

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Philosophy

Emphasis in World Missions

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARD A MODEL FOR EMPOWERING TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY  
ADVENTIST WOMEN IN NIGERIA AS MISSION MOBILIZERS

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Mission is the very foundation of God's nature, as He empowers men and women to fulfill the Great Commission. Christ and Apostle Paul also empowered and provided opportunities for men and women to become mission mobilizers. Though there is a significant shift from ministry as a responsibility for only ordained men to ministry as a responsibility for all, ordained and non-ordained, and most Churches in Nigeria empower ministers and church workers for ministerial and gospel work through theological training, however, only a few women, especially among Adventists, benefit from such training. As a result, there are few qualified Adventist women mission mobilizers in Nigeria, which affects their ability to contribute

wholistically to theological discourse. Thus, this study was conducted to design a model for empowering 21st-century Adventist women in Nigeria as mission

mobilizers. This study employed a mixed-method approach, which combined a 44-question quantitative survey with a semi-structured qualitative interview. The result showed that Adventist women in Nigeria face challenges in recognition and opportunities to become mission mobilizers due to a lack of theological training and job opportunities. Participants affirmed that empowering women as mission mobilizers has great benefits for women and greater benefits for the church and its mission at large. When opportunities are provided for women, it increases their participation rate in mission/ministry, helps shape their lives in handling issues challenging them and the global world, and builds up a partnership ministry of men and women. Therefore, to empower women, theological training that provides equal recognition and opportunities for women in mission/ministry leadership is encouraged. A practical model based on a biblical model that stresses the Holy Spirit empowering all believers was developed for empowering women as mission mobilizers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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FIRST-CENTURY ADVENTIST WOMEN IN  
NIGERIA AS MISSION MOBILIZERS

A Dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Biblical and Theological Studies  
Emphasis in World Missions

by

Harriet Osaretin Ikhane

October 2025

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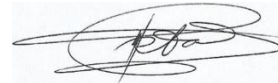
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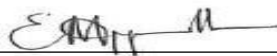


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To God Almighty, Source of my strength and inspiration. To my husband,  
Anabui, who supported and encouraged me at every step of the  
journey. To my children Osiolelumhe, Imiobosi, and  
Irobosi, who may complete the task. To all  
women with a sense of mission/ministry  
calling to fulfill God's mission  
in these last days

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	x
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	xi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background to the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	7
Significance of the Study .....	7
Research Questions .....	7
Theoretical Framework .....	8
Operational Definitions of Terms .....	13
Delimitations.....	14
Organization of the Remainder of the Study .....	16
Summary .....	16
2. BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN AND MISSION MOBILIZING.....	17
Biblical Foundation for Women and Mission Mobilizing .....	17
Women and Mission Mobilizing in the Old Testament .....	18
Miriam.....	18
Rahab. ....	19
Deborah.....	22
Women and Mission Mobilizing in the New Testament.....	23
Women and mission mobilizing in Jesus’ life and ministry.....	23
Women as co-laborers with Apostle Paul in mission/ministry. ....	33
‘Prohibiting’ Pauline texts and women’s involvement in mission/ministry.....	36
Supportive Pauline texts for women and mission/ministry.....	41
Theological Foundation for Women and Mission Mobilizing.....	44
The concept of womanhood in the creation narrative (Genesis 1 and 2). ....	44
The Commission for all (Matthew 28:18-20). ....	47
Balanced ministry focus (Romans 16:1-5). ....	52
The spiritual gifts given to all (1 Corinthians 12).....	53

Equal partnership in church mission/ministry (Galatians 3:28).....	54
Summary .....	57
3. MISSIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN AND MISSION MOBILIZING .....	58
Societal Overview of Women .....	58
Women in Biblical Times.....	59
Women in Greco-Roman society .....	61
Women in Early Christianity.....	67
Women in African society.....	68
Women in the Nigerian society.....	72
Women and Empowerment for Mission among Adventists in Nigeria .....	76
Adventist Women Ministries. ....	79
Leadership training scheme. ....	81
Role model/mentorship empowerment. ....	83
Prayer ministries/retreats and Bible study groups. ....	84
Church training programmes. ....	85
Factors Inhibiting Adventist Women from becoming Mission Mobilizers.....	88
Patriarchal structure. ....	88
Gendered ascribed roles and cultural norms.....	89
Lack of awareness and support systems. ....	90
Institutional and church structures and policies.....	91
Gender Studies and Women’s Empowerment.....	96
Summary .....	100
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	101
Research Design.....	101
Research Questions .....	102
Study Population.....	103
Sample Size.....	104
Instrument Design: Survey and Interview Questions .....	108
Validity and Reliability .....	116
Data Collection Procedure .....	119
Data Analysis .....	120
Ethical Consideration.....	121
Risk Avoidance .....	122
Limitations .....	122
Gender Representation.....	123
Summary .....	123
5. FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	125
Biblical/Theological Rationale for Women as Mission Mobilizers.....	126
Uniqueness in Abilities and Functions.....	127

The Function of the Church in Educating Members of Their Roles .....	129
Cultural prejudices and women serving as mission mobilizers.....	136
Factors Preventing Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers.....	143
Discrimination and stereotyping.....	144
Lack of equal opportunities.....	148
Family and ministry balance.....	156
Ways of Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers.....	161
Providing training for women.....	162
Providing mentorship opportunities for women.....	167
Providing leadership opportunities for women.....	170
Creating awareness opportunities for women. T.....	177
Benefits of Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers .....	181
Benefits for women.....	181
Benefits for the church.....	183
Benefits for missions.....	187
Follow-up on Women Who Have Been Trained/Empowered.....	189
Summary .....	191
6. A MODEL FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN AS MISSION MOBILIZERS	192
Toward an Empowering Model for Understanding “Women as Mission Mobilizers”.....	192
Empowerment as Receiving Training: A Map towards Women’s Theological Training and Mission.....	198
Empowerment as Gaining Church Recognition: A Concern for Women’s Ministerial Placement and Benefits.....	204
Empowerment as Giving Opportunities to Function: A Concern for Women and Church Leadership .....	207
Summary of a Model for “Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers.” .....	209
Summary .....	212
7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	214
Summary .....	214
Conclusions.....	216
Recommendations .....	216
Suggestions for Future Study.....	216
APPENDICES .....	220
A. RESEARCH CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS .....	221
B. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS .....	225
C. RAW DATA.....	236

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	250
VITA .....	275

## LIST OF TABLES

1. The Six Adventist Churches and the Major Ethnic Groups that Constitute Their Membership .....	103
2. Demographic Features for Quantitative Questionnaire .....	105
3. Breakdown of the Distribution and Retrieval of Copies of the Questionnaire .....	106
4. Background Information of the Participants for the Qualitative Survey .....	107
5. Summary Responses to Uniqueness in Abilities and Functions .....	129
6. Summary Responses to The Function of the Church in Educating Members of their Roles.....	136
7. Summary Responses to Cultural Prejudices and Women Serving as Mission Mobilizers .....	142
8. Summary Responses to Discrimination and Stereotyping.....	147
9. Summary Responses to Lack of Equal Opportunities .....	156
10. Summary Responses to Family and Ministry Balance .....	159
11. Summary Responses to Providing Training for Women.....	166
12. Summary Responses to Providing Mentorship Opportunities for Women.....	170
13. Summary Responses to Providing Leadership Opportunities for Women .....	176
14. Summary Responses to Awareness Opportunities for Women .....	180
15. Summary Responses to Benefits for Women.....	183
16. Summary Responses to Benefits for the Church .....	187
17. Summary Response to Benefits for Mission.....	188

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUA-ISERC	Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific Ethic Review Committee
AWM	Adventist Women's Ministries
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
YAWM	Young Adventist Women's Ministries

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study aims to design a model for empowering 21st-century Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers. By seeking to develop a model for empowering Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers, the research aimed to facilitate more effective mission training among this group. This chapter gives the background to the whole study.

#### **Background to the Study**

The Bible as the Grand Narrative of *Missio Dei* reveals mission as the foundation of God's nature.<sup>1</sup> God as the Initiator of mission empowers the church as His agent in the fulfillment of the Great Commission of taking the whole gospel to the whole world. As such, the very essence of the church is mission and in fulfilling its mission, the need to identify, train/equip, and empower the whole church for mission cannot be over-emphasized. Jesus demonstrated a foundational mobilization process by calling and training his disciples for over three years.<sup>2</sup>

Besides this, Jesus also trained and empowered women like Mary Magdalene, Mary, Samaritan women, etc. as mission leaders/mobilizers (see Luke 8:1-4; 10:38-

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 356. To Wright, mission is not just one of the themes in the Bible but the basis for the entire Bible.

<sup>2</sup> Ryan Shaw, "Toward a Biblical Missiology of Mobilization," *Mission Frontiers* (2022): 43, accessed 29 February 2024, [https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/MF44-1\\_web-42-45.pdf](https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/MF44-1_web-42-45.pdf).

42; John 4). Similarly, women like Priscilla, Phoebe, Lydia, etc., were identified and empowered to work with Paul as mission mobilizers (see Acts 16; 18; Rom 16).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a significant shift from ministry as a responsibility for only ordained men to ministry as a responsibility for all members, ordained and non-ordained<sup>3</sup> but with respect to training and empowerment for mission, especially as it relates to women, only a few are empowered and/or are involved as mission mobilizers. Although there are different aspects of empowerment for mobilization done in the church such as through Bible study, seminars, women's ministries, etc., there seems to be a gap in the intentional act of identifying, equipping/training, and empowering women to be qualified with the arts, sciences, and strategies for mission in this 21<sup>st</sup> century as it concerns the Nigerian context.

The Nigeria population is approximately 225 million and this population is estimated to reach 400 million people by 2050.<sup>4</sup> Also, globally, Nigeria is among the ten countries with the largest Christian population of 87 million as of 2015 and it is estimated to reach 175 million by 2060,<sup>5</sup> however, only about 312,175 Adventists live

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<sup>3</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Book, 1991), 467.

<sup>4</sup> Doris Dokua Sasu, "Population of Nigeria 1950-2022," *Statista* (2022), accessed 8 May 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1122838/population-of-nigeria/> Also, United Nations Nigeria (2022), Common Country Analysis, accessed 4 October 2023, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Common\\_Country\\_Analysis\\_2022\\_Nigeria.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Common_Country_Analysis_2022_Nigeria.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Jeff Diamant, "The Countries with the 10 Largest Christian Populations and 10 Largest Muslim Populations," *Pew Research Center*, accessed 4 October, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/04/01/the-countries-with-the-10-largest-christian-populations-and-the-10-largest-muslim-populations/>.

in Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Concurrently, the number of educated,<sup>7</sup> entrepreneurial,<sup>8</sup> and professional<sup>9</sup> Nigerian women is on the increase more than ever before, but, with Nigeria having the largest Christian population among the African societies, there still exist several attendant problems associated among Christians such as; wrong doctrinal teachings, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of scriptures, gender disparities, and cultural issues,<sup>10</sup> among others, as with many African societies.

There are also challenges in mission/ministry practice such as developing proper strategies for reaching the unreached in their various groups/classes, reaching the unreached women groups living near or far distance, reaching the Muslim women in ‘high-risk’ states, and even those living close, and female inmates, to mention but a few, are not left out.

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<sup>6</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives, Statistics and Research, *Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook*, accessed 6 May 2024, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

This statistic as of 30 June 2023 shows that about 1 out of every 612 people is an Adventist. This thus reveals the need for a more effective mission strategy.

<sup>7</sup> Toby Tomlinson Baker, “Educational Attainment Statistics in Nigeria” paper presented at Pepperdine University, (2019): 4, accessed 5 October 2023, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338332087\\_Educational\\_Attainment\\_Statistics\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338332087_Educational_Attainment_Statistics_in_Nigeria). Toby Baker sees that the number of educated women is not proportionate to the number of their involvement in labour sector as such, he identifies this problem as under-utilization. Similarly, the number of women in the church is not proportionate to their level of receiving the right/adequate training to fully participate in fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate and as such, there may be an under-utilization of using their God-given potential for mission. This under-utilization could still be a result of the feelings/attitudes and prejudice against women – this indicates that there are not many perceived changes of the traditional biases even though there is an increase in women in education.

<sup>8</sup> Safiyyah Muhammad Aliyu, “An Assessment of Women Entrepreneurship Performance in Nigeria,” *Malaysian Management Journal*, vol. 17 (2013): 2, accessed 5 October 2023, [file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/An\\_Assessment\\_of\\_Women\\_Entrepreneurship\\_Performanc.pdf](file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/An_Assessment_of_Women_Entrepreneurship_Performanc.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ezra Gayawan and Samson B. Adebayo, “Spatial Analysis of Women Employment Status in Nigeria,” *CBN Journal of Applied Statistics*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2015): 2, accessed 5 October 2023, <https://cbn.gov.ng/out/2016/sd/spatial%20analysis%20of%20women%20employment%20status%20in%20nigeria.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, Daniel Kasomo recognizes the deep-rooted gender roles and social inequality in African contexts. To him, these disparities result in a lack of under-recognition and underutilization of African women – while men received priority in religious roles and dominated social and religious spheres, women were marginalized in these spheres. (Daniel Kasomo, “The Role of Women in the Church in Africa,” *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 2, no. 6 (2010): 138).

Though Pew Research Center study revealed that a larger number of women attend religious services more often than men<sup>11</sup> and the Department of Adventist Women's Ministries advocates for the empowering, nurturing, and outreach training of women,<sup>12</sup> yet, when it comes to the involvement of women in leading missions and/or receiving training which could help reduce if not eliminate the aforementioned problems associated with Christians, only a few or no women are actively involved and/or given the right training for this special missionary task.

For instance, in Nigeria, most of the Christian churches empower ministers and other church workers for the gospel mission and for ministerial responsibilities through theological training,<sup>13</sup> yet, only a few women are benefiting from such training<sup>14</sup> especially among Adventist women. This slow rate of empowering the

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<sup>11</sup> Pew Research Center, "The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World," (Survey and Population Registration, 2016), accessed 3 April 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2016/03/22/the-gender-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/#:~:text=According%20to%20media%20accounts%2C%20women,more%20men%20into%20their%20congregations.>

<sup>12</sup> Omobonke Adeola Alabi-Sessou, "Nurture, Empower, and Outreach Training," *Mosaic Newsletter*, Q.4 (2022), accessed 5 October 2023, <https://women.adventist.org/more-than-1500-women-attend-wm-congress-in-western-nigeria.>

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Enoch Nmah, "Theological Education and Character Formation in Nigerian Christianity: A Reflection," *African Research Review*, vol 7, no. 1 (2013): 40-41.

<sup>14</sup> For example, among Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics, one may find few or no women in theological seminaries because women are not called as pastors or priests hence no need to receive theological education meant for male ministers (see: Elleen R. Campbell, "Examining Trend in Theological Education for Women - Part 1," In *Good Faith Media* (2019): 12, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://goodfaithmedia.org/examining-trend/s-in-theological-education-for-women-part-1/>).

Although the seminaries are meant to train men for the ordained ministry, however, it does not rule out the fact that all need this training in order to adequately fulfill the mission mandate (Matt 28:19-20) in this contemporary time. Seminary is a place where skills are developed for gospel mission/ministry, and strategies for mission practices are learnt from diverse perspectives. Among the Seventh-day Adventists' Seminaries also, very few women are in the field of theology. For example, at Andrews University, US, there are only six (6) female Theologians in a total of fifty (50) faculty in the Theological Seminary (Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Directory of Faculty, accessed 10 April 2023, <https://www.andrews.edu/sem/contact/faculty/index.html>).

At the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), there are two (2) female theological teachers out of 15 faculty in the Seminary (Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies Faculty Theological Seminary, accessed 10 April 2023, <https://www.aiias.edu/faculty-theological-seminary/>). At Adventist University of Africa, only few women are found when compared to

Adventist women as mission mobilizers has a great implication for the Adventist mission in Nigeria especially in developing intelligent women to be trained with the arts, sciences, and strategies for becoming intelligent mission mobilizers in reaching the rest population in Nigeria.

Further, most discourse on women and mission/ministry are from an Evangelical background<sup>15</sup> which is quite different from the Adventist's perspective on women and ministry especially as it concerns the Nigeria situation, hence, the necessity to engage with this research that is toward a model for empowering Adventist women in Nigeria to be mission mobilizers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria, as in many societies, women are the majority in most religious settings as they make up more than 75 percent of active membership in almost every congregation, including the Adventist churches.<sup>16</sup> Though they are in the majority, the

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men (Adventist University of Africa, Faculty and Staff Campus Directory, accessed 2 May 2023, <https://www.aua.ac.ke/faculty-and-staff/>). At Valley view University Ghana), only one female theological teacher in a total of twelve faculty (Peter Obeng Manu, an e-interview via WhatsApp. 17 February 2023). This thus shows the place, value, and role of women in the church training system.

<sup>15</sup> See: Williams O. Mbamalu, "The Challenges of Theological Education in the Assemblies of God, Nigeria: A Critical Analysis," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 40, no. 2 (2014): 4, accessed 8 February 2020, [https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S101704992014000300016](https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S101704992014000300016). Also, Nestor C. Rilloma, "The Challenges of Emancipatory Theological Education for Churches in the Third World," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 13, no. 2 (2002): 122, accessed 8 February 2020, <https://archive.atsjars.org/JATS13.2-10Rilloma.pdf>; Esther Mombo, "Theological Education in Africa," *Ministerial Formation* 89, (2000): 38; and Isabel Apawo Phiri, "Women in Theological Education in Malawi," *Women and Theology: Ministerial Formation* 48 (1990): 18. See also, Isabel, "Major Challenges," 105-119. These African female scholars also centered their works more on issues concerning women and ordination in the Gospel ministry. As such, their works may not apply to the Adventist context because of the peculiar teachings and doctrines as regards women and ordination. Also, the unique message of the SDA Church requires a unique training, approach, and mission planning/strategy that are learned from the Adventist theological schools which may not be reflected in their works.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Vine, "The Legal Social Status of Women in the Pentateuch," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Biblical Research Institute Committee, 1984), 27. Specific data on the ratio of males to females in the Adventist church in Nigeria is not available. However, from personal/general observations based on experiences and also from the testimonies gleaned from the interviewees, seem to be in line with the general trends in

church has not been intentional in identifying, equipping/training, and empowering women to be qualified as mission mobilizers, especially in ministering to the needs of their fellow women both within and outside the church.

Although they are in the majority, yet, when it comes to their involvement in leading mission roles and/or receiving training that will help improve their God-given potentials, only a few or no women are actively involved and/or trained for mission/ministry. As such, there exists the problem of underutilization of women in using their God-given potential for church growth and mission. This lack of women being empowered as mission leaders has a great effect on the church in developing proper mission strategies for ministering to the unreached women groups in close or far proximity, or in witnessing to women in ‘high-risk’ states, like the Muslim women, and even female inmates.

This lack of empowering and training women also has implications for the Adventist women in enhancing and/or utilizing their God-given potential in contributing their unique voices to any theological discourse in our days, from the biblical, missiological, and Adventist perspective, for there are only a few Adventists female missiologists/theological scholars when compared with other denominations in Nigeria leading to a few theological resources written from an Adventist perspective. Further, this lack has implications for the church in withholding an opportunity for synergy between men and women to enhance their potential to participate in the fulfillment of God’s mission.

Thus, in a culture where animistic practices abound and where a unique missiological approach is needed to reach the whole person in the whole world with

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Christian membership which reveal that women are more in membership (see Pew Research Center, “The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World,” (Survey and Population Registration, 2016)

the whole gospel, the need to design a model for empowering Adventist women as mission mobilizers to all people groups of any level is germane.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was threefold: first, it examined the factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming equipped as mission mobilizers. Second, it explored the potential benefits of Adventist women becoming mission mobilizers for the church and society at large by developing a model for understanding the empowerment of women as mission mobilizers. Lastly, it highlighted the need for the Adventist Church in Nigeria to synergize the potentials of male and female Adventist mission practitioners in fulfilling the Great Commission mandate of bringing souls into God's kingdom.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is of great significance to Adventist women seeking to be empowered as qualified and intelligent mission mobilizers as it uncovers the unique benefits of such empowerment. The study may also be of great significance to the church in creating valuable opportunities for synergy between males and females in fulfilling God's mission. Furthermore, it may become a valuable tool for anyone whose interest is in women's participation in mission/ministry, and likewise, to researchers and students in mission and theological studies.

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to respond to three research questions:

1. What are the factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission mobilizers?

2. In what ways can Adventists in Nigeria be empowered as mission mobilizers?
3. What are the benefits of Adventist women becoming mission mobilizers, utilizing the research data to develop a model for understanding empowering women as mission mobilizers?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is based on two concepts: the first is the concept of the *Missio Dei*, which is the idea that mission originates from God, and the second is the concept of gender studies. The doctrine of *Missio Dei* is seen as the involvement of the Trinity in mission – God the Father, the initiator of mission, sent His Son, and God the Son, sent the Holy Spirit, then, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, send the church into the world.<sup>17</sup> So, *Missio Dei* is seen as God’s redemptive, historical initiative on behalf of His creation.<sup>18</sup>

God is the prime initiator and mover of mission; His mission predates the church and is broader than the work of the church. thus, the church serves as the primary human agency of God’s mission. For this reason, one can say here that mission originates with God and not with the church, as such, it belongs to God alone.

Ellen White further buttressed this point by stating that:

God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ’s, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy, - the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice, - we must participate in His labors for their redemption.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bosch, 390.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Eregel, 2010): 54.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Oakland, Cal: Pacific Press, 1898),142.

Therefore, the Triune – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit being a missionary God, includes the church to participate in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the world.<sup>20</sup> As Christopher Wright rightly affirmed that:

Fundamentally, our mission means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, David Bosch opined that “our missionary activities are authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God.”<sup>22</sup> So, for the fact that the church – male and female is called to participate in God's mission and that Jesus demonstrated an all-inclusive ministry by training and empowering women leaders (e.g., Mary Magdalene, Samaritan women, etc.), it becomes germane for Adventist women in Nigeria to be involved in God's mission. Similarly, it becomes imperative for all – male and female to be equipped and empowered for this missionary task in these last days because the Holy spirit endows the church with spiritual gifts to function effectively in God's mission (1 Cor 12) and God's Spirit is promised to be poured on all flesh – male and female, on the last days (Joel 2:28-29). Also, following God's invitation and command for all (male and female inclusive) to reach the whole world with the gospel.

Therefore, from this perspective on the concept of the *Missio Dei*, this research thus presents biblical concepts that show the divine mission mandate among men and women to participate in God's mission and reveals empowerment as the

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<sup>20</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (Fortress Press, 1993),6.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, 22-23.

<sup>22</sup> Bosch, 391.

work of the *Missio Dei* in pouring out the Holy Spirit on all flesh, empowering them for God's mission.

The second theoretical framework is based on the concept of gender studies, which investigates the disparities between men and women and the repercussions of such disparities in various aspects of life in society. In simple term, gender is the meaning given to males and females in a society. According to Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Kelly, gender emerged in the early 1970s and had been generally equated with sex roles and stereotypes.<sup>23</sup>

The females were in charge of the homes while the males find their way into the world of politics and work. These gender roles have led to stereotypical roles between men and women, especially in Africa. For instance, Linda Lindsey avowed that females are more likely to occupy positions with less power, less prestige, less pay, or no pay at all than males as men are expected to take up leadership roles in almost every sphere of life – in family, community, education, political, and in religious spheres in the nations, to mention but a few.<sup>24</sup>

In recent times, though females have started to assume leadership roles in almost all spheres of life in society, yet considerable disparity relating to gender roles still exists in society. For instance, there are roles and responsibilities expected of men and women.<sup>25</sup> Women are expected to take care of the home and men to be

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<sup>23</sup> Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelley, *Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance* (University of Michigan Press, 1995), 246.

<sup>24</sup> Linda L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn (New York: Routledge, 2015), 37-38.

<sup>25</sup> Alice H. Eagly and Steven J. Karan, "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice toward Female Leaders," *Psychological Review*, vol. 109, no. 3 (2002): 17. 1-26, accessed 5 March 2025, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11287765>.

breadwinners and heads of their families, and this holds for several developing countries, including Nigeria.

Gender studies thus interrogate how gender is used as a discriminatory tool in the distribution of education, work, income, property, and social and religious/political participation in general and advocate for the use of gender perspective in all facets of life.<sup>26</sup> So, gender studies seek to address and explain the persistent factors contributing to gender inequality especially as it concerns leadership. One of such factors is the prejudices on gender, gender roles, and gender behaviours ascribed to both males and females.<sup>27</sup> Prejudice involves a group of people holding beliefs about another group of people based on the group to which they belong, as such, male and female.<sup>28</sup> There are roles and behaviors expected of men and women in society, leading to situations where both men and women are prejudiced especially about leadership.

In the Nigerian population, the patriarchal dominance of men, as also seen in most African societies, has contributed to the gender gap in leadership positions in many aspects in the Nigerian context and the religious sphere is not left out,<sup>29</sup> including the Adventist church. The cultural and age-old belief of male superiority and female subordination makes the attainment of leadership positions by women seem alien to traditional beliefs.

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<sup>26</sup> Ilufoye S. Ogundiya and Jimoh Amzat, eds, *The Basics of Social Sciences* (Nigeria: Malthouse Press, 2012), 69.

<sup>27</sup> Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli, "Women and Men as Leaders: The Nature of Leadership," *Emerging Issues in Leadership, Culture, Gender, and Ethics* (2004), 299.

<sup>28</sup> Eagly and Carli, 300.

<sup>29</sup> See, Eagly and Carli, 279-301.

Nevertheless, this situation is changing in some African countries where females participate and have access to leadership opportunities.<sup>30</sup> According to the Gender Index Gap, Nigeria ranked 128 out of the 153 countries indexed for efforts in closing the gender gap in leadership positions,<sup>31</sup> which indicates a huge gap in access to leadership opportunities between men and women still exists in the country. This is not too different from the religious sphere, particularly in the Adventist circle. As such, gender and leadership issues especially in developing countries such as Nigeria have therefore been a matter of great research interest. This interest has attracted many researchers as they have conducted studies about the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in various spheres of the nation.

The low representation of women in leadership positions especially as it concerns women as mission mobilizers, shows how existing and continuing cultural factors surrounded by gender issues, have hinder women from becoming mission leaders. Hence, gender studies which sometimes is referred to as women's studies because there is more focus on women than men,<sup>32</sup> will be used to help address the possible factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria from being mission mobilizers. In this study, gender referred to male and female in society. Men and women were also used interchangeably with males and females.

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<sup>30</sup> See, "The Global Gender Gap Index, 2020," accessed 25 Nov 2024, [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2).

<sup>31</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index (2020).

<sup>32</sup> Ogundiya and Amzat 70.

## Operational Definitions of Terms

This section will briefly define three major concepts important to this study as they relate to the overall purpose. They are: empowerment, mission mobilizer, and empowerment of women as mission mobilizers.

*Empowerment.* In this study, empowerment means the process by which the church recognizes women's identity in Christ, discovers and utilizes their gifts and calling for active service, then motivates and supports women through training to enhance their giftedness in fulfilling their God-given potential roles and purpose for mission/ministry practice and leadership.

*Empowerment of Women as Mission Mobilizers.* refers to an intentional process of recognizing women's crucial roles in fulfilling God's mission, equipping their God-given gifts to enable them to take active roles in mission/ministry practice and leadership, and positioning them to engage the different missiological strategies/skills for different mission contexts to advance the church's missional growth.

This process seeks to elevate women's roles in mission/ministry, drawing on biblical examples, theological principles, and practical implications for mission in today's world. This empowerment enriches the church's mission and reflects God's ideal for His people to work together in equal partnership to advance His kingdom.

*Mission Mobilizer.* A mission mobilizer in this context means a woman specifically trained and empowered with the arts and skills to inspire, educate, organize, and equip others to participate actively in mission work at the local and/or global level. The mobilizer plays a crucial role in the church's growth by raising awareness and involvement of mission needs in different contexts, promoting the

importance of fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate and the need for believers to see mission as a central aspect of their life.

Therefore, women as mission mobilizers here imply their involvement in mission/ministry by recognizing their God-given potential gifts and receiving the appropriate training to become empowered/equipped to function effectively as the right trainers/leaders of God's mission.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitation of the study includes the nature of the sample which is centered on ecclesiastical and factorial delimitations. In the ecclesiastical (with reference to the church) delimitation, the research focuses on women in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Nigeria, however, data was collected from only six Adventist churches in the western part of the country, more specifically, in the Ilisan-Remo axis of Ogun State.

These are the Seventh-day Adventist Number 1 Church, whose members are mostly the Yoruba-speaking tribe. Seventh-day Adventist Number 2 Church, whose members consist mostly of the Igbos, Seventh-day Adventist Bege Church, whose members are primarily the Hausas; while Seventh-day Adventist Cornerstone, Beautiful Gate, and Babcock community, members consist of mixtures of other ethnic groups.

These churches were chosen because one can easily find the three major languages and various ethnic groups in Nigeria because of the presence of the Seventh-day Adventist institution, Babcock University. As such, the study can be applied to Adventists in the Nigerian context in general.

The second delimitation is seen as the factorial delimitation – here, the research identified that several factors hinder Adventist women’s participation in mission/ministry and these numerous factors, as was discussed in the later part of the study, are holding Adventist women from involving in mission/ministry, however, this study focuses on the empowerment of Adventist women as mission mobilizers.

Therefore, while mobilizers may have different shades of definitions from various religious and ideological views, this study however considered mission mobilizer from a biblical perspective, which is about identifying (God’s potential gifts in members, males and females), training, and empowering all to function effectively in carrying out the Commission Mandate in this 21<sup>st</sup>-century.

Thus, women as mission mobilizers here imply their involvement in mission/ministry by recognizing their God-given potential gifts and receiving the right training to become empowered/equipped to function effectively as the right mission trainers/leaders. This empowerment as mission mobilizers is not necessarily tied to the issue of ordination because the Great Commission given to all (Matt 28:19-20) and the bestowal of spiritual gifts to all (I Cor 12) is not tied to ordination, as such, this study does not delve into the ordination issue.

## **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 2 includes the biblical/theological foundation for women and mission mobilizing while Chapter 3 delves into the missiological foundation for women and mission mobilizing, exploring ways Adventist women in Nigeria have been empowered for mission. It further examines factors inhibiting women from becoming mission mobilizers, addressing gender studies and women's empowerment.

Afterwards, it focuses on developing an empowering model for understanding women as mission mobilizers. Chapter 4 explains the methodology and procedures employed in the study to gather data for the research. Chapter 5 focuses on an in-depth presentation of the data collected during the field research, as well as tables that visualize the statistical analysis and discuss the findings as it relates to the research.

Chapter 6 presents the proposed model for understanding what empowering women as mission mobilizers entails, highlighting the three major components – theological training, recognition, and opportunities, to this effect. Chapter 7 delineates summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further missiological practice and research.

## **Summary**

This chapter presented the introduction and background of the study. It discussed the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation of the study, definitions of key terms, as well as organization of the remainder of the study. The next chapter will discuss the biblical/theological foundation for women and mission mobilizing.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN AND MISSION MOBILIZING

This chapter will examine the biblical and theological foundation of women and mission mobilizing, citing examples of women in the Bible who engaged in missions to underscore the significance of women in the Old and New Testaments and to determine their roles and status in the contemporary church.

#### **Biblical Foundation for Women and Mission Mobilizing**

The diverse interpretations of the Bible and its cultural context make women's leading role in the church ambiguous. The various interpretations which have brought longstanding discussions on the leadership roles of women in the church, leads the church to wrestle with many challenges for mission in our today's world. Thus, a comprehensive biblical/theological understanding of the roles of women is germane in harnessing their gifting and revitalizing the church's human resources for fulfilling God's mission.

The first part of this section will explore some examples of women in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT), especially in the ministry of Jesus and Paul, in relation to mission. Then, the next part will use some biblical texts to examine the theological foundation for women as mission mobilizers.

## Women and Mission Mobilizing in the Old Testament

Several Old Testament women played significant leading roles in fulfilling God's mission. However, because of time and space, the relevance to identify women who navigated patriarchy to function in leadership capacities as mission leaders, and the promotion for a balanced ministry where men and women synergize in active partnership to finish God's work, only a few women will be considered here. These women are Miriam, Rahab, and Deborah.

**Miriam.** Miriam, a sister to Moses and Aaron, was a leader of the Israelites during the sojourn in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> Miriam is among the most frequently mentioned and most prominent biblical women in ancient Jewish Scriptures.<sup>2</sup> Her name, Mariam, was only mentioned in five short references (Exo 15:20-21; Num 12:1-16; 20:1; 26:59; and Deut 24:8-9) that identify her as sister, prophet, musician, leader, and leper, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Miriam is further mentioned twice in the OT (1 Chron 6:3, Mic 6:4) where she is referred to as a daughter/sister and a leader of the people of Israel in the wilderness.<sup>4</sup>

From these references, she is only quoted directly in Exodus 15:21 and Number 12:2. In Exodus 15:20, Miriam is called "female prophet," which is the only

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<sup>1</sup> Sidnie White Crawford, "Traditions about Miriam in the Qumran Scrolls," *Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department*, vol. 97 (203): 33, accessed 22 May 2024, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1096&context=classicsfacpub>.

<sup>2</sup> Agnethe Siquans, "She Dared to Reprove Her Father," Miriam's Image as a Female Prophet in Rabbinic Interpretation," *Journal of Ancient Judaism*, vol. 6 (2016): 336, accessed 22 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/She\_Dared\_to\_Reprove\_Her\_Father\_Miriams\_Image\_as\_.pdf.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 337.

<sup>4</sup> Phyllis Trible, "Bringing Miriam Out of the Shadows," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, no. 6, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, England, Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 171-172.

time this designation is used for her in the Hebrew Bible<sup>5</sup> and she is then portrayed as leading the Israelite women in a victory celebration after the crossing of the Red Sea.<sup>6</sup> Speaking of her leadership qualities, Richard Davidson explained that Miriam was the one who motivated Moses and she was there for him right from when he was a baby. Miriam displayed great intelligence, tact, and courage when she spoke with the Egyptian princess and intelligently suggested Moses' mother to be the nurse of baby Moses in Pharaoh's court.<sup>7</sup>

In the Egyptian court, Miriam could present God indirectly to the princess and her maids because she was able to enter the princess' chamber, a place where a man naturally cannot enter. This thus confirmed what God insists through Micah that Miriam with her brothers were divinely called as leaders of the Israelites (Mic 6:4).<sup>8</sup> As such, she played a unique role in presenting God to the heathens in the court circle and in leading the Israelite women in appreciating God's victory for them. These few passages where Miriam is mentioned provides us with an encouraging insight of a female leadership figure, whose actual role may have been far greater than recorded.

**Rahab.** The story of Rahab is recorded in the book of Joshua, chapters two and six. Joshua chapter two narrates the sending of the two Israelite spy by Joshua to explore the Promised Land before the Israelites' entry through Jericho. It was from this exploration process that the Canaanite prostitute, Rahab enters the picture. She

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<sup>5</sup> Siquans, 337.

<sup>6</sup> Crawford, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson. 2007), 237.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 239.

aided these spies in fulfilling their mission and also assisted them in escaping from the authorities of Jericho.

Though there are arguments on the strategy used by Rahab in the narrative of the conquest of Jericho,<sup>9</sup> this research interest is not on such arguments since it is not within the scope of the study. Nevertheless, it suffices to say that this narrative appraises the leadership role of Rahab in conquering Jericho as she worked with God in His miraculous art of bringing victory to His people, Israel. Rahab expressed her faith and wisdom through her speech, “we have heard” (Jos 2:10) and she recognized God as a divine warrior which moved her to make a covenant with Israel and God.<sup>10</sup> Through her speech in verses 10-13, Rahab demonstrated her learning ability – she recounted all that the Lord had done for the Israelites in the past, and this enabled her to have faith and courage to carry out her mission. As such, Obiorah Jerome considered Rahab as a woman in a man’s domain who acted with courage and freedom.<sup>11</sup>

Concomitantly, Rahab is portrayed as a heroine and as a worthy ancestress of important people in the NT. She is first listed among the few women included in the

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<sup>9</sup> See, Malachy Udochukwu Theophilus, “The Role of Rahab in the Conquest Story of Joshua: Towards an Igwebuike Theology,” *Nnadiesube Journal of Religion, Culture, and Society*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2019): 37, accessed 23 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/60-Article%20Text-248-1-10-20200322.pdf. Malachy Theophilus identified Rahab’s role in this plot as providing Joshua and his people with vital information regarding the psychological state of the inhabitants of Jericho and this information helped the Israelites to develop a psychological strategy and courage to conquer the land as commanded by God. This psychological strategy as proposed by Malachy Theophilus, could possibly be the reason why Avraham Dafna concluded that the conquest of Jericho’s wall was not a miraculous act; rather, those guiding the wall surrendered because of the psychological strategy employed by the Israelites, which was based on Rahab’s information (see, Avraham L. Dafna, "Did the Wall of Jericho Collapse or Did the City Surrender?" *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2010): 37, accessed 23 May 2024, [https://jbq.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/381/381\\_collapsed.pdf](https://jbq.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/381/381_collapsed.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> John H. Stek, "Rahab of Canaan and Israel: The Meaning of Joshua 2," *Calvin Theological Journal*, vol. 37, iss. 1 (2002): 26-46.

<sup>11</sup> Obiorah Mary Jerome, “Rahab in the Book of Joshua and other Texts of the Bible,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 19, iss. 3 (2014): 26, accessed 23 May 2024, <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol19-issue3/Version-2/E019321929.pdf>.

genealogical list of Jesus (Matt 1:5).<sup>12</sup> Then, in Hebrews 11:31, she is presented as a prototype of faith in Israel, and finally, in James 2:25, Rahab is regarded as a model of faith with good works.<sup>13</sup>

Janelle Peters thus believed that without Rahab's leadership skill, the spies to Jericho would have been killed, and this would have ended the fulfillment of their mission.<sup>14</sup> So, faith and courage are needed for any woman to serve in God's mission. Rahab is also praised for her strength, courage, and faith in the Midrash<sup>15</sup> and in the Patristic writings, she is both an important and typological figure and her frequent representation in early Christian Art supports the notion of her importance and influence.<sup>16</sup>

Rahab's story teaches us that God can use anyone in fulfilling His mission. For with God, there is no discrimination and her story thus justifies the biblical practice of inclusiveness (Gal 3:28). Though her social status was none to reckon with, yet, Rahab was not afraid to rise from where she was to where God wants her to be. Through her step of faith and courage, she led her family to believe in her newfound God and were saved (Jos 2:12-13).

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Davidson, 256-259.

<sup>13</sup> Jerome, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Janelle Peters, "Rahab, Esther, and Judith as Models for Church leadership in 1 Clement," *Journal of Early Christian History*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2015): 98, accessed 23 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/Rahab\_Esther\_and\_Judith\_as\_Models\_for\_C.pdf.

<sup>15</sup> Irving M. Binik, "Rahab the Prostitute: A History of Interpretation from Antiquity to the Medieval Period" (MA thesis, Department of Jewish Studies, McGill University, Montreal 2018), 51, accessed 22 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/vq27zq87h.pdf.

<sup>16</sup> Judith R. Baskin, "The Rabbinic Transformation of Rahab the Harlot," *Notre Dame English Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1979): 141-142, accessed 23 May 2024, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40062458.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A362a32289653d7665cc730300a8b05a7&ab\\_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40062458.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A362a32289653d7665cc730300a8b05a7&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1).

**Deborah.** The book of Judges gives the account of Deborah who came on board as a result of the situation of the Israelites after the death of Ehud (Jos 4:13). The people of Israel did evil in God’s sight and He gave them to be oppressed by the Canaanite king. The Israelites cried to the Lord for help, and Deborah, who was called and gifted by God to be a judge and prophet, was raised to deliver the people of Israel from the Canaanites.<sup>17</sup> On this, Charme Robarts commented that Deborah was the only judge described as a prophet and like other biblical prophets, she spoke the word of Yahweh and her prophetic competency was proven by the result of the battle with the Canaanites led by Barak.<sup>18</sup>

John Brown thus averred that Deborah was both a prophet and a judge just like Samuel (1 Sam 3:20; 7:15 cf. Judg 4:5), who was appointed to leadership by God<sup>19</sup> and Mieke Bal considered Deborah as the only one who combines religious, military, juridical, and poetical forms of leadership.<sup>20</sup> Julia Staton commented on Deborah’s willingness to give Barak the opportunity to lead the people into victory while providing leadership assistance as requested by him.<sup>21</sup> Although Deborah lived in a patriarchal culture, she nevertheless carried out her mission to save her people

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<sup>17</sup> Ntozakhe Simon Cezula, “” Now Deborah, a Prophetess, a fiery Woman:” A Gendered Reading of Judges 4:4,” *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2021): 9, accessed 23 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/NowDeborah...2225-ArticleText-5582-1-10-20220117.pdf.

<sup>18</sup> Charme Robarts, “Deborah – Judge, Prophetess, Military Leader, and Mother in Israel,” in *Essays on women in earliest Christianity*, ed. C. D. Osburn (Joplin, MO: Wipf & Stock. 1995), 76.

<sup>19</sup> John G. Brown, “What about Deborah?” *Priscilla Papers*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2024): 26, accessed 23 May 2024, [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/55271453/v28n3p3libre.pdf?1513093344=&responsecontentdisposition=inline%3B+filename%3DWhat\\_About\\_Deborah.pdf&Expires=11](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/55271453/v28n3p3libre.pdf?1513093344=&responsecontentdisposition=inline%3B+filename%3DWhat_About_Deborah.pdf&Expires=11).

<sup>20</sup> Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The politics of coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.1988), 209.

<sup>21</sup> Julia Staton, *What the Bible says about women* (Joplin MO: College Staton, 1980), 264.

courageously, thereby illustrating that leadership roles of women are acceptable even to biblical patriarchy and God's will.<sup>22</sup>

Deborah therefore becomes a model to Christian women who want to dedicate themselves for God's work even in the midst of patriarchal culture. This story therefore shows that it is God who calls anyone He wills and His standard for choosing leaders is different from human's standard.<sup>23</sup> Having considered some OT women who served as mission mobilizers, the next is to examine women in NT that were leaders in mission/ministry, beginning with the life of Christ.

### **Women and Mission Mobilizing in the New Testament**

Women in different times, played significant leading roles in Christ's ministry, the apostles, and in the early Christian community. But because of the limited time and space, only a few of them will be examined majorly as their mission leading roles impacted the growth and mission of the church.

**Women and mission mobilizing in Jesus' life and ministry.** In the ministry of Jesus, he often speaks of women, using them in various parables and sayings.<sup>24</sup> He uses illustrations relating to daily life and challenges of women which plainly reflects his sympathetic understanding for them. For instance, to illustrate God's kingdom in its present mystery form, Christ gave the parable of the woman and the leavened bread (Matt 13:33; Luke 13:20-21)<sup>25</sup> and he used the parable of the lost coin (Luke

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Davidson, 259-266.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Moon, Injong, "A Process of Critical Contextualization to Deal with the Issue of Women in Leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Korea" (Project Diss, Andrews University, 2011), 14, accessed 15 April 2024, [https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/86\\_](https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/86_)

<sup>25</sup> Jacob J. Scholtz, "Reading Matthew 13 as a prophetic discourse: The four parables presented in public," in *die Skriflig*, vol. 49, no. 1(2015): 4, accessed 23 May 2024, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i1.1870>.

5:810) to relate the initiative of God in seeking for the lost.<sup>26</sup> Jesus further used the parable of the Ten Virgins to symbolize the remnant (Matt 25:1-13)<sup>27</sup> and to illustrate what it means to get prepared for Christ's Second Coming (Matt 25:1-13) while the story of the persistent widow seeking for justice from a corrupt judge was to show the need to pray fervently (Luke 18:18).<sup>28</sup>

The use of Lot's wife's story is to warn Christians against attaching to this world (Luke 17:32; cf. Gen 19:26), and his commending the action of a poor widow who dropped all she had in the treasury (Mark 12:41-44) was to show his compassion and special concern for women in his time. Based on these, Jo Ann Davidson noted that Christ's dealings with women in his days were remarkable and his behaviour towards them is outstanding.<sup>29</sup> Here, some of these women who contributed significantly to Jesus' life and ministry, as it relates to the scope and content of this work, will be identified.

***Mary, Jesus' mother (Luke 1: 46-55).*** Luke records the story of how Elizabeth and Mary got pregnant by God's miraculously power. Luke then begins with these two women's speeches in his gospel. When Mary discovers that she was pregnant, she travels to see Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea and this becomes a special moment for Mary to voice out her thoughts and feelings in songs (Luke 1:46-

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<sup>26</sup> Amara Chukwuma-Offor & Goodness Ozoemena Basil, "The Parable of the Lost Coin in Luke 15:8 - 10: Towards Addressing the Quest for Riches among Nigerian Youths," *Ohazurume: Unizik Journal of Culture and Civilization*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2024): 156, accessed 23 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/4487-Article%20Text-14410-1-10-20240321.pdf.

<sup>27</sup> Donald A. Hagner, "Matthew 14-28," in *Word Biblical Commentary: 58 vols, on CD-ROM*, vol. 33B, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Inc., 2002), 683.

<sup>28</sup> Walter F. Specht, "Jesus and Women," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church*, (Biblical Research Institute Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 64, accessed 21 May 2024, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/role-of-women-in-the-church.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," 161.

55). Mary's song is not just a reflection on her feelings of joy but she also weaves together prominent OT themes such as God's faithfulness and fulfillment of His covenantal promise, His enduring steadfast love, Judgment on the proud, the exaltation of the humble, etc.<sup>30</sup>

Besides Jesus' speeches, Mary's song is one of the longest speeches in the gospels. Her song is so magnificent on so many levels, which give rise to the arguments concerning the authorship of the song.<sup>31</sup> These arguments could be based on the fact that Jewish girls in the 1<sup>st</sup>-century were not given the same opportunity to receive any formal education as the boys. As such, only the boys could learn and memorize the OT Scripture, while the girls learned domestic chores and trade from their mothers. However, the girls only receive education in the Hebrew Scriptures from their fathers.<sup>32</sup> So, this educational setting for Jews at the time of Mary demonstrated how astounding her song is.

Mary was well- knowledgeable about God's character and covenant and she saw that the promised Christ, conceived in her by the Holy Spirit, is a fulfillment of OT Scripture. Mary was able to interpret the events of her life through a biblical lens. This was possible for Mary because of the kind of parenting she received – as a young woman, she was trained to have faith and love for the Scripture (Luke 2:20) because her parents allowed the Scripture be prevalent in their home. So, Mary grew up in an

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<sup>30</sup> Dale Thiele, "Mary's Magnificent Magnificat," in *Pastoral Encouragement* (2020):1, accessed 28 May 2024, <https://www.oakhillspca.com/blog/category/pastoral-encouragement>.

<sup>31</sup> On the authorship of Mary's song, see Darrell L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 146. Darrell gave a strong argument for Mary's authorship of her song.

<sup>32</sup> Thiele, 1.

environment that was not only delighted in God's Word but also sought to keep His Word in the forefront of their minds and hearts (cf. Deut 6:6-7).<sup>33</sup>

Although the gospel of Luke does not present Mary as playing significant role however, in the other gospels, Mary is very much present in Christ's life and ministry (Matt 13:55; 12:26; John 19:25), she stayed close by during Jesus' ministry and continued to be his closest family member.<sup>34</sup> This could make one to safely postulate that Mary, Jesus' mother, was a more formative mentor in his life. (cf John 2:1-5) – their conversation at the wedding feast in Cana showed Mary's expression of her faith in Jesus' ability to provide when she told the servants to "do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5-12).<sup>35</sup>

Further, Mary's presence at Christ's crucifixion (John 19:24) showed the impression that she could have been in Jesus' traveling entourage all along. Jesus' concern for his mother, Mary before his death when he requested the beloved disciple to adopt Mary as his mother and give her a safe home (John 19:27) demonstrated that to Jesus, Mary was far more than just the woman who gave birth to him, she was a caregiver, teacher, companion, disciple, mourner, encourager, and many more to Jesus and his ministry.

Though not all women interested in mission/ministry may have the opportunity to come from a rich Christian background like Mary, however, the need to become knowledgeable in the word of God is imperative in carrying out God's mission in this contemporary time, hence, the necessity to train/equip these women in

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<sup>33</sup> Thiele, 1.

<sup>34</sup> William David Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. III. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 652.

<sup>35</sup> Specht, 67.

theological schools to become biblically sound and theologically grounded and knowledgeable in developing strategies to fulfill the mission of God in proclaiming the gospel to all the world is germane.

***Mary Magdalene (Luke 8).*** Mary Magdalene is mentioned only twelve times in the NT and she is recognized in all four gospels.<sup>36</sup> Mary was a commonly used name among Jewish people, so in Luke 8, to distinguish this particular Mary, she was referred to as Mary Magdalene, linking her to her place of origin, Magdala<sup>37</sup> (between Capernaum and Tiberius by the Sea of Galilee).<sup>38</sup>

Compared to other Mary referenced in the Bible, Mary Magdalene stands out a-90 the sole woman not primarily identified by her family ties. According to Mark 8:10 (cf. Matt 15:39), Jesus in his journeys visited the district of Dalmanutha, called in some ancient manuscripts Magada or Magdala.<sup>39</sup> There is no record of any other disciple of Jesus that came from Magdala, apart from Mary. It was predominantly a Gentile city and had a very poor moral reputation among the Jews.<sup>40</sup>

Mary's name is not mentioned until after Jesus' arrest (Matt 27:56,61; Mark 15:40-47; John 19:25). In Mark's Gospel, she is described in a manner that highlights her independence from male ties, which is unconventional, as women are typically identified with their fathers, husbands, or sons (e.g. Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Luke

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<sup>36</sup> Merry Lisa, "Mary Magdalene: Saint Not Sinner," *Verbum*, vol. 9, Iss. 2 (2012): 1, 5, accessed April 9 2024, <https://fisherrub.sjf.edu/verbum/vol9/iss2/10>.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Joan E. Taylor, "Missing Magdala and the name of Mary 'Magdalene'," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, vol. 146, no. 3 (2014): 205, accessed 9 April 2024, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278323992>.

<sup>39</sup> Yohanan Aharoni et al., *The Carta Bible Atlas* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Jerusalem: Carta, 2002) 172-173.

<sup>40</sup> Raymond F. Collins, Ben Witherington III, and Peter Lampe, "Mary (Person)," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4 (NY: Doubleday, 1992),580.

8:2).<sup>41</sup> Luke is the only gospel that offers context, affirming that Mary Magdalene journeyed alongside Jesus and his twelve disciples throughout his ministry following her deliverance from seven demons by Jesus (Luke 8:2).<sup>42</sup>

Mary Magdalene followed Jesus from this city to other cities and villages where he preached. Very little is known about her first encounter with Jesus, and the exact point in his ministry when she joined his group of disciples. What is certain is that she started following Jesus very early in his ministry since Jesus began his mission in Galilee. She and some women followed Jesus from Galilee until his death (cf. Matt 27:55-56). So, in Luke 8:2 (cf. Mark 16:9). She is renowned primarily for her testimony regarding Jesus' resurrection.<sup>43</sup>

In Matthew's account, she along with another Mary is depicted accompanying Joseph of Arimathea as he placed Jesus' lifeless body in the tomb (Matt 27:61).<sup>44</sup> Subsequently, these two women revisited the tomb to observe it (Matt 28:1). When the Angel of the Lord, who rolled away the stone, appeared (Matt 28:4), he directed his message not to the male guards but to the women, informing them of Jesus' resurrection. He invited them to witness the empty tomb and instructed them to convey the news to the disciples (Matt 28:6-7). The women hurriedly departed, experiencing a blend of joy and trepidation. However, before they could reach the

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<sup>41</sup> Taylor, 206.

<sup>42</sup> Bonnie Thurston, *Women in the New Testament* (NY: Crossroad Publishing, 1998), 103.

<sup>43</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, "The Women, the Tomb, and the Climax of Mark," in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne*, eds. Zuleika Rodgers, Margaret Daly-Denton and Anne Fitzpatrick McKinley (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 428.

<sup>44</sup> See Carolyn Osiek, "The women at the tomb: What are they doing there? In *HTS Theological Studies*, vol. 52, iss. 1/2 (1997): 103-118, accessed 22 April 2024, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260319864\\_The\\_women\\_at\\_the\\_tomb\\_What\\_are\\_they\\_doing\\_there](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260319864_The_women_at_the_tomb_What_are_they_doing_there).

disciples, Jesus himself appeared to them, reassuring and commissioning them (Matt 28:8-10).

John's gospel continues with Mary Magdalene's commission from Jesus to announce his resurrection and ascension to the Father. Upon her arrival, she declares, "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:18) and then she proceeds to convey Jesus' message. Raymond Collins commented that with Mary's Paschal proclamation, she simply typifies adequate faith in the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>45</sup> She remained great in her leadership role, her patience, and her devotion to the Teacher whom she loved unreservedly.

It is significant to note that among all other women who followed Jesus, Mary of Madala is often mentioned first (similarly in Matt 27:56; Mark 15:40,47; 16:1; Luke 24:10). As such, Mariam Vamosh commented that Mary might have been a leader in the early Christian community<sup>46</sup> and Joseph Fitzmyer further stated that although she was not mentioned by name in Acts 1:12-14, she was most probably among the "certain women" mentioned who "were constantly devoting themselves to prayer" with the apostles in the upper room waiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene followed Jesus closely that she became a faithful disciple who was mentioned by name after the Twelve (cf. Luke 8:1-2).<sup>48</sup> Mary was thus an

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<sup>45</sup> Collins, Witherington, and Lampe 580.

<sup>46</sup> Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Women at the time of the Bible* (Abingdon Press, 2008), 95.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Acts of the Apostles," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 31 (NY: Doubleday, 1998), 215

<sup>48</sup> This is one of the examples of Lucan's pairs of men and women in his Gospel; it suggests equality. "Luke is fond of parallel pairs, and these pairs help us understand his stance towards women" (Robert F. O'Toole, S. J. *The Unity of Luke's Theology: An Analysis of Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 118.

active disciple of Jesus who listened to his instructions and participated in spreading the gospel of the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1).

Mary Magdalene lived in a culture where women were not so much recognized, yet, she knew the significance of participating in God's mission and so, her life and personality was not hidden in the gospels. Also, she knew the importance of team-spirit hence she was constantly in the company of other women, collaborated with them in doing God's mission so, after her encounter with Jesus through *training* (Luke 8:1-3), *instructing*, and *commission* (Luke 24:6-7; John 20:18), she was thus empowered to become a mission mobilizer for other women including the male apostles, for through her testimony, the other male disciple – Peter, was encouraged to go to the tomb – a place he dreaded, to see for himself.

Mary Magdalene becomes a model for all women who in the midst of cultural and social prejudices, are willing to be used by God in fulfilling His mission here on earth. The male dominated culture of Mary's time could not conceal her personality and contributions to the mission of Jesus and she was rewarded in the world by being the first to see the Risen Lord who entrusted her with the task of announcing his resurrection.

***Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42).*** Aside from the mother of Jesus, Martha and Mary, Lazarus's sisters, were closest to Jesus. The gospel of Luke introduces Martha and Mary with the words, "Now it happened as they went, that he entered a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word" (Luke 10:38-39).<sup>49</sup> According to John's gospel, the name of Martha and Mary's

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<sup>49</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible texts are from the New King James Version.

village was Bethany which was less than two miles away from Jerusalem (John 11:1,18).<sup>50</sup>

Against the rabbinic tradition, Jesus did not only accept the hospitality of these women's home but he also taught his word to them and this time, it was Mary who sat at his feet, listening to Jesus eagerly. The phrase, "to sit at someone's feet" was an idiomatic expression that means "studying under someone," and this suggest the humble position of the learner (e.g., Paul studied under the feet of Gamaliel Acts 22:3). So, Jesus made no haste to impart his words to Martha and Mary, even when it was contrary to Judaism general rule that prevented women from studying under a rabbi.

There is no doubt that Martha herself was a keen student of Jesus (see John 11:23-27) and Mary has always been seen as a committed student of Jesus. But this time around, Martha was not involved in the learning; she distracted herself with domestic chores while Mary sat at the feet of Christ, listening to him as he taught her his words. When Martha inquired of Christ while he cared not that her sister left her to serve alone and requested Jesus to tell Mary to help her (Luke 10:40), Jesus' mild response to Martha contains an important point: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42). On this point, Evelyn Stagg and Frank Stagg commented that Mary's decision to sit and listen to Christ's word was not a conventional one for Jewish women. Her posture and reference to Christ's word probably imply that Jesus was teaching her religious

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<sup>50</sup> Specht, 63.

instruction. Mary was admitted by Jesus into the study and she was commended for making that choice to learn.<sup>51</sup>

Mary did not allow any obstacle to prevent her from learning from Jesus. She ceased the opportunity to learn from Jesus even when her sister, Martha, at that moment was not in support of it. So, for Moon Injong, Martha's reaction revealed that a women's right to learn is not only opposed by men, based on patriarchal society, but women themselves could sometimes be a barrier to their learning.<sup>52</sup> Jesus however did not allow Martha's behaviour to prevent her sister from learning from him as other disciples who also learned from Jesus (Luke 10:41-42)

***The woman at the well (John 4).*** John's gospel details the conversation of Christ with the Samaritan woman. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as ceremonially unclean and treated them as enemies (John 4:9),<sup>53</sup> but Jesus broke this cultural prejudice when he actively engaged the Samaritan woman. Commenting on Christ's request for the woman to give water to drink, David Daube stated that this action showed Jesus' readiness to disregard the hostile presumption about the Samaritan and to emphasize for a more inclusive fellowship.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, Denise Carmody observed that the Samaritan woman was treated by Jesus as an intelligent woman as he was able to have the longest conversation with her than any other person.<sup>55</sup> Jesus as our Omniscience God, had a full knowledge about this woman's disreputable life and

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<sup>51</sup> Evelyn Stagg and Frank Stagg, *Women in the world of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster. Stagg & Stagg, 1978), 118.

<sup>52</sup> Injong, 13.

<sup>53</sup> pecht, 70.

<sup>54</sup> David Daube, "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 69 (1950): 138.

<sup>55</sup> Denise Carmody, *Biblical Woman: Contemporary reflections on Scriptural texts* (NY: Crossroad, 1989), 106.

so, he was able to bring her out of this lifestyle, and as the Messiah, he offered her the living water (John 4:25-26).

The Samaritan woman's interaction with Christ revealed her in-depth knowledge about the current theological issue of her days that she became the first mission leader that brought conversion to her whole community (John 4:39-42). Commenting on the Samaritan woman's action, Ellen White stated that she proved herself to be a highly effective missionary than the disciples of Christ.<sup>56</sup> She exemplified what true Christians are called to be – God's missionary to the world.

As seen above, women were instrumental in the life and ministry of Jesus. These women were not just following Jesus throughout his ministry journeys (Luke 8:1-3), they were also avid students of Jesus, and great missionaries in their days. Now, the next section will consider women in mission/ministry in Paul's days.

**Women as co-laborers with Apostle Paul in mission/ministry.** As presented earlier, women were actively involved in the life and ministry of Jesus and similarly, women in Paul's days took active part in mission/ministry, as they worked with him as co-workers in leading God's mission. On many occasions, both Acts and the Letters of Paul mention women who actively participated in the work of mission/ministry initiated by Paul. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas went from Neapolis to Philippi and stayed for several days (Acts 16:1-1). They went in search of a Jewish prayer place and there they found some women, and among them was Lydia, a worshipper of God (Acts 16:14).

Lydia accepted the gospel and was baptized along with her whole household (Acts 16:15). She became the link through which the gospel reached her whole

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<sup>56</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 194.

community.<sup>57</sup> Lydia thus became one of the first disciples of Paul and Paul with his sojourners later accepted Lydia's hospitality at her house (Acts 16:15).<sup>58</sup> Later, after Paul and Silas were released from the authorities in Philippi, they also went to Lydia's house and encouraged the brethren there. Lydia proved herself to be a capable and devote woman to God's course that when Paul and Silas left Philippi, they left the full church in her care (Acts 16:40).

Furthermore, Acts of the Apostle gives the story of Priscilla or Prisca (as she is known in Romans 16). She and her husband Aquila are addressed as Paul's coworkers in Christ. Paul recommends that all the churches of the Gentiles be grateful for the service rendered by them just as he himself is (Rom 16:3-4). The mentioning of Priscilla's name before the name of her husband indicates her prominent role in the ministry of the gospel (cf. Acts 18:18, 26; 2 Tim 4:19).<sup>59</sup> Paul recognized and appreciated their gifts and they followed him in his ministry at Ephesus.

Priscilla and Aquila later made their home available for Paul where he engaged in tent making and later on, Paul sailed with them to Ephesus. Their involvement with Paul in mission/ministry could have empower Priscilla to become an instructor or teacher to the Great Apollos who became Christ's disciple. Priscilla thus played the role of not only a follower but a teacher and proclaimer of the gospel.

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<sup>57</sup> Benjamin Isola Akano, "Importance of Women's Leadership Roles in Contemporary Cross-Cultural Missions in Nigeria," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry*, vol. 25 (2022): 184, accessed March 12 2025, <https://doi.org/10.21806/aamm.2022.25.08>.

<sup>58</sup> Rekha M. Chennattu, "Paul's Understanding of Women's Place in the Church," *Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1-2 (2009): 263, accessed 28 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/12%20Chennattu%20Women.pdf.

<sup>59</sup> Chennattu, 266.

Similarly, Paul in Philippians 4:3, acknowledges all the women who worked as co-labourers with him in spreading the gospel.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, Romans 16 details Paul's extensive greetings to friends and leaders in Rome. He lists most of these individuals in the church by name and some by relationship (e.g., Nereus's sister). Some of these people were householders, and Paul extends his greeting to their whole household community. Among these individuals, Paul includes an extraordinary number of women in his greeting, he singled out these women for their devoted service.<sup>61</sup>

Paul commended Phoebe who brought Paul's letter from Cenchrea (near Corinth) to Rome. Paul calls on the churches there to give Phoebe a warm welcome for she would be staying for a while and deserved generous hospitality. He described Phoebe as a sister, deacon, and a patron to Paul and others in the church of Cenchrea (Rom 16:1-2). Jennifer Stiefel thus believes that Phoebe provides strong evidence for the presence of women leaders in the Pauline churches (cf. 1 Tim 3:11).<sup>62</sup>

Concurrently, both Andronicus and Junia are mentioned alongside with the prominent apostles and although Junia was converted before Paul, she became Paul's "kinsman" and fellow prisoner who demonstrated outstanding qualities among the apostles (Rom 16:7).<sup>63</sup> Also, he commended other women like Persis, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Julia, Nereus's sister, and Rufus's mother, etc. for their work in mission/ministry. The intermixture of female and male names in Paul's list and the

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<sup>60</sup> Chennattu, 266.

<sup>61</sup> Stott J Romans, *God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity. Stott, 1994), 394-396.

<sup>62</sup> Jennifer H. Stiefel, "Women Deacons in 1 Timothy: A Linguistic and Literary Look at 'Women Likewise . . .' (1 Tim 3.11)," *New Testament Studies*, vol. 41. No. 3 (1995): 456.

<sup>63</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, 177.

general term used in describing their missionary work shows that with Paul, women and men are treated the same way when it came to church mission/ministry.

Paul commended these women as hard workers in ministry, devout teachers, and co-labourers in ministry in dangerous places, and further commended some for their hospitality. In all, the roles of women in Paul's days helped him in achieving success in his ministry and these women also demonstrated that the mission/ministry world is not a 'male domain,' for all – males and females, are to work together in fulfilling God's work here on earth.

Despite this appraisal of women in Paul's days, one still finds some of Paul's letters that are used to suppress the involvement of women in leading missions. Two of these texts will be concisely discussed as this is not the major thrust of this work however, it is just to address possible objections that may arise concerning the roles of women in the church.

**'Prohibiting' Pauline texts and women's involvement in mission/ministry.**

There are two Pauline texts that are sometimes used by some individuals to suppress women from participating fully in church mission/ministry. These texts are 1 Timothy 2: 11- 12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

This section is written to address possible objections that may arise concerning the roles of women in the church. Some have interpreted these Pauline texts as opposing women in church leadership, hence, the need to briefly examine what these texts actually say regarding women's roles in mission/ministry and in leading responsibilities.

**1 Timothy 2:11-12.** 1 Timothy 2 details four areas that Paul addresses as they relate to worship matters in the church of Ephesus. But our area of interest is verses 11-12 of 1 Timothy 2 and because of the scope of this research, I will not delve into a

detailed exegetical study of the text. In 1 Timothy 2:11-15, Paul instructs Timothy, who was pastoring in Ephesus at the time, on women's role in the place of worship.

Ann Bowman noted that since the beginning of the church on Pentecost, both women and men had participated in corporate worship<sup>64</sup> and now, false teachers, who may have included well-known elders, probably within the church, had arisen in the church of Ephesus since the last time Paul visited (1 Tim 1:3-11; 4:1-5; cf. Acts 20:17-38).<sup>65</sup> Further, Paul observed that these false teachers in the Ephesus church had influenced some of the women in the church (2 Tim 3:6-7).<sup>66</sup> As such, Junia Pokrifka commented on the possibility of having these untrained women influenced by the false teachers to promote false teaching that could water-down the gospel and the foundation of the church. Hence, Paul limited women's teaching and leadership role in the church momentarily, until they had received proper training.<sup>67</sup> Paul thus writes to instruct Timothy to avert the spread of false teaching in the church (1:3-11),

Paul seems concerned in the important for women to be well-grounded in Scripture, hence, he assumes that they could and would learn. This command to learn was really different from the common Judaism custom where Jewish women were not

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<sup>64</sup> Ann L. Bowman, "Women in Ministry: An Exegetical Study of 1 Timothy 2:11-15," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1992): 198, accessed 6 June 2024, [https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/Further\\_Research/MaleFemale%20Roles/Women%20in%20Ministry.pdf](https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/Further_Research/MaleFemale%20Roles/Women%20in%20Ministry.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 39-40.

<sup>66</sup> Bowman, 183.

<sup>67</sup> Junia Pokrifka, "Redeeming Women in the Grand Narrative of Scripture," in *Women in the Bible: Christian Reflection*, ed. Robert B. Krusechwitz (Waco, TX: The Center for Christian Ethics, 1989), 18.

allowed to study the Torah, let alone to touch it rather, they permitted to study from their sons and husbands while the women would later learn for them.<sup>68</sup>

On this, Lea Thomas and Hayne Griffin noted that in Judaism, the literal silence of women who neglected their spiritual growth or knowledge was enforced.<sup>69</sup> And so Collins Raymond stated that the lack of women in studying the Scriptures herself resulted in her inability to teach.<sup>70</sup> Lea Thomas and Hayne Griffin believed that the cultural setting of the church of Ephesus, which allows members to speak spontaneously, thereby making women to interrupt speakers and their teachings which could disrupt the flow of the service, could have been the reason why Paul instructs women to learn in silence and if they have any question, they should inquiry from their husbands at home.<sup>71</sup>

Sampson Nwaomah and Harriet Ikhane thus opined Paul's command as urging women in Ephesus' church to listen and learn first by being educated in faith and so for them, this instruction was a divine avenue for women to pursue and appreciate opportunities that could empower them to enhance their understanding and interpretation of Scriptures and which will further expose them to several literatures that could make them well-rounded in knowledge and challenges them to think and develop biblical and missional worldview.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Collins F. Raymond, "1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary," in *The New Testament Library* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2002), 71.

<sup>69</sup> Lea Thomas and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, United States: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), 71, accessed 5 June 2024, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=680800>.

<sup>70</sup> Raymond, 71.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas and Griffin, 86.

<sup>72</sup> Sampson Nwaomah and Harriet Ikhane, "Learning in Quietness and Submission in 1 Timothy 2:11: Relevance for Seventh-day Adventist Women in Nigeria," in *Light in a Once-Dark World: Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Christianity*, vol. 4 (2022): 64, 73.

Thus, Paul’s concern for women is for them to first educate themselves in Scriptures before they teach. On this, Ellen White encouraged women to be “people of the Word, mighty in the Scriptures as same men who work along such lines.”<sup>73</sup> So, Paul only prohibits women from speaking in the church if they were teaching wrongly, hence, the need for them to be empowered theologically/biblically to address issues properly. In giving the manner in which women were to learn, Paul instructs that they were to learn first “in quietness”<sup>74</sup> and to Gordon Fee, learning in “quietness” is suitable here because it seems normal for women to speak in public worship (1 Cor 11:5; 14:26).<sup>75</sup> Paul further instructs women to learn “in all submissiveness,” which highlights Paul’s emphasis on the attitude of the heart while learning.

Although several views emerge as to whom the women were to be submissive to,<sup>76</sup> women were however expected to be submissive to teachers of sound doctrines and they are to do so with an inner attitude of teachable spirit. In addition, Paul in verse 12 does not permit women teaching or exercising authority over men in public worship. But a study of what the term “to teach” means and its NT usage refers practically solely to instructing or teaching in public.<sup>77</sup> Since it is common in the NT

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<sup>73</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 192.

<sup>74</sup> For more detail on the meaning of the word “in quietness”, see Douglas J. Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance,” *Trinity Journal*, vol. 1, no. 5 (1980): 64.

<sup>75</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 52.

<sup>76</sup> See Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), 32. Since false teachers were leading believers astray, submission to church elders may have been part of Paul’s solution to that problem. Also, Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 44.

<sup>77</sup> Roy B. Zuck, “Greek Words for Teach,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 122 (1965): 159-160. He notes that in only three of nearly 100 occurrences does the word refer to the teaching of individuals: John 8:28; Romans 2:21; Revelation 2:14.

to see a teacher as one who teaches *systematically, expounds* and teaches Scriptures, both from the OT and apostolic teaching (1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 2:2),<sup>78</sup> then, in verses 13-14, Paul reveals the danger of deception as a result of a lack in receiving proper training on the part of a woman.

Paul then recommends that the Ephesus women seek biblical knowledge to be well-grounded in the Word, however, they are to do so in an orderly manner. This text thus gives a foundation by which properly trained and educated women could teach the Word just like Priscilla. This leads us to consider the next text 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

**1 Corinthians 14:34-35.** First Corinthians was written by Paul to the church of Corinth which he founded during his second missionary journey (Acts 18) and he later handed the church to Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, after eighteen months. The beginning of this letter to the Corinthian church reveals that the church was still under the influence of the world<sup>79</sup> because the city of Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and it was a populous city known for its intellectual concentration, material prosperity, and moral corruption.<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, Paul's letters (1 Cor 11, 14) to this church deal specifically on what the order of worship assembly should look like: "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but they are to be submissive, as the law

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<sup>78</sup> Harold Mare, "Prophet and Teacher in the New Testament Period," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 9 (1966): 146. Also, Floyd V. Filson, "The Christian Teacher in the First Century," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 60 (1941): 324.

<sup>79</sup> Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, United States: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), accessed 6 June 2024, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=1679062>.

<sup>80</sup> Leon L. Morris, "1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary," in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, vol. 7. (Downers Grove, United States: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 21, accessed 6 June 2024, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=2030116>.

also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for women to speak in church” (1 Cor 14:34-35).

Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 4, affirms that both men and women can pray and prophecy in the church. So, if in chapter 11, Paul permits women to prophecy why then in chapter 14 would he contradict himself? On this note, Leon Morris opined Paul as not contradicting himself because he is not dealing with whether women may minister and how qualified they should be, rather, his concern is on how women should learn (v. 35) thus affirming women to speak (Acts 2:18; 21:9).<sup>81</sup> It is obvious that as part of the congregation, women attended church worship with their husbands and they were however expected to follow the rules guiding congregational worship (v. 34).

Although here, Paul may have seemed to support the Jewish tradition that did not permit women to learn publicly under the tutor of a rabbi but instead, they were to receive instruction from their husbands and sons. Paul however, later reveals the danger of women falling into deception due to lack of learning (1 Tim 2:13-14) hence, the need for women to seek biblical knowledge so as to avoid being deceived by false teachers who were probably elders of the church and who may even be their husbands. Having considered some ‘prohibitive’ Pauline text, the next phase will also briefly explore Paul’s texts that support women’s engagement as mission leaders.

**Supportive Pauline texts for women and mission/ministry.** There are several Pauline texts that support women’s involvement in ministry and as earlier discussed, many women played significant roles in mission/ministry in Paul’s days. But due to lack of space and time, I will not comb through all these texts rather, only

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<sup>81</sup> . Morris, 21.

two of these texts – Galatians 3:27-28 and Acts 2:16-18 will be briefly discussed as it concerns this study.

***Galatians 3:27-28 – Equality in Christ Jesus.*** Galatians 3:27-28 says that: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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 Jesus*” (Gal 3:27-28, emphasis mine).

A Jewish man commonly offer this prayer to God in thanksgiving that he was not created a Gentile or a woman.<sup>82</sup> But Paul puts this Jewish prejudice aside and wrote a letter to the church in Galatia concerning the important of unity and equality among believers in Christ. He reminds the church in Galatia that salvation as a free gift is available to all who accepts it, not just to Jews. Thus, he affirms that all who believes and accepts Christ is not separated by race, culture, ethnic groups, class, or gender. Paul reminds the church that the ancient barriers have been conquered by Christ thereby uniting all believers in Him as one.<sup>83</sup>

Therefore, Galatians 3:27-28 provides the basis for equality in Christ because all who believe are baptized into the body of Christ, hence, all men and women alike are unite together to finish the task of evangelizing the world. As such, there no not exist in the church today any form of discrimination or separation among members in the body of Christ, especially as it relates to gender.

***Acts 2:16-18 – God’s Spirit on All Flesh.*** In Acts 2, after the Holy Spirit was poured on the disciples, Peter was full of the Holy Spirit and he received the boldness

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<sup>82</sup> Alan R. Cole, “The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary,” in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 156.

<sup>83</sup> Ralph P. Martin and Julie L. Wu, “Galatians,” in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon*, vol. 3. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), 284.

to speak about Christ and his salvation to the crowd. In the process of delivering his sermon, Peter quoted directly what prophet Joel said in Joel 2:28-29:

No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel, ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and you sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, *both men and women*, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:16-NRSV, emphasis mine).

Peter quotes this prophecy from Joel because the Holy Spirit was in him and he was led by the Spirit to address the crowd who were listening to him and to address us today. In the last days, the Spirit of God will be poured on all flesh, both women and men, making them to prophesy. The gift of prophecy is among the nine spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-10) and here, Peter mentions that God will pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh” – women and men (Acts 2:17).

On this note, Butler Carolyne averred that by God’s Spirit poured on all flesh signifies that the Spirit is for all people, making them to prophesy and so, nothing should limit women in this regard because the Holy Spirit has given all, women and men, equal access to God, the Father and this spiritual gifts thus empowers women as teachers, prophets, and leaders.<sup>84</sup>

From beginning, God created ‘all flesh’ as male and female and His Spirit is poured on ‘all flesh’ enabling them to partake in fulfilling His mission mandate of proclaiming the good news to all nations and then, the end will come. Having presented the biblical foundations for women in mission/ministry, the next section will examine the theological foundation for women’s participation in leading missions in the fulfilment of God’s prophecy and great commission mandate.

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<sup>84</sup> Butler D. Carolyne, “Women in Pastoral Leadership within the Assemblies of God: How Can the Numbers Advance?” (Selected Honors Theses, 2020), 134, accessed 6 June 2024, <https://firescholars.seu.edu/honors/134>

## **Theological Foundation for Women and Mission Mobilizing**

The theological foundation for women to become mission mobilizers will be discussed under the following subheadings: the concept of womanhood from creation, the commission giving to all, balanced ministry focus, spiritual gifts given to all, and equal partnership needed in church mission/ministry. This section is germane in order to have an understanding of the original plan of God in creating man and woman, and to also reflect the significant of women's involvement in fulfilling God's commission of saving souls into His kingdom.

**The concept of womanhood in the creation narrative (Genesis 1 and 2).** In the creation narrative, God made man as both "male and female" (Gen 1:26-27), and He created them as equal partners (Gen 1-3).<sup>85</sup> The KJV Dictionary defines the word equal as one not inferior or superior to another<sup>86</sup> and the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines equal as having requisite qualities, such as strength, or ability, for a task or situation or having the same quantity, measure, or value as another.<sup>87</sup>

The definitions above best give the position that male and female are created as equal partners, both man and woman are bestowed with God's blessing that empowers them to be productive; both are commissioned to subdue the earth and rule

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<sup>85</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "Equality from the Start: Woman in the Creation Story," *Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1975-1978): 22, accessed 24 April 2024, [https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/1975-1976\\_Vol\\_7/22253155.READER\\_028.pdf](https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/1975-1976_Vol_7/22253155.READER_028.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> *KJV Dictionary*, s.v. "Equal," accessed 16 October 2025, <https://av1611.com/kjbp/kjv-dictionary/equal.html>.

<sup>87</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., s.v. "Equal," accessed 24 April 2024, <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=equal>.

over the animals created; and both are raised to an equally honorable position as they exercise authority over the created world (Gen 1:26,28).<sup>88</sup>

David Larson thus sees man and woman existing in a relational, mutual, and reciprocal dynamic.<sup>89</sup> He further commented on the “rib of the man which God formed into a woman” (Gen 2:22-23) as a reminder of her equality in value and being.”<sup>90</sup> This suggests that both man and woman are made of the same substance, signifying that their shared humanity is identical in essence. Concomitantly, Ellen White noted that Eve created from Adam’s side rib signifies that Eve was not to control Adam as the head and likewise, Adam was not to trample on Eve as an inferior instead, Eve was to stand by Adam’s side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.<sup>91</sup>

From the above statement, it becomes evident that God did not create woman to be inferior to man, rather she was created as an equal partner. Furthermore, Adam’s exclamation when he first saw Eve, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man (Gen 2:23), reflects that Eve was the second-self of Adam, exemplifying that woman is not inferior to man (cf. Eph 5:29).<sup>92</sup>

Again, God referred to the woman as “a helper” (Gen 2:18). In this usage, David Larson commented that in this context, a helper is the same as the one who

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<sup>88</sup> Hasel, 22.

<sup>89</sup> David R. Larson, “Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination,” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, eds. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM. 1995), 115.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>91</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and prophets* (Mt. View, CA: Pacific. 1958), 46.

<sup>92</sup> White, *Patriarchs and prophets*, 46.

receives a help because no one may give help to one that is superior as such, the helper takes the position of the giver and not that of the receiver, so, the woman is not an inferior of the man but his equal.<sup>93</sup> According to Richard Davidson, the Hebrew word ‘ezer’, which is translated in English as “help” or “helper,” is misleading because this translation tends to suggest an assistant, a subordinate or an inferior. But the Hebrew translation does not carry such meaning.

In the Hebrew Bible, *ezer* is often used to describe a superior helper – God as the ultimate helper of Israel and His people, for instance, Moses named one of his sons Eliezer, meaning “My God is a help” (Exod 18:4) and the Psalmist also refers to God as our help (Ps 33:20; 70:5) and notably, this same Hebrew word is used to describe woman in Genesis 2. So, this term, *ezer*, in itself does not stipulate rank or position either superiority or inferiority; as such, *ezer* describes a beneficial relationship.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, one can say that in the Bible, the description given to the woman as a helper means that she is neither subordinate nor inferior to the man.

Additionally, Ellen White believed that woman, in all important aspect, was created by God as man’s equal because Eve’s sin was in her attempt to be like God and not in attempting to be like man, whom she was already equal (Gen 3:5-6) as such, the consequence of the curse brought about the subordination of the woman which was not part of God’s original plan for He designed that in all things, the woman should be the man’s equal.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, the plan of God from the very beginning was for the couple to share all interests while maintaining individuality in

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<sup>93</sup> Larson, 116.

<sup>94</sup> Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in ed. Nancy Vyhmeister, *Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University. 2000), 262.

<sup>95</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Mt. View, CA: Pacific, 1948), 483-484.

their thoughts and actions, but, after Eve sinned, as part of the curse, the man would rule over the woman (Gen 3:16).

This subjection has however made women's lives burdensome and men have also abused the superiority given to them through arbitrary power. But through the plan of redemption, God offers humanity a second chance by giving them another trial. Next in line is to look at the commission given to all.

**The Commission for all (Matthew 28:18-20).** The Great Commission is the term used for the variety of directives Christ gave to his followers concerning their future mission after his resurrection. This Commission is what Ellen White called the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom and the church, organized for service is God's appointed agency for saving souls.<sup>96</sup> Matthew 28:18-20 contains the Great Commission as follows;

And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and o, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, Amen.

Tony Tedjo, et al, noted that this mandate is given to all believers in the church, young, middle, and age adults, and all believers should be made to willingly accept this call.<sup>97</sup> Adults here thus included both male and female believers willing and ready to be guided and built to become equipped to proclaim God's message. So, to Ellen White, this commission is for all believers in Christ to the end of the age and the essence of the church is to faithfully fulfill this command of Jesus.<sup>98</sup> This task is

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<sup>96</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Ellen G. White Estate, 1911), 28.

<sup>97</sup> Tony Tedjo, et al., "The Growth of the Church through Mission Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20," *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal*, vol. 5, no 1, (2022): 5588, accessed 6 June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i1.4265>.

<sup>98</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 822, 825.

not for the ministers alone, but to all who profess Christ's name, men and women, youth and children.<sup>99</sup>

Additionally, Ellen White noted that the commission was for the apostles to go throughout the world proclaiming the gospel thereby showing the extent of the work and the high responsibility given to all Christ's followers today.<sup>100</sup> Hence, Kukzin Lee and Francois Viljoen believed that to reach the targeted group in fulfilment of the commission, all is required by Matthew to be involve in this universal mission.<sup>101</sup> Thus, all believers need to be involved in the assignment of Christ's mission for work has been allotted to all and no one can substitute for another<sup>102</sup> (cf. Acts 1:8; Matt 5:13-14 1 Pet 2:10; Gal 3:28).

It is also interesting to note that the word disciple is not only restricted to the people Jesus chose to work in his ministry (Matt 10:1-4), for as seen in Acts 9:36, Tabitha or Dorcas was called a disciple. Again, "disciple" is the English equivalent of the Greek word, *mathētēs*, used for a learner or a student, often with the idea that the person is a follower of a particular teacher (cf. John 9:28; Matt 22:16). In time, "disciple" became a common designation for all followers of the Lord (see Acts 18:22; Luke 8:1-3).<sup>103</sup> So, anyone who believes in Jesus and becomes a Christian is called a disciple.

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<sup>99</sup> Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times* (September 22), 1887.

<sup>100</sup> Ellen G. White, *Atlantic Union Gleaner* (September 25), 1907.

<sup>101</sup> Kukzin Lee and Francois P. Viljoen, "The Target Group of the Ultimate Commission Matthew 28:19," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theologica Studies*, vol. 66, no. 1 (2010): 4, accessed 3 June 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/ajol-file-journals\_339\_articles\_56743\_submission\_proof\_56743-4045-97334-1-10-20100719.pdf.

<sup>102</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, 10.

<sup>103</sup> Chris Shirley, "It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple: An Integrative Model of Discipleship for the Local Church," *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, vol. 50, no. 2 (2008): 208-209,

Thus, Bishop Morris averred that the Great Commission was given to the apostles initially because they were the highest leaders of the church that was to be established, however, it was not limited to them.<sup>104</sup> So, a disciple has been given a commission to “Go” and one ceases to be a disciple if he/she openly refuses to be one for every true disciple is born into God’s kingdom as a missionary.<sup>105</sup> Women are true disciples as earlier discussed and they are part of those charged with the responsibility of declaring the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light (1 Pet 2:9).

Similarly, the gospel of Mark records that Jesus called the twelve disciples as apostles (Mark 3:14), and “apostle” refers to someone who is sent on a mission. Mark notes that Jesus called the twelve that they might be with him – as disciples, and that he might send them out to preach – as apostles (Mark 3:14). Here, the learning and sending aspects is seen. Adequate knowledge about the Kingdom of God and how to go about it is needful likewise, the willingness to be sent is important. In the NT, many people were called apostles, including women, Paul, Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), a couple of Paul’s relatives, are all called apostles, and so on.

The call, commissioning, and sending are meant to be an important part of every true believer’s lifestyle. As such, Ellen White admonished that the whole church needs to be vitalized by God’s Spirit in studying, planning, economizing, and putting

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accessed 4 June 2024, [https://swbtsv7.s3.amazonaws.com/media/Theology\\_Journal/50.2/50.2\\_Shirley.pdf](https://swbtsv7.s3.amazonaws.com/media/Theology_Journal/50.2/50.2_Shirley.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> Bishop Emmanuel Morris, "Women’s Involvement in Ministry: A Legacy for Contextual Mission Work in Africa," *International Journal of Research in Sociology and Anthropology (IJRSA)*, vol 7, no. 2 (2022): 16, accessed 4 June 2024, <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijrsa/v7-i2/2.pdf>.

<sup>105</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 195.

in operation everything possible by which the church may reach and bless all humanity.<sup>106</sup> In so doing, all believers involve in the work of saving souls into God's kingdom will thus render to God the highest service.

Commenting on the Adventist's position on the Great Commission, Ellen White stated that since the early beginning of the Adventist church, the church has believed that the Great Commission constitutes the marching order of the church, and this commission includes all the believers to the end of the age. As such, the work of saving souls does not rest solely on the ordained ministers; rather, all who have received Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of others, for this is the essence for establishing the church and so, all who take part in the work are to pledge to be co-workers with Christ.<sup>107</sup>

Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-47; and John 20:21 also record the Great Commission. While Matthew outlines four elements – to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach, of the mission Jesus left in His disciples' care, Mark details the signs that follows the doing of the commission. Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson thus aver that the reason for Mark's details on the signs and miracles of Jesus was because of the audience Mark was trying to reach.<sup>108</sup>

This same power possessed by the apostles is also available to those who are committed to do God's work.<sup>109</sup> Then, Luke's version of the Great Commission has a focus on its teaching content, which is based on what Jesus taught about repentance

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<sup>106</sup> Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 12, 1909.

<sup>107</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 822.

<sup>108</sup> Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson, *The Great Commission: Biblical Models or Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 36.

<sup>109</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6 (Mt. View, CA: Pacific, 1948), 490.

and remission of sins and in John, the Commission is contained in an experience of the disciples just after the resurrection.<sup>110</sup>

In all the passages that link to the Great Commission, the presence of women is recorded (Matt 27:56, 61: 28:1-8; Mark 15:40-41, 47; 16:1-8; Luke 23:49,55; 24:1-10; John 19:25-27; 20:1, 11-18; Acts 1:14). With the meaning of a disciple as one who follow, a look at the structure and immediate context of Matthew 28:19-20 shows that it was only the women, alongside Joseph of Arimathea, that were pointed out as disciples who continued to “follow” Jesus to the cross and the Tomb (Matt 26:56; 27-55-57).<sup>111</sup>

Consequently, the women at the tomb became the first disciples to witness the resurrection of Jesus and the first disciples were commanded to “Go” and proclaim the good news about Christ resurrection to the male disciples (Matt 28:5-10).<sup>112</sup> Mark’s gospel went further to make a list of many other women disciples who came with Jesus from Jerusalem to the place of crucifixion (15:12-16:8).<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, Luke’s gospel includes women disciples with other friends from Galilee who were present at the cross when the male disciples were nowhere to be found. Thus, these women disciples were the representative disciples who were present at the crucifixion, were the first to witness Christ’s resurrection, and were the first commissioned to go and inform the remaining male disciples about Christ’s

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<sup>110</sup> For details see, Chuck Lawless, ““To all the Nations”: The Great Commission Passages in the Gospels and Acts,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15, no. 2 (2011): 21, accessed 25 Aug 2025, [https://cf.sbts.edu/equip/uploads/2015/10/SBJT-V15-N2\\_complete.pdf#page=16](https://cf.sbts.edu/equip/uploads/2015/10/SBJT-V15-N2_complete.pdf#page=16).

<sup>111</sup> See, D. M. Scholer, “Women,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 882. 880-883. 880. 882.

<sup>112</sup> Luter A. Boyd, “Women Disciples and the Great Commission,” *Trinity Journal*, vol. 6. no 5 (1995): 175, accessed 4 June 2024, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/58820704.pdf>.

<sup>113</sup> Boyd, 177-178.

resurrection (Luke 23:29; 24:8-9). Then in John's gospel, it was also a woman disciple, Mary Magdalene, who became the first follower of Jesus to witness the empty tomb (20:1), and she was commissioned to "Go" to the other disciples to tell them about the resurrected Lord (20:2, 18).

These women were prepared for mission/ministry through practical training of traveling along with Christ throughout every city and village, preaching the good news of the kingdom (Luke 8:1-3). They became empowered to become mission mobilizers, even to the male disciples, through the instruction and commissioning of proclaiming the resurrection gospel. These women, working together as a team and collaborating in doing God's mission draw us to the significance of a balanced ministry focus of involving both men and women in God's mission, which the next section will present.

**Balanced ministry focus (Romans 16:1-5).** In Romans 16, Paul identifies twenty-six individuals he intends to greet in Rome and of which nine are women. He mentioned these women to demonstrate their significance in church growth and ministry success recorded in his ministry days. So, Paul mentioned Priscilla and Aquila, her husband, who worked together with him (Rom 16:3; cf. Acts 18:2, 18; 1 Cor 16:19).

Sampson Nwaomah and Harriet Ikhane asserted that Priscilla was well-grounded in Scriptures that she was able to teach the Scripture to the great Orator, Apollos (Acts 18:28).<sup>114</sup> So, Priscilla with her husband, Aquila, worked together with Paul, risked their lives for Paul in presenting the gospel to those Paul could not reach (Rom 16:5).

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<sup>114</sup> Nwaomah and Ikhane, 74.

Also, Paul listed several single women like Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3) and Phoebe (Rom 16:1), who were co-workers with Paul in his ministry.<sup>115</sup> Phoebe likely had a recognized ministry role<sup>116</sup> while Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis were women who worked hard in mission/ministry with Paul (16:6, 12). So, in Paul's letter, women had an honoured place in mission/ministry, for they served as co-workers with Paul and they worked hard in service. They worked closely with Paul, thus illustrating the synergy of men and women in advancing God's kingdom. Similarly, Ellen White pinpointed the unique service that women can do in line of achieving a balanced ministry. She said,

In the various branches of the work of God's cause, there is a wide field in which our sisters may do good service for the Master. Many lines of missionary work are neglected. In the different churches, much work is often left undone or done imperfectly, could be well accomplished by the help that our sisters, if *properly instructed*, can give. Through various lines of missionary effort, *they can reach a class that is not reached by our ministers*. ... The labor of such Christian women are needed (emphasis mine).<sup>117</sup>

These words from Ellen White thus illustrate the need for women to be properly trained to reach out to souls in high and low places, restricted to men in fulfilling the mandate of spreading the gospel to all peoples and groups of the world. So, the following section will present us with the importance of the bestowal of the spiritual gifts to all believers, men and women alike in fulfilling God's cause.

**The spiritual gifts given to all (1 Corinthians 12).** In Paul's writings, he shows how the church is intimately interconnected with the workings of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-11; cf. 2 Cor 1:22; 3:3, 6, 8, 17-18; 5:5; Phil 1:19; 2:1; 3:3) who

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<sup>115</sup> Karen M. Elliott, *Women in Ministry and the Writings of Paul* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2010), 2.

<sup>116</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, "'Women in the Pauline Mission' in the Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission," *Apollos* (2000): 222.

<sup>117</sup> Ellen White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 466.

bestows diverse spiritual gifts to believers (1 Cor 12). Paul recognizes that these spiritual gifts are not given to men only, but women also receive such gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 11:5), which are to be used for the furtherance of the church's mission.<sup>118</sup>

In this vein, Harriet Ikhane observed that at Pentecost, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit was on both women and men, and Peter's speech reemphasizes God's desire to pour out His Spirit on all flesh – women and men alike, in the last days (Acts 2:17-18; cf. Joel 2:28ff). As such, the Holy Spirit equips “all flesh, women and men” with spiritual gifts that empower them to become fruitful proclaimers of the good news.<sup>119</sup>

Therefore, 1 Corinthians 12 does not specify any spiritual gifts bestow to a particular gender and there is also no partiality in the distribution of the gifts to believers by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the church should frown against any form of discrimination against women who desire to participate fully in mission/ministry. Next, I will shade light on the need for equal partnership in church mission/ministry.

**Equal partnership in church mission/ministry (Galatians 3:28).** From creation, God made man and woman as equal partners – both were created in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27) and they were both given equal blessings and commission of fruitfulness and multiplication the earth (Gen 1:28). According to John Scott and John Wyatt, though the equality was distorted when our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned, however, both Christ and Paul stressed that the distortion was

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<sup>118</sup> Gordon, D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 159).

<sup>119</sup> Harriet Ikhane, “Theological Education of Seventh-day Adventist Women in Nigeria,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (2020): 193.

remedied by redemption.<sup>120</sup> God also involved both men and women in His salvation plan, in evangelizing the world for Christ and empowering them both for this task (cf. 1 Cor 12; Acts 2:17-18) and both men and women will participate in establishing His kingdom.

This equal partnership means giving every member of the church, men and women, young and old, an equal opportunity to grow to their full spiritual potential in fulfilling God's mission. As such, David Larson asserted that these opportunities and responsibilities should be guided by an individual's evident gifts for a particular ministry. A denial of full access must be on the basis that an individual is not qualified for that specific service and not on the basis of gender.<sup>121</sup> This therefore calls the church today to be intentional in developing believers' spiritual gifts to render to God the highest service of saving souls into His kingdom.

Jerry Moon believed that this concept of equal partnership can be achieved by combining the abilities of men and women in team ministry, and in achieving great success in mission/ministry, this combination is germane.<sup>122</sup> Based on the fact that all, including women, are called to work for the salvation of humanity, then all women who have a calling should be given equal opportunity to grow (to be trained) and to be involved in mission/ministry.

Ellen White emphasized this point when she says that women should labor in the gospel ministry and young women should be trained for this work, for she believes that women can minister in ways that men cannot; hence, they are

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<sup>120</sup> John Scott and John Wyatt, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2006), 228-334.

<sup>121</sup> Larson, 131.

<sup>122</sup> Jerry Moon, "A power that exceeds that of men: Ellen G. White on women in ministry," in *Women in ministry*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University 1998), 203.

indispensable in God's work.<sup>123</sup> She further admonished a woman in trouble to take her trouble to women<sup>124</sup> and counseled that:

Woman, if she wisely improves her time and faculties, relying upon God for wisdom and strength, may stand on an equality with her husband as adviser, counselor, companion, and co-worker, and yet lose none of her womanly grace or modesty. She may elevate her own character, and just as she does this, she is elevating and ennobling the characters of her family and exerting a powerful though unconscious influence upon others around her.<sup>125</sup>

Concomitantly, in Ephesians 4:11, the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of pastoring-teaching to both men and women and Jerry Moon averred some women possess these gifts for the successful management of churches.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, Ruth Munityu recognized that in fulfilling the mission of the church, full partnership of women and men is indispensable<sup>127</sup> and so, equal partnership in mission/ministry will help bring a female touch or perspective in mission. Ellen White attested to this by saying that: "God has a work for women as well as for men for women can do in families a work that reaches the inner life that men cannot do and they can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach, hence, their labor is needed."<sup>128</sup>

Therefore, combining men and women's abilities in mission/ministry represents God's complete work at creation for He declared the creation of male and female as very good (Gen 1:31). As such, the church will gain more in using and

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<sup>123</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 472.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 460.

<sup>125</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 467.

<sup>126</sup> Moon, 203.

<sup>127</sup> Ruth Munityu James, "Women's Theological Education in Kenya," in *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays*, eds. Mary N. Getui and Emmanuel A. Obeng (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 1999), 109.

<sup>128</sup> Ellen G. White, "Words to Lay Members," Quoted in Ellen G. White. 1952. *Welfare Ministry* (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Estate, 1902) 26.

harnessing the potentials of women alongside men in mission and their empowerment will aid in the fulfillment of the Great Commission Mandate of spreading the good news to all the world, and then, the end will come. Next is to explore ways Adventist women are empowered for mission/ministry, specifically, in the Nigerian context.

### **Summary**

This chapter revealed women who navigated patriarchy to carry out pivotal roles in the OT and NT. Women like Miriam (entering unentered/restricted areas from men), Rahab (displayed learning ability through understanding history), Mary, the mother of Jesus (exemplified benefits of receiving proper training), Mary Magdalene (a great proclaimer of the gospel), Martha and Mary (great students of the Master), Priscila (a great Bible expounder and teacher), and other women in Paul's day, made significant contribution in mission/ministry because they were exposed to training and leadership roles. Thus, this promotes the need for a balanced ministry where men and women synergize in active partnership to finish God's work here on earth. The next chapter will examine the missiological foundation for women and mission mobilizing.

## CHAPTER 3

### MISSIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN AND MISSION MOBILIZING

This chapter will first examine the general perception of women in society. This is important for this study because understanding how women are perceived in different societies can inform readers about their relevance in societal and religious matters. This will enable readers to identify possible factors that could create barriers for women becoming mission mobilizers and provide them with potential ways to empower 21st-century women as mission mobilizers.

Afterward, this chapter explores women and empowerment for mission among Adventists in Nigeria, highlighting their roles in mission/ministry and the potential to empower women as mission mobilizers in the Adventist church. Then, factors inhibiting women from becoming mission mobilizers were examined. Finally, the concept of gender studies in recognition of the importance of equal opportunities for women and men to maximize their capacities for the church's mission was explored.

#### **Societal Overview of Women**

This section will briefly explore the lives and status of women in different eras of world history, beginning with the Bible times, the Greco-Roman world, and early Christianity. It will then examine the status and leadership role of women in the African context generally, and the Nigerian society specifically.

## Women in Biblical Times

As seen in chapter 2, patriarchy was the prevailing system of biblical times and its effects resulted in the way and manner the stories of women are told in biblical times. For instance, the stories of women appeared in the Scriptures either because they are the wives or mothers of famous people, or they are queens or heroes, or they are crime victims,<sup>1</sup> and their role reflects the typical role of women which was naturally related to her sex. As such, the position of a woman in the home with regards to the inheritance right from a father thus makes it paramount for her to bear a male child for her to maintain relevance.<sup>2</sup>

Frank Holbrook thus affirmed that in biblical records, the daily routine of women involved taking charge of the house chores and caring and training their children in their early age (Gen 24:16; cf. John 4:7; 1 Sam 22; 2:19; Ruth 4:16, etc.).<sup>3</sup> But sometimes, women were allowed to engaged in male tasks such as shepherding (Gen 29:9; Exo 2:16,19), becoming a judge (Judg 4:4), and engaging in business (Prov 31:10-31), etc.<sup>4</sup> Women also served in various leadership capacities as prophetess (Miriam, Exo 15:20, Deborah, Judg 4:4, Hulda, 2 Kgs 22:12-20, Isaiah's wife Isa 8:3 Noadiah, Neh 6:10-14, etc.)<sup>5</sup> and in the religious sphere such as

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<sup>1</sup> Janina Hiebel, *A Friendly Guide to: Women in the Old Testament* (Garratta Publishing), 16, accessed 20 May 2024, [https://www.garrattpublishing.com.au/pdf/SampleChapters/FG-Women-Old\\_Test\\_SamplePages.pdf](https://www.garrattpublishing.com.au/pdf/SampleChapters/FG-Women-Old_Test_SamplePages.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Hiebel 17.

<sup>3</sup> Frank B. Holbrook, "A Brief Analysis and Interpretation of the Biblical Data Regarding the Role of Women," in *Archive*, 6, accessed 20 May 2024, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/brief-analysis-of-biblical-data-regarding-role-of-women.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Holbrook, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Jerry A. Gladson, "The Role of Women in the Old Testament Outside the Pentateuch," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church*, (Biblical Research Institute Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 44-45, accessed 21 May 2024, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/role-of-women-in-the-church.pdf>.

organizing worship.<sup>6</sup> However, in religious life, women were concerned more with the instructing and training of their children with basic spiritual guide.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, women in biblical times were free to mingle with men in the social assembly of the nations (cf. Exod 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut 16:11, 14; 1Sam 1:1-2; Luke 2:41-42) and every seven years, the law was read to them publicly to instill the awareness of their religious faith (Deut 31:10-13; Neh 8:2-3).<sup>8</sup> The law codes seen in Exodus 21 and Leviticus 20 show that a woman was regarded as a complete human being (Exod 21:2-25, 28-31; Lev 20:16).<sup>9</sup>

On this, Kenneth Vine noted that though certain laws seem to emphasize on women's subordination to men (Lev 12:1-5; Exo 21:7-8), however, several laws treated women and men equally (Lev 19:3; 20:9; Deut 5:16; 22:22; 27:16).<sup>10</sup> A general examination of women in biblical times thus reveals that despite the patriarchal structure, women though wives and mothers, played significant roles in the life of their children by instructing them in the way of the Lord and they were also involved in the religious and social gathering of the people. This leads to the next section that explores how women are seen in Greco-Roman society.

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<sup>6</sup> Gladson, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth L. Vine, "The Legal and Social Status of Women in the Pentateuch," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church*, (Biblical Research Institute Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 33, accessed 21 May 2024, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/role-of-women-in-the-church.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Holbrook, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Gladson, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Vine, 34.

## Women in Greco-Roman society

In the discussion of women in Greco-Roman society, their status and leadership roles varied from one locality to another: Greco-Roman society: Jewish, Greek, and Roman Societies. However, the general rule subjected women first to their fathers or husbands, and then they remained semi-minors under male guardianship.<sup>11</sup> For instance, in some localities, a mixture of female infanticide and maternal deaths could be a reason for the inequality between males and females, which thereby limits the legal and political rights of women.<sup>12</sup> A Roman woman may have also enjoyed certain privileges and rights more than a Jewish woman.<sup>13</sup>

In the Jewish society, the specific Jewish man's prayer, "Praise be to God that he has not created me a woman,"<sup>14</sup> reveals the subordination of women in the Jewish communities. Beginning at the education of a child, both boys and girls were educated informally, however, the girl child receives training from her mother in household arts, purity laws, and women's responsibilities.<sup>15</sup> Jerry Gladson opined that these mothers could have probably learned this elementary religious instruction from their

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<sup>11</sup> Julia Neuffer, "First-Century Cultural Backgrounds in the Greco-Roman Empire," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church*, (Biblical Research Institute Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 50, accessed 21 May 2024, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/role-of-women-in-the-church.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Rodney Stark, "Reconstructing the Rise of Christianity: The Role of Women," *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 56, no. 3 (1995), 235, accessed, 10 May 2024, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3711820>.

<sup>13</sup> Helmut Koester, *History Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1995), 62.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth Anne Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Women Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 59.

<sup>15</sup> Nathaniel Oluseyi Oyewole, "Paul's Perspective on the Role of Women in Leadership and its Relevance to the Church in Africa," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, vol. 103, no. 2 (2022): 4, accessed 28 May 2024, [https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article\\_45\\_vol\\_103\\_2\\_2022\\_nigeria.pdf](https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_45_vol_103_2_2022_nigeria.pdf).

male guardians – fathers or husbands, which was enough to pass on to their children.<sup>16</sup> Only the boy child could formally further his education by attending the synagogue school and learning from a rabbi who teaches him the Torah in Hebrew.<sup>17</sup>

Catherine Kroeger thus noted that the diet provided for the boy child was quite richer than that of a girl child, probably because of what it takes to engage in formal learning.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, it became neither obligatory nor proper to educate females in the Torah, and they were not even given the privilege to study under a rabbi.<sup>19</sup> Joachim Jeremias summarized this situation regarding the education of a girl child thus:

Some rabbis strongly opposed efforts to teach women, and if a man gives his daughter knowledge of the Law, it is as though he taught her lechery. She might become active in public life and liable to seduction.<sup>20</sup>

This is the height to which Jewish women were subjugated in terms of receiving equal learning opportunities as with their Jewish male counterparts, thus connoting why mothers could not advance from giving only basic elementary religious instruction to their children. In the religious circle, women could participate in religious activities but they could not function in the essential religious tasks of

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<sup>16</sup> Gladson, 38.

<sup>17</sup> Ikechukwu Michael Oluikpe, “Jesus and Rabbinic Schools: Implications for Adventist Education,” *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry*, vol. 11 (2015): 118.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Women in Graeco-Roman World and Judaism,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. Craig Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000): 1276.

<sup>19</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, “Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation,” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 159.

<sup>20</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress. 1969), 373.

men, and though the Scripture instructed them, they were not permitted to touch it.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld observed that from the Talmud, women on specific occasions were excused from the Jewish Law and certain prayers.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the recommendation of a first-century rabbi that fathers should teach their daughters the Torah due to the merit they might stand to gain<sup>23</sup> made Zelophehad's five daughters (Num 26:33) to demonstrate that Moses permitted females' education in the law, for Moses instructed the priests to publicly read the law as the people assembled every seven years (Deut 31:10-13; cf. Neh 8:2-3). Thus, the actions of Zelophehad's daughters presented them as female expounders of the law.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, some women, like the mother of Timothy and his grandmother, acquired considerable knowledge of the Torah to pass on to their child, Timothy.<sup>25</sup>

Further, Craig Keener observed that it was not part of the Jewish tradition for women to constitute membership of any official congregation, nevertheless, some inscriptions from earliest Synagogues revealed women who held prominent leadership positions in some synagogues.<sup>26</sup> Even when a Jewish woman was under the guardianship of a male, she was, however, the mistress of the household, and she is valued and respected for her unique role in her family.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Tract West, "The Mary and Martha Story: Who Learns What Lesson about Women and Ministry?" *Quarterly Review: A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1999): 135.

<sup>22</sup> Tucker and Liefeld, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Katherine C. Bushnell, *God's Word to Women: 100 Bible Studies on Woman's Place in the Divine Economy* (Oxford University Press, 1943): 218.

<sup>24</sup> Bushnell, 218.

<sup>25</sup> Neuffer, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Craig S. Keener, "Man and Woman," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 432.

<sup>27</sup> Neuffer, 53.

***Women in the Greek society.*** In the Greek society like any other patriarchal societies, the view about women and leadership roles was guided by the expectations males had of women.<sup>28</sup> The Greek society considered the place of women to be confined to the home. They were expected to perform the important role of managing the daily requirements of the homes to rear, care, and educate their children in harmony with the acceptable norms and values in society.<sup>29</sup> For this reason, a girl is allowed to gain education, however, this kind of education was not to stimulate intellectual development or allow her to partake in public life but instead, it was to prepare her for the task of nurturing a family.<sup>30</sup>

Though most available documents on women in Greek society do not provide a precise view on how women lived in their era, the general view and leadership positions of women were different from all localities of ancient Greece. However, as found in Athens, a great detailed description on the status and leadership positions of women in the ancient Greek world, but women did not possess almost the same rights as men.<sup>31</sup>

Among the Athenians, women were confined to the women's quarters where they carried out home duties and had minimal contact with the male domain.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> William J. O'Neal, "The Status of Women in Ancient Athens," *International Social Science Review*, vol. 68 (2001): 116, accessed 4 July 2024, <https://farrington1600.wikispaces.com/file/view/WomenInAthens.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Zhulduz Amangelidyevna Seitkasimova, "Status of Women in Ancient Greece," *Journal for Anthropological Studies* 3, no. 2 (2019): 49, accessed 4 July 2024, <https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojas.0302.03049s>.

<sup>30</sup> Seitkasimova, 53.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland, *Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Alexander the Great* (London: Routledge, 1994), 125.

<sup>32</sup> Kay O'Pry, "Social and Political Roles of Women in Athens and Sparta," *Saber and Scroll*, vol. 1 (2012): 8-9, accessed 4 July 2024, <http://digitalcommons.apus.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=saberandscroll>.

However, this situation did not apply to all women in the Greek society because some women, such as respectable and wealthy women, were not restricted in movement and in participating equally with men in religious and other duties and young girls from wealthy homes were allowed to receive education and were free to interact with each other.<sup>33</sup>

Matthew Ditton observed that educated girls from wealthy backgrounds were featured in a literary setting with boot scrolls to depict the self-determining mind of women in seeking education. These portrayals provided evidence that not all women were excluded from active social life and other duties outside the household.<sup>34</sup>

Though women were not excluded from participating in social and other duties outside the homes, their participation in religious and certain duties as citizens was regulated by laws. In addition, the expectations men had of women may appear to make women subservient to men, nevertheless, this did not portray Greek women as inferior or insignificant in both the home or society as some exceptional women rose above these limitations and became relevant and recognized in the society as poets, philosophers, physicians, and leaders.<sup>35</sup>

***Women in Roman society.*** One easily gets to know the life and history of Roman women majorly from male sources, even when some of the Roman women were literate.<sup>36</sup> For instance, records revealed prominent women like the wives of

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<sup>33</sup> Dianan Burton, "Public Memorials, Private Virtues: Women in Classical Athenian Grave Monuments," *Mortality*, vol. 8 (2003): 23, accessed 4 July 2024, <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/4960/Public%20Memorials.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew P.J. Ditton, "Engendering the Scrolls: Girls' and Women's Literacy in Classical Greece," in *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in Classical World*, eds., Judith Evans Grubbs and Time Perkin (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 64.

<sup>35</sup> Seitkasimova, 50.

<sup>36</sup> Suzanna Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres, and Real Life* (Duckworth: London, 2001), 28.

emperors and politicians who often influenced their husbands' decisions.<sup>37</sup> But through archaeological findings, more insights into Roman women and their daily lives can be gained. Roman society was also patriarchally structured,<sup>38</sup> and the Imperial Roman society, culture, and politics were essentially dominated by men, while women were restricted from participating actively in public life.<sup>39</sup>

Women were thus engaged as supervisors of domestic work, caring, and attending to the family's needs.<sup>40</sup> Catherine Clay commented that although women were not officially permitted to participate in public leading roles, they nevertheless operated underground or through their husbands to exert power, control, influence, and leadership. Through this means, they were seen and heard in the Roman society.<sup>41</sup>

In relation to family, early marriage was encouraged because of the perceived societal role of women to bear legitimate children and her status and authority increases when she gives birth to male children.<sup>42</sup> There are also two class distinctions of Roman women – those within households managed the domestic affairs, while those in the upper-class pursued academic studies.<sup>43</sup> At least, women in this society

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<sup>37</sup> See, Jonah G. F. Powell, "Note on the Use of the Praenomen," *Classical Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 1 (1984): 238-239, accessed 15 May 2024, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/classical-quarterly/article/abs/note-on-the-use-of-thepraenomen/5ECB9959A9FD3878A12382CCD3D208E7>.

<sup>38</sup> See, Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Rome: It People, Life, and Customs*, tans. R. D. McNaughten (Aberdeen, UK, University Press Aberdeen, 1963), 113.

<sup>39</sup> John P. Balsdon, *Roman Women: Their History and Habits* (London: Greenwood Press, 1977), accessed 15 May 2024, <https://archive.org/details/romanwomentheirh0000bals/page/n7/mode/2up>.

<sup>40</sup> Carolyn Osiek and Jennifer Ponya, "Construction of Gender in the Roman Imperial World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, eds. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. Demaris (New York: Routledge, 2010), 47.

<sup>41</sup> Catherine Clay, Christine Senecal, and Chandrika Paul, *Envisioning Women in World History: Prehistory to 1500*, vol. 1. (Boston, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2009), 56-59.

<sup>42</sup> Oyewole, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Alan Watson, *The Spirit of Roman Law* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 173.

were allowed to engage in higher learning that enabled them to be actively involved in many levels of society. Again, in the Roman society, women participated actively in religious and cultic activities, and they also assumed priestly roles.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, amidst a patriarchal structure, Roman women were able to navigate through this system to achieve their desired goals<sup>45</sup> and as such, they enjoyed far greater freedom than Greek women. The next section will then examine the life of women in early Christianity.

**Women in Early Christianity.** Early Christianity was mixed with Jewish, Greek, and Roman ethnic and cultural background and a majority of the early Christians had some influence from the increasing independence of high-class women, thus, the role of women was distinctly countercultural.<sup>46</sup> Women were instrumental in the spread of Christianity because they were the earliest embracers of this religion and they were also responsible for the training of their children in the Christian way.<sup>47</sup>

Additionally, in the early days of Christianity where there was no organized structure for worship, women became instrumental in establishing house churches, assumed leadership responsibilities, and managed the Christian home gathering. The gathering places thus served as centers of worship and conversion.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Wayne A. Meek, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 25.

<sup>45</sup> David Konstan, "Women, Ethnicity and Power in the Roman Empire," *Ordia Prima*, vol. 1 (2002):19-21, accessed 2 May 2024, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/2516662\\_Women\\_Ethnicity\\_and\\_Power\\_in\\_the\\_Roman\\_Empire](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/2516662_Women_Ethnicity_and_Power_in_the_Roman_Empire).

<sup>46</sup> Neuffer, 60.

<sup>47</sup> Stark, 242.

<sup>48</sup> Rebecca Moore, "Women and the Conversion of an Empire," *Women in Christian Traditions*, vol. 52. (NYU Press, 2015), 52 accessed 2 May 2024, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt15r3xxm.7>.

Consequently, in early Christianity, women became co-workers with the apostles because they were knowledgeable in areas of mission/ministry.<sup>49</sup> However, as Christianity shifted from being a radical underground movement to an institutionalized religion, there was also a gradual shift from women's official religious roles to subjugation and exclusion from pivotal religious positions.<sup>50</sup> As Christianity became the main religion, the number of Christian women leaders was no longer more than men, as a result, they became exposed to similar societal forces dominated by men. Though there were more converts to Christianity, still, many of these converts carried this patriarchal ideology of Roman society that was opposed by early Christians.<sup>51</sup> This patriarchal idea is not different from what is found in the African society as will be discussed below.

**Women in African society.** In many African societies, the way women are viewed in terms of their status and leadership roles has created a major concern for

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<sup>49</sup> Neuffer, 58.

<sup>50</sup> Stark, 232-236.

<sup>51</sup> Birk, Joshua, "Emergence of Secular & Religious Orders," *History* vol. 1, no 2-3 (2021): 224.

most African female scholars.<sup>52</sup> The debate on the political,<sup>53</sup> theological,<sup>54</sup> and social discourse<sup>55</sup> on women has a long history similar to that of the other cultures discussed above.<sup>56</sup> Further, many efforts have been made to show the similarity between women

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<sup>52</sup> Oluseun Olumuyiwa Familusi, "African Culture and the Status of Women: The Yoruba Example." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* vol. 5, no. 1 (2012): 310, accessed 12 February 2024 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332330835\\_African\\_Culture\\_and\\_the\\_Status\\_of\\_Women\\_The\\_Yoruba\\_Example](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332330835_African_Culture_and_the_Status_of_Women_The_Yoruba_Example). Oluseun Familusi gives insights into the status of women in African culture with special emphasis on Yoruba culture. Writing from a holistic perspective with a well-robust background of a woman in the Yoruba culture, He offers valuable advice to African women and anyone who is considering writing on women from an African perspective, for he brought out the uniqueness of an African woman even in midst of some cultural hindrances.

<sup>53</sup> Gipson N. Asha et al., "Women and Leadership: Selection, Development, Leadership Style, and Performance," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 53, no. 1 (2017): 32-65, accessed 17 February 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jabs>. Gipson N. Asha, et al. examined the experiences and perceptions of female leaders throughout all stages of the leadership process with the aim of discovering whether there are different rates of selecting men and women for leadership positions, whether men and women have the same developmental opportunities in leadership, or whether women tend to demonstrate different leadership styles thereby performing better as leaders. In the same vein, Chimwemwe Katumbi explored the topic on women from gender equality and teaching theology. He averred that gender mostly forms the essential organizing principle in societies which governs the processes of the production, consumption, and distribution of resources in societies. He then highlighted the challenges of why gender studies are not included in the theological institutions. His major point of argument was that most, if not all; theological institutions are church-owned and are thus obliged to follow their respective theological traditions. Although it is proper for theological institutions to be owned by the church however, their vision statement and curricula should be re-evaluated to be gender sensitive. Chimwemwe Harawa Katunbi, "The Bible, Gender Equality and Teaching Theology in Malawi," *Sociology* (2010): 1-10, accessed 17 February 2023, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Bible%2C-gender-equality-and-teaching-theology-in-Harawa-Katumbi/26602d496b1e644b72e638961d899be0cc5acfb8>.

<sup>54</sup> The issue of whether women are to be ordained or not for pastoral ministry is one of the major ongoing theological debates. The complementarians and the egalitarians are the two main opposing sides in the debate. The former are opposed to the notion of ordaining women while the latter strongly affirm women ordination. See, Daniel Dei and Robert Osei-Bonsu, "The Female Ordination Debate: Theological Reflections," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* 11 (2015): 31-62, accessed 17 February 2020, <http://dx.doi.org/10.21806/aamm.2015.11.02>. Concurrently, Gretchen E. ZieGenhals added that both complementarians and egalitarians seek to reach consensus, but they are not sure of how to bridge the gap. Gretchen E. ZieGenhals, "Women in ministry: Beyond the Impasse," in *Women and the Church*, Waco, Tx: Baylor University, 2009, 77-87, accessed 17 February 2020, <https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/98766.pdf>. The issue of ordination was not a criterion for partaking in the Great Commission Mandate neither was it a necessity for the bestowal of spiritual gifts. As such, ordination should not in any way hinder women from participating in God's mission, both within and outside the church. Nevertheless, this research does not in any way focus on this issue and thus does not hold any position.

<sup>55</sup> Kasomo, 127. Here, the social discourse on women centers on women rights and empowerment, development, and their economic and cultural rights.

<sup>56</sup> Topic mostly debated about women center on their status, leadership roles/positions (either political and/or religious), and other related matters. The patriarchal system could be a possible reason for these debates which in a way pose a challenge to their involvement in missionary and leading roles.

and men,<sup>57</sup> yet, the belief in women's inferiority to men is still prevalent,<sup>58</sup> especially as it concerns women and church leadership and religious roles/positions.<sup>59</sup>

The issue of gender that an African woman faces even from her birth – the birth of a female child is not considered as good news, let alone a blessing to a home as with a male child,<sup>60</sup> created a vacuum for equal opportunity of educational training of a girl as with a boy child. This was centered on the belief that educating a girl child is not profitable to the family since she will end up in the kitchen and she will further lose her father's name by marriage.<sup>61</sup>

This point is buttressed by Mercy Oduyoye, who opined that a woman is generally educated to believe that her sex as female means she is born inherently as inferior, and so due to a woman's self-esteem, she devalues herself.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Olumuyiwa Familusi stated that the African traditional society unfairly ill-treated women by exploiting, oppressing, degrading women, and also handling them like personal property of men.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Cecilia Madu, "Women in the Bible as Source of Inspiration for Women Today," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 19, no. (2014): 123, accessed 7 February 2020, <https://www.academia.edu/945674/The-Samaritan-woman-in-John-4-as-leader-u>.

<sup>58</sup> Solomon Kofi Amoah, Josephine Semanu Safo, and Linda Ama Ownusaa Amaoh, "Opposition to Women in Congregational Leadership: A Sociocultural Perspective," *Journal of Advocacy, Research, and Education*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2015): 12, accessed 17 February 2020, [http://kadint.net/journals\\_n/1430116198.pdf](http://kadint.net/journals_n/1430116198.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> Vivian A. Petties, "A Biblical Perspective on Women in Leadership: A Fresh Look at 1 Timothy 2:8-15," *Biblical Perspectives* (2008): 8, accessed 16 February 2020, <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JPCR/article/view/31765>.

<sup>60</sup> Hamed A. Adetunji, "Re-Orientating the African Woman Today," in *African Culture and the Quest for Women's Right*, ed. Akintude D. O (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sefer, 2004), 106.

<sup>61</sup> Madu, 123.

<sup>62</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Theological Education for Women in Africa," in *Transforming Power: Women in the Household of God, Proceedings of the Pan African Conference of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*, ed. Mercy Amba Oduyoye (Accra: Sam Wood, 1997), 65.

<sup>63</sup> Familusi, 310.

Although this history is gradually changing, however, the need to train women specifically for mission/ministry was then seen as inappropriate because the church did not consider the ordination of women.<sup>64</sup> As earlier stated, this work will not delve into this issue of ordination because it is not the thrust of the research as it does not serve as a criterion for empowering women for mission/ministry involvement. Nevertheless, as observed by Patrick Mwanja, in the African traditional societies, women have displayed their valuable leadership skills in the domestic, social, economic, and political aspects of life.<sup>65</sup> Fatai Ojasupo also stated that the African religion has also provided opportunities for women to play pivotal roles as floor members and most significantly, as leaders.<sup>66</sup>

Rosemary Edet and Bette Ekeya further added that these leadership roles were not exclusively based on gender because the African religious acts of worship involved both the duty of men and women.<sup>67</sup> However, women in Africa were restricted in participating in important leadership roles in the church due to some socio-historical and doctrinal developments over the years.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Familusi, 310.

<sup>65</sup> Patrick Mwanja, "Women and Church Ministry in Africa: Removing the Impasse towards a Fruitful Theological Conversation," *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture, and Religion*, vol. 4, iss. 1 (2021): 82, accessed 22 May 2024, file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/Women\_and\_Church\_Ministry\_in\_Africa\_Remo.pdf.

<sup>66</sup> Fatai A. Ojasupo, "Women and Religion in Nigeria," *The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs*, vol. 2, Art. 10 (2016): 1, accessed 22 May 2024, <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/jtb/vol2/iss1/10>.

<sup>67</sup> Rosemary Edet and Bette Ekeya, "Church Women of Africa: A Theological Community," in *Reflections from the Women's Commission of the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 613.

<sup>68</sup> Sunday Didam Audu and Emmanuel Orihantare Eregare, "Women and Christianity in Africa," in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*, eds. Oujumoke Yacob-Haiso and Toyin Fatola, 2153, accessed 22 May 2024, [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7\\_171-1](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_171-1)

But the recognition of the significance of full partnership of men and women in fulfilling the church's mission and these changing times, brought about the initiative of the church in Africa to take steps toward changing the situation of the status of women.<sup>69</sup> Women like Mercy Oduyeoye, Isabel Apawo Phiri, and Esther Mombo, addressed the concern for women to engage in studying and teaching theology.<sup>70</sup>

As Audu and Eregare identified, more women who are contributing significantly to Christianity as intellectuals, theological and mission scholars are from other denominations<sup>71</sup> whereas this is lacking in the Adventist circle in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, where only a few women are empowered specifically as mission leaders. Hence, the next section presents the view of women in the Nigerian context, with the focus of developing a model of how Adventist women can be empowered effectively as mission leaders.

**Women in the Nigerian society.** Nigeria, located in the western region of Africa,<sup>72</sup> is the most populous country in the African continent with approximately 225 million and the seventh most populated country in the world.<sup>73</sup> The three main

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<sup>69</sup> Ruth Muthe James, "Women's Theological Education in Kenya," in *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays*, eds. Mary N. Getui and Emmanuel A. Gbeng (Nairobi: Acton, 1999), 109.

<sup>70</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, "Major Challenges for African Women Theologians in Theological Education (1989-2008)," *International Review of Mission World Council of Churches*, vol. 98, no. 1 (2009): 108, accessed 17 February 2020, <https://onlinelibrarywiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2009.00009.x>.

<sup>71</sup> Audu and Eregare, 2160.

<sup>72</sup> Ghazali Bello Abubakar, "Condition of Women in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges" *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, vol 8, no.4 (2017): 1, accessed 20 May 224, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320351276>.

<sup>73</sup> See, National Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Reports on Women and Men in Nigeria*, 2021, accessed 15 May 2024, [https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/2021\\_Statistical\\_Report\\_On\\_Women\\_and\\_Men.pdf](https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/2021_Statistical_Report_On_Women_and_Men.pdf).

tribes of Nigeria are the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo and about 50% of Nigerians are from these tribes. This country houses three main religions of the world – Christianity, Islamic, and African Traditional religions.<sup>74</sup>

Nigeria, like other African societies, is traditionally known as a patriarchal society<sup>75</sup> where cultural and traditional ideas influence the way women are perceived and treated.<sup>76</sup> Even when women make up roughly half of the population, the patriarchal structure of Nigerian society regards them as second-class citizens.<sup>77</sup> This culture encourages respect for males in society because females are viewed as inferior.<sup>78</sup> Makama Allanan believed that this treatment of women could be as a result of the general African idea that sees the kitchen as a woman's place and this has resulted in male domination, exploitation, and oppression of women in the home and society.<sup>79</sup> Titi Salaam identified areas that this patriarchal society has structurally marginalized and oppressed women to include in families, education, inheritance, wage disparities, and politics, among others.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Abubakar, I.

<sup>75</sup> Aina I. Olabisi, "Women, Culture, and Society," in *Nigerian Women in Society and Development*, eds. Amadu Sesay and Adetanwa Olebiyi (Ibadan: Dokun Publishing House, 1998), 75.

<sup>76</sup> Yetunde Adebunmi Aloko, "Globalization and the Status of Nigerian Women: An Historical Perspectives," in *The Global South*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2010): 19. accessed 15 May 2024, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280429337\\_Globalization\\_and\\_the\\_Status\\_of\\_Nigerian\\_Women\\_An\\_Historical\\_Perspectiveko](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280429337_Globalization_and_the_Status_of_Nigerian_Women_An_Historical_Perspectiveko).

<sup>77</sup> Makama, Godiya Allanan, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward," *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 9, no. 17 (2013): 115, accessed 15 May 2024, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/236407158.pdf>.

<sup>78</sup> Ushe Mike Ushe, "Participation of Women in Politics and Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects," *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, vol. 1, iss. 1 (2019): 116-119, accessed 27 March 2025, file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/2792-Article%20Text-9267-1-10-20220704.pdf.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>80</sup> Titi Salaam, "A Brief Analysis on the Situation of Women in Nigeria," in *Newspaper of the Democratic Socialist Movement: for Struggles, Solidarity, and Socialism in Nigeria* (1 March 2003), accessed 17 May 2024, <https://www.socialistnigeria.org/women/1-3-03.html>.

This patriarchal culture does not support women attaining leadership roles, as they are traditionally made to believe that men are expected to be in charge.<sup>81</sup> This thus influences the training of children in the society, males are trained in leadership roles while females are restricted to domestic activities. This, in some ways, affects women's self-confidence and self-esteem in their careers and adult life.<sup>82</sup>

In this vein, a participant in Agnetha Ndulaka's study stated that "most women in Nigeria already had this feeling that leadership is not for women as a lot of them feel that leadership is mostly meant for men."<sup>83</sup> But as stated by Arthur Jago, since a leader is made not born, then the determining process for leadership should be based on abilities and qualifications which are gained through self-study, education, training, and experience.<sup>84</sup>

As such, Anwar Hasan and Abdullah Othman opined that women are able to lead more effectively and productively as their leadership is more participatory or collaborative,<sup>85</sup> and they can lead in ways that are as effective as those of their male counterparts.<sup>86</sup> This is also supported by Michael Ajemba who pointed out that

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<sup>81</sup> Abosede O. Gbenga-Akinbiola, "Telling Their Stories: Women in Nigerian Higher Education" (Doctoral dissertation, Morgan State University, 2018), 76.

<sup>82</sup> Allanan, 116.

<sup>83</sup> Agnetha Chinaelo Ndulaka, "Exploring the Experiences of Women in Leadership Positions at a Higher Education Institution in South-Eastern Nigeria: A Phenomenological Study," (MA Thesis, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, 2022), 74.

<sup>84</sup> Arthur G. Jago, "Leadership: Perspective in Theory and Research," *Management Science*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1982): 315.

<sup>85</sup> Anwar Hasan and Abdullah Othman, "When it comes to Leadership, does Gender Matter?" *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2012): 8, accessed 23 October 2023, [https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD\\_VOL\\_2\\_3/2.pdf](https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_2_3/2.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Christiana O. Ogbogu, "Assessing the Leadership Styles of Male and Female Academics in Leadership Positions: Does Gender Matter?" *British Journal of Education*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2019): 61, accessed 17 March 2025, <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Assessing-the-Leadership-Styles-of-Male-and-Female-Academics-in-Leadership-Positions.pdf>.

women are not just as effective as men in leadership, but they possess more leadership skills and show better leadership efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>87</sup>

Consequently, female leadership, is considered as more transformational when compared to male leadership.<sup>88</sup> Ademola Ojo thus observed that this lack of equal educational opportunities for both females and males contributed greatly to the inequality of males and females in certain socio-economic activities and further increases the rate of poverty and illiteracy among females.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, with regards to leadership roles, women from the pre-colonial era were not considered suitable for political leadership as such, they were not part in the decision-making process.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, as time went by, women in Nigeria were involved in political sphere and they have made significant contribution to the political sphere of the nation, although in low number.<sup>91</sup>

This situation is not too different from the religious sphere of the nation. The reason for this low involvement of women in leading roles could be based on the religious and traditional belief that women are not supposed to carry out any

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<sup>87</sup> Michael Nnaemeka Ajemba, "Women in Leadership, Gender Inequality in Nigeria, Diversity and New Trend of Women in Leadership Positions in Industries around the World," *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews*, vol. 14, no. 01 (2023): 83, accessed 26 Dec 2024, <https://doi.org/10.30574/gscarr.2023.14.1.0013>.

<sup>88</sup> John Antonakis, Bruce J. Avolio and Nagaraj Sivasubramaniam, "Context and leadership: An Examination of the Nine-Factor Full-Range Leadership Theory Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire," *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 14 (2003): 261, accessed 27 March 2025, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223747166\\_Context\\_and\\_Leadership](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223747166_Context_and_Leadership).

<sup>89</sup> Ademola Ojo, "Socio-Economic Situation," in *Africa Atlases: Nigeria* (Paris, France: 2002): 126-127. Ojo analyzed the percentage of female workers in some selected professions and thus highlights the low rate of females in those professions. This was a result of the inequality in educational opportunities for both males and females.

<sup>90</sup> Olanipekun, Lateef Okikiola and Onabanjo, Abdul-Lateef Adeniyi, "Negative Perception of Culture on Women in the Nigerian Society," *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2020), 32, accessed 20 May 2024 <http://www.scholarly-journals.com/RJSSH>.

<sup>91</sup> Felicia Ihuoma Abaraonye, "The Women's War of 1929 in South-Eastern Nigeria," in *Women and Revolution: Global Expressions*, ed. M. J. Diamond (Dordrchi: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 1998), 109-111.

leadership position and the idea that women are believed to be inferior to men.<sup>92</sup>

Nonetheless, the arrival of the African Independent Churches and the Pentecostal Movement, among others are breaking this chain of inequality of men and women in religious leadership roles. More women are trained and empowered for church's mission but only a few receive the right training as with men among the Adventists. Thus, the next section will discuss women and empowerment for mission among Adventists in Nigeria.

### **Women and Empowerment for Mission among Adventists in Nigeria**

Generally, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, women played vital roles in setting up the foundation of the early beginnings of the Church. Among these women who felt the calling of taking part in the saving of lost souls was Ellen G. White, a co-founder of the church.<sup>93</sup> Ellen White in her youth, received the call to the ministry in 1889, after two men had declined the commission.<sup>94</sup> She spoke extensively on women and mission/ministry involvement. For instance, Ellen White's statement, "If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission their

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<sup>92</sup> Aloko, 23.

<sup>93</sup> Bert Haloviak, "Women and the SDA Church, *Seminar presentation at Sligo Church* (October 15, 1988), 1.

<sup>94</sup> Marcella E. Anderson, "The Roles of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church: Significance of Ellen G. White Counsels," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 109. Though Ellen White is recognized an important female figure in the formation and growth of the Adventist church, however, her mission/ministry contributions were not without any form of internal/external challenges. For instance, Healthwise, she was physically challenged however, she struggled and managed with her ill pains while fulfilling her calling and she was also faced with the challenge of balancing family and ministry but she developed strategies to curb this challenge. Significantly, Ellen White public ministry was not without criticism as the validity and nature of her prophetic gift were questioned both by internal within the church) and external opponents and as a woman in leadership role, she was also faced the challenge of being a female mission mobilizer in an era of male-dominated environment in mission/ministry sphere. Ellen White's ability to still utilized her God's given potential in partaking and contributing significantly in God's mission thus serve as a source of encouragement and hope for any woman desiring to dedicate her life in fulfilling God's mission in these last days (see Ellen G. White Estate Archive Resources for more details).

cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth,”<sup>95</sup> showed her belief in women’s ability to become instruments in carrying God’s truth to all classes of people, high and low, rich and poor.

Additionally, concerning the implications of the involvement of women in ministry, she encouraged that earnest efforts should be made for an open door for consecrated women to engage in ministry.<sup>96</sup> Further, she stated that women need a form of education that will best fit them for any position in church work: “Truly, when women are wanted with well-balanced minds, with not a cheap style of education, but with an education fitting them for any position of trust, they are not easily found.”<sup>97</sup>

The question then is, why are women not involved in this education that fits them for God’s cause? The church’s tasks today require the unique responsibilities of men and women, working together to fulfill the mission tasks. Ellen White thus believed that in this time of world history:

The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their pieces of His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. if they are imbued with a sense of their duty and labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and will give a power that exceeds that of men. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed.<sup>98</sup>

She went further to say that”

(A)woman, if she wisely improves her time and her faculties, relying upon God for wisdom and strength, may stand on an equality with her husband as

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<sup>95</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 471.

<sup>96</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Laborer is Worthy of his Hire* (MR, 1898), 298.

<sup>97</sup> Ellen White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Ellen G. White Estate, 1923), 114, accessed 7 March 2025, [https://media2.egwwritings.org/pdf/en\\_FE.pdf](https://media2.egwwritings.org/pdf/en_FE.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 464.

adviser, counselor, companion, and co-worker, and yet lose none of her womanly grace or modesty. In the work of carrying truth to families, in many respects, a woman can impart knowledge to her sisters that a man cannot.<sup>99</sup>

Speaking about the need for women to be qualified for any position of leadership, she has the following to say:

In areas where it is appropriate for the wife to assume a role similar to that of her husband, she should not contend for such, but rather she should aspire to qualify herself so that she can and will naturally fill that position whenever and wherever opportunity arises. We have an earnest desire that woman shall fill the position which God originally designed, as her husband's equal.... We may safely say that the dignity and importance of woman's mission and distinctive duties are of a more sacred and holy character than the duties of man.<sup>100</sup>

To a large extent, Ellen White's vision on women's roles in mission/ministry position has been fulfilled. Since the beginning of the church, women with talent and ability have had prominent leadership roles in carrying on God's work. Adventist women like those in the Bible, had supported the church's mission financially and even led out in church services.<sup>101</sup> Since 1861, articles have been published on the leadership role of women in the church, nevertheless, as the years went by, women's participation in church leadership gradually diminished.<sup>102</sup> Several factors could have attested to this gradual decline of women in church leadership, though, a section of this work, will address possible factors that could inhibit women in participating in leading roles in the Adventist church in Nigeria.

The history of Adventism in Nigeria began in 1914 when the Adventist Church first entered Nigeria through the South-Western part by the efforts of David C.

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<sup>99</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 467, 493.

<sup>100</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3 (Mt. View, CA: Pacific, 1948), 565.

<sup>101</sup> Bertha Dasher, "Women's Leadership, 1915-1970: The Waning Years, in *A woman's place*, ed. R. T. Banks (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1992), 75.

<sup>102</sup> Carole Luke Kilcher, "Introduction," in *The Welcome Table*, eds. Habada A. Patricia and Brillhart. F. Rebecca (Langley Park, MD: TEAM, 1995), 4.

Babcock and his family.<sup>103</sup> Since its inception, the Church has focused on evangelization of the world with the Three Angels' message (Rev 14:6-12).<sup>104</sup>

Adventist missionary activities in Nigeria, saw a tremendous growth in the 1950s and as the Adventist movement expands to other parts of the country, missionaries placed more emphasis on knowledge acquisition which was used as an arm of the church to win souls into God's kingdom.

Thus, the Adventist missionaries in Nigeria preoccupied themselves with establishing schools, out of which the Adventist College of West Africa was founded in 1959, in the West of Nigeria, precisely, in Ilisan-Remo. The aim was to train people for ministry beyond the secondary school level.<sup>105</sup> From being a college, it grew to become a Seminary and in 1999, it became known as Babcock University.<sup>106</sup>

During the early history of the Adventism in Nigeria, little is known about women's involvement in mission and their activities. However, women have received empowerment for mission through different ways initiative and programmers organized by the church. These ways will be presented below.

**Adventist Women Ministries.** The Adventist Women Ministries is a department of the church that exists to uphold, encourage, and challenge Adventist women in their Christian journey as disciples of Christ and as members of his world

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<sup>103</sup> David Toyebi Agboola, *Seventh-day Adventist History in West Africa (1888-1988): A Mustard Seed* (Ibadan, Nigeria: LASOB, 2001), 64.

<sup>104</sup> Olugbenga Adetokunbo Efuntade and Ignatius Swart, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Quest for Transformational Development in Contemporary Nigeria Perspectives from an Empirical Study," *Missionalia*, vol. 49 (2021): 248, accessed 6 June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.7832/49-405>.

<sup>105</sup> Agboola, 64.

<sup>106</sup> Chigemezi Nnadozie Wogu, "Independence, Civil War, and the Beginnings of Indigenization of Seventh-day Adventism in Nigeria from the 1940s to 1990s," *Spes Christiana*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2023): 93, accessed 6 June 2024 [file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/06\\_wogu\\_indigenization-of-nigerian-adventism\\_speschr\\_34.1-2023.pdf.pdf](file:///C:/Users/MYPC/Downloads/06_wogu_indigenization-of-nigerian-adventism_speschr_34.1-2023.pdf.pdf).

church. The vision of the Women Ministries is to empower women and nurture them to fulfill their God-given potential as they engage in outreach programmes. However, as stated earlier, women's involvement in mission was not pronounced in the history of the Adventist church in Nigeria not until the wife of one of the missionaries, Mrs. Mary McClement, introduced the Dorcas Welfare Society in Nigeria, just like Dorcas/Tabitha of old (Acts 9:36-40). This Dorcas Welfare Society developed over the years and in 1990, it became known as the Adventist Women Ministries (AWM).<sup>107</sup>

The establishment of AWM provides a structured platform for women to be engaged in spreading the gospel and rendering support to the less privileged.<sup>108</sup> The focus of the women ministries is on spiritual growth, leadership development, and outreach programmes. Through these activities, women are empowered to participate in mission work. Women are also empowered and equipped with skills that provide them with income.<sup>109</sup>

Scholarship opportunities are also opened to indigent female students through the assistance from the AWM Division. However, the statistics of the beneficiaries are majorly female students in other fields of study but not in theology.<sup>110</sup> This probably reflects the place and value of the involvement of women in mission from the angle of

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<sup>107</sup> Omobonike Adeola Alabi-Sessou, "Women's Ministries in West-Central Africa," in *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2010), accessed 6 June 2024, <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=20743>.

<sup>108</sup> Patience Nemezu Chioma, "A Christian Response to Poverty in Modern Times," *Babcock Journal of Economics, Banking and Finance*, maiden edn. (2009): 21.

<sup>109</sup> Efuntade and Swart, 240.

<sup>110</sup> Aluko, Jones Oluwole1 and Nwogwugwu, Ngozi, "MDGs in Nigeria: An examination of the Contributions of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (2000 – 2010), in *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as Instruments for Development in Africa*, eds. Josephine Ganu and Michael Abiodun Oni (eds), (n.d.), 231, accessed 6 June 2024, [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/49544347/How\\_green\\_are\\_hotels\\_in\\_Accra\\_](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/49544347/How_green_are_hotels_in_Accra_)

receiving the appropriate training to qualify them for mission/ministry. Thus, as observed in the women's ministries:

Even as women are engaged in the church's mission and evangelistic activities, their opportunities for leadership and advancement are limited, although this is not quite different from almost every country of the world. Women have always been involved in the church, though predominantly in supporting roles.<sup>111</sup>

So, even when the church empowers women for mission, it usually comes from the angle of playing supportive roles and not leading roles. Historically, women have held very few leadership positions in the church, and currently, there is a growing need in the church for more women to be involved at the leadership level. This underscores the need to equip and prepare women for this role. Unfortunately, most women have not had the advantage of leadership training and experience. As stated in the AWM page,

Though the Adventist Women Ministries seek to value each woman and recognize her individual needs and gifts, however, to be on the cutting edge, a leader (woman) must be involved in continuing education training. She must keep up-to-date on new leadership trends and look for new ways to minister to others.<sup>112</sup>

Based on the above, the AWM have taken a step to develop materials to train women for leadership. Primarily, this training seeks to empower women for church leadership and mission engagement.

**Leadership training scheme.** Leadership certification programme was introduced by the AWM to encourage the inclusion of women in leadership positions of the church. This training is done in a seminar-like form that has four levels and includes 63 seminars with PowerPoint presentations, overheads, and handouts that

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<sup>111</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Department of Women Ministries*, accessed 10 March 2025, <https://women-adventist.org>.

<sup>112</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Department of Women Ministries*.

include: guiding women in how to study the Bible, introducing women to principles of public speaking and effective leadership, and they are mentored in problem solving and decision-making. Women are trained at the different levels to develop leadership skills and upon the completion of the fourth level, they graduate and are given the leadership certificate to certify them as potential church leaders.<sup>113</sup>

Although this step is an added advantage to women's empowerment in leadership, however, it does not address the situation of women who have a sense of calling and want to dedicate their lives for church mission/ministry as with men. This programme does not recognize and train women specifically for this task and it also does not provide opportunity for women to have a deeper and broader perspectives of mission engagement, especially in becoming experts and qualified mission leaders/trainers and mission scholars/theologians.

Specific skills or knowledge such as biblical hermeneutics/exegesis, homiletics, biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek), the arts, science, and strategies for mission to the unreached people Groups, among others, are not provided through this training. The training does not also qualify women to become an authoritative figure or expert in the field of mission and biblical studies both in writing (as a scholar) and as trainers since most of the trainers (mostly women leaders) have not been empowered with the specific skills or knowledge needed to train one to become qualified mission expert/leader.

Hence, there still exist a gap between women and men trained specifically for this purpose and it may probably be a reason the church has not intentional provided placement and opportunity for women who have a sense of calling to become engaged

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<sup>113</sup> West-Central Africa Division Women Ministries Congress, with LC4 Graduation, *Mosaic Newsletter*, Q3, Summer issue, accessed 10 March 2025, [https://women.adventist.org/wad-leadership-certification-4\(2018\)](https://women.adventist.org/wad-leadership-certification-4(2018))

fully in mission/ministry. Since the church provides a system for men and women to gain expertise and recognition in mission/ministry task, it becomes imperative to encourage women to seize this opportunity to be trained in this capacity to gain full recognition in mission/ministry engagement.

This leadership certification programme can however serve as transitional channel for women who want to dedicate their lives for mission/ministry and want to gain full recognition by the church to seek to be empowered in the channel provided by the church for both men and women to be trained for gospel work and ministerial practices. By this, they can become equipped and qualified to be mission leaders/scholars and as Adventist theologians who will contribute their unique voices to any theological discourse in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. The next section will look at mentorship as another way women are being empowered in the church.

**Role model/mentorship empowerment.** Mentorship is defined as “a relational process in which a mentor invests his/her life in a mentee to empower the mentee to become an agent in mentoring others.”<sup>114</sup> It is about identifying people’s God-given potential and assisting the individuals through the process of developing and/or learning new leadership skills.<sup>115</sup> Thus, mentorship is an initiative provided for women by the women ministries to enable the elderly women to become role models to the younger ones. As such, the Young Adventist Women Ministries (YAWM) was introduced to serve as a channel for mentorship and role modeling in the aspect of

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<sup>114</sup> Ugochukwu Elems, “Towards an Assessment of the Potentials of Involving Young People of Africa in Ministry,” eds., Sampson Nwaomah, Eriks Galenieks, and Davidson Razafiarivony, in *Culture, Adventist Theology, and Mission in Africa* (Nairobi, Kenya: The Theological Seminary of Adventist University of Africa, 2016), 231.

<sup>115</sup> Herbert A. Simon, *Mentoring: A Tool for Ministry* (Saint Louis, Concordia, 2001), 13.

spiritual growth and discipleship and to support the young women in addressing issues affecting them.<sup>116</sup>

This mentorship model aligns with the biblical teaching in Titus 2:3-5, where older women were encouraged to teach and guide younger women to have good conduct at home, in the church, and in society at large. Through this YAWM, women are empowered to take up active roles in mission/ministry and to cultivate in them the significance of becoming future women leaders and mobilizers for mission. The women's ministries further encourage women leaders not only to serve as mentors but also as mentees to ensure that each individual is not only receiving but also giving.<sup>117</sup> This woman-to-woman mentoring would create a model for gender-based missions where women can minister to fellow women.<sup>118</sup>

This mentoring will not only “serve to soften the effects of cultural prejudices against women.”<sup>119</sup> but the process could become a means where young women can be made to discover their God-given potential. Also, those who have a sense of mission/ministry calling can be encouraged to seek empowerment in the appropriate training provided by the church to fulfill their calling in mission/ministry. Another way of empowerment, which is prayer retreats and Bible study will be presented.

**Prayer ministries/retreats and Bible study groups.** Women Ministries exists to nurture women through prayer ministries/retreats and Bible study so they can see their worth in Christ and nurture their personal relationship with God. These

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<sup>116</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Department of Women Ministries*.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Wendy Murray Zoba, “Trends in Missions: Women Reaching Women is Key to the Future of Missions,” *Christianity Today*, vol. 7 (2000): 43.

<sup>119</sup> Dana Lee Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), xix.

gatherings provide women with the opportunity to renew their spiritual life and enhance spiritual growth and they also help to create a supportive network among women where they can share their experiences and challenges to encourage each other. These retreats also serve as a means of exposing women to their spiritual gifts and opportunities for enhancing these gifts for engaging in church's mission.<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, some churches organize Bible study groups where women can be encouraged to participate and sometimes, lead out. Through these gatherings, women can deepen their faith and be encouraged to share the gospel by participating in mission activities. They can also be exposed to the appropriate training opportunities provided by the church for anyone who has a sense of calling and passion for mission. The church also conducts training programmes as a way of empowering women for mission as well, as presented below.

**Church training programmes.** The church conducts workshops and seminars to equip members for various ministries and outreach activities, especially when the church wants to conduct evangelism and public outreach. These trainings can be done quarterly to provide members with basic skills in health evangelism, community service, and spiritual leadership. Through this means, women are enabled to confidently share their faith.<sup>121</sup>

Though these workshops and seminars provide women with basic skills of conducting Bible studies, however, with the current pressing mission challenges, one needs to be properly empowered with the appropriate skills or knowledge in developing needed strategies to address these challenges, especially as it concerns women. As such, these trainings should serve as a means of identifying women's

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<sup>120</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Department of Women Ministries*.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

spiritual gifts, discovering those having a sense of mission/ministry calling, and encouraging them, through sponsorship and support, to acquire the right training provided by the church to utilize their God-given potential to become effective mission leaders and future trainers. As Ellen White rightly stated on women and mission/ministry mobilizing,

We greatly need consecrated women who, as messengers of mercy, shall visit the mothers and the children in their homes, and help them in the everyday household duties, if need be, before beginning to teach them regarding the truth for this time. You will find that by this method; you will have souls as a result of your ministry.<sup>122</sup>

This statement clearly shows the unique role of women engaging as mission mobilizers and the need for them to be empowered with the right skills or knowledge in fulfilling this great missionary task. Thus, the next section furnishes us with the educational training opportunities provided as the means of empowerment for mission/ministry.

**Educational training opportunities and support.** In Nigeria, the church institutions like Babcock University and Clifford University provide theological training programmes that are meant to equip both men and women for pastoral and missionary work. The training received enables the trainees to take on leadership and teaching roles within the church and community and to develop skills and strategies to enhance mission/ministry work. However, in reality, only a few women are found in these institutions, either as students/trainees or teachers/trainers.

For instance, at Clifford University, located in the Eastern part of the country, there is no female presence in the theological training program<sup>123</sup> while at Babcock

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<sup>122</sup> Ellen White, *Review and Herald* (July 12, 1906).

<sup>123</sup> Iheanacho Mendel Alala, 2025, Personal correspondence from the Head of Religious Studies Department Chair, Clifford University, Nigeria.

University, out of an average of 35-45 students enrolled every year, only about seven were female.<sup>124</sup> In fact, presently, from personal observation and experience, there is only one female theological teacher among about 23 males, and the few women who have benefited from this form of empowerment do so without struggles and challenges compared to their male counterparts.

This low rate of women's involvement in this training opportunity probably shows little sensitization and support for women to engage in this form of empowerment. Following the counsel of Ellen White, "there certainly should be a larger number of women engaged in the work of ministering to suffering humanity, uplifting, educating them how to believe in Jesus Christ."<sup>125</sup> The church thus needs to be more intentional in empowering women with the training that will best qualify them to educate others about Christ in this present world.

Although this educational training may be tied to ordination, however, there are several opportunities available for women to be engaged in this training without necessarily seeking for ordination. Hence, since the original purpose for this educational training is to equip both men and women for gospel ministry and ministerial practices, the need to encourage more women to engage in such a rich opportunity for empowerment becomes germane in empowering women for mission/ministry in this 21st century.

As seen above, various methods have been used by the church to empower women for mission. Juxtaposing these methods with the present mission realities reveals the need for women to gain appropriate empowerment that would qualify and

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<sup>124</sup> Ehioghae, M. Efe, 2024. Personal correspondence from the former Religious Studies Department Chair, Babcock University, Nigeria.

<sup>125</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 465.

make them recognized as the right mission leaders/trainers and even teachers/scholars. The next section will explore possible factors inhibiting Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission mobilizers.

### **Factors Inhibiting Adventist Women from becoming Mission Mobilizers**

There are several factors that are common across many African contexts that could inhibit Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission mobilizers. This section will explore these factors as they are directly applicable to this study.

**Patriarchal structure.** Patriarchy as defined by Bola Udegbe is a set of symbols and ideas that make up a culture, embodied by everything from the content of everyday conversation to literature and film.<sup>126</sup> It is also seen as the systematic domination by men of women<sup>127</sup> and beyond domination, patriarchy is about how social life is and how it is supposed to be; about what is expected of people and about how they feel.<sup>128</sup> So, patriarchal structure is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the role and activities of females.

This patriarchal ideology is a strong determinant that justifies the reason a man is regarded as one who remains in the home, as he retains the family name, while the woman is married out. So, based on the premise that the woman will be married out to

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<sup>126</sup> Bola Udegbe, "The Conceptual and Historical Framework: Women's Empowerment and Reproductive Health," In L. Erinosh, B. Osolimehin and J.E. Olawoye (eds.) *Women in Society* (Ibadan: Bookcraft Ltd), 350.

<sup>127</sup> Alex Scott-Samuel, "Patriarchy, Masculinities and Health Inequalities," *Journal of Health Policy and Public Health*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2009): 159-160, accessed 23 March 2025, <https://scielo.isciii.es/pdf/gsv23n2/politica.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup> Linda McDowell and Rosemary Pringle, *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Stratification* (New York, Cambridge Inc, 1992),153.

another family, she experiences discrimination and deprivation of access to all opportunities and benefits in the family. Thus, men are trained for leadership roles, while women are confined to domestic activities; roles ascribed to them by culture which affect them later in life, thereby making them lose self-confidence and self-worth and have low self-esteem in their career in adult life, as such, Rachel Hewlett asserted that through male-dominated institutions and patriarchal societies, women are portrayed as weak, inferior, and incapable of participating in leadership responsibilities.<sup>129</sup>

There are two viewpoints about patriarchy: the traditionalists believe that men are born to dominate and women to be subordinate, and they believe that this hierarchy, which has always existed, will continue to be and cannot be changed, just like other rules of nature. However, some others have challenged these beliefs, stating that patriarchy is unnatural, it is man-made, and therefore it can be changed.<sup>130</sup> As such, several measures have been put in place to curtail this effect of patriarchy on women, especially in their involvement in leadership.<sup>131</sup>

**Gendered ascribed roles and cultural norms.** In many Nigerian cultures, roles are ascribed to women that relegate them to the status of second-class citizens or minors. The domestic domain is perceived as the legitimate space for women, while the public space is associated with men. And so, women are made to see that their

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<sup>129</sup> Rachel J. Hewlett, *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success* (Pace Law Review, 2009), 89.

<sup>130</sup> See, Chidi Slessor Mbah and Everistus Osy Otin, "Patriarchy and Women's Political Leadership Position in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects," *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2015): 27..

<sup>131</sup> For example, see Mbah and Otin, 18.

permanent position was to be fully occupied in the kitchen.<sup>132</sup> These societal pressures faced by women to prioritize family and domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations, including roles in religious missions, constrain their time and potential for leadership. Consequently, in most cases, women had to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture. Such traditional gendered role perception can render a woman with no identity, and limits her opportunities for leadership.<sup>133</sup> It also relegates women to supportive roles, forcing them to focus more on familial responsibilities rather than in professional or church leadership positions.

In this vein, Makama Allanana asserted that the gender ascribed role ideology is used as an ideological tool by patriarchy to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere.<sup>134</sup> This will not only have specific cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic implications, but it could also have implications for church growth in Nigeria, especially in developing strategies for reaching the unreached people blocs and restricted areas.

**Lack of awareness and support systems.** A lack of awareness on the significance and need for women to be involved in theological training that would equip them for mission/ministry could inhibit women to become mission mobilizers. From personal observations, awareness and support systems are easily open for men, providing them with theological training and experiences that make them to be recognized by the church as those qualified to lead and train. But there are places and

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<sup>132</sup> Emeka Emmanuel Okafor and Monica Ewomazino Akokuwebe, "Women and Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects," *Developing Country Studies* Vol.5, No.4, 2015 :7.

<sup>133</sup> Mbah and Otin, 18.

<sup>134</sup> Allanana, 117.

specific ministries where qualification and experiences of men cannot penetrate, therefore, the church needs to identify these mission needs and create awareness of the significant roles that women play in reaching these walled-cities.

There could also be a lack of self-awareness on the part of women in identifying, developing, and utilizing their God-given potentials for the furtherance of God's kingdom. When there is self-awareness then there will be self-interest to grow and make meaningful contributions to church growth. So, the church should engage in intentional programmes that will promote mission awareness needs and develop personal awareness of women to be involve in addressing those needs.

Additionally, many women are economically dependent on male family members, which restricts their autonomy in pursuing their desired goals and aspirations. So, due to economic dependency of women, those who desired to train themselves for qualifications in leadership may have to either struggle to engage in self-sponsorship or get little or no scholarship support. This economic challenge may disproportionately affect women, limiting their ability to participate in training that could lead to leadership roles.

Financial constraints may restrict access to training and development opportunities. This also challenges the church to become intentional in designing scholarship or sponsorship schemes for women who have a sense of calling and wants to devout themselves for the gospel and ministry work, becoming qualified as mission mobilizers/trainers.

**Institutional and church structures and policies.** The organizational structure of the Adventist church may be more accommodating of male leadership. Policies and practices can intentionally and/or unintentionally prevent women from being engaged in leadership, especially when there are no clear provisions of

placement (present and/or future) for women. Similarly, the structures and policies of the institutions responsible for the training of church leaders and gospel workers may intentionally or unintentionally hinder women from receiving training or from becoming trainers. For instance, based on personal observations and experiences as a Nigerian, when promotions are made for enrolling into such institutions (theological schools/seminaries), pastors in the field are mainly sent by the conferences. When sponsorship is provided, it is also given to the pastors sent by their conferences. As such, females who are engaged in this training had to ‘suffer financially.’

Congruently, before one can be recognized as a theological teacher/trainer, such person must have first received theological training and then, must be working in an assigned field under a conference. This could be challenging for women who in rare cases are employed by the conferences even when they have been trained and have performed well in the training. It could also discourage them from aspiring to attain higher training at Masters’ or Doctorate level that will enhance them more to become mission leaders/trainers. These structures may thus hinder women from gaining the qualifications and experiences needed for becoming mission leaders/trainers.

Therefore, lack of access to theological training, unsure prospects (job placement), and economic constraints, especially for those who desire to study on self-sponsorship, significantly impact women’s desire and ability to engage as mission mobilizers. Without such training, it becomes challenging to take up such roles and even makes them ill-equipped in such missionary task of reaching the rest women’s population in blocs and restricted areas of the country. Although the department of Adventist Women Ministries encourages women to engage in leadership training

programmes by establishing leadership certification training scheme,<sup>135</sup> nevertheless, a more intentional effort is needed to encourage women in involving in theological training that will best equip and qualify them for both mission/ministry and church leadership.

The necessity of women's participation in mission/ministry requires the necessity for their training and empowerment. Benjamin Akano avowed that more awareness and educational opportunities must be created for enlisting and training more female missionaries for ministries.<sup>136</sup> Congruently, Fran Love asserted that females with a sense of mission/ministry calling should be well equipped for mission/ministry alongside their male counterparts to attend definitely to women's need in their fields of operations.<sup>137</sup> Such training will enhance their self-awareness and self-image, thus giving them confidence to minister alongside male counterparts, both locally and globally. Miriam Adeney went further to say that:

The training will provide women on how to reach many unreached women who are experiencing hurt, oppression, and abuse that are inaccessible to non-family member, especially men, due to even cultural influences. Similarly, wall cities including rural and semi-urban communities need to be strategically entered and evangelized because of the difficulty for men and women in such setting to be evangelized and disciplined in same way.<sup>138</sup>

As such, Mbayo Maloba and Nyakora Musa developed a social ecological model to address how the training of women in leadership can shape not only the destiny of women but also impact the church's growth. This model was proposed for

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<sup>135</sup> West-Central Africa Division Women Ministries Congress, with LC4 Graduation, *Mosaic Newsletter*, Q3, Summer issue, accessed 10 March 2025, [https://women.adventist.org/wad-leadership-certification-4\(2018\)](https://women.adventist.org/wad-leadership-certification-4(2018)).

<sup>136</sup> Akano, 193.

<sup>137</sup> Fran Love, "Church Planting that includes Muslim Women," in ed., K. E. Swartley, *Encountering the World of Islam, Nigerian ed.*, (Littleton, CO: Caleb Project, 2012): 369.

<sup>138</sup> Miriam Adeney, "What Draws Muslim Women to Christ?" in ed., K. E. Swartley, *Encountering the World of Islam, Nigerian ed.*, (Littleton, CO: Caleb Project, 2012): 345.

the church to address factors like cultural beliefs and practices, preventing women from being empowered for leadership, providing theological rationale for providing leadership training for all – women and children inclusive<sup>139</sup> (see figure 1). This model was mostly designed to focus on the factors preventing women from attaining leadership roles, especially regarding their ordination. However, little focus was placed on the role theological training plays in empowering women for efficient mission leaders.

Thus, for the Adventist church in Nigeria to have a successful mission in reaching all people groups, the significant values and roles of women in mission/ministry leading roles cannot be overemphasized.

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<sup>139</sup> Mbayo Debbie Maloba and Nyakora O. Musa, “Women Leadership, The Scriptures, and Empowerment: How Training in Leadership can shape the Destiny of Women in Church Ministry,” *Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, vo. 9, Iss. 3 (2018): 244 229-247, accessed 7 March 2025, <https://www.ijser.org/researchpaper/women-leadership-the-scriptures-and-empowerment-how-training-in-leadership-can-shape-the-destiny-of-women-in-church-ministry.pdf>.



Figure 1. Mbayo Maloba and Nyakora Social Ecological Model

Having examined factors that may hinder women’s participation as mission mobilizers, it is important to note that efficient and collaborative efforts from the church/institutional leaders, church members, and the broader society, are key to create enabling environments for women to be engaged and sustained as mission mobilizers. These efforts will not only enable them to become effective mission leaders but also to handle sound biblical teaching and other practical theological issues within the Nigerian context. The next section will look at women’s empowerment as it concerns gender studies.

## Gender Studies and Women's Empowerment

Gender studies, as it concerns differentiation in leadership, are increasingly important issues for women empowerment because a greater proportion of society and even the church are women.<sup>140</sup> Gender studies take several forms and theories; however, two forms that are related to this study are, special/professional opportunity inequality gender organization form<sup>141</sup> will be considered.

The special opportunity inequality reveals the prevalent bias of gender in higher education and professional training, especially in male-dominated fields such as theology, military, engineering, astrology, geology, mining, etc., and the exemption of women from such training is usually due to gender norms.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, the professional inequality between men and women is also prevalent, particularly in employment and promotion in work and occupation. Women often experience greater hindrances than men, especially when there are no equal opportunities for training and empowerment.<sup>143</sup>

Likewise, the theory of gendered organization, which was developed in 1990 by Joan Acker, revealed that one of the processes in which organizations are gendered is through divisions of labour between men and women.<sup>144</sup> Christine Williams et al. buttressed that the theory of gendered organization is used to explain the persistent

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<sup>140</sup> Ann M. Morrison and Mary Ann Von Glinow, "Women and Minorities in Management," *American Psychologist*, vol. 45, no. 2 (1990): 201, accessed 6 November 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.45.2.200>.

<sup>141</sup> See, Ogundiya and Amzat, eds, 75-77.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>143</sup> See, Ogundiya and Amzat, eds, 76.

<sup>144</sup> Joan Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organization," *Gender and Society*, vol. 4, iss. 2 (1990): 141. 139-158.

gender inequality in the workplace, especially in leadership.<sup>145</sup> While Diana Burgess and Eugene Borgida identified gender stereotypes as culturally shared beliefs that dictate expectations about how women and men are and how they ought to behave,<sup>146</sup>

Alice Eagly and Linda Carli opined that prejudices on gender, gender roles, and gender behaviours ascribed to both males and females are one of the major reasons that organizations are gendered.<sup>147</sup> Prejudice involves a group of people holding beliefs about another group of people based on the group to which they belong such as male and female and these roles and behaviours expected of men and women in society lead to situations where both men and women are prejudiced, especially about leadership.

The influences of society on the restrictions of women in leadership are embedded in the socio-cultural beliefs of patriarchy, as discussed earlier. The Global Gender Gap Index revealed that although some African countries have shown considerable progress in closing the gender gap concerning female participation in leadership positions and access to leadership opportunities, Nigeria ranked 128 out of the 153 countries indexed for efforts in closing the gender gap in leadership positions. This indicates that there still exists a huge gap in access to leadership opportunities between men and women in the country.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, and Kristine Kilanski, "Gendered Organization in the New Economy," *Gender and Society*, vol.26, iss. 4 (2012): 549-573.

<sup>146</sup> Diana Burgess and Eugene Borgida, "Who Women are, Who Women should be: Descriptive and Prescriptive Gender Stereotyping in Sex Discrimination," *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, vol. 5, iss. 3 (1999): 675, accessed 26 March 2025, <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2F1076-8971.5.3.665>.

<sup>147</sup> Eagly and Carli, 289.

<sup>148</sup> Global Gender Gap Index, *The Global Gender Index*, 2020, accessed 7 March 2025, [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2).

Though the Nigeria gender policy provides guidelines to address the long-term systemic discrimination against women and to identify and overcome the limitations to the empowerment of women and men,<sup>149</sup> yet inequalities still prevail in politics and decision-making within the government, including religious institutions. The Nigerian culture that supports male domination and female subordination informs the challenges faced by women as it concerns leadership. The idea that leadership is a man's place has relegated most women not to aspire to receive training that can empower them to serve effectively as leaders. The Adventist church in Nigeria is not spared from the patriarchal influence as well as gender roles that promote the marginalization of the female gender from missions. This has constituted a barrier to women's ability to freely and fully participate in leadership.

Similarly, the cultural and stereotypical roles assigned to women, which still expect them to carry out the bulk of the household work even when they are given opportunity to work outside the home may tend to hinder women from taking up leadership roles. This gender division of labour often contributes to fewer women in influential leadership positions and since women are not given equal opportunities to receive education and professional training as men, they would not be qualified to lead and function effectively as men when given a leadership role. Even when there are women with appropriate qualifications, this cultural stereotype may hinder them from assuming leadership roles.

The low representation of women in leadership positions shows how leadership is gendered due to existing and continuing cultural factors that hinder women from attaining leadership positions. Hence, the need for an equitable

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<sup>149</sup> See, section 2.3 of the National Gender Policy, accessed 6 November 2024, <https://www.wrapanigeria.org/revised-2021-2026-national-gender-policy/>.

representation of women in receiving the appropriate training to become empowered to function effectively as mission leaders is germane for the integration of more creative ideas to foster a ministry that caters for the needs of all – males and females. These gender and leadership issues have become a matter of great research interest.

As discussed in this chapter, factors like patriarchy, the abuse, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation of some biblical passages played a role in entrenching gender inequalities however, these factors cannot be condoned to justify the marginalization of women from leadership within the church. In this respect, women in the past two decades have made significant progress in occupying lower and middle leadership positions in church administration, especially through the arms of women's organizations.<sup>150</sup>

Gender studies thus imply here that males and females should have equal treatment and opportunities that will enable them to freely realize and develop their personal abilities and God-given potentials to enhance a balanced ministry and synergize their potentials in fulfilling the Commission Mandate. It is to be noted that equality here does not mean that women and men will become the same, rather, their responsibilities, opportunities, and empowerment will not depend on whether they are born male or female.<sup>151</sup>

Gender should not be the criterion for engagement in leadership, rather, qualities, skills, and qualifications possessed by males and females are to be required. By this, unique perspectives of mission abilities and strategies can be experienced.

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<sup>150</sup> Dorcas Olu Akintunde, "The Impact of Christian Women Organization on the Nigerian Society," *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2010): 114. 109-119.

<sup>151</sup> Helen N. Linonge-Fontebo and Magezi E. Baloy, "Gender Dynamics in Church Leadership: A Case Study of the Presbyterian Church and Full Gospel Mission in Cameroon," *HTS: Theological Studies/Theological Studies*, vol. 79, no. 3 (20): 1, accessed 6 November 2024, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i3.8271>.

Thus, the next section will provide the platform for developing an empowering model in understanding women as mission mobilizers

### **Summary**

This chapter revealed that women in almost every era of human history experienced one form of subjugation, oppression, and marginalization due to patriarchy, hence, the majority of them did not receive equal training as with men that could make them fit in public spheres and assume leadership roles. However, there were women who navigated patriarchy to carry out pivotal roles in these different periods and contexts. Hence, the need for more training of women to gain adequate knowledge and skills for mission/ministry practice has been raised.

The study further discovered factors like patriarchal structure, gendered ascribed roles and cultural norms, limited access to educational opportunities, lack of awareness, among others, as inhibiting women from becoming mission mobilizers/trainers. The review literature also identified the need for the Adventist church in Nigeria to engage women as mission mobilizers to become skillful and qualified missiological/theological leaders/scholars. Additionally, it was garnered that Adventist women are mostly exposed to leadership through the arm of the AWM which also runs scholarship programmes for young females in other fields of study with little/no scholarship scheme for training and empowering of females in theology.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to present the methodology (chapter 4) engaged in this study to address this missiological challenge of empowering women as mission mobilizers in this 21st century.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology that aided the investigation. It begins with the research design, research questions, then it categorizes the population and sets out the survey instruments. Furthermore, it provides the procedures of how data was collected and analyzed, and it discusses questions on validity and reliability, data analysis, risk avoidance, and limitations. Finally, it concludes with a brief chapter summary.

#### **Research Design**

This study designed a model for Adventist women in Nigeria to become empowered as mission mobilizers in our contemporary era. Although mission mobilizer has many meanings and usage,<sup>1</sup> this term is operationally defined as one's involvement in mission by recognizing God-given potential gifts and receiving the appropriate training to become empowered and effectively function as the right trainers/leaders of others in fulfilling God's Great Commission.

This study utilized the mixed method approach that collects, analyzes, and combines a quantitative and qualitative surveys in a single research study which may

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan Shaw, "Rethinking Global Mobilization: Calling the Church to Her Core Identity," in *Mission Frontiers* (London: SCM Press, 2022), 216 accessed 4 January 2024, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/mission-mobilizers-a-multifaceted-role-in-gods-global-purpose>.

result in a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.<sup>2</sup>

Mixed method helps a researcher to gain an in-depth knowledge about the subject matter and concomitantly, the results obtained can be generalized.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the research design utilized for this study was a combination of both questionnaire and semi-structured interview that constitute a mixed method approach.

Although this research's findings may not be generalizable across Adventists globally, they represent a contextual description of the surveyed population in the scope and timeframe in which the research was conducted.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided the design of the instrument and the collection of data were thus:

1. What are the factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission mobilizers? The data then undergoes a second round of analysis to answer the second and third research questions:
2. In what ways can Adventists in Nigeria be empowered as mission mobilizers?
3. What are the benefits of Adventist women becoming mission mobilizers, utilizing the research data to develop a model for understanding empowering women as mission mobilizers?

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<sup>2</sup> Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (London, NY: Guilford Press, 2017), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Silvia Domínguez and Betina Hollstein, eds., *Mixed Methods Social Networks Research: Design and Applications. Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 83.

## Study Population

The population size for this study was Adventists in six congregations in Ilisan-Remo community but though the research focused on women, men, specifically elders, deacons and pastors, were included in the population sampling. The reason for the inclusion of these categories of men is because of: (1) their knowledge about the subject matter, (2) the significant of equal partnership in fulfilling God's mission, and (3) the need to get a balanced-ministry view on women and mission involvement in Nigeria.

The Ilisan-Remo community houses the three major languages in Nigeria and other ethnic groups due to migration and the search for greener pastures. So, the choice of these six churches among the Adventist churches present in this community is because: (a) they consist of the major languages and ethnic groups that make up Nigeria as a nation, (b) no hint about any study done on women in these six churches relating to women as mission mobilizers, and (c) as a Nigerian to work with other women to become more intentional in mission/ministry involvement.

Thus, this study was useful in developing a model for empowering women for this missionary task of reaching the whole world strategically for God's kingdom.

Table 1 below presents the list of these Adventist churches used in this study and the major ethnic groups that constitute their membership.

*Table 1.* The Six Adventist Churches and the Major Ethnic Groups that Constitute Their Membership

Name of Church	Major Ethnic Group that Constitutes Membership
No. 1 Church	Yorubas
No. 2 Church	Igbos
Bege Church	Hausas
Cornerstone Church	Efiks and others
Beautiful Gate	Mixtures of ethnic groups
Babcock Community Church	Mixtures of ethnic groups

## Sample Size

The sample was selected from Adventist members in all the six churches mentioned above. James McMillan and Sally Schumacher explain that the guiding principle in deciding sample size is by obtaining an adequate number to give a reliable result, and they encourage researchers to get a sample of as many as possible.”<sup>4</sup> So, this research works with a population size of 1000 because of the combined women’s population of these churches, which is about 800, and pastors and elders/deacons were included in this scope. Therefore, according to Gilbert et al., missiological sample sizes for 5% Sampling Error of Precision of 1000 population will be 286.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, I collected 286 responses to have a representative sample, and the purposive sample technique was used to collect the 286 surveys. According to Genevieve, et.al., purposive sampling means selecting respondents to be part of this study because they have access to the information or experience with what is under study. The respondents meet the sample criteria and are thus specifically selected for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> Although purposive sampling is often associated with qualitative research, it is also sometimes required by quantitative questions.

The information collected from the sample includes demographic information and respondent opinions and beliefs. The questions were designed in both surveys to; get the biblical/theological knowledge of women as mission mobilizers, identify possible factors holding Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission

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<sup>4</sup> James. H. McMillan and Sally Schumacher, *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: MA: Pearson) Education, 2006), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Marvin Gilbert, Alan R. Johnson, and Paul W. Lewis, eds., *Missiological Research: Interdisciplinary Foundations, Methods, and Integration* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2018), 268.

<sup>6</sup> Genevieve Boucaud, Keph Pondi, and Shannon Trecartin, “Best Practices in Sampling,” in *Quantitative Research for Practical Theology*, eds. Petr Činčala, David Penno, Pavel Zubkov, and Safary Wa-Mbaleka, (Cooranbong NSW, Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2023), 225.

mobilizers, explore ways Adventist women in Nigeria can be empowered as mission mobilizers, and the benefits of Adventist women's leading mission in Nigeria.

*Table 2. Demographic Features for Quantitative Questionnaire*

Variables	Categories	Frequency (277) and Percentage (100%)
Gender	Male	99 (35.7%)
	Female	178 (64.3%)
Age	18-29	62 (22.4%)
	30-39	75 (27.1%)
	40-49	77 (27.8%)
	50-59	46 (16.6%)
	60/above	17 (6.1%)
Educational qualification	SSCE	48 (17.3%)
	BA/B.Sc	79 (28.5%)
	MA/M.Sc	71 (25.6%)
	Ph.D	34 (12.3%)
	Others	45 (16.3%)
Tribe	Hausa	44 (15.9%)
	Igbo	114 (41.2%)
	Yoruba	85 (30.7%)
	Others	26 (9.4%)
	Missing	8 (2.9%)
Name of local church	BU	81 (29.2%)
	BG	44 (15.9%)
	Bege	41 (14.8%)
	CS	22 (7.9%)
	No. 1	39 (14.1%)
	No. 2	50 (18.1%)
No. of years as member of Adventist church	3-5	21 (7.6%)
	6-10	18 (6.5%)
	11-15	18 (6.5%)
	16-20	26 (9.4%)
	21/above	194 (70.0%)
Position in church	Pastor	15 (5.4%)
	Elder	41 (14.8%)
	Dec/Decns	52 (18.8%)
	Member	167 (60.3)
	Missing	2 (0.7%)

Certain demographical features were restricted from participation in the study. For instance, the age limit of all participants was 18 years and above and also, since this study is applied to women specifically, then to elders/deacons, and pastors, anyone who is a male but is not identified as an elder/deacon, or pastor was not

included. Data was collected from each respondent only once, however, the place and time for the collection of the data differed between groups of respondents because of the different locations of the churches.

Participants for the quantitative survey were engaged physically so I physically conducted this survey on a day of worship, on Saturday because churches are usually full during Sabbath worship. The administration of the questionnaire took place between October and early December 2024.

Although two hundred and eighty-six (286) surveys were initiated, only two hundred and seventy-seven (277) were completed and returned, five (1.74%) survey takers' questionnaires were disqualified because the survey was not completed then, four (1.39%) were not returned. So, the copies of questionnaire that were lost due to respondents' problem of misplacement and inappropriate filling, tagged as non-response rate, were nine (3.13%) while the response rate for the study in terms of questionnaire collection is 97%. Thus, the response rate is considered adequate because it is higher than 70%.

*Table 3. Breakdown of the Distribution and Retrieval of Copies of the Questionnaire*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Questionnaire Distributed	286	100%
Number Retrieved and fit for Analysis	277	97%
Number not Returned	4	1.39%
Number filled Incomplete	5	1.74%

Then, for the qualitative interviews, five female participants were physically engaged through a purposive sampling. Out of the five women interviewed, four had a first degree in theology while one had a post-graduate diploma (PGD) degree in pastoral ministry. Their responses enhanced the practical aspects of the research in

terms of factors hindering women as mission mobilizers and the benefits of becoming empowered as mission mobilizers.

The interview sections were conducted within one month, in November, 2024 to ensure data consistency. From this information, the level of empowerment of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Adventist women in Nigeria was explored, and the ways to empower Adventist women as mission mobilizers was examined.

The Table (4) below provides some background information on the participants for the qualitative interview. Because of confidentiality, they are given pseudonyms. The Table outlines the qualifications of the participants, the year they sensed their calling, how they were empowered for mission/ministry, and the number of years in the ministry/leadership.

*Table 4. Background Information of the Participants for the Qualitative Survey*

Name of Participants	Qualifications	The year you sensed your Calling	Ways of Empowerment	How are you practicing your calling
Deborah	MA in Chaplaincy BA in Religion	20 years of age	Self-studying, Participated in church activities, Theological training	As a school chaplain/CRS Teacher
Agatha	BA in Theology	At 15	Mentorship (by father), Personal interest, Theological training	Yet to be engaged by the church, but I represent my calling in my mini-work space
Cecilia	BA in Theology	As an adult mid 20s	Self-realization, LE ministry, Theological training	Yet to be engaged by the church, but involving in personal ministry
Elizabeth	MA in view, in Education Counseling BA Theology	Between ages 10-15	Engagement in church programs, Personal efforts, Theological training	Chaplain and assistance pastoral team member
Gloria	PGD in Pastoral Ministry	Between ages 15 and 16	Self-interest, Given opportunities to teach during Sabbath School, pastoral ministry program	Chaplain

## Instrument Design: Survey and Interview Questions

Two research instruments were developed to ascertain the resonance of the views of women as mission mobilizers. The first instrument was a cross-sectional quantitative survey that was used to collect data, and the second instrument was a list of questions for semi-structured qualitative interviews. According to Darrin Thomas and Pavel Zubkov, cross-sectional survey designs entail data collection at one moment in time and the analysis is done based on this one-time data collection only.<sup>7</sup>

This survey contains a 44-question questionnaire that James McMillan and Sally Schumacher identified as the most commonly used technique for obtaining information from subjects.<sup>8</sup> As recognized by James Bartlett, et.al., its common aim is to collect data representative of a population.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the survey design was designed to get a large sample size and high response rate, which generated enough data that was coded, quantitatively analyzed, and engaged the descriptive approach.

The second instrument is a semi-structured qualitative interview that constitutes a list of questions aimed at forming a sequential mixed method study.<sup>10</sup> 16 semi-structured interview questions were developed to complement the quantitative survey questions. These questions (see appendix B7) also followed the same four-theme design as the quantitative questions: biblical/theological knowledge, factors, empowerment, and benefits.

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<sup>7</sup> Darrin Thomas and Pavel Zubkov, "Quantitative Research Designs," in *Quantitative Research for Practical Theology* eds. Petr Činčala, David Penno, Pavel Zubkov, and Safary Wambaleka, (Cooranbong NSW, Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2023), 104.

<sup>8</sup> McMillan and Schumacher, *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: MA: Pearson) Education, 2006), 17.

<sup>9</sup> James E. Bartlett, Joe W. Kotrlik, and Chadwick C. Higgins, "Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research," *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2001) 43.

<sup>10</sup> Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins, 19.

The reason for using two instruments consecutively was for the quantitative data set to enrich and provide additional data for the qualitative study phase. It was also for the qualitative phase to elucidate and elaborate upon trends that come from the quantitative phase. Both instruments were approved first by the Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) before they were administered (see Appendix A4).

The 44-question survey focused on four themes; biblical/theological knowledge, factors, empowerment, and benefits. The demographic information collected was limited to segment and responses were further analyzed. In all 44 questions, participants were required to give their answers on a sliding scale, coded with numerical values for easy analysis.

The values assigned to the scale were: 1 = Undecided (U), 2 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 3 = Disagree (D), 4 = Agree (A), and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). Average mean scores of the respondent were interpreted as follows: 4.4 to 5 was interpreted as strongly agree (SA); any item with a mean falling between 3.5 to 4.49 was interpreted as agree (A). also, any item with a mean between 2.5 to 3.49 was inferred as disagree (D), while item with a mean from 1.5 to 2.49 was regarded as strongly disagree (SD), and then, item with a mean from 0.5 to 1.49 was interpreted as undecided (U). So, answers were provided on a range of “strongly disagree” and strongly agree.”<sup>11</sup> The quantitative survey questions are listed below in Figure 1 while full response choices can be seen in appendix B6.

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<sup>11</sup> Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (London, NY: Guilford Press, 2017), 91.

Survey: Exploring ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup> century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education Level
4. Tribe
5. Name of Local Church
6. Number of Years as a member of the Adventist Church
7. Position in the Church

Section 2A: Biblical/Theological Knowledge on Women as Mission Mobilizers

1. Women and men were created with distinct abilities and functions
2. The church's function is to teach the distinct roles of men and women to help them understand their unique functions
3. We find no women in the Bible who acted as mission mobilizers
4. An unclear understanding of women's roles in the Bible brings about the lack of female mission mobilizers in the church
5. In the Bible, women were actively involved and empowered as mission mobilizers
6. Having women serve as mission mobilizers in our church is not a theological issue but rather a matter of socio-cultural norms
7. Women serving as mission mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men
8. Being a mission mobilizer should be determined by abilities and qualifications rather than gender

9. Women are not as capable of being mission mobilizers as men
10. Women's expressive and sensitive concern for others are excellent qualities for being a mission mobilizer
11. The softer traits of women and the experience of motherhood are suitable for 21st-century mission mobilizers
12. Women are equally effective as men in reforming society
13. Female mission mobilizers are acceptable and preferred by female church members

#### Section 2B: Factors Preventing Women as Mission Mobilizers

14. Discrimination against women in society is a major obstacle to fostering women as mission mobilizers
15. One obstacle for women as mission mobilizers is that women do not strive to be mobilizers
16. The reason we do not have enough capable women as mission mobilizers is that equal opportunities have not been provided for women who had been trained as men
17. Currently, the Adventist church in Nigeria has not fully utilized female members
18. In the current church system, there are many obstacles hindering the utilization of women's God-given potential
19. Women face the challenge of balancing family responsibilities and mission commitment
20. The church lacks a support system for women engaged as mission mobilizers

21. After getting married, women need to be faithful to home duties and not get involved in church and social activities
22. The Nigerian belief in male dominance poses a barrier to women's involvement as mission mobilizers
23. One of the reasons for the lack of women's involvement as mission mobilizers is due to little/or no theological training
24. Lack of financial support/sponsorship for women in mission/ministry creates a barrier to becoming mission mobilizers

#### Section 2C: Ways of Empower Women in the Church as Mission Mobilizers

25. Providing theological training programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church
26. Providing mentorship programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church
27. Women should have forums, including online chat rooms, to assist them share their own experiences and opinions
28. Seminars such as spiritual gifts seminars and self-development programs should be encouraged to maximize the development of women as mission mobilizers
29. There are specific skills or knowledge such as biblical hermeneutics, art/science of homiletics, biblical languages, mission strategies, etc, emphasized in theological training programs that can empower women as effective mission mobilizers
30. Providing leadership opportunities for women in the church could enhance their role as mission mobilizers

31. Recognizing and appreciating the contributions of other women in mission can become a source of encouragement for Adventist women in Nigeria
32. Providing resources that address the challenges and opportunities faced by other women in mission can empower women in Nigeria for mission
33. Collaboration with Adventist educational institutions to sensitize the need for young women in mission is important
34. There is a need for targeted campaigns or initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of women's involvement in mission
35. The church needs to foster a culture that values and celebrates the unique contributions of women as mission mobilizers
36. Women should be treated equally to men, which includes receiving equal training, job opportunities, and pay
37. Scholarship funds should be available to support and train more women in theological education
38. Women form more than half of the entire congregation, so, the church should be intentional in training more women theologically to reach women members
39. There is a need to encourage women to acquire a professional/theological education

#### Section 2D: Benefits of Women as Mission Mobilizers

40. Women as mission mobilizers would create a good network and collaboration among other mission practitioners
41. The need for the church to mobilize all members for ministry and outreach is germane in solving the mission challenges in today's world

42. An inclusive mission team where both men and women will recognize and utilize diverse skills and perspectives in fulfilling God's mission
43. An extended participation of women as mission mobilizers will help strengthen the growth of the church
44. A holistic approach to the spiritual, mental, social, and physical development of women in becoming mission mobilizers is needed.

Figure 1: Quantitative Research Instrument

After developing the quantitative survey questions, a follow-up set of questions were composed for the 16 semi-structured qualitative interviews. These questions (listed in Figure 2 below) also followed the same four-theme pattern as with the quantitative questions: biblical/theological knowledge, factors, empowerment, and benefits.

Both surveys began with a somewhat lengthy text for participant recruitment procedure; however, this was approved first by the AUA-ISERC (full text in Appendix B6). On this page, I began first by introducing myself and describing the research topic. I informed participants that their participation in this research was completely voluntary and they could opt out at any time they wanted without any negative consequences. I further let participants know that their responses would be entirely anonymous and confidential as no space was provided for names and/or personal details. Then, I make them aware that there will be no research remuneration. I got a consent letter from the three pastors in charge of the selected churches, respectively, before the survey was used.

## Semi-Structured Interview Guide

### Section 1: General Questions and Background to your Calling

1. Thinking back to when you first came into ministry, what do you remember about how you were called?
2. What were the obstacles encountered in accepting this call?
3. Tell me more about yourself at that time.

### Section 2: Biblical/Theological Knowledge of Women as Mission Mobilizers

4. What is your understanding about the role of women and men in mission/ministry?
5. What can you say about women becoming mission mobilizers?
6. Have Adventist women in Nigeria served in the capacity of mission mobilizers? if yes, how when, and when, if not, why?

### Section 3: Factors Preventing Women from becoming Mission Mobilizers

7. What do you remember about the challenges or barriers you faced as you considered practicing your calling?
8. How were you able to overcome those challenges and barriers?
9. What possible factors can hinder women from becoming mission mobilizers in Nigeria today?

### Section 4: Empowerment of Women as Mission Mobilizer

10. How did you come to know more about equipping/empowering yourself?
11. Having been empowered (through training), how do you see yourself fulfilling your calling in practical ways?
12. What is/are the ways (s) Adventist women in Nigeria can be empowered as mission mobilizers to serve the church better?

### Section 5: Benefits of women becoming mission mobilizers

13. What is the benefit of the empowerment received (theological training) to your calling?
14. What are some possible benefits for Adventist women in Nigeria becoming mission mobilizers?
15. Do you think the Adventist church in Nigeria stands the chance to benefit if women are empowered as mission mobilizers? if yes, how, if not, why?
16. Is there anything else that the researcher should know about your experience that I did not ask which can enrich this study?

Figure 2. Qualitative Research Instrument

### **Validity and Reliability**

The survey instrument and the semi-structured interview questions were validated by the dissertation committee. However, because the survey questions were self-generated, after receiving approval from AUA-ISERC (see Appendix A4), the questionnaire was sent to a pastor at Babcock University and one woman to ensure relevance and appropriateness to the current situation of Adventist women in Nigeria, and that it covered the necessary indices relating to women and mission mobilizers. To ensure content and construct and to check for accuracy and consistency, I ran a pilot study of the survey questionnaire.

The pilot study was conducted with the purpose of getting feedback from a small sample of the potential respondents on the understanding and perception of the survey items. Two professors in the Religious Studies Department at Babcock, the Post-graduate methodologist at Babcock, two pastors and two women from outside the selected churches were engaged for the pilot study. Before sending the questionnaire, the individuals were contacted via email and phone. Apart from the

questions on the instrument, there were five other questions the participants were to respond to give their input on the instrument. The questions were:

1. Were you able to understand each of the items on the questionnaire?
2. How long did it take you to respond to the questionnaire?
3. Do you think the questions are compatible with your experience in mission/ministry?
4. Are the questions in the right construction in terms of grammar, and relevance?
5. Do you have any suggestions of something to include or remove from the questionnaire?

The pilot study was conducted with seven participants who were purposively selected across the three main tribes in Nigeria and who know the subject under investigation. The participants were allowed to complete the exercise in one day. The feedback I received from the respondents showed that they had a good understanding of each item on the questionnaire as indicated by how they responded with the highest degree of agreement.

The respondents indicated that it took them an average of 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. They confirmed that these questions are compatible and relevant to their ministry/mission experience, however, two of them identified multiple questions that asked the same things but with slightly different wording or phrasing. Also, one of them identified items that were clustered together and suggested a split of the ideas. Comments from participants were considered and adjustments to the questionnaire were made. After the adjustments made in the pilot survey, no further adjustments were made in the survey design for implementation and analysis.

The participants said that the questionnaire is appropriate to the situation in the context and from their understanding, there is nothing to include or remove. The pilot study thus indicates that the survey may be valid for the purpose for which it was designed. It also indicates that the length of time assigned for respondents to complete the questions on the survey will be adequate.

There was no pilot study for the semi-structured instrument for two reasons: one, because the interview questions are extensions of the survey questions, and two, because of the difficulty that may arise in predicting sub-questions in the interview process. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken. To properly analyze and establish relevant patterns, the responses were coded by categorizing the collected non-numerical information into groups and assigning the numerical codes to these groups,<sup>12</sup> and then documented. To provide consistent patterns, the data coding did not look for isolated words among the data, but for entire paragraphs.<sup>13</sup>

The data from all the interviews was stored securely and properly backed up for safety. Then, the reliability of the study was enhanced by research triangulation<sup>14</sup> by examining and interpreting the data through the Literature Reviews and quantitative survey, to check for consistency in the interviewees' responses and other data gathered during the interview process. This was necessary to enhance a robust

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<sup>12</sup> Daniel Ganu, David Penno, Leni Casimiro, "Data Collection Methods and Processes," in *Quantitative Research for Practical Theology* eds. Petr Činčala, David Penno, Pavel Zubkov, and Safary Wa-Mbaleka, (Cooranbong NSW, Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2023), 258. 242-264.

<sup>13</sup> Arceli H. Rosario, Dióí Cruz, & Edgar Beskow, "Overview of Qualitative Research Designs – Part II," in *Qualitative Research for Practical Theology*, eds., Safary Wa-Mbaleka, Pavel Zubkov, Petr Činčala, and David Penno (Cooranbong NSW, Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2001), 105. 91-121.

<sup>14</sup> John L. Easter and Alan R. Johnson, "Qualitative Data Analysis," in *Missiological Research: Interdisciplinary Foundations, Methods, and Integration*, eds. Marvin Gilbert, Alan R. Johnson, and Paul W. Lewis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2018), 149.

and fuller understanding of the data and to provide illumination into the interpretation process.<sup>15</sup> The interview findings were analyzed to draw conclusions and recommendations.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Letters of permission were sent to the three district pastors in charge of the churches, respectively (see Appendix A1-3 respectively), to establish formal contact with the six churches before administering the questionnaire. The letter to each pastor detailed an explanation of the purpose of the study and a request for permission and participation. Before sending the letters, I first spoke directly with the three pastors in charge of the churches, explaining myself and my research purpose to them, and these pastors then sent their approval/consent before the questionnaire was administered (see Appendix B3-5 respectively). Thereafter, the data was administered to Adventist members in the selected churches. The data collection process was done by me, as I physically printed and disseminated the paper survey to participants.

Private interviews were pre-arranged via a phone call and text messaging. The interviewees were informed of my interest in interviewing them, they were informed the interview would be recorded, informed that their participation would be anonymous, and asked to affirm their participation would not put them at any known risk for physical, mental, or emotional harm. They were also informed that their willingness to participate in the 1-2 hours of interview will not attract any remuneration.

The selection process for interviews took few weeks and the letter of invitation/recruitment was shared with each participant to read and signify their

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<sup>15</sup> Gilbert, Johnson, and Lewis, eds, 388.

willingness to participate (see Appendix B1). Afterwards, a follow-up calls and text messaging via phone were made, participant indicated their consent by affirming with a yes and appointments were confirmed by the five interviewees. These five females selected were those who had received a call and have been equipped theologically as with their male counterparts, to gain valuable insights that will help strengthen the research work.

The participants were also within the Illisan-Remo axis and they were also from among the three major speaking tribes – Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, in Nigeria. The interviews were done at an individual level as such, different dates and appointments were given by each participant because of their different schedule, however, they were informed of the limited time for the completion of this project. Hence, the interview dates were on different weeks, days, and times but it was done within one month (see Appendix B2).

All interviews took approximately 1- 2 hours each and were conducted at the designed place of meeting as preferred by the interviewees. The interviews were recorded via my phone sound record and the files were then transferred to my laptop and stored on a secure drive.

### **Data Analysis**

The quantitative data was analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A descriptive statistics analysis which are brief informational figures that summarize a given data set, which can be either a representation of the entire population or a sample of the population,<sup>16</sup> was used to determine the level of

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<sup>16</sup> Laurisse Sossah, Pavel Zubkov, and Robeert John Almocera, “Descriptive Statistics and Data Analysis,” in *Quantitative Research for Practical Theology*, eds. Petr Činčala, David Penno, Pavel Zubkov, and Safary Wa-Mbaleka, (Cooranbong NSW, Australia: Avondale Academic Press, 2023), 271.292 271-

biblical/theological knowledge, factors, ways of empowerment, and benefits of women as mission mobilizers. The analysis disregarded incomplete survey responses.

Then, the qualitative data were recorded verbatim. They were stored and was transcribed for analysis. The transcripts were then coded using the analytical approach that followed the conventions of qualitative investigation using constant comparison methods and thematic analysis. Relevant themes under investigation: (1) biblical/theological knowledge, (2) factors, (3) empowerment, and (4) benefits, were discovered and were then explained and illustrated by quotes from the participates. The codes used for the qualitative data were divided into 13 sub-codes to sort responses in more detail. The corresponding themes in the quantitative data were then overlaid with the coded interview data for further triangulation and analysis. Incomplete survey responses were not included in the analysis.

### **Ethical Consideration**

As regards ethical dimensions, the participants' identities were kept confidential as the name and address of the participant were not required in the filling of the questionnaire or the interview. Though the research does not in any way expose participants to any known risks: physical, mental, and emotional, yet, participants were made to know that they can opt out from participating if they notice that they may be expose to ant risk. Also, concerning ethical consideration, the survey instruments alongside the research proposal was subjected to scrutiny of AUA-ISERC and I received the ethical clearance and approval from this body before the instruments were administered (see Appendix A4).

## **Risk Avoidance**

Given the avoidance of any possible social risk, the research instruments did not require any personal identifiers from survey participants. Numbers were used to code interviewees' names and were expressed as a pseudonym for readability in the findings chapter. A password-protected device was used to store the interview which was later deleted at most, two months after use. Furthermore, all interviewees were asked to confirm if their voluntary participation would not put them at any known physical, mental, or emotional risk. This is to ensure protection from any unexpected sociological consequences.

## **Limitations**

This study was based on self-selection sampling which in its nature, invites participants to freely participate in research however, participants may also freely opt-in or opt-out. As such, to some extent, some sections of the population were underrepresented or overrepresented. In taking measures regarding self-reflexivity which involves the researcher taking into account his/her own consciousness, I do acknowledge my personal involvement and passion in this area of study which may possibly create a positive bias.

Thus, to reduce this, I exercised enough self-control in making the study's questions and responses as neutrally as possible and the interviews were conducted as neutrally as possible. Also, as the researcher, I attempted to be neutral as possible while collecting the data as I did not get involved in making personal comments or contribution to interviewees' responses in the cause of the interview. This aided me to have the best data to analyze to draw valuable conclusions.

## **Gender Representation**

Of the completed surveys, 64.3% were returned by females and 35.7% by males. This high participation of females could be based on the purposive sampling technique employed in the study and also on the number one purpose of this study – to develop a model for empowering 21<sup>st</sup>-century Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers. Men, specifically pastors, elders/deacons were included in the population sampling because of: (1) their knowledge about the subject matter, (2) the significant of equal partnership in fulfilling God’s mission, and (3) the need to get a balanced-ministry view on women and mission involvement in Nigeria.

However, though women make up the high percentage rate of respondents as they make up the majority percent of membership in most religious settings,<sup>17</sup> including the Adventist churches in Nigeria, yet, there exist little intentional act of the church to identify, equip/train, and empower women to be qualified with the arts, sciences, and strategies for mission in this 21<sup>st</sup>-century, especially in ministering to the needs of their fellow women and other members both within and outside the church, influenced the reason for the greater focus on women in this study.

## **Summary**

This chapter furnished us with details on the research methodology procedures that explain the instrument design, data collection process, sampling procedures, and data analysis and then, it described the four major coding themes and the limitation of the study. Therefore, the next chapter presents the results of the data analysis as they pertain to the three research questions: (1) What are the factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission mobilizers? (2) In what ways can

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<sup>17</sup> Vine, 27.

Adventists in Nigeria be empowered as mission mobilizers? and (3) What are the benefits of Adventist women becoming mission mobilizers, utilizing the research data to develop a model for understanding empowering women as mission mobilizers.

In the next chapter, the emerging data will be used to discuss the major findings, highlighting areas of convergence and divergence from pre-existing research, and suggesting implications for integrating data with current practice and theory.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on the findings from the quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) phases of the field research and then it analyzes these findings as they pertain to the four themes under investigation: *(1) biblical/theological knowledge, (2) factors, (3) empowerment, and (4) benefits*. The emerging data from the first research question: *What are the factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria from becoming mission mobilizers?* will be used to answer the second and third research questions: *In what ways can Adventists in Nigeria be empowered as mission mobilizers? And what are the benefits of Adventist women becoming mission mobilizers, utilizing the research data to develop a model for understanding empowering women as mission mobilizers?* The discussion of the findings as it relates to previous research will be presented and a model for empowering women as mission mobilizers will be the thrust of the next chapter.

Though all research participants were informed that responses would be completely anonymous and their data had been coded under a number rather than a name (see Appendixes B 6 and 7), however, the participants interviewed were given a pseudonym in the coming pages for readability. The findings were discussed according to the themes listed above using source triangulation. Triangulation

involves the process of collecting multiple forms of data related to the same research questions for the purpose of finding consistencies or inconsistencies among the data.<sup>1</sup>

In this section, the data source triangulation, which involves examining and interpreting information from the literature review and the quantitative survey to check for consistency in interviewees' responses and other data collected during the interviews,<sup>2</sup> was used to enhance the depth and robustness of the findings, providing greater clarity in the interpretation process. Data source triangulation was used by collecting data from five Adventist females within the Ilisan-Remo axis to ensure triangulation in this study.

### **Biblical/Theological Rationale for Women as Mission Mobilizers**

As discussed in Chapter 2, in biblical times, men and women were created with distinct abilities and functions. In contrast, women were assigned the functions of handling household chores and caring for and training their children in their early age, men were involved in shepherding and leadership functions. However, it was garnered that women also engaged in 'male tasks' such as shepherding, being a judge, in leadership capacities as prophetess' and in the religious sphere such as organizing worship.

The data on biblical/theological knowledge of women as mission mobilizers strongly corroborates this assumption. The breakdown of respondents' responses to the sub-themes related to this theme above are presented as follows.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed (England: Pearson Education Limited, 2015), 278.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Carter et al., "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research," *Oncology Nursing Forum* 41, no. 5 (2014): 545.

## **Uniqueness in Abilities and Functions**

When participants were asked to express their understanding of the statement, *Women and men were created with distinct abilities and functions*, 84.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Only 9.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remainder, 6.5%, giving an ambivalent answer (neither agree nor disagree, i.e., undecided).

The research further revealed a strong correlation between respondents' understanding of women's roles and functions as it concerns their distinct abilities, which go beyond being a helpmate. For instance, those who agreed or strongly agreed (84.0%) that God created women with distinct abilities and functions are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (37.2%) that women serving as mission mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men (see Table 5).

These results correspond with the biblical teaching on the account of God's creation of man and woman. The narrative shows that God created male and female as equal partners in receiving His equal blessings of productivity, commissioning to subdue and rule over the earth, and of exercising authority over the world (Gen 1:26-28). Concomitantly, Ellen Whites asserted that the creation of woman from man's side rib signified that woman was created to serve as the second self of a man (cf. Eph 5:29) as against being inferior to man.<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on the reference to "a helper" (Gen 2:18) used by God for the woman, David Larson asserted that "a helper" here connotes that the woman renders help to the man.<sup>4</sup> This agreed with Richard Davidson's work on headship, submission,

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<sup>3</sup> White,46.

<sup>4</sup> Larson, 116.

and equality in Scripture where he explained that the Hebrew word ‘ezer’ used to refer to a woman as ‘helper’ (see Exo 18:4; Ps 33:20; 70:5), connotes that of a superior helper, signifying that a woman was not created as inferior to a man but rather, she renders help to him. This shows that a woman’s unique abilities and functions make it possible for her to be a helper – to render help to the man.

The response rate of those who agreed or strongly agreed that women were created with distinct abilities and functions (84.0%) is high. By way of comparison, this response is still higher than the percentage of those who, responding to the question that women serving as mission mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men (only 31.1% agreed or strongly agreed). The unique creation of women and men with distinct abilities and functions seemed to be an important area of concern to most respondents, and this was an expected outcome reflected in biblical teachings on the creation of man and woman.<sup>5</sup> Although there might be some biblical texts, that are seen to stress on women’s subordination to men, however, there still appear several biblical texts that treat women and men equally.

Consequently, when respondents were asked whether *women serving as mission mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men*, 37.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 31.1% agreed or strongly agreed (see Table 5). A reason for this strongly disagreed response could be the biblical/theological knowledge of participants affirmed by their strong agreement that men and women were created with distinct abilities and functions. As the literature review indicated that women are not to be mere followers or helpers of

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<sup>5</sup> Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” 262.

men but they are also gifted with leadership potentials, are evidenced in Jesus' and Paul's days.

This is opposed to a typical patriarchal system where women are expected to only play the supportive and follower' roles and not permitted to assume any leadership position. Therefore, God created men and women to see themselves as equal in a beneficial relationship while maintaining their individuality in their thoughts and actions. They are to synergize their unique functions and abilities to work as partners in fulfilling God's mission on earth and the church has a role in this regard.

*Table 5. Summary Responses to Uniqueness in Abilities and Functions*

Question	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Question 1: Women and men were created with distinct abilities and functions	6.5% 18	5.4% 15	4.0% 11	24.2% 67	59.6% 166	99.7% 277
Question 7: Women serving as mission mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men	30.7% 85	22.8% 66	14.4% 40	17.0% 47	14.1% 39	99% 277

Harriet, 2025.

### **The Function of the Church in Educating Members of Their Roles**

A majority of the respondents (80.0%), agreed or strongly agreed that the church's function is to teach the unique make-up of males and females so they can better understand and value their unique roles in God's mission (see Table 6). When interviewees were asked about their understanding on the role of women and men in

mission/ministry, their responses were biblically/theologically predicable and almost indistinguishable from each other. All five interviewed, believed that women in biblical times had played important roles in mission/ministry even though they were not called pastors. For instance, Elizabeth stated that,

Women in biblical times performed significant roles, especially in areas where men cannot reach. Though women were not called pastors, but they function as mission leaders both in the Old Testament and New Testament, though restricted to some functions.

Another interviewee by name Gloria, further stated that:

I know women had a role to play in ministry, they enter places where men cannot, especially in the northern part of the country, (Nigeria) and we find lots of women in the Bible who had played key roles in ministry (she cited some examples).

Similarly, Deborah and Agatha shared their understanding that was also related to the views of the above participants, respectively. Deborah said,

Both men and women work together to lead others to the Lord just like our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles did. We may serve in different capacities; we may not be at the forefront like the apostles in preaching. But wherever God has placed us, the understanding is that the time and talents is to lead souls to the kingdom, to care for them and nurture them in order not to derail. Yes, women are not pastors, but they are allowed to function majorly through AWM, YAWM, Children ministries, and even Shepherdess ministries.

Agatha's response was somehow similar to Deborah. She stated that:

I am aware of women and men's role in mission/ministry, women like Eve, Esther, Deborah, etc., they function as mission mobilizers. Women in the Adventist church function more through AWM, Personal ministries work like given support ministries to the less privileged."

These findings reiterate the biblical teachings on the roles of men and women in partaking in God's mission and emphasizes that though women are not called "pastors" by name or title, but their roles in fulfilling God's mission cannot be overemphasized. As such, the church's function is to constantly teach and educate members on their unique roles, which will help each one to synergize their God-given potentials in fulfilling God's mission thereby contributing to mission/ministry success.

Some of the participants (43.7%), agreed or strongly agreed that an unclear understanding of the roles of women in the Bible could be the possible cause for the lack of female mission mobilizers in the church (see Table 6). This unclear understanding of women's roles in the Bible could stem from some of the biblical texts that seems to stress on women's subordination to men and/or that prohibit women from functioning in "male tasks" of mission/ministry, as some may infer in the Pauline writings (cf. Lev 12:1-5; Exo 21:7-8; 1 Tim 2:11-12; 1 Cor 14:34-35).

But as revealed in the literature review section, a careful study of these texts, especially the Pauline's, illustrated Paul's concern on the importance for women to be well-grounded in Scripture not to fall into the danger of false teachings propagated by false teachers in the church, which had influenced some of the "untrained" women in promoting false teachings. So, he revealed the danger of women falling into deception due to a lack of learning (1 Tim 2:13-14). As Junia Pokrifka averred, Paul limited women's teaching and leadership roles in the church momentarily, until they had received proper training (1 Tim 1:3-11; 2 Tim 3:6-7),<sup>6</sup> showcasing the need for women to be properly trained and educated to become teachers/leaders of the Word, just like Priscilla. In this vein, Ellen White encouraged women to be "people of the Word, mighty in the Scriptures as same men who work along such lines."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, any unclear understanding of these teachings relating to men's and women's roles in mission/ministry could stem from biases and/or prejudices, especially as it relates to patriarchy, that have not been transformed in the conversion process. And the Adventist church in Nigeria educating members on this will go a

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<sup>6</sup> Pokrifka, 18.

<sup>7</sup> White, *Gospel Workers*, 192.

long way in curbing, if not eliminating, these negative prejudices against women and leadership.

When participants in the qualitative survey were asked on what they perceived about women becoming mission mobilizers and if Adventist women have served in that capacity, Deborah attested that:

Women have not been allowed to function as leaders besides the above ministries (the ones she mentioned earlier). It has not happened even in Babcock University, where I am. They have not given women that empowerment.

She went further to state possible reasons women have not been given the empowerment to lead as mission mobilizers:

Maybe because they have enough men.” In some places outside Nigeria, women are made to lead or head a church even without ordination because she had received the training and the gifts of the Holy Spirit – pastor-teacher is given to all, not to the ordained only. The church in Nigeria has not risen to the responsibility yet. For instance, each worship center is occupied by males probably because of the issue of ordination. However, in some places (outside Nigeria), because women had been equipped and trained, though not ordained, they are empowered to lead as mission mobilizers.

Also, Agatha stated that: “Women are involved as mission leaders at a personal level, not as church appointed.” Likewise, when Cecilia was asked about Adventist women serving as mission mobilizers in Nigeria, she shared her view as follows:

Yes, in Nigeria, women becoming mission Mobilizers is not really there; opportunity is not given to women because we are good at restricting, not empowering. Some Adventist churches in Nigeria do not even allow women to function even in the 5<sup>th</sup> Sabbath (that is, Women’s Sabbath programme).

Responding to the same questions, Elizabeth indicated that:

To me, women becoming mobilizers is a great thing for women to be mission mobilizers, for example, Jesus’ resurrection gospel was led by a woman – Mary Magdelene, the well woman’s encounter with Christ, became a mission field for her that after her encounter, she went into her community and preached. To me, women serving as mission mobilizers is not a problem, but they must serve in humility.

Regarding Adventist women in Nigeria serving in the capacity of mission mobilizers, she went further to say that:

Starting with the local church, and our pastors can testify to that, many activities of the church are carried out by women. An example that came to my head is that there is a great change when a woman became the stewardship director in our locality, the Ogun Conference. We women have a way of making things work in a sensitive and 'enticing' way, women connect to women more easily than men. Though I do not have the general statistic, using my local church as an example, the number of women is far-far more than the number of men and reaching out to these people we need women who are capable, who are effective, who will be allowed to reach out to these women in meeting their need. Women function in the church but not as core leaders without having men at the forefront.

Still on Adventist women's involvement as mission mobilizers, Gloria shared that:

Women becoming mission mobilizers play a distinctive and non-competitive role. About Adventist women becoming mobilizers, there are actually few of them fully involved in Nigeria, especially in the church. It is only when we talk about AWM and YAWM, but to be in the forefront, as leaders, women are quite a few. Like I can say now, I just got to discover that I am the only female chaplain from the north, except for now, the call is coming and some are responding, so I can imagine the situation of our nursing school that is just opened in the north that there is no female chaplain but there are female students. So, men have their limitations. So, there are quite a few women and I am sure in the east too, but from the west, for the presence of Babcock University, some females are involved though in very few proportions when compared to the ratio of females in this community versus female theologians, counselors, chaplains, and in the pastoral force.

From the results, it is gathered that the participants are aware of what women are doing, in terms of leadership, in other parts of the world, and also, how women have played significant roles in the church's mission, especially through the arm of the AWM. As noted earlier in the literature review, women were instrumental in the spread of early Christianity because they were the earliest embracers to Christianity, and were also instrumental in the establishment of home churches.

Women were able to assume leadership responsibilities and manage worship gatherings that took place both within and outside their homes. However, as revealed

from the interviews, Adventist women in the Nigerian context, have not been empowered as “core leaders,” let alone to function as mission leaders, except through the arm of the AWM and YAWM which is a normal situation because this is an all-women group and a man may not be placed there as the leader. So, in most cases, women mainly play the supportive role even when they are qualified to lead.

One could only wonder why that in the early history of Adventism in Nigeria, not until the establishment of the AWM,<sup>8</sup> little is known about women’s involvement in mission and their activities. This situation could be a result of the Nigerian cultural context of male dominance where even when women make up roughly half of the population, they are regarded as second-class citizens, making them take up supportive roles.<sup>9</sup>

This situation however, does not align well with the biblical views on women and mission leadership. For example, in chapter 2 of this study, a list of several women that Paul identified as leaders were presented. Women like Phoebe provided strong evidence for the presence of women leaders in the Pauline churches (cf. 1 Tim 3:11), Lydia proved herself to be a capable and devote woman who took care of a full-fledged church placed in her care (Acts 16:40), Priscilia taught the Scripture accurately to the great Orator, Apollos (Rom 16:1-3,5; Acts 18:28) and also risked her life in spreading the gospel to those Paul could not reach, among others.

Paul’s list of these women alongside with men and the general terms used in describing their missionary efforts such as hard workers in ministry, devout teachers, co-labourers, etc., highlights his treatment and view of men and women’s distinctive roles and functions in mission/ministry and the necessity for a balance ministry

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<sup>8</sup> Alabi-Sessou, “Women’s Ministries in West-Central Africa.”

<sup>9</sup> Allanan, 115.

approach by synergizing these unique roles in fulfilling God's mission. Likewise, in Christ's days, women like Mary Magdalene became the leader and first proclaimer of Christ's resurrection (cf. Matt 27:56; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10), the well-woman became the first great female mission mobilizer that brought the conversion of her whole community (John 4:25-42), to mention but a few. By this, the Adventist church in Nigeria has a function to teach and expose members to their unique roles in fulfilling God's mission in this age.

This teaching will not only expose members to their unique potentials, but it will also call the church's attention to become intentional in equipping/developing these potentials to successfully reach the whole person with the whole gospel wholly. So, the ways of empowering women for such a task become germane even as I explore the responses to cultural or theological prejudices on women as mission leaders.

It is also worth noting that most respondents (80.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that the church's function is to teach men and women their distinct roles in fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate. This relates to existing studies about women's involvement in missions. It is said that the commission given by Christ requires all believers in the church, young, middle, and age adults (men and women), and so, the church, through teaching all members, should make all to accept the call to get involved in fulfilling this command.<sup>10</sup>

Women, as part of the all, are believed to play a significant role in ensuring that the gospel gets to the reach of all people groups included in the scope of the Great Commission, especially targeted groups within restricted terrains.<sup>11</sup> So, the church is

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<sup>10</sup> Tedjo, et al., 5588.

<sup>11</sup> Lee and Viljoen, 4.

to continually teach and educate members on how they can synergize their abilities and unique functions as they partake in God’s mission.

*Table 6. Summary Responses to The Function of the Church in Educating Members of Their Roles*

Question	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Question 2: The church’s function is to teach the distinct roles of men and women to help them understand their unique Functions	5.4% 15	7.6% 21	7.2% 20	33.9% 94	45.8% 127	99.9% 277
Question 4: An unclear understanding of women’s roles in the Bible brings about the lack of female mission mobilizers in the church	20.9% 58	18.1% 50	17.3% 48	28.5% 79	15.2% 42	100% 277

Harriet, 2025.

**Cultural prejudices and women serving as mission mobilizers.** Still on the biblical/theological perception on women as mission mobilizers, the fact that majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that women in biblical period had served in various capacities of leadership, including being mission mobilizers could have informed the respondents’ level of agreement when asked: *Having women serve as mission mobilizers in our church is not a theological issue but rather a matter of socio-cultural norms*. About half of the respondents, 49.4%, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (see Table 7).

This could be due to the perspectives of patriarchy that seem to subordinate women. For instance, just as in most African contexts, the Nigerian patriarchal

cultural system had its influence in the training of children – males are trained in leadership roles while females are restricted to domestic activities.

This, according to Makama Allanan, has effects on women's self-esteem and confidence in their careers and adult life.<sup>12</sup> It further contributes to the inequality of males and females in certain socio-economic activities, thereby increasing illiteracy and poverty among females.<sup>13</sup> But as noted earlier (see ch.3), women had displayed their irreparable leadership skills in various aspects of life and Fatai Ojasupo also opined that the African religion had provided opportunities for women to play pivotal roles as floor members and most significantly, as leaders.<sup>14</sup> These leadership roles as supported by Rosemary Edet and Bette Ekeya, were not exclusively based on gender.<sup>15</sup>

Congruently, within the Adventist community in Nigeria, there still exist struggle with many converts who harbor this patriarchal ideology and prejudices against women and leadership. For instance, Elizabeth shared two of her experiences that buttressed this point. The first experience happened during her training days, while the second was during a practical session. She said:

In my school days, being the only female in my class, even when I was given the opportunity to lead as the class representative, full power was not given to me to carry out my duties as the leader. I experienced stigmatization as a female leading the males.

Her second experience was in her ministry practice, which was a touching one.

She said:

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<sup>12</sup> Allanan, 116.

<sup>13</sup> Ojo, 126-127.

<sup>14</sup> Ojasupo, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Edet and Ekeya, 613.

During our week of prayer that just ended, I was among those selected as chaplains and prayer band committee to attend to the spiritual needs of attendees. I had a challenging moment with one of my clients, a female. When she entered the prayer room for counseling, she was first surprised to see a female there because the general ideal was a male pastor to be in that session. So, when I greeted her to make her feel welcomed, her response was 'good morning my daughter.' This was the first objection and signal that I was not recognized as a female pastor/chaplain, so I had to begin prayerfully in my heart, asking God for wisdom to deal with this objection. Then I said in my mind, what if it were to be a man in the room, would she have said 'good morning my son' or good morning my pastor?' While I accepted that I was like a daughter to her but at this point, I am serving as a spiritual leader. The next thing was a bigger shock, she said, 'I want to see a pastor to share my burden and to pray for me.' When I said that I am here for that purpose, that is, I am the one she could see, her countenance changed, like she felt disappointed but insisted she needed a pastor. I had to first go round to explain how I find myself in this position and all the qualifications I had earned even more than some of the male pastors that qualified me to be in the position of attending to her spiritual and even emotional and psychological needs, before she gradually became comfortable to open up to me. It took her some time for her to be convinced.

Believe me, we were in the counseling session for over two hours, what she shared cannot be shared to a male pastor and the mannerize would also be different. At some points, we had to weep together, because I understood the pain she was going through. After the session, she was happy to have me counseled her. So, these are some of the challenges we experienced from being a female pastor/chaplain, let alone becoming leaders. We often receive stigmatization from members because they have yet to either understand or accept women as spiritual leaders.

The experiences above may not be too far from those of the other females who have dedicated themselves to mission/ministry. In fact, from the different interactions with two of the interviewees (Cecilia and Agatha), it showed that one of the reasons they have not be engaged by the church is tied to the acceptance of women as pastors or leaders, especially in the part of the country they came from where women are sometimes not even allowed to lead out (especially to preach) on their women's day, and this may be due to this cultural and patriarchal ideology. So, one can say here that both the church (members) and the church leadership have a role to play in accepting the unique ministries of women to serve as mission leaders.

These cultural prejudices may hinder women from rising up to the point of becoming leaders because from the beginning, the society and/or even the church do not expose women to have equal opportunity to be trained and/or be equipped as with men and even when such opportunity is provided, there is no intentional placement for them. This thus makes them appear ‘unqualified’ for the task of being mission mobilizers. From the above, it becomes imperative that the Adventist church in Nigeria should consider the importance of discipling new converts which may help to reduce if not eliminate the patriarchal ideology that often oppress, subjugate, and marginalize women.

Following, the remaining percentage of the respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed (39.4%) and/or were undecided (11.2%) to the statement that women serving as mission mobilizers is not theological issue but rather a matter of socio-cultural norms (see Table 7) supports the assertions of Mercy Oduyoye who stated that the reluctance of some churches to send women for theological studies and/or the reluctance of some seminaries to admit women as students has made the issue of women serving as mission leaders/teachers to be a theological one.<sup>16</sup>

This topic on women most especially as it concerns their status and leadership roles/positions is a long debated one, as the literature revealed. This had led scholars like Gipson Asha et al., to examined the experiences and perceptions of female leadership throughout all stages of the leadership process with the aim of discovering whether there are different rates of selecting men and women for leadership positions.<sup>17</sup> Also, the issue of whether women are to be ordained or not for pastoral

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<sup>16</sup> Phiri, 108.

<sup>17</sup> Asha et al., 35.

ministry is one of the major ongoing theological debates<sup>18</sup> which in a way poses a barrier for women to engage in mission.

These reasons, among others, may have contributed to why respondents agreed that women serving as mission mobilizers is a theological issue and not socio-cultural. Whatever the case, ordination was never a criterion for partaking in the Great Commission Mandate neither was it a necessity for the bestowal of spiritual gifts. As such, this should not in any way hinder women from participating in God's mission, both within and outside the church. However, this research's interest is not on this issue of ordination hence, no in-depth discussion will be done on it.

Notably, a significant number of the respondents, 66.0%, agreed or strongly agreed that being a mission mobilizer should be determined by abilities and qualifications rather than gender. Similarly, 45.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed on the statement that women are not as capable of being mission mobilizers as men (see Table 7). These results portray the debate among scholars on gender differences in leadership roles. Elizabeth's experiences correlate with Chimwemwe Katunbiwhat's view. Katunbiwhat indicated that gender mostly forms the essential organizing principle in societies, which in most cases, has been used as a discriminatory tool in the distribution of resources such as, education, power, leadership, income, work, etc.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, Elizabeth's experiences correspond with Asha N. Gipson, et al findings. They examined whether both men and women have the same developmental opportunities in leadership that could qualify both as leaders and specifically, whether women tend to demonstrate different leadership styles thereby making them to

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<sup>18</sup> For more details on the debate see, Dei and Osei-Bonsu, 31-62.

<sup>19</sup> Katunbi, 7.

perform better as leaders.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, Samantha Paustian, et al study, proffered an explanation for the low representation of women in leadership positions and they opined that undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders could be a possible explanation for women's underrepresentation in elite leadership positions.<sup>21</sup>

In identifying areas where this undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders could occur, I believe that this could happen in a situation where the church is not intentionally identifying women's God-given potentials and providing equal opportunities to improve their potentials through training women to be qualified with the arts, science, and strategies for mission in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Undervaluation can also occur in a situation where in the church, the few women who have received the training and are empowered are not provided with opportunities to engage in practical services that enhance their experiences, as well as their skills. As such, Toby Baker referred to this situation as the under-utilization<sup>22</sup> of women in using their God-given potentials for church growth and mission.

Intrinsically, the findings compliment Arthur Jago's comment that "since a leader is made not born, the process of determining a leader should be on abilities and qualifications which can be achieved through a process of self-study, education, training, and experience."<sup>23</sup> This correlates with participants interviewed who shared their experiences as how they were being empowered (see Table 4). Notably, the results on women not being as capable of being mission leaders as men, where a majority strongly disagreed with the statement, support Anwar Hasan and Abdullah

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<sup>20</sup> For more details, see Asha et al., 37.

<sup>21</sup> Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr, 1129.

<sup>22</sup> Baker, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Jago, 315.

Othman’s opinion on women as being able to lead more effectively and productively, and they also make their leadership more participatory or collaborative.<sup>24</sup> This is also in line with Christiana Ogbogu’s study, which observed that women can lead in ways that are as effective as those of their male counterparts.<sup>25</sup>

Ellen White believed that women can minister in ways that men cannot,<sup>26</sup> and the Bible records several examples of women like Miriam, Rahab, Mary Magdalene, to mention a few, who were capable leaders during their days. So, having seen the experiences of women who have strived to become efficient as mission leaders, these experiences should encourage more Adventist women in Nigeria to seek to become empowered as effective mission mobilizers/leaders.

*Table 7. Summary Responses to Cultural Prejudices and Women serving as Mission Mobilizers*

Question	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Question 6: Having women serve as mission mobilizers in our church is not a theological issue but rather a matter of socio-cultural norms	11.2% 31	19.9% 55	19.5% 54	27.4% 76	22.0% 61	100% 277
Question 8: Being a mission mobilizer should be determined by abilities and qualifications rather than gender	11.9% 33	13.4% 37	8.7% 24	26.7% 74	39.0% 109	99.7% 277

<sup>24</sup> Hasan and Othman, 8

<sup>25</sup> Ogbogu, 61.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, 472.

Question 9: Women are not as capable of being mission mobilizers as men	33.6% 93	30.3% 84	15.5% 43	9.7% 27	10.8% 30	99.9% 277
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Harriet, 2025.

Summarily, the results on biblical/theological rationale for women as mission mobilizers showed that the Adventist church in Nigeria is very much aware of the biblical teachings on women and men in mission/ministry. More significantly, the participants are aware of the unique roles of women in partnering and synergizing their God-given potentials with male mission practitioners in fulfilling God’s mission.

However, with the low involvement of women in leading roles despite this awareness, the window opens to explore possible factors that could prevent women from serving in that capacity. The next section presents and discusses respondents’ views on factors preventing Adventist women in Nigeria to become mission mobilizers.

### **Factors Preventing Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers**

The participants shared their perceptions on the factors preventing women as mission mobilizers. They thought the factors related to male dominance/patriarchy, lack of little/no theological training, lack of support system, lack of financial support/scholarship, future job prospects, lack of interest in assuming leading roles, lack of ability to balance ministry and family, among others.

I will categorize these factors into three headings: discrimination/stereotyping, lack of equal opportunities, and family/ministry balance. This section will then present and discuss participants’ responses under each heading.

**Discrimination and stereotyping.** The participants thought that one of the major obstacles that hindered women from becoming mission mobilizers was discrimination and stereotyping that is associated with the patriarchal and male-dominant culture. This was shown by 61.4% of the participants who agreed or strongly agreed that *discrimination against women in society is a major obstacle to fostering women as mission mobilizers*.

Equally, 57.4% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that *the Nigerian belief in male dominance poses a barrier to women's involvement as mission mobilizers* (see Table 5:4) The results reiterate Diana Burgess and Eugene Borgida's assertion that gender stereotypes are culturally shared beliefs that dictate expectations about how women and men are and how they ought to behave.<sup>27</sup>

The results also support the claim of Gbenga-Akinbiola that the Nigerian culture does not support women attaining leadership roles, as they are traditionally made to believe that men are expected to be in charge; as such, men are trained from birth to be dominant.<sup>28</sup> This male-dominant ideology was also experienced by one of the interviewees, as stated earlier, "though I was made the leader in my class, I was not given the full power to lead because of stigmatization, 'I am a woman.'"

Though Deborah and Gloria did not describe male dominance as one of the major factors hindering women from becoming mission mobilizers, the views they shared on culture can, however, be traced to male dominance. For instance, Deborah said:

The church in Nigeria has not risen to the responsibility of involving women in pastoral leadership. For example, each worship centers on campus are occupied (led) by males, trained or yet to be trained pastors, probably because of the issue of ordination.... The church in Nigeria has not gotten to the full

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<sup>27</sup> Burgess and Borgida, 675.

<sup>28</sup> Gbenga-Akinbiola, 76.

realization that ministry is not only for the ordained, but the unordained who have received the training can be leaders of mission.

In buttressing this point, she further stated that: “the pastor-teacher gift given by the Holy Spirit is not limited to males only. But if the Holy Spirit gives such gifts to individuals, who are we as humans to distinguish/separate?” Agatha summed it up by saying that: “the ministry is seen as only for men, hence, they play the roles of leaders and receive funds for academic support.” Still on the issue of male dominance, Cecila said:

This is like ‘fighting what you cannot fight,’ especially in Nigeria, meaning that Nigerians have not come to that point of engaging women in positions of mission leaders.

Agatha and Cecila shared similar thoughts with Ushe Mike Ushe, who avowed that most cultures and traditions in Nigeria depict male dominance in all situations, and as such, females are viewed as inferior, and this culture encourages respect for males in society.<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth summed it up by saying: “Many value culture more than the Bible preached. For Example, in some places, women cannot mount the pulpit.” So, trying to change the narrative is like ‘fighting the fight you cannot fight.’ These stereotypes create a belief among women that leadership is a ‘male domain’ only because of the gendered expectations about leaders – leadership entails agentic, which relates to characteristics and traits of males.

The male-dominance and stereotyping could have influenced participants’ decision when asked: *One obstacle for women as mission mobilizers is that women do not strive to be mobilizers.* There was a close marking between those who disagreed or strongly disagreed, 43.7%, and those who agreed or strongly agreed, 36.9% (see

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<sup>29</sup> Ushe, 116-117.

Table 8). The comment by a participant in Agnetha Ndulaka' study reflected the situation of women who do not strive to be leaders. The participant stated:

Most women in Nigeria already had this feeling that leadership is not for women. A lot of women feel that leadership is mostly meant for men. Because of that negative view that they have, you see a lot of them (women) will not even want to try to become a leader at all.<sup>30</sup>

This buttressed Yetunde Aloko's comment that, though there is a positive influence of women's involvement in leadership responsibilities due to changing times, only a few women are involved in leading roles.<sup>31</sup> This thus complements what a participant in Agnetha Ndulaka's study affirmed. The participant said, "I know things are changing, and we are moving forward, but we still have a reservation because of the culture we grew up in."<sup>32</sup>

In the literature review, it was gathered that the Nigerian patriarchal cultural ideas not only had great influence on the way women are perceived and treated but also on how women are made to see and value themselves, which influences their ability to participate in leadership roles. This in a way may likely affects women's self-confidence and self-esteem in pursuing their desired careers and calling. The Adventist church in Nigeria is thus called to be deliberate in teaching the biblically distinct roles of women and men that include working together as God's heirs (Rom 8:15-17; 1 Pet 2:5,9) in the fulfillment of "Go ye therefore" (Matt 28:19) command of God. Ellen White raised questions for women who may not strive to become mission mobilizers for one reason or the other by asking:

Why should women not cultivate the intellect? Why should they no answer the purpose of God in their existence? Why may they not understand their own powers, and realizing that these powers are given of God, strive to make use of

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<sup>30</sup> Ndulaka,74.

<sup>31</sup> Aloko, 23.

<sup>32</sup> Ndulaka, 75.

them to the fullest extent in doing good to others, in advancing the work of reform, of truth and real goodness in the world? Satan knows that women have a power of influence for good or evil, therefore, he seeks to enlist them in his cause.<sup>33</sup>

She therefore challenged women to know their worth and contributions

towards partaking in God’s work in different areas of the missionary work. She said:

Our sisters, the youth, the middle-aged, and those of advanced years, may act a part in the closing work for this time, and in doing this, as they have opportunity, they will obtain an experience of the highest value to themselves. In forgetfulness of self, they will grow in grace. By training the mind in this direction, they will learn how to bear burdens for Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

The church also needs to develop programmes, like the discipleship model programme, where through the power of the Holy Spirit, prejudices against women can be transformed. By so doing, it will lead members to ask the “what would Jesus do” questions and come to terms in practicing his views and teachings on women, which included training and empowering them for mission/ministry. Therefore, the next session will discuss the factors under the lack of equal opportunities provided for both men and women to become empowered as mission mobilizers.

*Table 8. Summary Responses to Discrimination and Stereotyping*

Question	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Question 14: Discrimination against women in society is a major obstacle to fostering women as mission mobilizers	14.1% 39	14.1% 39	10.5% 29	34.3% 95	27.0% 75	100% 277
Question 15: One obstacle for women as mission	19.5% 54	21.7% 60	22.0% 61	23.5% 65	13.4% 37	100% 277

<sup>33</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 467.

<sup>34</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 468.

mobilizers is that women do not strive to be mobilizers						
Question 22: The Nigerian belief in male dominance poses a barrier to women's involvement as mission mobilizers	11.2% 31	15.2% 42	15.9% 44	34.7% 96	22.7% 63	99.7% 276

Harriet, 2025.

**Lack of equal opportunities.** Another issue that emerged from the participants' perception of the factors inhibiting women from becoming mission mobilizers relates to the issues surrounding the lack of equal opportunities. It is germane to restate here that equality in any way is not to place a woman above a man; rather, it is giving women a sense of relevance and value, to appreciate their unique roles in participating in God's mission. The participants noted that equal opportunities have not been provided for women who had been trained as men, as 57.0% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed, while 30.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 12.6% were undecided (see Table 9).

This area on the lack of opportunities was also expressed by participants interviewed in the following manner. Almost all five interviewed identified a lack of equal job opportunity as a factor that can hinder women from engaging in the training that will empower them as mission leaders. For example, Agatha said that

One factor that hinders a woman from becoming trained as a mission leader is work opportunities – after training, what is next? is the question that comes to mind. This becomes a big hindrance. Using myself as an example, I have been empowered through training, and yet, the church has not engaged me for one reason or another other best known to them. However, there is hope; wherever a woman finds herself, she can fit in as a mission mobilizer in that area, if not employed by the church or in the field.

Similarly, Elizabeth stated that:

There is no plan from the church for women, even after training like for the men. This lack of equal pay job and job opportunities among the few trained can bring discouragement to others who may be interested in engaging in mission/ministry. As the saying goes, seeing is believing. By the time they see how well the few trained are being treated, it can encourage and motivate them.

When Deborah was asked the same question, this was what she shared:

A job already awaits a male counterpart than a female, and because there are no equal job opportunities, no equal pay. Because pay and allowances/benefits differ for those (women) who may be engaged like me, this can be a factor for low enrollment of females in the training that can empower them as mission mobilizers.

I agree with the above factor not only because I was a victim of circumstances but also because many – including men, see this empowerment of women that would qualify them for mission and pastoral leadership (theological training) as a waste of time and resources since the question of “and so, what next” is raised. Conspicuously, among the females interviewed, none had been given equal opportunities to put into practice the training they had received, especially as it concerns mission/ministry, as revealed during the interviews. There are some among these interviewees those who have not even gained recognition by the church, let alone become engaged to utilize the skills gained.

This situation will not only bring discouragement to those who have been trained but may even prevent many from engaging in such training. But because mission is primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God, and humans are privileged agents in participating in God’s mission, these female participants expressed their joy for the calling they had received from God to be part of the privileged human agents in fulfilling God’s mission.

Further, as seen from the literature review, this lack of providing equal opportunities for both males and females who have received equal training may have its root cause in the traditional African culture that extols the birth of a male child

over a female child. This idea is influenced by patriarchy, creating a vacuum for equal opportunities, which includes receiving equal educational training, wage disparities, equal access to jobs, and the like.

On this, 52.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that currently, the Adventist church in Nigeria has not fully utilized female members. However, 33.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 11.9% were “undecided (see Table 9).

Suffice it to say that since the church has not provided opportunities for women who had been trained as men to become capable mission leaders, hence, the respondents agreed that the Adventist church in Nigeria has not fully utilized female members. Although as in many societies, women make up 75 to 90 percent of active membership in church and society,<sup>35</sup> yet, they are underutilized in developing their God-given potentials and/or receiving appropriate training that will empower them to effectively minister to the needs of their fellow women, both within and outside the church. Yes, they are the majority, yet, they can easily be ensnared by false errors or teachings just like the women in the Ephesus church (1 Tim 11:3-11; 2:11-12), hence the need to train and empower women to develop their potentials in contributing their unique voices to any theological discourse in our days, applying biblical, missiological, and Adventist approach to such discourse.

Furthermore, the underutilization of female members by the church may still be due to the feelings/attitudes, and prejudices against women. It simply reveals a minimal/no change from the traditional biases of women due to patriarchy, even when more women are in the church. This, therefore, challenges the church to become

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<sup>35</sup> Allanan, 115.

intentional in developing a discipleship model of conversion that will lead both men and women in changing any prejudices against women.

As observed by Samantha Paustian-Underdahl, Lisa Walker, and David Woehr, this underutilization of women brings about undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders, thereby resulting in women's underrepresentation in leadership positions.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, this underutilization of female members can hinder the church from becoming intentional in identifying their giftedness and providing opportunities for the development of their gifts. They are to receive the appropriate training that will empower them with the right skills and strategies for the church's mission today.

Concurrently, this underutilization can prevent the few trained women from engaging in practical services that could enhance their experiences and the skills acquired from the training programme, which may hinder them from receiving equal work payment. As Ellen White counseled:

The Lord will use intelligent women in the work of teaching. And let none feel that these women, who understand the Word, and who have the ability to teach, should not receive remuneration for their labors. They should be paid as verily as are their husbands. ... Through the exercise of womanly tact and a wise use of their knowledge of Bible truth, they can remove difficulties that our brethren cannot meet.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, the Adventist church in Nigeria should develop plans of engaging these intelligent women in God's work and be willing to remunerate them as with their male counterparts. Another factor identified under the lack of opportunities is the lack of little/no theological training of women to become involved as mission mobilizers. 46.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *one of the reasons for the lack of women's involvement as mission mobilizers is due to little theological*

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<sup>36</sup> Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr, 1129.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 491.

*training*. 40.8% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 13.0% gave an ambivalent answer (see Table 9). The results correspond with Patrick Nmah's observation on the theological training institutions in Nigeria. He mentioned that very few or no women are benefiting from theological training.

This is not different from the Adventist theological schools (Religious Studies department) in Babcock University and Clifford University, respectively in Nigeria, that train and empower ministers, laypersons, and gospel workers for mission and ministerial responsibilities, but only a few or no women are involved in this training. As seen in the literature review, Alice Eagly and Linda Carli stated that this little involvement of women in training breeds scarcity of qualified women in leadership selection, as there are not enough women with the appropriate level of education, work, and even practical experience.<sup>38</sup> Elleen Campbell further posited that the idea that theological training is meant for the ordained ministry could be a possible reason for this low/or no involvement of women in theological training, and since women are not called as pastors are called, no need to receive theological education meant for male ministers.<sup>39</sup>

The study indicates that participants thought that a lack of theological training could hinder women from becoming involved as mission mobilizers. One of the interviewees, by name Gloria, sharing the benefits she derived from theological training as a way of reiterating the need for women to be engaged in this form of empowerment said:

There is need for women to be trained theologically. Using myself as an example, the training was a blessing .... I struggled with this mindset that at least fair enough I can read the Bible and God can give me understanding, do I really need to be trained? I might even hear some controversial things that my

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<sup>38</sup> Eagly and Carli, 286.

<sup>39</sup> Campbell, 12.

even shake my faith. But after the training, I know that somethings I know that I did not know before that had better equipped my understanding. For example, I have biblical interpretation more clearly exposure to the biblical languages is a huge blessing. An added advantage is that it has shaped the way I now study the Sabbath School Lesson Study, especially when I see a Greek or Hebrew word. I have an idea even if I cannot expand it that much. This helps me and even others to understand what the text is saying. But before the training, I would just read and pass by any biblical language words. So, the training had really added to my knowledge – able to understand the Scriptures well and serve in a better capacity.

Deborah also stated that: “ministry given by God is for all the called, and the called then go for training/equipment just like the disciples were called and trained by Christ to lead. After the equipment, one is given the mantle to lead others.” Although the theological institutions appear to be men dominated because they serve as a means of training men for the ordained ministry, however, as stated above, other church workers, specifically women, also need to be trained for the gospel mission to adequately and effectively work in partnership in fulfilling the commission mandate of going into all the world (Matt 28:19-20).

This is germane because in these contemporary times, there are issues that affect women that only women can understand and solve, and there are also places to be reached and evangelized that are naturally restricted to men, hence, the need for women to be encouraged and empowered for such training cannot be overemphasized today. Closely related to this factor is another that has to do with a lack of financial support for those women interested in becoming empowered as mission leaders. 59.2% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *lack of financial support/sponsorship for women in mission/ministry creates a barrier to becoming mission mobilizers*, while 34.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the remaining 14.1% were undecided (see Table 9).

The results correlate with the literature review where Isabel Phiri mentioned that the link of the study of theology with ordained ministry by the early missionaries

in Africa did not only contribute to the low rate of women in theological education but also make sponsoring of women to such ‘male terrain’ difficult, as such, the issue of ordaining women thus makes it difficult in training them. Moreso, those women trained were not recognized because their church did not send them to study theology.<sup>40</sup> In the midst of this, Christian Ogbogu suggested that mentorship and sponsorship of women are needed for them to be empowered as efficient leaders.<sup>41</sup>

The findings also correlate with all five interviewees’ experiences in the process of their empowerment through training. For instance, Agatha narrated her experience of how a lack of financial support/sponsorship made her stay longer in the training than usual. Her story was touching as she had to opt in and out of the programme to source for funds to complete her fees and to worsen her situation, since she had long completed the training till the time of the interview, it is another struggle or journey to gain recognition, let alone employment by the church. However, as she stated, “there is still hope, women can function anywhere.”

Likewise, Cecilia shared a similar experience that if not for the support she received from an outside body, she would have been lingering with the completion of the training, and even now that she has completed it, she is still waiting to gain employment. These situations of these interviewees simply confirmed what Isabel Phiri mentioned earlier, because the church did not send them, hence, they are not recognized and engaged by the church as with their male counterparts.

In fact, Elizabeth shared her experience during her training days, where her name was listed among the males to benefit from the church’s sponsorship, but to her surprise, up to the time of this interview, she did not know who, how, or why her

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<sup>40</sup> Phiri, 108.

<sup>41</sup> Ogbogu, 28.

name was deleted. She never benefited from such an opportunity; she struggled financially to complete her studies.

All these experiences were not different from my experience regarding receiving financial support/sponsorship. At a point in the interview session, especially the day the fourth participant was interviewed, at the end of the session, I had to voice out to myself, “Why do we have almost the same painful financial experiences to receive training? One answer that came to mind was that there is still a high view on cultural prejudices against women among believers and even church leaders, and this has to be erased. Another reason is that the church has no intentional plan for placement for women who receive this form of empowerment through theological training.

This financial support/sponsorship will not only encourage women who have received a call to be trained properly to effectively utilize their gift, but it will also create a synergy for both men and women to work together and share ideas that can bring great success in mission/ministry. This financial support/sponsorship for women, especially by the church, will give women church’s recognition thereby creating opportunities for them to represent the church both as trainers/leaders of mission and/or as theological teachers/scholars, thereby serving as a source of encouragement for other women to be trained and qualified as mission mobilizers/leaders.

Table 9. Summary Responses to Lack of Equal Opportunities

Question	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Question 16: The reason we do not have enough capable women as mission mobilizers is that equal opportunities have not been provided for women who had been trained as men	12.6% 35	15.2% 42	15.2% 42	28.5% 79	28.5% 79	100% 277
Question 17: Currently, the Adventist church in Nigeria has not fully utilized female members	11.9% 33	16.6% 46	18.8% 52	28.9% 80	23.8% 66	100% 277
Question 23: One of the reasons for the lack of women's involvement as mission mobilizers is due to little/or no theological training	13.0% 36	22.0% 61	18.8% 52	32.9% 91	13.4% 37	100% 277
Question 24: Lack of financial support/sponsorship for women in mission/ministry creates a barrier to becoming mission mobilizers	14.1% 99% 39 277	14.9% 44	19.1% 53	30.7% 85	20.2% 56	

Harriet, 2025.

**Family and ministry balance.** Balancing between family and ministry was one of the factors the participants perceived as a deterrent to women becoming mission mobilizers. As the respondents indicated, 66.4% agreed or strongly agreed that *women face the challenge of balancing family responsibilities and mission*

*commitment*, while 24.6% agreed or strongly disagreed, and 8.0% were undecided (see Table 10).

Although a majority of the respondents agreed to the above statement, however, the interviewees had a slightly different perception of this issue. As only two of the interviewees passively stated that balancing family responsibility and ministry is a challenge that may hinder women from becoming mobilizers. According to Deborah,

Childbearing and rearing could be a factor as such, hence, those within menopause or have grown-up children can fit in more as mission mobilizers. This becomes challenging to the family, especially with the children if not properly planned/handled, especially when it involves traveling a far distance for ministry/mission.

Cecilia also shared a similar perspective, she said that “the ministry work will require traveling and the family duties of women, which involve the training/nurturing of the children, could hinder women.” One cannot deny that family responsibilities are demanding, just as mission/ministry requires time and sacrifices. Studies have shown that women tend to have more career interruptions than men, due largely to having greater domestic responsibilities.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, there are other personal responsibilities that a woman has to deal with that Elizabeth in her interview identified as “women's cycles,” which include menstrual cycles, mood swings, pregnancy, childbirth, and child nursing, menopause cycles, among others.

However, rather than these situations becoming an obstacle for women who are called and want to dedicate themselves to mission/ministry, they should instead be used as a means of challenging women to develop planning, strategies, and time

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<sup>42</sup> See, Suzanna M. Bianchi, Milissa A. Milkie, Liana C. Sayer, and John P. Robinson, “Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends in the Gender Division of Household Labor,” *Social Forces*, vol. 79, no. 1 (2000): 191-228, accessed 27 March 2025, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246549302>.

management techniques. Again, when one waits till menopause or after having grown-up children, one may become advanced in age and may not tend to perform effectively in learning (training) and practice, as the ministry may demand. Thus, as revealed in previous findings above, God created women with distinct abilities that enable them to function in ways that men may not.

These distinct abilities enable women to multitask and still achieve the desired goal – for instance, Deborah was a wife to Lapidoth and at the same time, she was a prophetess and a judge over Israel (Judg 4:4-6), she was appointed to leadership by God.<sup>43</sup> As Mieke Bal summarily stated, Deborah combined religious, military, juridical, and poetical forms of leadership<sup>44</sup> and she provided leadership assistance as requested by Barak.

Similarly, Huldah, was also a wife to Shallum and at the same time, a prophetess who lived in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 22:12-20). Furthermore, Prophet Isaiah's wife was a mother and a prophetess (Isa 8:3). These women combined their family responsibilities and religious and political functions and they succeeded in areas where men failed. They probably had to plan and develop strategies to help them succeed in both functions, even though they depended on and trusted in God. However, as Ellen White counseled, periods of rest are necessary for everyone, especially for women, to avoid overwork that may injure oneself.<sup>45</sup> Thus, these women, among others, can serve as models for any woman who has received a call and seeks to balance family and ministry responsibilities.

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<sup>43</sup> Brown, 26

<sup>44</sup> Bal, 209.

<sup>45</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 494.

In a similar line of thought, the majority of the respondents 46.5%, disagreed or strongly disagreed that *after getting married, women need to be faithful to home duties and not get involved in church and social activities*. Although this concern has been stressed as a barrier that inhibits women from taking up leadership roles, only 16.3% agreed or strongly agreed while 36.1% were unsure or chose not to decide (see Table 10). Their indecision perhaps, may be because of women and ministry practice in this part of the world. As was gathered from the literature review, in the Nigerian context, as in most of the African countries, there is a traditional belief that women’s primary place is in the kitchen and their roles are to be mothers and housewives, thus, they are restricted to those roles.

These ‘traditional cultural values’ militate against the advancement, progress, and participation of women in any leadership process outside the restricted home roles activity. This cultural ideology about ‘a woman’s place’ can affect women’s representation in leadership as they face prejudice as leaders because of the assumption that leadership is a masculine trait. Thus, even in situations where women have the qualifications for leadership, they face cultural barriers to participation in leading roles. When these traditional values are still strongly upheld, women may be reluctant to take on leading roles as mission mobilizers.

*Table 10. Summary Responses to Family and Ministry Balance*

Question	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Question 19: Women face the challenge of balancing family responsibilities and mission commitment	8.0% 25	12.3% 34	12.3% 34	39.0% 108	27.4% 76	99% 277

Question 21: After getting married, women need to be faithful to home duties and not get involved in church and social activities	36.1% 10	32.1% 89	14.4% 40	8.7% 27	7.6% 21	99% 277
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Harriet, 2025.

From the interviews, participants shared similar concerns that can be a deterrent for women becoming mission mobilizers that were not indicated in the quantitative survey. These include the issue of ordination. Almost all the interviewees raised this as a challenge for women’s engagement in mission/ministry. For instance, Deborah said: “The reason each worship centers are occupied by males is probably because of the issue of ordination.” Because of this situation, Deborah opined that “the church in Nigeria has not got to the full realization that ministry is not only for the ordained but the un-ordained.”

Similarly, Gloria also pointed out that ordination can create fears, both in the minds of men and women. She said:

Their minds (women) are that if they are going into the ministry, they are being empowered to be a pastor or to compete with the pastors. But we are to know that there is something they (women) need to do for God. Hence, it is not about me, as a woman, but about God and what He has for me to do in His vineyard. Ministry in this part of the world is tied to ordination.

However, in trying to proffer a solution, she said “the church, especially men, should know that women have distinctive roles in mission/ministry and not competitive roles”. She emphatically and repeatedly said that “women are not competing with men, we are not to compete with men, and ministry is not about competing with men for ordination, but rather, women are truly needed in the ministry, especially in the last days and so, we have distinctive roles to play in ministry.”

In a similar thought, Elizabeth said: “fear of competition is a challenge. Men feared this competition because women can lead with influence.” Though this issue of ordination was identified by almost all the participants interviewed, because this is not the thrust of this research, I only presented this issue the way it was shared and recommended that further research be done to address this concern.

Having examined some possible factors preventing women as mission mobilizers, the findings revealed that the Adventist members in Nigeria agree that these factors are still prevalent in the church today. Therefore, just like Christ who emphasized a more inclusive fellowship through his interactions with women, the church is called to do the same, debunk the prejudices and biases that attempt to deemphasize inclusive mission and disempower women from becoming effective mission leaders.

The church thus needs to deal with these factors through theory – teaching members of their various roles in fulfilling God’s mission, and practice – exploring ways of empowering women in becoming mission mobilizers in our 21<sup>st</sup>-century. So, the next section will present and discuss the responses of the study participants in addressing the ways of empowering Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers.

### **Ways of Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers**

After participants shared their views on the factors preventing women from becoming mission mobilizers, I then explored their perceptions on the ways of empowering women as mission mobilizers. These ways are classified under four main categories – providing training, providing mentorship, providing leadership opportunities, and creating awareness.

**Providing training for women.** The participants thought that one of the ways to empower women as mission mobilizers is to provide training that will best equip them to function as leaders. This was evident in the response rate of participants who agreed or strongly agreed, 76.5%, that *providing theological training programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church*. Only 15.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while the remaining 7.9% were undecided (see Table 11).

The findings resonate with the experience of the interviewees, who indicated that theological training is needed for women who seek to be engaged in mission/ministry, as they all shared the benefits and opportunities that the training has brought to them (details will be provided in the benefits section). Sharing on how they came to know about theological training, Elizabeth said: “Self-motivation to know more about God was the major thing I had first because of my childhood experiences. Then a pastor talked to me about coming to study theology to enhance my gift.”

Equally, Deborah and Agatha respectively stated that their interest/decision right from their tender age and their activeness in church activities and reading of the Bible led them to develop an interest in studying theology. Then, Cecilia said that her work experience as a Literature Evangelist and her convictions led to the need for this training. Gloria’s interest was motivated by her parents, especially her mother.

As Partick Nmah’s findings reveals that in the theological training institutions in Nigeria, very few women are benefiting from such training, thus, making them unqualified to take up leadership roles in mission/ministry practice.<sup>46</sup> Alice Eagly and Linda Carli’s study showed that little women involved in training would breed scarcity of qualified women in leadership.<sup>47</sup> The need to become knowledgeable in

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<sup>46</sup> Nmah, 40-41.

<sup>47</sup> Eagly and Carli, 289.

God's Word is imperative for a meaningful and successful propagation of the gospel in this contemporary time. as revealed in the literature study, women like Mary Magdalene, received training – mobile/on-the-field training that enabled her to become an active disciple and a great mission mobilizer/leader of the resurrection gospel (cf., Matt 27:55-56' Mark 16:9; Luke 8:1-2).

Congruently, against the rabbinic tradition that prevented women from studying under a rabbi, Jesus taught his word to Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-39). Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him eagerly – teacher-student learning position in a classroom (cf., Acts 22:3). Her posture and reference to Christ's word connotes that she was receiving religious instructions. Ellen White encouraged women to be "people of the Word, mighty in the Scriptures as the same men who work along such lines."<sup>48</sup> She also emphasized the value of well-trained workers. She said:

God calls for laborers, but He wants those who are willing to submit their wills to His, and who will teach the truth as it is in Jesus. One worker who has been trained and educated for the work, who is controlled by the Spirit of Christ, will accomplish far more than ten laborers who go out deficient in knowledge and weak in the faith.<sup>49</sup>

These workers include women who have dedicated their lives to God's will, and so, they need to be well-trained and educated to become knowledgeable in God's truth and adequately teach such truth in this generation. Another reason for proper training, as Ellen White pointed out, is because of the Three Angels' Message, especially the Third Angel's Message, given to the church to proclaim (Rev 14:6-12). She said:

The Third angel is represented as flying in the midst of the heavens, showing that the message is to go forth throughout the length and breadth of the earth. It is the most solemn message ever given to mortals, and all who connect with

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<sup>48</sup> White, *Gospel Workers*, 192.

<sup>49</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 474.

the work should first feel their need of an *education* and a most *thorough training process* for the work, in reference to their future usefulness. ... (emphasis mine).<sup>50</sup>

This showcases the significance of thorough training in taking this gospel message to the ends of the world for Christ's soon return. The church's theological schools/seminaries provide this thorough training process to acquire the necessary training and knowledge to adequately and faithfully engage in mission in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though the AWM has initiated a training leadership certification programme for women, yet, opportunities have not been provided for women to function in mission/ministry leadership.

Empowering women through theological training to take up leading responsibilities has been suggested as the key to opening women up to church/mission leadership because this form of empowerment provides recognition and offers opportunities for church leadership and mission engagement. Thus, participants agreed or strongly agreed (75.4%) that *there are specific skills or knowledge, such as biblical hermeneutics, art/science of homiletics, biblical languages, mission strategies, etc., emphasized in theological training programs that can empower women as effective mission mobilizers* (see Table 11). The results complement Gloria's expression when she specifically identified areas that the study of theology had equipped her with (see p.181).

Cecilia also said, "Before the training (theological), I had limited knowledge about the Bible, but after the training, I have a broader knowledge, especially in reading and understanding, though not all, the Greek and Hebrew texts." Today, the theological schools serve the purpose of training people theologically/missionally to

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<sup>50</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 476.

be fit and properly sound for mission/ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. Therefore, for women to become effective mission mobilizers, they need to undergo such training to become well-equipped for mission/ministry practice.

Following, a very significant number of the respondents, 85.5%, agreed or strongly agreed that *collaboration with Adventist educational institutions to sensitize the need for young women in mission is important* (see Table 11). This collaboration should first begin with building synergy between the church and the family. The family (parents) are the authoritative influencers of decisions, especially the fathers or husbands are the authoritative voice in most household decision-making, so, in promoting females' involvement in theological studies, it should be constructively, respectfully, and biblically presented to male heads of household.

This is to ensure that female students who are enrolled in the training receive support, financial and otherwise, from the family, and to also ensure that the men may not think that their daughters, sisters or wives want to be empowered to take over their positions. Likewise, the church, that is, the leaders, also tend to be influential at the local level in the theological training of women. This is key because if the church leaders do not approve females to come for theological training, they may not support or sponsor them through the training and even when they finished, they may not absorb or create job opportunities for them.

Thus, if the home and/or the church does not provide opportunity for females to study in theological schools, then these schools will have no female to be trained who will in turn become qualified to train/leader and mentor others both now and in the future. On the other hand, the institutions can also create more space for women to come in and be empowered. This may be in the form of engaging the female presence

as trainers/teachers in these theological institutions to encourage other women in addressing the future prospect challenge.

This collaboration can also be achieved by providing scholarship funds to support and train more women in theological education. This can serve as an intentional act of training more women theologically. This collaboration will not only be beneficial for women but for the institution and the church at large because where men cannot enter naturally, women will be equipped with the arts, science, and strategies to enter such areas and even open ways for men to come afterward.

*Table 11. Summary Responses to Providing Training for Women*

Question	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Question 25: Providing theological training programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church	7.9% 22	7.6% 21	7.9% 22	39.7% 110	36.8% 102	99.9% 277
Question 29: There are specific skills or knowledge such as biblical hermeneutics, art/science of homiletics, biblical languages, mission strategies, etc, emphasized in theological training programs that can empower women as effective mission mobilizers	6.5% 18	4.3% 12	13.7% 38	41.5% 115	33.9% 94	99.9% 277
Question 33: Collaboration with Adventist educational institutions to	2.9% 8	4.3% 12	7.2% 20	38.2% 106	47.3% 131	99.9% 277

sensitize the need for young women in mission is important	
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Harriet, 2025.

**Providing mentorship opportunities for women.** Mentorship was another way identified by respondents to empower women as mission mobilizers. A greater percentage of the respondents (82.7%), agreed or strongly agreed that *providing mentorship programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church* (see Table 12). Ugochukwu Elems’ definition of mentoring complements the findings. He said, “Mentoring is a relational process in which a mentor invests his/her life in a mentee to empower the mentee to become an agent in mentoring others.”<sup>51</sup>

However, Herbert Simon’s definition of mentoring best fits the thrust of this study. He defined mentoring from a Christian perspective as “Mentoring is about identifying people’s God-given potential and assisting the individuals through the process of developing and/or learning new leadership skills.”<sup>52</sup> Mentoring entails that the mentor is often more experienced than the mentee and the ultimate goal is to equip and produce more leaders (cf. 2 Tim 2:2; Matt 28:19; Matt 4:19). Hence, mentoring is about building people who will in turn develop others and it involves a process that is continuous in making people to be agents of proclaiming God’s message, which specifically resonate with Dana Robert and Wendy Zoba’s studies, respectively.

Dana Robert identified one important positive effect that woman-to-woman mentoring would bring, especially as it concerns the close involvement in daily lives. He asserted, “Mentoring will serve to soften the effects of cultural prejudices against

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<sup>51</sup> Elems, 231.

<sup>52</sup> Simon, 13.

women.”<sup>53</sup> Then, Wendy Zoba opined that this woman-to-woman mentoring would create a model for gender-based missions where women can minister to their fellow women.<sup>54</sup>

Wendy Zoba further stated that throughout the history of missions, women, through mentorship from other women, became Christians as their mentorship touched these women at the point of their needs.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, Dorothy Patterson noted that historically, only female missionaries have gained access to women because they are allowed to go where male missionaries cannot enter and, in some places, where males are coldly received, women can get a footing.<sup>56</sup> As such, mentoring can serve as an effective tool to empower women for mission/ministry because it provides a healthy environment for the development of mentees under the supervision of mentors – those who have experience as mission/ministry leaders. This will help the mentees to develop the required skills and experience with minimal challenges and also help women to reach the hearts of other women, connecting on a level of understanding.

However, the females interviewed in this study acknowledged the absence of female mentors, and a close look at the background of the study makes it clear that there are few women serving as mission mobilizers in this context. A majority of the interviewees began their education and accepted their ministry call when there were few women serving in this capacity. So, much of what the participants described as

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<sup>53</sup> Robert, xix.

<sup>54</sup> Zoba, 43.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>56</sup> Dorothy Kelley Patterson, “The Role of Women as Missionaries,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2014): 69, accessed 18 February 2020, [https://swbts.edu/sites/default/files/images/content/docs/journal/57\\_1/57.1%20The%20Role%20of%20Women%20as%20Missionaries%20Patterson.pdf](https://swbts.edu/sites/default/files/images/content/docs/journal/57_1/57.1%20The%20Role%20of%20Women%20as%20Missionaries%20Patterson.pdf).

mentoring was male pastors, family members, and personal interest and involvement in church activities (see Table 4).

Furthermore, they all identified more than one source of mentoring, as Elizabeth commented, “I was mentored by engaging myself in church activities, like in playing the role of a pastor’s wife in drama, and willing to preach during children's Sabbath. This became a source of encouragement that sealed my mission commitment till this point,” Deborah said she observed mentoring from a pastor’s experience of studying theology and from her convictions and events.” Similarly, for Agatha, Cecilia, and Gloria, it was more of self-interest in Bible study, reading examples of women who served in mission/ministry, and serving in a way that mentored them.

Since there are few females who have been empowered theologically and have gained a wide range of mission/ministry experiences to become mentors for other women, then, one may tend to look at Adventist mentors from outside Nigeria who have both training and practical experiences to mentor Adventist women in Nigeria. This will thus require Adventist women in Nigeria to have forums, including online chat rooms, where they can share their own experiences and opinions.

This can serve as a way of empowerment, as a majority, 84.2%, of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (see Table 5:8). Through these online platforms, Adventist women in Nigeria can connect with other Adventist women, learning from each other, asking questions, and sharing vital ways of how mission among women can be done effectively in these changing times and challenging world. Also, these platforms can serve as a means of grooming and encouraging young women with a passion and calling to be engaged in mission/ministry.

Table 12. Summary Responses to Providing Mentorship Opportunities for Women

Question	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Question 26: Providing mentorship programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church	7.2% 20	4.0% 11	6.1% 17	43.0% 119	39.7% 110	100% 277
Question 27: Women should have forums, including online chat rooms, to assist them share their own experiences and opinions	6.9% 19	4.7% 13	4.3% 12	39.4% 109	44.8% 124	100% 277

Harriet, 2025.

**Providing leadership opportunities for women.** Providing leadership opportunities was the next that emerged as a way of empowering women as mission mobilizers; 79.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *providing leadership opportunities for women in the church could enhance their role as mission mobilizers*. However, there are those who differ, as 14.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 6.9% were undecided (see Table 13). The percentage of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed could resonate with the experience shared by one of the interviewees, Elizabeth. She said:

One of the obstacles I faced was that I was not allowed to learn more about the church, especially the organogram of the church during my early years of training. And since there was no plan from the church for women even after training, I had to ‘literally’ request and plead to be given an assignment/engagement for the church. I had to do this because the pastor told me, ‘Well you know the church has not made provision for women like you, so now I do not know where to place you.’

The issue of placement after training became a problem for Elizabeth.

However, Deborah had quite a different experience because of the environment she found herself immediately after completing the training. She said:

Thank God for the presence of Babcock University, where I am allowed to lead, although, it is a student environment. Maybe this is why because I know in the field (that church system), such opportunities are not there.

The other interviewees, yet to be engaged by the church also admitted that if not on a personal ministry level, opportunities for women to practice what they had learned in theological school are not provided in the church system. So, when asked about the practical aspect of their calling, one of them by name, Cecilia, ‘comforted’ herself by saying: “The field is broad, you can function anywhere as chaplains, Bible workers, etc., at your level.” The word ‘comforted’ was used because, from her expressions, she would have felt more fulfilled if engaged by the church, and she even cited several attempts made by her to get the church to engage her.

The issue of providing leadership opportunities for women thus informed me to identify some leadership qualities and traits of women that could be relevant in empowering women for leadership. One such quality is a woman’s expressive and sensitive concern for others. More than half, 74.8% of the respondents, agreed or strongly agreed that this is an excellent quality for being a mission mobilizer. Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this were 20.2%, while 5.1% gave ambivalent answers (see Table 13).

Studies from the literature review indicate that women tend to have a natural ability to be sensitive to others’ needs and concerns. In this way, they attract people to the gospel message of Christ. This describes what Elizabeth said concerning having women serve as mission leaders. She said:

Women have the natural tendency to make things work. They have this ‘enticing’ ability to penetrate difficult places where a man’s power cannot, women have great influence and they can connect to women more.

Elizabeth struggled to use a better word than ‘enticing’ but could not identify any at the moment of the interview. However, she made me understand that its usage here has a positive meaning. The literature review thus indicated that this leadership quality of a woman’s expressive and sensitive concern for others was exhibited in some women in the Bible. For instance, Miriam’s sensitive concern for the well-being and safety of her brother, Moses, directly or indirectly led to the knowledge of God’s providence in the Egyptian princess’s court.

Rehab’s sensitive concern for Joshua’s spies prevented them from being killed by the soldiers, and her leadership skills of expressive and sensitive concern led to the Israelites’ defeat of Jericho and the salvation of her and her family. Then, Mary Magdalene’s expressive and sensitive care of our Lord Jesus led her to become the first to witness and spread the resurrection message, which is the hope of our salvation. Likewise, Mary, the mother of Jesus, expressed and sensitive concern for the welfare of the people in the wedding ceremony, made Jesus not only perform his first miracle but also demonstrate who he is.

Still, more than 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that: *The softer traits of women and the experience of motherhood are suitable leadership qualities for 21<sup>st</sup>-century mission mobilizers* (see Table 13). The general belief that “charity begins at home” and the statement that “practice makes perfect” become more applicable when analyzing skills that enhance good leadership. This becomes valid as it is expected that women who have either experienced motherhood or are experiencing such, would learn and develop qualities like patience, understanding, humility, trust, compassion, care, and the like. Such a person would be able to become

an effective leader in this 21st century because of the experiences and qualities garnered.

The softer traits of women would allow them to meet people where they are and take them to where God wants them to be. Deborah reiterated, “Women are nation builders and they can influence the household for God.” This quality can also allow them to gain the trust and confidence of children and even adults. These softer traits could be a reason for having more women in the congregation – they are easily receptive than men, however, as women tend to be easily receptive to the gospel so also in most cases, especially as they tend to deal with issues surrounding their lives, they tend to be easily swayed from the truth and/or the church in the quest for proffering solutions to those issues. Therefore, there is a need for specific training and empowering of women to train and/or lead other women and the church as a whole, in a discipleship model of conversion that can address their personal, emotional, psychological, spiritual, etc. needs.

Simultaneously, 76.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *women are equally effective as men in reforming society*. Although 15.5% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed while 7.9% were undecided (see Table 13). The findings correspond with what Michael Ajemba’s research pointed out. In his findings, he observed that women are not just as effective as men in leadership, but they possess more leadership skills and show better leadership efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>57</sup>

These leadership skills thus provide an advantage for women leaders to be liked by their followers. John Antonakis, Bruce Avolio, and Nagaraj

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<sup>57</sup> Ajemba, 83.

Sivasubramaniam's study revealed that female leadership, when compared to men leadership, is more transformational.<sup>58</sup> Christiana Ogbogu opined that these qualities of women leaders as consistent with their gender roles, which inspire followers' commitment and creativity.<sup>59</sup> This corresponds with Elizabeth and Deborah's description of women's leadership qualities – women as “influencers and builders.”

Moreso, the Scriptures record women who became reformers of their societies. Women like Deborah through her leadership roles of being a prophetess and a judge, brought a complete victory over the Israelites' enemies. Likewise, the Samaritan woman having been empowered by Christ was able to bring a spiritual reformation of her whole community. What about Mary Magdalene, who through her learning from Christ, became the first proclaimer of the resurrection gospel that transformed the “fearful” disciples into becoming bold, making them to come out from their hiding and go out to see the empty tomb, just to mention but a few.

From these examples, one can say that women are nation builders, and if they are well trained and empowered, a nation can be said to be empowered. This is evident in the leadership role that Mary, the mother of Jesus, played in shaping the life and ministry of Jesus. She became Christ's first human caregiver, teacher, and encourager through her mobilizing the servants at the wedding in Canaan at Galilee, Jesus was able to perform his first miracle of turning water into wine.

Therefore, from the responses on *female mobilizers are acceptable and preferred by female mobilizers*, there is a difference in the perceptions of the participants. For instance, participants in the quantitative survey responded that they strongly disagreed or disagreed with 45.2% that female mission mobilizers are

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<sup>58</sup> Antonakis, Avolio and Sivasubramaniam, 261.

<sup>59</sup> Ogbogu, 52.

acceptable and preferred by female church members, while 37.5% of them either agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 17.0% were undecided. However, participants from the qualitative survey all agreed that females are preferred and accepted by female members, although it is based on the level of exposure of members in a given congregation.

As shared above, the experience of Elizabeth's counseling session with her female client best describes this dilemma. Her session and the findings exposed the fact that the Adventist church in Nigeria, has not been intentional in fully creating awareness on women serving as mission mobilizers and/or pastoral teams, let alone, become intentional in giving opportunities for females to be trained, empowered, and given leadership opportunities, hence women are not able to function in ways that the church can know if they are preferred or not.

As gathered from Elizabeth's experience, she had tried to explain herself, her training, and her roles to convince her female client before she could finally give in for the session. But in the end, the client appreciated that she was the one who attended to her – the client was able to open up to Elizabeth, and Elizabeth was able to understand, she put herself in the client's shoes. So, because there are very few women who have received such training and her exposed to leadership and practice, it becomes difficult for members to have a preference, still almost, if not all, have not had the opportunity to know of any female in such a capacity.

Suffice to say that in this 21st century, the numerous needs of women can be properly addressed and handled by fellow women who can easily understand where the “shoe pinches.” Women can confidently take their problems to fellow women because they can understand themselves better. They can easily enter the “naturally” restricted places that men cannot reach. Women can equally work with men to become

leaders/trainers in those areas of mission/ministry needs and both women and men’s contributions will be helpful in addressing theological issues in general, and more specifically, as they concern women, from a biblical/theological, and missiological, specifically, from an Adventist perspective, thereby, both will contribute theologically/missional to the body of knowledge.

As Ellen White cautioned: “when a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do this work, and if will feel the loss if the talents of both are not combined.”<sup>60</sup> This can happen when both, especially women, are not given leadership opportunities to develop and utilize these talents. So, the training, empowering, and involving of women are more greatly needed today than ever before; hence, the need to create awareness is important.

*Table 13. Summary Responses to Providing Leadership Opportunities for Women*

Question	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Question 30: Providing leadership opportunities for women in the church could enhance their role as mission mobilizers	6.9% 19	8.3% 23	5.9% 16	39.0% 108	40.1% 111	100% 277
Question 10: Women’s expressive and sensitive concern for others are excellent qualities for being a mission mobilizer	5.1% 14	9.0% 25	11.2% 31	36.5% 101	38.3% 106	100% 277
Question 11: The softer traits of women and the experience of motherhood are	10.5% 29	7.6% 21	20.9% 58	35.7% 99	25.3% 70	100% 277

<sup>60</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 469.

suitable for 21st-century mission mobilizers						
Question 12: Women are equally effective as men in reforming society	7.9% 22	8.3% 23	7.2% 20	34.3% 95	42.2% 117	99.9% 277
Question 13: Female mission mobilizers are acceptable and preferred by female church members	17.0% 47	17.0% 47	28.2% 79	22.0% 61	15.5% 43	99.7% 277

Harriet, 2025.

**Creating awareness opportunities for women.** The last phase on ways to empower women, as thought by the participants, is providing awareness opportunities for women. This awareness can be through seminars, targeted campaigns, and celebrating women’s unique contributions. Beginning with awareness through seminars, 83.0% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *seminars such as spiritual gifts seminars and self-development programs should be encouraged to maximize the development of women as mission mobilizers*. Although 10.5% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed while 6.1% were undecided (see Table 14).

I agreed with this point because I am aware that the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts to all members in the body of Christ. As specifically attested by Deborah, “the pastor-teacher gifts given by the Holy Spirit are not limited to the male-only.” As such, Cecilia said, “The first empowerment is from the Holy Spirit; to be called by him means he empowers.” So, if this is true, the church cannot afford not to sensitize members through awareness of the importance of identifying their spiritual gifts and calling. By this, I proposed that the church can engage in quarterly seminars

and spiritual gifts inventories programme, providing members with a survey instrument like a questionnaire, where they will identify their areas of strength in engaging in church work.

Again, resource persons can be engaged to train members on how to identify their spiritual gifts and to develop them for the furtherance of God's work. For the self-development programmes, all members can be given opportunities to serve in church work. This can be done by having a sheet of paper where members can indicate the areas they want to serve in the church, and opportunities should be created for them to do so. By so doing, the church will have an all-inclusive ministry that will encourage all members, specifically women, to use their God-given potentials in mission/ministry.

Concurrently, 76.9% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *there is a need for targeted campaigns or initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of women's involvement in missions*. However, only 17.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while the remaining 4.0% were undecided (see Table 14). These targeted campaigns are necessary because, with the changing and challenging times, missions in the 21st century also need a changing focus and unique strategies to reach the whole world for God's kingdom.

As Deborah stated, "creating awareness for women to be engaged in mission through receiving theological training can be achieved by making promotion in all local churches, highlighting the need for the training of women." She went further to say that "even pastors' wives can be trained." Agatha then added that "the church can promote theological training by extension, especially for those women who are called but cannot afford the fund for theological training."

This perspective of theological training by extension was shared by Agatha probably because of the personal struggles (financial) she had to go through before she eventually completed the training. However, Gloria had a slightly different opinion on the focus of this awareness. Her view was that these targeted campaigns or initiatives should also include that,

The church needs to give a kind of orientation that will disorient the minds that being in the ministry or mission provider is not about competing with men for ordination. But rather, women are truly needed in the ministry, especially in these last days.

She went further to say that this awareness should also focus on disabusing the minds of women,

There is a need for a disorientation of the cultural setting/background of Nigeria, women need to disabuse their minds that if they are going into the ministry, they are not being empowered to be pastors or to compete with the pastors (men). But (they are to know that 'there is something they need to do for God'. So, if we disabuse the minds of women, then we can begin to see that there are more things to do for God as a woman, then empowerment and encouragement will come.

Further, Benjamin Akano's study advocated for more awareness and educational opportunities for enlisting and training more female missionaries for ministries,<sup>61</sup> enabling them to become well-equipped for ministry impact alongside their male counterparts.<sup>62</sup> This form of awareness can be achieved through the use of various social media platforms and/or by organizing interactive sessions with church leaders to promote the need for more women in theological training programs. Also, women can be provided with information and opportunities that will encourage them to receive training that will enhance their potential in advancing God's course. In doing so, the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (76.9%) that *the church needs to*

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<sup>61</sup> Akano, 181.

<sup>62</sup> Love, 369.

*foster a culture that values and celebrates the unique contributions of women as mission mobilizers* (see Table 14).

This aligns with what Elizabeth shared as ways women can be empowered in the church. She said, “The church should place women appropriately to encourage other women.” A culture that values and celebrates the unique contributions of women can begin by placing women appropriately, especially those already trained specifically for this purpose. In this way, other women can know their fate (position in the church) when they engage as mission mobilizers. Still, on ways of fostering a culture that values and celebrates women, Elizabeth stated: “The church should get them (women) involved in Conferences with allied pay and dividends as male counterparts, even if they are not called/recognized as pastors.”

The church can then see the unique contributions of the trained and empowered women which can become a source of inspiration, encouragement, and hope for other women. This will also create a sense of belonging for women as they become aware of what others are engaged in after being empowered. Also, they can determine when and how to synergize their potential in collaboration with their equally trained male counterparts. This thus leads to exploring the potential benefits of women becoming mission mobilizers.

*Table 14. Summary Responses to Awareness Opportunities for Women*

Question	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Question 28: Seminars such as spiritual gifts seminars and self-development programs should be encouraged to maximize the development of	6.1% 17	4.0% 11	6.5% 18	37.2% 103	45.8% 127	99.6% 276

women as mission mobilizers						
Question 34: There is a need for targeted campaigns or initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of women's involvement in mission	4.0% 11	7.2% 20	9.7% 27	44.4% 123	34.7% 96	100% 277
Question 35: The church needs to foster a culture that values and celebrates the unique contributions of women as mission mobilizers	5.8% 16	6.9% 19	10.5% 29	39.0% 108	37.9% 105	100% 277

Harriet, 2025.

### **Benefits of Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers**

The participants shared their perceptions of the benefits of women becoming mission mobilizers. They expressed their thoughts on the benefits in three ways: the benefits for women, the church, and the mission world and this will be presented as follows:

**Benefits for women.** A majority of the respondents (86.6%), agreed or strongly agreed that when women are empowered as mission mobilizers, they stand to gain *a holistic approach to spiritual, mental, social, and physical development* (see Table 15). This correlates with what Gloria shared as the benefits that this empowerment has given her. She said, "I have gained in-depth knowledge about the Bible (*spiritual*) and also have developed ministry skills, especially in reading and interpreting the Bible (*mental*).

Gloria's reference to developing biblical interpretative skills is an important benefit that cannot be overruled as her experience she shared earlier attested to this. Thus, speaking of what women stand to gain when empowered as mission mobilizers, she further stated,

It creates interaction with fellow women (*social*), giving a fellow woman a voice and understanding, and being there for a woman where a man might not be able to be. This will help a woman's spiritual growth and personal development and bring spiritual upliftment rather than dependence on men, women need that skill and training.

In the same vein, Elizabeth shared that these benefits for women help to "build self-confidence, respect, and shape one to be the whole person, to be humbled, and give skills and knowledge to the women in mission." Specifically, she said, "The Adventist women will have an in-depth knowledge of the Bible and help to know their rights so as not to be sidelined. Thus, they become aware and study the church policies and the church."

An in-depth knowledge of the Bible may be absent from other means of empowering women for missions, as most of the ways of empowerment identified (see ch.3) are conducted within a couple of weeks or less. So, one may not have an opportunity to be exposed to biblical interpretations/exegesis, and other essential skills for mission/ministry. Additionally, Deborah believed that this empowerment of women as mission mobilizers would not only give women in-depth knowledge but would "make every woman see how best to nurture the family." Moreover, Agatha noted that "this empowerment will enable women to be mentors to other women."

This point of Agatha is worthy of note because currently, there are only a few women who have been trained specifically in the areas of mission/ministry, and considering the number of women in a local congregation, it becomes not only overwhelming but only little impact can be achieved in mentoring the rest women in

the local congregation and beyond. So, when more women are empowered as mobilizers, it will not only serve as future incubators for women in mission/ministry but also will qualify them to provide mentorship and discipleship training programmes that will help lead members through the process of transformation which will, in turn, grow the church spiritually – as members will be well-grounded in Scriptures, and numerically – as membership retention will be achieved.

Cecilia noted that this empowerment will “help women to be able to guide, train, and lead others in mission.” Besides the in-depth knowledge and skills that women stand to gain when empowered as mission mobilizers, the ability to properly guide, lead, and train others is something that is needed in a world where animistic practices abound. A unique missiological strategy is needed to reach the whole woman to avoid the danger of falling into deception as they seek solutions to life issues in this challenging world. The next section considers what the church will gain from women being empowered as mission mobilizers.

*Table 15. Summary Responses to Benefits for Women*

Question 44: A holistic approach to the spiritual, mental, social, and physical development of women in becoming mission mobilizers is needed	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
	4.7%	1.8%	6.9%	35.0%	51.6%	100%
	13	5	19	97	143	277

Harriet, 2025.

**Benefits for the church.** The participants (83.4%), thought that one benefit of empowering women as mission mobilizers for the church is that *women as mission mobilizers would create a good network and collaboration among other mission practitioners* (see Table 16). Since there are few women in Nigeria serving in the

capacity of mission leaders, women here may not have the full knowledge of what mission mobilizing entails. Hence, the process of providing opportunities for women to be trained and qualified as mission mobilizers will open up platforms for them to interact and collaborate with their counterparts – male and female practitioners both within or outside the sphere of learning.

In this way, experiences, networking, and exposure to what mission mobilizing entails will be gained. As noted in the literature review, in Paul's days, both men and women were included in mission/ministry work and both men and women were given opportunities to collaborate and be exposed to missionary tasks. In the end, he commended all positively for their efforts in bringing mission success (cf. Rom 16),

Thus, as Deborah noted, "the church stands to gain an increasing number of women in ministry as males are limited in ministry, especially when it comes to relating with women." As Agatha rightly opined, "Women not only put their hearts to work even without much pay, they also know when things are getting better or going wrong." In trying to find out why she gave this response, Agatha used examples to illustrate her point. She said, "A widow will need a female pastor to minister to her better than a male. Children love to listen to women than males. So, it will help grow a better society by modeling children in Christlike ways."

Deborah's point here is that women can know how to enter into a situation that may look tough and they know how to find their ways to make one to share their deepest pains or burdens. This collaboration with other mission practitioners (males), will bring a holistic missionary approach to mission/ministry. It will also provide opportunities for the gospel to penetrate in areas that are naturally restricted to men and bring fulfillment to all partaking in the great commission mandate.

Furthermore, Elizabeth added a different perspective of what this collaboration entails. She noted that besides mission/ministry impact, this collaboration includes “the church organizing or creating a forum where women trained can come together and have theological input in these times, it will bring a fulfilled and impactful life for the collaboration of women theologians is important to add our voices in scholarship and church life.” This is a valid point raised by Elizabeth because part of the struggle in writing this research was that it was difficult to find theological publications written by Adventist women, specifically, Nigerians, regarding the subject under investigation. I found other scholarly works written from other denominations addressing specific mission challenges of women and church life. So, this aspect is also relevant for women to become leaders in mission/ministry writers.

Concurrently, another benefit that women’s empowerment as mission mobilizers will have for the church is that of *an inclusive mission team where both men and women will recognize and utilize diverse skills and perspectives in fulfilling God’s mission*. Of the study participants, 86.0% agreed or strongly agreed that women being empowered as mission mobilizers will create an inclusive team where both men and women will be recognized and their diverse skills will be utilized in fulfilling God’s mission (see Table 16).

Speaking on this, Elizabeth earlier noted that women are almost entirely engaged in all church activities so empowering them as mission mobilizers will help them to apply skills and expertise in carrying out these activities effectively. These skills and perspectives will also help in the spiritual growth of members as issues will be addressed specifically to meet their needs.

Furthermore, participants thought empowering women as mission mobilizers would *help strengthen the growth of the church*. It was evident that a higher

percentage of the participants (83.4%), agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (see Table 16). A reason for this high percentage rate could correspond with the idea that members can specifically take their problems to their fellow (men/men and women/women) because their fellow can better understand them and put themselves in their shoes, and through God's guidance, help can be proffered.

This empowerment can guard against members, specifically, women, from being swayed into believing false doctrines/teachings that can take them away from the faith. This is achievable because when women are empowered, they will have the necessary skills to disciple other women and bring them into a more personal relationship with God. As Agatha earlier stated, empowering women as mission mobilizers will expose them not only to the ministry, but it will also help to bring out their gifts. This will in turn, bring engagement among peers that will help strengthen each other in their spiritual journeys. Therefore, empowering women as mission mobilizers will help grow the church and increase personal relationships with God even amid these challenging times with great mission needs.

Thus, if the church is intentional in emphasizing the unique roles and abilities of women in mission/ministry, especially the need for training and to develop their unique abilities and be empowered with the needed skills, then the issue of finding few or no women in our theological schools will be reduced if not eliminated. As Gloria stated, women mostly respond in large number when mission calls are made, however, they are not made to lead or be at the forefront. Although men are the priests, mission today, especially in these last days, requires more women to lead out and lead men to places where, naturally, a man cannot minister, like in my place (northern), and ministering to the contemporary needs of women today that only a woman can understand.

Table 16. Summary Responses to Benefits for the Church

Question	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Question 40: Women as mission mobilizers would create a good network and collaboration among other mission practitioners	6.5% 18	4.3% 12	5.4% 15	46.6% 129	36.8% 102	99.6% 276
Question 42: The inclusive mission team where both men and women will recognize and utilize diverse skills and perspectives in fulfilling God's mission	4.0% 11	2.9% 8	7.2% 20	34.7% 96	51.3% 142	100% 277
Question 43: An extended participation of women as mission mobilizers will help strengthen the growth of the church	4.3% 12	5.4% 15	6.9% 19	35.4% 98	48.0% 133	100% 277

Harriet, 2025.

**Benefits for missions.** Participants also indicated that empowering women as mission mobilizers has benefits for missions which is the ultimate goal of the church. However, in this respect, it creates awareness of mission needs, particularly associated with women that require a unique missiological approach. Thus, 81.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *the need for the church to mobilize all members for ministry and outreach is germane in solving the mission challenges in today's world* (see Table 17). As seen in the literature review, the involvement of men and women in Paul's mission demonstrated that the mission/ministry world is not a 'male domain,' – all, males and females, are to work together in fulfilling God's work here on earth.

This becomes a benefit the church derives from empowering women as mission mobilizers, as all, men and women will synergize their God-given potentials in identifying strategies that can help curb, if not eliminate, mission challenges in readiness of Christ’s coming. This complements what Ruth Munityuth noted when she recognized that in fulfilling the church’s mission, the full partnership of women and men is indispensable<sup>63</sup> as an equal partnership in mission/ministry will help bring a female touch or perspective in mission/ministry.

Similarly, this corresponds to Ellen White’s comment, she attested that: “God has a work for women as well as for men for women can do in families a work that reaches the inner life that men cannot do and they can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach, hence, their labor is needed.”<sup>64</sup> This also correlates with what Cecilia’s point when asked about what the church stands to gain from women being empowered as mission mobilizers. She said, “the church stands a lot to gain when she (the church) recognizes the ministry of both men and women, creating a balanced ministry.” It is important to note here that everyone has his/her unique role to play in reaching the world for Christ so, everyone’s uniqueness should be identified and appreciated by the church.

*Table 17. Summary Response to Benefits for Mission*

Question 41: The need for the church to mobilize all members for ministry and outreach is germane in solving the mission challenges in today’s world	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
	6.1%	2.5%	9.7%	35.7%	45.8%	99.8%
	17	7	27	99	127	277

Harriet, 2025

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<sup>63</sup> James, 109.

<sup>64</sup> White, “Words to Lay Members,” 26.

Empowering women as mission mobilizers radically attracts and increases the participation of other women. It also plays a significant role in shaping women's lives as they tend to know better how to deal with issues challenging them and the global world. Further, it is also beneficial to the men as they see the significance of partnership and teamwork in fulfilling God's mission in reaching the whole world, restricted and non-restricted areas for Christ. It can also bring new and fresh perspectives of engaging in mission in this 21st century, especially in ministering specific people groups like the Muslim bloc, and female inmates.

Therefore, the above findings revealed that the study participants strongly agreed that empowering women as mission mobilizers has great benefits for women and greater benefits for the church and its mission at large. Hence, the church gains more from empowering the Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers than to lose.

### **Follow-up on Women Who Have Been Trained/Empowered**

At the end of the interview, participants were asked to identify other areas they would like to add to or comment on, and one thing was outstanding, follow-up on women who have been trained/empowered. The participants thought that plans should be made to follow up on those few women trained/empowered to know their challenges and prospects in mission/ministry. Elizabeth noted, "The church and the institution should take up the challenge of checking on females that have received the training just as it is being done for our male counterparts."

I concurred with Elizabeth because this creates room for feedback that can influence the next line of action. Cecilia commented on the implication of the lack of follow-up on trained women, saying, "Most of the women are departing from theology to other fields, which brings a minus to the church and mission." Elizabeth

gave herself as an example when she said, “Women are diverting to other fields just like me.” She further gave reasons for such action: lack of recognition by the church, opportunity for scholarship or sponsorship, and future engagement.

Two of the interviewees, Cecilia and Agatha from our interaction shared that this lack of follow-up demonstrates a lack of the church to value and recognize the place of women in mission/ministry. They also cited themselves as examples of women who have been trained/empowered and yet, not engaged in any area by the church. These references to the effects of lack of follow-up support the theory of gendered organization. Williams et al. asserted that the theory of gendered organization is used to explain the persistent gender inequality in the workplace, especially in leadership.<sup>65</sup> As identified earlier by Deborah, a male who received training and empowerment for mission/ministry already has a job with the church waiting for him and those (females) who eventually are engaged do not receive equal job opportunities and/or equal pay. This also supports the theory of professional inequality – inequality in employment, especially when no equal opportunities for training and empowerment are provided.<sup>66</sup>

Engaging in follow-up plans for women empowered has several benefits. It would promote the collaboration of men and women in mission/ministry impact. It would help the church to know the level of involvement of women in mission/ministry and then value their contributions toward success in missionary endeavors. This follow-up can encourage and sensitize the interest of other women on mission needs. This gender gap in training and practice pose a challenge for the church in engaging in mission in this 21st century as the broadness of the mission

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<sup>65</sup> Williams, Muller and Kilanski, 553.

<sup>66</sup> Ogundiya and Amzat, eds, 76.

field requires the efforts of both men and women in full partnership work together in fulfilling the mission mandate.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. The engaged participants in both survey instruments expressed their views on the research questions that guided this study. They responded and/or discussed their perception of the biblical/theological rationale for women as mission mobilizers. They also expressed their views on factors inhibiting women from becoming mission mobilizers as well as offered some ways they thought would empower women as mission mobilizers. Finally, they expressed their views on what they thought would be the potential benefits of such empowerment of women as mission mobilizers first for the women, church, and mission task, at large.

The next chapter combines the empirical and literature review to discuss how this data may contribute to a better understanding of empowering women as mission mobilizers.

## CHAPTER 6

### A MODEL FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN AS MISSION MOBILIZERS

This chapter presents the implications of the findings from the empirical research, suggesting a practical/missiological model for synthesizing research findings in response to the third research question: “*What are the benefits of Adventist women becoming mission mobilizers, utilizing the research data to develop a model for understanding empowering women as mission mobilizers?*”

#### **Toward an Empowering Model for Understanding “Women as Mission Mobilizers”**

The study has investigated the ways of empowering the 21st-century Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers, and this analysis is followed here by a proposed model for what I called “empowering women as mission mobilizers.” Before discussing the components in this model, there is a need to revisit the ways of empowering women and how this can contribute to women becoming mission mobilizers and to also consider areas of the study that inspire me to develop a model in addressing this missiological challenge.

The Bible reveals that mission is the very foundation of God’s nature.<sup>1</sup> As the Initiator of His mission, He empowers the church to participate in fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate of taking the whole gospel to all people groups in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, 356. To Wright, mission is not just one of the themes in the Bible but the basis for the entire Bible.

God also empowered the church for this task by pouring out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8) and promising such outpouring of His Spirit in the last days (Joel 2:28-29). As the literature review illustrated, the Adventist church has employed several ways to empower women for God's mission, especially from the AWM. However, such ways, like the leadership certification training, have not provided the opportunity for women to be fully engaged in church and mission leadership.

This situation is so because efforts have not been made for women to acquire the appropriate training to open women up to fit into church/mission leadership. As revealed in this study, initiatives to support women to receive training in other fields are provided even within the AWM, but not for theological training that serves as the appropriate channel for the training of pastors and laity, including women, for the gospel work and ministerial practice.

This lack of financial support, among others, such as discrimination/ stereotyping, lack of opportunities, and prospects, ordination issues, to mention but a few, results in having few or no women engaged in this training that will empower them as mission mobilizers. It became surprising to me that the results of this study showed that more than half (57.0%) of the respondents, agreed or strongly agreed that leadership opportunities have not been provided for Adventist women in Nigeria, despite the biblical teachings and examples of both men and women given opportunities to lead, especially, as it concerns the spreading of the gospel (cf., Deborah, Mary Magdalene, Pheobe, Pricilia and Aquila, etc.).

Thus, I seek to develop a model for the Adventist church in Nigeria to see the need to intensify women's involvement as mission leaders, making them channels for reaching the unreached groups, especially in regions restricted to men, which Gloria also pointed out in her interview.

Again, another aspect of the study that surprised me was that although the AWM had introduced a leadership certification programme that aimed at empowering women for church leadership, yet, Adventist women in Nigeria lack full recognition in the church's leadership system. As Elizabeth noted in her interview, even when women are allowed to lead, power is not given to carry out the leadership as they are not made core leaders. This certificate programme, however, provides women with leadership opportunities within the AWM.

Though this looks surprising me, however, based on my background and how I came into the position I am today, I came to realize that before one is 'officially' recognized and qualified as a church mission/ministry leader or mobilizer, and will be given the full rights/benefits for that purpose, such an individual must have been working directly with the church and/or be trained in an Adventist theological school. When one receives such training, the person is then qualified to go to the field for mission/ministry practice. The mission field is an integral part of receiving theological training because it is where one can be recognized and given opportunities to utilize the skills learned and gain experience. Also, it is from the field that one can be called to become a leader/mobilizer in the theological schools or seminaries. On this, Ellen White stated that:

It should be the aim of our schools to provide the best instruction and training for Bible workers. Our conferences should see that the schools are provided with teachers who are thorough Bible teachers and who have a deep Christian experience. The ministerial talent should be brought into schools.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Adventist church in Nigeria has not provided plans for women who want to dedicate their lives to mission/ministry and those who have been trained

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<sup>2</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 475.

in theology are not called/engaged by the church to utilize the skills garnered from the training and also acquire mission/ministry experience to fit them properly as mission mobilizers/leaders.

The question then is, why is it that the conferences in Nigeria charged with the responsibility of ensuring that thorough Bible teachers are engaged in the schools to train others to be thorough Bible workers, do not have plans to engaged females who have received the best instruction and training for our schools, knowing fully well that in many respects, a female can impart knowledge to fellow females that a man cannot and there are aspects of females lives that only female -to-female ministry is needed, both in training and in practice? In fact, Ellen White emphatically stated that “again and again, the Lord has shown me that women teachers are just as greatly needed to do the work to which He has appointed them as are men.”<sup>3</sup>

This lack of placement of women may become a source of discouragement for those trained and those intending to be trained, as the time, money, and energy may be considered a waste since they will not be recognized and provided opportunities to function. The experiences shared mostly by two of the interviewees best described this kind of pathetic situation, and they respectively said, if not for their conviction and call, they would not have been able to bear this pain.

The conceptual distinction of what women mobilizers imply – *their involvement in mission/ministry by recognizing their God-given potentials and receiving the appropriate training to become empowered/equipped to function effectively as the right trainers/leaders in fulfilling God’s mission*, and also what empowerment means – *as an intentional process of recognizing women’s crucial roles*

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<sup>3</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 493.

*in fulfilling God's mission, equipping their God-given gifts to enable them to take active roles in mission work, and positioning them as integral participants in sharing the Good News through engaging different missiological strategies/skills for different mission contexts in advancing the church's mission at both local and global levels, are important to the discussion of empowering women as mission mobilizers because of the notion that theological training is tied to ordination which in a way serves as a hindrance for women to be trained, recognized, and engaged as mission mobilizers.*

I submit that this empowerment, where women are theologically trained as men, is not necessarily tied to ordination, as the commission given to all by God (Matt 28:19-20) and the promise of God's pouring out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28-29) was not tied to ordination. This empowerment is to enable women to become qualified in the arts and science of meeting the mission challenges in this 21st century, especially as it concerns addressing the challenges of their fellow women. The need to develop a model that could help the church see the need to provide recognition for women who seek to dedicate their lives to mission/ministry becomes imperative.

The literature review showed that the social ecological model developed by Mbayo Maloba and Nyakora Musa on how leadership training can empower women as leaders appears not to fully address the need for a theological training of women that best positions them as mission mobilizers/leaders. Thus, this model takes its inspiration from collections of Ellen White's counsels that: "God has a work for women as well as for men for women can do in families a work that reaches the inner life that men cannot do and they can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach, hence, their labor is needed."<sup>4</sup> Also, that "Truly, when women are

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<sup>4</sup> White, "Words to Lay Members," 26.

wanted with well-balanced minds, with not a cheap style of education, but with an education fitting them for any position of trust, they are not easily found.”<sup>5</sup> She also encouraged women to be people of the Word, mighty in the Scriptures as the same men who work along such lines, receiving a thorough training process that best fits them for any church leadership in hastening God’s coming is needed.

Further, the inspiration is from several results that emerged from the field research, namely, that respondents overwhelmingly expressed their view on not knowing whether female mobilizers are preferred or accepted by females, since there are few/no trained females, that participants’ shared experiences of lack of engagement after training due to some reasons best known to the church, and that most respondents generally agreed that currently, the church has not fully utilize female members, hence, there is lack of opportunities provided for trained females. This proposed model will be summarized and elaborated further in the coming section.

A model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers” recognizes that training is vital in equipping one to become fit for any mission/ministry leadership. In contrast to previous explanatory models for women's engagement in church leadership, a model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers” allows women to be recognized and given opportunities to function according to the training received. There are three major components in this proposed model, one is the theological training component – it attempts to fill the gap from the various ways employed in engaging women in church and mission leadership, which have not met the needs of those women who desire to dedicate their life to mission/ministry.

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<sup>5</sup> White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 114.

As such, promoting the need for a theological training that is the appropriate and recognized way of empowering men and women for gospel work and ministerial practice. Two, recognition component – it encourages the church to engage more in an all-inclusive ministry/mission practice that recognizes and values the unique roles of women and men in fulfilling God’s mission, revealing to women the value they will have from receiving the right training that will create a well-rounded development of their abilities, fortifying them to become well-grounded in Scriptures and qualifies them for mission practice especially to women and the church at large.

Lastly, the opportunities component – embraces the unique partnership of mission practitioners, engaging both men and women to value and respect each other's individuality as they synergize their God-given potential for the furtherance of God’s work, hastening His coming. This thus creates opportunities for women to function as mission leaders to men especially for restricted or targeted people groups ministry, and also gives women the right qualification to train and mobilize other women in particular, and the church in general, in fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate of reaching the whole world and people groups for Christ. So, the discussion on the three main components – theological training, recognition, and opportunities components of the model will be presented next.

### **Empowerment as Receiving Training: A Map towards Women’s Theological Training and Mission**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes theological training as a means of equipping both men and women for pastoral and missionary work. The training qualifies the trainees for any church leadership and teaching roles. Also, it provides opportunities for the trainees to develop skills, strategies, and in-depth biblical knowledge that enhances mission/ministry practices. Kuhn Wagner offering a wide

scope of what theological training entails stated that: theological training is built on God's mission to educate, transform, and bring salvation to humanity. He drew a link from Apostle Paul's view of theology and mission to Adventist mission and education hence bringing out ways by which this form of training can be engaged in mission.<sup>6</sup>

The Adventist theological training school in Nigeria was established on September 17 1959, first as a college – the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA), that was established with the aim of meeting the need for a ministry with training beyond the secondary school level.<sup>7</sup> In 1975 ACWA reached an affiliation agreement with the SDA Theological Seminary of Andrews University which authorized the college to train students and award Bachelor degrees from Andrews University, primarily in four B.A. programmes that included Theology and Religion. Then, in 1975, the name was changed to Adventist Seminary of West Africa (ASWA) in response to the dynamics of its socio-political environment.

In 1988, ASWA reached another affiliation agreement with Andrews University which authorized the college to offer the M.A. in Pastoral Ministry (by extension) and the M.A. Religion programme was later added in 1990. With the government accreditation in April 20 1999, the college became known as Babcock University and in October 2012, the department of Religious Studies got a full accreditation status from the National Universities Commission (NUC) for her undergraduate programme in Christian Religious Studies with her mission to make a

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<sup>6</sup> Wagner Kuhn, "The Book and Student: Theological Education as Mission," in *Book*, vol. 3 (2012): 13-22, accessed 8 February 2020. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/missionsbooks/3/>.

<sup>7</sup> David T. Agboola, *Seventh-day Adventist History in West Africa (1888-1988): A Mustard Seed* (Ibadan, Nigeria: LASOB, 2001), 64.

positive difference in theological education in Nigeria and even beyond.<sup>8</sup> This department thus serves as the engine room for the training of pastors, laymen, and gospel workers – men and female, for gospel ministry and pastoral work.

Thus, the theological school mentioned in this paper refers to the Religious Studies Department in BU where people are trained theologically to fit properly for missions. But interestingly, from its inception as a College to a Seminary and now a university, very few women have benefited from this kind of education. It may be interesting to note that the number of females' enrolment each year, is far lower than that of males' enrolment let alone the number of female lecturers. Presently, there is only one female trainer/teacher among about 23 male faculty members and only two female students from undergraduate and none currently at the post-graduate level.

Since women make up more than half of active membership and sustaining force in the church's congregation, it becomes necessary to engage more women in receiving theological training that would make them add their voices meaningfully to issues affecting women locally and globally. And since change is the 'mother of necessity,' as evidence that in response to the dynamics of its socio-political environment of the country, the College was changed to a Seminary. Likewise, in responding to the changing mission and focus in these challenging times, the need to get more women engaged in theological training is a necessity. Consequently, scholars of mission and missiology pointed out the pivotal role of women in ministering to their fellow women, which would lead to the transformation of whole

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<sup>8</sup> Joel Awoniyi School of Education and Humanities, Bulletin for Department of Religious Studies Undergraduate, 2015-2019 edn (Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria: Babcock University Press, 2017), 3.

communities.<sup>9</sup> In like manner, Isabel Phiri addressing the need for a balanced theological education of all people said:

If indeed the church acknowledges that God gives gifts to both men and women for the common good of the church, then it needs to transform itself to support theological education of both men and women. This requires the realization that according to the signs of our times, theological education should no longer be seen as training of soldiers of Christ to wade off heresy, but servants of Christ willing to build a community of men and women.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, this calls the attention that both men and women are gifted for God's service (1 Cor 12) and are called to be Christ's witnesses (Matt 28:18-20).<sup>11</sup>

The NT also speaks that the church as the body of Christ includes all of the redeemed of all ages, believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation<sup>12</sup> as such, more women should be encouraged and empowered through theological training to not only to serve effectively as mission mobilizers in this 21<sup>st</sup>-century but also to gain recognition by the church.

Thus, the lack of little theological training that surfaced from the response, suggests that many Adventist women in Nigeria are not engaged as mission mobilizers due to lack of theological training. Interviewees cited personal examples of the difference that theological training made in their lives and how it has also made them to function in the various capacities they find themselves either in personal ministries and/or church engagement. They expressed the need for women to be

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<sup>9</sup> Hazel Ayanga, "Contextual Challenges to African Women in Mission," *International Review of Mission, World Council of Churches*, vol. 2 (2017): 197, accessed 17 February 2020, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/irom.12187>.

<sup>10</sup> Phiri, 117.

<sup>11</sup> Sakae Kubo, "An Exegesis of I Timothy 2:11-15 and its Implications," in *Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church*, (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Biblical Research Institute Committee, 1984), 85.

<sup>12</sup> Patterson, 68.

engaged in this training that best qualifies and equips them for mission in these last days.

Jesus' model demonstrated the need for women to learn and be quipped for the mission task he gave us. Because he had a mission to fulfill, he nevertheless trained and equipped both men and women in fulfilling this mission of bringing salvation to the lost world (Acts 4:23-31). Also, despite the rabbinical tradition of his days that denied women the right to study or discuss the Torah, Christ engaged women like Mary and Martha and the Samaritan Woman in learning Scriptures. The findings further revealed that many Adventist women in Nigeria are not striving to engage in this form of training. This may be due to the cultural structure and view of women with respect to leadership and the church's position of women and ministry placement that seems not to open opportunities for women to practice after training.

This concern was shared by almost all the interviewees as currently, some of them have not even gain church recognition, probably because they were not sent, let alone, be engaged for practice and leadership. However, Paul's model provided us with the command for women to be well-grounded in Scriptures, through learning and proper training, to avoid been easily deceive by false teachers with false doctrines or teachings (1 Tim 2:8-15). It becomes important for the church to include more women in receiving theological training. As the interview sessions revealed, this empowerment of women through receiving the same theological training as with men does not in any way make women to become the supreme power or to compete with men, rather it could mean giving women equal role in receiving training and equal opportunities to function in line with the training received.

This theological training is also based on the new creation in Christ model where there is "neither male and female" as all, men and women are called to

participate in the ministries of the church and all, men and women, equally need to be trained properly for the gospel ministries. Ellen White's counseled women to engaged more in the study of God's Word to better fits them to partnership with men in hastening God's coming.

This equally promotes the need for women's engagement in theological training that best furnishes them to become thorough mission leaders and even Bible teachers/scholars. Though theological training of women has its own challenges but decades of research has proffer practical solutions. Isabel Phiri along other African women theologians formed the *Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians* to address the concerns of women, which included having more women in studying and teaching theology.<sup>13</sup> More women are contributing significantly to Christianity as intellectuals and theological and mission scholars from other denominations.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the Adventist church in Nigeria is challenged with the responsibility of encouraging and empowering women through theological training to fit in these capacities – producing not only more female mission leaders, but great theologians and Bible scholars. A model for empowering women as mission mobilizers must hold at its core a dedication to seek to engage women in the right training that empowers and equips them to become engaged by the church as the right trainers/leaders in mission/ministry. The church and the theological institutions, should re-strategized in creating awareness for recruiting women into studying theology to better qualify and open up church leadership position for them.

Providing theological training for women is a necessity for the Adventist church in Nigeria as only 15.5% of the respondents indicated that theological training

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<sup>13</sup> Phiri, 108.

<sup>14</sup> Audu and Eregare, 2160.

should not be provided for women (compared to 76.5% who are eager for women to be trained and equipped with skills that will enhance their ability of meeting the mission demands of our contemporary times) it does not seem that women's involvement in theological training would endangered the church however, the results revealed the yearning and desire of members to see more women getting involved in mission and ministry endeavours.

This simply goes in line with the church's mission slogan, "I will go reach my world" and those going to reach their world in this 21<sup>st</sup>-century, need empowerment and the skills needed to go and conquer the world for Christ, thereby leading to the next component of this model.

### **Empowerment as Gaining Church Recognition: A Concern for Women's Ministerial Placement and Benefits**

As seen above, the church recognizes one as a qualified pastoral ministry team member in mission/ministry when he/she has received theological training or is currently working with the pastoral team, awaiting to be sent for such training. As such, only those within these categories – sent or awaiting- are recognized for placement and entitlements. The irony is that more women are found in our congregations, but few or no women are in any of these categories – sent to study or working while awaiting to be sent.

Isabel Phiri noted that one reason women have not gained recognition by the church is the link of theological training with ordained ministry, and this makes sponsoring of women to study theology difficult,<sup>15</sup> as the field of theology is seen as

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<sup>15</sup> Phiri, 117.

male terrain. As such, women who want to dedicate their lives fully to the gospel ministry may not receive equal placement and treatment as their male counterparts.

Similarly, the efforts of the AWM to empower women through sponsorship schemes are more available to females in other fields of study outside theology. No intentional efforts on the part of Women Ministries in Nigeria to support at least one female for this programme, which will give the woman recognition by the church. The recognition here implies their placement in church mission/ministry with full or equal opportunities and benefits as with their male counterparts. There is a need for the church to create a position for women that includes their placement after being trained, and this position should begin with sponsoring and building a support system that accommodates women in mission/ministry capacity.

Consequently, a majority (81.5%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *the need for the church to mobilize all members for ministry and outreach is germane in solving the mission challenges in today's world*. As reflected in the literature review section, Paul's engagement of males and females in his ministry endeavours demonstrated the benefits that will be derived when all are involved in training, recognition, and practices in fulfilling God's mission. Empowering women as mission mobilizers would help in identifying mission needs and developing the right strategies that can curb, if not eliminate, the mission challenges in these last days. This recognition that full partnership of women and men is indispensable becomes missiological relevant as a female perspective for mission success will be achieved.

On the relevance of recognizing what women and men's engagement in mission tasks would bring, Ellen Whites counseled that: "God has a work for women as well as for men for women can do in families a work that reaches the inner life that

men cannot do and they can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach, hence, their labor is needed.”<sup>16</sup> This missiological aspect of the model calls for a church that recognizes that women’s role in ministry creates a balanced and inclusive ministry. According to the interviewees, empowering women and recognizing them include engaging in a follow-up plan for those who have received theological training specifically for mission/ministry propose.

Another recognition aspect of a model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers” involves the reflection of leadership traits that enhances mission engagement today. As indicated by a majority of the participants (74.8%), women exhibit expressive and sensitive concern for others. This is reflected in Christ’s life and ministry pattern where his concern for others led to meeting the wholistic needs of the people. This leadership quality serves as a way of attracting people to the Gospel. Both the literature review and survey instruments revealed how women have engaged in mission through these traits.

Just as Michael Ajemba pointed out, women are not just effective as men in leadership, but they possess more leadership skills and show better leadership efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>17</sup> This was revealed by the surveyed participants where 76.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that women are equally effective as men in reforming society. However, this study did not focus on evaluating the leadership qualities of men and women for effective mission practice, this model can be used also to address possible objections.

Again, another recognition component in a model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers” involves reflecting on awareness opportunities for women to be

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<sup>16</sup> White, “Words to Lay Members,” 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ajemba, 83.

recognized. 73.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the church should encourage awareness opportunities such as spiritual gifts development programmes. This seeks to create an awareness of mission needs that will require a co-partnership of men and women in meeting those needs and this will open women up to leadership opportunities which is the last component of this model.

### **Empowerment as Giving Opportunities to Function: A Concern for Women and Church Leadership**

As observed from this chapter, there has been a prevalent bias of gender in professional training, especially in male-dominated fields such as theology, and exempting women from such training is mostly due to gender norms.<sup>18</sup> In relation to employment, inequality between men and women is prevalent as equal opportunities for training and empowerment are not provided.

Similarly, in the Adventist Church in Nigeria, opportunities for women in church leadership and ministry are usually not provided, except through the AWM and children's ministries. Only in a few cases are women assigned to other areas. This lack of leadership opportunities for women in mission/ministry could be a result of unequal opportunities to receive training that would qualify them to lead. This could also be attributed to the cultural and stereotypical roles assigned to women, which may hinder them from taking up leadership roles. Also, Samantha Paustian et al revealed in their study that undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders could be a possible explanation for women's underrepresentation in elite leadership positions.<sup>19</sup> This undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders could occur

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<sup>18</sup> Ogundiya and Amzat, eds, 76.

<sup>19</sup> Samantha C. Paustian-Underdahl, Lisa Slattery Walker, and David J. Woehr, "Gender and Perceptions of Leadership Effectiveness: A Meta-Analysis of Contextual Moderators," *Journal of*

when the church is not intentional in identifying women's God-given potential and providing equal opportunities to improve their potential through training that qualifies women as mission mobilizers.

However, as was revealed in this chapter, the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit, especially the gifts of pastor-teacher, is not specified to a particular gender, and the creation of both man and woman by God showed that God created them with equal opportunities of His blessings, commission of fruitfulness, and multiplication of the earth. Jerry Moon thus believed that giving women opportunities to combine their abilities with men could bring great success in mission/ministry.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, empowerment entails giving opportunities for women to grow through training and to be involved in functioning effectively in mission/ministry, as leaders, trainers, teachers, scholars, and mission leaders in various capacities of church leadership.

This opportunities component of a model for "empowering women as mission mobilizers" involves opportunities provided for mobilization. 80.0% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that members should be educated of their uniqueness as they interact and synergize their abilities and functions in the furtherance of God's work. The social element embraces the unique partnership of men and women in valuing and respecting each other's individuality as they work together to synergize abilities in fulfilling God's mission.

This opportunities component also seeks to create leadership opportunities for women to function as mission leaders, especially in areas traditionally restricted to men. It also provides women equal training with men, empowering them with the

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*Applied Psychology*, vol. 99, no. 6 (2014): 1129. accessed 26 December 2024, <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/apl-a0036751.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Moon, Jerry, 203.

right qualification to become the right mobilizers/trainers of other women, in particular, and the church in general (cf., Rom 16:1-3,5; Acts 18:28). The opportunities component further provides opportunities for women to fit in any leadership position. These opportunities for leadership are aimed as empowering women to become effective mobilizers of others and to become qualified, it requires training in the right way.

Opportunities component has its challenges especially as it concerns the cultural prejudices that have affected women in certain socio-economic activities, making them not to attain certain leadership position. However, the literature review had shown that several women had navigated through these prejudices and attain position of leadership and influence that resulted in great successes and achievements. So, the church is encouraged to provide leadership opportunities specifically for women who have received the training that serves as the key to open up church leadership position for mission practice.

The leadership certification programme introduced by AWM can be used as a bridge for women who desire to become engage as mission mobilizers to come into theological training that better prepares them to become fit and qualify them to be recognized and provided with opportunities to become mission mobilizers.

### **Summary of a Model for “Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers.”**

To summarize the proposed model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers,” it is important to reiterate Ellen White’s counsel that *women should engage more in the study of God’s Word because God has a work for them, for women can do in families a work that reaches the inner life that men cannot do. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach, so they are to be people of*

*the Word, mighty in the Scriptures as the same men who work along such lines, receiving a thorough training process that best fits them for any church leadership in hastening God's coming.* This is not to say that women's training and empowerment as mission leaders have not received several theological debates, or that a social ecological model has not already been viewed as a means of empowering women for church leadership.

What makes this model that I am proposing unique is that empowering women as mission mobilizers means very little if their theological training is not considered. For women to gain more relevance and recognition by the church system as qualified and intelligent mission mobilizers/trainers, it must become far more important for Adventist women in Nigeria to become properly and specifically trained for this purpose.

I suggested three ways in which empowering women as mission mobilizers becomes a more focal point in strengthening the growth of the Adventist church in Nigeria, especially as engaging in missions in areas restricted to men is concerned. Firstly, the illustration of the Triune God who initiates, calls, and sends the church – men and women, as privileged agents in partaking in His mission of saving souls into His kingdom, is germane. The Triune God empowers all men and women, with the Holy Spirit, to carry out His mission (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 1:8).

Secondly, empowering women as mission mobilizers must be rooted in the church system with a greater emphasis on adapting or developing policies on theological training, placement, and church leadership opportunities awareness for women's engagement as mission mobilizers. This awareness should be stressed because training is key in equipping one to become fit and recognize as mission/ministry leaders and practitioners. This can be achieved by organizing

seminars and workshops where members can recognize and develop their spiritual gifts and through conducting targeted campaigns to create a more balanced and inclusive mission/ministry practice. This, in a way, will serve as a source of encouragement for women to enhance and utilize their giftedness rightly.

Lastly, Adventist women in Nigeria should be encouraged to strive to become efficient and intelligent mission mobilizers through involvement in theological training that will bring recognition and opportunities for mission/ministry leadership. As women engage in this form of training, competitive spirit and the desire to usurp men's unique roles/power should be discouraged as a violation of God's creative purpose – men and women created to synergize their unique abilities and functions to work as partners in fulfilling His mission, as such, the desire to become mission leaders should be led by the Holy Spirit.

So, I attempted to portray a model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers” in Figure 2. In the last chapter, several recommendations will be made that do not neatly fit under the umbrella of this model.

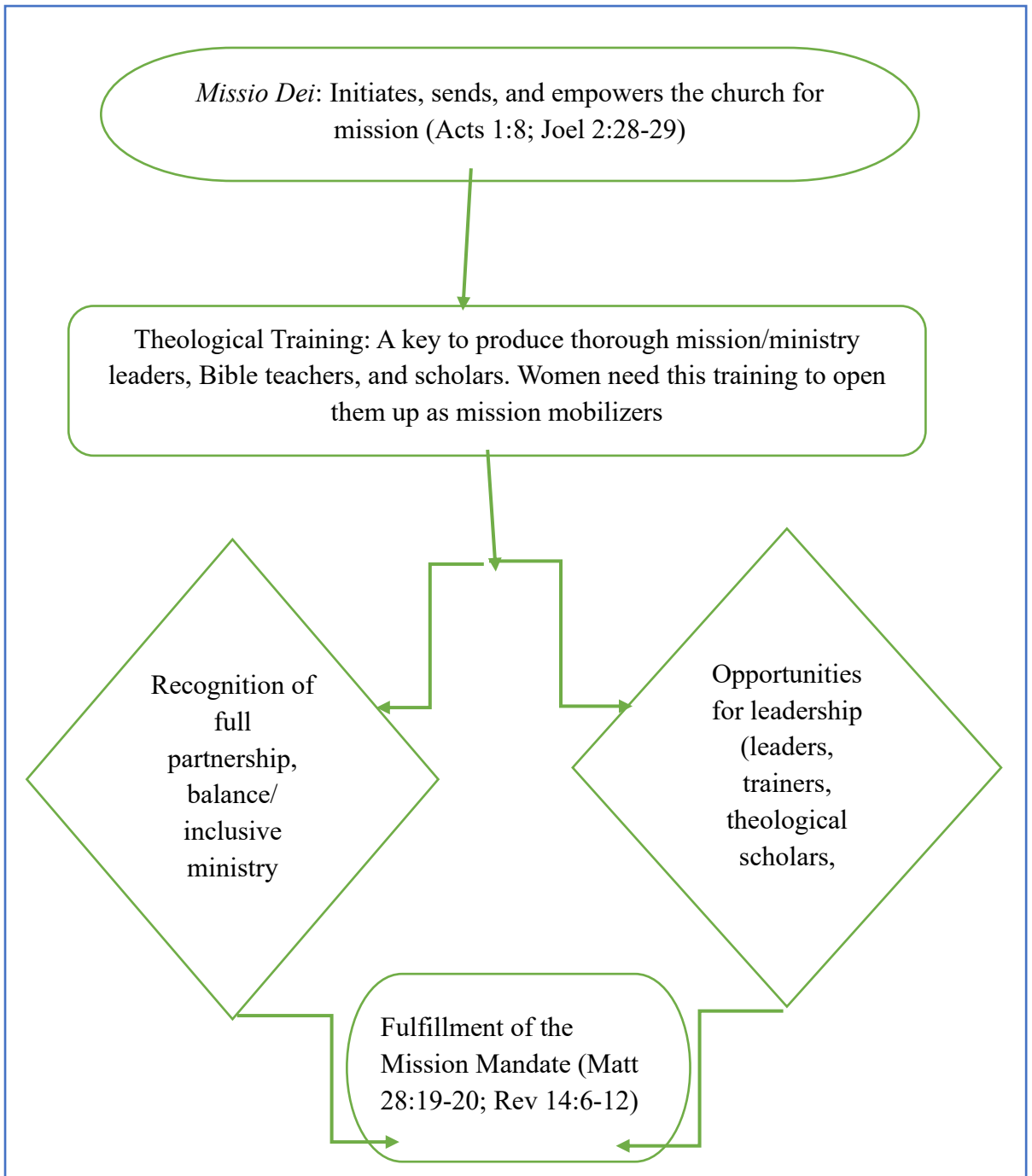


Figure 2. Image Model for “Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers”

### Summary

This chapter combined the empirical and literature review to suggest a practical and missiological model for understanding what empowering women as mission mobilizers entails. It further discussed the three major components of the

proposed model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers.” The first component is theological training – it attempts to fill the gap from the various ways employed in engaging women as mission leaders which have not met the needs of those women who desire to engage in mission/ministry practice.

The second is recognition component which encourages an all-inclusive mission/ministry practice that recognizes and values the unique roles of women and encourages them to develop their potential through proper training (theological) that helps them become recognized as qualified mission leaders/mobilizers.

The last, opportunities component embraces the unique partnership of men and women in furtherance of God’s mission, creating equal opportunities for engaging in the right training that provides opportunities for mission/ministry leadership and practice. The last chapter will present the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the information presented in the previous five chapters and presents the conclusions of the findings by suggesting a model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers.” Then, it presents the recommendations made for further study.

#### **Summary**

This study was aimed at exploring the ways Adventist women in Nigeria can be empowered as mission mobilizers by designing a model that will guide in the understanding of women’s empowerment as mission leaders. The foundation for this study was laid by examining the biblical/theological and missiological understanding of women and mission mobilizing, possible factors inhibiting women from becoming mission mobilizers, and addressing gender studies as a theoretical framework for implementing change and developing a model that provides an understanding of why empowering women as mission mobilizers is relevant today.

A detailed description of the research methodology was provided (see ch.4) that aided me to arrive at the research findings and conclusions. From the study, it was gathered that women are not empowered as mission/ministry mobilizers because they are not provided with opportunities to receive equal theological training as with men. The study participants identified that theological training is crucial for women’s involvement in mission in today’s world.

As gathered from the interview processes, theological training provides women not only with the arts and sciences for engaging in mission but also enables them to become recognized by the church as trained and well-equipped mission and ministry leaders, trainers, Bible scholars, and theologians. Thus, the interviews allowed a further investigation as to why the church has not intentionally provided opportunities for women to become empowered as mission leaders, even when they are qualified to lead.

Participants in this study also affirmed that empowering women as mission mobilizers has great benefits for women and greater benefits for the church and its mission at large. When opportunities are provided for women to be empowered with the right training that makes them fit as mission mobilizers, it not only increases the participation rate of women but also helps shape their lives as they tend to know better how to deal with issues challenging them and the global world. The findings further revealed that this form of empowerment builds up partnership and teamwork ministry as both men and women reach the whole world, restricted and non-restricted areas for Christ.

Therefore, a practical model for implementing the findings on empowering women as mission mobilizers was suggested (see Ch. 6), and recommendations were made for Adventist women in Nigeria to be empowered with the right training (theological) to help them function as mission mobilizers in the capacity of the training received. Also, the biblical examples (Christ and Paul's model) and Ellen White's counsel should be a basis for empowering women through theological training that provides recognition and creates opportunities for them to become qualified mission/ministry mobilizers in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Conclusions**

Adventist women in Nigeria face challenges in equal recognition and opportunities to become mission mobilizers due to several factors, such as discrimination and stereotyping, lack of equal training and job opportunities, to mention but a few. To overcome these, theological training that provides equal recognition and opportunities for women in mission/ministry leadership is encouraged. A biblical model that stresses the Holy Spirit's empowering all believers is suggested in developing a proposed model titled: "Empowering Women as Mission Mobilizers."

This suggested both recognition and opportunities approach that seek to highlight the primacy of theological training. In creating recognition, a model for "empowering women as mission mobilizers" involves promoting the full partnership of men and women in mission/ministry to achieve mission success and creating a balanced/an all-inclusive ministry.

Then, the opportunities component seeks to provide equal training of women with men, empowering them with the right qualification to become the right mobilizers/trainers of other women. It also creates leadership opportunities for women to function as mission leaders, especially in areas traditionally restricted to men and it makes women to become biblically, theologically, and missiological sound as mission mobilizers.

## **Recommendations**

In this section, seven recommendations will be briefly mentioned that arise from the proposed model for "empowering women as mission mobilizers." They are as follows:

1. Adventist women in Nigeria are encouraged to strive to become empowered as mission leaders as this will create great benefits for them and greater benefits for the Adventist mission in Nigeria at large.
2. It would be important to collect and analyze data from women who have a sense of calling but have not receive theological training that would empower them in fulfilling their callings. This could be helpful in securing the future and growth of the church.
3. Practical promotion on the full partnership of men and women by providing equal opportunities for theological training for mission/ministry work should be encouraged.
4. There is the need to emphasize and implement the model for empowering women as mission mobilizers so as to provide both recognition and leadership opportunities for them in mission/ministry.
5. While there can be a mindset of “no bright future” for women willing to dedicate their lives for mission/ministry work and become trained for this task, the data suggested a need to encourage women who have been trained properly by engaging them to utilize fully the skills and experiences garnered to function effectively as mission leaders/trainers, scholars, teachers, Bible workers, etc.
6. Another recommendation arose from a significant point of the research findings which showed that 66.0% of the respondent agreed or strongly agreed that being a mission mobilizer should be determined by abilities and qualifications rather than gender, and also that 45.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed that women are not as capable of being mission mobilizers as men. Participants from the qualitative survey, particularly

from the experience shared by Elizabeth, demonstrated how abilities and qualifications are vital for leadership responsibilities. Beside the theological training, she had other qualifications that best fitted her to be well-qualified as the right spiritual care giver than some of her male counterparts. Therefore, there is need to promote and encourage women with leadership abilities and qualifications in mission practice. In so doing, the challenge of underrepresentation and/or underutilization of any gender in church leadership would be minimized if not eliminated.

7. The last recommendation is from the data findings which showed that discrimination and the cultural belief in male dominance pose a barrier to women's involvement as mission mobilizers. I would therefore suggest the need to develop a discipleship training programme, where through the power of the Holy Spirit, beliefs that seek to subjugate and disempower women from developing their God-given potential for His course, can be transformed.

### **Suggestions for Future Study**

In this segment, five suggestions for future study will be briefly mentioned that do not directly relate to the proposed model for “empowering women as mission mobilizers,” but are based on related studies that arise as a result of this research's findings. These suggestions may be helpful to certain segments of the mission team and they are as follows:

1. As detected in the interviews in which interviewees suggested a follow-up plan, it becomes necessary to do a broader survey on developing a follow-up

model to address this concern. This follow-up plan can help women to become effective leaders both in intelligent and experience.

2. Another area begging for further research is to evaluate whether it is the ‘fear of ordination’ or the ‘fear of competition’ that hinders the empowerment of Adventist women in Nigeria for mission/ministry leadership. As revealed by the interviewees in which ordination and the fear to compete with men were identified as barrier, it becomes germane to carry out a survey in ascertaining whether ordination is the real concern or the fear of competing with men.
3. Further research could be done on examining theological training by extension and its benefits in empowering women who lack finance to receive proper training for mission/ministry practice. This concern was raised by almost the five interviewees as they shared their experiences centered on lack of finance.
4. Further study can be carried out on methods of engaging women to study theology, addressing the need of awareness, sponsorship, and future engagement/placement. Interviewees shared their views that job opportunities already await a male counterpart than a female who have engaged in theological training and interestingly, their background information revealed that almost all of them sensed their calling at a very tender age (see Table 4.3). however, not all have been provided opportunities to enhance their calling in line with their desired commitment to mission/ministry practice.
5. Lastly, I recommend that further study be done on how the leadership certification training programme introduced by the AWM can be used as a tool for identifying, equipping and encouraging women to undergo the right training that will best qualify them for mission/ministry leadership and practice.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

#### **Acquisition of Permission Letter (Babcock Community)**

Dear Pastor (Prof) Efe Ehioghae

My name is Harriet Ikhane, and I am a Doctorate student in the Theological Seminary School of Adventist University of Africa, conducting research on the topic "Exploring the ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers." The purpose for this structured questionnaire is to elicit useful information to enable the researcher to arrive at informed and verifiable conclusions.

I am conducting a survey questionnaire relating to the above topic so I am requesting for permission to engaged women, elders, and pastors who might be interested in participating who congregate within Babcock community under your care. Willing participants within the selected group will be required to fill the 44-questions questionnaire that will take less than 30 minutes of their time. This exercise will be done during one of the Sabbath worships and anyone within the selected group who choose to participate, their participation is completely voluntary and unremunerated, and they are free to change their mind and opt out at any time. Participants identities will be kept strictly confidential as there will be no space provided for their names or identities.

I will be glad to receive a letter of consent from you, I can be reached at phone; 08035916561 or e-mail: [akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng](mailto:akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng) to answer any questions you may have. You may also direct your question to my research advisor, Prof. Petr Cincala, who may be contacted at [cincalap@aundrews.edu](mailto:cincalap@aundrews.edu). I will follow up in 1-2 weeks with a phone call after receiving your consent to inform you when I will be visiting these churches. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research.

Yours sincerely

Harriet Ikhane

## ACQUISITION OF PERMISSION LETTER (DISTRICT PASTOR, NO.1)

Dear Pastor Olatunde Olajide

My name is Harriet Ikhane, and I am a Doctorate student in the Theological Seminary School of Adventist University of Africa, conducting research on the topic "Exploring the ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers." The purpose for this structured questionnaire is to elicit useful information to enable the researcher to arrive at informed and verifiable conclusions.

I am conducting a survey questionnaire relating to the above topic so I am requesting for permission to engaged women, elders, and pastors who might be interested in participating who congregate in Seventh-day Adventist Church: No, 1. Willing participants within the selected group will be required to fill the 44-questions questionnaire that will take less than 30 minutes of their time. This exercise will be done during one of the Sabbath worships and anyone within the selected group who choose to participate, their participation is completely voluntary and unremunerated, and they are free to change their mind and opt out at any time. Participants identities will be kept strictly confidential as there will be no space provided for their names or identities.

I will be glad to receive a letter of consent from you, I can be reached at phone; 08035916561 or e-mail: [akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng](mailto:akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng) to answer any questions you may have. You may also direct your question to my research advisor, Prof. Petr Cincala, who may be contacted at [cincalap@aundrews.edu](mailto:cincalap@aundrews.edu). I will follow up in 1-2 weeks with a phone call after receiving your consent to inform you when I will be visiting these churches. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research.

Yours sincerely

Harriet Ikhane

## ACQUISITION OF PERMISSION LETTER (DISTRICT PASTOR, NO 2)

Dear Pastor Ezekiel Famuyiwa,

My name is Harriet Ikhane, and I am a Doctorate student in the Theological Seminary School of Adventist University of Africa, conducting research on the topic "Exploring the ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers." The purpose for this structured questionnaire is to elicit useful information to enable the researcher to arrive at informed and verifiable conclusions.

I am conducting a survey questionnaire relating to the above topic so I am requesting for permission to engaged women, elders, and pastors who might be interested in participating who congregate in the following churches under your care. These churches are Seventh-day Adventist Church: No, 2, Bege, Beautiful Gate, and Cornerstone. Willing participants within the selected group will be required to fill the 44-questions questionnaire that will take less than 30 minutes of their time. This exercise will be done during one of the Sabbath worships and anyone within the selected group who choose to participate, their participation is completely voluntary and unremunerated, and they are free to change their mind and opt out at any time. Participants identities will be kept strictly confidential as there will be no space provided for their names or identities.

I will be glad to receive a letter of consent from you, I can be reached at phone; 08035916561 or e-mail: [akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng](mailto:akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng) to answer any questions you may have. You may also direct your question to my research advisor, Prof. Petr Cincala, who may be contacted at [cincalap@andrews.edu](mailto:cincalap@andrews.edu). I will follow up in 1-2 weeks with a phone call after receiving your consent to inform you when I will be visiting these churches. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research.

Yours sincerely

Harriet Ikhane

## AUA ISERC ETHICAL APPROVAL AND CLEARANCE



Adventist University of Africa

*Developing Leaders for Service*

A Private Chartered University Accredited by Commission for University Education, Kenya



9<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Harriet Osaretin Ikhane  
Theological Seminary  
Adventist University of Africa

**Reference: AUA/ISERC/13/05/2024**

Dear Harriet Osaretin Ikhane

**RE: Exploring the ways of empowering 21st Century Adventist women in Nigeria as mission mobilizers**

This is to inform you that the Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is AUA/ISERC/2024/033. The approval period is 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents (including informed consent and study instruments) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by AUA-ISERC.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to AUA-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others, or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to AUA-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vi. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to AUA-ISERC.

Prior to commencing your study, you are expected to obtain permissions or any other clearances needed.

Yours Sincerely

Josephine Ganu, Ph.D.  
Chair, Institutional Scientific Ethics Review C'ttee  
[ethics@aua.ac.ke](mailto:ethics@aua.ac.ke)

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA  
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE  
PRIVATE BAG MBAGATHI - 00503,  
NAIROBI - KENYA

Physical Address: Advent Hill, Magadi Road, Ongata Rongai, Kajiado, Kenya | Tel: +254 730 733400  
Postal Address: Private Bag, Mbagathi, 00503 Nairobi, Kenya | Email: [info@aua.ac.ke](mailto:info@aua.ac.ke) | Web: [www.aua.ac.ke](http://www.aua.ac.ke)

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

#### INVITATION/RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear participant,

My name is Harriet Ikhane, and I am a Doctorate student in the Theological Seminary School of Adventist University of Africa, conducting research on the topic” Exploring the ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers.” The purpose for this semi-structured interview is to elicit useful information to enable the researcher to arrive at informed and verifiable conclusions.

I am conducting an oral interview relating to the above topic and through my recruitment process, your name was mentioned as someone who might be interested in participating. Should you choose to participate, your participation is completely voluntary and unremunerated, and you are free to change your mind and opt out at any time. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Your participation would mean that I would set up an interview session with you, lasting 60-90 minutes. I would work around your schedule. The interview could be held in my office, your office, home, or another quiet location of your choice.

I am very interested in the issues women face regarding participating in mission/ministry. I think you have knowledge to share that could benefit others. It is my hope that the interview experience would be personally rewarding for you as well.

I can be reached at phone; 08035916561 or e-mail: [akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng](mailto:akhaneh@babcock.edu.ng) to answer any questions you may have. You may also direct your question to my research advisor, Prof. Petr Cincala, who may be contacted at [cincalap@andrews.edu](mailto:cincalap@andrews.edu). I will follow up in 1-2 weeks with a phone call to see if you are interested in learning more unless of course, I hear from you first. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research.

Yours sincerely

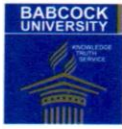
Harriet Ikhane

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE FIVE INTERVIEWEES

To ensure confidentiality, participants were not permitted to disclose any means of personal identification for name, address, and/or personal details of the participant were not required in the interview session, as such, participants' responses were anonymous and confidential. But for readability of the findings, names of participants were expressed as pseudonyms. These pseudonym names will be used here to present the schedules given by each participant for the interview session.

S/N	NAME	DATE	TIME	VENUE
1	Mrs. Deborah	1/11/24	9:00am-11:05 am	Interviewee's office
2	Sister Agatha	6/11/24	2:05pm-4:00pm	Interviewer's office
3	Sister Cecilia	16/11/24	11:00am-1:00 pm	Interviewee's workplace
4	Mrs. Elizabeth	19/11/24	12:20pm-2:06 pm	Church premises
5	Sister Gloria	20/11/24	3:35pm-6:00pm	Church premises

## LETTER OF CONSENT FROM BABCOCK COMMUNITY



**BABCOCK  
UNIVERSITY**

*Division of Spiritual Life*

October 30, 2024

Dear Harriet Ikhane,

### LETTER OF CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am writing to confirm our acceptance of your proposal to conduct research within the Babcock District of Seventh-day Adventists at Babcock University. We appreciate your interest in conducting a research on “Exploring the Ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers”.

Your research topic and objectives align well with our mission and values, and we are excited about the potential insights that may emerge from your work. Please ensure that you adhere to ethical standards throughout your research.

We look forward to collaborating with you and supporting your research endeavors. If you need any further assistance or have any questions as you proceed, please feel free to reach out.

Warm regards,

Prof Efe M. Ehioghae  
AVP, Spiritual Life/District Pastor  
+234 90319 07211  
ehioghae@babcock.edu.ng

*...A Seventh-day Adventist Institution of Higher Learning*  
Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. [www.babcock.edu.ng](http://www.babcock.edu.ng)

LETTER OF CONSENT FROM NO.1 DISTRICT PASTOR

07063003022

**Jacobbm**

Mon, Nov 4, 1:06 PM (20 hours ago)

**Olajide <joolajide43@gmail.com>**

to me

Good afternoon,

I acknowledge receipt of your questionnaires and appreciate your request. I gladly consent to assist in distributing them to our church members and fellow Pastors.

Thank you for considering my church for your research. I wish you success in your data collection and analysis.

Best regards,

Pastor Olajide Jacob Olatunde

## LETTER OF CONSENT FROM NO. 2 DISTRICT PASTOR



**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH** Ilisan North District,  
Ogun State, Nig

---

October 1, 2024

Dear Sister Harriet Ikhane

### LETTER OF CONSENT

In response to your letter received on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024 on the subject “conducting research on the topic: Exploring the ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers.”

I write to inform you that we would participate in the follow areas:

1. Our district would participate fully as respondent to the questionnaire (once absolute confidentiality is guaranteed) without any financial implication.
2. We would participate as respondent to the study as long as the study last.
3. Acknowledgement and written permission where possible should be given if the information we provided would be used besides the research study
4. District name should be acknowledged for their participation in the study if it goes beyond this academic study
5. Since this study is academic work, we do not look forward for any financial compensation after the research

Thank you very much for selecting our district as your choice.

Yours faithfully

---

Pastor Ezekiel M. Famuyiwa  
District Pastor

## FULL TEXT OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is a Doctorate student in the Theological Seminary School of Adventist University of Africa, conducting research on the topic” Exploring the ways of Empowering 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Adventist Women in Nigeria as Mission Mobilizers.” The purpose for this structured questionnaire is to elicit useful information to enable the researcher to arrive at informed and verifiable conclusions.

Please note that participation in the survey is completely voluntary and unremunerated. Your responses will be collected by the researcher and will be coded and stored securely and never be published. Note that no space is provided for your name or identity, thus, all information from you (herein) will be treated with confidentiality, in line with the ethics of academic research. Furthermore, you may stop participating in the study at any time without negative consequences.

If you have any questions about my study, you may direct them to me or to my research advisor, Prof. Petr Cincala, who may be contacted at [cincalap@andrews.edu](mailto:cincalap@andrews.edu). I would like to thank you for taking the time to assist me in my research.

Yours faithfully

Harriet Ikhane

**Section 1: Demographic Information (tick at the appropriate box)**

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age:  18-29  30-39  40-49  50-59  60 and above
3. Education Level:  SSCE  Bachelor's degree  Master's degree  Ph.D. degree  
 Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Tribe:  Hausa  Igbo  Yoruba  other ethnic groups (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of Local Church:  Babcock Community  Beautiful Gate  Bege  Cornerstone  No. 1 Church  No. 2 Church
6. Number of years as a member of the Adventist Church:  3-5  6-10  11- 15  16-20  21 and above
7. Position in the church:  Pastor  Elder  Deacon or Deaconess  Member

**Section 2: Reflecting on your knowledge or belief, on a scale of 1-5, kindly tick the appropriate boxes to express the degree of your agreement with the following statement. The scale is explained as follows:**

**1 = Undecided 2 = strongly disagree 3 = disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree**

**Clarification:** “Women as Mission Mobilizers” here implies their involvement in mission by recognizing their God-given potential gifts and receiving the right training to become empowered as the right trainers/leaders of mission.”

A	Biblical/Theological Knowledge on Women as Mission Mobilizers	1	2	3	4	5
1	Women and men were created with distinct abilities and functions					
2	The church's function is to teach the distinct roles of men and women to help them understand their unique functions					
3	We find no women in the Bible who acted as mission mobilizers					
4	An unclear understanding of women's roles in the Bible brings about the lack of female mission mobilizers in the church					
5	In the Bible, women were actively involved and empowered as mission mobilizers					
6	Having women serve as mission mobilizers in our church is not a theological issue but rather a matter of socio-cultural norms					
7	Women serving as mission mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men					
8	Being a mission mobilizer should be determined by abilities and qualifications rather than gender					
9	Women are not as capable of being mission mobilizers as men					
10	Women's expressive and sensitive concern for others are excellent qualities for being a mission mobilizer					

11	The softer traits of women and the experience of motherhood are suitable for 21st-century mission mobilizers					
12	Women are equally effective as men in reforming society					
13	Female mission mobilizers are acceptable and preferred by female church members					

<b>B</b>	<b>Factors Preventing Women as Mission Mobilizers</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
14	Discrimination against women in society is a major obstacle to fostering women as mission mobilizers					
15	One obstacle for women as mission mobilizers is that women do not strive to be mobilizers					
16	The reason we do not have enough capable women as mission mobilizers is that equal opportunities have not been provided for women who had been trained as men					
17	Currently, the Adventist church in Nigeria has not fully utilized female members					
18	In the current church system, there are many obstacles hindering the utilization of women's God-given potential					
19	Women face the challenge of balancing family responsibilities and mission commitment					
20	The church lacks a support system for women engaged as mission mobilizers					
21	After getting married, women need to be faithful to home duties and not get involved in church and social activities					
22	The Nigerian belief in male dominance poses a barrier to women's involvement as mission mobilizers					
23	One of the reasons for lack of women's involvement as mission mobilizers is due to little/or no theological training					
24	Lack of financial support/sponsorship for women in mission/ministry create a barrier to becoming mission mobilizers					
<b>C</b>	<b>Ways of Empowering Women in the Church as Mission Mobilizers</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
25	Providing theological training programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church					
26	Providing mentorship programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church					
27	Women should have forums, including online chat rooms, to assist them share their own experiences and opinions					
28	Seminars such as spiritual gifts seminars and self-development programs should be encouraged to maximize the development of women as mission mobilizers					
29	There are specific skills or knowledge such as biblical hermeneutics, art/science of homiletics, biblical languages, mission strategies, etc, emphasized in theological training programs that can empower women as effective mission mobilizers					
30	Providing leadership opportunities for women in the church could enhance their role as mission mobilizers					

31	Recognizing and appreciating the contributions of other women to mission can become source of encouragement and empowerment for Adventist women in Nigeria					
32	Providing resources and materials that address the challenges and opportunities faced by other women in mission can improve the empowerment of women in Nigeria and ensures relevance and inclusivity					
33	Collaboration with Adventist educational institutions to sensitize the need for young women in mission is very important					
34	There is a need for targeted campaigns or initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of women's involvement in mission					
35	The church needs to foster a culture that values and celebrates the unique contributions of women as mission mobilizers					
36	Women should be treated equally to men, which includes receiving equal training, job opportunities, and pay					
37	Scholarship funds should be available to support and train more women in theological education					
38	An appreciable number of women make up the entire congregation. Hence, the church should be intentional in training/equipping more women in theological training to reach women members					
39	There is a need to encourage women to acquire a professional/theological education					

<b>D</b>	<b>Benefits of Women as Mission Mobilizers</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
40	Women's involvement as mission mobilizers would create a good network and collaboration among other mission practitioners					
41	The need for the church to mobilize all members for ministry and outreach, including women is germane in solving the mission challenges in today's world					
42	An inclusive mission team where both men and women will recognize and utilize diverse skills and perspectives in fulfilling the Great Commission Mandate					
43	An extended participation of women as mission mobilizers will help strengthen the growth of the church					
44	A holistic approach to the spiritual, mental, social, and physical development of women in becoming mission mobilizers is needed					

# INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF ADVENTIST WOMEN IN NIGERIA AS MISSION MOBILIZERS

## Introduction

The Researcher who is undergoing her PhD program at Adventist University of Africa, with emphasis in World Mission, is interested in understanding the experiences of females who have a call into ministry.

I will ask you questions about your own calling and training experience. Please you are free to answer or not to answer any question, keeping in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. Your experience and insights are what is most important.

To optimize the use of the information you provide, I will be recording our conversation. It is crucial for us to accurately recall and represent all your insights. Please, be assured that we will not disclose anyone's identity in our report, ensuring your confidentiality.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

## *General questions and Background to your Calling*

1. Thinking back to when you first came into ministry, what do you remember about how you were called? (Prompts: Dreams: Events, Mentor, etc.)
2. What were the obstacles encountered in accepting this call? (Prompts: Family: Personal struggles, Future, Confusion, Curiosity, etc.)
3. Tell me more about yourself at that time. (Prompts: Age, Education, Family configuration, Socioeconomic status)

## *Biblical/Theological Knowledge of Women as Mission Mobilizers*

4. What is your understanding about the role of women and men in mission/ministry?
5. What can you say about women becoming mission mobilizers?
6. Have Adventist women in Nigeria served in the capacity of mission mobilizers? if yes, how when, and when, if not, why? (Prompts: leading in-reach and/or out-reach programs, evangelism, trainers, etc.)

## *Factors Preventing Women from becoming Mission Mobilizers*

7. What do you remember about the challenges or barriers you faced as you considered practicing your calling? (Prompts: Persecution, Family opposition, Community disdain/rejection, Cultural issues, Loss of personal identity, Loss of resources and support)
8. How were you able to overcome those challenges and barriers? (Prompts: Support from church members, Family support, Personal determination)
9. What possible factors hinder women from becoming mission mobilizers in Nigeria today? (Prompts: ordination issue, balancing ministry/family, equal job/pay opportunity, etc.)

*Empowerment of Women as Mission Mobilizers*

10. How did you come to know more about equipping/empowering yourself?  
(Prompts: Self-taught intellectual inquiry, Friends, Theological training promotion, Church community, etc.)
11. Having been empowered (through training), how do you see yourself fulfilling your calling in practical ways? (Prompts: leading in ministry/mission work, training others, etc.)
12. What is/are the way(s) Adventist women in Nigeria can be empowered as mission mobilizers to serve the church better?

*Benefits of women becoming mission mobilizers*

13. What is the benefit of the empowerment received (theological training) to your calling? (Prompts: in-depth knowledge, ministry skills, awareness of mission needs, etc.)
14. What are some possible benefits for Adventist women in Nigeria becoming mission mobilizers?
15. Do you think the Adventist church in Nigeria stand the chance to benefit if women are empowered as mission mobilizers? if yes, how, if not, why?
16. Is there anything else that the researcher should know about your experience that I did not ask which can enrich this study?

APPENDIX C

RAW DATA

**Question 1: Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	99	35.7	35.7	35.7
Female	178	64.3	64.3	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 2: Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-29	62	22.4	22.4	22.4
30-39	75	27.1	27.1	49.5
40-49	77	27.8	27.8	77.3
50-59	46	16.6	16.6	93.9
60 and above	17	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 3: Education Level**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SSCE	48	17.3	17.3	17.3
BA	79	28.5	28.5	45.8
MA	71	25.6	25.6	71.5
Ph.D	34	12.3	12.3	83.8
Others	45	16.2	16.2	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 4: Tribe**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Hausa	44	15.9	15.9	15.9
Igbo	114	41.2	41.2	57.0
Yoruba	85	30.7	30.7	87.7
Others	26	9.4	9.4	97.1

5.00	6	2.2	2.2	99.3
6.00	2	.7	.7	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 5: Name of Local Church**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Babcock Community	81	29.2	29.2	29.2
Beautiful Gate	44	15.9	15.9	45.1
Bege	41	14.8	14.8	59.9
Cornerstone	22	7.9	7.9	67.9
No.1	39	14.1	14.1	81.9
No.2	50	18.1	18.1	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 6: Number of Years as a member of the Adventist church**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3-5	21	7.6	7.6	7.6
6-10	18	6.5	6.5	14.1
11-15	18	6.5	6.5	20.6
16-20	26	9.4	9.4	30.0
21 and above	194	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 7: Position in the Church**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Pastor	15	5.4	5.4	5.4
Elder	41	14.8	14.8	20.2
Deacon or Deaconess	52	18.8	18.8	39.0
Member	167	60.3	60.3	99.3
5.00	1	.4	.4	99.6
35.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 1: Women and men were created with distinct abilities and functions**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	18	6.5	6.5	6.5
	SD	15	5.4	5.4	11.9
	D	11	4.0	4.0	15.9
	A	67	24.2	24.2	40.1
	SA	165	59.6	59.6	99.6
	6.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 2: The church's function is to teach the distinct roles of men and women to help them understand their unique functions**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	15	5.4	5.4	5.4
	SD	21	7.6	7.6	13.0
	D	20	7.2	7.2	20.2
	A	94	33.9	33.9	54.2
	SA	127	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 3: We find no women in the Bible who acted as Mission Mobilizers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	120	43.3	43.3	43.3
	SD	83	30.0	30.0	73.3
	D	29	10.5	10.5	83.8
	A	24	8.7	8.7	92.4
	SA	21	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 4: An unclear understanding of women's roles in the Bible brings about the lack of female Mission Mobilizers in the church**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	58	20.9	20.9	20.9
	SD	50	18.1	18.1	39.0
	D	48	17.3	17.3	56.3
	A	79	28.5	28.5	84.8

SA	42	15.2	15.2	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 5: In the Bible, women were actively involved and empowered as Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	26	9.4	9.4	9.4
SD	13	4.7	4.7	14.1
D	32	11.6	11.6	25.6
A	110	39.7	39.7	65.3
SA	96	34.7	34.7	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 6: Having women serve as Mission Mobilizers in our church is not a theological issue but rather a matter of socio-cultural norms**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	31	11.2	11.2	11.2
SD	55	19.9	19.9	31.0
D	54	19.5	19.5	50.5
A	76	27.4	27.4	78.0
SA	61	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 7: Women serving as Mission Mobilizers in the church is not biblical because God created them as followers and helpers of men**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	85	30.7	30.7	30.7
SD	66	23.8	23.8	54.5
D	40	14.4	14.4	69.0
A	47	17.0	17.0	85.9
SA	39	14.1	14.1	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 8: Being a Mission Mobilizer should be determined by abilities and qualifications rather than gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	U	33	11.9	11.9	11.9
	SD	37	13.4	13.4	25.3
	D	24	8.7	8.7	33.9
	A	74	26.7	26.7	60.6
	SA	109	39.4	39.4	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 9: Women are not as capable of being Mission Mobilizers as men**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	93	33.6	33.6	33.6
	SD	84	30.3	30.3	63.9
	D	43	15.5	15.5	79.4
	A	27	9.7	9.7	89.2
	SA	30	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 10: Women's expressive and sensitive concern for others are excellent qualities for being a Mission Mobilizer**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	14	5.1	5.1	5.1
	SD	25	9.0	9.0	14.1
	D	31	11.2	11.2	25.3
	A	101	36.5	36.5	61.7
	SA	106	38.3	38.3	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 11: The softer traits of women and the experience of motherhood are suitable for 21st-century Mission Mobilizers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	29	10.5	10.5	10.5
	SD	21	7.6	7.6	18.1
	D	58	20.9	20.9	39.0
	A	99	35.7	35.7	74.7
	SA	70	25.3	25.3	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 12: Women are equally effective as men in reforming society**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	22	7.9	7.9	7.9
	SD	23	8.3	8.3	16.2
	D	20	7.2	7.2	23.5
	A	95	34.3	34.3	57.8
	SA	117	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 13: Female Mission Mobilizers are acceptable and preferred by female church members**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	47	17.0	17.0	17.0
	SD	50	18.1	18.1	35.0
	D	78	28.2	28.2	63.2
	A	61	22.0	22.0	85.2
	SA	41	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 14: Discrimination against women in society is a major obstacle to fostering women as Mission Mobilizers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	39	14.1	14.1	14.1
	SD	39	14.1	14.1	28.2
	D	29	10.5	10.5	38.6
	A	95	34.3	34.3	72.9
	SA	75	27.1	27.1	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 15: One obstacle for women as Mission Mobilizers is that women do not strive to be mobilizers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	54	19.5	19.5	19.5
	SD	60	21.7	21.7	41.2
	D	61	22.0	22.0	63.2
	A	65	23.5	23.5	86.6
	SA	37	13.4	13.4	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 16: The reason we do not have enough capable women as Mission Mobilizers is that equal opportunities have not been provided for women who had been trained as men**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	35	12.6	12.6	12.6
SD	42	15.2	15.2	27.8
D	42	15.2	15.2	43.0
A	79	28.5	28.5	71.5
SA	79	28.5	28.5	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 17: Currently, the Adventist church in Nigeria has not fully utilized female members**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	33	11.9	11.9	11.9
SD	46	16.6	16.6	28.5
D	52	18.8	18.8	47.3
A	80	28.9	28.9	76.2
SA	66	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 18: In the current church system, there are many obstacles hindering the utilization of women's God-given potential**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	27	9.7	9.7	9.7
SD	45	16.2	16.2	26.0
D	50	18.1	18.1	44.0
A	103	37.2	37.2	81.2
SA	52	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 19: Women face the challenge of balancing family responsibilities and mission commitment**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	25	9.0	9.0	9.0
SD	34	12.3	12.3	21.3
D	34	12.3	12.3	33.6
A	108	39.0	39.0	72.6
SA	76	27.4	27.4	100.0

Total	277	100.0	100.0	
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**Question 20: The church lacks a support system for women engaged as Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	43	15.5	15.5	15.5
SD	59	21.3	21.3	36.8
D	51	18.4	18.4	55.2
A	86	31.0	31.0	86.3
SA	38	13.7	13.7	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 21: After getting married, women need to be faithful to home duties and not get involved in church and social activities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	100	36.1	36.1	36.1
SD	89	32.1	32.1	68.2
D	40	14.4	14.4	82.7
A	27	9.7	9.7	92.4
SA	21	7.6	7.6	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 22: The Nigerian belief in male dominance poses a barrier to women's involvement as Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	31	11.2	11.2	11.2
SD	42	15.2	15.2	26.4
D	44	15.9	15.9	42.2
A	96	34.7	34.7	76.9
SA	63	22.7	22.7	99.6
55.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 23: One of the reasons for the lack of women's involvement as Mission Mobilizers is due to little/or no theological training**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	36	13.0	13.0	13.0

SD	61	22.0	22.0	35.0
D	52	18.8	18.8	53.8
A	91	32.9	32.9	86.6
SA	37	13.4	13.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 24: Lack of financial support/sponsorship for women in mission/ministry creates a barrier to becoming Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	39	14.1	14.1	14.1
SD	44	15.9	15.9	30.0
D	53	19.1	19.1	49.1
A	85	30.7	30.7	79.8
SA	56	20.2	20.2	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 25: Providing theological training programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	22	7.9	7.9	7.9
SD	21	7.6	7.6	15.5
D	22	7.9	7.9	23.5
A	110	39.7	39.7	63.2
SA	102	36.8	36.8	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 26: Providing mentorship programs specifically tailored for women is a great need for the church**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	20	7.2	7.2	7.2
SD	11	4.0	4.0	11.2
D	17	6.1	6.1	17.3
A	119	43.0	43.0	60.3
SA	110	39.7	39.7	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 27: Women should have forums, including online chat rooms, to assist them share their own experiences and opinions**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	19	6.9	6.9	6.9
SD	13	4.7	4.7	11.6
D	12	4.3	4.3	15.9
A	109	39.4	39.4	55.2
SA	124	44.8	44.8	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 28: Seminars such as spiritual gifts seminars and self-development programs should be encouraged to maximize the development of women as Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	17	6.1	6.1	6.1
SD	11	4.0	4.0	10.1
D	18	6.5	6.5	16.6
A	103	37.2	37.2	53.8
SA	127	45.8	45.8	99.6
43.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 29: There are specific skills or knowledge such as biblical hermeneutics, art/science of homiletics, biblical languages, mission strategies, etc, emphasized in theological training programs that can empower women as effective Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	18	6.5	6.5	6.5
SD	12	4.3	4.3	10.8
D	38	13.7	13.7	24.5
A	115	41.5	41.5	66.1
SA	94	33.9	33.9	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 30: Providing leadership opportunities for women in the church could enhance their role as Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	19	6.9	6.9	6.9
SD	23	8.3	8.3	15.2
D	16	5.8	5.8	20.9
A	108	39.0	39.0	59.9
SA	111	40.1	40.1	100.0

Total	277	100.0	100.0	
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**Question 31: Recognizing and appreciating the contributions of other women in mission can become a source of encouragement for Adventist women in Nigeria**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	17	6.1	6.1	6.1
SD	7	2.5	2.5	8.7
D	16	5.8	5.8	14.4
A	117	42.2	42.2	56.7
SA	120	43.3	43.3	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 32: Providing resources that address the challenges and opportunities faced by other women in mission can empower women in Nigeria for mission**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	13	4.7	4.7	4.7
SD	12	4.3	4.3	9.0
D	20	7.2	7.2	16.2
A	116	41.9	41.9	58.1
SA	116	41.9	41.9	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 33: Collaboration with Adventist educational institutions to sensitize the need for young women in mission is important**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	8	2.9	2.9	2.9
SD	12	4.3	4.3	7.2
D	20	7.2	7.2	14.4
A	106	38.3	38.3	52.7
SA	131	47.3	47.3	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 34: There is a need for targeted campaigns or initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of women's involvement in mission**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	11	4.0	4.0	4.0
SD	20	7.2	7.2	11.2
D	27	9.7	9.7	20.9
A	123	44.4	44.4	65.3
SA	96	34.7	34.7	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 35: The church needs to foster a culture that values and celebrates the unique contributions of women as Mission Mobilizers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	16	5.8	5.8	5.8
SD	19	6.9	6.9	12.6
D	29	10.5	10.5	23.1
A	108	39.0	39.0	62.1
SA	105	37.9	37.9	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 36: Women should be treated equally to men, which includes receiving equal training, job opportunities, and pay**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	29	10.5	10.5	10.5
SD	22	7.9	7.9	18.4
D	48	17.3	17.3	35.7
A	92	33.2	33.2	69.0
SA	86	31.0	31.0	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 37: Scholarship funds should be available to support and train more women in theological education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	20	7.2	7.2	7.2
SD	17	6.1	6.1	13.4
D	27	9.7	9.7	23.1
A	96	34.7	34.7	57.8
SA	117	42.2	42.2	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 38: An appreciable number of women make up the entire congregation. Hence, the church should be intentional in training/equipping more women in theological training to reach women members**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	20	7.2	7.2	7.2
SD	15	5.4	5.4	12.6
D	36	13.0	13.0	25.6
A	108	39.0	39.0	64.6
SA	98	35.4	35.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 39: There is a need to encourage women to acquire a professional/theological education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	24	8.7	8.7	8.7
SD	15	5.4	5.4	14.1
D	32	11.6	11.6	25.6
A	94	33.9	33.9	59.6
SA	112	40.4	40.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 40: Women's involvement as Mission Mobilizers would crate a good network and collaboration among other mission practitioners**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	18	6.5	6.5	6.5
SD	12	4.3	4.3	10.8
D	15	5.4	5.4	16.2
A	129	46.6	46.6	62.8
SA	102	36.8	36.8	99.6
44.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 41: The need for the church to mobilizer all members for ministry and outreach including women is germane in solving the mission challenges in today's world**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid U	17	6.1	6.1	6.1

	SD	7	2.5	2.5	8.7
	D	27	9.7	9.7	18.4
	A	99	35.7	35.7	54.2
	SA	127	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 42: An inclusive mission team where both men and women will recognize and utilize diverse skills and perspectives in fulfilling God's mission**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	11	4.0	4.0	4.0
	SD	8	2.9	2.9	6.9
	D	20	7.2	7.2	14.1
	A	96	34.7	34.7	48.7
	SA	142	51.3	51.3	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 43: An extended participation of women as Mission Mobilizers will help strengthen the growth of the church**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	12	4.3	4.3	4.3
	SD	15	5.4	5.4	9.7
	D	19	6.9	6.9	16.6
	A	98	35.4	35.4	52.0
	SA	133	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

**Question 44: A holistic approach to the spiritual, mental, social, and physical development of women in becoming Mission Mobilizers is needed**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	U	13	4.7	4.7	4.7
	SD	5	1.8	1.8	6.5
	D	19	6.9	6.9	13.4
	A	97	35.0	35.0	48.4
	SA	143	51.6	51.6	100.0
	Total	277	100.0	100.0	

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