

**AN APPRAISAL OF THE MOTIF BEHIND THE INFLUX OF WOMEN INTO  
PASTORAL MINISTRY**

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## ABSTRACT

The study attempt to appraise the motif behind the influx of women into pastoral ministry. There is evidence to show that increasingly more women are ministering as pastors in the churches today but the reasons for this changing situation globally and especially in Nigeria appear obscure.

The descriptive survey method was used. The instrument used for the study was questionnaire. The researcher conducted the research from men and women from different denominations in selective churches within Oyo State, Nigeria. Women already in ministry were interviewed to obtain their own views concerning ministry, also the late former General Secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Fadeji S. O. in whose tenure, the ordination of female pastors began, was also interviewed.

Also, records on the enrolment of women into the Bachelor and Master Degree programmes were retrieved from the Nigerian Baptist Seminary, Ogbomosho Registry.

Findings confirm that there is an influx of women in the pastoral ministry globally in Baptist and other denominations. At the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomosho, women were first admitted into the B.Th degree programmes in 1995 and increasingly more women were admitted into the B.Th (regular) undergraduate and the M.Div. (Regular and Sandwich graduate programmes). However, the number of women trained (all degrees from 1995 to 2005 was only 85 as compared to 1,050 men trained in the same period. No distinct pattern was noted in other degree programmes.

Reasons for the influx as perceived by study participants are predicated on the fact that there is a better understanding of the Scriptures; the Holy Spirit is also calling women, and women are better educated now. Women in ministry reported that they are now more willing to tell people that they have a call of God on their lives. In addition they reported that they are already doing the work of ministry.

The higher the number of pastors in the church, the more likely they were less likely to favour women pastors. Of all the denominations studied, the Baptist were the least likely to favour women ministers.

In conclusion, this study supports the fact that more women are found in pastoral ministry in recent times. The study also determined the extent of the influx and identified the motif for the influx seen in recent times. The recommendations are that women should be encouraged to fulfill their divine calling and take their place in positions of leadership in the body of Christ. Barriers to women in ministry should be systematically addressed in the local congregation.

## **Conclusion**

There are more women in Pastoral ministry today than ever before. Reasons for this are predicated on the fact that there is a better understanding of the scriptures and women are better educated and hence able to speak in the company of others. Also women are not as fearful as they were before and more willing to that they are gifted and have the call of God upon their lives. Furthermore, women are better accepted as leaders and encouraged by both men and women now that they were before. Others reasons for this influx may be as a result of the fact that women especially wives of pastors are now encouraged to play their role a Spiritual leader alongside their male counterparts and women have always played important roles in the church hence going into the ministry would complement these roles.

## **Recommendations**

Women in ministry may face extra challenges and barriers such as discrimination from men and layperson as well as from middle aged person (40-49 years). Baptist with its Seminary which admits both men and women should be model in encouraging women

pastors at every level (Convention, Conference Association and Local church). Women pastors must pursue their calling and ignore opposition, build a network of support, form a forum such as Baptist women in Ministry and get on with their work in serving God. Before churches take on women pastors, they should have women come in to preach and teach as this is shown to increase their acceptability in the church. The church is being robbed of women teachers and preachers and barriers to women in ministry must be identified and dealt with systematically at the church level as they arise.