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WOMEN'S ORDINATION:
ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE BAPTIST CHURCH
IN NIGERIA

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

The plain truth about ordination or of the laying on of hands is unclear in the New Testament. The Church should be true to herself. To accept that the whole question of ordination is unclear in the New Testament. There is no one Greek word in the New Testament which dominates as the word for ordination. There is not one uniform intention in the many appearances of the English word 'ordain' in the New Testament.¹

In the same vein, imposition of hands is a familiar practice in the New Testament, but its origin and purpose are also unclear. Where did it begin, we may ask ourselves and where does it properly end. Also by what authority do we find our direction in this matter? Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ appointed the twelve disciples later called apostles, and we did not see any of these practice with them. Thus, the bitter truth is that the whole matter of laying on of hands and ordination is unclear in the New Testament. Not looking at it from the women's angle alone, but from the general

¹Evelyn and Frank Stagg, Women in the World of Jesus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), p. 183.

perspective of what the Bible says about the whole issue of ordination.

Thus, we must bear it in mind that the authority of the Scripture should be far and above any race, tribe, culture or practice. The aim and objective of the gospel is to bring men and women into the Kingdom of God. Each of us, irrespective of gender must play a part. Issues that are not too clear to the Church should not therefore divide us. Issues that are not necessarily fundamental to the faith, doctrinal issues should not be the subject where we continue to expend a lot of our energy at the expense of Christian witness.

In the light of the above truth about ordination, our theology about it may mean hard work and reciprocal understanding for underneath the scriptural data we often deal with the issue on prejudice and self-interest from all sides as well as established patterns and deep-rooted habits.

Looking at it from another angle, the whole process about ordination might have taken its root from human ego. Does a pastor when addressed, not feel inferior to a reverend? Thus the practice of ordination might have also stemmed from the feeling of inferiority complex. Thus ordination as being practised now is not having biblical injunction, but the local church has taken it upon herself to ordain. Still the theology of ordination and its

implications briefly stated in this essay, is without doubt that our churches must address themselves to sooner or later. The task is enormous. It is indispensable. We cannot afford to shy away from it at all. As members of the body of Christ, it is this writer's sincere hope that this essay will ignite a fire in us, that a great many will later than sooner participate in this kind of study, making their individual contributions in order that God's people and His Church as a whole will find a sound solution to some of those pressing problems of our time confronting the Church, especially Baptist Churches.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer wants to recommend that Baptist Churches in Nigeria, through their ministers, should embark on radical teaching as a matter of urgency on the issue of the role of women in ministry in a general context. They should highlight notable roles that women have been playing since the life of the Church, and also on a global level. A lot of our church members are still holding on to cultural bias against women. They see it as a taboo for a woman to be trained as a pastor. A lot of our people are still in dark about the issue of women in ministry, not even to mention about women ordination. Majority of our rural people even look at it as an abomination. And since about 65 percent of our church population stay in the rural areas, there is the need for a radical teaching along this line.

Majority of our church members are still in the dark about the rationale behind a woman undergoing a theological training, even among the female population. The W.M.U. should try to organise seminars and workshops that can shed light on the issue. Our women should be enlightened about the various opportunities that they can afford themselves of in order to minister more effectively.

There should be sound biblical teaching about womanhood, and the role assigned to them in the Scriptures, examples of notable women in the Bible who played active role should be examined. In fact, series of Bible study could be conducted and tailored toward this women used of God. It must be stated neatly and clearly that the issue about women ordination can be viewed from the situational angle, not necessarily from a doctrinal point of view.

The researcher also wants to suggest to the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches that women could be appointed to serve as associates in the pastoral ministry, but not a full pastoral ministry in a local church, because of the implications earlier stated.

They should be encouraged to invest their gifts more in the area of children evangelism in the church. Thus they would be able to compliment their gifts with the natural role God has given them in the family set up. They can also be involved in other aspects of the ministry, like the educational aspect. This will give equal

opportunity to both male and female to spread the Gospel,
which is the heartbeat of God, without the issue of even
ordination.