

**ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF RWANDA**

BY

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BY

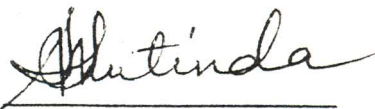
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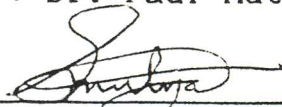
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out whether the ordination of women can result in the growth of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda.

The second chapter is a study of the traditional teaching on women ordination, a study which includes the practice of Judaism, the Early Church, and Christianity today.

In the third chapter, the cultural factors susceptible to affect women ordination are examined.

In the fourth chapter, the biblical teaching regarding women ordination, there is an analysis of arguments for and against women ordination.

Chapter five is the analysis of the data collected from the bishops, the pastors, the laymen, and the laywomen of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda.

In the sixth chapter, recommendations for organizing seminars and workshops related to women ordination, for training women in theology, for ordaining women mature in faith and women whose husbands are dedicated Christians are given.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal Pilgrimage

The Episcopal church of Rwanda, known as Eglise Episcopale du Rwanda (EER), started in 1926 with the name "Anglican church of Rwanda". In 1967, missionaries handed it over to the national pastors (men). The church then gained independence and changed the name to become Episcopal Church of Rwanda.

Outwardly, the Episcopal church of Rwanda has signs of growth and progress such as great church buildings, overflowing crowds in Sunday services, many excellent choirs, large administrative power, pastors with overseas education liturgy and protocol, and an extended educational and medical work. The Episcopal church has now seven dioceses and one archbishop.

Although the church has made progress it has areas that need to be improved: there is a growing number of sects founded by the former church members, and a great crowd of Christians joining them. There are Christians returning to ancestral practices which they have never completely abandoned. There is also discrimination based on tribalism and a lot of hatred for fellow Christians. The aid for the poor is not equally distributed. In addition to that, there are many Christian broken homes and many other former

firm Christians who are backsliding. As Britta Hukema says in Principles of Revival in The Bible and Church History.

These are signs that the church has been failing, that Christians have strayed from the teaching and the power which had saved their forefathers, made the strong, fearless and progressive before the challenges of their surrounding world (Hukema 1989:3).

Still, many people have joined other churches because they cannot cope with the situation. As a committed member of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda I am very concerned about the situation of my church. And I am looking for ways to improve it.

I have thought that ordination of women could help greatly in improving the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. The Episcopal church has already women who are very much involved in the ministry. They participate actively in Sunday school teaching. They are involved in singing, praying, visiting, and in evangelism. However, their task in evangelism is only limited to planning and sharing their testimony. They are not allowed to preach unless to a group of other women.

But also for some time I had a question why the Episcopal church of Rwanda is very strict to its treatment of women as second class citizens. The issue of women's ordination came to my mind for the first time in 1980 when I went out to evangelize with the interdenominational choir called Fraternite (Brotherhood). We went to minister in one of the parishes of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. One woman was assigned to share the Word of God. The pastor of that church was shocked. He asked three times "Is this lady

preaching or giving a testimony?" Our group explained that the lady was ready to preach and that there was no other preacher. The pastor did not want to disappoint visitors and he accepted trembling.

The woman preached a sermon on salvation. She gave an example of a Christian, Murengezi, who died in the place of his brother, Simbikangwa. The latter had killed somebody and was then followed to be killed. Murengezi, who knew that his brother was going to hell, decided to take his clothes and be killed in his place. That act of love made the brother to accept Christ as his personal Savior. The preacher went on to explain how Christ died for our sins. That day fourteen people gave their lives to Christ and three backsliders rededicated themselves to Him.

The pastor, who was waiting to see what would happen, confessed saying "I was afraid when I accepted that this lady could preach because it has never happened before. Now I really praise God for this message. I hope you will visit us again soon."

Even though that pastor was sure that women were able to preach he has never given a chance to a female member of his church to do it. Apart from the fact that women are despised as inferior in the ministry, I had no interest for women ordination. I even struggled with the ordination for men. I thought that one was free to serve God without being necessarily ordained. I pleaded with my husband not to be ordained because I had noticed that only laymen had the right to give their opinions in meetings. As for pastors, not only they feared to be transferred, but also they are

caught by the vow of obeying the bishop. Any disagreement is regarded as disobedience or rebellion.

What does a Christian husband do when faced with a thorny problem which will require a lot of prayers? He is sure that God has called him. But on the other hand he knows that a pastoral task is to be taken when the wife is willing to support him. My husband decided to postpone his ordination. He approached two of his friends and asked them to pray with him for his wife who was not convinced for ordination. Very interesting was the answer from the Lord two years later. Not only was I convinced of the ordination of my husband, but also I felt called to minister as an ordained pastor.

However, the problem I had met back in 1980 with a pastor who was not willing to let a woman preach came back into my mind. The question of women ordination became a real-life issue for me. I began to think about what the Bible teaches about women ordination. I began to inquire why the church had neglected the ordination of women.

Through my research, I have learned that the subject of ordination of women has been bitterly debated since the birth of the church. The debate does not show any sign of abating. The wise solution for my denomination was to wait and hear the reaction of the mother church of Canterbury. When the church failed to address the issue, it tried to a very limited extent to permit women to carry out certain church activities without ordination.

In this investigation I seek to find out why the Episcopal Church has been very slow and in most cases

neglected the ordination of women. I do not want to believe that the success of women's ministry will spell out the success of the church before I undertake the study. This is the key motivation factor of my study. I want to find out whether for the church to experience a healthy and balanced growth the issue of women's ordination must be addressed. Also I want to find out whether ordination will help the women to be more responsible and to develop confidence in making major decisions in the church.

The purpose of this study is therefore to find out what difference women's ordination would make in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda in the area of evangelism, social programs and church growth in general. This will lead to recommendations whether women should be ordained or not.

Historical need

The Episcopal Church of Rwanda has been led by men since its beginning. Although the majority in the Church are women, they are not involved in any leadership roles. They are rare in the church meetings and even when they are invited are not allowed to express themselves as they should.

This implicit oppression has given birth to two kinds of reaction. The first is to accept the situation as it is. The second one is to pray and challenge the male to consider the women and recognize them as co - equal in God's ministry.

The prayers have given some positive signs although women are not yet fully satisfied. Some women have been

recognized as good examples in the Christian life and are made canons. This is a title of honor given by the bishop to Christians of good conduct, pastors or laypersons. These highly respected people receive a special dress through a church ceremony, and put it on in church functions. Other women are chosen to be elders while others are allowed to read the Bible during the services. One can notice some improvements. The major problem is to preach and to allow them to carry other duties of ordained pastors. Of course this would imply ordination.

The women of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda, however, hold regular fellowships known as Mothers' Union. This is a fellowship of all the women who are married in the church. They meet weekly for prayer, Bible study, and teachings related to house keeping. Some of these women are educated and hold important positions in the government. They come up with good suggestions to build the church. However, no matter how important is the suggestion, it cannot be adopted if it does not suit the pastor. Conflicts arise now and then making women wish to have an ordained woman who would better understand them.

I postulate that without the full participation of women, the Episcopal Church of Rwanda would remain a weak church though outwardly it shows signs of growth and progress. I believe that the success of women's ministry could spell out the success of the church.

Major Hypothesis

The Episcopal church of Rwanda would ordain women if it had not been for inadequate understanding of scripture and its adherence to cultural and traditional norms.

Minor Hypothesis

Women's contribution in the area of evangelism, social action, and church growth will be evidently clear should they be ordained.

Problem Statement

The problem to be addressed in this study is the relationship between women ordination and church growth in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. The historical need is mentioned above on page five.

Research Questions

In order to carry out this study the following questions need to be answered:

1. What have ordained women contributed in the churches where women ordination is accepted?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of ordained women in the church?
3. Where would the impact of the ordained women in the Episcopal church be felt most?
4. What are the cultural factors inhibiting women ordination?
5. What does the Bible say about women's ordination?

Delimitation of the Study

I have restricted this study to the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. However, the research will also include the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda because it ordains women. The findings will help me to have comparisons and draw conclusions for the Episcopal Church of Rwanda.

Significance of the Study

1. This study would help church leaders to be aware of women's need concerning women ordination.
2. The findings of the study would help to know the opinions of Christians about women ordination.
3. It would help to know whether women's abilities and gifts could be used for the church growth.
4. The findings of the study would help me to be effective in my ministry with women.
5. It would help me to gain experience in research.

Definition of Terms

Ordination: It is the way one is inducted into the office of the ministry. One is set a part for, and enters upon the Christian ministry by ordination. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines ordination as the "Special status accorded ministers (priests) through officially sanctioned rites with associated emphasis on authority to proclaim the word of God or to administer the sacraments or to do both.

Canon: This term refers to a trustworthy person in Episcopal Church who has shown an exemplary conduct within and outside the Christian community.

Ministry: It refers to Christian service to the church for teaching, preaching, and discipleship for the growth of Christian community.

Diaconate: It is the first stage to ordination in the Episcopal Church and it is the same as in the Anglican Church. The ordained person gets the title of a deacon and he/she is allowed to carry on the following pastoral duties: baptizing, assisting at the Holy Communion by giving the cup of wine, preaching and visiting the church members.

Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to review the literature relevant to the topic of ordination of women and their success or failure in general with a view to know whether their strengths can be used for church growth in Rwanda. Some people have rejected women ordination on the ground of leadership. They say that since women are to be excluded from leadership positions, it would be contradictory to ordain them. Because of this argument, the terms women ordination and women leadership are used synonymously in this writing.

Different people have expressed different views concerning the subject of women ordination. Some are for and others are against. Some Bible believing scholars and theologians such as James B. Hurley, John C.B, and Ellen Low Webster are against it. We shall discuss their arguments.

Janey B. Hurley in Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective tells us why Paul forbids women to teach or to exercise authority: "Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; the woman, being deceived, became a sinner"¹ (1981:202).

Hurley gives two supporting arguments that Paul took from the book of Genesis. He also discusses Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 2. He responds to those who say that Paul's teaching in this passage is designed for his own particular day and for his cultural situation which he faced.

¹cf Gen.2: 13-14

They say "If we are to be faithful to the "genius" or central "thrust" or "greater vision" of Paul, we must reject his actual teaching" (1981:202).

The answer he gives to this is:

Does Paul 's teaching contain elements which should be modified in the light of changed historical circumstances? His case hinges upon his interpretation of events in the opening chapters of Genesis, with no reference whatever to culture, uneducated women, or even to possible cultural offence which might result if women were to teach. His argument does not allow the introduction of new cultural "factors" which would have caused him to make other applications of his principles.....We have set ourselves as judges of Scripture and as the ones who have the right to determine when the words of Paul are authoritative. We thus claim to stand over the Bible rather than under it. If we may judge the apostolic understand of the meaning of the Gospel to be error at this point of application of faith to life, there is no reason why we should not do so at the other points as well (1981:203).

Hurley is against the idea of looking at the cultural context of 1 Timothy 2. This would be putting ourselves on the top of Scripture to judge which would be authoritative or not.

John. L B and Helen Low Webster in The Church and Women the Third World, oppose the participation of women in religious activities.

Research on women and religion arising from a feminist perspective has tended to exclude the new African groups and to turn away from the cross cultural subtles in gender relations and cultural practices that these groups contain. Separation of men and women in seating arrangements, ritual activities, and social events is common in both mission and new churches in Africa. This separation may in many cases, be traced to accepted cultural practices of separation, secrecy, and seclusion in traditional men's activities. But rather than focusing on these practices this study examines some key themes that surround women's participation in new

African religions in an effort to understand the unique

positions that women hold as symbolic and cultural leaders (1985:88).

The Websters discovered that the Third World has cultural setting which does not promote ceremonial leadership of women. The cultural and gender - linked stereotypes hinders the ceremonial influence of women. Roberta Hestenes in Theology News and Notes emphasizes meekness and humble spirit for a woman who feels called in leadership. "She should become a person of prayer and spiritual discernment, so that she really is seeking to minister out her risks of not being approved of by everybody" (1987:4).

In the journal Wajibu, the interview with Agnes Chepkwony makes clear that if women's style of leadership were given a chance, we would have better working relationship and greater productivity. She said that

Women lean more toward a consultative process, that is, if they are not aping the leadership style of the men in order to survive in a male environment. Men are more individualistic, more competitive. Men are also much more concerned with merit. For men the question is whom you know, with whom you associate. Sadly, the male dominant culture looks upon the female style of leadership as weak. Yet the male type of leadership which essentially functions by climbing on others, is very destructive (Ngugi 1993:4).

Ngugi says that men do not allow women to lead. They consider women's leadership as inferior. Note that men's leadership can be destructive but still looked at as better.

In this section we have seen why some people oppose women's leadership and why others accept it with conditions. We need also to look at some of the reasons advanced by those who advocate women's leadership.

Del Birkey, in the book The House Church: A Model of Renewing the Church, underlines the need of women in the ministry.

Women, side by side with men, were partners in leadership and ministry in the early church. As unbiased reading of apostolic teaching and practice makes it abundantly clear that gender has nothing to do with either the fruit or the gifts of the Spirit. Paul intends no distinction of status in ministry in his many references to his fellow workers, whether male or female (1988:984).

There is no one aspect of this that is worth stressing. That is, even at the early period of history, during the period of Judges, God called on a woman to lead people and to be their judge. Deborah was the transmitter of God's message to all Jewish men and women of that time.

Birkey also, says that

Without doubt, the most revolutionary change in the New Testament house churches was the radical equalization of the sexes in Christ's Body. The cross eradicated racial and class distinctions of Jew and Gentile, slaves and free! More than that, it triumphed most critically in the male nor female demolition in Christ, reaching to the depths of the human dilemma"¹ (1988:94).

In his book which is a model for renewing the church he brings the idea of equalization of sexes and eradication of class distinctions. He also gave an example of women who ministered in the Early Church.

The many references to Priscilla, gifted leader church founder, and able teacher of eloquent men like Apollos (Acts 18:4f) create a colorful Mosaic of ministering womanhood in the early days. She, together with her husband and Paul, formed a ministering team. Her influence in several early house churches points most likely to a teaching elder role (1988:95).

According to Birkey all Christians have the same basic mission, whether they belong to the laity or clergy, whether

¹ cf. Gal. 3:28

they are male or female and that is to continue the mission of Jesus Christ on earth. He does not see why women should be excluded from church ministry since Paul worked and acknowledged the ministry of women. He says that Junia, together with her husband Andronicus, was an influential missionary who was acknowledged as an apostle, even before Paul³ (1988:94).

Others like Pobe John and Barbel Von Wartenberg Potter have commented on Jesus' attitude toward women in New Eyes for Reading:

Jesus never discriminated against women. His attitude toward women was startling new. He was able to mix freely and naturally with women of all sorts, and women followed and ministered to Him. Since Christians have assumed the rights of Israel we share the rights which Christ gave Jewish women (1980:81).

After saying that Jesus never discriminated against women Pobe and Potter argue that Phoebe was Paul's co-worker, most likely an official minister and teacher in the church of Lenchrene, whose authority was respected even by Paul himself⁴ (1986:81).

In my understanding, these people are saying that if women worked closely with Jesus and Paul, why not with the church today?

Mary Evans in the book Woman in the Bible says:

Paul Stresses that there is diversity between the sexes and that there is order in the relationship between men and women... while it cannot be defined, this order remains intrinsically an order of mutual complementarity, where in neither sex is subordinate or super ordinate to the other (1983:114).

³ cf Rom. 16:7

⁴ cf Rom. 16:1-3

Scott Higgins wants women to minister their gifts. He says:

There are many women in our churches who are gifted teachers, leaders, administrators, etc. If we are mistaken in denying them positions of leadership or in refusing to allow them to minister their gifts to us then we suffer terribly. On the other hand if it is not proper for women to be leaders of men then how are we to care for these women? In what ways will their giftedness be fully realized? We must be aware that there are women who are hurting because of their perception of being treated as second class citizens in the church (1992:2).

Here, Higgins seems to say that to deny women the opportunity to minister their gifts is to hurt them but also it is a great loss for the church. One can say, "Teachers we have them, leaders of organizations we have them, but the church is different."

Higgins also says that there are new things that the body of Christ needs to know which will help foster the unity of this body and may help to avoid the common thought that women are inferior to men and in the presence of men they should not be given leadership responsibilities (1992:2).

Marlene Le Fever, in the magazine Leadership, advocates Women leaders as essential.

Each woman has unique, personalized gifts to bring to God...It is a boom for our churches, for women have important perspectives that they can bring to this pivotal field. Women model godliness for kids. They become God's visual aids to help teenager girls incorporate Christ into their identities(1993:12).

Le Fever has also discovered that women contribute to the ministry by images and stories that they supply, both personal and biblical, stories that are meaningful to people.

She was inspired by Katheen Fischer in the Inner Rainbow (Paulist Press), that

New meanings emerge from such recontextualization. When Christian leaders do this, they continue the development of a living faith, giving expression to our experience and finding forms which evoke faith anew. Women contribute to the ministry even by their sensitivity to beauty, to how the arts enhance youth ministry, by bringing balance to a program, by developing it for both young men and women (Le Fever 1993:13).

Le Fever does not ignore the problems that women church leaders face. She understands that they need affirmation and prayer support from the whole church. Le Fever says, "people tend to look at the first woman as a representative of all women. If she does a great job, it clears the way for more women to use their gifts...If she fails, others conclude that all women would fail" (1993:300).

According to Le Fever, it is important to have women in the church ministry. However, we need to be aware of the problems they face in order to support them.

Paul King Jewett also spoke on the issue of women's involvement in the church.

History, including church history - one might almost say especially church history - has always had its great women, whose lives have witnessed to the woman's potential as achiever. But it was relatively easy in the past to ignore these beacon signs by putting such women in the special category of the exceptional charismatic. Gradually however, as science and technology have lightened the burdens of womanhood, it has become increasingly apparent that women who are neither geniuses nor charismatic are capable of many things simply because they are human beings in the image of God, with all that implies for their powers of self transcendence and their God - given right to a responsible expression of it... Let anyone look in any hymn book and see what women poets - Fanny Crosby, Charlotte Elliot, Frances Havergal, Christina Rossetti, Anna Steele - have thought the worshiping Congregation to sing, and then ask what it would mean to the church if such

women were allowed to move beyond the relative anonymity of the hymnal and achieve the visibility that men have had in the church as teachers, preachers, and evangelists (1976:67).

Jewett says that women are capable. They could do wonders if they were allowed to.

Don Williams in The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church says the following:

The theological basis for "familyhood" that is expressed both in the family and in the church since we are now all one in Christ Jesus, this must mean one ministry. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are never given with preference to the male. We live in the church in "new age" of redemption the power of the Holy Spirit is shattering the old expectations and molds. Women are now exercising gifts of ministry by praying and prophesying (1 Cor. 11:5). Not only this, they are being "ordained" for ministry as well. Phoebe is a "deacon" and a "helper" (Romans 16:1-2). Prisca, Eodea and syntche are "fellow workers," standing side by side with men such as Aquilla and Clement (Romans 16:3; Phillipians 4:2-3). The office of deacon is to be filled by women who are "serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things" (Timothy 3:11). Widows are to be enrolled for special ministry (Timothy 5:3) and older women are to teach younger women their domestic duties⁵ (1977:143-144).

Williams argues that men and women are one in Christ and that the gift of the Spirit are not given with preference to male. So women can be ordained for ministry. She makes another point that not every woman can be ordained but those who are serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. "The gospel levels us, male and female, before God" (1977:146), he says.

⁵ cf Titus 2:3-5

He also adds

We are all saved by faith alone. United to Christ, we reflect one new life of unity and equality in servant-hood and familyhood. This is demonstrated in marriage and the church. Husband serve their wives who are first sisters and then spouses. Wives submit to that service which elevates and enhances them. Men and women together use their gifts in building up the church and evangelizing the world. They are "fellow workers" in the gospel (1977:144).

Williams stresses the unity and equality in servanthood and the use of each one's gifts in building the church.

Church growth pioneers advocate that each member has to use his or her gifts for church growth. Roy Pointer puts this nicely in his book How Do Churches Grow,

This concept of every member ministry is reinforced by the fact that all who are in the community of the King have been appointed in the worship (1Cor: 14:26) and service (1 Peter 2:9) of the church and this is also their responsibility. There are no passages or speculators, only participants... The church is the people of God and we have seen that this means that the church is never merely a particular class or caste within the fellowship of the faithful. On the contrary, all believers, in fundamental equality, are the church, are members of the people of God. They are 'elect,' saints, 'disciples', 'Brethren.' Hence they are precisely a 'royal priesthood' (Pointer 1984:72).

Summary

Whereas some people encourage the involvement of women in leadership, others are totally against it. Those who are for it argue that women have gifts and to barry them from church ministry is a loss. Those who are against it base their arguments on the cultural elements they hold on and on the idea they have of the Bible. The next chapter which is about the traditional teaching on women ordination will provide more insights on this issue.

CHAPTER 2

THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING ON WOMEN ORDINATION

Ordination of Women in General

Early Church

The term "pastor" (poimen) in the New Testament originally implied a function performed and later was applied to an office held in church life. It means to tend or feed as a shepherd... pastoral ministries were performed in the early churches by two groups: (a) those many spontaneous general ministers who received the charismatic gift of the Spirit (II Cor. 12:12-28; Eph. 4:7-12; Rom:5-8) and (b) those few appointed as local ministers, elders or bishops, and deacons by the apostles (Act. 20:28; Phil. 1:1; Heb. 13:7). 17:29) I Tim. 3:8-13). Pastoral functions such as healing, supporting and teaching were performed by many unofficial ministers. As churches developed, elders (presbyteroi) and bishops (episkopoi) were appointed to exercise pastoral oversight over congregations. Deacons (diakonoi) were ordained as their associates in such task as oversight, preaching pastoral care, conducting worship, and administering the rites of baptism and the Lord's supper (Brister 1977:90).

The Early Church had men and women working together and John W. Drane, in The Life of the Early Church, maintains that there were variations according to churches.

The church at Philippi had its church leaders and helpers, while Paul's letter to the Thessalonians

also mentions "Those who work among you, who guide and instruct you in the Christian life." But it is certain that such people owed their position not to some formal act of ordination (as later), but simply to their endowment with the spirit. When we turn to the church in Jerusalem, we get a slightly different picture. There, James seems to be very much a man in charge of the church, though no doubt he was guided and assisted by others (apostles and elders...) We know very little of formal organization of other churches during the New Testament period. Even the church at Rome is something of a mystery. When Paul wrote to it he mentions no leaders at all, though his list of house churches tends to suggest that its organization was more like the earliest churches in Jerusalem than the later congregation led by James. Books like 2 Peter, 1 John and Jude mentions no leader at all, while others speak vaguely of "leaders," "elders," or "shepherds," but without explaining their functions (1983:71-72).

It appears that according to Drane, during Early Church time, the church leadership was not restricted to men only. It was rather shared by both men and women who were endowed with the Holy Spirit.

Historical Controversy

Historically, the position of a woman has been a paradox. Take for example in Judaism. There is on the one hand the well known saying of the synagogue service "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, king of the Universe, who hast not made me a woman."

On the other hand Ryrie stated

There are the lofty wonders concerning woman for her price is far above rubes... strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praised her (Ryrie 1978:8).

In Judaism there is a conception of inferiority of

women which limits them to their special sphere, the home. Since public affairs and public activities lie outside the home they are outside women's sphere. However, for a Jewish woman public life and in this her role was neither passive nor of leadership. The religious feeling which she possessed in common with others was bound to assert itself, as it did in various ways. Basic to all this is the fact pointed out by Ryrie that "all the people including women, were part of God's covenant relationship which He introduced through Moses" (1978:11). Ryrie also adds that

Although Jewish women had an inferior position, the practice was not for the majority of women. They were entirely dependant on men, and because in religious matters a sort of appendix to their husbands, who by their good actions insured salvation also for them. It is important to note that many religious activities were open to them and some women participated in them. Nevertheless other activities were forbidden to them, and one could not conclude that there was universal participation even in those activities open to them. Certainly they did not take a place of leadership as a general rule, rather, men dominated the public scene in Israel" (1978:11).

Ryrie is aware that many religious activities were open to Jewish women. However, women did not take a place of leadership as a general rule.

Mary Hayter tells about the Yahwistic cult:

Is it strictly accurate to say that no female even held cultic office in Yahwism? The traditional scholarly consensus gave an affirmative answer to this question. Indeed most reputable authors who have discussed the subject of priesthood in the Old Testament have not thought it worth devoting more than a brief mention to women's ministry. It has been assumed that, however women may have been treated in other respects, in what was for the Hebrew the most important sphere namely, a Aaron's place within the Yahwistic cult - women were excluded. Judaism, it is said, has been a man's 'religion from the early days when the injunction for all males to attend the three annual festivals was promulgated (Exodus 23:17;34:23; Deut.16:16).

Some theologians disagree that, far from being excluded from the worship of the God of Israel, women even held certain cultic offices. Clearly it is imperative to ascertain which of these opposing views comes nearer to the truth (Hayter 1978:60-61).

Hayter rejects the view of some people that women were excluded from the worship of God in Israel. He maintains that they were involved in some activities and excluded from others.

In Christianity, ordination of women has also been controversial. There is on one hand Christ appreciation of women's spiritual capability, which led him to say there is neither male nor female whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, sister, and mother" (Matt 12:48). He opened the doors to intimate affinity with himself and sex constituted no barrier to this intimacy. Jesus appreciated women's intellectual capability and though then in contrast to the unwillingness of the Rabbis to teach them because education was for men only. Later Jesus also appreciated women's ability to serve. For instance, Peter's mother-in-law to Jesus and to others after her healing. (Matthew 8:14-15).

However, as regards to spiritual activity, there was a difference between that of men and women, says Ryrie.

It is significant that Jesus chose and sent out seventy men. It is significant that there was no woman chosen to be among the twelve disciples. It is significant that the Lord's supper was instituted in the presence of men only. The apostolic commissions of John 20:19-23 and Matthew 28:16-20 were given to men only (though it is time that the Holy Spirit fell upon women as well as men at Pentecost). But it is evident that all these significant facts put together are proof that the activities assigned to women were different from those our Lord assigned to men (Ryrie 1971:31-32).

To sum up, the Bible and the Early Church practice present us with what appear to be conflicting strands of evidence relating to the role of women in ministries of leadership in the church. Some evidence appears to suggest women should not engage in ministry involving leadership over men while others appear to suggest the opposite.

Ordination of women in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda

Duties of an Ordained Priest

When the Episcopal Church is gathered for worship, the pastor exercise the duty of chief minister. Whereas the Christian fellowship implies a shared ministry by the pastor and his people, the word leader which appears in the Prayer Book refers to the pastor. He is indeed the leader. He has the prayers to recite and the congregation has prayers to say in answer. He is the one to lead the service.

In the book Pastoral Care in the Church, Brister says that discipline, through "ascetical rule" or prayer coachship, is viewed as the priest's essential task. This is true for the Episcopal Church priest. The pastor also administers the sacrament of baptism, the lord's supper and marriage. He is in charge of teaching those who are preparing to get baptized or married. He does not delegate.

The pastor is a co-ordinator. He co-ordinates all the activities of the Parish. He is the head of all the departments of the Parish: evangelism, mothers' union, Sunday school, choir, recreation activities if any. He is also the official leader of the hospital or the health center located within the circumscription of his parish.

At the same time, he is the official leader of primary and secondary schools. He participates in all the meetings and he is a key factor in decision. Other duties of an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda related to shepherding God's flock. These include preaching, instructing, teaching, visiting, care of the families, and counseling, visiting the sick members and other sick in the hospital, and visiting in a special situation such as birth, catastrophes, and others. The pastor also buries the dead.

In the Episcopal Church of Rwanda, when one is ordained into the ministry, and is said to have entered "holy orders." There are three orders (categories) of ordination deacons, priests and bishops. All the orders stem the ministry of the word and the pastoral care as forming the main functions of the ordained ministry. Thus, John 10 is very appropriately chosen as referring to the shepherding of the sheep. The priests are called to be managers, watchmen, pastors and shepherds of the Lord; to admonish, to feed, and to provide for the Lord's family, and to seek for the lost sheep. A priest has to preach from scripture and to minister the doctrine of the church and the sacraments. He has to be diligent in prayer and study and he has to set a good example for the flock of Christ.

The Episcopal Church of Rwanda holds that ordination is necessary if one is to function as a minister in Christ's Church with the authority of one divinely called to the ministry. Ordination constitutes among other things the confirmation of that divine call. Ordination presupposes in other words that there is a theological dimension of

one's entry into the Christian ministry. One is called of God to the office and does not simply choose to enter into the ordained ministry of the Church.

This brings us to the question of women's ordination - does God call women for ordination, to minister in the church as He does men? Granted that it is God who calls - and not men, should He call only men for ordination? These are the thought provoking questions which face the Episcopal church of Rwanda today.

The first order, is the diaconate. It is the first stage of ordination in the Episcopal church of Rwanda. The duties of a deacon include liturgical functions, assisting at the Eucharist (Holy communion) baptizing, preaching, and visitation. The deacon is ordained by a bishop who gives him authority in the following words "Take authority to execute the office of a deacon in the church of God committed unto thee..."

Priesting is the second stage of ordination in which the bishop gives a Bible to the priest and says "Take authority to preach the word of God and to minister the Holy sacraments." It is necessary then to note that no one, by his own private authority might assume to execute church ministerial functions. But, in the Episcopal church, the duties of ordained priests are still limited to men.

Historical Survey

In a private conversation with Stephen Wamuge¹ on Women Ordination, he said that ordination is a public appointment a recognition of what God has given. It is a public gift identification and it should be noted that no amount of training will make one have a gift that is spirit given. Gifts are God - given and all that training does is to "fan them into flame", to "equip for the ministry."

To Timothy, Paul said "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Tim.4:1). The essential thing about ordination is the lack of it.

Wamuge stated that we do well to remember that, God has always called people to various ministries. Mark 3:14 says "He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach. The Bible speaks of call or appointment and not ordination but whatever terminology we use it is obvious that God calls both men and women who are committed to serve Him (Wamuge:1993).

The Anglican church endorsed the ordination of women priests several years ago at the Lambeth Conference in London but the decision to ordain women was left to each diocese.

Bishop Mwangi² said that it was not justifiable to have women from becoming priests. Speaking at the st. Peters Wanyororo church in Karatina, the bishop said that women

¹Stephen Wamuge is a pastor in the Church of the Province of Kenya, Nairobi Diocese. He is interested in women ministry, especially women ordination.

²Mwangi is the Anglican Bishop of Nakuru Diocese, Kenya. He ordains women in his diocese

play role in promoting the welfare of the church and the church goers were women and that their contribution should be appreciated and encouraged.

Concerning the position, bishop Mortimer of Arias in Bolivia says that the oppression of women is in the oldest oppression. This was repeated by Graeme Irvine in the World Vision Journal Together. His idea is that human society must no longer tolerate the abuse of women and the demand of their gifts.

The first ordination of women in the Church of England on March 12, 1994 was welcomed by one group and rejected by another (Reuters 1994:18).

It appears that some churches are reconsidering their position on women ordination. But the idea seems to be still unpopular among conservative Christians because of some cultural factors as it will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RWANDESE CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN ORDINATION

Introduction

Despite the Rwandese own cultural factors, it must be stated that the Western cultural presuppositions with regard to women for instance, are still causing problems for the emerging church in other parts of the world, that is, women are considered inferior to men. David Barret¹ offers this as one of the major reasons for the rise of independent Christian movements in Africa in which women may take positions of leadership.

In the country of Rwanda, like in many other countries, the man is the head of the family. He is in charge of organizing all the activities. The traditional concept of the clan is valued in the rural areas as well as in the urban centers. The wife becomes a member of the husband's family and has no right to the children. All of the children belong to the father. Only the father can take decisions concerning the members of the clan. This mentality affects the woman who feels inferior to the husband (Sannes Moen 1993:5).

The Rwandese woman is submissive. Her role is to give birth to children.

¹David Barret is part of the team of authors of the book Kenya Church Handbook. He was interested in children, even infants on their mothers' backs.

The more she gives, the more respected she is. Security and prestige are in the number of children. There is a saying that children are the arms of the family that is they are a force, they protect parents and work for them. Thus, wealth will increase with the number of children because the greater the number of workers, the bigger the production.

The husband who has paid the bride wealth has acquired the wife. The latter has no right to the land or anything in the house. In case of divorce she can only take her clothes. This emphasizes her inferiority and she can endure suffering because she does not want to bother her parents or her brothers with the task of giving her a land and a house in case of divorce.

The married woman could not have a bank account unless the husband signed for her. She could not benefit from a loan in the bank. Although the state of a married woman was an inferior one it was appreciated by the society in contrast to the one of a single woman. A single woman was very despised. She was good for nothing. This was expressed in the saying Nyakagore iruta nyagakobwa meaning (a married lady is better than a single lady). This attitude is still with us and it is not different in the church. The sphere of a woman has been exclusively domestic she has been honored both as wife and mother. But even there she was very much under authority she was controlled by her husband's will. I would not be wrong if I say she was in servitude to her husband. The man had the duty to feed, clothe and maintain his wife, unless, the wife's duty was to carry out the household tasks.

Rwandese Woman in Modern Society.

The place of a woman was totally within the home. But today she is no longer bound to indoor life.

The highest thought of womanhood that the Rwandese had was that a woman should remain at home, that she should serve her husband and his household, and that she should not be beyond her own family. She was not permitted to go into the street. In this condition, can one think of a woman as a preacher?

But in the modern society the conception of womanhood has changed progressively. Many women have gone to schools and they are working in government and in private society. Both man and his wife go to work in the morning and come back in the evening around 5.00 p. m. Educated women have occupied the high rank in the society. In Rwanda the prime minister was a lady until her death in the civil war in April 1994. She had performed so well as the minister of Education and she had been promoted prime minister.

We will discuss the impact of modernity after a look on the gender role in Rwanda.

Gender Roles In Rwanda

In the past women were summoned in traditional meetings to discuss issues related to families and clans. They were not actually part of these meetings. They played a role of entertainment for the people in those meetings. They could sing and dance to prepare the participants. After this, they were to sit down and listen carefully. They were not allowed to speak. Because most of the councils ended with

drinks, men were given their own kind of beer, namely "Urwagwa," a beer made out of fermented banana juice, while women drank "Ikigage," a beer made out of sorghum. This was believed to be softer, because it was a disgrace for a woman to drink strong beer in the presence of men.

Decision making was for men alone. However, women did take important decisions for a whole country. When a king died, his son was to take over. If the son was small, he still took over but the mother ruled in his place. Nobody questioned her because she has the full right to save and to kill just like the king.

Husbands were cared for by their wives. Women kept nice food for their husbands not because of respect but because culture dictated that. It was believed that eating a goat made women to grow beard. It was then a good reason for them to avoid it. A chicken was also for men who could decide on when to slaughter. Women had to eat in the kitchen with small children and girls while big boys joined the father. This made the women feel inferior even to their own male children.

The women were thought of as weaker sex. For that reason there was division of labor according to sex. In building houses, for example, women and children brought water and men used it to prepare mud with hoes and their legs. Men cut the grass for roofing, women and children carried it. The grass was then put on the roof by men who were able to climb.

After the work, men were free to go and drink beer because they were not supposed to help in the kitchen.

Those who were willing to stay at home were criticized as having taken love poison.

Therefore, they were forced to go out and chat with other men.

Even though women were considered weak, it was not that so in practice. At the end of the day, it became clear that they were doing more than men. Ubonabenshi Odette did a research on the division of labor according to sex in Rwanda.

TABLE OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY MEN AND WOMEN

Division of labor according to sexes.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Number of Hours</u>	<u>Number of men</u>	<u>Number of women</u>
House keeping	15.5%	10	90
Cooking	5.1%	5	95
Commerce	1.2%	51	49
Art	1.7%	1	99
Cattle	10.7%	44	56
Cash crops	35.5%	21	79
Banana plantation	0.7%	93	7
Coffee	23.0%	70	30
Work outside	7.6%	66	34
Total all activities	100%	27%	73%

Source: Mrs. Ubonabenshi Odette.

La participation de la Femme Rwandaise a L' Effort de production. Butare, 1977. (The participation of the Rwandese woman in an effort of production).

Odette concluded that women by far do more work than men. What she is saying concerns especially a woman in the

rural area but also women who work outside complain for reaping little of their sweat. In some organizations a woman earns less than a man who performs the same thing when placed in the same conditions. Moreover, the salary of the woman is the one used for running the household. The husband tells her that his own money is placed in the bank until it will be enough for starting a project or building a house. But this is a way of saying because that money is used by the man for drinking, for helping his relatives, and for prostitutes. This situation of Rwanda is also common to other parts of the world. An example of Uganda is given to us in the paper Weekly Topic of March 12, 1993. D.L Okwanga discussed the topic "Why women's liberation is still very slim?" He talks about the women in Uganda "The rural women who form the majority are working (in fact overworking) but they are deprived of their products by their husbands"(Okwanga 1993:14).

Rwandese culture as it were in the past, could not be favorable for leadership or ordination of women. The latter were not allowed to speak in public. They were considered inferior and they believed it. They were very busy and so they had no time left for the pastoral ministry. Are these factors still bounding today's generation? Let us examine whether modernity has brought any difference.

The Impact of Modernity On Rwandese Society.

Today both men and women go to school. In fact a school like NEGST or NIST where pastors are trained do not admit men alone. Women are now involved well in the

government of Rwanda. They can hold important positions in the government and they are being elected in parliament.

What about churches?

Modernity has influenced the form of worship in many parts of Africa, Rwanda included. The use of African songs in the church has involved young in choirs which do not require to use Western music notes. Ladies who have gone to school have committed themselves to leading ladies' fellowships or Mothers' Union. Ladies can organize their own committee and carry together some Christian activities such as Bible studies, home visitations, and others.

Education has improved in Rwanda. Today Rwanda has done a lot to correct it in educating women. To name a few, there are medical doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, secretaries, accountants, all working in the government or in private organizations. Rwanda is no longer in that stage where the ladies had to stay at home. Things have so changed that even women leave their homes for further studies. Education is no longer a cultural handicap for them.

With the growth of cities and increase of women working outside, there is change in production. More men can help their wives in the kitchen despite the critics. Those who are not comfortable with that find servants to help them.

The division of labor has changed today especially in towns. Today women do not attend meetings as observers. They do participate. Sometimes they chair those meetings.

Women are coming out of their inferiority.

Though we have looked at the cultural factors which could affect women ordination but are diminishing because of the modern period we are in, we still need to look at what was the traditional teaching concerning the ordination of women.

The Traditional Teaching On Women Ordination

Missionary Era.

The Episcopal church started 1926 when the first missionaries entered the twin kingdoms of Rwanda-Burundi and gained a foothold at Gahini. An effective medical and evangelistic ministry was begun.

The blessing that came to the church through the experience of Blasio Kigezi in 1935 had been not in relation to the church in Uganda. From Rwanda the revival spread into the Ankole area and came to Kampala. A strong indigenous church was established on this response in Rwanda (Falk 1979, 279). Mission stations were established in the Northern part of the country like Gitare and Shyira. They gained many converts to the church. In the West Northern section there was a mission in Gisenyi. In the central part, Shyogwe and Kigeme. The station in Gahini in the West of Rwanda was very strong and many people even small children got converted to Christianity. The church grew tremendously.

The initial teaching of the church was the radical sinfulness of man, of pagan society in particular, together with the emphasis on the Holy Spirit into the medium of

witch calling and Nyabingi Shamanism. The aetiology of conversion involved a sense of Jesus call and indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurring either in a dream or emotional atmosphere of a mass meeting; the convert confessed his sins in public, and might sometimes accuse others around him, demanding that they too, proclaim a conviction of sin. Groups with a core of Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) members toured the hills, holding prayer meetings and seeking for confessions. Sometimes the accusations would be undisguised calls to admit to sorcery, and the C.M.S. missionary found people bringing in the leather crowns of crowns of cowrie shells that had traditionally represented the spiritual power.

As Linden described,

The Abaka² leaders became Christian witch callers, abahamagazi, who felt chosen to root out the evil about which the missionaries preached incessantly, and who legitimized the right to do so by reference to the paraclete rather than to the Nyabingi spirit (Linden 1977:205).

The teaching of the Anglican church was brotherhood in contrast to Catholicism which was not simply the foundation of a Christian community but also the religious ratification of a stratified society divided by class as by alter rails (Linden 1977:205).

² Abaka: Saved and highly motivated by the burden of winning souls to Christ; literally Abaka were those feeling fire inside themselves to go out and tell others about their salvation experience and invite others to come to Christ. It was a kind of movement going in different areas to preach the Gospel.

As for Anglican church, the Abaka movement alone clung to the true and faith and preached the Gospel of love, equality and justice (ibid).

Both men and women shared their faith in the church and outside without distinction of sex. They were both involved in church activities but preaching as it were was not allowed to women.

Post-Missionary Era.

In 1967, missionaries handed over the leadership of the church to the national pastors (men). At that time, it had only one diocese which was affiliated to the province of Rwanda, Burundi and Boga - Zaire. Today the church has seven dioceses and its own archbishop.

The issue of ordination of women in Rwanda has been undermined because of two reasons:

The first was the practice of missionaries. The missionaries who took the gospel in Rwanda were men. They were the ones who could preach and lead services in churches. Although they were accompanied by their wives the latter were limited to giving testimonies of how they accepted Christ and how they were enjoying to continue their walk in Him. Another area of interest was the teaching of the children which developed with the name of Sunday school.

Male missionaries had a method of selecting men to be trained for preaching. When men were being trained, women were in class of housekeeping. They were taught how to wash clothes, to sew, to cook, to have a balanced diet.

They were also taught how to help a preacher, to pray for him, encourage him, but never how to preach.

The second reason was the education in Rwanda. There was a difference in education for boys and girls. Boys were allowed to go to school but girls were not. It was believed that girls could be spoiled by school. In Rwandese culture, a girl was supposed to stay at home with her mother and learn from her the daily activities including cultivating the shamba. For this reason, the ladies didn't know how to read and write which means they could not read the Bible or preach. These two reasons, education and the practice of missionaries have been a barrier to women ordination.

Summary

In the Rwandese culture ladies were brought up in a way that made them convinced that their responsibilities were only in the home. They were not exposed to teaching. Missionaries did not help ladies to improve their situation. They rather worsened it and this is why up to now ladies are still considered as a second class citizens in the church. This mentality has been there for long time. It is now changing progressively but not rapidly. It appears that we still have to face it for some time.

CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING WOMEN ORDINATION

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined the cultural factors which interfered with women ordination but are loosing progressively their strength in these modern times. We also saw that missionaries contributed in the delay of women ordination. This chapter will look into biblical teaching concerning the issue of women ordination.

One of the greatest mistakes Christians make when debating the issue of women ordination is to be selective in their use of the Bible. It may be easy only to look at the Bible passages which support one's view and ignore those which do not. Yet if we are to be faithful to God's will as revealed in the scriptures it is important to look at all the scriptures. We shall discuss both the arguments for and against ordination in this chapter.

Arguments Against Women Ordination

People who argue against women ordination use a passage which says women are not to teach or have authority over men: 1 Tim. 2:11-15. "A woman learn's in quietness in full submission. I don't permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived

and became a sinner. But women will be saved through child bearing if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety" (NIV).

Let us see Scott Higgins's comments on 1 Timothy and Genesis:

The meaning behind Paul's statement depends on the interpretation of verse 13 and 14. Verse 11 and 12 cannot simply be dismissed as being only applicable in Paul's day that is to his culture only, is shown by the word "for" introducing 13. Paul gives a theological reason for his statement referring back to Genesis 1-3. the problem is what does Genesis 1-3 have to say about the authority of men in relation to women? Genesis 3:16 "He shall rule over you" was a statement of fact as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve. It was how things became. But Christ died to reverse the deadly effects of Adam's fall and in Christ there is to be mutual submission (Eph. 12). Genesis 1 speaks of man and woman together as the climax of God's creation and both are in the "image of God." Certainly the situation has changed considerably. Women in many cultures today are just as educated as men. And the teaching office today, now the New Testament Canon has been finalized, is much less authoritative. So then (I ask myself) a woman has to teach men under the authority of Scripture (not claiming an authority of her own), in a meek and humble spirit (not throwing her weight about), and as member of a pastoral team of which a man were the head - might those conditions enable her to teach men, without exercising an improper authority over them, and without infringing the principle of masculine leadership?.. My tentative answer to my own question is, yes, I think so (Higgins 1989:200)

Higgins' comment says that Paul is not actually forbidding women from teaching. He allows women to teach under the authority of the Scripture in total humility.

Other men of God commented on this passage. When we refer to the Life Application Bible, presented as the most extensive resource Bible ever published and also the first specifically designed to help Christians apply the Bible to everyday life, we are told to understand the situation in which Paul was in.

In first century Jewish culture, women were not allowed to study. When Paul said women should learn quietly and humbly, he was offering them an amazing new opportunity. Paul did not want the Ephesians women to teach because they didn't have enough knowledge or experience. The Ephesians Church had a particular problem with false teachers. Evidently the women were especially susceptible to their teaching (2 Timothy 3:1-9), because they did not have enough biblical knowledge to see through the false claims. In addition, some of the women were apparently flaunting their new - found Christian freedom by wearing inappropriate clothing (2:9). Paul was telling Timothy not to put anyone (in this case, women) into positions of leadership who were not yet mature in the faith (see 5:22). The same principle applies to churches today. New believers should become secure and strong in the faith before taking leadership roles in the church (L A B: 2128).

The comments of the Life Application Bible exclude women from teaching because women did not have enough knowledge or experience. Once they are strong in the faith and knowledge they can be allowed to teach.

Another passage people use to speak against women ordination is 1 Cor.14:33-35 which says women should not speak in church. "As in old congregation of the saints, 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" (NIV).

D. Guthrie and J.A Motyer in the New Bible commentary reminds us that this passage is to be dealt with in its context.

They say Paul's famous instruction that women should keep silence in the churches and not speak is still much misunderstood by being divorced from its local and contemporary context. Paul has earlier discussed what is meant by the subordinate status of women (11:3,11). He is keenly aware of

the need for emancipated Christian women to avoid unnecessary scandal through flouting the social conventions of the day. Women had to be wise in using their newly given liberty in Christ. Paul is here protesting against the disturbance of services by feminine chatter - the meaning of "speak" in vv 34, 35. Some women (they set apart from men) were perhaps calling out questions, and commenting knowingly on things said in the service. Paul did not condemn women to complete silence in church for he mentions some able to prophesy (11:5; cf. Acts 21:9), and this was a gift exercised in public. Paul's injunction also has positive value. A woman's femininity and so her influence (cf. 1 Peter 3:2) are alike enhanced by the practice of silence. Men too, are told to be silent on occasions (vv 28, 30). Only in quietness could the word of God be heard and absorbed (1990:1070).

The modern church is totally different from the assemblies of the first Christians. The family has changed and today's organization is different from the organization of two thousand years ago. It looks like the home was the temple for the woman's ministry in the Early church. Today women have realized that intelligent service is expected from them and they study to be furnished with religious knowledge. So, 1 Cor. 14:33-35 is not a firm ground to stand on in forbidding ordination.

Another Bible passage used for argument against women ordination is 1 Timothy 3:1 -7 which gives the eldership qualifications addressed to males. In this passage Paul tells Timothy what qualities should be found in elders (that is church leaders). Because these qualities are related to men, some people assume that the leaders are only men. For example, the phrase "husband of one wife" can apply only to a male.

When Paul says that church leaders (bishops) should have only one wife, he is prohibiting both polygyny and promiscuity. Married only once seems more likely to be the meaning here than the husband of one wife, that is, not practicing polygamy (1990:1171).

Much stress is laid in this passage on "being blameless," and having "a good report of those that are without," those namely who are outside the kingdom of Christ says Joseph's Excell in the Biblical illustrator. He adds:

We cannot offend, as Christ's representatives, to defy the world's opinion about us for as moral reputation is concerned. The world is a poor judge of doctrine, of motive, and religious hopes and thoughts; but it is a keen and on the whole an accurate judge of character. And when the members and leaders of the church are recognized by the world as honest, sincere, trusty, pure men and women, Christ will win the day against His foes (n.d: 131-132).

Paul apparently takes it for granted that bishops will be male, but deacons can be either male or female.

According to Mary Evans, in The New Eve in Christ, women had a part to play in the official leadership of the church within that leadership. However, it must be stressed that leadership, whether male or female, was seen primarily in terms of service rather than of authority. The fact that women deacons are specifically mentioned lends support to the view that, at this stage at least, Paul did not envisage the possibility of women bishops (1973:62). So, to say that eldership qualifications in 1 Tim. 3 are addressed to males is a generalization.

People also argue against women ordination emphasizing the fact that Jesus chose only male apostles (Luke 6:12-16). Why did He not choose a woman among them they say?

The question why did not Jesus choose a woman among the apostles remains unanswered up to now and most modern critics would certainly rely on this question. But the twelve are given a precise commission for a limited sphere and time, and they go out two by two for the work. Perhaps if Jesus were in these modern times He could choose women also.

The Bible has passages that people use as arguments against women leadership in the church, but no single point is overwhelmingly convincing. A genuine interpretation of a passage in the Bible considers the context and uses clearer passages to explain the less clearer.

Arguments For Ordination of Women

We can point to numerous examples (in the Bible) of women who have done the most remarkable work for the Lord. These in themselves are argument for ordination of women. Few of them are listed below.

The Bible says that all believers should teach one another. Colossians 3:16 addressed to the entire church and, therefore, both men and women says: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (NIV).

The word of Christ is the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. It is to dwell in us richly, plentifully, profoundly. Excell in The Biblical Illustrator tells us that the school of the word is the church, the school of devotion or the prayer meeting, the school of experience or

fellowship meeting, the school of family when children learn theology, and the divine character and administration, by object lessons, by what father and mother say and do but preeminently it is the Sunday School of the word.

Although the early Christians had access to the Old Testament and freely used it, they did not yet have the New Testament or any other Christian books to study. Their stories and teachings about Christ were memorized and passed on from person to person. Sometimes they were set to music, and so music became an important part of Christian worship and education. That is the reason why the verse refers to use of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. It would then be contradictory if this passage was addressed to all the believers and at the same time exclude women.

The passage of Galatians 3:28 reads "You are the son of God through faith in Jesus Christ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free male or female, for you are all one in Christ" (NIV). Evans comments:

While we acknowledge the equal status and equal worth of male and female in the sight of God, there has been much debate concerning the precise meaning and implications of Galatians 3:28. Some have assumed it implies the removal of all role distinctions within the church, others that it merely means that all have equal access to the church through baptism, but does not alter the distinctive roles of Jew and Greek, bond and free, or male and female. Caird points out that the three pairs must be seen in parallel. We cannot press the first two into saying that male /female distinctions disappear - particularly as the form of words used for the first two apparently in order to avoid this implication. However it would be wrong so to spiritualize the third pair that we end up by saying that Paul's long running battle with the Judaizers, his determined struggle to maintain visible unity...need never have happened. We cannot limit the meaning of the phrase 'there is no male no female' to denote simply that both are permitted to be baptized unless we put the

same limitations on the first two pairs which would somewhat lessen the force of Paul's words. Paul seems to be saying that all these divisions 'can have no place in the thought or practice of those who are united with Christ' (1973:63).

This passage of Galatians 3:28 is to be understood in the sense of unity rather than equality. Females relate to God in the same way as males as Evans puts it nicely.

It is right to emphasize that Paul here 'is more interested in the unity than the equality that the Gospel brings'. It is a unity which has practical consequences for the relation between Jew and Greek, between slave and free and between male and female, but the primary concern here is the relation of each to God. It is clear that females relate to God in exactly the same way as males. The use of the word 'sons' in verse 26 for both males and females brings this in verse 26 for both males and females brings this home. All Christians, whether slaves or free, whether male or female, are 'sons of God'. As sons, enjoying full liberties and privileges, they become heirs who are entitled to all that the father's resources can give them. These verses then can prohibit any interpretation of such verses as 1 Corinthians 11:3 or 7 which would imply any difference in the relation of the sexes to God (1973:64).

Therefore, the equal status and equal worth of male and female in the sight of God give both men and women the right to serve God, to minister before Him.

The fact that women held God approved positions of leadership or teaching over men shows the relevance of women ordination. The Bible is full of examples of women who were involved in leading, teaching, or prophesying to men. For instance there were ladies like Deborah who was both a prophetess and a judge (Judges 4-5) Phoebe, Paul co-worker, (Rom. 16:1 - 2), and many others.

Another point that supports the idea of women ordination is giftedness. The Holy Spirit was poured out to all believers regardless of age, race, sex or status (Acts 2: 14-21).

Ken Brownell argues for ordination of women saying tha

The desire of some women to become pastor/teacher is the evident success of their ministries. Women desire to be overseers and who can deny that God has called them? Furthermore we can point to numerous examples, historical and contemporary, where God had blessed the ministry of women. Was it not William Booth who said that some of his best men were women? And the mission field abounds with women, past and present, who have done the most remarkable work for the Lord. I personally know women in ministry who are clearly evangelical and whose churches are growing. This in itself justifies ordaining women to the ministry (Brownell 1992:22).

Summary

This study has contributed to a detailed and elaborate understanding of Scriptures in as far as women ordination is concerned. The arguments against women ordination draw upon an interpretation which does not apply correctly the hermeneutical rules. These consist in interpreting a passage in its own context and in using clearer passages to interpret the less clear. Since of all the points that people try to make against women ordination, no single one is convincing, since the Bible points to numerous examples of women who have done remarkable work for God, since the Bible recommends all the believers to teach one another, my conclusion in this matter is that the Bible supports the ordination of women.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the data collected using the relevant statistical method and to interpret the findings from the analyses.

The design of the work called for both library and field research. The library research work was primarily carried in the various libraries in and around Nairobi. This includes: NEGST, DAYSTAR, EAST, NIST, st PAUL'S, and Hekima College. From the library research I found out that women are highly appreciated as hard workers very needed in the ministry and they could perhaps be good if they were ordained.

Field work was carried out in Rwanda. The findings led to some proposals which hopefully will promote adequate progress in the area of our concern. The sources of data in Rwanda include:

- a. personal residence among the Rwandese people;
- b. discussions with competent people who either evidenced some interest in the thesis topic or engaged in work/research complementary to this work;
- c. interviews with bishops;

d. questionnaires to the following randomly selected

people:

pastors	10
laymen:	15
lay women:	25
Total number:	50

Interviews with Bishops

I had an opportunity to interview the bishops of the Episcopal church of Rwanda during the convention held at Shyogwe Diocese from 2nd August to 9th of August 1993.

The Episcopal church of Rwanda has seven dioceses out of which five are the most active. One is still new and is called missionary diocese. It has two parishes and is working for gaining converts. Another one started five years ago but it was displaced by the war. However, I was able to interview all the bishops including those of the two dioceses. The bishop of Butare Diocese was in Britain by the time I went for research but I interviewed his coadjutor.

NAMES OF DIOCESES AND BISHOPS

<u>Name of Diocese</u>	<u>Name of Bishop</u>
KIGALI	Adonia Sebununguli
KIGALI	Jonathan Ruhumuliza (coadjutor)
BUTARE	Mutiganda Venuste (coadjutor)
SHYIRA	Augustin Nshamihigo (Archbishop)
BYUMBA	Onesphore Rwaje
KIGEME	Norman Kayumba
SHYOGWE	Samuel Musabyimana
CYANGUGU	Nduhura Daniel

The questions to the bishops and their answers

1. What are the strengths of women in ministry?

All the bishops answered that women are very zealous for the ministry. They are very gifted in various areas of the church ministry. They are committed to teach Sunday schools, to participate in mother's union meetings, to visit each other and to visit the sick.

- Women do not show that they are tired. They persevere because they want the job to be done.
- Women are very sensitive to the suffering. They are very compassionate.
- Women look at all details.

2. What are the weaknesses of women in ministry?

- weak leadership; women are very consultative;
- women cause conflicts in the church. They like quarrelling;
- gossip
- they like compliments and praises.

3. What are the cultural factors inhibiting women ordination?

Six out of eight bishops responded that women were meant to stay in the house but now everything has changed. Women hold important positions in many organizations and in the government. They lead meetings and speak fluently. Many of them have men as subordinate. They see no reason for refusing ordination to woman.

Two said that women go by the orders of their husbands. A pastor is mostly a person of innovation. This would make her appear as "igishegabo" literally translated a woman-man.

Such a woman is despised by the community and cannot therefore claim to be a servant of the Lord.

The division of work in the society is a handicap to women ordination. In order to fulfill her duties, she will require the intervention of her husband in doing the house work. This reverse can only be accepted by few. It might even result in superiority complex on behalf of the woman or inferiority complex on behalf of the man.

4. Do you think ordination of women will improve the church?

- One bishop said I cannot answer this question now I am going to pray about it.

- Six bishops think that the efforts of women can be used for church growth.

- One bishop said that ordination of women is good but doubt the improvement of the church by ordination of women. They think that women have already a daily busy schedule. So, to be a pastor will make it worse.

5. Why up to this time there is no ordained woman in your diocese?

One bishop said: "I have two candidates in the Bible School". Three of them said: "No woman has approached me to tell me about her call to serve God as an ordained pastor".

The archbishop of Rwanda and two other bishops feel that the call of a single lady to pastoral ministry is still a problem. They related this to the incidence of a lady who got scholarship and entered the theological school, she met a man of the Pentecostal Church who proposed her for marriage. The lady changed and joined the

Pentecostal Church. The Episcopal Church had given her scholarship with the hope that she would work there. Her church considered her a great loss. The fact of becoming a Pentecostal was a disappointment. Each of them referred to that lady though she had been sponsored by only one diocese. Two also said: "We have always had male pastors; maybe it is time to think about it because even the church of England is for women ordination". The last one said "I will answer after I pray about it".

To sum up, 75 % of the bishops seem to be favorable to the ordination of women. But they have expressed that, though women are zealous, hard working, and gifted for Christian ministries, their leadership is weak because of gossiping and lack of personality needed for leadership. 25% have also articulated their doubt about the improvement of the church by ordination of women. Out of eight bishops only one has two candidates in the Bible School.

Questionnaire to Pastors

I selected ten pastors, two per diocese one in urban and one in rural areas. I left out two dioceses, Byumba and Cyanguu. The first is the one displaced by the war, and the second is the new born diocese. I gave a questionnaire to the selected pastors. I also gave the same questionnaire to women pastors in the Presbyterian Church for comparison purposes.

Women pastors

On the 15th, 1993, I interviewed the Reverend Pauline McCann, an ordained lady who ministers at St Francis Anglican Church in Kenya. She said that ordination gave her recognition. She is now involved in everything in the church because she is ordained. She also said that women like the ministry from other women. She baptizes a child and because of that she can teach the mother. If a woman is at home during the day it does not look good that a man goes to visit but it is good for another woman to go and share. This removes any suspicion. A church which ordains women benefits a lot from this ministry.

After this interview, I planned to meet ordained pastors in Rwanda in order to see whether they have the same advantage as the church in Kenya. This observation could only be done in the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda.

The Presbyterian Church of Rwanda has three ordained women. I had an opportunity to meet these pastors during the annual meeting of all pastors of this church which was held at Rubengera in the South of the country. The legal representative of the Presbyterian Church was surprised to see me doing a research of this kind. He knew the Episcopal Church as very reluctant. He told me that among the three first parishes in the country one is led by a woman. He also gave me a list of his parishes together with the number of Christians in each. This information complemented the one I got from the interviews with the three ordained women in the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda.

Parishes

Kabirizi

Kirinda

Mbatl

Answers

1. How long have you been in the ministry?

Kabilizi 2 years

Kirinda 10 years,

Mbatl 4 years

2. How many members did you have when you started pasturing?

Kabilizi 40

Kirinda 190

Mbatl 70

3. How many do you have today?

Kabirizi 1,078

Kirinda 4,012

Mbatl 1,744

The total number of parishes in the Presbyterian Church is 52

The total number of Christians in the 3 parishes of Presbyterian Church (led by women) is 6834.

The average number by parish is $6834 : 3 = 2278$

Total number of Christian in the rest of parishes (49) where men are leaders is 71562.

Average number by parish is $71562 : 49 = 1460$.

4. How many are part of the prayer group?

Kabirizi 922

Kirinda 2680

Mbati 1130

5. a) How many different ministries did you have when you started? (Choir, home visitations, hospital visitations, evangelism, and others).

b) Name them

Kabilizi: Prayer, Choir.

Kirinda: Prayer, choir, women fellowship.

Mbati: Prayer, choir.

6. How many do you have now?

Kabirizi: Prayer, ladies fellowship, home visitation, choir, hospital visitation, Sunday school, read and write, youth meetings.

Kilinda: Sunday school, Read and write, choir/evangelism agriculture, ladies fellowship, tailoring, hospital ministry (pray for the sick and give food to the needy) primary school, secondary school, sports.

Mbati: prayer, Sunday School, choir, visit the sick, sports, primary school, nursery school.

7. How do people support you?

These three pastors answered that people encourage them and respond well when called for any activity. Both men, women and the youth are source of encouragement. The fact that they are women, these pastors get more support from outside because people have realized how women are left behind.

8. What are your difficulties?

-Church activities such as building are not easy to supervise but team work and delegation have solved the problem. Most of the care for the children is left to

women. The house work is ours. The first two- three months are not easy when one is trying to adjust.

-The period of pregnancy and we have a small baby we find some problems but we can go through them with God help. One of the pastors told me "I went to Kigali for a three day meeting with a baby of two weeks and I had no problem." The distance from Mbatia where she stays to Kigali is 50 kilometers.

9. What are your strengths?

-Being able to relate to all the people

-Teaching abilities give an advantage

-People have confidence in us

-If something goes wrong, people will blame all the women.

We do our best to avoid the stigma of failing because we are women. In fact people expect much from us and we do not want to disappoint them.

10. How did ordination contribute to your ministry (for ordained pastors).

-Ordination gave us the right to take decisions, to take the parish as ours and give ourselves to it with all our hearts.

-People get quickly our advice simply because they consider us pastors.

11. How many daughter churches have you planted?

- The Pastor of Kilinda has planted two daughter churches, the others each of them one daughter church.

Men Pastors

Parishes

The names of the parishes selected for the study are:

Kigali Diocese: Kigali and Maranyundo

Shyira Diocese: Shyira and Ruhengeri

Butare Diocese: Butare and Gatagara

Kigeme Diocese: Kigeme and Gikongoro

Shyogwe Diocese: Shyogwe and Nyanza

Answers

The pastors were asked to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strength of women in ministry?

40% of the pastors answered that women have a vision for the future. They are sensitive to people's needs. They have a gift of teaching and singing. They are enduring; they do all the work in the home and do not complain. They respond positively. The Sunday worship is made up of women. At least 3/4 of the congregation is the women.

2. What are the weaknesses of women?

Women are very talkative. They hardly keep secrets. In fact, many pastors do not share much with their wives because they fear to have news spread. They are not reliable and they are hard to organize.

3. What are the Cultural Factors inhibiting women ordination?

In the country of Rwanda, women are not supposed to warn men. He can make mistakes and not be corrected. There is a saying " Amafuti y' umugabo nibwo buryo bwe" literary

meaning that a man's mistakes are his ways. He has the right to do as he wills. The man is the boss, he makes all the programs. The time his wife starts to make programmes for the church conflicts will arise. The wife can only succeed when her husband is also ordained.

The wife cannot be responsible for a male co-worker. This will bring conflicts in leadership.

4. Can ordination of women improve the church?

-Two pastors said yes. They explain that women have gifts which can be used to make the church grow. They commented that ordination of women can be helpful as long as women do not seek to be above men and it is only possible in cities where there are house - helpers and many other commodities to help.

-One of them said "Can God be pleased to see a man struggling with firewood when his wife has gone to preach?"

-Eight said no. They commented that women cannot improve the church. The work of pastors is for men. Women have no time to use for pastoral ministry. They are not able. Therefore a ministry entrusted to them can quickly die.

6. Do you think ordination can make women more productive in the ministry?

Yes ordination can give them confidence, make them more responsible married women can be ordained and become more productive if their husbands are Christians.

Married women are to be encouraged to be ordained.

Young ladies who claim to be called by God can be asked

to wait until they get married.

Ordination of women is to be conditioned by the husband's approval. The ministry of pastors is very demanding. If the husband is not cooperating with the wife, we can doubt the success of that ministry.

- Ordained women must humble themselves as they settle issues concerning men.

- When possible a parish led by a woman should not have a male as assistant pastor. This would complex the man.

7. What are the cultural handicaps you find to oppose women ordination?

- Women do not discuss issues with men. They are brought up to be inferior to men. They do not sit together with them.

- Women do most of the work in the house. If they start to spend all their days moving from house to house as pastors do to visit, their home will break up.

- Women are to be humble. If they are allowed to preach they will give directives to men, including their husbands.

- If an ordained women works with a male pastor, it will be hard to give the wife responsibility even if she is doing better than the male pastor.

8. When did you start the pastoral ministry?

All the pastors answered that they were in the ministry for more than eight years, One of them more than twenty years, and two of them fifteen.

9. How many Christians did you have when you started?

in all that long period of serving the pastors kept moving from place to place. They cannot say exactly how many Christians they started with as some book records did not correspond exactly to the number of active members but they can only say what they did in the new place.

10. How many do you have now?

Kigali has 1140, Maranyundo 700, Ruhengeri 1000, Shyira 20015, Kigeme 1300, Gikongoro 380, Butare 1050, Gatagara 200, Shyogwe 2376, Nyanza 840.

9. What are the activities you had when you started?

All the pastors started with choir, Sunday school, Mother's Union, prayer, and home visitations. Three of them had in addition to that, the hospital visitation.

10. What are the activities you have now?

All the pastors have Girls' Brigade (fellowship for single ladies), evangelization, alphabetization, small groups of prayer in homes. They also continue with the previous activities.

10. How many daughter churches have you planted?

Kigali has four, Maranyundo none, Shyira four, Ruhengeri two, Kigeme three, Gikongoro zero, Butare two, Gatagara zero, Shyogwe four, Nyanza one.

To sum up the pastors' answers, 80% of pastors oppose ordination of women while 20% support it with comments that it is only possible in cities. The cultural barrier expressed by more than 70% was that a woman cannot be responsible for a male co-worker. According to pastors, such situation could create leadership conflicts. However, three ordained women of Presbyterian Church said that they

were being encouraged by men and they had the right to take decisions concerning their parishes.

Questionnaire to Laypersons

Answers from laymen

Laymen include ten canons, two hospital directors and two choir leaders. These had only four questions to answer.

1. What are the strengths of women in ministry?

Women are the heart of the home. In the same way they are the heart of the church. They serve with all their heart.

-Women have many responsibilities and they want all the things to be done. Women are very loving. They are sensitive to the needy.

-One of them said "Of all the people in need we have helped in our family, only two were introduced by me. My wife is the one who has the gift of noticing the needy."

-They are good social workers and can coordinate projects.

-They feel at home with all kinds of people: men, women, children, the youth, and others.

2. What are the weaknesses of women in ministry?

- Women are very emotional. They cry when a person is dead. They cannot bury the dead. For this reason, I would not like them to be ordained.

- Women are not faithful to time. You give them an hour, they add another one for themselves. When a child gets sick, all the programs are cancelled. It is impossible to rely on them. Women gossip. They can have a problem if engaged in counseling.

3. What are the cultural factors inhibiting women ordination?

- Women are meant to bear children and educate them
- Women do not discuss serious issues with men.
- The other one is the responsibility factor: Can a woman be in charge of a parish where there is a man?
- The inferiority complex will weaken women,s decision making.

4. Do you think ordination can help the women to serve better?

Seven of the laymen said that women can use fully their gifts if they were ordained. Four said that it would be impossible for the women to do well because they would be very busy. The remaining five had no opinion.

Answers from the Laywomen

Laywomen include the mothers union leaders that is the wife of the bishop in each of the five dioceses and a coordinator (10). They also include 10 deaconess and 5 Sunday school leaders. They were very happy to see me interested in a research that concerns them.

1. What are the strengths of women in ministry?

Women are more in number than, men. They are sensitive to pain. They pray for the sick and people enjoy their service.

2. What are the weaknesses of women?

- Lack punctuality. They come late to work even those who stay nearby. Women leave the work before time and without permission.

3. What are the cultural factors inhibiting women ordination?

-Lack of education. Inferiority complex: some women would not accept to be ordained. Men do not help their wives in the house; women can be discouraged by the work.

4. Would ordination contributed positively to your ministry?

Answers:

<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>agree</u>	<u>disagree</u>	<u>strongly disagree</u>	<u>Total</u>
8	6	7	4	25

Of the twenty-five women who participated in the research, eight strongly agreed that ordination could make them more productive, six agreed, the other seven disagreed, while four strongly disagreed. Those who answered "Yes" believe that ordination would make them serve better as it would confer to them responsibility and confidence in exercising their gifts. Among those who disagreed two believe that ordination is for men and seven believe that ordination is good but does not necessarily improve the church.

In regard to the laymen answers, 40% of laymen said that women ordination could be helpful to the church while 26% opposed it strongly. 33% did not want to give their opinion. Of all the laywomen 56% support the ordination of women while 44% oppose it.

Summary of the Findings

75% of bishops of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda are aware that women have gifts which they can use in building up the church and evangelization. 40% of them believe that ordination can help women acquire confidence and they will be more productive while 35% of them acknowledge the strengths of women but do not advise women ordination.

Thirteen pastors, three women and ten men participated in the study. The three women have succeeded in the pastoral ministry. These women who belong to the Presbyterian Church have contributed tremendously to church growth. They have an average number of 2278 while the average number of Christians in the other parishes is 1460.

Among the men pastors, 20% appreciated women strengths as a tool for church growth while 80% oppose the idea of women ordination. 45% of the laymen were also happy for the strength of women. They said that women can fully use their gifts if they were ordained. But 25% of laymen did not appreciate the idea of ordaining women. As for the lay women, 56% are sure that ordination of women can make them better ministers, but 44% are against it. Their reason is that ordination is for men, women are very busy and are to be submissive.

Other factors that discourage the recommendation of women ordination include women's weak leadership, their busy schedule, their many words, their failure to keep time, their emotions, the fact of relying on husbands in order to meet their goals, and the instability of single ladies.

The tables below summarize these findings

1. What are the strengths of women?

<u>Answers from Bishops</u>	<u>Answers from Pastors</u>	<u>Answers from Laymen</u>	<u>Answers from Laywomen</u>
. women are: - hard working, - careful, - zealous, - caring; . they have: - gifts for ministry, commitment, - endurance, -patience, -compassion.	.women are: -hard working, -enduring, -sensitive to needs. .women have: -vision for the future, -gift of teaching, -singing heart.	. women are: - hard -working, -patient, -open, -strong in faith, -sensitive to pain. . women have: -commitment, -the heart of the home.	.women are: -hard work. -gifted -sensitive .women have: -endurance, -zeal, -compassion, -faith.

2. What are the weaknesses of women?

<u>Answers from Bishops</u>	<u>Answers from Pastors</u>	<u>Answers from Laymen</u>	<u>Answers from Laywomen</u>
.women are: -Physically weak -Very talkative, -Very consultative .women have: -weak leadership .women like: -compliments -and praises	.women are: -talkative, -very emotional, -always late and not able to keep programs, -not reliable, -hard to organize.	.women are: -not punctual, -quarrelsome, -rude towards the helpers, -Emotional, -fond of gossip.	.women are: -easily discouraged, -very talkative. .women like: -to argue.

3. Cultural factors inhibiting women ordination

<u>Answers from Bishops</u>	<u>Answers from pastors</u>	<u>Answers from Laymen</u>	<u>Answers from Laywomen</u>
<p>. women do alone all the work at home and cannot add extra responsibilities,</p> <p>-women do not warn men,</p> <p>-Working with men makes women inferior even if they are assigned to lead.</p>	<p>.women have:</p> <p>-all the household responsibilities,</p> <p>-the man is the boss, he makes all the programs.</p> <p>-A female pastor could not rely on the husbands programs</p> <p>-conflicts will be there especially if the husband is not a pastor.</p>	<p>-men do not discuss serious issues with women</p> <p>.women are inferior</p> <p>.men are the ones to be responsible if the woman works with men.</p>	<p>-lack of education</p> <p>-male co-workers believe a woman is not able to lead them</p> <p>.women have:</p> <p>-inferiority complex,</p> <p>-poor decision making.</p>

4. Can ordination of women improve the church?

<u>Answers from Bishop</u>	<u>Answers from Pastors</u>	<u>Answers from Laymen</u>	<u>Answers from Laywomen</u>
<p>-ordination can make women more responsible</p> <p>-women can gain more confidence</p> <p>-They can use their gifts</p> <p>-they can succeed if the husband is cooperative</p> <p>Women are normally busy.</p>	<p>-Yes as long as they do not seek to be above men,</p> <p>-Yes but not in the rural area</p> <p>-Open churches have more facilities</p> <p>-No, men are better of to improve the church.</p> <p>-No, men have more time, more thoughts, more plans for the future</p>	<p>-No, ordination will make them proud.</p> <p>-No women are hard to organize.</p> <p>-Yes their faith and commitment can improve the church.</p> <p>-Yes, but spiritual area only; they can not engage in building activities.</p>	<p>-Yes we need recognition in order to be more productive.</p> <p>-Women have a vision but men do not allow them to act.</p> <p>Pastors are to be men.</p>

Bishops, pastors, and laymen recognize that women are zealous, hard working, committed to their job and caring for others, but they perceive them as weak leaders.

Some of the underlying assumptions inhibiting women ordination are: a man is the boss and a woman is "inferior" to man; the woman is too busy with the work at home, and decision making is for men.

The fact that some bishops consider the use of women's gifts as important for the improvement of the church could prepare the ground for ordination of women, but most of the pastors (80%) and laymen (25%) oppose women ordination since they think it is a way of putting women above men. 30% of laymen are neutral. In the next chapter we will look at some recommendations concerning this issue that could be provided to Episcopal Church of Rwanda.

CHAPTER 6

TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALIZED APPROACH TO WOMEN ORDINATION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to make recommendations concerning the issue of women ordination in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. But before I do so, it is important to give a brief resume of the results of this study.

The ordination of women is still a problem in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. More than a half of the bishops are convinced that women have gifts for Christian ministries but still doubt their abilities for leadership. 80%¹ of pastors have fear that ordination of women would make women feel superior to men and it would create conflicts with male co-workers. Only 45% of laymen think that ordination of women would be helpful to the church. Others think that women ordination would make them proud. More than a half (56%) of women support ordination of women. They think they need recognition to be more productive. However, the remaining 44% women rejected strongly the idea as they are convinced that pastors should be only men.

¹ A high percentage of pastors rejected the idea of women ordination because most of them seem to be conservative.

Considering the results of the study I would suggest, in this chapter, the following:

1. Recommendation for organizing seminars and workshops related to women ordination.
2. Recommendation for training women in theology
3. Recommendation for ordaining women whose husbands are dedicated Christians.
4. Recommendation for ordaining women who are mature in faith.

Recommendation for Organizing Seminars and Workshops Related to Women Ordination.

This study has showed that ordination of women has been delayed because of a wrong interpretation of women submission. Many people said, "The wife is to be submissive and so should not be ordained." Such an idea of submission seems to arise from a false picture of what the wife's submission involves. To correct this false picture, I would like to remind those who hold it that submission is not merely a concept for women. It is a concept for all believers (Eph 5:21; Phil 2:3,4 1 Pet 5:5; Rom 13:1; Heb 13:17).

Submission does not mean that the wife becomes a slave. It does neither mean that a wife should never open her mouth, never have an opinion, never give an advice (compare Prov.31:26; Acts 18:26; Judges 13:21-23). The wife is not to become a wall flower who folds up and allows her abilities to be dormant (compare Proverbs 31:10-31). In fact submission does not imply inferiority, and the submission of

the wife to her husband does not mean being inferior to him. Jesus Christ was not inferior to Mary and Joseph, and yet the scripture says that as a child, "He continued in subjection to them" (Luke 2:51). Jesus was in no way inferior to God the Father. He was and is fully and completely God, in every sense. After a careful examination of the Bible and other sources, it seems that the stand of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda on women ordination is not truly biblical. The church lacks the women deacons fulfilling ministerial task. But the Bible mentions women deacons who functioned in Paul's churches (Romans 16:1 - 15). In the same way women could function well in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. In Paul's churches women were also leading in prayer and prophecy. They can also be useful in the Episcopal church of Rwanda. The point here is that the strength, growth, and life of the church in our generation depends upon our openness to welcome women fully into the Christian ministry. To miss this point would mean an elimination of massive gifts given to believers to strengthen the church through women and a contradiction to the gospel we proclaim and demonstrate to the world.

Thus, I would recommend that seminars and workshops be organized to correct the false picture that some men have about the ordination of women by using Biblical teaching and principles. The ordination of women should not be forced but taught until Christians can appreciate it themselves. It may take time and long process as some cultural elements keep changing and the society grasp new values.

Recommendation for Training Women in Theology

The Rwandese culture has made women illiterate for a long period in history. When doors for school became open for women in Rwanda the theological schools did not open themselves up to women. The Episcopal Church especially did not encourage women to attend theological schools. The creation of women as bearers of children puts them in a unique role². While this responsibility is not to be taken lightly and should be held in priority, no scripture excludes a woman, from also having other responsibility. In 1 Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6 men are excluded from leadership if their households are not in order. Thus responsibilities of the home are a priority for men as well.

Given the fact that the women who managed to be involved in pastoral ministry have succeeded, as the average number of Christians in the parishes led by women in the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda is greater than the one in those led by men, I recommend that women should be ordained also in the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. But this ordination requires education in theology to be effective in the ministry. All women pastors in Presbyterian Church have done theology and that has contributed to their credibility in the ministry and decision making. Though the Episcopal Church is different in leadership style, the theological one is still needed for building trust and credibility in the pastoral ministry.

²The women's unique role was to assure good education for children and welcome visitors at home. About eight years ago educated wives of Ministers and Ambassadors were not allowed to work. Their major role was to take care for the house, children and visitors.

Recommendation for Ordaining Women Whose
Husbands Are Dedicated Christian

During this study, a great number of respondents expressed the conflicting role of the mother, housekeeping, and pastoral ministry. For the woman pastor to succeed the husband should be cooperative in handling the work at home.

As some respondent suggested it could be better if both the husband and the wife are pastors. They can support each other easily in their pastoral work. As the husband is supposed to be the one to outline the program of activities for the whole family including the wife, conflicts may arise if the husband is not a committed Christian who gives priority to God's ministry

And the wife can assume effectively the pastoral responsibilities if husband opposes them. So, I would recommend that before the church ordains a woman, there should be a serious consideration of the husband's commitment to Christ and his attitude towards the call of his wife to be a pastor. If the husband does not show any interest in the call of his wife, the church should wait until the husband is ready to support her in the ministry. Even though the Presbyterian Church has adopted the principle of ordaining women 10 years ago, it has only three ordained women pastors³. One may then assume that the cultural elements inhibiting women ordination should not be neglected even in Presbyterian Church.

³ The first woman pastor was married to a husband who was also pastor. Two others women pastors who were having four and two years were married to committed Christians.

Recommendation for Ordaining Women Who Are Mature in Faith.

The ordination should be allowed to women who show the abilities to serve in humility. An ordained priest is a person to whom Christians and non-Christians run to seek advise. He is to handle issues of all sort and this requires a person who trust in God for solving the problems. For this reason, the Church is to ordain women who are mature in faith. Moreover, the first ordained women should set a good example and if they fail, they would bring discouragement to their followers.

The pastor is to coordinate all the activities of the parish. There is no guarantee that everything would run smoothly. The work would require prayers of faith in order to succeed. Rwandese society do not like arrogant women. In order to carry out pastoral ministry a woman should be humble enough and avoid to be judged as seeking to be above men. A failure here would result in rejection not only of the woman pastor but also of her message.

In conclusion, it seems that the ordination of women is not yet understood by the church members of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. Women should be helped to understand that no activities are reserved only for men. Men also should go beyond the cultural barriers minimizing the value of women.

Though the church has, to some extent, changed family life* and individual ways of thinking, it has not yet had the

* In a family life, woman is no longer bound to stay inside the house. She can go to school and participate in outside activities.

influence it should and could have on the social aspect of the society. It could become more effective if in the hierarchy of its aims was the stress on religious⁵ behaviour.

Issues for Further Research

1. There is need to do a study on the issue concerning the ordination of single ladies since church leaders have expressed their hesitation to ordain them.
2. To find out the factors that have contributed to the success of Presbyterian women pastors.

⁵ Religious behaviour refers to the teaching of Christians on how to live a holy life pleasing to God rather than concentrating on buildings and large administrative power.

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Appendix 1

Questions for interviews with bishops

1. What are the strengths of women?
2. What are the weaknesses of women?
3. What are the cultural factors inhibiting women ordination?
4. Do you think ordination of women will improve the church?
5. If you have scholarship for one person and you have two candidates can you give it to a man or a woman?
6. Why up to this time there is no ordained woman in your diocese?

Appendix 2

**Ibibazo Bigenewe Abapastori n'abalayiki
(Questions for pastors and laypersons)**

1. Umaze igihe kingana iki mur'uyu murimo w'Imana?
2. Wari ufite abakristo bangahe ugitangira umurimo w'ubupasitori?
3. Ubu ufite bangahe?
4. Ni bangahe bari mu mutwe w'abasenga (groupe de priere)?
5. a) N'iyihe mirimo y'Imana itandukanye watangiranye mu murimo w'ubupasitori? Kuririmba (koralii), gusura, kuvuga ubutumwa, gusura abarwayi, n'indi.
b) Erekana iyariyo.
6. Ubu mufite ingahe?
7. Abantu bagushyigikiye bate?
8. N'ibihe bibazo ufite mu murimo?
9. N'iki kigutera imbaraga?
10. Kurobanurirwa ubupasitori byakongereye iki ku buryo wari usanzwe ukoramo umurimo w'Imana? (ubupasitori).
11. Wibwira ko kurobanurwa byagira icyo byongera ku buryo ukorera Imana ubu? (abalayiki).
12. Umaze gutangiza andi mashami (amakanisa, paroisses) angahe mw'itorero ryawe? (kubapasitori).

CURRICULUM VITAE

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