

Ministerial Ordination and Gender Inequality in Selected Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The discourse on the place and role of women in society has remained one contentious issue. The importance of women in every sphere of the society cannot be overemphasized, but women have in most cases been neglected and, in few cases, relegated to play a second and diminutive role. Most unfortunately, this is the case in our Christian organisations in Nigeria, especially among the Pentecostal Churches. The central objective of this paper is to discuss ministerial ordination and gender inequality among the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. The method of data collection is secondary with historical and descriptive research designs. It applies content and documentary data analysis. The study is a non-statistical based, but with simple percentage illustrations where necessary. One key finding of the paper shows that of all the five Pentecostal Churches discussed; it is only Deeper Life Bible Church that states unequivocally that women cannot be ordained pastors. The paper concludes that none ordination of female pastors by other Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria, apart from Christ Embassy is a matter of the none or poor policy implementation of their policies; that is characteristic of the Nigerian society. It therefore recommended that we must not neglect our calling as Christian men and women; to serve God and to do so in line with what we know to be true from the Bible. Hence, women in Pentecostal Churches can find the same rich fulfillment in serving their God and Christ as did by the notable ministers in the Old and New Testaments.*

Keywords: Ministerial Training, Ministerial Ordination, Gender, Gender Disparity, Pentecostalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The disparity that exists between men and women has remained an issue of general concern in every stratum of social life in Nigeria. Women have continued to struggle for positions and opportunities in politics, economy, social and religious settings. Wendot (2019) rightly observes that the inequality that is between men and women in the seeking and getting opportunities and roles whether political, socio-economic or religious circles has is inherent in every society. The focus of this paper is on gender disparity among the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. This research was motivated by the intense debate that has continued over the years on the place and role of women in churches among the Pentecostals in Nigeria and beyond. The debate cuts across every denomination on the training, ordination and appointment of women into ministry either for themselves or under the control of men ministers. The debate has been echoed by Scholer at various times (1983a; 1983b; 1984a & 1984b). He observes as cited in Wendot (2019) that though women have contributed much to the ministry of the church throughout its history, their role has been riddled with controversy.

This is notwithstanding the fact that women form the majority of church membership (Phiri, 2005; Rakoczy, 2004). This however, has not made any difference in a male dominated church, principally in leadership through appointment and ordination even if they are trained in church ministry with their female counterparts. The church has done very little to ease the burden of oppression women face in ministry in Nigeria especially among the Pentecostals (Hadabe, 1999). This, however, this is not the case in all the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. This is the primary motivation for this paper. The discriminatory treatment meted out to women ministers in Nigerian Pentecostal Churches is evident, while at the same time they are expected to contribute to the financial and other material needs of the Church through tithes, offerings and other forms of giving. But Schriener (2005), laments that “the role of women in the church is probably the most emotionally charged issue today” (Schriener, 2005, p. 85).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The debate over ordination of women according to Scholer (1984) does not capture the issue of holistic concept of ministry of the Church as recorded in the New Testament of the Bible. The Bible does not record that anyone should be ordained to ministry or given any other ministerial responsibilities in the Church on the basis of gender. For example, the Acts of the Apostle records that women were part of the first church in Jerusalem and were included as the church grew and spread. Women were among the group of 120 disciples that waited in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15). The calling and the gifts of ministry is not gender biased, instead, it can be given to anyone. However, it has been found that women ministries and leadership in evangelism and missions are not fully accepted by some denominations in the Christian community.

The debate in the words of Dei and Osei-Bonsu (2015) is often entwined on issues and concepts that border on wide range of academic disciplines: Theology, Religion, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, History, and Anthropology. At other times, this debate hinges on practical lessons from daily lives as in the personal encounters of life and traditions of one’s faith community.

Whatever form the debate takes, the fact remains that it has become intensified in recent times. Though some people have views that affirm female ordination, others are strongly opposed to the whole notion of female ordination. In line with this fact, Gill and Cavaness (2007, p. 204) argues that “a person called to ministry has to begin by diligently studying God’s Word and spending time with Him as recorded in 1 Timothy 4:12-16. One’s level of education is not a condition to be called to ministry or not, neither is gender, age or material resources the requirements for the gifts of God to be given to a person.

This paper therefore tends to investigate and explain the position some of the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria have taken concerning appointment and ordination of women ministers. Wendot (2019) explains that ministerial appointment and ordination is an employment issue though a service to God. It is an employment due to the fact that the senior minister ordains the younger ones to work for him in his ministry. The ordained ministers are placed under salaries and wages under the ministry’s terms of employment. To this end, ministerial ordination has some economic benefits. When a woman is not ordained by the Church, she is deprived of some economic status and interferes on their rights to employment, and this is discriminatory against them.

Pentecostal women have proved to be remarkably capable and fruitful in ministry. This is in line with the position of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in her novel, *Americanah*, Adichie (2014) as cited in Amaefule (2023) when he states that:

It is found that women in Nigerian Pentecostalism are more than the men in number and participate more actively both in church activities and in spiritual efforts at home. However, it is mostly the men who are the pastors and leaders of the Nigerian Pentecostal churches, even if at home, by what is sometimes called ‘domestication’ of the same men, the women are empowered in some ways (p. 1).

After all, the first person in modern Pentecostalism to receive the baptism of the Spirit was a woman. The truth of Acts 2:17 could not be denied: “Your sons and daughters will prophesy.” “In the early Pentecostalism movement, having the ‘anointing’ was far more important than one’s sex” (Blumhofer, 1985, p. 137). For most people in leadership, including many women, the anointing and the call of God were essential in ministerial credentials. It was generally concluded that women could give public utterances, exercise spiritual gifts, pray publicly, teach and engage in missionary work. On the other hand, women were generally discouraged from taking administrative leadership (Blumhofer, 1985).

The position of this paper is that every Christian is a minister of God because every Christian has been given gift(s) by the Holy Spirit to equip believers with the capacity to serve the Lord. This position is predicated on the biblical reference as recorded in Romans 12:6-8:

6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; **7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; **8** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

3. METHODS

The paper adopts secondary (indirect) sources of data collection. Hence, there was an extensive study of textbooks, newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals, internet, website of the church under discussion, and other documented materials that treat the subject matter of this paper and other related topics. Adequate research, review and evaluation of literatures relevant to and consistent with the topic and objective of this paper were adopted to gather data. The research design is a combination of historical and descriptive approaches. Data analysis applies content and documentary methods. The paper is a non-statistical, but with simple percentage illustrations where necessary.

4. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

5.1 Ministry

The concept of "Ministry" is from the Greek word *diakoneo*, meaning "to serve" or *douleuo*, meaning "to serve as a slave." In the New Testament, ministry is seen as service to God and to other people in His name. Jesus provided the pattern for Christian ministry—He came, not to receive service, but to give it (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:1-17) (Got Questions Ministries, 2022). Ministry means serving in the function of a priest by offering up “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.” Ministry is the responsibility of all Christians (Cardoza, 2021). Therefore, ministry is an act of service to spread the gospel of Christ, and to serve and edify others to the glory of God.

The etymology of ministry is fascinating. In the Greek language used in the New Testament, the term always centres on acts of service to others. It sometimes carries the more powerful connotation of servitude or slavery to God. So, ministry implies a sense of being duty-bound to work under God’s authority as His loyal servant (Cardoza, 2021). There are some misconceptions about the definition of ministry. One of the most common misconceptions by many people regarding the definition of Christian ministry today is that the word ministry has been defined to mean either a church, a particular department within a local church or a Christian

organization. The other misconception pertaining to the definition of ministry is that anyone who works full-time for a church or Christian institution such as a pastor or missionary is perceived to be “doing ministry” whilst anyone who is not full-time is not perceived to be a minister nor to be “in ministry” (Kabatebate, n.d.).

5.2 Women ministries

A women’s ministry is a community of women who gather to fellowship, mentor, and connect in a safe, supportive environment. Women’s ministries are where women engage with God while uplifting and encouraging one another in their faith.

5.3 Assemblies of God Church

The Assemblies of God, officially the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, is a group of over 144 autonomous self-governing national groupings of churches that together form the world’s largest Pentecostal denomination.

5.2 Ordination

Etymologically, ordination is derived from a Latin word ‘*ordinare*’, means ‘to set in order’ or to organize’. The word was Latin language to ‘to appoint to office’ (Elwell, 2001). Traditionally, ordination confers power and authority on a person to act and be established in the hierarchy of orders. From the spiritual point of view, ordination means the outward calling of a person to ordained ministry resulting to the inward calling of the Holy Spirit. This assertion means that ordination is not just the ordinary work carried by human beings but a fulfillment of God’s divine plan in a person’s life (Yarkum, 2008).

5.3 Ministerial Ordination

Ministerial ordination is when a person shows that he or she has received the calling and gifts from God to build up a Church for the fulfillment of the call and gifts. In order to be formally appointed by the Church for service by ordination through invocation of the Holy Spirit and laying on of hands by a senior or superior minister. There is a significant aspect that is also biblically sound; is the fact that ordination is preceded by a person being gifted in a certain ministry (Sprinkle, 2004). In as much as the Bible does not mention the ‘ordination’, the concept is referenced in the Bible with the words- laying of hands and anointing, but without attaching it to any particular gender. (Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2013).

According to Seventh-Day Adventist Church (2013):

Ordination is a formal acknowledgment and authentication of one’s call to service ministry by God. Authentication should be understood as ratifying what only God can dispense. Ordination neither supersedes God’s call nor enhances it. Ordination affirms the genuineness of the call as having borne the proper fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work. God initiates the call and equips the recipient for enacting it. God’s person accepts the call. God’s people affirm the call (p. 5).

Ordination serves to formally sanction an individual for the purpose of fulfilling the church’s global mission (Matthew 24:14; 28:19–20). According to Encyclopaedia Britannica (April 27, 2017), ordination is a rite for the dedication and commissioning of ministers. The essential ceremony consists of the laying of hands of the ordaining minister upon the head of the one being ordained, with prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of grace required for the carrying out of the ministry. Ordination from Christian perspective is derived from the Jewish custom of ordaining rabbis by the laying on of hands (the *Semikha*). In the Old Testament, which contains the Hebrew Scriptures, Moses ordained Joshua (Numbers 27:18, 23; Deuteronomy 34:9). In the New Testament, the seven were ordained by the Twelve Apostles (Acts 6:6) and Barnabas and Paul were commissioned by prophets and teachers at Antioch (Acts 13:3). Ordination according to the Pastoral Letters (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6) confers a spiritual gift of grace for ministry.

There are various types of gifts in ministry the person can be called into for the benefit of the entire body of Christ- the Church (Ephesians 4:11-12):

11 And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ.

In the New Testament, ordination is necessary and importance. We should note that before Paul’s ordination, he already possessed the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17; 13:3). The same can be said of the seven deacons (Acts 6:3-6; cf. 1 Tim 4:14). This is why he wrote that the reason he left Titus in Crete was that Titus might “set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). This was principally for them to possess the same Holy Spirit. Again, in Asia Minor, Paul and Barnabas “ordained them elders in every church” (Acts 14:23). Evidently elders were to be ordained in all the New Testament churches.

5.4 Gender

Gender is socially created differences, inequalities and opportunities associated with being female or male and to the social interactions and relationships between women and men. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in a given context (Lutheran World Federation, 2013). It is a range of physical, mental, and behavioural characteristics distinguishing between masculinity and femininity. Gender could be a reference to biological sex which is a physical state of male or female. It could also be a reference to social roles or identity which an individual's personal conception through experience as the basis of accepting membership of certain category of the society's biological groups such as male or female, man or woman (Udry, 1997).

5.5 Inequality

Inequality is defined by Collins Thesaurus as lack of equality in relation to opportunity, treatment, and status or the existence of disparity (Collins Thesaurus of the English Language, 2002). Inequality deals with the existence of double standards in dealing with persons under the law system in the same community. According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all are equal before the law and should be treated without discrimination regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, colour, ethnicity, religion, disability or other characteristics.

5.6 Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is a legal, cultural, or social situation where gender determines disparate opportunities and rights for women and men, characterized by unequal access to or benefit of rights and assumptions of stereotypical culturally and socially defined roles (Heitner & McCluer, 2022). It is the characteristic of most societies that males are dominantly positioned in social, economic, and political ladders. Gender inequality is not perpetuated exclusively through differential access to and control over material resources, but perpetuated through creation of gender norms and stereotypes which constrain the behavior of women and men in ways that lead to inequality within society (Tshishonga, 2021).

5.7 Pentecostalism

The word Pentecostalism is derived from the Greek word 'pentecost' refers to the fiftieth day after the second day of the Jewish festival of Passover (Coleman, 2000; Barker, 2007). Pentecostalism as a movement that focuses on the activities of the Holy Spirit as witnessed in the Christian scriptures. It denotes that movement in Christianity that strives to bring spiritual renewal in the church with emphasis on the Bible and other visible gifts of the Holy Spirit (Coleman, 2000). 'Pentecostals' refer to those who are members of the movement, believe in the ideals and teachings of the movement, and see the movement as the re-enactment of the same spiritual power and teachings witnessed by the early Christians in the first century (Jando, 2014). Johnstone and Mandryk (2001) define the term 'Pentecostals' as "those affiliated to specifically Pentecostal denominations committed to a Pentecostal theology, usually a post-conversion experience of a baptism in the Spirit" (p. 3).

Pentecostalism can be traced back to the 20th century in the United States of America, particularly at the Apostolic Faith Mission, Azusa Street, Los Angeles (Miller, Sargeant & Flory, 2013). The origin of Pentecostalism in Nigeria has been explained by several scholars of religious studies and social anthropology, which include Tuner (1972), Peel (2000), Ukah (2007), Ojo (2013), Jando (2014), Kitause & Achunike (2015), and Pew Research Center (PRC) (2015). For instance, Kalu (2008) traces the origin of Pentecostalism in Africa between the 1910s and 1920s, when a deacon in the Anglican Communion broke away to form the Christ Army Church (CAC) (Ogbe, 2019).

Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be categorized into three phases: (1) The Classical Pentecostalism, which has to do with faith healing, prophecy, exorcism, speaking in strange languages, spontaneous prayers, stress on dreams and visions; (2) The Indigenous or Independent Pentecostalism, which started between 1920s and 1960s that has Aladura Church, the Apostolic Faith movement established by Timothy Gbadebo Oshkoya in 1944, a minister from Christ Apostolic Church, and Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in 1952; and (3) The New Pentecostal Churches (neo-Pentecostalism) appear from the 1970s and are distinct in their teachings (Ukah 2007). This third category believes and preaches the message of "born again" and "speaking in tongues as mark of this new birth. Churches among them are Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, Assemblies of God, Deeper Life Ministry and Living Faith Church, etc.

The Pentecostals generally, are also referred to as Charismatic Renewals and are part of what the World Council of Churches call African Independent Churches (AICs) to refer to those churches that emerged from the mission or main stream churches beginning from the 1920s (Ayegeboyin & Ishola, 1997).

5. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

5.1 Women in Ministry in the New Testament

Reading through the Bible, one finds examples of women leaders (Zambian Churches Mother Bodies, 2010). Many of them operated in cultural contexts very similar to ours, and yet they were able to achieve much in their ministries for God (Malinga, 2002). There

are two principles concerning the role of women in the New Testament church. The first principle is that in standing before God, women are equal with men. "There is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:28b). "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originated from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God" (1 Cor. 11: 11, 12).

Therefore, since women have equal standing before God, they share in such important truths as personal salvation through Christ ('Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ' 1 Pet.1: 18, 19), the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ('But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him' Rom.8:9b), and the priesthood of all believers ('You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ ... but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' 1 Pet.2:5,9).

The second principle concerning the role of women in the New Testament church is that the man is to be the head of the woman. 'But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ' (1 Cor.11:3). Woman is equal to man just as Christ is equal to God, and she is to be submissive to man as Christ submits to the Father – the willing submission of an equal. It is significant that the Greek word used when speaking of the obedience of slaves and children (Col.3:20-28; Eph.6:5) is not used to refer to the submission of the woman (1 Cor.14:34; Col.3:18; Eph.5:21). The reason that the woman is to be submissive even though she is not inferior is that God intended this relationship, as can be seen in the method of creation: 'For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but for the man's sake' (1 Cor.11:8-9).

The New Testament also shows that women filled important ministry roles in the Early Church. Tabitha (Dorcas) initiated an effective benevolence ministry (Acts 9:36). Philip's four unmarried daughters were recognized prophets (Acts 21:8, 9). Paul singled out two women, Euodia and Syntyche, as "women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers" (Philippians 4:2-3). Priscilla was another of Paul's exemplary "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3-4). In Romans 16, Paul greets numerous ministry colleagues, a large number of them women. In these greetings, the word Paul uses to speak of the work (kopiao), or labour, of Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis (Romans 16:6,12) is one he uses extensively for the labour of ministry (1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17).

Phoebe, a leader in the church at Cenchrea, was highly commended to the church at Rome by Paul (Romans 16:1, 2). Unfortunately, translation biases have often obscured Phoebe's position of leadership, calling her a "servant" (NIV, NASB, ESV). Yet Phoebe was diakonos of the church at Cenchrea. Paul regularly used this term for a minister or leader of a congregation and applied it specifically to Jesus Christ, Tychicus, Epaphras, Timothy, and to his own ministry. Depending on this context, diakonos is usually translated "deacon" or "minister." Though some translators have chosen the word deaconess (e.g., RSV, because Phoebe was a female), the Greek word 'diakonos' is a masculine noun. Therefore, it seems likely that diakonos was the designation for an official leadership position in the Early Church and the proper translation for Phoebe's role is "deacon" (TNIV, NLT, NRSV) or "minister." (Assemblies of God General Presbytery, 2010).

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Women in Ministry in the Pentecostals Churches in Nigeria

It is in this section of the paper that its objective will be achieved. For purpose of this, the paper is delineated to five notable Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria, which are: The Assemblies of God (AG), Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Deeper Life Bible Church, Living Faith Church Worldwide (a.k.a Winners Chapel International), and Christ Embassy.

6.1.1 The Assemblies of God Church

The Assemblies of God has affirmed the ministry of women ever since its first constitutional statement in 1914 which included an article on the "Rights and Offices of Women." The conference committee recommended to the General Council that whereas the hand of God is mightily upon many women to proclaim and publish the "good tidings of great joy" in a wonderful way, that the General Council of the Assemblies of God submit the following scriptures for consideration (the council adopted) (Gill, 1995):

- i. In Christ, that is in the matter of salvation, the lines of sex are blotted out (Gal 3:28).
- ii. Women are commanded to be in subjection and not to usurp authority over the man (I Tim. 2:11-15).
- iii. They are called to prophesy and preach the gospel. Acts 2:17. "He that prophesyeth speaketh unto men to edification, to exhortation and to comfort." I Cor. 14:3.
- iv. To be helpers in the gospel (Rom. 16:3).

The history of Assemblies of God in Nigeria, can be traced between the years 1931 and 1935 when a group of young men and women soundly converted and living at Old Umuahia in the present Abia State, were reading various religious periodicals that told of many people in many lands who were receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, according to Acts 2:4. They became convinced that the Pentecostal experience was for them, too. Within a short while many of them were blessed with the Baptism in the Holy in 1934. In June, 1939, Rev. & Mrs. Williams Lloyd Shirer, a Missionary in what was then called Gold Coast (Ghana) was sent to meet the few Pastors and young men of "The Church of Jesus Christ." They worked out an agreement of affiliation with the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A. and the "Church of Jesus Christ" was officially renamed "Assemblies of God". Early in July 1939, the Shirers returned to Tamele, Gold Coast (Ghana).

Empirical literature from the website of the Assemblies of God has the following structure of the Church:

i. Local Structure and Form of Government

At the local structure and form of government, Christ is the Head. In the Assemblies of God Christ is recognized as the head of the Church. He is supreme; and His life is the pattern for all ministry and conduct of the church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

• **Elected Leadership**

The pastor is elected by the local congregation. He leads through exhortation of the Word and example. The pastor is responsible for much of the public ministry and day-to-day operation of the local church. A board of deacons is elected to assist the pastor and help conduct the business operation of the church (Ephesians 4:11, 12; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

• **Sovereignty of Local Assemblies**

Within the fellowship of the Assemblies of God there are two classifications of churches - General Council affiliated churches and district affiliated churches. General Council affiliated churches enjoy full autonomy, having developed to the point of where they are self-governing and self-supporting. These fundamental principles have been catalysts for growth in the Fellowship. District affiliated churches are those which have not yet developed to the point where they qualify for full autonomy. All assemblies are required to adhere to the Statement of Fundamental Truths and a biblical pattern of conduct.

ii. System of Leadership and Accountability

• **District and General Council Functions**

Each assembly operates its ministries under both a district and national structure. The 58 districts basically follow state boundaries or are set according to ethnic focus. Districts oversee the ministries in their areas, such as camps and outreaches, as well as provide ministry opportunities and avenues of fellowship for ministers and constituents. Districts also recommend ministers for national credentialing. They are authorized to lead, solving matters of leadership and direction for local assemblies. They operate as a type of regional leadership between the local church and the national Fellowship.

Late in August, 1939, the affiliation agreement was officially sanctioned. Rev. Shirer's recommendation to the American Assemblies of God resulted in Rev. and Mrs. Everrest L. Philips coming to Nigeria in February, 1940. Other Missionaries soon followed. From that beginning both the Nigerian Pastors and the overseas Missionaries found a great response to their preaching of the Gospel and church planting efforts. One of the first projects they embarked on was to establish a Bible School at Old Umuahia, Abia State, where the young pastors could receive training for the Ministry (Bp-Relate, 2016a). The national church is called "The General Council of the Assemblies of God." In keeping with the original intention of the founding body, the Assemblies of God is considered a cooperative fellowship instead of a denomination. As a result, the national headquarters operation exists primarily as a service organization - providing educational curriculum, organizing the missions' programmes, credentialing ministers, overseeing the church's colleges and seminary, producing communication channels for the church and non-church public, and providing leadership for many national programmes and ministries of the Assemblies of God (Acts 16:4, 5; Hebrews 13:17).

The General Council of the Assemblies of God Nigeria has its origins in the Nigerian Church of Jesus Christ and a partnership with the Assemblies of God USA in 1934 (Kalu, 2008). The council was founded in 1964 (Burgess, 2008). As at 2019, the church had 16,300 churches and 3.6 million members. The General Council has its Headquarters in Enugu, Enugu State.

iii. Women in Leadership and Ministry in the Assemblies of God

Leadership in the local church is open to all whom God calls without limitation based on gender. The Assemblies of God Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2, states that "divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word," and "are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and/or district and General Council leadership." The call of God is determinative of the right and privilege of service in the local church. He pours His Spirit out on all flesh, equipping each for ministry in His kingdom (Acts 2:17-18, quoting Joel 2:28-29).

The Assemblies of God has always believed that God has called and continues to call women into ministry as lead pastors, associate pastors, and missionaries. As Spirit-filled believers, we take Paul at his word when he said that God distributes spiritual gifts to each one, just as he determines (1 Corinthians 12:11 NIV). Nowhere in Scripture are we told that God's distribution of the spiritual gifts is confined to any one gender. That means women can receive and use any spiritual gift the Lord bestows upon them including teaching, pastoring, and every other gift mentioned in Scripture. There are several reasons why an increasing number of denominations ordain women into ministry (Roncone, 2021a). Women evangelists in Assemblies of God Nigeria do encounter challenges in their ministry

Like most Pentecostal churches, the AG (as it shortly called) believes that women should be included in all ministry roles. About one in four AG pastors are women. In 2010, the official policy-making body of the AG adopted a statement on "The Role of Women in Ministry" that concludes: "After examining the various translations and interpretations of biblical passages relating to the role of women in the first-century church, and desiring to apply biblical principles to contemporary church practice, we conclude that we cannot find convincing evidence that the ministry of women is restricted according to some sacred or immutable principle" (Carter, 2021). The Assemblies of God does not believe there are any biblical grounds to limit the role of women in ministry; however, some disagree with this position for various reasons. With that said, let's consider why some do not believe women should serve as lead pastors as well as the overwhelming biblical evidence for why they can (Roncone, 2021b).

The Church has 12 'Positions Statements', which the last among them is **Women's role in ministry** that states: "The AG affirms the ministry of women in the church and allows them to be ordained and serve in pastoral roles." Women formed an important part of the Assemblies of God's constituency, many being Sunday School workers and evangelists, most prominent being Aimee Semple McPherson (who later found the Foursquare Church). This made the issue of women's place in the movement important in the 1930s. It was also recognized that many congregations who could not afford male pastors relied on women preachers. Although opposition to female pastors had been regularly affirmed since 1914, the office of pastor was opened to women in 1935 (Blumhofer, 1993). It was in 1935 that the General Council of the Assemblies of God reversed the prohibition of female elders enacted in 1914 and authorized the ordination of women as elders or pastors.

Our finding on the implementation of this new policy explains that Assemblies of God from 1935 ordained female pastor based on the evidences we have. However, the year 1977 was the first year the Assemblies of God kept statistics on female ministers. In all the years since 1977 but one (1989), the number of female ministers in the Assemblies of God has risen annually, reflecting a net change of +17, +16, +70, +76, +31, +77, +94, +82, +35, +52, -81 (1989), +48, +45, +50, +68 each year respectively (Gill, 1995). Further report according to Flower (1994), reveals that in 1979, 3,253 (14.4%) of 22,584 credentialed ministers were females; 1,219 (37.47%) were 65 years of age or older; 2,648 (81.4%) were not senior pastors, home or foreign missionaries; 239 (1.06%) of all credentialed ministers were female senior pastors; 49% of all credentialed females were ordained. In 1981, 3,399 (14.2%) of 23,898 credentialed ministers were females; 1,385 (40.75%) were 65 years of age or older; 1,427 (41.98%) were not senior pastors, home or foreign missionaries; 252 (1.05%) of all credentialed ministers were female senior pastors; 48% of credentialed females were ordained. In 1987, 3,770 (13.8%) of 27,264 credentialed ministers were females; 1,542 (40.9%) were 65 years of age or older; 3,202 (84.9%) were not senior pastors, home or foreign missionaries.

Credentialed refers to ordained, licensed and specialized licensed ministers. Until 1982, the General Council statistics did not include certified ministers (previously called Christian workers) under this rubric. In another development, for the first time in its 105-year history, the Assemblies of God (AG) General Council elected a woman to its executive leadership in the person of Donna Barrett in Ohio in the United State of America. She was voted in as AG general secretary during its biennial gathering on Friday, 2nd August 2022. Barrett had been appointed to the post last year—the third-highest position in the denomination—after her predecessor resigned in the middle of his term. She is now both the first woman to fill a seat on the AG's six-person executive leadership team and the first woman elected by its ministers to such a position for a four-year term. As general secretary for a denomination that claims 3.2 million adherents and over 13,000 churches in the US, Barrett oversees the credentialing of ministers, church chartering, church statistics, and the world's largest Pentecostal archive, located at AG national headquarters in Springfield, Missouri (Flower, 2019).

From our findings, we conclude here that the low amount of women ordination as pastors in the Assemblies of God (AG) Nigeria is uncharacteristic of the world-wide Assemblies of God General Council. Other Assemblies of God Missions outside Nigeria have ordained female pastors actively involved in the work of God. For example, as at 2022, the Assemblies of God USA has 37,713 ministers. Twenty-seven percent or 10,281 of our credentialed ministers are female. Of our 10,281 female ministers:

- i. 2,214 are certified; 4,016 are licensed; and 4,051 are ordained.
- ii. Of our 21,444 ordained ministers, 4,051 or 18.9 percent are female.
- iii. Of our 12,930 churches, 630 are led by female pastors which represents .49 percent of our churches.
- iv. 1,030 are missionaries (244 AGUSM and 786 AGWM).

- v. 22 are General Council general presbyters. The General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God is made up of approximately 375 elected representatives who serve as the official policy-making body of our Fellowship when the General Council is not in session. As of the August 2021 meeting of the General Presbytery, 7 percent were female.
- vi. 4 are district/network officials.
- vii. 55 are elected by their colleagues to serve as sectional presbyters representing a region of churches and sit on a District/Network Presbytery board of directors. There are 687 sections in the Assemblies of God USA, and female presbyters lead 8 percent of them.
- viii. 3 are General Council executive presbyters. The Executive Presbytery is the Executive Board of the Assemblies of God and consists of 15 members, 20 percent of whom are females.
- ix. 1 is a member of the six-person Executive Leadership Team which is 17 percent of that group

The above record is a confirmation of the belief of the Assemblies of God USA. While writing on the reasons the Assemblies of God believes females can serve as lead pastors, AG USA states thus:

The Assemblies of God has always believed that God has called and continues to call women into ministry as lead pastors, associate pastors, and missionaries. As Spirit-filled believers, we take Paul at his word when he said that God distributes spiritual gifts to each one, just as he determines (1 Corinthians 12:11 NIV). Nowhere in Scripture are we told that God’s distribution of the spiritual gifts is confined to any one gender. That means women can receive and use any spiritual gift the Lord bestows upon them including teaching, pastoring, and every other gift mentioned in Scripture. There are several reasons why an increasing number of denominations ordain women into ministry. The Assemblies of God affirms that God calls women and gives them spiritual gifts for ministry. We believe our local churches should as well and now is the time for your team to ask, “Have we prayed about whether God has called a female to be our lead pastor?”

This worthy scriptural observation by the AG USA has not been fully implemented by AG Nigeria. However, our finding shows that since 2016, AG Nigeria has to some extent, ordained women into priesthood as shown in table I below but has not assigned the female ordained ‘pastors’ into full-time ministers.

Table 1: Statistics of males and females in the priesthood of Assemblies of God Nigeria.

Year of Ordination	Male	Female	Total
20/01/2023	NA	NA	685
2022	510	90	600
2021	547	74	621
2020	495	18	513
2019	411	47	458
2018	408	47	455
2017	427	57	484
2016	470	82	552
2015	NA	NA	650
2014	NA	NA	688
2013	NA	NA	520
2012	NA	NA	761

Source: See <https://openheaven.net/assemblies-of-god-nigeria-ordained-685-pastors-20th-january-2023/>

We further found that what is in practice is the Assemblies of God is that both male and female members are trained in the same Bible school, but only male counterparts are assigned full-time pastoral position with the exclusion of female counterparts. It is only when the husband of the female trained member is a pastor that she will be assigned to be in charge of Women group. Another unfortunate thing about this disparity and neglect of female members is that women form over 60% of the entire church membership, which invariably reflects on the income generation of the church.

6.1.2 Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is a Pentecostal Christian Church founded by Pa Josiah Akindayomi, with Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye as the current General Overseer of the Church. RCCG started in 1952 as a house fellowship called “The Glory of God Fellowship”, at Willoughby Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos, with just 9 members. The church continued to meet at 9 Willoughby Street until they were able to acquire some land thereby witnessing relocation to its present Headquarters at 1-5 Redemption Way, Ebute-Metta, Lagos (formerly 1a, Cemetery Street). Pa Josiah Akindayomi was 71 years old when he died in 1981. Amidst controversy, Pastor Adeboye’s appointment was formalized by the reading of Pa Akindayomi’s sealed pronouncement after his burial (Bp-Relate, 2016b).

The motto of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever”. This is a text derived from New Testament book of Hebrew 13:8.

Since 1981, an open explosion began with the number of parishes growing in leaps and bounds. At the last count, there are at least about 2,000 parishes of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria. On the International scene, the church is present in other African nations including C’ote D’Ivoire, Ghana, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Gambia, Cameroon, and South Africa. In Europe the church is spread in England, Germany, and France. In the United States there are parishes in Dallas, Tallahassee, Houston, New York, Washington, and Chicago and also in the Caribbean states of Haiti and Jamaica. Today, God is still doing marvelous deeds through the Redeemed Christian Church of God, worldwide. One of the well-known programmes of the church is the Holy Ghost Service, an all-night miracle service that holds on the first Friday of every month at the Church headquarters, located at Km 46 Lagos Ibadan Expressway, Redemption Camp, Mowe Ogun State, Nigeria. The average headcount of those who attend the Service is about 500,000 ((Bp-Relate, 2016b).

Table 2: Statistics of males and females in the priesthood of RCCG

Positions	No. of Male	No. of Female
General Overseer	1	Nil
Deputy General Overseer	1	Nil
Assistant General Overseer	6	Nil
Provincial Pastors	60	3
Assistant Provincial Pastors	6	Nil
Regional Pastors	5	Nil
Regional Evangelists	5	Nil
Zonal Pastors	219	6
Area Pastors	5,361	44
Parish Pastors	9,775	432

Source: The Redeemed Christian Church of God 55th Annual Convention, 2008 Annual Report.

Table 1 above shows that at the RCCG, Nigeria women are not allowed to hold top ministerial appointment as priests. The top-ranking level of priesthood are men dominated. It is at its provincial level that has 3 out of 60 pastors, which represent a mere 5%. At its headquarters, no woman in leadership. It is obviously absent as neither as the General Overseer, Deputy General Overseer nor Assistant General Overseer. Women pastor could be seen at the last three levels of priesthood- Zonal level with 6 female pastors out of 219, which is less than 3%. No female is an Assistant Provincial pastor out of 6, of 5 Regional Pastors, there is also no female, and as the Regional Evangelist, no female too.

It is at the Area level, of 5,361 pastors only 44 are females representing 0.08% while at the Parish level are 9,775 pastors with 432 as females, just 4.4% equivalent. From the analysis above, it is clear that women are discriminated in the pastoral positions in the RCCG, notwithstanding the fact that women are far in population among its members. In all, RCCG, Nigeria has a total of 15,439 Pastors; only 485 as females an equivalent of 3.1%. This, in the view of this paper is far below average representation, and calls for concern.

It is good to note that women ordination as pastor was the original policy of the founder- Pa Josiah. According to Ukah (2003, p. 103), “the introduction of musical equipment, the ordination of women as ministers, and the collection of money as offering during worship services are some of the areas of discontinuities between Adeboye and Josiah.”

6.1.3 Deeper Life Bible Church

Deeper Christian Life Ministry (also known as Deeper Life Bible Church) is a non-denominational Christian Church with its international headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. Overseen by the General Superintendent of Deeper Life Bible Church, Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi, the Church is known popularly for its emphasis on holiness and holy living. The history of Deeper Life is very much the personal story of W.F. Kumuyi. In 1973, while serving as a Mathematics Lecturer at the University of Lagos, W.F. Kumuyi started a Bible study group with 15 university students who had come to him requesting training in the Scriptures. A former Anglican who joined the Apostolic Faith Church after being baptised, Kumuyi was in 1975, expelled from the church for preaching without credentials (Bp-Relate, 2016b).

By the early 1980s that small group of 16 people had grown to several thousands, at which time Deeper Life Bible Church was formally established. Prior to 1982, there had been a number of Deeper Life Bible study groups in some major cities in the country.

As soon as Sunday worship started in Lagos, these other groups began to hold services too, mostly in 1983 (Ojo, 1992). Kumuyi continued his independent ministry. In November 7, 1982 the Deeper Life Bible Church according to Ojo (1992) held its first Sunday worship service was held at Gbagada, an outlying district of the mainland of Lagos. Deeper Life Church has spread throughout sub-Saharan Africa and then to the United Kingdom, from where branches were developed in Western Europe, Russia, India, and North America (Bp-Relate, 2016b).

In Deeper Life, allowing women to be involved in leadership position is not acceptable. However, as observed by Omotoye, the late wife of the general superintendent shared leadership position with her husband before her death. The wife of the founder as noted by him was usually seen as the second in command. But in an interview granted Alan Isaacson by Kumuyi, he says that in the church women only have an important ministry on women. So, the whole church seems to believe that the women have a role to play in evangelistic and missionary work, talking to those who have not known the lord.

Further, he says, in the early days, single women usually led Bible studies, but now that they have been getting married, they have slightly changed so that they can fulfill their roles at homes, and work with their husbands, rather than working alone. It could therefore be said here that, Deeper Life women ministry has been playing a key supporting role within the Deeper Life Christian ministry right from inception focusing on meeting the specific spiritual and family needs of women both within the church and the entire world as a whole. They serve as ushers, choristers and also involve in the decoration of the church (Olusola, 2013). In addition, women's Representative is chosen from each of the zones, while late Biodun Kumuyi serves as the Women's co-coordinator. She even has a magazine called Women's Mirror credited to her. Her work was to teach the women leaders on Bible study, making the home comfortable, intimacy with God even though they are busy at home (Alan, 1989).

Therefore, from the above findings, it is sufficient to say that, women are not made pastors in Deeper Life. They are also not given leadership roles over men; rather their ministry is only to women and more importantly to their family. The main reason for this as rightly noted by Kumuyi is that, 'a closer look at the scripture shows that there is more on the side of men being into some roles and responsibilities. Also, he noted that leadership role of the women in the Old Testament was mainly among the womenfolk and also in the home. Therefore because of these women are not given ministerial duties to perform in the church (Olusola, 2013).

6.1.4 Living Faith Church Worldwide (a.k.a Winners Chapel International)

Living Faith Church stated in 1981, according to Bishop David Olaniyi Oyedepo, the founder of the Church, when the Mandate was delivered. It was specifically on 11th December, 1983 when Living Faith Kaduna was inaugurated. It was the first planted church, which formed its first national headquarters. The Church has witnessed dramatic growth and change over the years. For example, on September 24, 1989, the church started its Lagos branch with about 300 people in attendance. Furthermore, on August 29th 1998, it held its ground breaking service at Canaan Land in preparation for the construction of 50,000-seat auditorium known as *Faith Tabernacle*, which was dedicated on Sunday, September 18, 1999. The Canaan Land now serves as its National Headquarters (The Mandate, 2012).

On women in minister as it applies to the Living Faith Church Worldwide, this section of the paper draws data extensively from the 'The Mandate', the operational manual of the Church. Article 7.8 of the Mandate is titled "Women in Ministry" states in its preamble in Article 7.8.1 thus:

According to scriptures, there is no gender discrimination in calling and election in the Kingdom. God pours out his Spirit upon all flesh, male and female alike (Joel 2:28). Also, there is neither Greek nor Jews, **male or female**. We are all one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). This is why all through generations; women have had their own major share in the ministry of the gospel. Today, a number of flourishing churches are founded and led by women. There are many women who exhibited leadership in both the Old and New Testaments (p. 221).

The Mandate goes on to name these Old and New Testament women who were in ministry to include in the Old Testament: Marian, the prophetess (Exodus 15:20), Deborah, the prophetess-judge (Judges 4 & 5), Huldah, the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:220, and Anna, the prophetess (Luke 2:36-38). In the Old Testament are Euodia and Syntyche, co-workers as Evangelists (Philippians 4:2), Phoebe, the minister (Romans 16:1), Priscilla, fellow worker in Christ Jesus (Romans 16:3), Junia, the apostle (Romans 16:7), and Tryphena and Tryphosa, labourers with the Apostles (Romans 12:12).

The Mandate further states:

All through scriptures, we have records of women in God given position of power and influence. Such women were given divine approval and authority to speak to his people just as their male counterparts. This is what informed the new position of ordination as of women pastors in the commission. When ordained, there shall be no restriction to what a woman can serve (p. 222).

The discriminatory aspect of the Church Operational Manual is where it states thus:

However, no married woman shall be ordained as pastor without the consent of her husband. Deployment of such women shall have family considerations. This implies that a woman may be deployed to serve as a Resident pastor in any locations where her family resides. No woman shall be deployed as Missionary to any foreign nation except where there are no family constraints (p. 22).

It is good to note that in Living Faith Church, men and female members attain the same bible school- Word of Faith Bible Institute (WOFBI). The Institute offers three-tier course namely: the Basic Certificate Course (BCC), Leadership Certificate Course (LCC), and Leadership Diploma Course (LDC) (The Mandate, 2012, p. 345).

Article 7.8.2 of the Mandate concludes “the same criteria for male pastors apply to women” (p. 222).

Most unfortunately, the finding of this paper shows that notwithstanding the provisions of Article 7.8 on ‘Women in Ministry’ coupled with over 20,000 churches across Nigeria, and thousands across six major continents of the world, there is no single ordained full-time or part-time female pastor. It is only the wife of the founder, Pastor (Mrs) Faith Abiola Oyedepo who is an ordained pastor. The President of the Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel), Bishop David Oyedepo, further says that the ministry has over six million members in 147 nations across the world (Vanguard online Newspaper of December 27, 2014).

6.1.5 Christ Embassy

Christ Embassy also known as Believers’ LoveWorld Incorporated is a Bible-based Christian ministry headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria. It is a megachurch and a Christian denomination founded by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome in 1990. The Church has since become a global network of churches with congregations in many countries, with millions of members. The ministry was founded by Pastor Chris during his university days. There are several major programmes with thousands to millions of people in attendance. Pastor Chris Oyakhilome was studying at Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma in Edo state, Nigeria when he started the Believers’ LoveWorld Fellowship then known as Youths for Christ (YFC), which later became Believers Love world Inc, the global ministry with millions of followers and associates all around the world (Bp-Relate, 2016b)

YFC soon became one of the largest fellowships on Campus in Ekpoma. By 1989, Chris Oyakhilome established the ministry known as Believers LoveWorld Inc. (BLW) and named her church arm Christ Embassy with headquarters in Lagos. He got married to Anita on February 2nd 1991. By 2002, BLW had become the most prominent Christian ministry on television in not just Nigeria but all over the African Continent with her Atmosphere for Miracles (Bp-Relate, 2016b).

Table 2: 10 top female pastors in the Christ Embassy

S/No	Name	Position/Location
1	Pastor Deola Philips	Pastor Deola Philips is a senior Pastor in Christ Embassy. She is the Chief Executive Officer of the ministry as well as the Pastor of Christ Embassy Lagos Zone5. She has organised numerous crusades with countless number of miracles recorded. She is also the director of the Healing School and International school of Ministry of Christ Embassy.
2	Pastor Ose Oyakhilome	Pastor Ose Oyakhilome is the wife of the Rev. Ken Oyakhilome, younger brother to Pastor Chris Oyakhilome. She is the Pastor of Christ Embassy, South Africa Region. She Is a senior Pastor, who manifests the power of the Holy Spirit every time.
3	Pastor Yemisi Kudehinbu	Pastor Yemisi Kudehinbu is the Pastor of Christ Embassy, Lagos Virtual Zone. She is the director of LoveWorld Publications like Rhapsody of Realities and other publications by Pastor Chris.
4	Pastor Joy Amenkhienan	Pastor Joy Amenkhienan is the Pastor of Christ Embassy Port Harcourt Zone 3. She is also the regional Pastor of Christ Embassy Northern Nigeria Region.
5	Pastor Dupe Isesele	Pastor Dupe Isesele is a Senior Pastor of Christ Embassy. She serves as the General Director of Parallelex Bank. A micro finance bank owned and managed by Christ Embassy. She has served as a Senior Pastor of Christ Embassy Onitsha and Christ Embassy Calabar. She is currently the camp commandant of the waste youth camp with Pastor Chris.

6	Pastor Mary Owase	Pastor Mary Owase is the Zonal Pastor of Christ Embassy Mid-West Zone. She is woman who is passionate about the gospel of Christ.
7	Pastor Linda Okocha	Pastor Linda Okocha is the Senior Pastor of Christ Embassy Zone 2. She is a phenomenal woman and a senior Pastor in Christ Embassy.
8	Pastor Ifeoma Chiemeka	Pastor Ifeoma Chiemeka is a senior Pastor of Christ Embassy. She is the Corporate Affairs Director of Christ Embassy. She is a great commander of the English Language; hence, she is always an anchor in major Christ Embassy Programmes.
9	Pastor Karen Victor	Pastor Karen Victor is a senior Pastor of Christ Embassy. She is the Pastor of Christ Embassy South Africa Zone. She has held special programmes and outreaches in South Africa and beyond.
10	Pastor Ruth Musarurwa	Pastor Ruth Musarurwa is a senior Pastor of Christ Embassy. She is the Senior Pastor of Christ Embassy in Zimbabwe.

Source: City People Magazine of April 27, 2020

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has discussed the place of women in priesthood within the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. Women in all spheres of human existence have remained credible in their social role to the society. Most unfortunately, they have in most circumstance relegated to the background. This is more obvious in Nigerian society. However, there is a great deal of written material available concerning this area and it is not necessarily feasible to draw up a conclusive list of what women are and are not allowed to do. It is difficult to know exactly where to draw the line when it comes to women's priesthood, as scholars do interpret the parts of scriptures relating to women in varying ways, sadly often because they are more concerned with using the Bible to back up their opinions rather than forming their opinions as a result of what they read in the Bible.

In specific terms, the inequality in women ordination as pastor is peculiar to Nigerian Pentecostal Churches. In all the Pentecostal Churches discussed in this paper only Deeper Life Bible Church clearly states its position on women ordination as pastors. Pentecostal Churches with their headquarters outside the shores of Nigeria have ordained female pastors. The challenge of those in Nigeria is a matter of neglect or abandonment of their own policy on women ordination.

This, in the view of the paper, is unacceptable.

It is therefore recommended as follows:

- i. We must not neglect our calling as Christian men and women, to serve God and to do so in line with what we know to be true from the Bible. The controversies of this area can easily distract us from doing this and as a result, there must be a point where each woman must decide how she will apply these truths to her life (Olusola & Ojo, 2010).
- ii. Moreover, the cry of the women today is to allow them a warm response to the priesthood as women did to Jesus' ministry. As the wind of globalization sweeps across the world, with all its attendant consequences, women need to be grafted into the mainstream of church priesthood. With this, women in Pentecostal Churches can find the same rich fulfillment in serving Christ as did their women counterparts in Old and New Testaments of the Bible.
- iii. 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 (Yarkum, 2008).
- iv. It was recommended that Assemblies of God Nigerian pastors/leaders should be more principled and unbiased in the selection and ordination of women for mission's duties in the church. Also, women should be given leadership roles in the church to encourage them discover their redemptive gifts in Christ.

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