

**North Western Seminary**

**An analysis of female pastoring of a church from the context of Joel 2:28-29**

**A research paper submitted in fulfillment of Master of theology**

**NAME:** JENNIPHER NG'ONYA PHIRI MUCHELENG'ANGA

**STUDENT NUMBER:** NTS 37-3777A

**DATE OF SUBMISION:** 29/11/13

**SUPERVISOR:** Dr GALLOZA S

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby do declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any other College or University.

Signature: JNP Mucheleng'anga

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated fully to the Sovereign God (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit), my beloved husband, Mr Chitaku Mucheleng'anga, my children: (Dr Luchenga Mucheleng'anga, Mr James Mucheleng'anga, Mr Chimwando Mucheleng'anga, Mr Chitaku Jr Mucheleng'anga, and Miss Lusungu Ng'onya Jr Mucheleng'anga), my mentor Dr Samuel Galloza, the Church at Energema Ministries, my father Mr Phiri Lefati Talavu Mutemeni (late), my mother Miss Lakele Lungu, my brother Mr David Phiri, and my disciples Reverend Zulu Lucas, Mr Muzgatama Patrick, Mrs Lungu Ednah, Mrs Tembo Martha, Mrs Mbewe Namulifa and Miss Imbwae Eileen.

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## List of Abbreviations

**AIDS** .....Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

**AV** .....Amplified Version.

**HIV** .....Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

**NT** .....New Testament.

**NRSV** .....New Revised Standard Version.

**OT** .....Old Testament.

**Figures**

Fig. 1. The "Shield of the Trinity" (Scutum Fidei) ..... 22

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.0 Introduction

This study is an analysis of God's plan of equality between men and women (feminism) in the aspects of church leadership and pastoring highlighting Joel 2:28-29. This is one of the examples where God grants equal opportunity to women and men to serve him, the Holy Spirit being the medium in the doctrine of reformist feminism.<sup>1</sup> Reformism is a branch of feminist theology seeking to interpret and understand Christianity in light of the equality of women and men, an interpretation necessary for a complete understanding of Christianity. In the absence of a standard set of beliefs among Christian feminists, most agree that God does not discriminate on the basis of sex, and are involved in issues of the ordination of women, male dominance and the balance of parenting in Christian marriage, claims of moral deficiency and inferiority of women compared to men, and the overall treatment of women in the church.<sup>2</sup> Livingstone on the other hand defines feminism as a "Theological movement of various strands united in a determination to secure social justice for women. She also gives a history of its origins tracing back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century social campaigns which became a serious challenge within the Christian tradition in the 1980's."<sup>3</sup> The Old Testament (OT) in history had many examples of women in God's service but Deborah is picked as unique for her being a prophet and judge of Israel. She assumed religious, political and military responsibilities. The spirit of the lord came upon such individuals to empower them for word and action in crisis situations in the life of Israel.<sup>4</sup> Women rose to positions of apostleship, Junia being one.<sup>5</sup> New

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<sup>1</sup> [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article\\_id=1385](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article_id=1385). Uploaded 020813, 1225hrs.

<sup>2</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism#Theology>. Uploaded 020813, 1117hrs.

<sup>3</sup> Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford, UK.: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim & David L. Petersen, A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), p.270.

Testament (NT) passages affirm that the punishment imposed upon women (and men) in Genesis for the sin of Adam and Eve is overcome in Christ (Rom 5:12-21). The present process of redemption is the working out of that promise of unity in Christ who is the source and architect of a new humanity, not simply a renewed male humanity with females trailing respectfully at a submissive distance. The only appropriate ethical question for a Christian, thus, is how one moves the world closer towards that condition of perfect equality and unity in Christ.<sup>6</sup>

The situation as at now is that there are sections of the Christian church that do not recognize women as leaders or pioneers of churches as attested to by the struggle between the anti-feminists and feminists. In both mainline and liberal branches of protestant Christianity, women are ordained as clergy even in some theologically conservative denominations, such as Assemblies of God.<sup>7</sup> However, the Roman Catholic church, the Orthodox Christian churches, the Southern Baptist Convention (the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S.),<sup>8</sup> the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and most churches in the American Evangelical movement prohibit women from entering clerical positions.<sup>9</sup> Some Christian feminists believe that as women have greater opportunity to receive theological training, they will have greater influence on how scriptures are interpreted by those that deny women the right to become ministers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Denise Ackermann, Jonathan A. Draper and Emma Mashinini, eds., Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), p.33.

<sup>6</sup> [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article\\_id=1385](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article_id=1385). Uploaded 020813, 1225hrs.

<sup>7</sup> The role of women in ministry. The General council of the assemblies of God. 1990-08-04. P7.

<sup>8</sup> SBC position statement –women in ministry.

<sup>9</sup> SpringerLink - Journal Article. Male god imagery and female submission: Lessons from a southern baptist ladies' bible class.

<sup>10</sup> Harrison, Victoria S. "Modern Women, Traditional Abrahamic Religions and Interpreting Sacred Texts." Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain & Ireland School of Feminist Theology 15.2 (2007):p.145-159.

Yet attention to the history of feminism gives us reason to step back from the current debate and clarify what is really at stake: The agreement between religion and feminism is no less real than the tension.

It is my hope therefore, that this analysis will bring about acceptance of women as equal partners in church leadership and pastoring of congregations.

## **2.0 Research question**

Will anti-feminists ever consider female Christian clergy/Church founders worthwhile?

### **3.0 Background**

There is conflict by some sections of the Christian community that females should not pastor a congregation or lead a church thus hindering them in God's calling. This is one bigger reason why the feminist movement has come in to defend and include women in God's service as Scripture attests;

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28-29).

#### **4.0 Significance of the study**

This study will help Christians and the church accept and encourage women lead and found churches as the called of God.

Feminism reminds us that our concepts of equality of men and women are not new to the Christian tradition and that Christian theology and Scripture must serve as a source of women's equality in the leading and pastoring of churches.



## 5.0 Literature review

Feminism at heart is a desire for all to be equal. As I said at the start of this piece – Jesus was a feminist and so am I. He treated women in his social era in a revolutionary manner, broke a lot of cultural traditions, gave them respect, dignity and worth. His behaviour meshes perfectly with the definition of feminism: a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing and defending equal political, economic, social rights and opportunities for women. For example, the woman at the well, friends like Mary Magdalene, not judging the woman caught in adultery, choosing a woman to be the first person to see his resurrected body and women being among the group of disciples who followed him everywhere. There were no women chosen within the twelve disciples, though, but to me that is related to the culture of that era and the lack of education available to women, rather than being a doctrinal statement. The Bible contains some pretty powerful portraits of women. In the NT they were among those who funded the whole ‘discipleship tour’ of Jesus and his followers. Luke says: “Jesus travelled from one town to another, proclaiming the good news...The Twelve, and also some women cured of evil spirits and diseases were with him: Mary ... Joanna Chuzza’s wife, Herod’s household manager; Susanna; and many others who helped to support them out of their own means” (Lk. 8). Then consider the story of Mary and Martha where Jesus did not affirm the cultural limitations of women doing domestic work, but declared Mary’s sitting at his feet (learning from a Rabbi) and engaging in theological study as ‘the better part’. In the OT, Deborah bravely stood as the Judge of Israel and led it into fierce battle. Proverbs 31 is about the ‘ideal woman’ who excelled in business, provided for her family and bought and sold property. In Esther, we learn of Esther’s courage rescuing the entire

nation.<sup>11</sup> There were feminists prior to the early twentieth century. There were also women philosophers throughout Europe who were busy arguing against patriarchal oppression. Damaris Masham (1659–1708) and Mary Astell (1666–1731) offered especially compelling arguments for improving women’s lot, and they did so within a religious framework. They argued that women were not liabilities but indispensable to the common good. Astell stated, “whatever other great and wise reasons men may have for despising women, and keeping them in ignorance and slavery, it can’t be from their having learnt to do so in Holy Scripture.” She cited biblical passages depicting women writers, political advisers, and rulers pointing to Deborah, who was not only an excellent poet, but a ruler “whose Government so much excelled that of the former Judges.” The Queen of Sheba, she noted, also employed her reason and “shows her own good Judgment” rather than relying on the opinions of men. She said that “one place then was sufficient, but we have many instances wherein Holy Scripture considers women very differently from what they appear in the common prejudices of mankind.” Thus, she wrote that “Scripture is for us and not against us.”<sup>12</sup> Many people - both men and women - have hailed Jesus as a feminist because of His elevation of women in a male-chauvinist society. Moreover, Paul’s statement : “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28 NIV) - has been called “the [Magna-Carta<sup>13</sup>] of humanity.”<sup>14</sup> Some traditionalists believe that the emergence of evangelical feminism may be an example of the negative influence of trends in the wider culture on contemporary Christianity. However, Christian feminist Virginia Mollenkott rejects this assessment: “We did not become feminists and then try to fit our Christianity into feminist ideology. We heralded the feminist movement because we were convinced that the church had

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<sup>11</sup> <http://vickybeeching.com/blog/christian-feminism-is-not-an-oxymoron>. Uploaded 5/08/13, 10:22hrs.

<sup>12</sup> [Christianity and Feminism: Oil and Water?](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Magna+Carta) March 26, 2009 Regan Penaluna.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Magna+Carta>. Uploaded 11/09/13, 15:18hrs.

<sup>14</sup> Paul King Jewett, [Man as Male and Female](#) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p.142.

strayed from a correct understanding of God's will for women."<sup>15</sup> In view of the tendency to view God as a male, Howe says the sexuality of God has often been stressed rather than His personhood. But "we are in the realm of mythology," she retorts, "when we conceptualize God as male, rather than female, just as we would be if we considered him to be female rather than male. The being of God transcends the limitations of sexuality."<sup>16</sup>

Feminist Hull calls Luke 10:38-42 "the most significant encounter because it taught that women should prefer studying theology over a preoccupation with domestic chores."<sup>17</sup> Spencer, another feminist writer, discounts the fact that Jesus chose twelve men to be disciples. "If Jesus' choice of twelve male (Jewish) disciples signifies that females should not be leaders in the church, then, consistently, his choice also signifies that Gentiles should not be leaders in the church." Spencer's argument in seeing Gentiles being allowed to be leaders in the church signifies that it also is same and true for women. Feminists also cast Jesus in the role of a feminist in His first resurrection appearance. Mollenkott notes that "women were considered too frivolous and untrustworthy to be witnesses in a court of law, or to teach children - let alone men; yet Jesus commissioned women to be the first witnesses of his resurrection and sent them to teach the male disciples that he was risen."<sup>18</sup> The good news, feminists say, is that in Christ "the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). "Theologically speaking," Howe argues, "the death of Christ released humanity from the curse brought about by sin. Woman is no longer to be subjugated under male headship. The mutual and complementary

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Phyllis E. Alsdurf, "Evangelical Feminists: Ministry Is the Issue," Christianity Today, 21 July 1978, 47.

<sup>16</sup>E. Margaret Howe, "The Positive Case for the Ordination of Women," in Perspectives on Evangelical Theology, eds. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p.268.

<sup>17</sup>Gretchen Hull, Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1987), p.115.

<sup>18</sup>Virginia Mollenkott, "What is True Biblical Feminism?" Christian Life, Sept. 1977, p.73.

relationship that Adam and Eve enjoyed before the Fall may now be restored.”<sup>19</sup> Evangelical feminists sometimes argue their case from the biblical text (Gen. 3:16; Gal. 3:28). Other biblical texts, they say, deal with local cultural situations of the first century and thus must not be seen as normative for modern society (Eph. 5:21-24; 1 Cor. 14:33b-36; 1 Tim. 2:11-15).<sup>20</sup>

“The prophet Joel said that when the Spirit comes, sons and daughters would prophesy. Peter proclaimed the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, once and for all abolishing any ordering with regard to gender. But I think it starts much earlier - Genesis records that God created men and women equally in God's trinitarian image. Any sort of gender ordering is the result of fallen humanity. When churches regard women as second-class citizens, they are espousing an ideology that is less than God's ideal!”<sup>21</sup>

This research aims at contributing to the scholarly body the idea of women leading a church or pastoring congregations other than just talking about women theologians in their subordinate duties to men. This may bring the heart of a genuinely God-called feminist to rest.

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<sup>19</sup>E. Margaret Howe, Women and Church Leadership (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p.139.

<sup>20</sup>The Debate Over Feminist Theology: Which View Is Biblical? Part Three in a Three-Part Series on Liberation Theology by Ron Rhodes) (An article from the Christian Research Journal, Summer 1991, p.20.

<sup>21</sup><http://sojo.net/blogs/2010/06/30/patriarchy-church-and-its-effects>. Uploaded 041113, 1505hrs.

## **6.0 Methods.**

The research will be done through interviews, the study of historical and current information found in documents, doctrine and literature of women clergy leading churches as well as those who believe in the senior leadership of women from the context of Joel 2:28-29. After the information is obtained a discussion and conclusion shall be made in form of chapters.

## 7.0 Glossary

1. Antifeminism - Opposition to feminism in some or all of its forms.
2. Complementarianism - A theological view about men and women being created equal in their being and personhood to complement each other through different roles and responsibilities as manifested in marriage, family life, religious leadership and elsewhere.
3. Feminism
  - (i) - A Theological movement of various strands united in a determination to secure social justice for women.
  - (ii) - A collection of movements aimed at defining, stabilizing and defending equal political, economic, social rights and opportunities for women.
4. Fertility - The natural human capability of producing offspring.
5. Magna-Carta-A document or piece of legislation that serves as a guarantee of basic rights.
6. Mai Guru - First wife.
7. Menstruation - Or period, is normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a woman's monthly cycle. Every month, the

body prepares for pregnancy. If no pregnancy occurs, the uterus, or womb, sheds its lining. The menstrual blood is partly blood and partly tissue from inside the uterus. It passes out of the body through the vagina. Periods usually start between age 11 and 14 and continue until menopause at about age 51.

8. Patriarchy - Patriarchy as a male pyramid of graded subordination and exploitations specifies women's oppression in terms of the class, race, country, or religion of the men to whom they belong. . . . It points to the socio-political mechanisms creating and sustaining the oppression of women.
9. Polygyny - Marriage between one man and two or more women at the same time.
10. Reformist feminism - A branch of feminist theology which seeks to interpret and understand Christianity in light of the equality of women and men, and that this interpretation is necessary for a complete understanding of Christianity.
11. Type III (infibulation) - The removal of all external genitalia and the fusing of the wound, leaving only a hole the size of a matchstick head for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. The inner and outer labia are cut away, with or without excision of the clitoris.

## Chapter Two: The Holy Spirit and Servanthood in Feminism

### 2.0 Introduction

When Joel prophesied: “Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:29), little did he know what ‘those days’ would entail as a result of the pouring out of God’s Spirit. Time has elapsed, ‘those days’ have been exposed and the prophecy fulfilled bringing pain and division to the Body of Christ through the very man who is supposed to be the beneficiary of the poured out Spirit. This then is the reason of establishing who the Holy Spirit is in tackling the issue of ‘A Critical Analysis of Feminism from Joel’s Context.’ If there will be servanthood in the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit as God enough must be poured upon the servants of His own choice. For what servanthood can be there besides that which issues from His presence? Feminists, Complementarians, or whatever term would be in place, the Holy Spirit must take charge of man’s life. Life has challenges and because the church is a living organism, its life is signified by growth and change as the means of maturity.<sup>22</sup> The church also has its own share of challenges, particularly in the matters of Feminism which must be tackled with concerted efforts, for a divided Church is a disgrace to the Lord. God wants man and woman to work together. His word reveals the harvest being plentiful with fewer workers and that the Lord of the

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<sup>22</sup> Ward Powers, The ministry of women in the church: Which way forward? (Adelaide: SPCK, 1996), p.171.



harvest be requested to send out workers into His harvest field (Lk. 10:2). This, God has done, but the same workers are still fighting over who is mightier than the other, who is more used than who and more recognized in being the harvest worker than the others. In other words, the world is still in us as the jealousy and the quarrels prevalent among us are proof, that we are acting like mere men as Paul states in 1 Cor. 3:3. It is vital to know that when one is called of God, they are set apart for holiness in the Lord Jesus Christ and all sub-divisions in such a life must be done away with, for the reason that He that is holy now works within them, irrespective their gender. In the plan of God the Holy Spirit is given as a true gift that builds up the community and contributes to the common good rather than serving only the self aggrandizement of a few.<sup>23</sup> Yes, challenges are no roll-over issues in life and in the Body of Christ, but they must be resisted for their source is shaky ground soon to be dismantled for He that calls us is God in the authority and power of the Holy Spirit. Successful Feminists can be of Benefit in the Church of Christ today. The NT has examples of Junia, Fiorenza and the Researcher herself who accepted the idea of founding a church and doing the works of an apostle of planting seven more congregations in the heat of male streamed domination.

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<sup>23</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p.173.

## **2.1.0 Who the Holy Spirit Is**

It is necessary to make the Holy Spirit known for a better understanding of the prophecy of Joel, for the weight of the prophet's message must be brought out, clearly expressed and explained to remove any supposed doubt of who exactly this Holy Spirit is.

### **2.1.1 Definition**

Livingstone in her Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church defines the Holy Spirit as being the Third Person of the Trinity. He is distinct, consubstantial, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. He is God. He marks the resurrection faith of His disciples. He is one poured out on the day of Pentecost, another Comforter (Jn. 14-16) distinct from Jesus Christ but performing similar works and making present what the Lord Jesus Christ said and did.<sup>24</sup> This is He that God the Father sent in place of the Lord Jesus Christ so that we do not remain as orphans. Truly the sent is God Himself in all His attributes. He is marvelous in power. The hope of resurrection after this death on earth issues from Him. The Pentecostal anointing was so for His being. What Christ proclaimed, He makes it come into function in this day. The Holy Spirit is great and powerful. It is as though God was making a mistake in Joel 2:29, when He says, 'this is the man that has taken over my servants, both male and female.'

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<sup>24</sup> Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church. Revised ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), p.277.

The two are meant to really stand in for God the Father in all happenings as God's chosen. Let women arise to the service of God for the Holy Spirit is with them speaking the word without doubt or pain because it has been confirmed that the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon them (Is. 61:1). Let the women serve this powerful God for in Him, they have been made powerful. With or without intimidation from God's creation, women should not allow themselves to be hindered for the weapon of empowerment God has stamped through the Holy Spirit Himself. Proclaim, woman, 'For as long as I live, I will serve the Lord in this same form as He calls me to Himself the way I am' (1 Cor.7:20).

### **2.1.2 The Power**

Stendahl looks at "the Spirit as the energy and guide engineering the life and expansion of the Church in the world of the Jewish diaspora and through it to the Gentile world."<sup>25</sup> Good news for all feminists and servants of the most High God that the work they are in is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord (Zech. 3:6). The Holy Spirit is their revealed energy and guide to go ahead of the life and the expansion of the Church. Many are the times that feminists mostly accuse themselves in ministry and begin to ask a lot of unnecessary questions. Unnecessary in that they want to do things in their own plan, working their own way, but alas, this is God's work. One feels frustrated, good-for-nothing-fellow, doubting the calling and probably even questioning "Where is God in all this and why women?" Return, woman! Go back to your energizer, the Holy Spirit for guidance. You heard Him right when you felt called, for no one else can give you unction towards God unless He Himself gives it to you. For indeed women have the heart of man that is deceitful and keeps speaking negatively: "You are leading a Church full of sin and it is not growing numerically." It is necessary to ignore all that which is from the devourer's hand for removal of sin and numerical growth are the Holy Spirit's work and not ours or the devourer's. It

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<sup>25</sup> Krister Stendahl, Energy for Life: Reflections on the Theme "Come Holy Spirit-Renew the whole Creation (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), p.33.

is their duty to make God's word known as it is preached to the nations. It is important to remember from the researcher's experience, 'If the devil will not lie in your ears, then He ceases to be the devil.' Let not this be forgotten; women are but spanners in this service, the Planner and the Doer of everything is God through the Holy Spirit.

Hoekema helps the servanthood as he says "The Holy Spirit is exercised in love, peace, joy and many more ways. He gives the charismata to teach, encourage, administer and make us flow in spiritual gifts, tongues being an example."<sup>26</sup> Truly let the Holy Spirit take the lead for where love is lacking, He will be the love and will also give people in our place in time of hardship for shielding (Isa. 43:1-4). When His servanthood is hurting, He will give peace and when sad His joy shall come upon them confirming His own word, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5). The Researcher wonders how she has run the Church from 2001 to this time 2013, considering all the issues one would conclude she would not come this far, but, when God is with one the weight of fatigue is lifted. One only thing that lingers is, 'I must forge ahead' as God commands: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). This command is deep to the heart and so forceful like a woman's experience in labor and the decision for the baby to be released is reached. A point of no return! The Spirit of God in His power must see His plans met through the vessel in use. For the Researcher, the burden to serve God has never lifted off, but has instead increased and grown. Due to the Holy Spirit's charisma, she lives on hoping to be used better every moment that comes, like yesterday was with God and today is and tomorrow will be (Heb. 13:8). Nothing changes in His presence. Hoekema continues and says, "The Holy Spirit persuades, runs the ministry of healing in the Church, gives His fruit, baptizes

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<sup>26</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, Saved by Grace (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1989), p.32-36.

and saves through grace.”<sup>27</sup> When He is doing all this, He does it without favoring male or female, but for the common good of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7).

### 2.1.3 The Seal

Hoekema gives hope to those that truly are for God and desire to serve Him

according to the authority conferred upon them. He reminds us that the Holy Spirit seals. Being sealed with Him means being kept in fellowship with God until the final day of redemption. He is involved in our preservation and perseverance in faith.<sup>28</sup> This act must be considered a great thing God has done to separate and sanctify His servants from common man: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5). This surely speaks to all that are true and knowledgeable about their calling that they are not doing it alone, but with God the Holy Spirit. Like He tells Joshua, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and very courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:9). The woman of the day in the service of God must take it up and get moving without fear, discouragement or obstruction. God is with you! Faint not, cry Abba, Father (Rom. 8:15) and He will answer in His continued giving of direction, for He says: Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it” (Isa. 30:21).

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<sup>27</sup> ...Anthony A. Hoekema, p.37.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, Saved by Grace (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1989), p.31.

## **2.2.0 What Servanthood Is In the Presence of the Holy Spirit**

God calls one into service according to the specific areas ordained for them through the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction of His teachings as helper (Jn. 14:26).

### **2.2.1 Helper in Ministry**

Marshall addresses the Holy Spirit as the Helper and considers Him as a spotlight ever focused on Jesus Christ. So for every servant of God to correctly perform their duties, the Holy Spirit must be central as He now becomes more real than He ever was before servanthood to such a life. The need to believe in Him, receive Him as savior of life is one cardinal thing. He convicts God's servants of their sins leading them to a prayer of repentance and building.<sup>29</sup> Any new godly work that will be started by anyone will only do so through the Helper as the establisher of Ministry. The owner of Ministry declares, "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me" (Jn. 12:26). Servanthood then has no program of its own; the master always takes the lead and the reward of their works is received. One thing that comes out clearly about God's service in the presence of the Holy Spirit is the great protection which makes one rejoice in what was suffered for Him, and fills up in the flesh with what is still lacking in regards to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His Body, the Church (Col. 1:24). God gives someone to present to the world His word in its fullness as attested by Paul: "Who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but

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<sup>29</sup> Catherine Marshall, The Helper (London: Cox and Wyman, 1978), p.22-24.

made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Phil. 2:6-7). The revelation is about servanthood and not considering oneself as equal with God but realizing they are God’s creation and rules over the Body in His total authority. A servant in the presence of the Holy Spirit then is one who will “keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). Like Migliore puts it, “Christians live by the promise of God and thus in creative hope. There is work to be done, a message to be proclaimed, service to be rendered, hostility to be overcome and injustice to be rectified. Guided by the Word and Spirit of God, Christians take up these tasks in confidence and hope in the final fulfillment of God’s promise of a new humanity in a new heaven and a new earth.”<sup>30</sup> Servanthood is involving as stated above. One must be emotionally upright in the practice of so much humility in order to proclaim God’s word as He remains “God with us” (Isa. 7:14). Doing this perfectly is a big proof of the Lord God Almighty having put a unique and great servant in such a one. From the works it will show. It is also necessary to know and understand that service to God is not easy. It is hefty and difficult, but God has declared, “I am with you always!” (Mt. 28:20). Maybe one may ask, ‘How does one enter into God’s service? Can everyone become a servant of God and who should one really be to be a part of God’s servanthood?’ Getting it from Migliore, “people called both inwardly and outwardly by the Spirit of God for leadership responsibilities are set apart by a service of ordination. In this service the ordained promises to be faithful to Christ and to the rest of God’s people.”<sup>31</sup> The impartation of power and authority of Christ through the Holy Spirit by His already serving ministers is done to give the minister the right to operate in the word and sacraments.<sup>32</sup>

### **2.2.2 The Holy Spirit in all Service**

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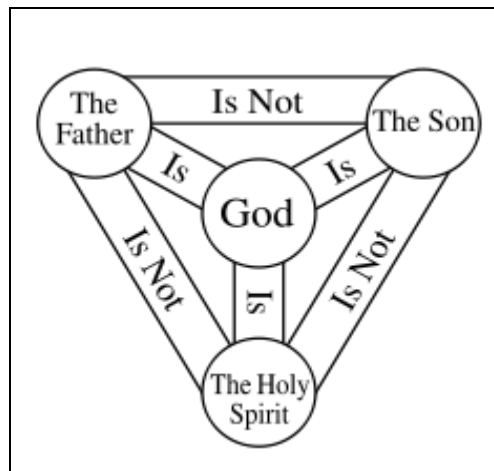
<sup>30</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p.183.

<sup>31</sup> ... Daniel L. Migliore, p.228.

<sup>32</sup>[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p2s1c1a2.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s1c1a2.htm). Uploaded 11 10 13, 2014hrs.

It has been made clear by now that the Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and to the Son and He is God. The three are one God.<sup>33</sup> It is without doubt that whosoever may call themselves God's servants, are called in the presence of the Holy Spirit. He provokes spiritual feelings about the faith of Christ and just the idea of one standing up and saying, 'I will serve God.' Yet when such is proof of His work you feel the Holy Spirit is talking, it must also be understood the Son and the Father are talking.

Fig. 1



The "Shield of the Trinity"  
(Scutum Fidei) diagram of  
traditional Western Christian  
symbolism

The understanding of the Scutum Fidei is that ... the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father, but, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is God.<sup>34</sup>

“The unity of the Father and the Son and of the Son and the Spirit are inseparable from one another in themselves as they are in their economic

<sup>33</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p.59.

<sup>34</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity>. Uploaded 241013, 1234hrs.



manifestation toward us. God the Father communicates Himself to us in His Son who imparts Himself to us in His Spirit in such a way as to enable us to receive His revelation and participate in the movement of mutual knowing and loving between the Father and the Son.”<sup>35</sup> ‘Economic manifestations,’ picking it out of Thomas’ sentiments, manifestations,’ one really sees how serious God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in the sharing of duties. ‘Economic’ because each one must do their own work without any interference by the other nor feeling the other one does better things than is given to the other! A path is laid for each one and each individual takes up their very path. One realizes the great discipline that comes with being God and so one would ever desire that the economics of God were also exhibited in servanthood. Man would have gone back home with the Father in the absence of the wrangles and struggles amidst themselves despite the command from the Lord Jesus Christ, “Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me” (Jn. 6:57). If only God’s servants would have a mind like that of Jesus Christ, a mind that depends on the other with full knowledge of Himself not standing on His own, servants of God would also have depended on God through the Holy Spirit as well as on fellow servants. The fracas one sees sometimes would not have existed at all and the Body of Christ was going to be at peace.

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p.146.

### **2.3.0 Feminism in God's eye and Complementarianism**

The Researcher feels there is a greater necessity to knowing what feminism is to God, how it started and it is also important to understand the side of those that are in opposition.

#### **2.3.1 Defining and Tracing the Origins of Feminism**

Feminism by Livingstone is defined as a "Theological movement of various strands united in a determination to secure social justice for women. Its origins are traced to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century social campaigns but became a serious challenge within the Christian tradition in the 1980's."<sup>36</sup> In all surety, the sex of a human being is known by the beholder without doubt. Those who are male and female have been capacitated with an ability to know when their rights are infringed upon or when they are at liberty with themselves. It is because of this that those others who believe in women's capabilities sat down and came up with a movement, which later in the 1980's became a big challenge in the Christian tradition.

Oduyoye looks at a feminist as a woman who listens to the kind of God who loves and is compassionate and wants human beings to thrive. You are a

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<sup>36</sup>Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford, UK.: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 216.

theologian because you want to critically look at your religion and ask yourself, 'what is my religion doing in the community?' 'What is my religion doing to me?' 'What are the ethical principles coming out of this religion and are we doing it right?'<sup>37</sup> Mercy's wording and reasonability is very correct, though the Researcher thinks this would be another way of perpetuating women's oppression. It is not until both male and female sit together and agree for partnership that the oppression between them may gradually come to an end.

"Feminist theology emerged from the notion that Christian theology and the institutional embodiment of Christianity not only excluded women's voices and experiences, but also developed practices that are sexist, patriarchal, and androcentric."<sup>38</sup> No sex needed oppressing and in all clarity, it was the females that remained unrecognized by the male folk and their colleagues as well. Justice that is sought is not political but 'ministerial.' Ruether observes that "the arguments for women's exclusion from ministry are applications of the general theology of male headship and female subordination. This subordination, while attributed to women's physiological role in procreation, extends to an inferiority of mind and soul as well. Women are categorized as less capable than men of moral self-control and reason. They can play only a passive role in the giving and receiving of ministry. If anything, they should keep silent."<sup>39</sup> This is not the way of God. He has not excluded females from ministry nor given males headship and female's subordination in it. Like Paul states, "There is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). In fact, the Lord shows it plainly through Balaam and the donkey that He can use 'anything' at His disposal in ministry (Num. 22:28-33). Females and males are above donkeys! Is it not surprising, really, to learn of people grabbing power and authority from their partners for a simple reason that the males that have headed churches have made the fore-runners feel they have it all as males and the females must be subordinate. It is important to reason

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/nana-darkoa-sekyiamah/jesus-was-feminist>. Uploaded 311013, 1642hrs.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.enotes.com/topics/feminist-theology>. Uploaded 110913, 1735hrs.

<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1983), p.195.

together (Isa.1:18). Following the statement, “Women are categorized as less capable than men of moral self-control and reason,” one does not know a fair comment to name the statement. Whether it is abusive, a curse or could it be a blessing on the part of women? The Researcher has observed that seventy-five percent of populations and cultures of the world have gone begging for a hand of a woman in marriage. The prayer is, in all common sense, though it may not be as common, man begs from a stronger hand and the weaker receives. It is supposed to be common sense! The Researcher has the following questions: “Why oppress women? Why is God being opposed when He says, A woman when chosen is God’s servant? Who is greater between man as in male and God? Who rules over the other, God or man?” Man has sinned by putting aside God’s commands of women as a servant just like himself. God through Jeremiah, says, “If you will return, O Israel, return to me,” declares the LORD. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way, you swear, ‘As surely as the LORD lives,’ then the nations will be blessed by Him and in Him they will glory” (Jer. 4:1-2). If a woman is a servant of God and someone comes in between God and her, God detests such and calls for repentance to remove this curse that there may be a blessing thereafter, as Feminism does not have one face and one agenda.<sup>40</sup>

### **2.3.2 Requirements of Feminism**

In case someone misunderstands the whole purpose of this Thesis, it is not discussing gender issues that the world knows and talks about even when gender is not understood by them. The discussion in here is like where God says, “He will judge with equity” (Ps. 96:10). Hence the cry of feminists of allowing the actual leading of a church/congregation as an in-charge, for that which God has proclaimed will be put to practice for male and female without adulteration. Ackermann then defines the term feminism as spelling out a commitment to women’s struggles against oppression, translating into practices

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.globalization101.org/feminists-challenges-around-the-world>. Uploaded 190913, 1310hrs.

for their liberation. Feminism does not benefit any specific group, race or class of women; neither does it promote privileges for women over men. It is about a different consciousness, a radically transformed perspective which questions social, cultural, political and religious traditions, calling for structural change in the mentioned spheres.<sup>41</sup> In other words, women are seeking participation, involvement and partnership in all endeavors of life. Then the world would develop at a quicker rate, paving the way for the youth unto a recognizable future. God would be introduced to the youth from a tender age which would be an aid in putting down social degradation as they grow in the fear of the Lord God Almighty. Whatever the case, women would not be deterred by what the other part of creation thinks, for God's thought is final and no one changes it; "My Spirit ... on both male and female servants." It is done!

Let us go ahead and carry on to live in God's command agreeing with Nangula Kathindi, as she declares through God's word to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:19-20, NRSV).<sup>42</sup> Who can take the promise of God away from the servant's hands when God seals it by saying, "Always, I am with you to the end of the age?"

### **2.3.3 Complementarianism**

According to Theopedia this is the theological view about men and women being created equal in their being and personhood to complement each other through different roles and responsibilities as manifested in marriage, family life, religious leadership and elsewhere. It is rooted in more literal interpretations of the Creation account and the roles of men and women presented in Scripture.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Denise Ackermann, Jonathan A. Draper and Emma Mashinini, eds., Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), pxvi.

<sup>42</sup> Denise Ackermann, Jonathan A. Draper and Emma Mashinini, eds., Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), p.265.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.theopedia.com/Complementarianism>. Uploaded 260313,1515hrs.

Feminists in the eyes of Complementarians, considering Theopedia's definition; are figures of oppression, subordinate to men, mere bearers of children, meal preparers of husbands, musicians in the Church or Sunday School teachers and those that cannot ask questions in church but asking the husbands in their bedrooms for answers. Women to Complementarians are a second rate kind of beings. They matter less in the company of men and in many senses they are objects of abuse. A good example is that given by Oduyoye when she observes that women are said to be wives and mothers and will at least give people water to drink and a male is a mighty man of valor.<sup>44</sup> The question is, if this is Complementarianism, then what is it in the eyes of God? From the definition above according to Theopedia, Complementarians are anti-feminists and people that have not understood Joel 2:29, which clearly states that "Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." The Spirit will be poured without discriminating males or females. Maybe a bit of the way forward, it is necessary to study the word and scripture properly with a desire to understand what God is speaking to the Church. Going before Him empty and not full of knowledge as though one were revising to remind our self of the learnt ideas but that we should go expecting to be taught, rebuked, corrected and trained and then come out of God's presence full and fulfilled, changed and transformed. This would allow God's decision for both male and female servants to do well and partner in His service.

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<sup>44</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.87.

## **2.4.0 The Holy Spirit, Servanthood and Feminism**

The Researcher feels that the absence of the Holy Spirit denotes the absence of service and female involvement.

### **2.4.1 The Relationship of Men and Women in Ministry**

It is all about a critical analysis of feminism. As a prophet, Joel is given authority to reveal the real relationship between men and women in the Lord, through the insight power of the Holy Spirit by proclaiming the servanthood of both male and female. Freeman declares, “The Holy Spirit is rightly known according to His nature, and must be understood, in an essentially spiritual and of course in a completely genderless way.”<sup>45</sup> The Researcher agrees with Freeman that this kind of work is God-given to those created in His image irrespective their sex. Paul in his writing to the Romans confirms it by stating: “And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). Feminism is referred to as a movement of those that support God’s idea of females being part of God’s work, and is opposed to Complementarianism. Besides the anti-feminists, it is true that the combination of the Holy Spirit, Servanthood and Feminism is ministry.

### **2.4.2 Making the Depth of Ministry Known**

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<sup>45</sup> Thomas Freeman, Pneumatology-F04.doc. (Course Notes), p.158.

Migliore has it that ministry is an office ordained by God to provide for regular and responsible preaching of the gospel, celebration of the sacraments and leadership in the life and service of the church.<sup>46</sup> Ministry then is the actual depth of service for God where holiness must be implored to bring sanity to His workmanship, emanating from the poured out Holy Spirit. Such must be a people committed to the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit and walking in peace with God. Ministry for God and for the Called does not come to an end. It is like when a servant of God is doing marriage solemnization, and the marrying say, "Till death do us part!" It must remain Jesus near me, in one's mouth, in one's heart and Jesus manifest (Rom. 10:8), the foundation of faith without which ministry would remain a fallacy. Migliore also encourages the 'service of the church' to involve the work of missions in addition to taking the word to the unreached in order to make them realize that they also are of God and they are loved of God to an extent of wanting them present in His kingdom. But what exactly are missions? Moreau, Corwin and McGee describe missions as "the specific work of the Church and agencies in the task of reaching people for Christ by crossing cultural boundaries."<sup>47</sup> The Researcher also considers Missions as a means of caring for the vulnerable in form of orphans, widows, widowers, the terminally ill and those that may not have a sound financial ground to take full care of their being. John attests to this as he gives this good example of Missions by God Himself: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Missions then are a must do.

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<sup>46</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p.227.

<sup>47</sup> A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin and Gary B. McGee, Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), p.17.



## **2.5.0 The Challenges of Feminism in the Church Today**

Feminists undergo several difficulties whichever side one may take from. The need to provide answers to the challenges as explained below becomes inevitable. Let the lament by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza be considered as she writes to the Archbishop Roberto Sanchez: "One encounter with the living God is denied me, not by God but by law based on my sex and rooted in a sexism within our Roman Catholic tradition which has grown over the centuries and has brought us, you and me to this moment, of brokenness . . . This brokenness means that an important way of releasing the power of God within me is being denied me and the community which desires my ordination and services."<sup>48</sup> Let oppressive doctrine, let women go sacramental in place of just being subordinate leaders to men in the fulfillment of God's plan.

### **2.5.1 A Rediscovery of a Woman's Place in the Prophetic Context and Content of Biblical Faith.**

At the heart of Feminism, according to Livingstone, is the desire to secure social justice for women theologically and in other endeavours. The challenges are real, true and numerous. Indeed, one gets convicted and acknowledges it is true. Feminists have been sat upon everywhere as stated above by Fiorenza. A hindrance that needs exhuming by them that may stand upon the poured out Spirit on God's creation. Feminist theology is not asserting unprecedented ideas; rather it is rediscovering the prophetic context and content of Biblical faith itself.

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.womenpriests.org/classic2/fiorenz3.asp>. Uploaded 190913, 1310hrs.

when it defines the prophetic-liberating tradition as norm.<sup>49</sup> Yet this has been misunderstood and misinterpreted that feminist theology is meant to assert and to set precedent ideas, which is not the issue in any case. Feminists have it at heart that the prophecy of women and men wallowing in the poured out Spirit maybe fulfilled according to God's arrangement. What can be seen in the church today mostly is that prophecy that issues from a male is highly accepted by both male and female, but the same thing coming from a female is received with misgivings. This is a big challenge. It frustrates, makes a female servant feel convicted as a liar, untrustworthy and as though doing a piece of work that should not be done. Sometimes one thinks, "How can Joel today appear in his physicality and proclaim the same message with fire within and without him so that man declares, yes, he truly is from God and his message is true for 'God answers by fire' and people will say, 'the LORD is God!'" (1 Kin.18:24, 29). The salvation of women in service?

Not as though Paul was to be talked against in his scripture, "Woman must learn in silence" (1 Cor. 14:34), but that it has been a very big weapon against women, yet Paul was particularly addressing the women at Corinth for becoming unruly. Today, this fire of silence has caught up with every bush of the world like woman cannot escape it, but for the grace of God.

### **2.5.2 Retention of a Woman's Femininity**

Other challenges in the Church today are that women are made to endlessly prove they can think, feel and act like 'one of the boys.' The 'boys,' in turn, accept them. But this only in token numbers where their monopoly on ecclesiastical power is not threatened (anything above five percent is perceived as a threat to this monopoly). Practically, they continually subvert women, intimating that women should retain their 'femininity' by exercising a ministry different from that

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<sup>49</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology (London: SCM Press, 1983), p.31.

of men and this should be as assistant minister in charge of children, youth and the aged, but not as 'Minister' with full authority.<sup>50</sup> That is what it means to be a woman in the face of a contemporary man that woman must forever be reminded of their being and told to maintain it. It is a life of proving that women lead while the other may have no proof but still be approved. The world we live in is cruel, for it grabs away even that which God has already rested in the hand of the woman shamelessly: "You are a woman." Allowing one's own given title by God become a source of intimidation and dishonor. In all reality, no one would be afraid if there was no reason for such a one to be feared. The fact that a lot of men feel threatened with the presence of a successful woman, it means their fears are founded, the male folk understand the capacity certain women have. Hence God making a helper to man, a stronger person he needed! (Gen. 2:20).

### **2.5.3 Unmasking Patriarchal Hierarchies**

Atteberry discovered that the women in the Bible she came to know through her own study were totally different than those she grew up with in Sunday Schools and sermons. These were tough, strong and intelligent. She found out they were judges, prophets, worship leaders, and business women; a man would not go to war without a certain woman by his side; women were evangelists, preachers, and patrons of the church; these women had been set to the side and put in the shadows. They had been marginalized and ignored because they were not simply wives and mothers. They showed women could be more and much more.<sup>51</sup> This is the reason why the unmasking must be done to uncover the seemingly lost women's place in the biblical Church.

"Christian feminists call the Church to open up its structures to unmask the thinking that sets up patriarchal hierarchies and to enable the divine plan for full

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<sup>50</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1983), p.200.

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.shawnaatteberry.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Bringing-the-Women-of-the-Bible-from-the-Shadows1.pdf>. Uploaded 011113, 1314hrs.

human relationships between women and men to develop. The linear, non-participatory way of looking at human community of such hierarchies conceals with a tragic negative mask of the beauty and connectedness with the divine which Jesus' naming of God as Father should give us. Christian feminists remember that our Christian Church grew from a religion that survived because its earliest adherents were willing to die to obey their God rather than to live in obedience of fellow human beings."<sup>52</sup> Thanks to Oduyoye. It feels like one is in the same bed with her and she is speaking right into one's ear. Not the voice of encouragement anymore, but that which will make people arise and say, 'Come what may, it must be God for me and no other, do or die!' Let they that are called of God stand and be counted as clergy in all it takes. This challenge must not sit anyone down; let all obey their God by not following the voice of human beings. It is while one is alive that one can choose to be sensibly a challenge to all foul thoughts for as long as the Holy Spirit is God.

#### **2.5.4 Gender Neutrality**

Whatever the challenges, it is worth noting that Osmundo Ponce states that "God created woman and man in the same human condition, and that theologically we cannot believe that man was created superior to woman. Therefore, the pastorate is a vocation in the service of others, equal to men and women, without distinction of gender, race or social condition, which cannot put obstacles in front of anyone carrying out the ministry which God has given to all in need."<sup>53</sup> Though Atteberry talks of Gender roles changing from culture to culture, over time and are not static.<sup>54</sup> Time has now come to show that gender neutrality is moving in

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<sup>52</sup>Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.184.

<sup>53</sup>Rosenhager, U, and Stephens, S, eds., Walk my Sister: The Ordination of Women: Reformed Perspectives (Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1993), p.142.

<sup>54</sup><http://www.shawnaatteberry.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Bringing-the-Women-of-the-Bible-from-the-Shadows1.pdf>. Uploaded 011113, 1314hrs.

putting feminists in their rightful places, shutting every door of hindrance and oppression against them.

## **2.6.0 The Benefits of Successful Feminists**

One may not rule out the fact that feminists have succeeded despite the challenges faced. The decision to overcome has been taken through various stances like others confirm that “women can contribute to society through the making of important decisions, research and being influential in society.”<sup>55</sup>

### **2.6.1 Walking in Bravery**

One may ask if at all there are successful feminists and if ever they are of benefit in the Church of Christ. Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza is one example in her ground-breaking research, showing the equality talked about in Gal. 3:28 being not only a spiritual idea but actual praxis in the early church. The scripture summarizes a new community of equals when it talks of there being neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ.<sup>56</sup> As already stated, if Fiorenza was joined by many more people laying a firm ground in lifting feminism the way she has done, spiritual civilization would come to the church. But the problem is, people do not want to come out in the open for fear of being finger pointed and all that is done is sit back and continue murmuring, of course yielding no fruit in any way. So, a successful feminist will brave situations as they

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<sup>55</sup><http://elegantblackwoman.blogspot.com/2012/02/benefits-and-drawbacks-of-feminism.html>. Uploaded 110913, 2154hrs.

<sup>56</sup> Denise Ackermann, Jonathan A. Draper and Emma Mashinini, eds., Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), p.33.

come to let people recognize the positive presence of women not through intimidation for “God has not given them such a spirit” (2 Tim.1:7), but that of wisdom (Eph.1:17), love, joy, peace, patience, faithfulness (Gal.5:22), hard work and perseverance (Rev.2:2) in total commitment to our plan with God in these days.

### **2.6.2 Laying Off the Belief “All the Apostles were Male”**

In the same vein, it has taken feminist biblical research for the discovery that has invalidated the main argument for male-leadership in the church that all the apostles were male. Many scholars agree now that the reference to the Apostle Junia, is to a woman Apostle!<sup>57</sup> This looks like good news to anyone that seems to be a passer-by to the problem of feminism. For serious feminists, it does not matter whether among the Apostles all were male or female, whether there was Apostle Junia being female or not. Quality must be considered; i.e. are these people called of God or they are a hireling?’ (Jn.10:12-13). ‘Has Christ positioned this man or woman as an apostle? (Eph.4:11). Has the prophetic gift been rested upon such a life by the laying of hands of the body of elders? (1 Tim. 4:14). Is she or he one that will encourage others with sound doctrine against those that oppose it? (Tit. 1:7-9). After all this consideration is done, one would then be put in a position because they deserve it and not for their being male or female. That should be the issue and the bone of contention. Let authority be given to everyone on merit. Whatever the case for the sake of argument and making ourselves feel good, among the Apostles, Junia was a female. Thank God, for this wonderful representation of successful feminists at that time.

### **2.6.3 Doers of God’s Exploits**

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<sup>57</sup>Denise Ackermann, Jonathan A. Draper and Emma Mashinini, eds., Women Hold up Half the Sky: Women in the Church in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), eds., p.33.

In the process of writing this Thesis, the Researcher went round the church finding out which feminist struck the Church members so much, and one Elder, Luchenga Mucheleng'anga (Church Coordinator)<sup>58</sup> had this to say: "The fact that God used you to found a Church in this era and age, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is a big breakthrough in this male dominated sphere. If God today told me to do away with my job as a medical doctor, and found a church, I would certainly say no because I saw you struggle to establish the first congregation with no one at all but your two children and today the story is different. Whenever I remember where the church is coming from I automatically develop goose pimples as to how one would stop work and opt for church founding, unless God called them. Not only that, but that you have planted seven rural Churches is an indication that you love rural ministry much more than urban ministry, a big plus to you looking at how most pastors shun rural ministry maybe for the lack of financial benefits. Your God oriented anointing (2 Cor. 12:12) impacts the lives of people tremendously such that spiritual growth is able to be gauged both on individuals and the Church at large. Apart from that, you are a good example of a hard worker looking at your achievements of getting the first degree in theology at the age of 55 in 2012 after a successful teaching career as a teacher of Mathematics, English and Science that spanned 15 years. You are now winding up your masters in the degree of theology and soon embarking on your PhD studies. As a young man I really feel spurred into working harder so as to reorient my educational future. Then there is this unique dedication in you in preaching the gospel, planting of church branches in rural areas and visiting them every three months to encourage their spirituality which is a big spiritual inspiration to the church proving to me truly you walk in the calling of an Apostle. Above all, I feel I have a future in this church because you are an example of 'countable' achievements to me. Your being married with five children, four boys (Luchenga, medical doctor; James, accountant; Chimwando, computer scientist; Chitaku, accountant) and one girl, Lusungu (currently in medical school) has not deterred you from putting in everything for the Lord. You are an example of success even

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<sup>58</sup> Luchenga Mucheleng'anga, Interview. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013. Lusaka, Zambia.

to your own children besides the church at large. The mere fact that you are a woman and God has used you this much to be founder and overseer of a church is reason enough for my looking up to you as my model both spiritually and otherwise. For this, with my unceasing respect due to you, I will live to fear the Lord that called you as one of the servants to fulfill Joel's prophecy even through my own pastor and mother."

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The center of discussion was the Holy Spirit and Servanthood in Feminism. The Holy Spirit was defined and explained as the source and pillar of Servanthood and Feminism considered from Livingstone's definition, "a theological movement of various strands united in a determination to secure social justice for women." The stance of Complementarians vis-a-vis Feminists and the place of the Holy Spirit, Servanthood and Feminism, translating to Ministry was tackled before discussing the Challenges of Feminism in the Church. The Challenges highlighted were concluded in the words of Osmundo Ponce, that "God created woman and man in the same human condition, and that theologically we cannot believe that man was created superior to woman. Therefore, the pastorate is a vocation in the service of others, equal to men and women, without distinction of gender, race or social condition, which cannot put obstacles in front of anyone carrying out the ministry which God has given to all in need." The Chapter ends with examples of Benefits of Successful Feminists where the Researcher is part through an interview.



## Chapter Three: Feminism in the Old Testament

### 3.0 Introduction

The context offers the Researcher the genesis of spiritual Feminism in Christian faith by looking at the Old Testament being a shadow of the New Testament where women had a hand in religious practices. Yet, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (1 Cor.10:11). Greg Boyd declares: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Col. 2:16-17).<sup>59</sup> It is wise for those in the NT era to have a serious analysis of feminism and endeavor to discover the OT women as well as whom they could have been in their operation. These women rose to stardom not by man’s articulation but through the power of the Holy Spirit that was with them (Isa.61:1) in the midst of rigid Jewish male dominated societies. Surely they are worth emulating. Hence scripture saying: “But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (Dan. 11:32). Achievements in life do not come easy; they are met with

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<sup>59</sup><http://www.patheos.com/blogs/theorangeablog/2012/08/31/greg-boyd-on-the-old-testament-as-a-shadow-of-the-new/>. Uploaded 241013, 1955hrs.

greater opposition which must be overcome, like that of our Lord Jesus Christ overcoming death and today bears the name above all names (Php. 2:6-9). The feminists in the OT are no exception. They faced their own kind of derailments concerning the Hebrew culture which was patriarchal but overcame. When big leadership was spoken about, it generally was meant for a man and a woman was to play a supportive role only. Not so for heroines. The chapter concludes with Feminism in the OT and how it Emerged in the Victory of Power making one have hope and develop confidence in doing something worthwhile.

### **3.1.0 Did the Old Testament ever Operate through Women?**

The OT is for both male and female as Moses declares: “God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen.1:27). The difference is literally in the levels of participation and the numbers at which they are operational as part of human history. Women behaved like any other that had an idea about the Bible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Confidently it is confirmed through many examples in the OT about the operation of women in their different abilities, characters and giftings.

God from the beginning has never changed (Heb.13:8). Men and women have been a part of God through and through. “Some women in the Bible are standouts due to their long-lasting influential power. Some of them, through their actions, provided a direct and obvious influence, but others were influential in a more indirect way. No matter the case, these women altered salvation history, their stories have continued to be told.”<sup>60</sup> The OT has the following women serving God in their different capacities:

#### **3.1.1 Sarah**

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<sup>60</sup><http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/introducing-influential-women-of-the-bible.html>. Uploaded 110913, 2201hrs.

God used Sarah, the wife to Abraham, significantly known as the covenant carrier and through her the son of promise, Isaac, was born.<sup>61</sup> This was the seed of Abraham from whom nations were to multiply and their history never to be erased. The birth of Isaac though, was quite mysterious in a way. Clearly it was not planned by man because everything about it was strange due to the fact that Sarah was barren and quite old.

Despite being matriarchal, she became the ancestress of the Israelite nation. Favoured of God she sent away Hagar and her son Ishmael which needed accepting for she acted in God's divine plan and will.<sup>62</sup> In her exploits, Sarah spoke and did all she wanted and was at peace with herself and her husband. Her secret was as in the words of Mwiti, "Tarrying at God's promise and God met her there! As a woman of faith she consented to be God's handmaid, did the impossible, broke the laws of nature and mothered a child at the age of ninety."<sup>63</sup> Without doubt, Sarah walked in the loyalty of God and her prayer was answered with the receipt of a blessing.

### 3.1.2 Zelophehad's Daughters

The event about Zelophehad's daughters is an inspiring narrative for women, for it rightly demonstrates that the seemingly rigid Israelite social structures could be modified for those that stood rightly.<sup>64</sup> This was so not only through Zelophehad's daughters' resolve to challenge the system of allotment of land to males only, but also because their appeal was forwarded by their leader Moses, to a God of equity and 'respector of no man' (Rom. 2:11). These daughters were one out of the many people that were oppressed and they decided to stand up and let the

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<sup>61</sup> Sharon Pace Jeansonne, The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p.14.

<sup>62</sup> Phyllis Silverman Kramer, Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p.220, p.216.

<sup>63</sup> Judy Mbugua, ed., Our Time has Come: African Christian Woman Address the Issues of Today (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House/Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1994), p.32.

<sup>64</sup> Athalya Brenner, ed., Song of Songs: A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), ed. p.97.

world know they were as good as sons and that they deserved that which was due to them. There was no need for any other person to get their inheritance nor was there need for the daughters to lose their inheritance completely since their father had died in the desert for his own sin. They sat down and reasoned together and God gave them wisdom on how to approach Moses, which they did and God gave back the land that belonged to them. What was broken was an Israelite rule of allotting land to males only. Finally, the conservative and adamant Israelites had God Himself change the rule in favour of daughters over inheritance (Num. 27:1-11).

If women will fight rightly and genuinely, God will answer and give back all that seemed lost.

### **3.1.3 Zipporah**

“Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro and wife of Moses, is another influential woman. Her greatest influence probably stems from her actions in Exodus 4 changing the course and history of Moses who had not circumcised his son. God was offended to a point of smiting him, but Zipporah saved the day by circumcising their boy herself and throwing the foreskin at the feet of Moses. Her action was so influential that it saved Moses' life, enabling him to continue on to Egypt, confront Pharaoh, and secure the release of all the Hebrew slaves.”<sup>65</sup> It is clear that Zipporah saved Moses' life and through her act of bravery, Moses lived on to secure the release of Hebrew slaves. Let today's feminists be the Zipporah's that will bring liberation of the oppressed in the service of God.

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<sup>65</sup><http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/introducing-influential-women-of-the-bible.html>. Uploaded 110913, 2201hrs.

### 3.2.0 Discuss the Heroic Old Testament Feminists

In the mercies and love of God (Ps. 25:6), He made women become great people, heroic in their dealings and faith. “Have you ever heard the saying behind any good man there is a great woman? In the Bible many of the grand movers and shakers seem to be men, but if you read deeper into the famous stories you will find that although it may appear that men have the biggest influence you will find that if it were not for the women in their lives many of Gods plans would never have come to fruition. With this in our minds let us look a little bit closer at particular heroines from the Old Testament.”<sup>66</sup>

#### 3.2.1 Deborah

“Deborah (Hebrew: דְּבוֹרָה ) was a prophetess of the God of the Israelites, the fourth Judge of pre-monarchic Israel, counselor, warrior, and the wife of Lapidoth according to the Book of Judges chapters 4 and 5. The only female judge mentioned in the Bible, Deborah led a successful counterattack against the forces of Jabin king of Canaan and his military commander Sisera.”<sup>67</sup>

When the Bible talks of people that do know their God being strong and doing exploits (Dan. 11:32), it is in there where heroes lie and Deborah was one. She

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<sup>66</sup><http://www.stjohns-burscough.org/WhatsHappening/Resources/UnsungHeroinesJuly2011.pdf>.

Uploaded 241013, 1017hrs.

<sup>67</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deborah>. Uploaded 311013,1233hrs.

was a well respected local judge, a planner of military strategy, a prophetess and co (if not sole) author of a victory poem.

E. Jacob writes that in the Bible are numerous songs of war among which the Song of Deborah is one (Judges 5, 1-32) exalting Israel's victory in the desire and leadership of Yahweh Himself, (Numbers 10, 35).<sup>68</sup>

Deborah did not equal just male or female. She was a great woman and a hero of her age. The time at which she lived must also be considered, tradition was strong, but Deborah was fished out as judge. It must be appreciated that all that committed wrongs, whether male or female were brought to her and this went on for years. The Bible stipulates the historical place where Deborah carried out her judgments from, "The Palm of Deborah" (Judg. 4:5). Who would not want to have such a record live after them forever? She also made military strategies in Israel, was not only able in the physical world but was also spiritual as prophetess, hearing the voice of God and directing His people in the way of God. This could probably suggest the many reasons why she prospered as judge and planner. "In other cases (like Judges) they probably created new works out of collections of oral traditions"<sup>69</sup> to show that Deborah believed in written records, which was a strange phenomenon that time. Imagine the kind of advancement of mind! When victory had come for Israel, it did not end in her mouth but her hand scribbled it down. Though people may not be sure, but they believe in her being co-author, or simply the author of a victory poem.<sup>70</sup> It is surprising today how certain feminists want to be big leaders like Deborah without the gadgets of being knowledgeable, learned and intelligent which were Deborah's possessions. This gave Deborah an appearance of who she truly was in people's eyes and she received what was due to her, an excellent way of being a hero that lasts. The example of Deborah confirms that neither God nor the ancient Hebrews found female leadership intrinsically abhorrent. On the contrary, a woman could – and

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.islam-guide.com/bqs/3old.htm>. Uploaded 311013, 1553hrs.

<sup>69</sup> <http://atheism.about.com/od/biblestudyoldtestament1/a/Deuteronomist-History-Old-Testament.htm>.  
Uploaded 311013, 1439hrs.

<sup>70</sup> Athalya Brenner, ed., Song of Songs: A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p.96.

did – exercise authority over the entire community that included men. The predominance of male judges does not militate against the significance of God’s choice of Deborah and her praise – worthy service in obedience to that call. It is a disservice to God and Deborah when it is suggested that she worked as Israel’s judge only because no men were available.<sup>71</sup> This is a typical example of men’s greed and those that follow that kind of thinking. But whatever the reason, the fact that Deborah led Israel in different positions suggests many other possible events. “Deborah brought shame to the Israelite men as they had fear so that none dared to assume leadership.”<sup>72</sup> May be the situation was intolerable and the men absconded for their inability. In all truthfulness, it was not so. Man is speaking to be happy, for Deborah was a God-fearing person and in the presence of men and women God made her to lead and judge. People may today insinuate men’s absence, but no one can take away this fact from her: God used her greatly and her name was renowned. To date, at the mention of the name Deborah, people are inspired and it registers a greatness that can never be erased under the sun.

### **3.2.2 Rahab**

Another feminist hero of the OT is Rahab, the risk taker not for things that brought direct benefits to her, Rahab wanted to save Joshua’s two spies (Josh. 2), for the love she had for her God through his servant Joshua, without minding the danger to her life, in saving his spies. Rahab had a life of selflessness which women in this era should go for. Taking risks when it is necessary, not because one wants to fight men, or there are benefits, but because “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (1 Cor. 10:24).

The book of Joshua introduces us to one of the most amazing and thought provoking women of the Old Testament. Rahab, the prostitute earned unique

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<sup>71</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), p.70.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.letusreason.org/pent45.htm>. Uploaded 311013, 1252hrs.

praise for her faith, and a place in the lineage of Christ. Certainly the faith she revealed demonstrates the potential we all have; she also reminds us not to judge. How many of us would expect a great act of faith from a hooker? How many of us would not only have walked by her house, but crossed to the other-side of the street so as not to be contaminated. Yet, God blessed this woman by putting her in the lineage of Christ. God's blessings come in surprising packages. If we think about Rahab's life, her faith shines even brighter. She is an outcast, a prostitute. Rejected by society, she still trusts that the Lord will not reject her. Abandoned by her family (we assume) to a life of prostitution, she trusts that the Lord will not abandon her.<sup>73</sup>

### **3.2.3 The Shunammite woman**

The Shunammite woman was a wealthy and well respected person in the society. This is how the Bible described her. She had a kind heart, full of love and empty of bitterness the reason of her receiving a blessing from God as attested by Dele Oke.<sup>74</sup>

The Shunammite woman cannot be left out among the heroes of the OT. This woman was married and always urged the servant of God, Elisha, to have a meal at her place whenever he went by. When her son died, Elisha prayed for his restoration to life (2 Kings 4:8-36). The questions feminists should always ask themselves are: 'Is there a heroine in me? Do I feel I am a hero, and what am I expected to do as a hero?' Heroes should live by their word. If they say they will be up the following day, God being gracious, at five in the morning, they must be up at five. The Shunammite woman urged the servant of God Elisha to have a meal at her place as a married woman and did not take marriage as reason to be used against doing the godly thing. When one is not involved in sin, they will be free and will not fear working for God, even in the service given to the servant of

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.alabaster-jars.com/biblewomen-r.html#rahab>. Uploaded 311013, 1604hrs.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.wordlibrary.co.uk/article.php?id=171>. Uploaded 311013, 1620hrs.



God like the Shunammite did. She received a big blessing of her son's life being restored through Elisha. Feminists must know that when they come in as true, they will reap truth and when serving, they also shall be served, for "you reap what you sow" (Gal.6:7).

### **3.2.4 Miriam**

"Moses, the younger brother to Miriam is a hero for bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, but there was a bigger hero to save the hero's life when he was incapable of doing anything. She watched over Moses in the water, later became a prophet of God walking side by side with her brothers as they led the people of God to the Promised Land."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup><http://www.stjohns-burscough.org/WhatsHappening/Resources/UnsungHeroinesJuly2011.pdf>.  
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### **3.3.0 The Power under which Feminists did Exploits**

Luke communicates to Theophilus about the great doings of God: “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you” (Lk.10:19). Let the elements below be considered for better understanding.

#### **3.3.1 Acceptance, Encouragement, Recognition and Value**

It is very true that feminists did exploits under God’s power. A good example is that of Bauckham who refers to the women of Israel whose voices were heard, their presence was valuable and valued and their deeds had profound influence on others.<sup>76</sup> It is common in psychology to have a behavior most likely repeating itself in the future when it is rewarded.<sup>77</sup> So the feminists did exploits under acceptance of their voices that were heard by those around them. Encouragement also came in and they desired to do greater works (Acts 4:36). In the same acceptance feminists had value and were recognized as part of the society and workmanship. Hence Paul’s confirmation: “Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis,

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<sup>76</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2006), p.9.

<sup>77</sup><http://aqabpsychology.co.uk/2010/07/skinner-and-pavlov-the-behaviourist-approach>. Uploaded 090413, 1830hrs.

another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too” (Rom.16:12-13). Value cannot be ignored wherever else one goes, even “Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth” (Prov. 16:13). The whole reason why the named Feminists succeeded. The Researcher looks at the deeds of the feminists which had profound influence on others because they were wallowing in the sense of belonging which is a need to every living being.

### **3.4.0 The Derailments Feminists Faced**

Feminists were marginalized, considered without the Holy Spirit and their superior influence stamped down. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza discusses women from a cultural and theological consideration of being the “weaker sex,” and their access to ordination would imply for male clerics the reduction to the low status of women leading to the “feminization” of the church and thus becoming second rate and powerless. She also talks of the fear priests express again and again whenever women’s ordination is discussed for the dread of women taking over the Church; since they are in the majority in today’s worship of God. These priests think the Church will be made obsolete for men and society.<sup>78</sup> Would one say men are holier than women, or men are living literally in the fear of being led by women?

### **3.4.1 Marginalization**

Among the many Derailments feminists have faced is their Marginalization, especially by male chauvinists. The marginalization, as Dennis Bratcher observes have mostly much to do with “debates centered around a literalist interpretation of a few verses in Scripture that are taken out of context without much attempt at seeing them within the ‘whole tenor of Scripture.’ As such, they often become little more than proof texts for perspectives that are far more a

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<sup>78</sup><http://www.womenpriests.org/classic2/fiorenza3.asp>. Uploaded 190913, 1314hrs.

reflection of cultural, societal, and religious norms, and even simple prejudice and bigotry, than they are a reflection of the teachings of Scripture understood holistically.”<sup>79</sup>

Pellew on the other hand speaks of Buhrig noting that the Church fathers, like the writers of the NT and beyond, had been males who propagated their biased views about women. These views permeated the Christian Theology and lent credence to the notion of male domination that is firmly established in the structure of the Church.<sup>80</sup> Although women were treated in history in an inferior way, this does not mean that those who did so were obeying the commands of Scripture. There is a huge difference in the way the Pharisees treated women in Jesus’ day and how the Bible instructs us to treat them. Certain Jews prayed in this time period, thank God I am not a dog, a gentile or a woman (one reference- Menahoth 43b-44). This shows their attitude was not of Biblical precedent, as God gave to man a woman to be a necessary helper alongside him. Historically women have played an important part in the history of Israel and God’s plan,<sup>81</sup> which is woman and man to serve Him.

### **3.4.2 The None Consideration of the Works of the Holy Spirit**

Neglect and suspicion of the work of the Holy Spirit has damaging effects on both Christian life and Christian Theology. It can lead to distortions in the understanding of God, the doctrine of Scripture, the significance of the natural order, the value of human culture, the interpretation of Christ and His work, the nature of the Church, the freedom of the Christian and the hope for the final fulfillment of life.<sup>82</sup> A lot of people, preachers, Christians and theologians in general have neglected the Holy Spirit thus making His work suspect. This has

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<sup>79</sup><http://www.crivoice.org/WT-theology.html>. Uploaded 041113, 1911hrs.

<sup>80</sup><http://books.google.co.zm/books?id=aSvn4hbPA2YC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.  
Uploaded 041113, 1430hrs.

<sup>81</sup><http://www.letusreason.org/pent45.htm>. Uploaded 311013, 1245hrs.

<sup>82</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p.166.

brought a lot of damage to the Christian faith and society by distorting the understanding of God as though He were a magician when miracles, signs and wonders are being performed. Man has seriously gone into the natural order of valuing human culture as more important than Christ's work in the Church liberating the Christian giving him/her hope for the final fulfillment of life. The Holy Spirit has become a by-the-way. He may manifest and not be believed. Yet many of the Churches are entangled in this neglect. It is well with them for as long as they serve the Father and the Son as God. The Researcher disputes the neglect of the Holy Spirit, because this kind of God is incomplete and whosoever is a follower of the two in the absence of the Holy Spirit is not true. Earlier on in Chapter Two, the Holy Spirit is confirmed equal to God the Father and the Son but different in duties they carry as it is seen in the following writing; "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [the Father], and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). It may not teach the Trinity explicitly, but it appropriately removes the language and the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit by the mention of the Trinity.<sup>83</sup>

### **3.4.3 The Anti-feminists Stamping Down Superior Influence**

Derailments always stand in the way of Achievers. Feminists are no exception. For achievement to be attained, derailment is the price to be paid by every person. Yet the goal must be to overcome irrespective the odds. From the beginning in creation, woman has been looked down upon. Eve in the eyes of Ginsburg will help the understanding of this point. "The fact that the tempter assailed the woman and not the man, so far from showing that the woman was weaker, would rather prove her strength; the cunning serpent knew this and was persuaded, if he could only prevail over the woman, she with her superior

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.answering-islam.org/Trinity/t7rel.html>. Uploaded 241013, 1220hrs.

influence would be sure to succeed with the man, as the sad result showed.”<sup>84</sup> Ginsburg is very right, the Researcher applauds. The tempter assailed the woman because he was categorically sure she was stronger than the man. Though it is not so today, it has been understood and taken for granted without any synthesis of the matter, the fact that woman was tempted is proof enough she is weak. Consider the following; when a raid is to be done, you do not start fighting the weak because the stronger will pounce on you and destroy your plans. The word says: “Strike the Shepherd and the sheep will scatter” (Zech. 13:7). No further research is needed to prove the scriptural statement true. It is simple common sense and probably general knowledge that when the mother dies, the father may find solace somewhere through marrying another woman who may not be a solace for the children and vice-versa. The truth is the family will have been scattered by the going away of the female parent. The shepherd then has plans for the sheep and the sheep depend on the shepherd upon whose departure chaos befalls the sheep. Even in the natural life, the woman is followed by the man into marriage because the woman decides whether to be joined by the man or not. No matter how much the man may love the woman, if she says no ... man will not force himself onto her. Painful as it is, hard as it may be, “When the woman (Eve) saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (Gen.3:6). Seventy-five percent of the home decisions since then are made by women and the world has been running that Way for a long time. Men have normally been mouthpieces and announcers of the women’s ideas. Was Adam weaker before Eve, our forefathers? What about us? What does God say about us? Is God’s instruction being overridden, “In those days I will pour out my Spirit on both male and female,” to please our own selves? ‘Superior influence,’ the serpent thought. This refers to a woman according to the serpent and she must

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<sup>84</sup> Athalya Brenner, ed., Song of Songs: A Feminist Companion to the Song of Songs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p.48.

be the one to be approached first. Here are the two ideas and at the same time facts; man has superior power and woman has superior influence.

Maybe let us consider the definition of power: it is “The ability or official capacity to exercise control, authority”<sup>85</sup> and compare with influence which is: “The act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command.”<sup>86</sup> One discovers that power and influence are innate but in practical terms influence stands out and comes without effort. It is simply there and affects people deeply than would power. This entails the kind of person God has made a woman to be. Hence Adam’s failure to resist her, but for man’s selfishness to lead he wants to resist even what God has already put in place, i.e. the Joel experience.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/power>. Uploaded 050413, 1615hrs.

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influence>. Uploaded 050413, 1630hrs.

### **3.5.0 Emerging in the Victory of Power**

Though women may be considered weak and not counted, God has ordained victory for them for as long as they believe, trust in His rules and commands through faith and persistent prayer.

### **3.5.1 Remaining in the Vine**

Bright speaks of one choosing to remain in the vine, which is seriously like riding a wave. It is an active process requiring a lot of effort and practice. A deliberate risk must be taken so that, in the end, there shall be experience of sheer exhilaration of God's power to be carried forward by His Spirit. Often Christian life is lived in one's own strength, like attempting to push the ocean as we paddle along with all our strength. But we miss out on the total thrill of riding the wave of God's Spirit, allowing His power to thrust us forward. For one to ride the wave there must be trust in God to live through them by the limitless power of His Spirit.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> <http://www.discovergod.com/power.html>. Uploaded 290313, 1745hrs.



Esther is a good example of a feminist that rode the wave by trusting in God and letting the limitless power of the Holy Spirit thrust her forward. When destruction of the Jews was planned by Haman at Susa, Queen Esther emerged in the power of God as the Jews' saviour! Salvation came through these words: "If I have found favour with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life – this is my petition. And spare my people – this is my request," Esther 7:3.<sup>88</sup> Today's feminist must discover Esther's secret to be victorious in the power that is given to them by God and it only comes through trusting in God by the power of the Holy Spirit, petitioning Him as well as requesting the Lord God Almighty.

### 3.5.2 Persistence in Prayer

It is necessary to realize a situation that does not seem to come to an end and that one can only get around it through unceasing prayer (Lk.18:1-5). Hannah's plight was that of being childless, but after being blessed with a child, Samuel, she sung a hymn of thanksgiving to the Lord. In this hymn, Hannah's song celebrates the reversals of power that God makes possible: weakness made strength; the lowly made exalted; the hungry filled; the poor made rich; the barren given children.<sup>89</sup> Hannah is amongst the feminists that emerged in the victory of power despite her plight. She earnestly prayed to the Lord and the Lord gave her the desire of her heart. It does not come easy to be victorious; it takes pain, tears and scorn giving one the feeling of emptiness and nakedness like you are worthy nothing. Then you know the Lord is about to arise right in your face proclaiming victory. Only do not tire, persist and persist in courage and bravery for the Lord has overcome: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn.16:33). Darkness is departing and the light replacing it and the onset of victory by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>88</sup> Phyllis Silverman Kramer, Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p230. Kramer.

<sup>89</sup> Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim & David L. Petersen, A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), p.224.

### 3.5.3 Greatness through Faith

Ruth is an account of faith. Her story is of how a Moabite girl, who was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and by law under the curse of Moab, found redemption in the village of Bethlehem and was accepted into the society of the people of God.<sup>90</sup> Emerging in the victory of power comes in different ways. Ruth found redemption and was accepted among God's people, which was a lot of victory on her part. Different people have different situations that may alienate them from being part of the society, congregation, family and sometimes God Himself. Yet faith is provided by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:9) and one can have it in God and all that seemed failing will be removed: "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!' (Dt.33:27). Today one may feel rejected and left out. God has already made a way out through the Holy Spirit. It is immaterial who thinks women are not appreciated because God appreciates them. Therefore woman shall ride the wave and the storm shall soon be over.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Feminism in the OT was considered in view of whether the OT ever Operated through Women.

Examples drawn were those of Sarah, Zelophehad's daughters, Zipporah, Heroines like Deborah, Rahab, the Shunammite woman and Miriam. These emerged in the victory of Power, not out of their own prowess, but through the power of the Holy Spirit and their works were recognized and accepted by the patriarchal society at large.

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<sup>90</sup> OT Survey, (Course Notes: Chapter 30), Ruth.

## Chapter Four: African Culture and Feminism

### 4.0 Introduction

In the consideration of African Culture and Feminism, Culture is defined as “the customary manner in which human groups learn to organize their behavior and thought in relation to their environment.”<sup>91</sup> Looking at the terms “behavior” and “thought” as well as “its organization,” the Researcher feels culture takes more than 75% of a person’s life: “For culture is here defined as the totality of thought and practice by which a people creates itself, celebrates, sustains and develops itself and introduces itself to history and humanity.”<sup>92</sup>

It must be considered that the analysis on African Culture and Feminism will run better through following the principle of “obedience is more important than

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<sup>91</sup> Michael C. Howard, Contemporary Cultural Anthropology, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), p.5.

<sup>92</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture\\_of\\_Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Africa). Uploaded 011113, 1645hrs.

cultural norms.”<sup>93</sup> Like any other people, Africans have a culture peculiar to its own people and therefore different from that of the Americans, Europeans, Asians and others. “Culture is a continuous process of change but in spite of the change, culture continues giving a community a sense of identity, dignity, continuity, security and binds society together.”<sup>94</sup>

Despite this, as Mbiti puts it, “each African people have their own cultural heritage with some aspects being fairly similar over large areas of the continent. Culture shows itself in art and literature, dance, music and drama, in the styles of building houses and of people’s clothing, in social organization and political systems, in religion, ethics, morals and philosophy, in the customs and institutions of the people, in their values and laws, their economic life inclusive.”<sup>95</sup> Considering the African Culture and Feminism, the Researcher looks at what it means to be Female, Where the Voice of a Woman is, Woman being Culture and her Challenges.

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<sup>93</sup><http://www.shawnaatteberry.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Bringing-the-Women-of-the-Bible-from-the-Shadows1.pdf>. Uploaded 011113, 1346hrs.

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/neoliberal-paradigm/the-effects-of-globalization-on-culture-in-africa-in-the-eyes-of-an-african-woman?set\\_language=en](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/neoliberal-paradigm/the-effects-of-globalization-on-culture-in-africa-in-the-eyes-of-an-african-woman?set_language=en). Uploaded 011113, 1700hrs.

<sup>95</sup> John S. Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion (London/Ibadan/Nairobi: Heinemann, 1975), p.7.

#### **4.1.0 What it means to be Female in an African Culture**

A female in an African Culture faces a number of issues among which are abuse, being regarded as man's property and technology, society's communal mother and many more.

#### 4.1.1 Vessel of Multiple Abuse

Esther Mombo declares that in the Luyia society a woman in the shackles of tradition and traditional food taboos as well as marriage customs is a potential wife and a mother who does not eat chicken and bridewealth. She is vulnerable to polygamous practices enforced by fellows and men.<sup>96</sup> To be female in an African culture judging from Esther's stance is to be a wife and a mother, who will be told what to eat and what not to, to see people pay her off into marriage and never even know the budget and the whole use of the money. Cultural woman of Africa stretches herself extremely far to a point of accepting polygamy as being a norm.<sup>97</sup> Cultural woman, whose mind has remained unadulterated by foreign culture, looks at marriage as not having one man and living forever alone with him, but having as many children with him as she can. A nursing mother has the man free to have children with other women and it is well with her; the reason why a lot of men are polygynous.<sup>98</sup> Abuse normalized? The man takes turns on them all at a programme that can only be distributed by him and the women follow. This reminds the Researcher of twenty cattle in a kraal being serviced by one bull. This befits it for they are animals. This though happens among human beings even in the presence of Gen. 2:24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." To be female in cultural Africa is to see ones husband pick up other women into marriage, an introduction of ranks in the home. She is now not just the wife but the first wife (Mai Guru) and is expected to pretend all is well. To be hindered and dumped into marriage customs which seem to present no better hope of change in the future, is to be female. The female of cultural Africa has no favour from either sex. This is the reason why she is not considered for senior leadership in the Church.

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<sup>96</sup>Isabel Apawo Phiri, Devarakshanam Betty Govinden and Sarojini Nadar, eds., Her Stories: Hidden Stories of Women of Faith in Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p.63.

<sup>97</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.52.

<sup>98</sup>Michael C. Howard, Contemporary Cultural Anthropology, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boson/ Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), p.446.

The servicing of many women by one man may seem normal today due to 94 member-states which have gone constitutional on gay rights worldwide.<sup>99</sup> This does not make the practice right before God and those that believe in Him. Paul declares: “But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (1 Cor.7:2).

#### **4.1.2 Man’s Property and a Form of Technology**

In the lack of technology an African man values human resources very much. The wife is seen as property. She is expected to work hard and to produce other forms of laborers through child bearing. She is equivalent to a field and hardly worth more than that. She is useful if much is reaped from her. No wonder the special celebrations at the birth of her 10<sup>th</sup> child! She is quietly and easily discarded if not productive. As such the African woman is denied many basic rights.<sup>100</sup> Agreeing with Mbugua culturally, the Researcher confirms that being a female is not different from being a piece of furniture in a home which can be shifted to various places without having the choice to make and no complaint to accompany it. After all, though a female has life and knowledge of the events around her, she should behave like one that is not seeing what is happening. At a command to jump, she must jump without asking why she is doing so. Maybe the only other question she would ask would be how high. An African female is truly property, is made to go into marriage at a very tender age and produce as many children as she can, yet remains unrecognized, all this is done as a contribution to the family and the society in human resources. “Does a woman become the possession of her husband upon getting married? Is the idea of

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<sup>99</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT\\_rights\\_by\\_country\\_or\\_territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_by_country_or_territory). Uploaded 121213, 1643hrs.

<sup>100</sup> Judy Mbugua, ed., Our Time Has Come: African Christian Women Address the Issues of Today (Grand Rapids/ Carlisle: Baker Book House/The Paternoster Press, 1994), p.62.

being so and so's wife enough for African women that they have to give up all else and be reduced to the status of children?"<sup>101</sup>

A female is meant to provide pleasure to man in cultural Africa. Even in succeeding to providing this pleasure in the absence of conception, she will easily be sent away without any remorse because at this level, she does not make sense to the society. Her husband does not belong to her alone. He is free to mingle with many other women sexually, as a sign of having relationships. The female should not see and should not react in any way and life should continue as though everything was normal. A female could be worse off than a chicken for it ends up in the pot and people have it for a meal as she after death is disposed of. She is not food and so making very little sense though the destiny for both is the soil. The difference on how to reach this destiny between a female and a chicken is the process they undergo. For example: chicken → man → soil, while for a female: death → soil. This process will speak which of the two is more important than the other. Cultural Africa then has a female as a hard worker and one that cannot express herself even when things are wrong and is a carrier of tradition. God seems to have missed it when He talked of woman being part of God's service. It feels a dream impossible: from being of less value than a chicken to woman clergy!

#### **4.1.3 Society's Communal Mother**

Oduyoye in her wisdom talks of women and primacy of life through the emphasis by the right use of power. She states that childless women offer protection and companionship for a procreating sister and that nurturing of the next generation is a communal duty. Mothers are therefore communal.<sup>102</sup> Naked facts are that a female in cultural Africa that is unable to have children will live for the rest of her life offering protection and companionship for her procreating sister. She will also join the community in the nurturing of the next generation. A female in cultural

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<sup>101</sup> <http://mgcininyoni.blogspot.com/2013/06/are-married-women-property-of-their.html>. Uploaded 041113, 1952hrs).



Africa is a mother of many children, whether procreative or non-procreative. In other words a female in this society is a source of unity and a connecting power from generation to generation. A round up of all things, “An African woman's roles are as life bearer, nurturer, and source of generations. Her main duty in traditional African rural community as the chief measure of success in life is her ability to bear many children.”<sup>103</sup> She is the reason for the removal of selfishness in parenthood, as all children belong to all parents.

“Even if a woman is unable to contribute by having her own biological children her role as a mother is expressed in a communal set up. Hence the Pan-African proverb saying: ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ Parenting is communal, and the harmony of male and female energies are critical in enshrining balanced humans.”<sup>104</sup>

#### **4.1.4 Power and Femininity**

A contradiction between power and femininity is used to manipulate women, but only when it serves the good of others like in benevolent powers restraining her for her own good.<sup>105</sup> Submitting to Oduyoye’s talk as the meaning of being female in an African culture is accepting the contradiction between power and femininity. Power in this situation is not supposed to be for a female. The two are different and they do not belong together according to African culture. Power by a female can only be used when it is meant to do good for the others since she has no authority over power and it does not belong to her. It will come out as though some strange thing or an accident has taken place if power is seen on a female. No one or very few will accept and appreciate it as the real thing. Otherwise, an African female has power used against her as a weapon of manipulation. A good example is the Researcher herself in her early years of ministry, working with her

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/chapters/kml/KMA2.html>. Uploaded 011113, 1435hrs.

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.africanmarriage.info/>. Uploaded 131113, 1025hrs.

<sup>105</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.29.

own ordained spiritual son. During ministration, the Lord spoke something and this spiritual son heard it and realized it was God speaking. Later on he opened up and said, "You see mom, you are a woman and anything that comes to you from God must not be spoken by you to the congregation. Tell it to me and I will tell the congregation as a man." This made the Researcher realize she had not yet found a partner in ministry. The young minister was told to speak to God about the Researcher on how she who had received the vision from God would be the wrong person to speak to the congregation about what God was saying. The minister left the church though later returned with a lot of apologies. This is typical of an African male and female, where the male thinks he must always lead, even where he has no entitlements. Praise be to God that Joel in this day speaks to the female of Africa, 'Your time to walk in the Spirit, you and man has come. And so be it!'

#### **4.1.5 The Bible and Culture in Relation to Feminism**

To a great extent the events in Bible times were a reflection of and a response to the existing culture. Does this mean for us then that the Bible no longer has relevance or application because we live in a different culture? It certainly does not. But that to understand the message of the Bible one must take account of the cultural factors.<sup>106</sup> The Researcher agrees with Powers that the Bible reflects and responds to the cultural situation of that time, does not make feminists irrelevant, despite the different culture they maybe in. The culture of the Bible must intently be understood. It is the Bible culture that will introduce to one the genesis of the events and how the destiny is to be reached. One may question why there should be all this effort in the learning and understanding of culture. It must be known that mostly Africa is highly dependent on it for any resolve to be made. It comes out clearly that to be female calls for one being totally engrossed in it lest life proves difficult. It is either culture acts in the feminists' favour or it

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<sup>106</sup> Ward Powers, The Ministry of Women in the Church: Which Way Forward? (Adelaide: SPCK, 1996), p.173.

completely disapproves the feminists' presence and activities. So there is every need to take culture into consideration, for proper study and knowledge that feminists may not misquote others or be misquoted.

#### **4.1.6 Cultural African Woman In The Eyes Of God**

G. Mwiti has these questions to consider. "What does God see when He looks at us, women of Africa today? Does He see women that are available to be co-workers, building with Him, right from (Jerusalem)-our homes, then out to the world at large?"<sup>107</sup> The Researcher, in response to these questions, is reminded of the actual origin of an African woman, whether God can present her and everyone else without question will confirm, 'Yes, this is a Zambian of Africa through and through, from looks, deeds, speech and acts.' A Female in the African culture is expected to be present with God as co-workers from where she has been placed. The Researcher supposes this is where female Africa has lost the way because there is no chance for her to even think of Godliness besides culture. It does not seem to worry the female, as pretence has caught up with her and God's presence is not hers but man's. "As Jesus and His disciples were on their way He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. Mary her sister sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said but Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, "Lord," don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Lk. 10:38-42). Mary at the feet of the Lord must be emulated for in it there is permanency. Let African female arise and choose what is right to do, for culture will not save her, just like the law does not (Gal. 3:25).

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<sup>107</sup> Judy Mbugua, ed., Our Time Has Come: African Christian Women Address the Issues of Today (Grand Rapids/ Carlisle: Baker Book House/The Paternoster Press, 1994), p.33.

## 4.2.0 The Voice of a Woman in Cultural Africa

Her voice has a very special place though it may seem faint, yet moulds the society in its entirety in the many avenues presented below as Adeola James confirms: "Our problem is that we have listened so rarely to women's voices, the noises of men having drowned women and their arts out in every sphere of life. Yet women too are artists, and are endowed with a special sensitivity and compassion, necessary to creativity."<sup>108</sup>

### 4.2.1 Story-telling and Teaching

Mbiti considers a female cultural African as a voice through stories in proverbs, riddles, myths and legends which are found in large numbers among all African peoples handed down orally.<sup>109</sup> In all this, one notices the ideal woman of Africa having her voice in various kinds of story-telling in the absence of the written record. This voice has lived on through generations upon another and people's lives and systems have been transformed. In other words the Researcher and Mbiti confirm the voice of the woman of Africa being a reservoir of strength; power and wisdom to endeavour every system remain alive. "Folktales, legends and myths" shape social relations even today. African literary writers depend on the corpus of folk talk which is a religio-culture, a social history of our people as the collective memory that wishes to keep the records remembered.<sup>110</sup> It is without doubt that a woman can fare excellently in the ministering and leading of churches because naturally she has stronger foundations of leadership as mentioned above. Let the church today direct and nurture this gift by making women participative in it.

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<sup>108</sup> Adeola James, In Their Own Voices: African Women Writers Talk: Studies In African Literature (London: Villiers Publication Limited, 1990), p.6.

<sup>109</sup> John S. Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion (London/Ibadan/Nairobi: Hienemann, 1975), p.7.

<sup>110</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.19, p.20.

### 4.3.0 Woman is Culture itself

She is the background of human life, sensuality and is the determining factor of a sensible being.

### 4.3.1 The Basis Of Human Life

The Researcher looks at a woman as being cultural because all teachings about culture for both male and female have their base. If the society will stabilize and its welfare looked into as something good and acceptable and if there shall be respect for them that are elderly, it will take this same woman to provide the required rich resource for the society and on behalf of fellows.

Chodorow explores the implications of woman's maternal role for the development of personality in young children. Sex linked personality differences, she argues, are often the unintentional consequence of the fact that women have the primary responsibility for raising children of both sexes.<sup>111</sup>

In the absence of the teachings the women provide, man of Africa would live like animals. Disorder would be the talk of the day, as there would be no direction. A woman as culture is used to teach invariably gender-based, for the stability and welfare of the whole community and respect for the elderly, providing women's rich source of imagery.<sup>112</sup> This is what makes woman become culture knowing when to come in to teach the society from a tender age; girls at puberty are taught how to care for themselves during menstruation, how to behave towards the opposite sex to avoid unholy offspring, respecting those who are older or having special responsibilities over them. "Young men are mostly taught at the time they are getting married. The eve of their wedding day comes with it a pair or a team of women to bring utensils to be used on the couple's first go, and

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<sup>111</sup><http://books.google.co.zm/books?id=vE85zkFdURQC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

Uploaded 121113, 2056hrs.

<sup>112</sup>Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.36.

early in the morning the following day this team will return to confirm the young lady has gotten a real man and everything has gone on well and successfully.”<sup>113</sup>

This is according to a ninety-six year old Zambian woman, Rakele.

These remarks move the researcher to considering the duties women perform in the society being crowned as culture itself.

#### **4.3.2 Woman, the Focal Point**

Although our culture remains dynamic and is ever changing, it, like most other cultures, has firm foundations in tradition. In any case, these traditions continue to shape women’s lives, both directly and covertly.<sup>114</sup> It is true that she is culture itself and if it is culture they are discussing, they will talk about her. It is barely clear when the scholar Oduyoye talks of culture remaining dynamic and ever changing like any other culture besides that of Africa. The reason for the continued change is that women themselves are being transformed as they read through versions and versions of information under this earth in the pursuit to using it. This cultural woman of Africa is not education-proof: she knows that knowledge is for transformation and that which cannot change for the better is a fool. Solomon declares it better when he says, “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly” (Prov. 26:11). Today, the levels at which woman remains “culture” are extremely different from the initial ones. She still remains culture anyway, but from a broader and spiritualized perspective.

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<sup>113</sup>Rakele Lungu, *Interview*. 15 11 2013. Lusaka, Zambia.

<sup>114</sup>Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.80.

#### 4.4.0 Her Challenges in Cultural Africa

“Challenges faced by feminists can be classified as both external to the movement and within the feminist’s collectives. Some examples of external challenges mainly stem from the societal perceptions about feminism.”<sup>115</sup> Much as a woman is the centre of activity, cultural Africa has neglected her in paths un-foretold.

#### 4.4.1 She Cannot be Established

Ruth-Yaneko Romba speaks generally of an African society and family being the center of all social activities. This can be affirmed that the woman is truly pivotal in societal revolve, yet women today have no establishment of their own. Struggles remain the order of their day, no matter where they may be found. Witnesses are everywhere proving the problems the women are faced with. Whatever the woman is in, she still is considered second rate playing a seemingly servile role.<sup>116</sup> How can anyone fail to fall for Romba in her considering woman as the center of the family, pivotal in all activities that establish the society and yet as the vessel of use she is disregarded, disrespected and dishonoured. Glory be to God that with the education that has been discussed earlier woman has begun to change issues. Barbara Moulton sees the woman accepting the calling received and that God has given her a voice. "Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished" (Lk. 1:45).<sup>117</sup>

Thank God indeed for the prophets that God used to bring the light in the face of the woman. Particular thanks to God for Joel who has made a woman stand up

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<sup>115</sup> <http://www.nawey.net/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/05/Feminism-in-Nigeria.pdf>. Uploaded 120913, 1137hrs.

<sup>116</sup> Judy Mbugua, ed., Our Time Has Come: African Christian Women Address the Issues of Today (Grand Rapids/ Carlisle: Baker Book House/The Paternoster Press, 1994), p.104.

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.crivoice.org/WT-call.html>. Uploaded 041113, 1923hrs.

with the full knowledge that the Lord God has given her full capacity in the presence of the Holy Spirit to operate and proclaim, 'The Lord is God' to all the nations without being considered second to anybody (Isa.44:6). The challenge is real but it is so "comforting to know that God is so powerful! He is able to protect and save us from oppression and evil powers."<sup>118</sup> God is liberating the woman, the Researcher declares.

#### 4.4.2 Solitude during Menstruation

Menstruation according to the Researcher is the monthly bleeding of a female signifying the absence of fertilization. Childbirth is the bringing out of a foetus from the mother's womb. Menstruation and childbirth have a common feature, 'blood.' Ilana Beer talks of the menstruant woman and childbirth as impure and must be exempted from certain obligations though menstruation is closely linked to fertility and femininity.<sup>119</sup> Tradition and culture has always had a menstruant woman and the one that has given birth as impure and certain duties like preparing people's food, adding salt to anything or simply mingling with others are withdrawn from her. She should not share the bed with the husband and there should be no love making at least for six months after the child's birth to make sure all signs of such bleeding are complete. That is a female in an African culture. Menstruation<sup>120</sup> to cultural Africa is a sign of being fertile and female, 'a misconception' hence the numerous problems African females face if they cannot conceive in marriage. It is high time this was entrenched upon African female that menstruation is not a confirmation of fertility<sup>121</sup> and femininity but a process for normal and mature women.

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<sup>118</sup> <https://woh.org/pdf/producer/bmoh/d-05.pdf>. Uploaded 041113,1840hrs.

<sup>119</sup> Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminists Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), p154, 155, 160, 164.

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/menstruation.html>. Uploaded 110913, 1547hrs.

<sup>121</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fertility>. Uploaded 110913, 1600hrs.



#### 4.4.3 Customs, Traditions and Beliefs

Some aspects of African Culture which have a particular bearing on the issue of women's emancipation are customs, traditions and beliefs. These have, over the years, helped to keep women under subjugation and feeling inferior to men in society as in high fertility and puberty rites with specific reference to female circumcision.<sup>122</sup> These have become greater challenges in the life of a woman in the African culture. It comes from different directions as earlier on mentioned: 'a woman without children is a worker to her procreating sister.' The biblical Hannah is one of the examples who cried to the Lord for a child but was tortured by Peninnah, the second wife to her husband. Peninnah easily had children and she showered mockery on Hannah. One imagines now Hannah must gather the sisters' children for protection and all! A great challenge indeed (1 Sam. 1). In the same vein due to high fertility a woman may get ten to fifteen children, maybe because cultural Africa loves big families as attested below: "One of the foremost traditional values of the African is a large family. Children are of supreme value to the African. His primary purpose for marriage is children and to have as many of them as possible. This is the reason why polygamy or the union of one man with several women still holds great attraction for him, and also why the birth rate in Africa is among the highest in the world. The fact is that the African still counts his blessings by the number of children he has, whether they are educated or not, rich or poor, healthy or sick, well-fed or hungry."<sup>123</sup> The woman though is disadvantaged in that her relationship with the husband will seriously dwindle as the husband will believe, 'she is finished and can only be the mother to my children.' The man will move on in search of fresher women, causing so much pain and trauma like all the years on earth were but wasted.

#### 4.4.4 Circumcision

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<sup>122</sup> Florence Abena Dolphyne, The Emancipation of Women: An African Perspective (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1991), p.1.

<sup>123</sup> [http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-3/chapter\\_v.htm](http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-3/chapter_v.htm). Uploaded 041113, 1822hrs.

One of the worst challenges women face in certain parts of Africa culturally is “Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, and is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as ‘all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.’”<sup>124</sup>

Boyle reported several studies during the 1980’s and 1990’s where the women who underwent female circumcision said they were able to enjoy sex, though with Type III the risk of sexual dysfunction was higher.<sup>125</sup> This is meant to reduce women’s sexual feelings making them no different from logs without feelings at all but with capacity to think. The challenge here is looking beautiful, alive and yet actually dead.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

What it means to be “Female” was a discussion that exposed African Culture and Feminism in the eyes of many through Oduyoye. Among other things, the contradiction between power and femininity must be noted where power in a woman’s individual capacity is not counted unless it benefits others in society. This was vividly shown when a scenario was given by the Researcher of a spiritual son “who felt it was ‘wrong’ for God to reveal mysteries to His female servant when he was around as male!” Concerning the Voice of a Woman in Cultural Africa, the vital role a woman plays in keeping African culture ‘alive and going’ through her being at the very medium of handing it down through ‘Folk-Talk’ to others from generation to generation was taken care of. The idea of woman being a source of African-culture’s continuity makes the African woman Culture itself, teaching the society from a very tender age about all social norms, puberty and marriage. All in all, the Challenges of a woman in an African Culture were highlighted, bringing out her disregard, disrespect and dishonour. Issues of

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<sup>124</sup> <http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/key-issues/fgm>. Uploaded 041113, 1800hrs.

<sup>125</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female\\_genital\\_mutilation#cite\\_note-46](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genital_mutilation#cite_note-46). Uploaded 150413, 1212hrs.

a woman without children being a worker to her procreating sister and the demeaning practices of female circumcision were not left out. The Researcher though looks at the oppressive culture as dying away.

## Chapter Five: Feminism in the New Testament and the Contemporary Ministry

### 5.0 Introduction

The Inter-testamental Period comprises 400 'Silent Years' in the sense that there were no prophets from God who were writing Scripture.<sup>126</sup>

This time was not an 'Erased Period of History.' Chris Clevenger says "The '400 Silent Years' acted as a buffer between the close of the Old Testament in the Second Temple Period and the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptizer, the herald of the coming King."<sup>127</sup> People lived in it and stepped over into the NT Anna being an example. Feminists in the NT were equally opposed by the male stream and fellow feminists. The success of feminists is considered possible by the power granted them from above, as a result of the Joel prophecy. This power made some women disciples of Jesus become witnesses of an empty tomb. Lydia in the NT, in her relationship with God, is a good example of the power's results and became an answer to many people.<sup>128</sup> The letters of Paul being andocentric and ambiguous in language, give a negative impression on feminism,<sup>129</sup> though the Researcher recognises the positive impact his ministry has made. Later on feminism is examined in the contemporary world considering the works of Kathryn Kuhlman, Joyce Meyer and the Researcher herself.

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<sup>126</sup> <http://www.angelfire.com/nt/theology/15-400sy.html>. Uploaded 030413, 1130hrs.

<sup>127</sup> <http://chrsclvng.com/mydeskhisglory/the-intertestamental-period-in-15-objects-introduction>. Uploaded 071113, 1313hrs.

<sup>128</sup> Luise Schottroff, Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspective on the New Testament (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1991), p.135.

<sup>129</sup> ... Luise Schottroff, p.105.

### 5.1.0 The Inter-testamental Period

Rick Mangrum reveals the “time between the last writings of the Old Testament and the birth of Christ the political, religious, and social atmosphere of Palestine changed significantly. The environment that existed while Jesus walked the Earth came to be in the period between Malachi and Matthew.”<sup>130</sup> In God’s silence, men and women disciples crossed over into His gracious hope. “The New Testament tells the story of how hope came, not only for the Jews, but for the entire world. Christ’s fulfillment of prophecy was anticipated and recognized by many who sought Him. The stories of the Roman centurion, the wise men, and the Pharisee Nicodemus show how Jesus was recognized as the Messiah by those who lived in His day. The ‘400 years of silence’ were broken by the greatest story ever told—the gospel of Jesus Christ!”<sup>131</sup>

#### 5.1.1 Prophetess Anna and the Transitional Events

Among the feminists that followed God in this time was prophetess Anna as described in Lk. 2:36-38, “There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old and lived with her husband who died seven years later. She remained a widow up to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.”<sup>132</sup> Actually whosoever has heard the word; it shall remain in them even in the time of God’s silence. The word shall be in their mouth and in their heart. The reason why Anna as a feminist crossed over and still believed in God. After seven years of her husband’s death she is reported to have been praying in the Temple day and night. How could this happen unless one was with God through the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>130</sup><http://studytoshewthyself.com/intertestamental-period-400-silent-years/>. Uploaded 041113, 1632hrs.

<sup>131</sup><http://www.gotquestions.org/intertestamental-period.html>. Uploaded 041113, 1622hrs.

<sup>132</sup><http://bibleview.org/en/Bible/400SilentYears/400SilentYears>. Uploaded 280313, 1630h.

Surely, Anna saw the baby Jesus being brought to the temple, like one would say, 'It came to pass.' This was real victory in Anna's life. The word to her and everyone else around her was alive and she saw the Lord come! This is proof to all of them that believe in God that once the seed of the word is planted upon man's heart it will not escape them (Rom. 10:8). It also reveals a permanency that is in the word: "it was in the beginning with God and it was God" (Jn. 1:1). For the word is designed never to lose its value, power or authority. It lives on even after the vessel of proclamation is long gone. Feminists and everyone else may get to understand the means and ways of keeping the word permanent. Sarah Bessey desires feminists to become "policymakers and people who are going to go down swimming for the constitution of the church."<sup>133</sup>

### **5.1.2 The Desire to Communicate with God**

Clearly one sees God's people trying to access God in His silence. Like one was saying, 'what is it Lord that I am supposed to do?' 'Where are you?' No answer is received. One begins to feel as though they were in a dark room without knowing who could be in it, or whether they should shout or not. The Inter-testamental period was a trying time. Yet God needed to remain God: to be revered and honoured, whether He was speaking or not. The feminists having crossed over together with men were faced with multiple issues if their following of God was to be continued. "The Law now became the standard of holiness, the symbol of nationality and the beginning of the local synagogue. The basic idea of the synagogue was instruction in the Scriptures and not worship. An elaborate liturgical service developed later with appointed persons reading public prayers while the congregation made responses. Now that the public reading of the Law had to be by translation into the Aramaic tongue, which the people had learned in Babylonia (Neh. 8:8), the transition from translation to exposition and even to

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<sup>133</sup><http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/november-web-only/sarah-bessey-feminist-because-i-love-jesus-so-much.html>. Uploaded 071113, 1303hrs.

discourses was easy, though it was gradual. However, from that time on, there began to form an elaborate system of interpretations, amplifications and additional regulations of which the Judaism of our Lord's time was the result."<sup>134</sup>

The Synagogue issue may seem not necessary with the crossing over of women in the Inter-testamental period. The fact that they went through it believing in God, meant that they were part of every development in the Christian faith. Hence the mention of the synagogue as Anna herself was at the temple praying and fasting when she saw the baby Jesus being brought in. Those that desired to continue following God had now the greater duty of interpreting the word of God into Aramaic for the sake of those around who were interested in God's word. All this was by the power of the Holy Spirit. It only confirms the fact that the Spirit of the Lord put upon one will not allow any dormancy to linger until all that is God's plan upon them is fulfilled (Isa.55:11). Let this be a caution to all feminists and the others that God will still make everyone

The Bible says God shall judge with equity (Ps. 96:10). This being God's plan, male and female will not escape, for none shall answer for the other. No one will give a reason like 'the male stream oppressed me and vice-versa.' What is it that will be presented before the Lord Remember always, in the NT the Holy Spirit is in people (1 Cor. 3:16). He will give no one peace until His duties are done. It is true we have no record of any inspired writings from that period. It is also true that there is no prophetic record. God does indeed appear to be silent but the hand of God was actively directing the course of events.<sup>135</sup> This made the plan of man's salvation complete. That is how those that followed God, male and female crossed over to the NT because that which is of God cannot be seized by the sinful acts of man.

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<sup>134</sup> <http://www.believersweb.org/view.cfm?ID=1020>. Uploaded 280313, 1630hrs.

<sup>135</sup> <http://outofadullam.wordpress.com/2009/12/28/the-space-between-malachi-and-matthew>. Uploaded 280313, 1645hrs.

## 5.2.0 The Opposition Feminism Encountered

Sigmund Freud declares: “We must not allow ourselves to be deflected by the feminists who are anxious to force us to regard the two sexes as completely equal in position and worth.”<sup>136</sup> Freud here looks at fellows and himself as untouchables never to be equaled to women in position and worth. Feminists have been proclaimed ancillary, unreliable and spiritually ungifted for ministry acquiring henceforth all names against themselves. Freud is certainly wrong in his being judgmental: “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Matt.7:1-2).

### 5.2.1 Being Called to a Supportive Role

Many people believe that God has called women to a supportive role as to man in ministry and they appeal to Jesus’ relationship to the Father to support their view. Yet “those who appeal to the Son’s relationship to the Father to support the subordination of women are mistaken, not because such subordination necessarily implies inequality-but because the analogy is faulty.”<sup>137</sup>

She is said not to be called of God to engage in an ‘upfront’ ministry of the church like conducting the worship service, sacrament administration, preaching, or leading in public prayer.<sup>138</sup> Truly God is all knowing. He saw as He looked into the future that among the servants He had chosen, some would want to lead in the absence of His appointment for the sake of a bias they would have against the other. The Lord God is praised for His foresight to raise His prophets that came to bring to light an anointing, power and authority for both male and female.

Thanks to the Lord God for Joel for being so direct, open and specific over the

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<sup>136</sup> [http://womenshistory.about.com/od/quotes/a/antifeminism\\_quotes.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/quotes/a/antifeminism_quotes.htm). Uploaded 120913, 1153hrs.

<sup>137</sup> [http://www.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/review\\_Grenz.pdf](http://www.sbts.edu/documents/tschreiner/review_Grenz.pdf). Uploaded 051113, 1600hrs.

<sup>138</sup> Ward Powers, The Ministry of Women in the Church: Which Way Forward? (Adelaide: SPCK, 1996), p.15.



issue of women as servants, running in the power of the Holy Spirit as equals to men. No one is expected to answer to the other but both are supposed to answer to God, rendering man's thought not as reality but mere opposition against women. Yes it is true that when a woman is married, she takes a supportive role to her husband (Gen 3:16). This should not happen or be done to any other man who has no marital relationship with this particular woman. What is seen in the opposition above as stipulated by Powers, representing the anti-feminists is one thing that pleases him and his disciples in that belief. This is coupled with a walk in the traditional faith where woman must have knowledge of how many children she is going to have, when to prepare the meals for her husband and how her house must look, is a prime duty for her. The list is long. In the Church a woman is expected to play roles that man deems inferior and insignificant. She must not be involved in service worship, sacrament administration, public prayer and preaching for they befit a man because they are the 'real things' in ministry! Men must take up and give out the real stuff. Such stances have no godly, scriptural support. Searching the Bible without taking sides indicates whatever part of writing that seems to support the findings of Powers is in two ways; either spoken from a point of being a male chauvinist or a traditionalist and sometimes as a consequential result due to negative events. A good example being Paul's writing where 'women must learn in silence,' (1 Cor. 14:34) for the reason of cabling down an existing problem. Yet this same view has been used by many anti-feminists as a point against all women in their view to oppose woman in this service of the Lord.

### **5.2.2 Women's Testimony as Unreliable**

The Gospel narratives indicate women disciples of Jesus being the first people to find the tomb of Jesus empty. In fact, they were the only witnesses to the empty tomb who had seen Jesus buried and could vouch for the fact that the empty tomb really was the one in which Jesus' body had been laid two days before. Concerning the prominence of the women in the gospel resurrection discourses,

many have argued against women's testimony in the ancient world, regarded as unreliable and untrustworthy, especially by the Jewish Palestine. This role of the women in the Easter events is unlikely to have been invented.<sup>139</sup> Bauckham and the researcher deny this fact, for it is one way of opposing the women. He comes through seeing sense in feminism and authenticates its worthiness. The bone of contention is over the prominence of the gospel resurrection discourses and the women's testimony. Whenever the resurrection of Christ is talked about, it reminds everyone of the women disciples at the empty tomb even when they were not mentioned: which has become a problem to anti-feminists and have always stood in opposition against the women disciple's testimony calling it unreliable and untrustworthy. Joel talks of both male and female receiving the Holy Spirit, hence both being used by God without difficulties. It is the vessels fighting against one another about who is above the other! Man has always made himself above woman, which is an irrelevant issue before God. The saga of opposition has delayed God's work and the salvation of man, limited as from men, deemed better and from women, not real! In other words that which comes from the hand of man is reliable and trustworthy: Is it from the hand of a woman? It is a lie.

### **5.2.3 Women Being Gifted For Ministry**

"Women are to be recognized as being granted gifts by God in the same way as men. Some of these gifts are for ministry in the Church as preachers and teachers. 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 and 1 Tim. 2:8-15 have been often interpreted as prohibiting such a ministry or as restricting a ministry by women to other women and children only: but this interpretation has been examined and found to be faulty and invalid. There is no force in the arguments which are put forward by many Christians against women being allowed to preach or teach in the congregation, or their being allowed to exercise a spiritual ministry in other ways

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<sup>139</sup> Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2002), p.257.

(for example, to become theologians, write theological books, and lecture on theological subjects in Bible and Theological Colleges). Those who exclude women from these various ministries desire to be biblical in their approach to these questions, and they are to be respected for this. But the scriptures upon which they base their views cannot in fact bear the interpretation that they put upon them."<sup>140</sup> One cannot claim to be using Biblical approach by not allowing women to be partakers of real ministry. The Prophet Joel is emphatic on this unless another Bible is being used to clarify this matter. Scripture has been heavily abused to fit men's desires and help them play safe. Sarah Bessey in her charismatic identity and emphasis on the kingdom of God underscores her "invitation to revisit the Bible's view of women." Rather than trying to baptize feminism's current concerns (among them LGBTQ equality and pro-choice rights) with pick-and-choose Bible verses, Bessey starts with the whole narrative of Scripture.<sup>141</sup>

Let the word be twisted and let the name of God make sense to men alone in this last minute, for the hour has now come (Jn. 12:23) for woman to arise in the power and authority of the poured out Holy Spirit on both male and female. The end of opposition and oppression is about now.

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<sup>140</sup> Ward Powers, The Ministry of Women in the Church: Which Way Forward? (Adelaide: SPCK, 1996), p.184.

<sup>141</sup><http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/november-web-only/sarah-bessey-feminist-because-i-love-jesus-so-much.html?start=1>. Uploaded 071113, 1645hrs.

### 5.3.0 The Company of a Successful Feminist

It is necessary to search and discover He that has been with feminists for them to succeed.

### 5.3.1 God and the Called in Ministry

The greatest company that is with women is the Lord God Himself through the Holy Spirit quickening their mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11); guiding them into all truth (Jn. 16:12-13); revealing to them things to come (Jn. 16:13); reminding them of things they were taught (Jn. 14:26) and correcting or reproofing the world of sin in them.<sup>142</sup>

This is the most needed item for the called in ministry as servants to succeed. 'The power and authority' is role enough to work out miracles, wonders and signs as declared by God through Joel. It is not as though God was acting out of self-pity but that He planned it that way from inception as 'time and chance happened to them all' (Eccles. 9:11). Humanly speaking, the only other person is he who has accepted the universal calling of both male and female "for God uses women in ministry just as He uses men. There is no mention of spiritual gifts or salvation being different for men and women. In God's eyes, men and women are equal in importance and calling."<sup>143</sup>

The question is where, Oh God, are such people found on this earth? Women nevertheless, will find partners in the service of God and succeed for their God is with them forever (Mt.28:20).

### 5.3.2 Lydia

Lydia is one of the successful feminists whose company in all she did was God. Though the name Lydia is not a proper person's name, it relates to a place of

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<sup>142</sup> <http://voices.yahoo.com/top-5-ministries-holy-spirit-2276100.html?cat=34>. Uploaded 081113, 1135hrs.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.raptureready.com/faq/faq235.html>. Uploaded 081113, 1000hrs.

origin, 'the one from Lydia,' and such names were often used for female and male slaves. Though not a slave herself, her name points to the social irrelevancy of her family. As a single woman Lydia found power in her relationship with the God of Israel and built centers of solidarity: the community of a women's group living the Jewish faith and, in continuation of this community, a Christian house church. She brought people together and helped them better their lives.<sup>144</sup> God in His mercy comes in to make everything new (Isa.42:9). The activities listed above are the weapon that will let people see what God is doing in one's life and prove truly, there is someone behind the activity who can only be God, as it was with Lydia. This should affect the woman of the day positively and be encouraged to get closer to God, who will do what man cannot do for her: "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."<sup>145</sup> He is Lydia's God as well as every woman's in this era. He knows and appreciates her name even if others may pretend not to.

### 5.3.3 Priscilla

Priscilla's ministry was so important that she won Paul's commendation and gratitude, as well as that of "all Gentile Churches" (Rom. 16:3).<sup>146</sup> In Rom.16:3 he addresses Priscilla as a fellow worker in Christ Jesus for risking her life for his sake and that many of Gentiles. The Researcher considers Priscilla's case as a very big lesson to feminists if ever they will be appreciated by those that are genuinely brothers and servants in the Lord to also decide to risk their lives for them. This is what will bring acceptance even in the presence of the anti-feminists. Let us desire to do good sacrificially to others without any expected benefit and God will grant us the benefits Himself. Paul became a feminist company to Priscilla and she prospered in her ministry for walking in the path of a

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<sup>144</sup> Luise Schottroff, Let the oppressed go free: Feminist perspectives on the New Testament (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), p.131, p.135.

<sup>145</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/philippians/4-13-compare.html>. Uploaded 041113, 2000hrs.

<sup>146</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), p.83.

successful servant of God. Grenz and Kjesbo are indicating to feminists of the day to emulate Priscilla for the paving of their path.

#### 5.4.0 The Contributions of Pauline Writings to Feminism

Paul did not consider himself better than female servants; he was gender neutral and appreciated women.

The narration of Sarah Bessey, “I began to understand Paul in the context of his time, specifically regarding the Roman household codes. As everywhere the gospel was preached, women had flocked to the church, along with slaves, the poor, the weak, and children. . . . women had never been included in the teaching, encouraged to prophesy, or given dignity as participants. Many scholars believe that in their newfound freedom, a group of Christian women were disrupting the meeting with questions. Paul then asked them to learn in quietness and talk it over at home with their husbands. Even Paul's recommendation was revolutionary for that time encouraging women to learn,”<sup>147</sup> gradually shows Paul introducing the women to real ministry through an initiative of participation right through from their homes as may be their husbands would notice the special ability in them.

“Some would say, Paul told women to be silent in the church and that they should never teach men. Well, some Theologians believe that much of these texts were inserted into the epistles after Paul's death. An example lies in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36, where liberal theologians believe an impostor inserted this between 14:33a and 14:37. If you remove these texts, you will see that this flows and makes sense.”<sup>148</sup>

Hence the Researcher agreeing with Sarah Bessey on a “Paul and a Jesus ... in saying, she finds a Jesus—and even a Paul—who saw women as equally crucial as men to advancing the gospel”<sup>149</sup> Seriously men and women are not different as far as spiritual things are concerned.

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<sup>147</sup><http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/november-web-only/sarah-bessey-feminist-because-i-love-jesus-so-much.html?start=2>. Uploaded 071113, 1255hrs.

<sup>148</sup><http://rdeemed4real.wordpress.com/2008/05/10/the-marginalization-of-women-in-the-bible/>  
Uploaded 011113, 1257hrs.

<sup>149</sup><http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/november-web-only/sarah-bessey-feminist-because-i-love-jesus-so-much.html?start=1>. Uploaded 071113, 1657hrs.

### 5.4.1 Equal Ranking in Ministry

The Researcher considers Paul's letters as a rich source for the history of Christian women though androcentric in language. In his letters, Paul does not turn out to be one to suppress women's history, or at least he suppresses that history much less than his later Christian interpreters, who often found reason to reinterpret Pauline texts in a patriarchal manner. From his letters, six points become clear:

- i) Women were decision-makers in the church;
- ii) Their energy represented an important contribution to the spread of the Gospel in a patriarchal society;
- iii) Women were equal in rank with Paul as they laboured in spreading the gospel;
- iv) He had no problems about submitting to women;
- v) Paul had no gender-specific work in the church;
- vi) Paul considers other apostles and missionaries as equally important.<sup>150</sup>

Pauline writings' contributions to feminism have brought a lot of debate in theological circles. His writings are treated with a lot of mixed feelings as to whether it is learning in silence or the veiling of women (1 Cor. 14:34) that takes the lead or it is what Schottroff is expressing about the exaggerations that several interpreters of his books have made! Whatever it is with Paul and ministry, the Researcher agrees that Paul himself has also been misunderstood looking at the silence and veiling of feminists which have caught him in the web of anti-feminism. Paul being an apostle and a great writer of the NT books in their numerous numbers having an outrageous bias against women, would not have seen the NT talk of women in the service of God like Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), Priscilla (Acts 18:2), and many more. Schottroff then in her writing about Paul has a place in the Researcher's heart that he really had women as co-workers in

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<sup>150</sup> Luise Schottroff, Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspectives on the New Testament (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), p.36-38.



their different governing functions in churches as decision makers. He had more women serving God, confirming the equality he put in place between him and women in ministry (Rom. 16:3).

Several times he submitted to feminine leadership comfortably and successfully (1 Cor. 16:16). All in all, the Researcher without doubt proclaims Paul having contributed so much, through his ministry in partnership with women. One receives this great dream about the contemporary time as to whether it would raise the 'Pauls' to accept working together for the good of none but that of fulfilling the prophecy of Joel as received from God.

#### **5.4.2 Gender Neutrality**

Marshall exposes Paul's gender neutrality, an indication of 'a new age' in place with Christ and the temporary function of the law having ceased. Those who believe in Christ are now children of God, regardless of whether they are Jews or Greeks, they constitute one people in Christ' (Gal. 3:21-29).<sup>151</sup> This statement is powerful and lovely but true. God being without gender does not consider the tribe one is coming from, nor does He consider the gender in man become one. As far as the Researcher is concerned, this was total and absolute gender-neutrality, proving Paul really had a heart for female servants and truly worked with them on an equal basis: a great contribution indeed to the NT feminism. This then leads to "the realization that the hierarchical distinctions between men and women are the outcome of social coercion closely connected with the realization that distinctions of race and class are injustices before God."<sup>152</sup>

#### **5.4.3 Appreciation of Women**

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<sup>151</sup> I. Howard Marshall, New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses. One Gospel (Downers Grove/Nottingham: OVP Academic/Apollos, 2004), p.218.

<sup>152</sup> Luise Schottroff, Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspectives on the New Testament (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), p.41.

Paul's appreciation of women and men extends beyond spiritual matters. He touched on their physical matters as well in relation to marriage which he regarded as a source for holiness especially concerning the sexual passions of every genuine and true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Talking about male and female, in 1 Cor. 7, Paul emphasizes on husband and wife not denying one another and being in concession in case of fasting to be done at a bearable period, because the bodies are weak. Advice is given on marriage indicating that he cared for family as a means of procreation, that the Body of Christ may have offspring that are holy. This is a contribution every sane mind must not choose to throw away. This was Paul confirming it through Powers when he says, "women are human beings different from men but equal bearers of the image of God. He stresses on women being sexual with legitimate sexual needs to be met and are subject to sexual temptations when the sexual needs are not met by the husband."<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ward Powers, The Ministry of Women in the Church: Which Way Forward? (Adelaide: SPCK, 1996), p.25.

### 5.5.0 The Results of Feminism in the Contemporary World

The Researcher feels the Lord has been faithful to His appointment and women are doing exploits using His word. J. Lee Grady talks of “the Christian history being full of examples of strong, Godly women who achieved remarkable breakthroughs for the kingdom of God. To say that women should not display spiritual strength or do exploits in the name of Jesus is to discredit everything that Christian women have done throughout history to further the gospel.

If we want to stake a claim that women should not lead the church, are we prepared to say that everything women have done to expand the kingdom of God was a mistake? Is the Salvation Army an illegitimate organization because a strong, vocal woman preacher was a driving force behind it? Do we really want to negate the countless missionary breakthroughs made in the 19th and 20th centuries in China and India, since so many women—such as Amy Carmichael, Bertha Smith or Marie Monsen—were responsible for the pioneering work there? If we look at the history of revival movements, it is clear that whenever there has been a deepening of spiritual passion and holiness in the church, and a corresponding call to evangelism, women have responded to the call to ministry even when it was culturally unacceptable for them to do so. This was true during the Second Great Awakening in the United States, which unleashed an army of women to fund missionary movements and to lead the abolitionist cause. It was also obvious in the early days of the Pentecostal revival, which mobilized women preachers to blaze trails in foreign and domestic mission fields. These women, including healing evangelist Lilian Yeomans, Carrie Judd Montgomery, Minnie Draper, Ida Robinson, Aimee Semple McPherson and Florence Crawford, started churches that still flourish today.

“These women were not looking for a spotlight or a pulpit, nor were they out to win an argument or to prove that women are better than men. They were prayer warriors who loved the Word of God and used it skillfully to combat the evils of their day. They were mothers of the faith who nurtured new converts with the milk

of salvation and trained their disciples to pursue spiritual maturity.”<sup>154</sup> What next, what other proof is the world looking for to accept the Church or Congregational leadership of women?

### **5.5.1 Kathryn Johanna Kuhlman**

She was “born-again” at the age of 14 in the Methodist Church of Concordia and began preaching in the West at the age of sixteen in primarily Baptist Churches. On October 18th, 1938, Kathryn secretly got married to Burroughs Waltrip in Mason City though she did not “find the will of God in the matter” even after justifying it herself. On the day of her wedding, as a spiritual person she had no peace and left the man and decided to get an annulment of her marriage. Kuhlman traveled widely around the United States and in many other countries holding “healing crusades” between the 1940’s and 1970’s. Her weekly TV program in the 1960’s and 1970’s, “I Believe in Miracles” was aired nationally. By 1970, she moved to Los Angeles, conducting faith healing for thousands of people each day. She became famous despite having no theological training.<sup>155</sup> Apparently the conditions to serving the Lord for most Christian churches is that one must have an encounter with the Lord. She must be Born–Again, Jn. 3:3, which happened to Kathryn Kuhlman and of course this only happens in the presence of the Holy Spirit and His power. She did her ministry in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as a mightily used woman of God, well travelled in America. Her name has lived through and through such that the Joel 2:29 prophecy has continued to make sense in being fulfilled by feminists like her.

### **5.5.2 Joyce Meyer**

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Joyce Meyer (born Pauline Joyce Hutchison; June 4, 1943) through her ministry of demonstrative teaching; she is a Charismatic

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<sup>154</sup> <http://ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-leadership/women-in-leadership/723-can-women-lead-the-church>, Uploaded 081113, 1148hrs.

<sup>155</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathryn\\_Kuhlman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathryn_Kuhlman). Uploaded 290313,1800hrs.

Christian Author and Speaker. Joyce and her husband Dave have four grown children and live outside St. Louis, Missouri. Her ministry is headquartered in the St. Louis suburb of Fenton, Missouri. It goes without saying that Joyce, by the Lord's grace has carried the banner of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a successful feminist and worker of the Lord. Truly, if feminism in this century has succeeded, Meyer's contribution cannot be ignored. Looking at Meyer's ministry one sees the faithfulness of God. Surely, He is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). He does not look back to our past events. He delivers, heals broken hearts, renews minds and makes them whole, ready for use in His vineyard. This automatically is through the Holy Spirit. It is true, 'He came to set the captives free' (Is. 61:1). Today Joyce is a powerful woman of God, mightily used with a global announcement of her name by God Himself, as though from a nonentity to greatness. Joyce is not only a popular feminist, but has inspired many people in feasible and tangible ministry.<sup>156</sup>

### **5.5.3 The Researcher**

She has been blessed mightily in prophecy (a greater discerning spirit and revelation power) which has really helped her in the works mentioned later by God's grace concerning the 'mark of an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles' (2 Cor. 12:12). As for her, these miraculous activities started at the age of eight in 1965. She was a member of the Reformed Church from childhood till sometime in her secondary school education, when she was attracted to becoming a Catholic nun with the Sisters of Charity at St. Monica's Secondary School, Chipata, Zambia. At the age of 23, she got married to Chitaku G. Mucheleng'anga. She met Christ as her personal savior at twenty-five on the third of July, 21 00 hours, 1983 through the ministry of Minevah Mwananshiku at Kasama Teachers Training College, Zambia and went into full-time ministry when she was 44 years old. To date, her ministry has not ceased but is highly attacked by the powers of darkness. The ministry was confirmed upon the researcher in

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<sup>156</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joyce\\_Meyer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joyce_Meyer). Uploaded 290313,1805hrs.

1997 by Benny Hinn when he had come to Mulungushi International Conference Center, Zambia, for a crusade. He laid hands on her confirming the greater ministry as he proclaimed it. Under God's authority, an anointing has been granted to this servant of the most High God and people have received release from the powers of darkness and there has been recovery of sight for one blind woman in Mozambique in 2005, 28 cases of healings in HIV/Aids (Four in Botswana, 2007 and the rest in Zambia as from 2001), diabetes, paralysis, hypertension, impotence, barrenness, a resurrection for a five-year old boy who had died and deliverance from demons as the Lord Jesus Christ declared: "You will do even greater things than these" (Jn. 14:12).<sup>157</sup> This empowered statement is confirmed through the writing, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my Name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on the sick people and they will get well" (Mk. 16:15-18). The prophecy Jesus proclaims has been fulfilled in her case. To all this the Name of the Lord God Almighty receives the glory for the events were all because of prayer and by the power of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit Himself that reveals and makes come to pass the miracles and the miraculous and non miraculous gifts.<sup>158</sup>

## 5.6 Conclusion

Feminism in the NT and the Contemporary World was considered with Anna as an example of the very few feminists who Crossed Over the Inter-testamental Period. She experienced God's silence and heard Him speak again in the power

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<sup>157</sup> Jennipher NP Mucheleng'anga, Energema Dunamis Church: Order of Worship (Lusaka: Unpublished, 2007), p.i.

<sup>158</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, Saved by Grace (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1989), p.33.

of the Holy Spirit in her 'time and chance' (Eccles. 9:11). The Opposition against Feminists; that of being given a supportive role, their testimony being unreliable and women considered not gifted for spiritual ministry was not ignored. The Researcher then looked at the greatest Company of a Successful Feminist being that of the Holy Spirit. If Paul was alive today, he would watch in awe at the various understandings and conclusions people have drawn from his letters, especially those bordering on marginalizing women in church functions! Whatever the case, Pauline Writings have Contributed a lot to Feminism. Certain Scriptures in Paul's letters have been interpreted in a way that has given feminists an unshakable ground. Feminism in the Contemporary World and how it has Fared was a look through Kathryn Kuhlman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Joyce Meyer and the Researcher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These feminists have in various ways been greatly used of the Lord.

## Chapter Six: Feminism and the Christian Church Today

### 6.0 Introduction

Among the many problems dogging Feminism and the Christian Church today is the Need of Secular and Spiritual Education as Reggy confirms in her sharing: Africa has low literacy levels. In 1985, of the world's estimated 889 million adult illiterates (age 15+), above 100 million children of primary school (6-11 years) not enrolled in school were in danger of becoming adult illiterates of the twenty-first century. 34.9 percent of women and 20.5 percent of men are illiterate. This problem is compounded by Africa's 1730 languages with an astounding 3000 ethnolinguistic groups. There is thus need for the Bible and people to teach, read and understand the Bible because adults who cannot read the Bible, are prevented from attaining their God-given goal.<sup>159</sup> Gender Presence is one other issue that needs Ironing out. Ruether is right in her observation of "Christianity having male dominant patterns originating from a time when church and patriarchal society were integrally related. The Church then borrowed patterns of organization from this patriarchal society and harnessed them with theological symbolism and argumentation."<sup>160</sup> Gender presence eventually got entrenched in the Church. It is necessary to note that the Triune God of the Christian Church is gender Neutral, confirming the fact that anything allowing gender presence in the Christian faith is unscriptural and does not come from God. Such will eventually be uprooted no matter how deep and long the roots or period. The scrutiny of The Role of a Woman Leader in the Contemporary Church will come in, thereafter, rallying behind one another as Feminists in the Body of Christ and The Challenges of Feminism in Senior Leadership in Today's Christian Church. If there will be change in the manner feminists tackle the issue of Feminism and

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<sup>159</sup> Judy Mbugua, ed., Our Time Has Come: African Christian Women Address the Issues of Today (Grand Rapids/ Carlisle: Baker Book House/The Paternoster Press, 1994), p.133-134.

<sup>160</sup> Anne Carr and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, The Special Nature of Women? (London: SCM Press/ Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991/6), p.12.



the Christian Church, a leaf should be gotten through Grenz and Kjesbo when they state that “Jesus’ dealings with women ran contrary to the cultural norms of His day; He viewed all people, whether male or female, as persons.”<sup>161</sup> This should be the direction the contemporary Christian Church should take on Feminism.

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<sup>161</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), p.73.

### 6.1.0 The Need of Secular and Spiritual Education

The mind of a minister needs enhancing in wisdom to expose patriarchy and move onto new grounds.

### 6.1.1 Exposing Patriarchy

Masenya encourages educators to expose patriarchy<sup>162</sup> both in the African culture and the Christian Church for being an evil system used and continues to be used by the church, to perpetuate inequalities between people who have been created in the image of God.<sup>163</sup> Ministry of both men and women in the desire to achieving partnership between them can only succeed by walking side by side with education of every kind concerning especially those that have feminists at heart and in ministry. Patriarchal leadership and attitudes be brought down right from the times of teaching and learning, helping the learner to have a correct mind about which God's creation is. Richard Rohr exposes the evils of patriarchal ethics as "dehumanizing and therefore de-spiritualizing generations of races, nations, professions, women, sexual minorities, handicapped people, the weak and the elderly whom the powerful are able to culturally disparage and dismiss as 'of no account.'"<sup>164</sup> These evils, the Researcher declares, must completely be uprooted from the learners' mind, helping them to understand that feminists are not a mistake in ministry, but have been ordained as equals to men by God Himself in His creation and plan.

### 6.1.2 Being Vessels Ready of Use

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<sup>162</sup> [http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/38/38-3/38-3-pp321-336\\_JETS.pdf](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/38/38-3/38-3-pp321-336_JETS.pdf). Uploaded 071113, 1854hrs.

<sup>163</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, Beverley Haddad, Madipoane Masenya (ngwana' Mhahlele), eds., African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), p.125.

<sup>164</sup> <http://blueeyedennis-siempre.blogspot.com/2012/01/patriarchy.html>. Uploaded 071113, 1708hrs.

All that feminists need to do is to hold their part by preparing their lives to be properly used of God. The human preparation, besides education, can be attitudinal in understanding that they may be as the sent of God to the kind of people they will work with and among. The preacher must have a ready mind to learn the people's culture, language, norms and approach to situations so that the preacher is able to fit in their boots. As Moreau puts it, "Relational values and skills are culturally learned, and the wise cross-cultural worker will invest significant time in that culture so that he or she can disciple well."<sup>165</sup> Only then will there be acceptance by the people of this kind of worker. The difficulties will of course be there but they will be normal as the preparation would have removed the avoidable. The preacher will then enhance self confidence in themselves and their work to handle all issues without fear.

### **6.1.3 When the Holy Spirit is the Teacher**

Grenz and Kjesbo present groups that welcome women believing in the Holy Spirit endowing spiritual gifts on God's children, irrespective their gender. In this respect women and men could serve as leaders, administrators and preachers. The sectarian movements reason that if God so gifts men and women, who are mere mortals to stand in the way of the Spirit's work?<sup>166</sup> For as long as feminists equip themselves with secular and spiritual education, the Holy Spirit will do the rest. No one will stop them from doing God's work for any reason for they serve God who knows no gender. He has instilled power in certain people to trust women are equally called.

### **6.1.4 The School of Wisdom as the way Forward**

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<sup>165</sup> A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin and Gary B. McGee, Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), p.243.

<sup>166</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), p.53.

Agreeing with Willhauck and Thorpe, the leadership of women in the church has come to a turning point as indicated in the old saying in feminist circles: “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” More and more women found that “the master’s tools” were ineffective for them. The master’s house (the male – dominated church) needed to be torn down. If the Body of the Lord will truly remain Christ’s Body, the plan of God (both male and female) must be realized. This can only work by the tearing down through spiritual sensitizations, teachings on Godly-love and that God has no bias towards any of the sexes. The two are one in partnership in God’s work. Many women tried and failed to get ahead using “the master’s tools.” They discovered a way of leadership that is right. In the wisdom of God, women have discovered a better tool that can be used to bring down the master’s house; the caring connectional weblike leadership, allowing them to slowly but surely dismantle the house, one brick at a time. Being in a hurry to let the house tumble could also make the feminists plan fail. The decision to stand and walk in the time of God must be understood, appreciated and made use of. With all praise to God who through feminists and many more that are used of God through the Holy Spirit, ‘the time is ripe and the ground is fertile to work the input of women into the soil and to see the fruits of their labour.’<sup>167</sup> In the presence of so much sin, evil, dispute, disbelief, dislike, murder, different kinds of immorality and the list is long. The heart of man searches for God in this kind of situation much more than ever before, in that the need of feminists arising to cabling down the unworthiness mentioned above is now. The salvation of God must be received by the people in the plan of God. He will use anybody that He has chosen, ready to be filled by the power of the Holy Spirit, to minister the word of God. The perishing will be awakened due to the insurmountable sin they may be in. Christ came for such that captivity may be laid captive (Is. 61:1). For these plans to work and work perfectly, one needs a mind that is literate, secularly and scripturally. For anybody that has the desire to be used of the Lord, male or female, must prepare to put such literacy in place

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<sup>167</sup> Susan Willhauck & Jacquelyn Thorpe, The Web of Women’s Leadership: Recasting Congregational Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), p.48.

then the tool of 'caring' will work. Talking of connectional weblike leadership is a very big idea that can only take place through the discussed education and networking kind of leadership. The Researcher has observed that through networking, a lot of cultures, traditions, beliefs and even myths can be changed. It is a good indicator that the 'master's house' can also be brought down through people that have a heart for the global rising of women.

### **6.1.5 The Root to New Avenues**

A very good example on the continent of Africa is AB Xuma whom Charlotte Maxeke considers as 'Mother of African Freedom in South Africa,' and Govinden confirms her being the first woman graduate in South Africa in B.Sc. in 1905. She was also the founder and first president of the Bantu Women's League in 1918. Xuma pioneered the formation of the African Episcopal Church in South Africa. As the first African woman social worker (Walker 1982/1991:38) she contributed politically, educationally and ecclesiastically in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>168</sup> In all honesty, Xuma had it big for herself. One talks of great exposure to so much knowledge that no one would stand against her even if they did not like her. Xuma's education would always pave the way for doing her heart's desire everywhere and at anytime. Whatever the case, an educated and learned person does not have gender or race mattering much. School rules out a lot of hindrances the whole reason why feminists that are serious should go to school and negligence of feminists will be gotten rid of without question.

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<sup>168</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, Devarakshanam Betty Govinden and Sarojini Nadar, eds., Her Stories: Hidden Stories of Women of Faith in Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p.304.

## 6.2.0 The Ironing out of Gender Presence in the Church

Leslie and Chad Neal Segraves teach about “the power of unity and reconciliation, using a filthy net to powerfully symbolize how God desires men, women, the young, the old, the urban, and the rural to work together, each holding their part of the net to bring in God’s harvest. Despite the urgent need for the Church to equip, empower, and release more laborers for the countless millions in need of a Savior, many questions and barriers remain regarding the partnership of men and women. These barriers require the Church’s attention and biblical reflection: Does God distribute spiritual gifts based on one’s gender? Does God give leadership gifts to females or only to men? Can a woman only lead children and other women? How does Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection heal and redeem God’s ideal purposes for males and females? Does restricting or releasing women into spiritual leadership impact the Great Commission?

The Lausanne movement, begun by Billy Graham, has affirmed that men and women are gifted by God and that their partnership is needed for world evangelization.”<sup>169</sup> The Researcher agrees with the team in that men alone cannot hold the world in their single hand as they are not the sole purpose of God to do so.

### 6.2.1 Taking the Lead

Gender Presence in the Church today needs ironing out at all costs. This will take the feminists themselves taking the lead. The starting point should be through Witherington’s eye who notes that “Roles and functions should be determined by what God has gifted and called people to do and not by race, gender, or ethnic extraction.”<sup>170</sup> Overlooking the above listed items is denying the

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<sup>169</sup> <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/10557#.Un6xiWXJb4c>. Uploaded 091113, 1000hrs.

<sup>170</sup> Ben Witherington III, Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company/ Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1995), p.149.

many parts of the body having different roles and functions (1 Cor. 12:12) which is an impediment to God's work.

### **6.2.2 Arising to Partnership**

The Christian feminists, with their eyes opened are calling for the unmasking of the Church by opening up its structures to the thinking that sets up patriarchal hierarchies enabling the divine plan of developing the full human relationships between female and male streams. This non-participatory way of looking at the human community of such hierarchies conceals with a tragic negative mask the beauty and connectedness divinely given by Jesus in the naming of God as Father. It should be remembered by Christian feminists that our Christian Church grew from a religion that survived because its earliest adherents were willing to die in obedience to their God rather than to fellow human beings.<sup>171</sup> It is such a sacrifice that will help in the Ironing out of Gender Presence in the Church, for a better continuity of ministry that is inclusive. There are so many ways in which God does not present the need of Gender Presence in the Church. One other is baptism: a good point of looking at God's neutrality. Spirituality quashes away the difference between people, for by faith all are equally entitled to being sons and daughters of God. One baptized in Christ, clothed with Christ, becomes one family, even one body. Every one Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female become one in Christ (Gal. 4:28).<sup>172</sup> God Himself gives a glimpse on how Gender Presence can be ironed out. In other words, the Researcher says, 'Christ's Presence in a Person is Gender Absence.' Secularly, it is true to generally say, women in African societies are relegated to a rather subordinate position. However there are categories of women who command respect in their societies. These are women who wield a certain amount of power, usually in the political and religious fields; professional women who, by virtue of their education and

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<sup>171</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), p.184.

<sup>172</sup> Thomas Hale & Stephen Thorson, The Applied New Testament Commentary (Colorado Springs/Ontario/East Sussex: David C. Cook, 1996), p.710.

training, as well as wealthy women hold responsible positions in the society.<sup>173</sup>  
This will take believing in self, trustworthiness, bravery and a lot of boldness, never allowing oneself to easily be shaken because they know and understand what they are doing. The defeat of Gender Presence!

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<sup>173</sup> Florence Abena Dolphyne, The Emancipation of Women: An African Perspective (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1991), p.41.



### 6.3.0 Woman Leader in the Contemporary Church

This must be time for women leaders to realize they are a leader like any man is. “Women can draw on their own pilgrimage as a resource as they invite and enable others to affirm and value their own uniqueness, gifts and resources.”<sup>174</sup>

#### 6.3.1 Woman Leadership no Different from that of Man

Many believe that there are no Biblical reasons (or any other reasons) why a woman should not, if she has the necessary gifts and calling, exercise the same kinds of ministry in the church as does a man. Those who hold this view are in favour of women taking part in the local church and in the denominational structures in all respects as men do, including being ordained and having the charge of churches and parishes.<sup>175</sup> If all men and certain women were like Powers to understand and appreciate the voice of God about men and women being equal and the same in His sight, there would be no need of talking about the role of a woman leader. The world was going to discuss instead, ‘Leaders in the Church Today.’ But for as long as persons continue to pretend about not having the knowledge of truth over men and women being the same and equal before God, time will continue to be wasted in these unnecessary issues concerning Women’s Leadership for the power-greed of man. The researcher in agreement with Kapuma confirms man’s greed when she sees women being encouraged to take up minor positions that reflect their traditional roles, like teaching Sunday School, Visiting the sick and the bereaved, Fund-raising, Cleaning the church, Cooking and serving food when a minister visits a family.<sup>176</sup> May the Lord God intervene in His mercies!

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<sup>174</sup> Beverly J. Anderson, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1207>. Uploaded 110913, 1646hrs).

<sup>175</sup> Ward Powers, The Ministry of Women in the Church: Which Way Forward? (Adelaide: SPCK, 1996), p.15.

<sup>176</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, Devarakshanam Betty Govinden and Sarojini Nadar, eds., Her Stories: Hidden Stories of Women of Faith in Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p.351.

### 6.3.2 Anti-feminists' Desire to Lead

Rees states that “Nothing but jealousy, prejudice, bigotry and a stingy love of bossing in men has prevented woman’s public recognition by the church. No church acquainted with the Holy Ghost will object to the public ministry of women. It is known that scores of women can preach the Gospel with clearness, a power, and an efficacy seldom equaled by men. Sister, let the Holy Ghost call, fill, anoint and preach the glorious Gospel of the Lord in you.”<sup>177</sup> One other reason Rees brings out is the lack of the Holy Spirit acquaintance which has brought about the objection of women in ministry. The reason being, those that object the ministry of women as servants of God have first of all rejected the Holy Spirit as being an equal to God the Father and the Son, indicating purely that such are perpetuating heresy, as God the Father and the Son alone is not the Christian God but God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Truth being what it is confirms that anyone objecting feminine leadership objects to God who has given servanthood to all He has called and such is not a true disciple. One prays that men may see the danger involved in the practice of objecting to authentic women leadership.

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<sup>177</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), p.54.

#### **6.4.0 Rallying behind one another in the Body of Christ**

The need for women to support one another in integrity and duty is a must as the Holy Spirit remains their influence.

#### **6.4.1 Equal Worthiness and Responsibility of Men and Women**

Equal worth and joint responsibility are presented by women as deriving from God who makes us all human. This can be made operative by women theologians awakening the determination to cooperate in obedience to God rather than men's as expected by God of all humans.<sup>178</sup> Oduyoye and the Researcher believe in the correctness of God who made men and women both human. From this point, they are not different. The responsibility of woman is equal to that of man. Time is now when women and men must consider the partnership that is God-given between them. They should not allow any flow that would create the discrepancy that has existed, helping them fail to rally behind one another in the promotion of God's ministry. It is inevitable that women and men must now decide to awaken from their slumber in the question of 'Who is above Who in this Service of God?' For God has from the beginning provided the answer, 'My servants both male and female' (Joel 2:29) a clear show that none is above or below the other. It is vital that men and women come up with a sincere program to make Christ shine. Let feminists stand together: 'They can do it!'

#### **6.4.2 Women are not Devoid of the Holy Spirit**

The contemporary Christians would not be the first ones to rally behind one another as women and men. Grenz and Kjesbo talk of "The endowment of women for ministry finding confirmation in Luke's narrative of the activities and experiences of the community. All disciples – men and women – shared together

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<sup>178</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Introducing African Women's Theology: Introductions in Feminist Theology (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press 200), p.45.

in prayer, were filled with the Spirit and proclaimed the gospel message on Pentecost. In the same way, both men and women participated in subsequent prayer gatherings, experienced the fullness of the Spirit and preached the Word of God with boldness (e.g., Acts 4:23-31).<sup>179</sup> The Holy Spirit did not exclude the women from being filled. There was no segregation. God attended to both men and women, women were no exemption from prayer and the preaching of the word of God. They were joyous together and under the power of God they celebrated Christ successfully. Why not now? After all, Grenz and Kjesbo acknowledge women having often displayed a more profound perspective understanding of the significance of servant leadership than men have. This brings about the need of men and women to work together in the service of God.

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<sup>179</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Denise Muir Kjesbo, Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), p.79, p.218.

## 6.5.0 The Challenges of Feminism to Pastoral Leadership

Feminist pastoral leadership has lacked God-tailored dogma, partnership, patriotism, marriage and child bearing and violation of women's security. Brooke comes in as one that has faced challenges in becoming a pastoral leader and has this question to be answered: "Is there a way that you know of to reach these conservative, religious patriarchs, or should I just give up on altering their beliefs entirely? I should also inform you I want to be a pastor and was rejected on the basis of my sex. Do I need to 'fight the power' so to speak or cave and attend another church in order to fulfill my dream?"<sup>180</sup>

### 6.5.1 The Man-tailored Dogma

Thomas Aquinas dogmatically asserted that 'The power of rational discernment is by nature stronger in man (than woman)'; 'the male is more perfect in reason and stronger in virtue'; 'man is by nature superior to woman'; and 'woman is subject to man because of her weakness of nature, both in spiritual vigour and in bodily strength.'<sup>181</sup> Aquinas does not seem to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit as God for failing to know that the power of rational discernment was by nature the same: "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people," Joel 2:28a). The unfortunate thing is that he has several seemingly powerful theological men who flow in ignorance, with his disciples thinking woman was weaker in a lot of ways. Aquinas' disciples and those that discipled Aquinas have been running with this idea in their oppression of woman, making many more believe that the idea is true. This is a serious but empty challenge to women today. The women and those that rally behind them have seen the void and they are coming out of it in the robbing of Aquinas' disciples.

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<sup>180</sup> [http://www.feminist.com/ourinnerlives/ask\\_our\\_team2.html](http://www.feminist.com/ourinnerlives/ask_our_team2.html). Uploaded 110913, 1640hrs.

<sup>181</sup> Ruth B. Edwards, *Biblical Foundations in Theology: The Case for Women's Ministry* (Cambridge: SPCK/ University Press, 1989), p.107.

### **6.5.2 The Lack of Partnership for the Participation of both Male and Female**

The other challenge of feminists in senior leadership is the lack of Partnership in ministry between men and women as Njoroge quotes: “A call for partnership is a call for participation and community building where mutual love, justice and respect for all life are the building blocks.”<sup>182</sup> Without partnership there is no participation, development, reality, truth and appreciation for one another. The kind of partnership in discussion is about men and women and not men among themselves and vice-versa. This is helpful because naturally, all issues concerning both sexes will aptly be attended to. The society will have healthy attitudes towards various developmental calls, as one can never be one with the other unless they become participants in the events that are happening. Ogebe analyses all congregations as consisting of more women than men yet they are silenced.<sup>183</sup> The issue of silencing women when the biggest percentage globally is that of women does not make sense at all. It only proves the magnitude of the challenges the senior feminist leaders are facing. Let everyone consider two football teams which have had nine of their players receiving red cards and the second has only one given a red card. The game is played to its full time and the winner is declared to be the team with only two players. This is the kind of game that has continued to be played between men and women, without any shame. Let such people return to God through the Bible, which is the manual and guide for the correct manner of doing things.

### **6.5.3 The Patriotism of Reformers in Feminists’ Discrimination**

Most Reformers are actually in the forefront in the discrimination against female core-leadership. Their stance is a big challenge to Feminists in Senior Leadership in Today’s Christian Church because they “assume that ordination

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<sup>182</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, Devarakshanam Betty Govinden and Sarojini Nadar, eds., Her Stories: Hidden Stories of Women of Faith in Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p.353.

<sup>183</sup> Judy Mbugua, ed., Our Time Has Come: African Christian Women Address the Issues of Today (Grand Rapids/ Carlisle: Baker Book House/The Paternoster Press, 1994), p.63.

and church government are a male prerogative. It achieves less than expected towards the liberation of women, cherishing the ideal of motherhood in preference to virginity, simultaneously reinforcing the view of women being created for domestic roles. It supports the education of girls affirming the right of all Christians to study the Bible, approaching God directly in prayer, but discriminating against women in public worship perpetuating the idea that ordination and church government is for men.”<sup>184</sup> The challenge is threefold: the lack of women ordination, women church governance and women in public worship. For Reformers, it is well for them to discriminate against women being part of the mentioned three items. Time has now come and no one will twist God’s hand over women’s service. Let God be true and man a liar (Rom. 3:4).

#### **6.5.4 Marriage and Child Bearing**

“Traditionally in Zambia being married and with children makes one stand in society.”<sup>185</sup> Kuzipa Nalwamba points out a very terrible challenge in the Zambian upbringing and society, where being a woman is determined through marriage and child-bearing. This kind of understanding of a woman is painful and makes a woman appear as though God has given her nothing else. A lot more women have ended up believing such a situation as concrete. Let women be reminded that marriage and child-bearing are simply part of the gifts that God has given them and not the goal of womanhood. Women should stand up and stream to the cliff of God’s wisdom and in His power and authority be counted.

#### **6.5.5 The Violation of Women’s Security**

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<sup>184</sup> Ruth B. Edwards, Biblical Foundations in Theology: The Case for Women’s Ministry (Cambridge: SPCK/ University Press, 1989), p.114.

<sup>185</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, Devarakshanam Betty Govinden and Sarojini Nadar, eds., Her Stories: Hidden Stories of Women of Faith in Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p.384.

As though the said is not enough challenge, Kapuma talks of the insecurity in women even when as theologians whose qualifications are not different from that of a male theologian, the female theologian is expected to bow before the male. This is so because the women's humanity, personality and dignity have been violated.<sup>186</sup> When the female theologian's confidence is lost, the papers they may have in form of qualification may not make sense at all because they fail to relate themselves to their own qualifications which is a sad development. Sometimes this tradition supports men into leadership for their being men. Raymond C Ortlund, Jr. wants people to understand the distinction between male headship and male domination to bring about correct meaning of Genesis 1-3.<sup>187</sup> Women alone must choose to come out of this inferiority complex. May the Lord hear their cry and help them come out of this cocoon of oppression allowing them to run towards fulfilling God's plan and not that of man and his tradition.

## 6.6 Conclusion

In tackling 'Feminism and the Christian Church,' the Researcher firstly looked at The Need of both Secular and Spiritual Education for in the lack of it the evils of male chauvinism are greatly exposed. Lack of secular education is yet one of the great challenges even in the presence of a high anointing and heresy is likely to set in. Next considered was 'The Ironing out of Gender Presence in the Church' for the simple reason of doing away with 'Male Dominance' as it does not come from the word of God. With such a background, 'The Role of a Woman Leader in the Contemporary Church' was established through echoing Rees words. Shown also is the necessity of 'Rallying behind one another as Feminists in the Body of Christ.' The Researcher finally delved into the Challenges of Feminism in Senior

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<sup>186</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, Devarakshanam Betty Govinden and Sarojini Nadar, eds., Her Stories: Hidden Stories of Women of Faith in Africa (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p.350, p.352.

<sup>187</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/male-female-equality-and-male-headship-genesis-1-3>. Uploaded

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Leadership in Today's Christian Church through the writings of Thomas Aquinas, in his considering a woman as subject to man. The lack of partnership in ministry between men and women was discussed. It was also observed most Reformers do not accept women's leadership in the Church. The other challenge was the traditional Zambian set-up, where a woman's highest point is deemed to be marriage and having children. Finally, the bowing of female to male theologians with equal qualifications due to the violation of humanity was one terrible point observed which should not be condoned at all.

## Chapter Seven: General Conclusion

In this Thesis, the Researcher has put down arguments on “A Critical Analysis of Feminism from the Context of Joel 2:28-29” showing how God has granted chance to women to serve Him, with the Holy Spirit being the medium, guided by the following questions: “Will there ever be a time when females will serve their God freely without interference from the non-believers of feminism” and “Will women ever be recognized as substantive in their callings to the Ministry of Christ as God has called them?” The Holy Spirit and Servanthood in Feminism centred the discussion with the Holy Spirit being established as the source and pillar from Livingstone’s understanding. Complementarianism, Feminism, the Holy Spirit, Servanthood, Feminism and its Challenges were discussed, translating to Ministry in the Church as per Osmundo Ponce’s view. The Chapter ended with models of “Benefits of Successful Feminists.” A review of the OT was made to discover whether women in there were operational. Examples given were of Sarah, Zelophehad’s daughters, Zipporah, Deborah, Rahab, the Shunammite woman and Mirriam as successful heroines. In the NT, Feminism and the Contemporary World have Anna as an example of few feminists who Crossed Over the Intertestamental Period. Feminists called of God were opposed but they remained in the great Company of the Holy Spirit. Yet in this battle, Paul through his letters received a greater portion of accusation in the marginalizing of Women’s Ministry. The truth remains that the Pauline Writings have made a huge difference to Feminism, leaving feminists on grounds unshakable. Kathryn Kuhlman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Joyce Meyer and the Researcher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have given a comprehension of feminism and how it has fared in the contemporary world. African Culture and Feminism in the eyes of many through Oduyoye exposed the meaning of being a woman. Her Voice keeps African culture ‘alive and going’ through her being at the centre of handing it down through ‘Folk-Talk’ from generation to generation. She faced challenges by being disregarded, disrespected and dishonoured. The Need for both Secular and Spiritual Education was put into place in considering feminism in the

Christian Church which is yet one of the great challenges even in the presence of a high anointing. 'Who is male and female?' was explained out to do away with male chauvinism and dominance establishing 'The Role of a Woman Leader in the Contemporary Church' echoing Ree's word. The need of feminists supporting one another in the Body of Christ was emphasized. The Challenges of Feminists in Senior Leadership via Thomas Aquinas were not left out. The lack of partnership in ministry between men and women was brought in, exposing most Reformers and Zambian tradition.

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