

The Role of Women in the Church of Pentecost: A Case Study of the Kwadaso Area - Kumasi, Ghana.



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ABSTRACT

This article is an investigation of the role of women in the Kwadaso Area, Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of the Church of Pentecost (CoP) in Ghana. It is stimulated by the realisation that while many of the Mainline Churches, as well as the African Independent Churches and Charismatic Churches have created avenues for women to play key roles and ordaining some as ministers at various levels, the CoP does not ordain female ministers. This entrenched position of the CoP has made its leadership (pastoral responsibilities) a male-dominated one in the context of not allowing females to become either District Pastors or Area Heads or to be called into the full-time. This action of the church is similar to the patriarchal structures of the Jewish community. This study used both primary and secondary sources in the collection of data. The data collection consisted of interviews, questionnaires and observations to assess whether the CoP has cultural challenges when it comes to the appointment of women into leadership positions. It was observed that, the highest leadership position a woman would be allowed to occupy in the CoP was a Deaconess. Also, the CoP has not officially opened up to discussions on the need to create gender equality when it comes to the appointment of members into leadership positions. The study recommended that the CoP should open up to discussions on the issue since the status of women. Again, the CoP leadership should re-look its Constitution with regards to enrolling only males into the ordained ministry. This study adds to the existing literature on women's empowerment in the African Church.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years it can be observed that leadership positions in the Church of Pentecost (CoP) have been male-dominated and this could be attributed to the cultural perception concerning women in Ghana.¹ It is assumed that women should not take some leadership positions in Ghana. This cultural understanding has also been imbibed by the CoP and as a result, it has relegated women to the background when it comes to appointments

¹ Samuel Kwasi Frimpong, *Gender Equality in Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana: Assemblies of God and the Church of Pentecost as Case Studies*, (unpublished thesis), (MPhil, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2014), 6.

into the leadership positions apart from the Women's Ministry.² From the Four Gospels, Jesus showed God's delight for women; who had been made in His image to be allowed to play their God-given roles in the church. In an opposing view, Paul instructed women in the churches in Ephesus and Corinth not to teach and exercise authority over men. However, this instruction has been denied by many feminist theologians, such as: Judy L. Brown,³ Grace Sintim Adasi⁴ and Solomon O. Ademiluka.⁵

Different cultures have different perceptions about women and therefore accord them as such.⁶ Apusigah discusses the role of women in religious activities in Ghana. She states that women are relegated to the background in all spheres of life including religious activities. Males have the singular right to perform such religious activities as consultation of oracles, libation pouring, or pacification of the gods. It is only in a few cases that priestesses take charge and that is even rare. For instance, some Frafra households are headed by women, and in times of decision making these women have to rely on male relatives in the extended family to perform leadership roles on their behalf, hence making their male relatives the nominal heads of their households.⁷ From the biblical perspective, the Hebrew law sons the sole right to inherit. In light of this law, the daughters of Zelophehad, having no brothers, came to Moses to ask for their father's possessions (Num. 27:1-7). God told Moses that if a man died without sons, his inheritance would go to his daughters. But the daughters could keep it only if they married within their own tribe, probably so the territorial lines would remain intact (Num. 36:5-12).⁸

The various roles women play in the church cannot be glossed over. Women seem to be underutilized in the church.⁹ This article agrees with the position of Mercy Amba Oduyoye that 'religiously, women are acknowledged as the backbone of the church in terms of numerical strength, finances, upkeep of church activities...yet their representation locally, nationally and internationally is limited.' The women are very much concerned about the church but the church is not so much concerned about equipping them to take up leadership positions. The church and society have not done much to challenge the socio-cultural barriers so as to build a dynamic community of women and men. This stand reflects negatively on the self-image of women.¹⁰ Society should not only embrace what women can offer but also must be prepared to involve them in all spheres of human endeavours.

Many socio-cultural issues affect women in the Ghanaian society. For example, the way Ghanaian culture sees women is portrayed in their languages. Some sayings and proverbs give an idea about the status of women in the society.¹¹ Oduyoye has noted that utterances that do violence to women abound in the idioms of all Ghanaian languages. Such sayings which are meant to subdue or marginalize women constitute verbal violence.¹² For instance, in Akan, an outspoken woman is sarcastically referred to as "Obaa akonini"; literally, means 'a woman cock'. It is the cock that crows early in the morning, hens do not. Boachie argues as cited by Oduyoye that this saying means that the outspoken woman usurps the authority of men; this notion has negatively affected some women so much that they refuse to speak up even when the need arises

² Frimpong, *Gender Equality in Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana*, 6.

³ Judy L. Brown, *Women Ministers According to Scriptures*, (USA:Morris Publication, 1996), 1-3.

⁴ Grace Sintim Adasi, *Gender and Change: Roles and Challenges of Ordaained Women Ministers of the PCG*, (Accra:Gavoss Education PLC Ltd., 2016), 1-8.

⁵ Solomon O. Ademiluka, *1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 in light of women and church leadership in Nigeria*, *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 38(1), 1-8. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v38i1.1672>

⁶ John K. Boachie, *Attitude of Men and Women towards church activities in the AOG churches in the Old Tafo District, Kumasi* (unpublished thesis), (Cape Coast University, November, 2009), 22.

⁷ Atia Apusigah, *Culture and National Institutions in Ghana: Institute for Education Development and Extension*, (Winneba: University of Winneba, 2014), 65.

⁸ *The Life Application Study Bible, New International Version Edition*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1997), 262.

⁹ Boachie, *Attitude of Men and Women towards church activities in the AOG churches in the Old Tafo District, Kumasi*, 46.

¹⁰ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Feminism: A Pre-Condition for Christian Anthropology.* *African Theological Journal* 2(3), (1982):15.

¹¹ John K. Boakye, *An Analysis of the Activities of the Women's Ministry in Assemblies of God, Ghana and its Implications for Church Growth* (unpublished thesis), (Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, Akropong, 2012), 48.

¹² Mercy Oduyoye, *Women in Religion and Culture: Essays in Honour of Constance Buchanan*. (Ibadan: Sefer Books Ltd. 2007), 3.

to avoid being ostracised. Such a notion should be discouraged outright since it kills creativity and keeps women's ideas in the dark. In the light of the above, women should be allowed to express their views both in society and the church respectively.¹³ From Oduyoye and Boachie's perspective, the full potential of women has not been allowed to be expressed due to cultural limitations and this has extended into the Church.

This article aims to assess why the CoP is reluctant to admit women into leadership positions. The study looks at the constitution of the CoP with emphasis on the role of women and what it says about women in leadership. It also highlights the history of women in the CoP and the challenges they face in the quest to take up leadership positions. An investigation of the role of women in the CoP, Kwadaso Area¹⁴, Kumasi, Ghana would serve as the basis for this research.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

The constitution of the CoP states that there shall be a Women's Ministry which shall consist of all the women in the Local Assemblies. "It shall hold meetings at least once a week and has various assigned functions which include praying for church growth, organizing seminars, workshops, lectures and symposia in all aspects of life including:

- Marriage enrichment, wives' responsibilities at home, child welfare, care and education,
- Business management and techniques,
- The teaching of basic principles of law relating to the family e.g. succession, marriage, etc,
- To promote the welfare of widows, orphans the needy,
- To perform such other functions as the General Council or the Executive Council may assign it amongst others."¹⁵

Historical Developments of the Women's Ministry in the CoP

From the inception of the CoP, it was felt that the women in the church should be organized for prayers while assisting their husbands and helping the sisterhood to be useful citizens in both church and public life.¹⁶ This later led to the formation of the Women's Movement in 1945 under the auspices of T. Adam Mckeown-the brother of James Mckeown.¹⁷ The movement absorbed all other women in the church. The women became active in prayers and Bible studies, Evangelistic outreaches. They were also given lessons in various vocations like sewing, cooking and housekeeping.¹⁸ Emmanuel Larbi explains that these activities were initiated by the women themselves.¹⁹ It is not clear how long the training in the vocational training programme was available to the women because it soon gave way to their participation in various spiritual exercises of the church. The women of the Church are therefore currently well known for their organization of prayer meetings, evangelistic campaigns and conventions.

Women's Movement

In 1993, the Women's Movement was created and it was ironically led by a man and his deputies who happened to be women. In that same year, the Women's Directorate was established by the church and it finally had women been appointed as Directors. This change was actualized in 1994 at an extraordinary meeting held at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi between 24th-

¹³ Boakye, *An analysis of the activities of the women's ministry in Assemblies of God, Ghana and its implications for church growth*, 49.

¹⁴ An Area in the CoP is the fourth administrative rung, following the General Council, the Executive Council. It is headed by an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist or a senior pastor. He is assisted by a six-member Executive Committee in the day-to-day running of the Area through the Area Presbytery - <https://thecophq.org/the-area/>

¹⁵ The Church of Pentecost: Articles 21.1 & 21.2 of *COP Constitution*, 83.

¹⁶ Ernestina Enyonam Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, (MPhil, University of Ghana, Legon, 2002), 82.

¹⁷ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 83-85.

¹⁸ Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, (Accra: Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies (SAPC), 2001), 184-185.

¹⁹ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 184-185.

27th March, 1994.²⁰ The Constitution of the CoP, Article 20, sub-section 20:3.1 provides the members of the Women's Movement/Executive committee, with a man as the leader/patron.²¹

The author shares Quist's submission that the patron being male suggests that women were thought of as not having the capacity to make meaningful submissions and decisions.²² This proves the fact the CoP is a patriarchal church in outlook and it is evidenced in the fact that men and women did not even sit together let alone dance together in the past.²³ Wiredu however, states that currently the situation has improved and as a result, men and women can sit together.²⁴ Despite these seeming 'challenges' women still enjoy full participation in the life of the church.²⁵

The Women's Movement is one of the major strengths of the CoP. It has been in existence since the establishment of the Church. Sophia Mckeown led the local women and made provisions for them. Women of repute such as Christiana Obo, Eunice Addison, Esme Siriboe, Perpetual Owusu and Beatrice Evelyn Kwaffo can be mentioned as pioneers of the Women's Movement of the Church.²⁶

On the matter of the operation of spiritual gifts such as healing and miracles, in the church, any group of people can lead and participate. It is noteworthy women have been given the opportunity to exercise their spiritual gifts without any limitation. Maame Dede, a deaconess is an example. She is reported to have been active in the 1960s in the areas of healing, word of knowledge, prophecy and discernment of spirits. Also, Grace Mensah was once the prayer centre leader at Edumfa.²⁷ Women can be found in all sectors of the church and often interpret when preachers are not familiar with the mother tongue of a particular locality. At certain points, they prophesy as well.²⁸

Gender Department of PENTSOS

The Constitution of the Church also established a unit to promote the social mission of the Church, which led to the creation of Pentecost Social Services hereinafter called "PENTSOS".²⁹ The Gender Department was tasked to implement this unit.³⁰ It has since been registered as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with the focus of initiating, promoting, developing and managing social services and projects of the Church.³¹ The department collaborates closely with the Women's Movement to address issues that affect the women and the needy in the church.³²

Widow's Ministry

The Widow's Ministry was initiated by Betty Ayagiba, a widow. Considering the ordeal she had to endure as a widow, she set out to empower widows to enable them to fend for themselves. Membership is also open to the public and by so doing, many widows became members of the COP. They finally became agents of church growth through their testimonies. Later on, the church commenced payment for Ayagiba's services by putting her on the payroll. She then went on to collaborate with the two other women's movements to work effectively. She currently works with 35 widow groups in the northern part of Ghana.³³

²⁰ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 86.

²¹ The Church of Pentecost: *The Constitution Of The CoP*, The General Council of COP, 2016 84.

²² Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 87.

²³ Johnson Kwabena Asamoah- Gyadu, Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience in Africa Today: The Case of Ghana 'Church of Pentecost'. *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* 12 (1, 2), (2002): 86-87.

²⁴ Interview with Rev. Job Wiredu-District Pastor, CoP at KNUST, 2021.

²⁵ Asamoah- Gyadu, *Pentecostalism and the Missiological Significance of Religious Experience*, 51.

²⁶ Oppong Asare-Duah, The gallant soldiers of the church of Pentecost: History of the Fathers of old whose relentless efforts gave birth to the church,. Anniversary Brochure, (n.d.), 154-156.

²⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostalism And The Missiological Significance of Religious Experience*, 51.

²⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostalism And The Missiological Significance of Religious Experience*, 11.

²⁹ Article 31 of *COP Constitution*, 119.

³⁰ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 91.

³¹ Article 31 of *COP Constitution*, 119-120

³² Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 92.

³³ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 92.

Religio-Cultural Challenges of Women in the CoP in Ghana

Wiredu explains that, at the 2021 executive zoom meeting held in May, it was decided that, the women's director and her deputy be co-opted in the International Executive Committee; that is, these two directors automatically become part of the National Executives through to the District Committees of CoP.³⁴ The non-inclusion of women in leadership positions of the Church is based on the four (4) main factors/reasons, namely, biblical, church doctrine/practice, culture and the general nature of women.³⁵ These reasons are explained in the subsequent sections:

Biblical

The CoP believes that the leaders in the Bible (prophets and apostles) were all male. Jesus also worked with the 12 disciples (Matt. 10: 2-4), all being male.³⁶ Paul in Ephesians 5:22-24 also says that the man is the head of the woman.³⁷ African Bible Commentary states that God has made the husband (male) the head of the family, just as Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Eph. 5:23). Both wives and husbands have been assigned roles in the home and in the church.³⁸ The Constitution of CoP³⁹ with specific reference to 1 Corinthians 12: 28 and Ephesians 4: 11-13 indicates that, approved men are called to these offices by Revelation, Prophecy or Recommendation by local Presbytery, Area Presbytery and National Executive Council and ratification by the General Council. The leadership of the CoP seems to interpret this five-fold ministry⁴⁰ as exclusively for men. The requirements for admission into full-time ministry as stated in the CoP's Constitution⁴¹ have as its main text: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-8. Briefly, the CoP looks particularly for 'MEN' to take up the position of a Minister.⁴² Women are to be a helpmeet (helper) to assist in the discharge of their earthly duties. Other duties of women include the welfare of widows, orphans, the needy, evangelism, witnessing, soul-winning and training women to be responsible wives as indicated in the CoP Constitution.⁴³ This entrenched position set up by the leadership of the CoP has made it impossible to admit women into the ordained ministry/pastoral ministry.

Church Doctrine/Policies

The policies/structures of the CoP do not allow women to serve as pastors in the church except as directors in the Women's ministry. A woman can work as an elder in 'extreme' conditions. This situation may happen as a result of the absence of males. The woman who may be appointed to occupy such an office shall be accorded the needed recognition as would have been given to a man. It must be stressed that immediately a male arrives or becomes available, the eldership mantle would be handed over to the man. According to Quist, there however may be several thousands of women available who are capable of being in leadership positions but their gender disqualifies them; thus, when they want to become pastors.⁴⁴ She further mentions that there have been instances where women have held key positions in their assemblies. Christiana Obo⁴⁵ once presided over the Merry Villas Assembly as a "presiding deaconess" in Accra and Georgina Bememba

³⁴ Interview with Rev. Job Wiredu-District Pastor, CoP at KNUST, 2021.

³⁵ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 71-82.

³⁶ Matthew 10: 1-4 (RSV)

³⁷ Ephesians 5:22-24, Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, and Himself is the Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

³⁸ Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*, (China: Word Alive Publishers, 2006), 1462.

³⁹ CoP Constitution, Article 15: Subsections a, b & d, 40.

⁴⁰ And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.... Ephesians 4:11-13.

⁴¹ CoP Constitution, Article 15: b, 41.

⁴² CoP Constitution, Article 15, 71.

⁴³ CoP Constitution, Article 20 : a ff

⁴⁴ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 73.

⁴⁵ Christiana Obo was one of the gallant women of CoP; Asare-Duah, *The Gallant Soldiers of the COP: History of the fathers of old whose relentless efforts gave birth to the Church*, 155.

presided over Buchore Assembly, now under Grubi District in the Kete-Krachi Area in the Oti Region.⁴⁶ Both performed very well in their capacities as leaders.

Culture

Culture and religion are bedfellows, hence the CoP is conscious about Ghanaian culture wherever a branch is planted. Like the spiritual churches, the CoP has adopted the Akan cultural practices which are relevant for the growth of the church.⁴⁷ Most cultural practices/ideas in Ghana, especially, the Akan culture do not allow women to take part in decision-making processes. The Ascension gifts or ministerial gifts have been reserved for men. Again, the position of women in Ghanaian culture is similar to that of the Jews where leadership is concerned.⁴⁸ This, to some extent, may have had some influence on the practice of the church. The relegated position assigned to women (women's status was clearly defined by Jewish law and custom in ancient Israel)⁴⁹ in Ghana might have had great influence in the church of Pentecost in respect to appointments of women to become a pastor. The role of women in the CoP has become stereotyped.⁵⁰

Nature of Women

The responsibilities of women cannot be quantified either in the home or in society (Gen. 2 : 18). Paul and Peter viewed women as the weaker sex both physically and emotionally (Rom. 9:21 & 1Pet. 3:7). This should rather be considered a strength than a weakness. The nature of women makes them more responsive to issues and this can be seen in the ministry of Jesus. By their nature, women are more caring and they respond quickly to issues just like Jesus in His ministry. The emotional nature makes women more caring and responsible to issues of human concern just like Jesus Christ. It would even make them better pastors. Nevertheless, the challenges that a woman goes through during pregnancy and the duties associated with childbirth and upbringing make it very difficult for women to be called into the full-time ministry of the church. Quist further argues that in an era where women play various roles across the economy, equal opportunities are been made available and both sexes are capable of playing their roles effectively. Some male pastors argue that their counterparts in the deprived areas have to travel long distances and they, therefore, claim that women may not be strong and bold enough to go through such hazards. The author agrees with the view of Quist that this opinion is not factual because women in deprived areas have to endure various hardships in their daily chores and are able to perform creditably. The same can be said of women in urban areas.⁵¹

The Position of the CoP Regarding Women Leadership

It has been observed that the CoP's position is in agreement with the Egalitarian and Complementary schools of thought. A section of Egalitarians, see no difference between the sexes and do not agree with the interpretations of scripture given by their counterparts who believe that women and men are different when it comes to church leadership.⁵² A faction that is more liberal posits that the differentiation between the sexes is just an opinion of patriarchy and has no basis in scripture. Most evangelicals on the other hand believe in authority placed in the male gender. They are however of the view that the distinct roles provided by the

⁴⁶ Asare-Duah, *The Gallant Soldiers of the CoP: History of the fathers of old whose relentless efforts gave birth to the Church*, 73.

⁴⁷ Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism : Witchcraft and demonology in Ghana*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Supplement Series 34, (2012): 134.

⁴⁸ William Barclay postulates that no nation ever gave a bigger place to women in the home and in the family things than the Jews did; but officially the position of a woman was very low. Women had no part in the synagogue service; they were shut apart in a section of the synagogue, or in a gallery, where they were not to be seen, Barclay, *The Daily Bible Study: The letters to Timothy, Titus & Philemon*, (India; Theological Publications, 2001), 89.

⁴⁹ Jennifer Wallace, *Free to Serve, God's Liberated Women*, (Qheaton, Illinois: Xulon Press, 2002), 89.

⁵⁰ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 75-76.

⁵¹ Quist, *Roles of the women in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana*, 77.

⁵² Robert L. Saucy and Judith K. Tenelshof, *Women and men in ministry: A complementary Perspective*, (Chicago; Moody Press, 2001), 27.

apostles were to address a particular issue at the time.⁵³

Complementarians on the other hand believe that the roles assigned to both genders by the apostles had a bearing on church leadership.⁵⁴ However, there is a challenge in applying this to the issue of both sexes holding leadership positions in the church. Hence, it is commonly understood that women are prevented from holding the highest office of pastors but are permitted to hold leadership positions in other aspects of the ministry. Another view is that a woman can hold any position so long as a man leads her. Therefore, a woman can be appointed pastor so long as she ministers under the authority of men.⁵⁵ Deducing from the two views as indicated by scholars, egalitarian's position is the reflection of the CoP's leadership structure which is also in line with the complementary as indicated above. The author agrees with Kuwornu Adjaottor's position that the admonition Paul gave in 1 Timothy 3:2a is not about the gender of an individual but whether the person is living beyond reproach and possessing a good reputation.⁵⁶

METHODOLOGY

The study used both primary and secondary sources in the collection of data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The data collection consisted of interviews, questionnaires and observations. Open-ended questions and questionnaires were used in surveying the Kwadaso Area of the CoP which has nineteen (19) Districts and one hundred and fifty-three (153) local assemblies/congregations in Kumasi of the Ashanti Region of Ghana.⁵⁷ The Fifteen interviewees were made up of: the Area Heads,⁵⁸ Pastors, Pastor's spouses, Elders and Women's leaders (Deaconesses) among others. Questionnaires were administered to one hundred and fifty (150) congregants. Out of the one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires distributed, the researcher was able to retrieve one hundred (100) answered questionnaires. The Church's Constitution and other relevant documents concerning the role of women were also used. As part of observations, the researcher participated in Sunday services at the Toase Central of Pentecost on the 8th November 2013 and the Kwadaso Central of Pentecost on the 29th December 2013. The researcher also participated in a monthly District Women's programmes at the Toase Central Assembly on the 14th January, 2014, a Leadership Seminar on the 15th January, 2014 at Abuakwa Central Assembly and another Leadership Seminar which was held at the Atwima Koforidua Assembly on the 5th February, 2014. The survey conducted was to find out from the respondents, their opinion concerning gender equality in one of the Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

From the data collated a majority of the respondents maintained that the CoP should follow the current Pentecostal pattern/tradition and stop promoting the modernization agenda since the Bible expects women to be submissive (Eph. 5:22). Comparatively, according to their estimation, women cannot perform well in some positions in the CoP like men. They were of the view that pastoral work in the CoP should be in the preserve of men. Should there be a woman in any of the councils, for instance, from the Local to the National levels, then, she is there to represent children and women's ministries.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of those talked with affirmed that God works in the culture and the cultural setbacks of Akan do not encourage women to hold leadership positions in the CoP. The church policies/structures do not permit that, and for that reason, women should be content with their current calling as deaconesses. They argued that women cannot be pastors since the highest office for a woman to be called into is a deaconess in the CoP. The selection of these church officers according to the respondents has to do

⁵³ Saucy and. Tenelshof, *Women and men in ministry: A complementary Perspective*, , 27.

⁵⁴ Saucy and. Tenelshof, *Women and men in ministry: A complementary Perspective*, , 27.

⁵⁵ Saucy and Tenelshof, *Women and men in ministry: A complementary Perspective*, 27-28.

⁵⁶ Jonathan E . T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, Interpretation of 1 Timothy 3 : 2A in some Ghanaians Mother-Tongue Translation of the Bible, *Journal of African Bible Studies*, 3,(2011): 43-51.

⁵⁷ An interview with Mr. Samuel Ofori, the Presiding Elder of Atwima Agogo in the Kwadaso Area of the CoP on 22/02/22 @ 10:30 am.

⁵⁸ The Constitution of The CoP, Article 8 sub-section 8.1 stipulates that, "there shall be an Area Presbytery which shall be the co-ordinating and the highest policy-making body in the Area to which the Area Executive Committee shall be responsible. It shall be chaired by the Area Head, 2016, 21. Therefore, he is the head of the Presbytery.

with the Constitutional structures of the church. It was realized that the CoP is concerned about the full-time ministry; which the leadership thinks female pastors may not be able to contain intermittent transfers. In their opinion, the 'higher callings' to the District, Area and the National appointments are preserved for men as indicated by Apostles Ekow Badu-Wood-Kwadaso Area Head (2014) and J. S. Gyimah-Asokwa Area Head/former Ashanti Regional Chairman of CoP (2014).⁵⁹

The respondents further indicated that the responsibilities of the Area/National executives are so demanding and stressful that women cannot bear them. Currently, the National and Area Women leader and assistants are part of the executives. Therefore women should support their husbands (Elders, Pastors and Apostles) to function well. They further mentioned that the administration and decision-making may be difficult for women for such a higher position. From the Biblical perspective, the respondents gave two reasons why women should not be allowed to serve as either an Apostle or a National Chairman: In the early church, there was no woman apostle (Matt. 10:1-4). Males are the head of the family according to the Bible (Eph. 5:24). This argument has been challenged by Evangelical feminists who argue that God created man and woman as equals in a sense that excludes male headship. Male headship/domination (feminism acknowledges no distinction) was imposed on Eve as a penalty for her part in the fall. It follows, in this view that a woman's redemption in Christ releases her from the punishment of male headship.⁶⁰ The respondents answered that the issue is not about gender competition but it should be complementary roles for women's ministry. In the light of the complementary nature of the women's roles; the respondents emphasized that women have their functions as the District Leader, Area Leader and the National Women's Leader/President respectively.

Some respondents also emphasized that the constitution of the church in no way debars women from holding leadership positions because the Women's Ministry once had an Apostle as a Patron.⁶¹ The respondents indicated that women are not given the pastoral function because; "in the typical Ghanaian society, a man is expected to lead in all aspects of life while a woman follows". One of the respondents interpreted Luke 8:1-3 to mean that "Jesus made women servants to the Elders, Pastors and Area Heads among others"

Fifteen respondents were however of the view that the issue of women's inclusion arose after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, (popularly referred to as the Beijing Conference) where a consensus was reached that women like men can equally play roles in every aspect of life. They also argued that the world is now a global village and the churches in Ghana cannot remain in isolation. Currently, many women are knowledgeable and have ideas to make meaningful contributions in the church. These views were however in the minority.

Also, the fifteen maintained that Paul had few arguments he wanted to deal with or resolve. They pointed out that the CoP has never had the challenge that Paul encountered as indicated in the Corinthian church. The CoP leadership is trying to operate in 'Paul's controversy' since Paul's statement about the role of women is not clear. The respondents further indicated that the Greek culture in a way had some sort of negative influence on the role of women in the Corinthian church.

Other varied views were given with respect to why gender equality should become important to other churches; Forty-five percent (45%) held the view that, issues relating to gender are not all that important since the church does not discriminate against women and that Christian leaders should rather be concerned about spiritual things but not issues relating to gender equality. Others argued that Paul entreats women to submit to their husbands and describes men as head of the family. There were other arguments that the socio-economic trend in Ghana calls for gender equality in both society and in the church. Hence, there is the need to embrace both genders in God's ministry based on their ability to perform.

⁵⁹ Frimpong, *Gender Equality in Classical Pentecostal Churches in Ghana*, 110-111, 138.

⁶⁰ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Good News Publishers, 1991), 95.

⁶¹ CoP Constitution, *Art 20.3*.

It is a known fact that women are already holding leadership positions in the Districts⁶², Area and National⁶³ levels, especially in the women's ministry, except pastoral positions. Forty-one (41%) of the respondents agreed that as long as the person is filled with the Holy Spirit, dedicated, hardworking, respectful and has the needed leadership qualities, such a person should be made a leader; regardless of gender. Some respondents again mentioned that as female prophets they were able to serve as leaders in the Old Testament and so women can equally hold positions as Area Apostles or National Executive Members. According to Ntummy as indicated by Asamoah-Gyadu, those whose ministries are singled out as unique in the history and development of the CoP are all women. Among these, Ntummy mentions Maame Dede, a deaconess who was said to have been active in the 1960s in areas of healing, word of knowledge, prophecy and discernment of spirits. Ntummy also mentions Grace Mensah, who is the founder and leader of the popular Edumfa Revival Centre. What Ntummy has said is in accordance with what Quist has stated that women are seen playing leadership roles in other churches in Ghana. In the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, for example, women are being admitted into the clergy. However, in the Catholic Church, women are not permitted to be priests but are admitted as nuns who play a crucial role in the church. In the African Independent Churches (AIC's) women are found in leadership positions and some are even founders of ministries. In the view of Asamoah-Gyadu, women are to be largely credited with the survival of the church due to their active engagement. He added that the male hegemony in African churches was broken by the women who entered the prophetic ministry and established their own ministries.⁶⁴ The respondents maintained that there is a possibility that, a time will come when a female pastor would become a District Pastor, an Area Apostle or National Executive Member.

From the analysis, it is evident that the CoP has no immediate plans of letting women occupy key leadership positions in the Church due to the various reasons above. It is however the hope of some of the respondents and the author that there would come a time when women would lead the church.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings from the field, this article recommends the following for CoP Leadership:

- There is the need to have a common theological education for Classical Pentecostal Fraternity in Ghana, such as the School of Theology, Mission and Leadership (STML). This will enable CoP members who go through theological education to know the importance of ordaining females as Pastors into the ordained ministry.
- The CoP should officially open up discussion on the need to create gender equality when it comes to the appointment of members into full-time ministry of the church (leadership positions). Bible Study material could be used to sensitise their members on the issue under consideration. Again, this would enable women's ministry to become more independent as a ministry in CoP.
- CoP leadership should do well to liberate women from socio-cultural setbacks; because, women are more vocal, can articulate their views and can equally handle any position a man can hold in the church in this 21st century. This undertaking would call for overhauling of the church's Constitution to create an equal platform for both genders to reflect on what is stated in Galatians 3: 28 (There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ).

⁶² The Constitution of CoP, Article 9 sub-section 9.1 (a) states that, "there shall be a District Presbytery which shall consist of the Minister, his wife, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses in the District and District Ministry leaders and Assistant District Ministry Leaders. Again, sub-section 9.4 says, "there shall be a District Minister who shall be appointed by the General Council on the recommendation of the Executive Council. Sub-section 9.41 (a) indicates, "he shall be responsible to the Area Head for the administration of The Church in the District," 2016, 28-29.

⁶³ The Constitution of CoP, Article 12, sub-section 12.1 indicates that, "there shall be established National Councils in the missionary lands which shall act as liaison between the International Missions Board and the Local Assemblies. The Council shall meet at least once a year, 2016, 35-36."

⁶⁴ Asamoah- Gyadu, *Pentecostalism And The Missiological Significance of Religious Experience In Africa Today* 51.

⁶⁵ CoP Constitution, Article 20 .3.1, 74.

- CoP leadership should re-look its Constitution with regard to enrolling only males into the ordained ministry; that is, pastoral and eldership responsibilities. This Constitutional provision should be critically looked at by the National Executive Council; in reference to how Jesus Christ selected Mary Magdalene to convey the resurrection message to the disciples.
- The Constitutional provision in CoP which allows the Pastor, apostle or an elder to identify a “called person” into the ordained ministry must be reviewed since the “David’s in the wilderness taking care of sheep” might not be noticed (1 Sam.16:11-14). The leadership should emulate the selection processes of Assemblies of God (AG) and the other mainline churches; where the candidate who feels he/she has been called by God informs the Pastor about his/her intention to be in the ordained ministry. The selection of only males to serve as Trustees of CoP should be critically cross-examined in the context of contemporary ideas about gender equality in across the globe and in Ghana especially (within the church and society).
- CoP leadership should encourage Pastor’s spouses to pursue theological education, particularly those “who have the call of God.” Some of the spouses who would avail themselves for training will be allowed to play the role of Associate Pastor (s) as is done in Assemblies of God. This will reduce the burden on the male District Pastors; who usually have many stations or congregants to man within their jurisdiction. This decision when implemented would boost the confidence/morale of other females who want to aspire to the leadership positions in the CoP.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined women’s role in the CoP. It has been observed that in the CoP, leadership positions are male dominated. In view of that, the highest leadership position/role for a woman in CoP is a deaconess. This is the result of the cultural perception concerning women in Ghana which has influenced the CoP’s constitution. However, leadership roles/status in Ghanaian Pentecostal Fraternity should not be seen as gender-specific since God does not intend any gender distinction between men and women in the Christian ministry. God is more interested in the ability and availability to perform and not necessary about one’s gender. Additionally, times have changed and the CoP cannot remain in isolation; when it comes to issues relating to gender equality since many women are knowledgeable and have ideas to make meaningful contributions in the church. Therefore, the calling of God into the leadership positions is for all persons regardless of gender since Jesus’ death has broken down all gender barriers in the church.

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