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**A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE
IMPACT OF THEOLOGICALLY TRAINED
WOMEN IN THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST
CONVENTION**

NBTS
m 512

A Thesis Presented

**TO THE FACULTY OF THE
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA.**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY IN
THEOLOGY**

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JUNE, 2002

03-315

ABSTRACT

The issue of leadership roles which women Pastors can play in the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches have not been given proper attention. Some female Pastors have graduated from the seminary and their impacts are yet to be felt in NBC. Many of those who have the call of God into the ministry are not recognized and are jobless. Therefore they often return to take up secular jobs. Yet within the NBC one is aware of women's increasing faithful dedication and dynamic involvement in the cause of missions, stewardship and other aspects of the total life of the church.

The essence of this thesis is to examine the contributions of theologically trained women in NBC and critically evaluate them in the light of Jesus Christ's expectations concerning women.

The study therefore analyzed the Old and New Testament's basis for women participation in ministry and discovered that the Bible sanctions women's participation in ministry. The study also discovered that while many theologically trained NBC female pastors are not called as waged pastors and are not recognized, some are highly recognized but serve in subordinate positions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this essay, the writer has clearly set out scriptural bases for women participation in ministry. This has been stated for both the Old and New Testaments. The way God used women in the early Church period has also been outlined. One therefore wonders why the debate of whether women should participate in ministry leadership or not is so much serious.

“Though most of leadership in the Bible was masculine (men) there were so many examples of anointed, consecrated, chosen women of God in both the Old and New Testament”¹

Church historian like Eisebius also confirms the call and use of women during the early church period. The church therefore has no option but to allow God to use women He has called and to whom He has given ministerial offices to perform their duties.

“In the Church, spiritual gifts of women and men are to be recognized, developed and used in serving and teaching ministries at all levels of involvement: as small group leaders, counselors, facilitators, and members ministers, ushers, communion servers and board members and pastoral care, teaching, preaching and worship”²

This writer knows that many writers have previously written against the participation of women in ministry, especially the issue of ordination of women. “----- Such writers have now realized that the scriptures are not as male oriented as they once thought”³

¹ ACT Magazine p 11

² Shepherding the flock, p 44

³ Shepherding the flock, ... P. 3

As Christians we are obliged to obey our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We should interpret the Old Testament teaching in line with the teachings and life of Jesus Christ. One question asked on this matter is “Do we arrogate our church traditions against this mountain of biblical evidences and deny women their rights, biblical expressions and liberty?”⁴

There is no doubt; the women of today have a major role to play in the church as some churches have started to give them chance to exercise their talents and leadership skills. The church today should treat women as individual person as Phoebe in Rom. 16:1-2. It is then that the church will be in a position to understand and recognize the talents in individual women and to get them fully involved in the church’s mission thereby encouraging them in the Church’s mission, and thereby encouraging them in the Lord’s work Jesus Christ did.

It is not enough for women to serve the table as deaconess or to teach in the Sunday school but should be allowed to be seen on full participation in: Liturgy administering the sacraments (Lord Supper), preaching and teaching in the church?⁵ Women should be seen not only among the women and children but also among men in mixed groups.

Despite, cultural limitations against women, there are many talented, determined and dedicated woman who could even do better than men and make valuable contribution to the social, moral and spiritual growth of the church, but they are denied this privilege to serve because they are women.

⁴ Shepherd staff, p.80 of section 9

⁵ Meceroy Oduyoye & Musimbi Kanyoro, Tahitha, qumi! (Ibadan, Dayster press, 1990) p. 178

“Let the church give women a chance and witness spiritual growth in the churches.”⁶

On the part of the women, they need to develop a better image of themselves and one another. It has been discovered that women face problem of acceptance from their fellow women in the church and society because of the indoctrination they have received from the beginning. They need to recognize that it is no honor to God to deny or play down their own God given dignity and place in society.

Concrete efforts should be made to educate both men and women, through Bible study groups in a proper understanding of the Bible. This will awaken and free people from centuries of socio-cultural and theological conditions based on a false understanding of the bible teaching concerning women. Through this, humanity will come to know that truth in Christ set us free (cf. Jn 8:31-36)

Since Jesus’ ministry transcends local culture and religion, bring renewal in women, male pastors need to be actively involved in educating their congregation on women issues. Also women issue should be introduced in the curriculum of the theological institution and the grassroots through informal education. The children are not left out, for charity begin at home. They need to be properly informed that a woman is a person. Men need not to rule out the validity of women’s call to minister the word of God.

Kenner said,

“When men claim that God has called them we do not question their call if their lives and ministry bear witness to that claim, when women claim that God has called them, we ought to evaluate their call on the same terms. If we judge other people’s

⁶ Mercy Oduyoye &co, p 179

