).

The gift of teaching means loving to research, helping others so that change can occur. The gift of exhortation refers to giving encouragement, comforting those who hurt. Joseph displayed this gift so much that he was renamed Barnabas, which means “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36).

The gift of giving is also called the gift of liberality or generosity. It refers particularly to the sharing of material blessings with other people.

The gift of leading is sometimes called the ruling gift in the King James Version. It speaks of direction, influence, guidance and the exercise of authority. In the Church, God has ordained rulers or leaders to direct and oversee the affairs of the body of believers.

The gift of showing mercy means being merciful and kind to others, for instance, visiting the sick, praying for the poor and widows, and helping orphans.

Ephesians 4:11 also lists a number of gifts generally referred to as *ministerial office gifts*. These are apostles, pastors, evangelists, leading or administration, and teaching. An evangelist literally is one who preaches the gospel. He or she proclaims the good news to the unsaved. A pastor is a shepherd, one who leads and cares for the spiritual needs of God's people. In other words, a pastor is an overseer or bishop (Acts 14:23; 20:17). Elders are also seen as pastoral teams who lead the church, and Christ is the chief shepherd. The Greek word *apostolos*, for apostle, literally means someone who is sent with a commission or message and who serves as an ambassador or commissioner.

Ephesians 2:20 teaches that the household of God, the Church, is built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets. Believers should, however, know that the former apostles (designated the twelve disciples) were all men, but the latter were not all men. Prophetesses and prophets were in the apostolic Church, and some might have been active with the twelve from the very beginning (e.g., Junias; Rom. 16:16).

Paul's argument was that the gifts for ministry are basically the result of God's grace to every believer and so they proffer no reasons for spiritual pride. Therefore, the whole idea was a corrective measure Paul decided to offer to the body of believers. Paul made a similar correction in 1 Corinthians 1:27-31 when he talks about God's choice of the weak to shame the strong or what is foolish to shame the wise. So human boasting according to Paul is not in line with God's divine plan.

The work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the apostolic age, but neither are spiritual gifts restricted by gender. “The anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit has the same purpose in a woman’s life as it has in a man’s life” (Osborn 114).

To conclude that the business of the ministry is only male’s affairs can be a theological error because the stories of the Scripture and history of the Church is full of records of graces of God bestowed on God’s people at different times without gender restriction. Reasoning in the same vein, M. E. Thrall asserts, “The essential nature of the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments does not in itself prevent a woman from being ordained” (106).

Christ’s Promise of the Holy Spirit

On the night of Jesus’ betrayal, Christ promised the coming of the Holy Spirit who would remind the apostles all that he had taught. The Holy Spirit would also guide the disciples into all truth (John 14:26). This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Peter addressed the assembly, quoting from the book of the prophet Joel:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions; your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy. (Acts 2:16-18)

These verses give a good picture of God’s divine plan for both men and women to be involved in world evangelization. Peter was the chief speaker for the group on the Pentecost day the Bible records that many people spoke in addition to Peter, which might have included women as well. The change brought about in the time of the Spirit is that male and female will receive the prophetic call without any discrimination. The disparity between men and women will be abolished (Bilezikian 124).

Ordination in Church History

A glimpse into church history gives a clear perspective on the issue of women's ordination. During the early life of the Church, the ordination of women was not a serious issue. Women held church offices and performed various church functions concurrently with the men. The understanding of the early Church was based on the women figures in the Old Testament such as Deborah, Huldah, and Miriam. Grenz and Kjesbo observe, "The early Church may have even recognized the ministry of the widows as a clergy function. In any case, in the second and third centuries the Church ordained women deaconesses along with male deacons" (39). Foster shares a similar view:

Widows in the early Centuries of the Church became part of the ordained clergy. In the testimony of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a fifth century work based on Himmolytus, there is evidence that the process of selecting and ordaining widows paralleled that of deacons and bishops.... The council of Chalcedon set down rules for their ordination. However, from the middle of the third century the *Didaskalia Apostolorum* the first church order to reflect major controversy surrounding women's leadership placed many restrictions on women. (75)

The historical data shows that women were initially admitted to ordained ministry. Controversy over women's ordination later trailed women's leadership and, perhaps, set the stage for the tradition in the church today.

Notable among the bishops in the history of the church was a woman bishop Theodora. She was one of the well-recognized and respected women elevated to the position of a bishop. Other women recognized by their piety in the early Church life include Theresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Anthusa, Nonna, Monica, and the mothers of Chrysostom, Gregory, and Jerome, respectively (Maxwell 101).

Monasteries

Monasteries are places men and women founded and used as training fields or institutions to model the lives of believers for church ministries and leadership. Women found great opportunities through these institutions to articulate their leadership, ministry calling, and gifts in the life of the early Church. In fact, history indicates that the ascetic communities of female virgins predated the male monastic movement. Women pursued holiness and developed ministry career and leadership through the various monasteries. They were able to govern themselves successfully without any needs for male leadership or influence. They offered credible leadership within their monasteries so great that their influence extended beyond the community of the abbey.

As a result of their leadership credibility, the church recognized some of the women leaders such as Theresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena, by conferring on them the title “Doctor of the Church” (Grenz and Kjesbo 41). Consequently, this recognition given to the women provided them ample opportunity to stand alongside such notable Church fathers as Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. They could participate in church councils, be involved in the nominations of priests, and be appointed and licensed as priors.

They received vows of obedience from the people who were under them. The popes even sanctioned, acknowledged, and supported the right of these women to exercise authority over those under them. The people under the leadership of these women were not just female but also male. Many church historians such as Grenz and Kjesbo assert that abbesses were originally ordained. They received the symbols of the office of a bishop the miter, crosier, gloves, and cross (41).

An apparent paradigm shift in the concept of women's ordination became visible and inherent in the church in subsequent centuries. Various factors were responsible for this change such as institutionalization of the church, power, and economic control, and also renewed interest in Greco-Roman culture.

On the eve of the institutionalization of the church, the leadership of the church was basically adhoc or informal. For the purpose of recognition, cultural respectability, and unity of the body of believers, the church became institutionalized, especially in the third century.

However, the institutionalization of the church, which was aimed at bringing unity, liberation, and progress in the life of the church, tended to be a weapon of suppression, discrimination, and marginalization against women. Women became increasingly excluded from positions of responsibility as the church became institutionalized:

Christian art from the first and second centuries depicts women performing various ministerial activities, administering the Lord's Supper, teaching, baptizing, caring for the physical needs of the congregation and leading in public prayers. Later revisionists however, apparently attempted to cover traces of women's involvement in what had subsequently become male prerogatives. (Stanley and Kjesbo 39)

As the church became an institution and was immersed into the culture of the surrounding world, its view of women's leadership was changed. Many church councils began to adopt resolutions restricting and prohibiting women from holding the offices they had earlier held.

Resource Control

The issue of resource control between the local bishops and the abbesses became a serious roadblock to the leadership of women in the medieval period of the church's

life. According to Grenz and Kjesbo, the abbesses became very rich and held great power within the monastic movement. They had large tracts of land, which they supervised, and they managed the funds brought by the women who entered the order. The pope directly ruled the abbeys. They were not required to pay tithes to the local bishops nor take directives from them. The abbesses had prerogatives to appoint local parish priests and cared for the material and other related services. Consequently, tension often arose between the local bishops and the abbesses. This tension led to drastic decisions against the women leadership at the council of Trent. The council ruled that all of the women's monasteries ruled by abbesses had to join with a male monastery and submit to the rule of a male abbot or to come under the direct control of the male bishop. This decision was the final stroke that eliminated women from the leadership in the church at that time (42).

Inculturation of the Gospel

In Nigerian contemporary culture, people are fond of saying, "Why do you do things like a woman?" Anything that is weak, unfashionable, dysfunctional, unintelligent, unpraiseworthy, or shameful is considered to be a woman's act. Women are seen as people who cannot accomplish any great task. This attitude permeates the church's life as well and contributes immensely to certain negative trends women are experiencing in the church in Nigeria today.

Rose N. Uchem, an Igbo Nigerian theologian, says, "What is most needed to bring change in a culture that is strongly patriarchal with such a negative view of women such as Nigeria, is the application of inculturation as a model" (60). Inculturation of the gospel would help the church in Africa and indeed Nigeria to understand the Scripture more clearly.

Commenting on the concept and significance of inculturation of the gospel in the African context, Peter Nlemadin DomNwachukwu states that:

The word *inculturation* is the Incarnation of Christian life and of Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that experience not only find [sic] expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation. (126)

Inculturation involves dialogue between culture and faith in cultural form so that the meaning of the text or Christian message would become meaningful and appreciated by the people. Dialogue is a conversation between two or more people with different views, concepts, or notions about a particular subject with the objective that each participant can learn new knowledge from the other(s) so that change can result.

Therefore, the local church has the responsibility to shape the future of society within the milieu in which the church operates. The church can begin with the empirical needs of the people in place. These needs may be a search for a new cultural identity or certain fundamental changes aiming at liberation.

Jesus' life and ministry shows the empirical model of inculturation. The Bible teaches that the "Word" became flesh and lived among people (John 1:14). Christ lived with the poor, ate with sinners, shared their pains and vulnerability, healed the brokenhearted, and liberated the oppressed (Luke 13:10-17).

The process of the gospel enterprise in Africa, especially in Nigeria should engage women in all aspects of its activity. Incorporating women in leadership ministry would make a clear difference between Christianity and the contemporary African traditional religion, which is known for marginalization of women in its dogma. An opportunity should be given to all groups without restriction to gender to decide what is

to be inculturated and what is not. The story of Vo Gyang is a proof case of the yearning of women in Nigeria to preach, teach, and lead in churches.

Vo Gyang, a female evangelist, was called forth among the Birom tribe in Plateau state, Nigeria, in late 1927 to go and evangelize the Ganawuri (the hill tribe) known for the myths about cannibalism. She was a committed Christian woman so devout that men were scared to approach her for marriage. At the time she sensed God calling her to preach to the Ganawuri community. The relationship between the Ganawuri tribe and the Birom tribe, from which she came, at that time was very sour. When she decided to go and preach to the Ganawuri tribe, many people discouraged her from going to evangelize the cannibal tribe. In addition, the fear that the people were cannibals and the inter-community conflict, which might not make moving from her community to the other community safe, dominated her mind. Nevertheless, she responded, "If the Lord wants me to go and preach to the cannibals I am quite willing to go" (Isichei 171). Elizabeth Isichei writes that Vo Gyang went and planted a church among the hill tribe (Ganawuri), and she was not harmed. She lived with the people and had a fruitful ministry. She adapted using contextualization or inculturation. As a result of her being with the Ganawuri people, the conflict between the two tribes came to an end. She became a peacemaker to the two communities.

Vo Gyang had a considerable influence on Birom and Ganawuri women, and her achievements, according to those who knew her, were many. Listing her achievements, six of her female contemporaries stressed the following ones: her translation of the Bible into the Ganawuri language, the way she assimilated the Ganawuri culture and customs

and learned their language, and the fact that she did not put a barrier between herself and those less educated (Isichei 173).

Global Experience of Women in Ministry

The problem of femininity is a global phenomenon within Christian circles. Some have accepted that the Church is made up of both males and females and so they should have equal roles. Others see the issue of sexuality as a major factor in determining leadership roles within the Christian community. Sarah Sumner remarks that men have dominated women everywhere in the world in every generation of history (136). For those who accept the inspiration and the authority of the Bible as powerful in transforming life, stand as a voice, calling for the admission of women into ministerial leadership.

John Wijngaards, in his work, shares the view that the Roman Catholic Church and its ministries urgently need to be reformed. In Catholicism, like other Christian churches, the ordination to priesthood is restricted to men only. The official position of the Roman Catholic Church on ordination as expressed in the current canon law and the catechism of the church is that only a baptized man validly receives sacred ordination. The church's teaching on the restriction of its ordination to men says that masculinity was integral to the personhood of both Jesus and the men Christ called apostles. The Roman Catholic Church sees maleness and femaleness as two different ways of expressing common humanity. It teaches an ontological (i.e., essential) difference between humanity expressed as male and female humanity. While many functions are interchangeable between men and women, some are not because maleness and femaleness are not interchangeable (29). Wijngaards believes that the traditional view on women's

ordination holds no truth as far as the Scripture is concerned: “I do not support antiquated views on priesthood or power hungry clericalism. The love of Christ was and is bestowed on all of us men and women” (30).

Wijngaards admonishes the Catholic adherents that the second Vatican Council is a good basis for church reform, and their frustration with the church leadership should not make them go beyond their boundary. He asserts that women in the church should be ordained because to him that was the only way to express Catholic response. Wijngaards argues that if devotion to Mary is the seal of correct Christology, the full integration of women in all spheres of the Church is the hallmark of genuine Catholic salvation.

Wijngaards subscribes to women being treated equally with men:

I have come to the clear recognition that the reasons for barring women from ordination cannot be substantiated from Scripture or tradition. Sacred Scripture leaves the question wide open. In so-called Catholic tradition, women were excluded from ministries because of social conditions and cultural prejudice. (31)

Wijngaards articulates how the church’s tradition does not acknowledge women’s ordination; he describes it as counterfeit. The church is still following the old Roman law that has destroyed all evidence from Scripture and tradition. Wijngaards admits the ordination of women as deacons in the first millennium and the age-old devotion to Mary as priest (160).

The Church of the Nazarene

History offers glimpses into theological and social institutional atmospheres that led women to join the stream of leadership in the Church of the Nazarene. The few women ordained only in the church affirmed their argument or reason for ordination in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Many of the women argued a dispensational view of the

Holy Spirit, believing that at a certain period in history the Holy Spirit gives unusual gifts and freedom to God's people. One of the biblical cornerstones on which these women built ministerial careers was the word of Joel quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:17).

Rebecca Laird recounts that the Church of the Nazarene emerged as a result of the holiness movement in 1895 in America. Laird, however, wrestles with the issue of how women who testified to a clear calling of the Holy Spirit and who manifested obvious gifts could be denied the right to preach. This conviction opens the door to women in the Church of the Nazarene to receive ordination into ministry (11).

Laird offers a fascinating historical glance at the twelve ordained pioneer female ministers in the Church of the Nazarene who helped shape the life of the Church and became pacesetters in the ordination of women. Antoinette Brown was the first ordained woman in America. Phoebe Palma was known for piety, advocated for liberation of women and slaves, and was a great preacher. Lucy Knott was one of the "Kentucky women of distinguished ability" (44). Others included Maye McRenolds, Santos Elizondo, Elsie Wallace, Suzan Norris, Martha E. Curry, and Olive Winchester.

The Changing Role of Women in Nigeria

Many factors necessitate the changing role of women in Nigeria today. Women have moved back to their roles earlier played in the pre-colonial days and reinforced its structures through modern education and civilization. Prominent among these factors are the changing economic situation within Nigerian society and modern education.

The search for job opportunities brought about mass movement of people from rural areas to urban cities as youth (men and women) were graduating from high schools and universities. As Nigerian society was changing in terms of industries and physical

development, many people see the cities as places where they can go to find jobs. Many cities, therefore, produced large populations with various social issues and needs.

The problem of corruption among military leaders when Nigeria was under military rule and the corrupt attitudes of the politicians threw the country into poor economic shape, leading to the closure of many viable industries and companies. Furthermore, the emergence of religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria brought about great division and lack of peace where people had lived together peacefully for many years. These situations made Nigeria very unsafe. Hence, the need to reach the growing number of people in the cities with the gospel became an intrinsic vision to many evangelical women. This situation also led to the formation of interreligious associations among Nigerian women to discuss the way forward.

Many women also thought that they had a responsibility to salvage the decaying morality within the country as many women became more educated.

Politically, Nigerian women are actively involved in the politics of their native land and are receiving great support from men. Nigeria had a general election in 2007 with a woman elected as speaker of the house and many women elected to the senate, with two serving as lieutenant governors. The state of Plateau has a woman, Polin Tallen, as a deputy governor. Women in Nigeria are receiving traditional titles that formerly only men could bear and occupy. Many women in Nigeria today are called “Chief Mrs.” The traditional title means the person has made a significant contribution to the community, and, in the absence of the chief, the traditional titleholder could take the place of the chief.

The Changing Role of Women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria

Basically, the scenario that brought about the change in the role of women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria was very peculiar. A practical visitation of the Holy Spirit on sons and daughters was experienced in 1972 in the District of Gindiri Plateau State, Nigeria. At that time a great work of the Holy Spirit manifesting in the lives of women, men, boys, and girls convicted many people of their sins and urged them to tell others about salvation in Christ: "A localized manifestation of the spirit of God happened in Gindiri district in 1972, spreading randomly to other districts" (Gutip 230).

Gutip reports that the movement of the Holy Spirit on the Plateau church started in Gindiri. Mrs. Habila, one of the women in the church, sensed a strange power, a filling power of the Holy Spirit. She stood up in the church and announced that she saw the Holy Spirit coming on her. She went on to plead for those holding on to things not right or who had not yet accepted Christ as their Lord to repent. She invited people who needed repentance to come forward. A lot of people responded to her call. Information soon reached people within the Gindiri compound, and they started to rush to church to see what was going on. A crowd suddenly gathered in the church that became impossible to give adequate help to everyone, as all were confessing all kinds of sins and some were weeping bitterly. The situation went on until early morning the next day (235).

The visitation of the Holy Spirit on this woman led to great revival in the church. The revival spread to all the districts, comprising Plateau, Bauchi, and other surrounding states. Women were in the forefront of this revival. Gutip writes that many Christians whose lives had been somewhat stagnant were revitalized into action. Many asked if they could go to their home areas and preach and some were permitted to do so. The

movement spread like wildfire to many parts of the Plateau where the boys and girls went. Other revivals of the same nature began to occur (237).

This development brought about renewed interest, strength, and hope for women in COCIN about evangelism. Since then, many women in the church took the preaching of the gospel upon their shoulders as part of their divine responsibility. Nevertheless, in spite of this great and enormous work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the women, the church still denies them the opportunity to function as ordained clergy.

Conclusion

In summary of the arguments for and against the leadership and ordination of women as discussed in this chapter, I wish to make the following submission:

Apparently, hesitancy to open wide the avenues of service to women by the traditionalists stems from the desire and belief to remain true to scriptural teaching on women. From what I have observed, people's understanding of the Scripture affects their interpretations of the Scripture and their conducts as well. The realization came as a result of the heat of debate over the difficult passages in the Scripture I worked with in this project.

First, I would like to observe that the opponents of women's leadership and ordination have failed to take into cognizance the progressive feature of the reading of the Scripture and only focused their arguments on the conservative domain that has negatively affected their view of women. The Bible, though inspired by God, was written by fallible human beings who undoubtedly in the course of writing the Scriptures might have shared from their worldviews, some personal opinions as in Paul's writing: "To the rest I say not the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:7, 12). They most likely made certain descriptions and illustrations based on their belief systems and experience of their times. For example, the

Bible speaks of the world as a square, having “four corners” (Rev. 7:1). Today, the science and astronomy of the Bible are considered inaccurate when compared by modern and postmodern standards. Modern science speaks of the world as a spherical entity.

Furthermore, the most sophisticated weapons any nation could use in the time of war in the Jewish world were bow, arrow, and swords. Chariots and horses were the most effective means of transportation the military could use. The Bible speaks about that clearly in 2 Kings 6:17. Today in modern technology bow, arrow, sword, chariot, and horses have become rather inferior means of war and transportation.

Second, biblical writers in the Old and New Testaments wrote as if slavery were a legitimate social institution that should not be questioned: “As for your male and female slaves whom you may have you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you” (Lev. 25:44). Paul in giving exhortation to the church states, “Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling” (Eph. 6:5). Today, the church looks at the issue of slavery in a different dimension. The church has a complete different worldview of the issue of slavery. Slavery is no longer a legitimate institution within the concept of the church but the church believes slavery is a violation of human liberty and dignity. Therefore, to consider the times in which the Scripture was written when interpreting its meanings and its message for today’s believers is very important. Because people’s worldviews have shifted on many things in the Scriptures based on time and experiences, traditionalists have no obvious reason to remain conventional on the issue of women. The church’s worldview on women should also be reframed to accommodate women into leadership roles.

Third, in the case of Paul's mandate for women's silence, a universal principle in that text needs to be clearly understood and applied. If Paul's statement means that women should not teach at all as literally stated in the Scripture, then perhaps the remark came not because of their nature as women but because they were unlearned. I believe Paul's principle basically was that those who do not understand the Scriptures and are not able to teach the Scriptures accurately should not be allowed to teach others.

Today the body of Christ is witnessing some erroneous teaching and unhealthy interpretations of the Scriptures by some people and majority of these people are men. Paul's general command of silence should be applied to those men that are engaging in wrong teachings. They should not be allowed to continue because they are men. They should be stopped and be silent.

Fourth, my prayerful study of the Scriptures and examination of church history and tradition convinced me that women should be admitted to ordained ministry like their male counterparts. For example, in Genesis 1:27, the Bible says that God created man his own image, male and female he created them. A man reflects God's image as much as a woman does. The ideal church structure, therefore, would fully reflect the loving character of God and would function much better if the church would recognize and incorporate both male and female personnel as pastors in its ministry.

Fifth, believers should also understand that Jesus broke with the tradition of male superiority on several occasions during his earthly ministry and he categorically announced that his mission was to liberate and to set the captives free (Luke 4:18). In demonstrating his liberation work, Jesus welcomed Mary Magdalene, from whom he cast

out seven demons, as one of his best followers and revealed his risen body to her first (Mark 16:9), Paul acknowledged female apostles as coworkers (Rom. 16:1-7).

Sixth, the coming of Christ into the world has indeed created a community of reconciliation (God's family), the Church, the covenant people of God. Under the old community (Old Testament), the law and its entire injunction seem to create tension that places women as lesser beings. Jimmy Carter observes that women were seen as generally being responsible for the evil in the world and severely segregated from the social and religious lives of their communities as inferior and unteachable beings (129).

Jesus' disposition was to accept, to forgive, to heal, and to break the wall of partition and to bring the unity among the Jews, Gentiles, men, and women. These passionate and loving acts of Christ give a good big picture of the place of a woman in the ministry and life of Christ. To me the love of Christ is clear evidence that Jesus intended women to play major and equal roles in his church. Turning women away from their call or opposing their call without recourse to their genuine conviction from God would amount to theological pitfall.

Seventh, evangelism, unity, and spiritual growth of the church should be the collective concern rather than on gender as issue in ministry. My greatest blessing is to see young men and women leaving and taking hope in Jesus the Christ and families being united, transformed, and healed (Ngcobo 84). I therefore conclude that no position, including deacon, pastor, or priest, should be withheld from women. The paradigm shift of present time should be accepted in the light of the revealed word of God in faith and focus should be made on the direction where the Spirit of God is leading in his ministry in this generation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The ministry of women within the Church of Christ in Nigeria has been the casualty of church doctrinal struggles. The evangelistic mandate and liberty of women to preach, teach, and lead in the local congregations in the capacity of ordained ministers like their male counterparts are denied.

Jesus taught that Christians should open their eyes and look at the fields and see that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few (Matt. 9:37). This statement indicates the need for more workers in the field of evangelism. Ironically, the Church of Christ in Nigeria tends to limit and restrict women, a great section of Christ's workforce from the pulpit for whom services are very important in calling many people to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus in spite of the fewer number of workers needed to labor in the field.

Contemporary traditions, cultural beliefs, and interpretation of certain scriptural passages are believed to be the guiding principles for this wide disparity between women and men in ordained ministry, particularly within the Church of Christ in Nigeria. A more holistic approach to this problem, therefore, is needed to bridge this wide gap. The ideal community of God's people (men and women) needs to be holistically involved in God's Great Commission mandate.

A holistic gospel conceptually is the integration of all members of the body of Christ into the ministry of the gospel. This metaphor is seen in Romans 12:5: "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

This study sought to address the issue of discrimination against women and to identify the grounds for denying ordination to women within the Church of Christ in Nigeria and how this understanding can take a new dimension. To meet this goal, I formulated a number of survey research questions and telephone interviews were conducted with several participants within the Church of Christ in Nigeria. Two basic research questions guided the research project.

Research Question 1

In what ways are the leadership's values, attitudes, and beliefs against the ordination of women shaped by the indigenous culture and worldview of the people?

The answer to this question offered the basis for this study. A questionnaire was used to gather information on the attitude of the church leadership and members of the church on the ordination of women. The questionnaire attempted to identify whether the position of the leadership on the issue of women's ordination is similar to or the same as what the members of the church generally conceived and how the indigenous cultural worldview of the people influences their attitudes against the ordination of women.

People differ in terms of the degree to which they are, based on the environment in which they found themselves. Every country has multitude cultures and the cultures are characterized by their degree of individualism or collectivism. Some individuals think, feel, act, and behave like collectivists within a collectivists' culture (Fern 24). Edward F. Fern, also observes that several factors such as language, historical period, and geographical region discern different subjective cultures and he further defines subjective culture, as "shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values found among speakers of a

particular language who live during the same historical period in a specific geographic region” (14).

Cultural value orientation, therefore, has great impact and influence in the lives of the people. If elements such as dominant and gender disparity have value in a given culture especially among men, the spirit of dominance is likely to permeate every sphere of life of the given community, thus affecting their worldview in every aspect including high social status (Fern 25).

Research Question 2

In what ways does biblical understanding shape the leadership’s attitude against the ordination of women?

This question sought to find out how the leadership’s attitude against the ordination of women is impacted by their understanding of Scripture. To a great extent, interpersonal relationships and communication pattern among Christians are developed based on the way they understand the Scripture. Communication is a cultural phenomena (Lindlof 43). Arguably, the understanding of Scripture is also consequential to the level of education the Christians within a particular church denomination have attained. This assertion makes the issue of education very critical in the life of the church.

Because the question of education is very sensitive, John Chidi Nwafor states that *education* is the art of informing, forming, and strengthening the powers of the body and the mind, the human faculties. It is a process for transforming culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society (187).

The assumption of this study is that certain practices, beliefs, and interpretations of the Scripture serve as a guide for the denial of ordination to women for pastoral ministry in the church. The question, therefore, sought to identify the dynamics and to provide an educational agenda such as inculturation of the gospel that would help to transform such traditional thought on the side of the leadership on the ordination of women and provide possibility for men to support and encourage women in their quest to herald the gospel.

As a working hypothesis, this question, sought to employ dialogue and inculturation as effective ways of identifying the barrier to the ordination of women. This claim has been asserted in Chapter 1 as a ministry intervention strategy. Dialogue and inculturation of the gospel help to bring people together to realize God's plan for humanity.

Participants

In establishing access to and making contact with selecting participants, Arvin Seidman asserts that the first step one takes in selecting participants for an interview study is that the interviewer must both establish access to them and make contact because interviewing involves a relationship between the interviewer and the participant and how the interviewer gains access to potential participants can affect the beginning of the relationship (40). I personally contacted most of the participants and introduced myself. Many of them are aware that I am studying in the United States of America. I requested for their telephone numbers for the purpose of the research interview.

Seidman suggested several important reasons for making contacts with the participants before the actual interview commences: (1) to ascertain whether the subject

of the research's study is central to the participants' experience, (2) to facilitate communication, (3) for confirmation of acceptance/appointments, (4) to develop database of the participants, and (5) to determine the best times, places, and dates of the interview (48-49).

The participants focused in this research study were basically some selected key leaders in the church and also selected key church members. Because of the significance of the research topic of this study, I needed to focus on some stakeholders in the church who have good experience as policy makers to respond pragmatically and rationally to the research topic.

Furthermore, the selection of the participants was carefully done to have a fair range of representation of the policy makers and because of the participants' wealth of experience and maturity as leaders in the church. The age of the participants was very much an issue in this study. I decided to pick people who are older and who have served in leadership positions for quite some time with a good range of experience. Fortunately, most of the church leaders are middle aged whose ages range from 40 years and above.

The majority of the church leaders are serving pastors, ordained ministers, and are either serving as part-time leaders or are in office full-time. Some of the other men participants are not quite educated but are very active and committed Christians. The criteria of sufficiency and saturation was used in the selection of the number of respondents or participants for the research project and, of course, practical exigencies of time and other resources played vital roles in the decision on the number of the participants within the Church of Christ in Nigeria.

Interviewing fewer participants may save time in a study (Seidman 55). In this research, fifteen key church leaders and five key lay male church members randomly were picked making a total of twenty participants contacted or interviewed. These participants were chosen from different local church congregations at different locations that fairly represent the numbers of the key leaders from the different Regional Church Councils (RCC) and those working in the offices at the headquarters, in order to have good views of the people.

Instrumentation

This study was a qualitative case study that made use of a research questionnaire and telephone interviews. Thomas R. Lindlof asserts that the purposes of qualitative interviews are to allow people to tell about events, processes, or objects that exist outside the immediate interview context (172). “Qualitative interviews are a storytelling zone par excellence in which people are given complete license craft their selves in language” (173). For the purpose of effectiveness of this research work, I decided to test the research topic prior to the actual interview by providing robust questions on the topic. The purpose was to help me understand the worthiness of the research topic and how closely the questions were related to the research problem.

The initial pilot test was carried out through a focus group team seminar in May 2008. The focus group consisted of men and women from different local congregations, friends, and colleagues at the college of theology in Gindiri Plateau state, Nigeria. Also in attendance at the focus group team seminar were trained women theologians who are currently involved in ministry within the local church as teachers in secondary school or Bible college, elders in the churches, and office administrators.

The group appointed a moderator to chair the discussions and a secretary to document the discussions. I provided questions for the discussion on identifying the church's gender worldview roadblock to women's ordination. The group brainstormed together and provided a broad picture of women's experiences and the agony of discrimination. Various complimentary statements were made on the research topic such as, "The topic is timely, welcome, worth researching, Spirit led." This response shows a great disparity between the key leaders' perspective of women's leadership in the church and those of grassroots church members.

Design and Use of Interview Questions

Asking good questions and designing good question order is a very vital strategy in research interview. Good interview questions can help or motivate a respondent to think in new ways about a topic. On the other hand, bad interview questions can confuse people or disabuse them of any notions they may have had of the importance of the study (Lindlof 194). A researcher can put respondents at ease by asking or starting the interview with

1. An easy question,
2. A less threatening or nonjudgmental question, or
3. A sensitive question (Lindlof 194-203).

Beth L. Leech also asserts that certain types of questions should be avoided in research interviews, such as loaded questions, double-barreled questions, leading questions, and presuming questions (3).

Speaking on the best type of interview questions, Lindlof asserts that the best single type of a qualitative semi-structured interview question is the *grand tour question*.

According to Lindlof, the grand tour questions allow the respondents to present a verbal tour of their experience or what they know very well. Furthermore, *the grand tour question* is used to understand how an activity or events usually transpire from start to finish or how a social setting is organized. He maintains that the typical grand tour questions interview as the term implies, should begin by asking questions that relate to description, how, what, or why. For example, questions such as, could you describe, or how would you characterize, or what do you think. (195-203).

I made use of Leech's and Lindlof's views in formulating my interview questions. I also made provision for *loose-ends* questions near the end of the interview. The *loose-ends* questions usually occur to the researcher at some point in the course of the interview but are not ask instantly so as not to disrupt the flow of the discussion. Intriguing remarks by the respondents usually prompt such questions.

Development of Research Instruments

All the interview questions were written in English and the research interviews were conducted in the Hausa language (Nigerian indigenous language) and were later translated into the English language. The questions were designed to identify the worldview roadblock to the ordination of women in the church of Christ in Nigeria. The set of the semi-structured interview questions is found in its entirety in Appendix B.

The research questionnaire was developed from the two basic research questions. Each of the two basic research questions had three questions that provided what Leech and Lindlof call the grand tour interview questions (Leech 2; Lindlof 195). The questions in the first section sought to identify the indigenous cultural elements that shaped the leaders' perception on the ordination of women within the church. In the second section,

the questions were designed to identify the ways the biblical understanding shaped the leaders' attitudes on the ordination of women.

I structured my interview notes in such a way to remind me of the specific interview process. Focusing on the two most important emphases during the interview, I made use of Seidman's idea of a qualitative flexible method of interviewing (84-92) that allowed me through the course of discussion to draw out additional significant information that was not necessarily derived specifically from the designed questions. This flexibility helped strengthen the research framework.

The research generally made use of telephone interview questions and discussions to gather information or data for the project. During the interview, I audiotaped or recorded the participants' responses or answers rather than just writing down the answers. The research questions designed were used during the telephone interviews I conducted.

Telephone interviews share many of the advantages of face-to-face interviewing such as high response rate. They enable the interviewer to correct some obvious misunderstanding of statements and possible use of probes (Robson 282). The research was focused on two groups of people, namely, key theologically trained male church leaders and male lay church leaders.

I provided a notebook that I used to take note of all the discussions on phone in addition to audio recording. Lindlof highlights several significant virtues of tape recording interviews. It enables the researcher to capture the interview more or less exactly as it was spoken. The interview texts can be imported into data analysis software and portions of the texts can be cut and pasted into research reports. Another important reason to tape record is that it can free up investigators to participate more fully in the

interview (186-88). Sequentially, a question was first written down in the notebook or noted as question (1) or (2) as the case may be, and then the response to the question was noted down beneath the noted question. In addition, any question that arose from the response of the participant, which requires further explanation, was noted, and if statements made by the respondent appeared unclear, I asked the respondent to repeat himself.

Furthermore, a research assistant was hired to facilitate contacts with some of the key leaders that I was unable to meet personally. The research assistant helped in collecting their telephone numbers and passed the telephone numbers on to me. The telephone numbers of the participants were collected only when they indicated interest in participating in the interview. When the person was open to the research, the research assistant proceeded to collect his telephone numbers, but when a person objected or was not willing to be part of the research interview, he was ignored. The role of the research assistant was very important because of the fluctuation in the telephone network that Nigeria sometime experiences. In the case where I had difficulty contacting a participant from the United States, due to the person's location in Nigeria, a research assistant was allowed to contact the individual with the same set of questionnaire and the responses were later transmitted to me.

I focused on the church leaders because they are the policy makers, and I wanted to know what shaped the leaders' understanding on the ministry of women. The questionnaire was designed to find out if the interviewee has any opinions against the ordination of women and whether his opinion is scriptural or cultural.

The same questionnaire was used for all the participants because I wanted to understand from both groups their worldview on the issue of the ordination of women, whether their understanding was biblically or culturally guided. The interview I had with each of the respondents range from thirty to forty five minutes, depending on what the respondents had to say.

Data Collection

The collection of data was based on the use of focus group interview protocols with a semi-structured interview approach. The approach has a predetermined question, but the order can be modified based on the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate. Question wording can be changed and explanations given. Particular questions that seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included (Robson 270).

I took the following steps in collecting the data for the project. I noted carefully the information gathered from the focus group team. I also noted the telephone interviews data and the discussions carefully. I gave due consideration to what the participants said and took into account their words with all seriousness. I asked questions and received answers from the people I engaged as participants in my study (Robson 269).

A research assistant helped collect and returned information to me. I was also personally involved in the interview discussion and collection of data.

Because of fluctuation in the telephone network and difficulty in setting up convenient interview times with the participants, the process of data collection extended to a period of about two weeks. In a case where telephone interviews became impossible, the research assistant helped do the interviews.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is commonly divided into two broad types: exploratory and confirmatory (Robson 398). Also commenting on the process of analysis, Seidman states, “It is difficult to separate between the process of gathering and analyzing data. Even before the actual interviews begin, the researcher may anticipate results on the basis of his or her reading and preparation for the study” (113). Thus, one always faces the challenge of determining how to look at data in a way that yields the most appealing and perceptive view.

The analysis of the data was based on the questionnaire designed and the verbal or oral telephone interviews conducted with the key church leaders and experienced lay churchmen (exploratory and confirmatory). The audio recording was transcribed and translated into English. I processed what the participants said, employing narrative and descriptive approaches.

In order to remain consistent and pragmatic in the interpretation and analysis, the participants were put into two groups and assigned a group number. The key church leaders came under group #1 and the Lay church members came under group #2. Furthermore, the analysis was also based on the two broad research questions. The questions were stated, followed by the participants’ responses. I also tried to avoid repeating respondents’ statements by the use of a specific color to indicate that another respondent had given the same particular expression.

The analysis went in the following order. First were the views of the key church leaders on the roadblock to the ordination of women within the Church of Christ in

Nigeria. The second step was the analysis of the views of some key male church leaders/members. The analysis was made in English.

Validity and Reliability

One thing that impresses me about Christian faith is the fact that believers have freedom to choose what they want. “I would readily describe myself as a feminist. I favor the ordination and full involvement of women in the church’s ministry” (Schmidt 8).

Prior to conducting the research, I had an opportunity in June 2007 to preach in my local church congregation back in Nigeria on the topic “Men and Women in the kingdom of God.” The Mangu church was one of the local church congregations I pastored before I came to Asbury Theological Seminary in 2005.

My texts were Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:15-21. My emphasis was on male and female relationships in the new community of God’s people. The response of the church members after I had delivered the sermon was impressive and inspiring, and I was encouraged to pursue my research in the area of identifying gender roadblocks to the ordination of women.

Today a dramatic increase is seen in the number of women being enrolled in seminary with increase zeal for evangelism. A sense of call being experienced by these women is as strong as the one experienced by men aspiring to Christian ministry. Many have felt a strong desire to participate in Christian leadership ministry, and a lot of women are seen quitting their lucrative jobs to honor the call to preach. Ordination will accord them the privilege and opportunity to be recognized and function as clerics like their male counterparts.

The validity of the research is limited for various reasons. Selection was dependent on the openness of the church leaders and members. Preference was given to people in leadership because the leaders of the church typically formulate policy or guiding principles. The selection was also focused on people from diverse church regions with a variety of educational and ministry experiences.

This study was focused on collecting data from participants within a distinct evangelical church denomination (Church of Christ in Nigeria). I made the choice of the Church of Christ in Nigeria because I personally belong to it and tend to have some experience in its policy and tradition. The leaders and members whom this study was based were those who individually expressed their willingness to participate in the interviews. This choice limited the range of this study.

Variables

The variables in this research study were multidimensional. They related to the experiences and perspectives of the participants. First was the issue of gender disparity in the ministry within the Church of Christ in Nigeria. The intervening variables that may have affected the result of the study involve primary church demographics such as the population of women within the church and their interest in church ministry. Second was the issue of whether women were allowed to be involved in some kind of leadership roles in the church, the nature of the leadership roles, and the dynamics behind restricting women to such offices. Because the research was qualitative, the variables were mainly expressed in a descriptive and narrative manner.

Generalizability

This research did not intend to cover all aspects of gender issues or women's issues being experienced within the Church in Nigeria such as widowhood, girls' education, or head covering; rather, it was restricted to the issue of the ordination of women. Women have already been in ministry serving in different capacities as seen in the history of the church. Many of them are trained theologians and are teaching or training pastors and also involved in leadership (elders) and evangelistic works of the church, but the ordination door is still closed to them. The project aimed at identifying the elements that shaped the church's understanding on the issue.

Ethics of the Study

Confidentiality is very significant in all areas of life and business. Fern states, "Privacy is an interpersonal boundary control process" (51). The participants have the right to privacy and also the right to request that their identity and what they have to say should remain confidential: however, in a study such as this one, the anonymity of participants is very difficult to maintain though not impossible. I worked to protect the identity or the interest of the respondents by not causing or making them vulnerable in any way as they were committed to avail themselves for the interview.

In this research study, the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Respondents were also assured of the privacy of their names. I was also committed to preserving the dignity of the participants by not making them vulnerable as a result of their participation in the research project. The participants were also assured of accuracy in the analysis of the information they supplied to me.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to identify or explore gender worldview roadblocks to the ordination of women (from the perspective of male leaders) in the Church of Christ in Nigeria. The Church apparently does not believe in the ordination of women, and the impetus toward greater equality of women and men in ordained ministry in many respects is hindered. The concept of women's subordination to men and division of labor between sexes affects women in most spheres of endeavor. The leadership of the church is comfortable with the fact that women are capable of heading academic institutions and faculties, running major corporations, and leading in their states and country as legislators, judges, and prime ministers or governors but such secular competence does not give women authority to assume spiritual leadership within the assembly of believers.

Profile of Participants

This study involved selected male leaders and male church members within the Church of Christ in Nigeria as my interview participants. The selection was focused on the leaders and lay church members from eight of twenty-five Regional Church Councils. This choice was deliberate to enable me to hear their respective views not only on their position as a church but how the respondents perceive women in their respective cultural setting across the country, particularly where they live and work. The telephone interviews were conducted with two focus groups: (1) theologically trained church leaders and (2) lay church leaders/members as described in Chapter 3.

Respondents with a high worldview believe that men and women are equal and should be allowed to participate in the same ministries as men. Respondents with a low worldview believe that women should not be allowed to participate in the same ministries as men. Respondents with a moderate worldview have no preference (see Table 4.1).

Table 0.1. Worldviews (N= 25)

High	Low	Moderate
Egalitarian Worldview: A belief that men and women are equal and have equal prestige and power	Traditional Worldview: A belief or view that something precious is instituted by authority and should not be changed	Is a less conservative idea on something Simplicity and humble opinion

Twenty-five Regional Church Councils constitute the leadership core of the church. I decided to restrict my interviews within eight out of the twenty-five RCCs and one chaplaincy out of the three. My choice of the participants was based on trust, familiarity, and a good blend worldviews of the people.

The Church of Christ in Nigeria operates a unified and central system of administration. Policies are made at the top (GCC) for all the Regional Councils as indicated in Figure 1.1 (p. 17).

The word *Regional* does not refer to civil or government geopolitical province. The region is a church district and several of the regional councils could be located within a state or county depending on the number of worshipers and financial capability of the local churches within an area.

Age and Educational Background

The average age of the participants was 43. The oldest of these was 58 and the youngest was 39. The interviewees had different and diverse educational backgrounds. The highest academically educated person holds a PhD, degree from one of the Nigerian universities. Five hold Bible college diplomas. One holds a certificate and twelve hold seminary degrees as described in Table 4.2.

Table 0.2. Demographics of Respondents from 25 Regional Church Councils

Respondent	Regional Council	Age Range	Clergy	Laity	Role of Spouse	Education	Years of service	Cultural World-view	Biblical World-view
1	A	45-50	✓		Home-maker	Seminary degree	20-25	Low	Low
2	B	43-47	✓		Home-maker	Seminary degree	15-20	Low	Low
3	C	45-50	✓		Home-maker	Seminary diploma	20-25	Low	Low
4	D	40-45	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	10-15	High	High
5	E	25-30	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	10-15	High	Mod
6	F	45-50	✓		Home-maker	Seminary degree	20-25	High	Mod
7	G	45-50	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	20-25	Low	Low
8	H	45-50	✓		Home-maker	Seminary diploma	10-15	Low	Low
9	H	50-58			Worker	PhD.	35-40	Low	Low
10	B	40-45		✓	Worker	Certificate	15-20	Mod	Mod
11	B	35-40		✓	Worker	Diploma	10-15	Low	Low
12	G	40-45		✓	Worker	Diploma	10-15	High	High
13	D	34-39	✓		Worker	Seminary diploma	10-12	High	High
14	E	35-40	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	10-15	High	High
15	D	40-45	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	15-20	Mod	Low
16	H	33-40	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	8-13	mod	Low
17	D	35-40		✓	Worker	Diploma	6-10	High	High
18	Chaplaincy	40-45	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	8-13	High	High
19	✓	45-50	✓		Home-maker	Seminary degree	15-20	Low	Low
20	✓	35-40	✓		Worker	Seminary degree	10-15	Mod	Low

The chaplaincy has equal status as the Regional Church Council. The participants with whom I talked or interviewed have various years in church leadership, ranging from eight to forty years. Some of the leaders function as RCC chairmen while others function as pastors and elders in local church congregations. This length of time in leadership of biblical and theological education gives the participants ample opportunity to speak from their experience and their beliefs on the topic of the research.

Any research based on in-depth interviewing is labor intensive, and a researcher must avoid any in-depth analysis of the interview data until the researcher makes sure all the interviews are completed (Seidman 112-13):

I believe that to work most reliably with the words of participants, the researcher has to transform those spoken words into a written text to study. The primary method of creation text from interviews is to tape-record the interviews and to transcribe them. Each word a participant speaks reflects his or her consciousness. The participants' thoughts become embodied in their words. To substitute the researcher's paraphrasing or summaries of what the participants say for their actual words is to substitute the researcher's consciousness for that of the participants. Although inevitably the researcher's consciousness will play a major role in the interpretation of interview data that consciousness must interact with the words of the participant recorded as fully and as accurately as possible. (114)

In my work in this chapter, I made use of Seidman's suggestions in analyzing and transcribing the interview data. I evaded any analysis until I made sure that I have made contact and interviewed all my participants adequately. Then I listened to the tape about three times before I transcribed what they said into written text. After studying the text, I then translated the text into English in my project.

The first research question investigated how the leadership's attitude against the ordination of women is shaped by the indigenous culture and worldview of the people. The questionnaire and interviews here were created to address the following categories: current cultural perceptions of women, whether men and women are equal in terms of family decision making, and whether women have basic civil rights comparable to men. The respondents were encouraged to share their experiences and attitudes freely. All the respondents to the questionnaire were married. The questions were adequately answered in two stages.

The first stage was the views or responses of the church leaders as focus group number one FG #1 (Clergy). The second stage was the views of church members as focus group FG #2 (Laity), on the perception of a woman in their culture (see Table 4.3).

Table 0.3. Cultural and Biblical Worldviews

Clergy	Lay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Women are regarded as second class citizens ○ Women do not have rights culturally comparable to men ○ Culturally, women do not have educational opportunities comparable to men ○ Some eminent women's lifestyles impact on their communities greatly ○ Pregnancy, menstruations, and marriage pose problems to women in ministry ○ Scriptures support restriction of Church on women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The marginalization of women is more a cultural phenomenon than a biblical stance ○ The low cultural perception of women promotes the same attitudes in the church ○ Poor interpretation of Scriptures is part of the reasons for the denial of women's place in ministry

At the stage of research question one, this study sought to understand how women are perceived within the participants' culture. Excerpts were carefully taken to represent the majority opinions of the respondents and not a report of every bit of what all the

respondents have said, but the most significant things or statements that represent popular opinions of the participants were chosen.

Findings from FG #1 (A-F) indicated that the status of a woman is categorized into two segments: (1) a married woman, (2) a single lady or marriageable age single lady. A married woman is viewed differently from a none-married (i.e., single) lady. A single lady who is still being engaged has certain rights within her family. To a certain extent according to respondent A, she has the right to choose of a husband. She also has the right to inherit some sort of property from her father in the event of the death of her father and her voice is respected to a certain point in her family. She has this respect because the parents are anticipating that one day she would bring to them some sort of wealth in the family when she gets married and dowry is collected from her husband. She is seen as an asset or possession and as a result of that she is pretty much valued and cherished in the family.

Respondents B and G stated that a married woman loses her prestige because the culture accepts payment (dowry) for women. When a woman is married and dowry is received on her, she is regarded as being purchased from her parents and she becomes a type of property of her husband. Her prestige is lower because of her status as a purchased property. Though her marriage elevates her status, earns her respect, and gives her protection from harassment or intimidation by any individual or group of people in the community, nevertheless she is seen as an acquired property of the husband and is regarded as a second-class person comparable to the status of a man.

Opportunity in Family Decision Making

In the views of the respondents A-H, the trend is changing due to several factors such as education and economic hardships. They stated that culturally, the man is always the boss and the man dictates every decision without giving the woman any opportunity to make any decisions. One of the respondents G, commented, “Culturally, a woman has no right to welcome a guest into the house in the absence of the husband; she has no right to make that decision.” Men make all decisions for their families. However, the situation now is improving due to civilization or urbanization, modern influence and economic recession being experienced in the Nigerian society.

Respondent G observes that little numbers of women are more educated than their husbands and tend to make better income so their status automatically offers them the privilege to make decisions equally with their husband in some families. Respondent G added, “Nevertheless, the percentage of such privilege and circumstances is very low.”

Respondents F, E, and H shared that in their community today, women do have civil rights constitutionally comparable to men, but their rights are still being suppressed by the culture, e.g. Women have opportunity to participate in politics, to have education, to lead and rule, but such rights are contingent (on this marital status). If they are married, they must first of all seek their husbands, permission to do what they want. Again if they are not married and they are of age (older women) they lose their respect in the community because culturally people think that a single woman lives an immoral life and that concept halts her basic civil rights to function in some public domain or sphere.

The responses of the church members on the cultural perceptions of women, equality in terms of family decision making, and women’s basic civil rights comparable

to men had similar views. Some interviews were lengthy and animated while others were less extensive. The variations reflect interests, passions, and experiences of the different respondents.

People in FG #2 (lay church members 9, 10, 11, 12 and 17) shared that women are seen as men's possessions or property. All of them mentioned and stressed that culturally a woman is perceived to be someone who belongs to her husband, and she is under the control of her husband. Her situation in her marital home is the same as when she was a little girl under her parents. The parents dictate for her things to do, so when she comes under her husband, the husband acts like a father to her in terms of power and control. She is seen as a possession not only to her husband but also to all members of her husband's family.

One respondent (9) states that a woman is comparable to a child culturally. A woman is perceived as one who lacks courage and possesses little wisdom, and she is very fragile. Because of her nature, she needs always to be under a man to guide and protect her. He cited an example that men do claim that they have the courage to go out at night for hunting, but women cannot go out at night for hunting because they are always apprehensive and frightened. Respondent 9 said that the Nigerian cultural society today is different from what people knew in the past. He explains that the issue of dowry that tends to enslave a Nigerian woman today had a different concept or understanding in the past. The idea of a dowry was in reciprocity as an appreciation to the parents of a girl for her upbringing. Ironically, the concept later changed when Western education was introduced, giving some girls the opportunity to go to school. Some parents think that

they have invested much in the girls: therefore, they expect much to be paid on their daughters because of their education.

The second factor according to respondent 9 was that people are becoming more materialistic and because of that women are being considered as the property of their husbands due to a high demand for dowry. The third factor according to respondents 9 and 18 was the role of the colonizers. The British colonial masters contributed to the low concept of a Nigerian woman. According to respondents 9 and 18, during the colonial era, women's role was restricted to home making. Women were not employed to work in offices nor recruited into the armed forces: therefore, such nuances contributed to the low concept of Nigerian women. The colonizers do not make any strong emphases on the role of women in the society, other than restricting them to home making.

Cultural Divide between Men and Women

The questionnaire and interviews sought to discover cultural divide between men and women (see Appendix D section one: question #2).

The respondents in FG #1 A-H confessed that they had a cultural divide. Respondent A stated that in his community women are not expected to sit jointly with men when an important family or community issue is to be discussed. The respondent stated that women have their roles different from the men. Women's roles are mainly restricted in the home. Women cook, take care of the children, keep the house clean and also meet the man's sexual desires.

Respondents B-H and #18-20 expressed similar views as respondent A with a slight difference that a woman can be allowed to sit with men if she is recognized with a peculiar traditional title.

Virtually all the respondents from the eight RCCs believe that men are the breadwinners for the family. They believe a man gives protection to the family and makes important decisions for the family.

On providing counseling to men, respondents #18 and D-F said women do sometimes provide counseling to men but mostly in private. Their opinions are not always respected; in their views, they are comfortable with advice given by a woman.

On education, respondents A, C, D, H and #18 stated that girls' education was not popular in the colonial era, but nowadays parents have great awareness and are beginning to see the need to send girls to school.

Respondents B, F, and G stated that many parents are now sending their female children to school. The understanding in the colonial era was that the girl would one day leave the parents for marriage, so if she is developed educationally, the husband would be the one to benefit materially and financially from her education because she would be the husband's possession. That understanding hindered girls' educational opportunities very much in the past.

On leadership and economic opportunities, women do not have those opportunities comparable to men. Respondents E, F particularly stated that though a good number of women have attained the same educational standard with men but the culture would not allow them to have the same economic and leadership opportunities with men.

Respondent D stated that women are not empowered, and they also experienced much prejudice. He said that in offices, male candidates are given more attention in employment than the female candidates because culturally people believe that a man should be given first place and a woman second.

The Response from FG #2 Lay Leaders

The major finding from FG #2 came from respondent 9 who stated that the cultural divide was imbedded in creation. He said biologically God created man differently from a woman. He gave example of pregnancy and child bearing, which are restricted to a woman only. He further stated that in the community where the worship and practice of animism is highly held, women are restricted from participating or going into shrines along with men. the reason according to the respondent, shrines have some secrets that women are not allowed to know. I probed, “What is that”? He said, “You know. You know our culture.”

On education and economic and leadership opportunities, respondents 14 and 15 in FG #2 expressed the views that Nigerian history says that Nigerian women were very powerful economically before the coming of the European colonizers. Because the country had no Western education before the coming of the Portuguese in Nigeria, traditional Nigerian education was taught to both boys and girls. Women had general agricultural opportunities such as farming, fishing and animal rearing. For the nomads like the Fulanis, who live mainly in the northern part of Nigeria, not only the men owned the cows, but women, too, owned cows and the women were economically very viable.

Remarkable Lifestyle of a Woman in Community

Still under research question one, the interview and questions sought to determine the impression the respondents have regarding how women are respected in their communities (see Appendix D, section one question #3).

I did substantial explorations into male feelings and experiences regarding women and the findings and analysis in this section capitalized on the information generated.

The respondents in FG #1 acknowledged that they have women in their communities and that their lifestyles had great impact in their communities. Each one of the respondents pinpointed or identified a woman in his community whose lifestyle was a source of encouragement to the people in the community.

One of the respondents E went as far as listing five women in his community whose lifestyle made great impact in the community and other respondents stated that many women played important roles in the sphere of politics. Many of them have been elected as the community's representatives in the state assembly and national assembly (i.e., parliament).

One of the respondents D mentioned that in his community a woman was the first person to write the history of his people. She also wrote the local language of his people. He commented that the writing of the local language was more important because Islamic culture had submerged the original culture and language of the people in his community. Her work helped to revive the identity and the original language of the people in his community. People are now beginning to see the difference between Islamic culture and the people's original culture. According to the respondent, the church is using those books in addition to the Bible to reach the people in his community with the gospel. Respondent D added that the spirit of Queen Amina of Zaria in northern Nigeria, who lived in the pre-colonial era as a woman hero is still working in the lives of many Nigerian women today.

Similarly, respondent A testified that in his community a woman was the first person to write a book on nomadic education aimed at helping the nomads' children to

have education. The government found her work very important, and, as a result, nomadic education was introduced in all primary educational systems in the state.

Respondent 12 said, “Nevertheless in spite of all these enormous works of the women, the culture still places women as second-class citizens. Women are valued but as second class citizens.” He continued, “I discovered I had to fight very hard to disabuse myself of such wicked thoughts and negative judgment towards women.” Testimony such as this, reveals the reality that women in some culture are facing serious disparity, hence, the church needs to work hard to liberate them.

Respondents in FG #2 (9-12 and 17) acknowledged and shared tremendous stories of women in their communities whose lifestyles impacted their communities and how women are valued and respected. One of the respondents in FG #2 and (#9) shared that a woman was the founder of his hometown. He narrated that the woman was a daughter of a traditional chief, and after the death of her father, she was crowned the chief of the town. Soon after she faced severe opposition and was deposed and sent out of the town. She went and founded the town presently called Shiwer in Plateau state Nigeria. She remained the chief of the town until her death about eighty years ago. She had a palace, and her palace and the chieftain title are today reserved only for women. A woman from her lineage is the present traditional chief of the town.

Respondent 10 shared that a group of women saved their town (Kachia) from total destruction by the Muslims in 2001. The Kachia local government (County) in Kaduna state experienced a religious crisis in 2001, in which Muslim militants raided the area and men could not withstand the Islamic militants. A group of women boldly decided to face the militants. The respondent had difficulty explaining what weapons or arms the women

used against the militants, but the women overpowered the Islamic militants group and their town was saved from destruction.

After the women overpowered the Islamic militants they decided to go to Kaduna city (three-hour drive) where the governor of the state resides to express to the governor their displeasure for the governor's inability to protect the people from the militants' attack as the chief security officer of the state. The women decided to walk barefoot to go to the city. When information reached the governor that the women were walking barefoot to the city, the governor knew that the city was going to be inflamed if the women were allowed to come to the city. The governor quickly drove to stop the women from coming into the city and pleaded with them to go back. These developments made many people in their communities respect women and also helped to change some peoples' perception of women.

Respondent 17 said a woman was the first person to own and ride a bicycle in his community, which was amazing to the people in his community. Some men were challenged by the woman's bravery and ability to own a bike. As a result, three men later made an effort and also bought bicycles.

Biblical Worldview

The emphasis in the second research interviews was on the biblical understanding that shapes the attitudes of the leaders against the ordination of women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria.

The questions and interviews in this section were centered on discovering whether the respondents have any favorite stories of a woman in the Bible. It also sought to

understand which aspect of the story impacts the respondents' lives the most and how that helped to shape the respondents' perception of women.

In this section I would like to report simultaneously the responses of the two focus groups (i.e., FG #1 and #2). The respondents emphasized similar stories of personalities in the Scriptures. The excerpts were chosen to represent the majority opinions of the respondents. The participants confessed that they had fascinating stories of women in the Bible. Respondents D, E, F, and 11-15 talked about Deborah, Esther, Naomi, and Ruth in the Old Testament. The respondents also talked about Mary, the story of the widow (widow's mite), and Priscilla the wife of Aquila in the New Testament.

Many of them shared and applauded the courage and wisdom of Esther in bringing deliverance to the Jews from Haman's wicked plan. They said that the story of Deborah was their favorite in the Bible that when all men failed to live up to God's expectation, she stood up to do what men were afraid to do. Respondents B and D shared on Naomi, that what Naomi told her two daughters-in-law (Ruth and Orpah's story was a demonstration that when a husband dies, the wife is free to marry whomever she wants). According to the respondents, African culture makes room for inheritance of a woman after the death of her husband, but what Naomi did helps them to teach the people that a woman is indeed free after her husband's death and no cultural law should be binding on her.

Respondent 9 said the story of the poor widow who came and put in two small copper coins that amount to a cent was important to them. Her faith was worth emulating. Respondents 13 and 15 shared that the story of Mary the wife of Joseph as the most important story in their lives. They stated that when Mary was confronted with the news

that she would conceive in her womb and bear a son to be called Jesus, she was touched and spoke in obedience to the will of God, and because of her obedience, the Savior was born through her.

Hitherto, respondents 17 and 18 applauded Priscilla for her zeal in evangelism, hosting many churches in her home, and also for her assistance to Paul in his ministry.

On how the stories of the biblical women shaped their perception of women, respondent 13 stated that he believes women are people with potential that God can use to advance his course on earth.

Women's Spiritual Call and Practice of Pastoral Ministry

The interviews sought to discover male leaders' views on women as pastors (see Appendix D, section two question #2).

The respondents' views in FG #1 regarding the spiritual call of women to and their practice of pastoral ministry varied tremendously. Respondents A, B, C, G, H, and 9, 11, 19, did not believe that God can call women to pastoral ministry or that women could function as senior pastors in ministry. A reference was made to the issue of priesthood in the Old Testament. The respondents alluded that all the priests in the Old Testament were males because God did not call a woman in the Old Testament to be a priest. They asserted that to admit women today into pastoral ministry is biblically wrong.

They asserted further that God not choosing a woman among the twelve tribes of Israel was a clear demonstration that the priestly ministry is reserved to men only. The respondents also asserted that because the priestly ministry is a function that governs the

church and because the Bible says a man is the head of the woman, it is not fitting that a woman is appointed to be the head of the man.

Respondent A particularly holds that women have no authority in the leadership of the church because Christ entrusted authority over his Church to the apostles who were all males. This development is clear evidence that God wants men to lead in his Church and not women. Respondent G stated that women are not capable of providing church leadership. He cited an example with the Anglican Church in Nigeria where Anglicans decided to ordain women some years ago but later stopped the idea and withdrew all the ordained women from functioning as ordained pastors because they discovered that women could not perform well without the help of their husbands.

He further alleges that in the situation of those women whose husbands work with the government becomes more difficult for the church to move them because of the jobs of their husbands. Therefore, to bring women into the full stream of church leadership would amount to creating problems in the leadership of the church. Respondent B simply stated, "Please allow women to stay where they are for now," yet respondent 19 said, "Anybody that preaches equality of men and women has not read the Scripture pretty well."

Nevertheless, other respondents E, F, and #13, 14, 18 hold the view that God has authority to call whomever he wants irrespective of gender. They believe women can be called to function as pastors in the local church, stressing that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are conferred upon and function through women the same as through men. Respondent F stated that women have long been leading and pastoring their families who are apparently comprised of males and females. Based on the responses of respondent F, I probed his

assertion, whether his Islamic background influences his positive view on women. He said no, stressing that his understanding of the Bible shapes his view of women. He added that Muslims do not go to the mosque with women and that should have made him hold a more conservative idea about women. However, he believes that he has a modest view of women because of his Christian faith.

Respondents D and F asserted that the reason why many church denominations restrict women from pastoral ministry is that the leaders have not yet emerged from the cultural prejudice against women though they are believers. They believe that women are as capable as men to be church leaders. Women only need to be given the chance to prove their worth in ministry. Respondent D particularly stated that he feels frustrated to see women as leaders in places where they work in civil society and are frustrated in the church. He said in his local congregation women are allowed and scheduled from time to time to preach on Sunday in his church. I further probed his assertion whether any man has approached him or confronted him for scheduling women to preach on Sunday. He responded, “Never, not at all.”

Respondent 18 traces the root of the poor concept of Nigerian woman on the missionaries. He said missionaries came with their wives to the mission field, but the male missionaries would not allow the female missionaries to preach and lead in churches. Furthermore, the missionaries opened secondary schools (high schools) and Bible schools and named them “boys’ secondary school” (only boys were admitted to the schools), and the Bible schools were only meant to train male students for evangelism and pastoral work. Much later the girls’ secondary schools were opened, so these developments have continued to have a negative impact on women.

Respondents 10 and 12 in FG #2 believe that God can call women to pastoral ministry. They do not believe that the Scripture forbids women from functioning as pastors. They asserted that if God used women in the Bible such as Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, Esther, and Pricilla, women could be used in the churches today as well.

Respondent 12 said if the church today sees the issue of pastoral office as a spiritual calling, then it should not have problem in admitting women into pastoral ministry. However, if the office of the pastor is seen in terms of gender restriction, then the church will have problems admitting women as pastors. Apparently, he was saying that the office of a pastor is not gender restricted.

Respondents 9, 10, and 11 claim many reasons that can hinder a woman from being called into ministry and to function as a pastor. They mentioned things such as the monthly menstruation of a woman, pregnancy, child care, lack of humility, and control of her tongue. Other issues mentioned were a woman's marriage and society's prejudice against women. Respondents F and G and FG#1 also mentioned these particulars.

Spiritual Gifts in the Bible

This last section of the interviews sought to discover the leaders' understanding of the biblical teaching on spiritual gifts (see Appendix D, section two question #3).

The following excerpts from the participants in FG #1 were carefully chosen. In reacting to these questions, respondents A-H believe that spiritual gifts are not gender restricted. The respondents believe that God gives these gifts to both men and women. Respondent 19 stressed that, "But women are given the gift of teaching to teach their fellow women and to teach children and not to teach the entire body of Christ or have authority over men."

Respondent E stated that this issue of gifts is absolutely God's decision and should be left to God to decide. Believers should not bring their personal opinion on it or allow their prejudice to prevail on the issue. He added, "I have never thought much on this issue and that is why I am careful to take a position."

Respondent G thinks spiritual gifts are given to women also, but the women can use the gifts to teach in public and in theological schools. Spiritual gifts do not mean that women should be pastors in local congregations. Women can use their gifts in different church ministries to help the body of Christ grow without necessarily aspiring to a senior pastor's position in the church.

Making reference to 1 Corinthians 14, respondent G stressed that the silence Paul discusses should be taken seriously. If the Church today allows women to be pastors and to teach on the pulpit, the Church will be violating or going against the scriptural injunction and against the will of God. Women are to be silent. The Scripture should not be changed to suit the church's purpose. Women cannot teach men in the church. God does not give them that leadership right, and the Church today should abide by. The church as an institution is deferent from a public or secular institution. Women can function in any secular institution as leaders, but in the Church, women must be in submission to the leadership of men.

Pastoral ministry means having authority over others, and a careful reading or study of 1 Timothy 2 shows that Paul prohibits the exercise of such authority by women. Women cannot occupy pastoral ministry and exercise authority over men, so Paul strictly made that distinction between men and women and based his understanding on what God

himself instituted in Genesis 2, when God fashioned the rib, he had taken out from the man into a woman.

Respondent B shared that women lack virtue to do work in the Church or to provide spiritual leadership within the assembly of the people of God. Women would not be accepted especially within the present cultural setting, stressing that the Church is different from a secular office, institution, or political organization where women are allowed to lead. Scriptures do not seem to validate women as leaders of men.

Respondent 18 shared that he does believe absolutely that women are capable of proving spiritual leadership to men because God gives the gifts of the Holy Spirit to all without being a respecter of persons. He said that the issue of authority that is being stressed with reference to 1 Corinthians 14 has some cultural undertone. Because in his culture, men dominate, control, and rule in everything; therefore, to accord a woman an authority and power equal to a man would amount to a power tussle, which seems to be a threat to men. The issue of women's spiritual leadership would have been understood and accepted if the cultural settings of the people had valued and respected women. He said the issue of not ordaining women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria does not make sense to him because they can allow women to teach at the seminary and prepare men for ministry but still restrict the women from being ordained.

Respondents 9 and 12 in FG #2 overwhelmingly claimed that the gifts of the Spirit are for all believers irrespective of gender. They stressed that women are fully capable of providing spiritual leadership to men in the church if they are given the opportunity. If they are trained like the men, women would do the work just like men do. Women would be encouraged if they are given the chance to lead in the church.

Respondent 10 believes that some women are good in leadership and have good leadership skills.

Respondent 17 said he is not a theologian and feels incapable to comment on this theological issue but observes that women themselves have negative attitude towards their fellow women in leadership, so the issue to him was not the problem of the men being indignant at the leadership of a woman. He expresses the fear that women may not be comfortable with the leadership of their fellow women. He concluded, "I have no problem with a woman leading in the Church."

On the role peculiarity in the church, the outcome of the interviews indicated that the church has enormous role peculiarity. Respondent 12 confirms that men do dominate the leadership positions in the church, citing examples that the posts of the secretary in the church and pastoral positions are always restricted to men. Women are only allowed to teach Sunday school classes to children. Though women serve on local church boards as elders, their roles on the board are mainly to cook food and provide drinks to men at meetings. Their opinions at meetings are not so much respected. On how the church can promote fairness between women and men in the church so as to build a more just community, respondent 12 stated that the church can only return to the Bible to allow the Holy Spirit to take control and to direct the church properly. Believers must always reflect on the life of the church as a new community of persons made in the image of God who would be responsive to God and responsible to each other and band together in the name of Jesus.

Respondent 18 said a spiritual climate should be created in the church whereby men and women are seen as equal in providing leadership in the church. Men must move

beyond reluctant toleration to affirmation of women in leadership roles. Respondent A said the church has been doing everything possible to bring about its progress.

Respondent G said Christianity has helped the believers to do things a bit differently from the cultural setting by going to church with women and sitting together with them in the church. The church has promoted fairness by allowing women to be on the board as elders and have representatives to the general church council meeting.

Summary of Interview Findings

In anticipation of the in-depth discussion of the major interview findings in Chapter 5, the following summarizes the findings of the interviews.

First, women are regarded as second-class citizens. They are regarded as acquired property to their husbands.

Second, women do not have rights culturally comparable to men. Men make most of the decisions for the family. Constitutionally, women have basic civil rights in society, but in practice, their basic rights are being suppressed.

Third, women and men have different educational opportunities, status, and economic power.

Fourth, some eminent women virtually whose lifestyles are remarkable made great impact in the lives of respondents' communities.

Fifth, the marginalization of women is more a cultural phenomenon than a biblical stance.

Sixth, the perception of inferiority or low standard of women in the respondents' cultural society is promoting the same attitudes and perception of women in the church.

Seventh, some respondents believed the Scriptures support the restrictions of the Church on women. Role peculiarity between men and women is believed to have root in the Bible.

Eighth, the clergy's worldview on women's leadership differs substantially, while the laymen's worldview on women's leadership tends to concur.

Ninth, pregnancies, menstruations, and marriage are huge hindrances to women's pastoral leadership.

Tenth, poor interpretations of the Scriptures are part of the reasons responsible for the denial of women's place in ministry within the church.

Eleven, younger church leaders have more positive worldviews and respond more positively towards the leadership of women in the church than the older church leaders.

Twelve, education and age of the leaders play a greater role as impediments to women's leadership in the Church (see Table 4.3, p. 109).

Chapter 5 focuses analysis on these outcomes and on biblical/theological and ministerial implications with reference to the theoretical and theological perspectives conclusions from Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Before the British consolidation of colonial power over Nigeria in 1914, the major occupation of Nigeria as a nation was agriculture. Nigerian women virtually had independence economically (Uchem 39). However political and religious participations varied from one ethnic group to another as described in Chapter 1.

Uchem asserts that in most ethnic groups in Nigeria women had a distinct life of their own. The rights of women were highly respected. For example, a man would not take the wife's livestock without her authorization. Furthermore, the economic and political responsibilities or tasks of the traditional Nigerian woman were well thought-out and considered very significant because she was part and parcel of bread winning for the family. The idea of acquiring a woman and her property was out of place (39).

Conversely, a change in this culture and women's status in Nigerian society emerged through two sources: The first source is the British sexist or extremist imperialism, and the second source is the extremist Christian tradition (Uchem 45).

The British policy of indirect rule that was introduced in Nigeria during colonial control resulted in the installation of sexist administrative structure that excluded and limited women's spheres in the home and continues to vibrate in spite of the demise or the termination of the British imperial power (Nzegwu 445).

The coming of Christianity to Africa and especially to Nigeria was indeed a welcome development. The efforts of the missionaries to propagate the gospel of Christ to the Nigerian people, the significance and the benefit of the missionaries' work in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The missionaries preached the message of salvation

to the people of Nigeria with zeal and great passion. Apart from the introduction and preaching of the gospel, missionaries embarked on some infrastructural developments such as health centers, agriculture, and schools for Nigerian children.

Through mission schools, many Nigerian children had opportunities for Western education and quite a number of these missionary schools in Nigeria today have developed into higher institutions of learning. Nevertheless, Uchem observes that the missionaries in the course of their work in the churches tended to implement the colonial policy of marginalizing Nigerian women:

The missionaries effectively and uncritically implemented the colonial policies, which politically, economically and socially marginalized women. Consequently, women were deposed from their economic, political and social positions, which they had enjoyed in the pre-colonial and pre-Christian days. Thus, it is sad to think that religion (Christianity) has served as the vehicle that transported women's inferiorization and marginalization to Nigeria. (46-47)

Thus, one would pinpoint without doubt that the lowering of the status of Nigerian women by the British imperialists and missionary enterprise gave rise to the promotion of cultural superiority of Nigerian men over the women, a situation that today has become part and parcel of the society.

However, whatever the defects of the missionaries enterprise, Nigeria owes the missionaries an incalculable and immeasurable debt of gratitude for planting the gospel light and creating hope in life of the nation and especially to those who received the gospel as good news of salvation.

Major Findings

Findings from Chapter 4 were divided into two broad groups: (1) findings from the people's cultural worldviews on women, and (2) Findings from the people's

understanding of what the Bible teaches on women. These two sections reported the findings generated from the interviews conducted. The first summarized the results of how the people perceive women in their cultural society, and the second summarized the outcomes, how the understanding of the Scriptures shaped their worldviews on women. Though I came up with twelve interview findings in Chapter 4, , only five major interview findings or discoveries are discussed in Chapter 5 because of their significance to the research project.

Discovery #1

The interviews revealed some *cultural stereotypes* against women. Women are regarded as acquired property to their husbands and as second-class citizens within society.

Reflecting on the status of women shows that people's experiences differ virtually. In some culture, women are bossed around and are given tender loving care while some are not. The whole situation depends on the orientation of every cultural society.

Men by nature seem to have an inborn egoism, and the source of their egoism is not easily traced. Men always like to dominate in every situation. From Nigerian cultural perspective, more often, one hears men talking to women without any respect and treating the women without due regard to their personality and good worth. I believe that a woman is a person just like me. The fact that we have been created biologically different that does not make her inferior or make me superior over her. Furthermore, the fact that my biological creation makes me physically stronger than a woman does not mean that I should see a woman as less important.

One of the respondents I interviewed narrated a pathetic situation of a couple. He stated that the husband always talks to his wife like the husband was addressing his child. He always makes the woman go to her work late just for no good reason and each time the woman complains about being late at work, his reply was, "I don't care." Some of the cultural reasons behind this sort of bad treatment toward women are that if a woman were allowed to be economically buoyant, she would not respect her husband.

In family decisions such as buying a property, a car, or a change of men do not always consult or confer with their wives. A woman does not have the right to question such decisions the husband makes. She is expected to respect the opinion of the husband whether a decision was taken in consultation with her opinion or not.

People always forget that a woman can see a better way of doing something that may result in averting a situation that would otherwise be devastating on the family. After all, some of the women are more educated and more socialized than their husbands, but the problem is that some husbands always hide behind cultural nuances to make a general assumption on women as weaker people.

Because women are always excluded from family decision making and community frontlines, women have decided to form separate organizations and fellowships to address their issues or issues affecting their welfare.

The church is aware of this cultural disparity but to a certain extent, the church has failed to strike the balance or present a different perspective to bridge the gap between men and women. As I asked one of the respondents to share the difference between the people's culture and the church culture in terms of the perception of a

woman, he said no difference. I believe he is right, because the church is still championing the concept of inequality between men and women in ministry.

Discovery #2

Today women and men have different levels of education, status, and economic power. Division of labor between women and men is now insisted upon. The cultural divide between men and women is openly practiced. Women have different roles from men. Men do not always give in to counseling from women and women experience lack of economic, educational, and leadership opportunities comparable to men.

People having different roles either in the family or at the workplace it can lead to an unhealthy division of labor. While division of labor is meant to increase the productivity of a society, within a cultural group, the understanding of different roles between men and women goes beyond the concept of increasing productivity. The idea is all about dominance, preeminence, power, control, and authority of the men over women.

One of the respondents narrated that in his culture, women do not sit together with men. He gave an example of communal work that when people in their community go to do some work, during break time, men would group themselves separately from the women and women would sit also in a different place to eat and drink. Men and women never sit together.

On the aspect of roles, the respondent stated that some specific things are understood to be and are restricted for women such as cooking, doing dishes, taking care of children, and keeping the house clean. A woman is only valued in the culture, for her ability to carry a child in her womb. Men have only one thing to do as their main job and that is going to farm. Because farming is the main occupation of the people, women go to

farm along with men, and when they come back from work, a man does nothing in the house. He only relaxes and waits for food as his wife cooks for the family.

In this situation, one could see that women carry double roles. Women do many things; they are overworked. In a sense, women should be seen as the most capable and hard working people.

As a result of this cultural divide and different roles, women's opportunities such as education, leadership, and economic growth are hindered in many communities. Furthermore, the saddest thing is that the cultural disparity being practiced is directly being transferred into the church. In almost all the local churches within the Church of Christ in Nigeria today, men have separate pews from women during worship services. The idea of believers being a community by the fact of their being one in the body of Christ is not expressed by action.

I believe nuances such as these predominate the minds of church leaders, and because they cannot see anything wrong with this type of practice, they do not see the need to elevate the standard of women to an equal status with men.

Discovery #3

Respondents affirmed that eminent women whose lifestyles are remarkable have made great impact in the lives of their communities.

This study not only sought to identify or discover the eminency of women in the respondents' culture but also sought to know whether women whose lives serve as role models to both men and women and how they have impacted the lives of their communities. The interviews revealed that virtually every respondent's community, has women of high merit. The women have demonstrated their worth in diverse ways, which

shows that they have the intellectual ability and great desire to build or develop their communities.

One of the respondents stated that a woman in his community wrote for the first time the history of people of her community, which is a great achievement. The work men never thought to do. The culture and language of her people were being lost through the dominant Islamic culture and she thought that the book would free her people from Islamic domination by making the people know their historical background.

As a matter of fact, the language of a person is the person's identity. Because the ethnicity and mores of her people were being assimilated and annexed by Islam, means that her people were being lost.

What this woman did was similar to the life story of Esther in the Bible. Esther was concerned about the survival of her people (the Jews). She was concerned that if she did not take action, the Jews were going to be destroyed through Harman's wicked plan. She used her wisdom, courage and position to save the Jews from destruction and annihilation.

Unfortunately, women's achievements are not always recognized. The achievements of women are always attributed to the man and not to the woman (Uchem 39).

The achievements of women are a challenge to men and a challenge to the Church. Women should not be taken as inferior human beings. I believe if women were given the opportunity as leaders in the church, their performance would outnumber that of men because they have critical and decisive thinking.

The Christian Church is a community of not only men but of men, women and children. Men should not stand alone in this vineyard.

My ambiguity on the question of autonomy grows from the fact that no human being is entirely autonomous. You may hit yourself on the chest and say 'I am so and so' but it is for the community to agree to treat you as the person you proclaim yourself to be. This is what hits women most" (Hayashida 118).

I believe God created men and women to live together and to love one another. The enormous nature of the ministry requires that believers work together as a team in order to achieve success.

Discovery #4

The traditional belief is that the Scriptures support the Church's restrictions of women and that the role peculiarity between men and women is believed to have root in the Bible.

The sharing of many of the respondents suggests that the teachings of the Scriptures do not entail that a woman should lead as a pastor in the community of believers. Reference is made from creation and particularly Genesis 2, that the man was created first before the woman and man was also given the opportunity to name each of the animals, including the woman. This order of creation entails that a man is the head of the woman: Consequently church leadership is given to man and not to a woman.

Also making reference to Israel's leadership, some of the respondents believe that the religious leadership role in ancient Israel was uniformly reserved for men. Only Aaron and his male descendants could occupy the priestly office.

This assertion is true, but when one looks carefully and critically, this public office does not appear to place any serious restrictions on women's public leadership in ancient Israel. Deborah, Huldah, and Miriam were women who held public offices and also spiritual offices in ancient Israel. A Prophet could perform every exalted task and could confront even kings with their sins. Prophet Nathan versus David, and Prophet Elijah versus Ahab are examples. The prophets were a group of leaders who directly proclaimed God's words to the people of Israel.

Though some of respondents argued that the office of the prophet is different from that of a priest, but the context of the Old Testament is different from the concept of the church as a new community of believers. The Bible records three main offices operational in the Old Testament. The offices were priestly office, prophetic office, and administrative office (King: Judges). These were the offices that functioned in the Old Testament.

Women were involved in all of these offices except the office of a priest, and this restriction was not without cultural nuances of the Israelites' time (Keener 133). Furthermore, in the contemporary church situation, these three offices have been combined or intertwined into the office of a pastor. The pastor today serves as a prophet, and also as an administrator over the new community of God's people.

Because the church today does not operate the same way as the community of God's people in the Old Testament where they had a judge and a king, and because the offices today have been interlocked, I am of the opinion that women should not be barred from functioning as ordained pastors.

Discovery #5

Pregnancies, menstruations, and marriage are considered huge hindrances to women's pastoral leadership. The argument against the ordination of women to pastoral ministry has been built around the issues of a woman's periodic menstruations, the possibility of being pregnant, and her position in marriage as someone under the control of her husband. Thus, the denial of pastoral ordination to women revolves much around these biological issues.

The reasons proffered for the denial of ordination to women into pastoral ministry entail how poor the worldview of a woman is held in many evangelical churches. As one of the respondents stated, "The issue of menstruation of a woman is biblical: therefore, we should not break that."

In order to understand why women were restricted with regard to place and function in the Old Testament's Temple worship, one must bear in mind the cultural restrictions in the book of Leviticus 15. Because sacrifices in Israel were done by the slaughtering of animals and the focal point was on the blood of the animal to cover the sin of an individual or group of people, the law stipulates that the priest who performs this sacrifice must be clean and holy at all times in order to offer the sacrifice (Lev. 21-22). The restriction has nothing to do with rabbinic prejudices. If they were an issue, women such as Deborah, Huldah, and Miriam would have not functioned in Israel as prophetesses and judges.

Furthermore, Christ the High Priest has offered the final sacrifice (Luke 22:7). That sacrifice supersedes the animal sacrifices that the Old Testament priests were required to do, and no church officer of any kind is designated as a priest in the New

Testament. The priesthood of the Old Testament has been fulfilled and brought to an end through Christ (Heb. 10:10-14). The Church today does not need to slaughter animals for any sacrifices. Consequently, such biological restriction does not apply any more.

Women can minister without any restrictions (Vyhmeister 138).

In addition, if marriage were an issue in leadership in Israel, then God would not have allowed the women to be leaders of the people of Israel. Though the respondents argued that today the Church does transfer the pastors and moves its ministers from time to time to various locations, therefore, to move a man who is not a full-time minister just because the need arises for the wife to move to a different church would lead to a serious problem in the couple's life. This assertion I believe is just an issue of a cultural perspective. Transfers of pastors should not be an issue to hinder women from being church leaders.

Furthermore, for a woman to be pregnant is a great blessing to the family and to the church therefore, her pregnancy should not be a barrier to her pastoral calling.

Theological Reflection

The Church (universal) emerged by the act of God through Jesus Christ. Bilezikian says that the Church of Jesus Christ celebrates its own birthday on two occasions. The first is the day of Pentecost and the second is for the individual at the moment of the person's inclusion into the body of Christ through confession of faith and baptism (121).

The Church is a spiritual community of believers saved by grace, and its mission as a community of faith is to please God through its life and to fulfill spiritual and physical human needs as demonstrated by Christ during his earthly ministry.

My motivation to research issues on women is grounded in the conviction that the Church is not only a personal archetype but also a social paradigm and that its life encompasses both genders.

As Paul teaches, “But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6), God created a new community of his people through Christ to bear and revitalize his lost image in the Garden of Eden. Believers are required by this divine grace to be banded together in new life and to reflect the character, image, and love of God. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the believers and the Holy Spirit gives believers the gifts to build each other up as Paul emphasizes in 1 Thessalonians 5.

God demonstrated this unity and oneness of believers as a community of faith at the time of Pentecost when God sent the Holy Spirit upon the believers irrespective of genders. At the moments of the Church’s reception of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) and of the reception of believers into the Church (baptism), constitutional declarations are articulated about the nature of relations within the Church, thus defining the distinctive nature of the new community as a body where equality and unity prevail (Bilezekian 121).

One important thing of which believers should be aware is the fact that the Church does not only exist as a body of Christ’s witness but it also exists within the society to bear the light of Christ and to be salty to the world. The Church has the responsibility as a broker of peace to influence society through its good work.

Furthermore, owing to its far-reaching implications, the perception of the Church as a community should be allowed to govern the believers’ understanding of relationships

in the body of Christ. It should also be allowed to engage in a determinant role in the definition of relationship and ministries in the new community.

The question worth asking is whether women generally as part of God's creation have the theological framework of ministry vocation or calling. Christ asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15). This question is still important for believers today, and some people may miss the good answer to this question as did some of Christ's disciples. The Scripture teaches that the biblical God is a God of love, mercy, and justice. God cannot create women to be pertinently subordinated and be suppressed by men. Suppression does not measure with God's nature as a God of love and justice?

In Christ's opening speech to the people of his hometown Nazareth, he declared that the Spirit of the Lord had come upon him, for God had anointed him to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, and to set the downtrodden free (Luke 4:18).

The word *downtrodden* is a very strong term. It summarizes Christ's meaning of the good news as what the oppressed, exploited, demoralized, subjugated or browbeaten, vulnerable, and dehumanized would likely hear and experience (Oduyoye 38). God is aware that the world is full of evil. Because sin was introduced into the world as a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve, the world continues to remain evil. Christ came to broker peace within the fallen world.

The church in Africa and particularly Nigeria must follow the footsteps of Christ and see itself as an agent of peace to influence the full meaning of Christ's good news so that the good news would be a living reality in the lives of not only Nigerian men but also Nigerian women.

The Church of Christ in Nigeria would not virtually influence its milieu if it continues to subordinate women as inferior in ministry. The ministry of the church is becoming more global and the notion of subordination of women is likely to hamper the success of evangelism in some places.

The attitude of Christ towards women is something worth emulating. Christ never made any categorical statements as to whether women are never fit to be disciples. In fact, the encounter between Christ and the Samaritan woman in the Bible is a practical example of Christ's positive attitudes towards women. At this encounter with the Samaritan woman, the disciples became very indignant that Christ was communicating with the woman (John 4:27). The action of the disciples shows a cultural paradigm or prejudice being demonstrated. They urged Christ to break the communication with the woman under the pretense that they had brought food for him to eat. Christ told them he had food to eat. Christ's food at this point was the salvation of the woman and what he had wanted to accomplish in the woman. He told the disciples, "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (vs. 35). The end result of that encounter was that the woman left for her city and became a preacher of the gospel to her people, and many repented.

Conclusion

In recognition of the role and character of the Church as a light and as a new community of believers entrusted with the responsibilities of evangelization of the world, caring and meeting the needs of one another in faith, I submit that the Nigerian evangelicals must be brought to rethink their theology of excluding women from ordination and church leadership.

Secondly, the various needs of the flocks must be carefully understood as ministers of the gospel endeavor to serve the flocks entrusted to them.

Thirdly, Nigerian evangelicals need to focus on the contextualization of the gospel to bring home the message of the gospel within the people's cultural context.

Fourthly, community life must be encouraged with focus on both sexes as a new people of God redeemed through the blood of Christ.

Fifthly, the church's theological emphasis must include the dimension of spiritual sensitization to understand that the office of the pastor should not be seen in terms of gender but rather spiritual calling.

Limitations of the Study

This study was an attempt to identify gender worldview roadblocks to the ordination of women in the context of the Church of Christ in Nigeria. The study was carried out through the method of research questionnaire and telephone conversations centering on two focus groups, namely, theologically trained church leaders and lay church leaders/members.

Theologically Trained Church Leaders

The interview pool of this study focused on the church leaders, the policy makers for the church. They make most of the significant decisions for the church, and their views were sought on the issue of the ordination of women.

Lay Church Leaders/Members

The second pool of the interview findings dwelled on the lay leaders' views on the issue of women's ordination. The choice of the laity was to help me have a good

understanding of views from both groups (laity and theologically trained leaders), to avoid unbalanced information from the respondents.

Instrumentation

The method used in collecting data for this study was unconventional and unusual because the study adopted the telephone interview approach. The method was capital intensive, yet it was faster and quicker in terms of information gathering. I was able to continue with the discussions at the convenience of my respondents. Though some flow of the discussions was interrupted through poor telephone network, the calls were reconnected quickly and the discussions continued smoothly.

The number of the respondents interviewed was fairly good, however, more information probably would have been drawn or generated if the number of the interviewees was a little larger. Nevertheless, the information generated gives the impression of the general belief of the people. The interesting thing was that I personally knew all the respondents with whom I had interviews, and they were excited to furnish me with all the information I was asking from them.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge that the research would have suffered defeat had my mentors not given much attention to the development and rebuilding or reframing of the research questionnaire. If wrong word usage and phrasing had not been corrected, I would have received different results or outcomes.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

With reference to the research findings and the whole purpose of this study, I make the following suggestions for further studies.

Inculturation

An African cultural theological hermeneutics should be developed by African theologians to help the African people understand the Scripture within the African context. Nigerian history has good African ancestral stories that, when harmonized with the Scripture, may bring the message of the gospel clearer to the minds of Africans.

Many African women (reference to Nigeria) live in their communities powerfully but because nothing is being documented about them, their contributions in their communities have not been recognized.

Proverbs

Another paradigm of recommendation with regards to the twist opinions about the ordination of women is the popular saying of the people (*Sai an gwada a san na kwarai*), meaning, not to assume something but try to prove its worth. Nuance such as this should be emphasized in contextualizing the gospel in the people's context. Because Nigerians have such sayings, why should the church continue to make assumptions that women cannot be good leaders? I strongly suggest that good biblical hermeneutics should be the watchword of the church in Nigeria.

Witness

The evangelical Christians in Nigeria must find a way to reinvent their credibility, relevance, and capacity to witness to the good news in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world. The meaning of authority and leadership must be redefined within the context of the Scripture. Christ has authority and he is the head of the Church, but he serves the Church as a servant not as an authoritative leader. He categorically told his disciples that the least among them should be their leader. The idea of a solitary monarch, which

developed in medieval Europe and migrated eventually into Nigeria during the colonial era and which influences the life of the Church, should be confronted by sound biblical hermeneutics for the change to be achieved.

Education

Education is a vital instrument. A man of knowledge increases power (Prov. 24:5). Some of the reasons that Nigerian evangelical believers are plunked into poor cultural worldviews of women have to do with their level of educational attainment. Girls' education should be encouraged at all levels, as a way to create a good future and to free Nigerian woman from poor cultural worldview and power domination within the church and society. Both men and women should be encouraged to have good theological education in addition to the secular education they attain.

The Status of Women in the Global World

The role of women within the ministry of the gospel of Christ should be redefined not only within the African church but also in a global context with a focus on the meaning of revelation and inspiration of the Scripture with respect to women and whether or not God wills the subjugation and oppression of women as an acceptable paradigm.

Tradition

Those who have continued to rebel against moving away or changing their worldviews from traditional sexist expectations and norms should be educated on the paradigm of the Church as a new community of believers. This paradigm can be successfully carried out through conferences and retreats to create awareness.

Inferiority Complex

Evangelicals in Africa with particular reference to Nigeria should embark on serious teachings and campaign within the Church to confront a false inferiority complex among young girls. Similar teaching should also be applied to women to educate them on the danger or hazard of such low standards into which the women are systematically socialized and that lead to their low self-esteem in their cultural societies.

Practical Applications

One of my probes during the interviews was on whether women are zealous about their faith in the Church and demonstrate any sense of calling into ministry. The answer was, "Yes, they do." A respondent stated that women form more than seventy percent the total worshipers in almost every local assembly within the church, and they are so enthusiastic in their faith. Women are the main potential strength of the church. The main job of the leaders now should be to reconstruct collective consciousness in the heart of the church. Leaders must explore the assumptions, values, and goals that would guide the church in attaining these expectations of equal opportunities for both men and women.

Furthermore, our role should be to stand up, speak out, and break the silence is something in which church leaders must actively engage. I think that the issue of women's emancipation in the church leaves much ground to be desired. The issue is a big challenge to the church and especially in this present dispensation where the world needs the gospel the most. The secular world seems to be doing much better in terms of women's emancipation by bringing women into the main stream of governance, which should serve as a challenge to the Church.

Women within the Church of Christ in Nigeria need to be assessed by a standard similar to a standard used for men. Women are equally created in the image of God; hence, women's leadership roles need to be assessed on spiritual gifts and sense of calling and not upon patriarchal views or gender.

The issue should be a frequent discussion among church leaders and among church members about empowering everyone to the freedom of the Spirit of God. The purpose is not just the concern about ordination of women or giving women equal leadership and ministry opportunity within the evangelical church. The objective goes beyond that assumption. The goal is all about the whole understanding of a woman and womanhood. Because even in some churches that claim to have emancipated women in terms of ordained leadership, women still experience marginalization in different aspects.

The entire men's attitudes towards women, the places of both men and women in society and church, and much more in the whole of creation must be addressed (Hayashida 228).

Concluding Remarks

I was born and raised on the farm. My father used to be a hunter. He would go to the forest or jungle and spend days in an attempt to kill animals. One of his hunting trips to the jungle, he decided to take me along. While in the jungle, I had a meningitis attack was almost to the point of death.

My father brought me to and left me with a woman in the village. I believe he thought I would not survive from the illness so father felt no need to go to the hospital and spend money. He left me with the woman and went back to the jungle to hunt. The woman did her best, and God heard her prayers and I recovered from the sickness.

When I gained admission to come to Asbury Theological Seminary, I contacted many people in Nigeria to help with finances to come over to the States. My strong support practically came from women and particularly one woman who did everything possible to raise money to enable me come over to the States for studies.

When I arrived in the States and while at the airport in Chicago, I missed my flight to Louisville and I wanted somebody to help me call a friend whom we I had contacted while in Nigeria to pick me up at the airport to inform him that my flight time had changed. I first talked to a man to help me use his phone. The man would not let me use his phone. I moved to the next man on the seat and made the same request. Again the man turned down my request. I became so frustrated and worried. I waited for a while, and then a lady came by. I went to the lady and made a request to use her phone. The lady immediately handed her phone to me, and I was able to contact my friend who was already at the airport waiting for me.

I am not saying that my motivation to write on women was because they did good things for me. In fact, I have had bad experiences with many women. I decided to give this personal testimony with a sense of conviction that the Lord wants me to work in this aspect of women's ministry. Furthermore, my purpose for writing on this topic was not only for the academic exercise but also through a total conviction that women are great people, and they are highly valued in the sight of God and should be treated as such. Power struggle or domination between men and women has been one of the cardinal reasons that women's ordination opportunity is being stalled.

As a matter of fact, my worldview on women's ministry before I came to Asbury seminary was quite traditional or supportive. I had the same bias as some of my

respondents. A turning point occurred when I came to Asbury Seminary. My worldview on women was shaped through many classes I took at the seminary.

One of the professors who truly shaped my understanding on this subject was Dr. Joe Dongell. Dr. Dongell may not know the degree or extent to which his lectures impacted my life in the classes I took, and I was encouraged to undertake research on this dimension.

Apart from the experience I had through Dr. Dongell's class, Rev Beverly, a woman pastor in a Methodist church in Georgetown, Indiana, also made a great impression in my life. I had several opportunities to worship at the church, and Rev. Beverly's biblical hermeneutics and exegesis impressed me very much. This work is a result of what God has done in my life through these people.

Power struggle between men and women as discussed in Chapter 2, seems to have its root in Genesis 3:6. The Bible talks about the consequences of Eve's sin having eaten of the forbidden fruit. It reads, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (vs. 16). Eve's sin resulted to God's pronouncement that Adam would rule over her. This domination has been exactly what has happened over the course of history.

Furthermore, this domination was not the way it was supposed to be. God's initial plan was that both man and woman would reflect his image and work together as a team (Gen. 1:26). Christ came to restore humanity to God's image in him, renewing believers in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Christ's death has broken power and control tendencies in the lives of believers. They are no longer under law but have their freedom through Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF AFRICA AND THE LOCATION OF NIGERIA



APPENDIX B

MAP OF NIGERIA, SHOWING SOME MAJOR CITIES



APPENDIX C

LETTER OF CONSENT

From: Stephen N. Yarkum
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 N. Lexington Av.
Wilmore, KY. 40390
USA
9-1-08.

Dear Sir,

My name is Stephen N. Yarkum (Rev). As you know, I am studying at the Doctoral level at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY, USA. I am undertaking research that aims at identifying worldview roadblocks to the ordination of women in the Church of Christ in Nigeria.

Please understand that I am not saying outrightly that the church should ordain women, but I am only interested in identifying those roadblocks to the ordination of women. I have chosen you as one of my participants.

My reason for selecting you among many church leaders is because of the confidence that I have in you and also because of your spiritual maturity and experience in the church. I, therefore, humbly ask your consent to hold this interview with you on this topic. I would be glad if you could give me your honest viewpoint on the issue and approval of time that best fits your schedule so we can hold this telephone interview that will be tape-recorded and transcribed by me. You may choose to respond by-email.

I want to assure you that throughout the projects, participants' names will not be revealed, and I will maintain confidentiality of your responses. I will only share information in my dissertation anonymously. At the end of the study, I will destroy the tape in addition to the notes that were taken during the interview.

Sincerely,

Stephen N. Yarkum
Stephen_yarkum@asburyseminary.edu
Tel. 859 215 0021

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Grand Tour Questions

SECTION ONE: (Cultural worldview)

1. Tell me about how women are perceived in your culture.
 - a. Do you see men and women as equal in terms of family decision making?
 - b. Do women in your community have basic civil rights comparable to men?
2. Do you have a cultural divide between men and women? If so, tell me about it.
 - a. What are the roles of women?
 - b. What are the roles of men?
 - c. Do women sometimes play the roles of men and vice versa?
 - d. Are women allowed to provide counseling to men?
 - e. Do girls have the same educational opportunity as the boys?
 - f. Do women have the same leadership opportunity as the men?
 - g. Do women have equal economic opportunities comparable to men?
3. Tell me about a woman in your community whose lifestyle is remarkable and who made a great impact in your community?
 - a. Please tell me about her life
 - b. Tell me how women are respected in your community. Maybe how she serves as a model to other women?
 - c. Please explain further, how are women valued in your culture?
 - d. How does your experience shape or influence your understanding of the status and role of women in society?

SECTION TWO: (Biblical worldview)

1. Do you have a favorite story of a woman in the Bible?
 - a. Tell me about it.
 - b. What aspect of her story impacts your life the most?
 - c. How has that shaped your perception of women?
2. What is your belief on women's spiritual call to and practice of pastoral ministry?
 - a. Do you believe a woman can be a pastor of local church congregation?
 - b. What do you think can hinder a woman from being a local congregational Pastor?
3. Do you believe spiritual gifts are gender restricted in the Bible? (e.g., apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, or counselors as in Ephesians 4:11)
 - a. Do you think women are capable of providing spiritual leadership to men in the church?
 - b. Do you have role peculiarity between men and women in the church?
 - c. How can the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) promote fairness between women and men so as to build a more just community?

APPENDIX E

TRANSLATION IN THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

Cultural worldview indigenous

Tambaya na farko da nayi wa mai magana shine, yayane sun fahimci matta daga cikin al'adansu?

Amsa shine cewa matta fa kasashen mutane ne ga ganin maza. Su na nan kamar yara ne kuma su kamar kaya ne na maigida.

Mamta kam basu da martaba ba cikin al,adan mu na garga jiya.

Ba akan yi shawar wari dasu ba sai ko an gayache su domin su yi bayani kan wani masala. Sau tari mai gida ne ya kan dauki sharawa kan komai da komai

Ba a gan mata kamar masayin su na dai dai da namiji ba.

Mata kam basu da yanci ba, ko dashike dokar kasa ta yarda masu su kasanche da yanci amma al'ada ta danna su.

Hakikan akwai al'ada da ta raba mu maza da matta. Akwai abin da mache ta kan iya yi ita kadai.

Akwai kuma abinda na miji kan iyayi shi kadai

Su matta kam al,ada bata dauke su da komai ba ko muhimanchi ba.

Matta dai aikinsu nanan kamai haka

1. Dafe dafe
2. Haifuwa
3. Jan ruwa a kogi ko rijiya
4. Diban itace

5. Tafiyar gonna
6. Lura da yara
7. Lura da gida da dai sauransu

Maza kuma aikinsu

Na anan kamar haka.

1. Shine Kan gida
2. Mai neman abici go iyali
3. Shi kamar Sarki ne
4. Mai mulki akan mace

Da sauki mace ta sami yancin bada shawara ga mai gida saboda maza su kan dauki shawara batatare da sanin matta ba. Matta su kan yi kokari bada shawara amma sau tari maza basu saurara ba.

A fuskar ilimi kuma, yaya maza sunfi samun zarafi fiye da yayan matta. Wato an ganin yar mace kamar kayan wani ne domin hakka babu ganin daraja ta yi makaranta. Amma fa yanzu akwai sakewa kada kadan game da zancen ilimin yan matta. Anan wayewa domin haka yan matta suna kan tafiyar karatu

A,a kodan matta basu da zarafi shugabanci kamar maza ba. Sautari maza ne masu rikon shugabanci domin ana ganin mace renene ce. Basu kan kasanche a mulki sasai ba. Game da sashen tattalin arzhiki kuman kasa kuma, da shaanin kasuwanci, maza sun fi yin wanna. Akai matta masu bizenes bizenes, ama basu kai yawan maza ba. Wato sautari dai, ba'a ba I wa matta zarafi manyan manyan bizenes ba watau zirga zirgan nema abin zaman gari.

Masu magana sun yi magan ganu sai da cewar mata na kwarai na nan a
garuruwan su wadanda suyi abin takarawa a zo again

An bada missali da mama Mary Lar

Da Ngo Hanatu Chillom

Paulin Tallin da dai sauran su

Wasu su sun rubuta takardu na ya taimaki mutaninsu sosai

Wasu ma sun rubuta tarihin kasansu da mutanin su.

Game da martaba dai, kwasam, matta bu dashi sosai ba. Ba a ganin darajan su
sosai ba. Ana gini dai an ajeje ta ne domin biyan bukatar maza ta wurin jima'I da kuma
taimakon aiki a gona ko gida kawai.

Masu gana da dama sun fadi golgodon bakinsu dacewar rayuwan wasu mata abin
kalu balla ne garesu. Suna yin sha'awar wanan nan matta domin aikinsu a cikin jama'a
Har ma sun cewar idan an bawa wadanna matta zarafi shugabanci fa za. Yi balayi mulki
mai kau

1. Suna masu cewar matta fa abin da ya kamata a daraja su sasai
2. Alura dasu
3. A basu karatu
4. A daraja su
5. A dena dukan su
6. a sani cewar suma mutani ne kamr maza
7. A basu fili shugabanci
8. A karfa su cikin komai da komai
9. A yi masu adua'a

Biblical Worldview

Tambaya na farko itace kana da madai daciyar labarin wata daga Littafi”

Masu amsa sun ce kwarai su nana da su tuli kamar

1. Hulda,
2. Esta
3. Mariyam
4. Debora
5. Naomi da Ruta
6. Sohuwar mama mai mara kudi
7. Maryamu uwar Yesu da dai makamantan su

Wadan nan mata fa suyi abin takarawa a zo again. wato rayuwansu ta kalubanci mutana da ban daban. Naomi da Ruta suntaka rawa azo again so sai.

Ganiwana game da kiran mata cikin aikin pasto kam ban yarda da wanan ba domin Allah bazaya kira mache ba cikin aikin shugabanci a choci ba. A cikin fristoci bamu karanta cewar akwai mace ba

Kuma cikin yayan Isarila, wato zuriya nan sha biyu babu mace daga cikinsu

Kuma bias go sabuwar Alkawari, almajiran nan na Yesu guda shabiyu ai babu mace

Ama wau masu magana sun yi na'am dacewa mata kam basu ga dalilin da baza su yi aikin shugabaci a ikkelisiya ba. Suna cewar bamu da damuwa akan wanan. Sun afadi cewa idan Allah kansa yayi maga da matta a sohuwar al'kawari har matta sun yi mulki to, ai babu dalilin hanna su a wan nan lokaci ba. Wani ya che ni kam ban rigaya na yi tunani akan wanna zanche ba. Wani ma che a chicina, na kan ba wa matta zarafi suyi wa.a zi

kuma an sauraran su dakyau. Kuma su na wa zi da kiu. Wanan fa abin godiya ne bari mu ba matta wannan zarafi kada mu hanna masu ba.

Wasu sun che abin da yakna hanna wa mace zaman pasto shine kamar hakka

1. Jinin allada
2. Aure
3. Chicki da haifuwa
4. Ba zata iya yin ziyara ita kadaiba
5. Soron jama'a

Game da baye bayen ruhu kuma, suna mai cewar a.a Allah ya ba wa kowa wanan izini. Allah bai baban bata ba.

Acikin Ikelesiya kam, mata sukan bada shawara goa maza ama kamar yadda na fada can baya, basafai ne maza sukan dauku shawararin matta ba. Amma kuma mace tayi shugabanci a ikkelisiya wannan haramne.

Wasu sunce ni kam suyi, gonan Ubangiji na nan da yawa tana bukatan ma'aita.

Game da yaya ikkelisiyar COCIN zata ingata rayuwa sakanin matta da maza domin girman ta? Masu maga suna cewar dolle ne Ikkelisiya ta dauki mataki sosai game da zaman matta a cikin ikkelisiya. Wato a aiwatar da wasu abinda zasu kawo rayuwa mai kau sakanin matta da maza cikin aiki.

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