

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ABUSE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS THROUGH CHURCH DOCTRINES AND  
PRACTICES: A STUDY OF MAINLINE (ORTHODOX) AND NON-ORTHODOX  
CHURCHES IN ASHANTI MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY**



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**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN HUMAN RIGHTS**

**APRIL, 2015**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, George Agyei Kwabi, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

**SIGNATURE** .....

**DATE** .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this project work were done in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

**NAME OF SUPERVISOR:** DR. ANSAH KOI

**SIGNATURE:** .....

**DATE:** .....

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my dear wife, Mrs. Ama Darkoa Agyei-Kwabi; our children: Kwaku Asante Agyei-Kwabi, Kwaku Koranteng Agyei-Kwabi, Akua Sika Agyei-Kwabi and Yaw Darko Agyei-Kwabi; and my mentors: Professor Mrs. Akua Kuenyehia, Evangelist Dr. & Mrs. Abboah Offei, and my dear mother, madam Dinah Mensah for their spiritual and material support throughout my life.



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## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. It investigated discrimination against women and/or abuse of women in churches through doctrines and practices by mainline (orthodox) and non-orthodox (Pentecostal and African indigenous) churches. This was a mixed-method sequential explanatory design which employed the phenomenological approach. Hundred (100) respondents comprising the clergy and laity were sampled via simple random, and proportional stratified sampling methods. Data was gathered using questionnaire (Cronbach Alpha = 0.76), and semi-structured interview guide. Data was analyzed and presented in tables and figures or charts as frequency counts and percentages. The thematic approach using open-coding system was used to analyse the qualitative data. Chi square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was used to test for the hypotheses with  $p < .05$ . The study revealed that Female members in churches within the Ashanti Mampong Municipality have unequal rights; there is imbalance or uneven distribution of power and authority. Human rights violations or abuses of females in Christendom is statistically found to be linked to or associated with church doctrines and practices ( $p = .004$ ). It was empirically found that human rights abuses of females in Christendom was largely dependent on Church practices than Church doctrines ( $p = .023$ ). The church hierarchy uses canon laws, and doctrinal practices, as mechanisms to violate the rights of female members in churches within the municipality. They use patriarchy and ‘male chauvinism’ as weapons to suppress, limit female participation in leadership and power in the church ministry. Female members of churches in the municipality experience male dominance, deprivation, rejection, denial and exclusion from leadership, participation in church administration, preaching and other church activities. It was recommended that the Christian Council of Churches in the Ashanti-Mampong Municipality should adopt gender equality policies on women’s representation in leadership. It should campaign against the clergy who misinterpret, and misrepresent the Bible against the rights of females. The Christian Council of Churches in Ghana through the assistance of the local council of Churches within the study area should campaign and support females/women to stand for decision-making or leadership positions in churches. They should have a civil and legal framework that will protect and promote the rights of all its members, including women.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

The teaching of male dominance and female submission is viewed by many within the Christian tradition as the model for human relationships (Heggen, 1993). Miles (2008: 37) agrees with this observation. He notes that “Scriptural interpretation and translation bolster this widely embraced doctrinal teaching.” The social construct of patterns of relationship in which men (male) are understood as being the standard for human being; and women (female) subordinate not just to God but to men, is an object of faith (Rzepka, 2002). Patriarchy has demanded that women ‘naturally’ assume the role of carer and nurturer (Rakoczy, 2005).

Marginalization of women continues to be endemic worldwide. For instance, discrimination against women through religious doctrines (teachings) and practices often deny them of equal participation in religious institutions. The World Council of Churches (WCC) has acknowledged the existence of violence in, and in the name of, religion (Ariarajah, 2002). Religion and human rights of women are linked in the sense that some religious beliefs and practices tend to reinforce the acceptance of women’s inferiority. There are some aspects of Christian theology which established a doctrine and culture of the subordination of women.

God reconciled all human beings with Him, irrespective of gender or any other social differences. Galatians 3:28 reads, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Colosians 3:11). There is, therefore, a contradiction in the way that some churches have preached about the

equality of all humanity in Jesus Christ while in practice it excludes women from Eucharistic ministry (Phiri, 1997; Oduyoye, 1995).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) explains that human rights protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses. The various conventions on the rights of women and on gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 2006), testify to the idea that discrimination against women on the basis of their sex is at variance with the spirit of modern times.

Human rights law guarantees the right to freedom of religion, including the right to manifest one's religious beliefs through worship, observance, practice and teaching in private and in public. Pippa and Inglehart (2004) conclude that, 'religion matters, not only for cultural attitudes but for the opportunities and constraints on women's lives.'

As in relation to Christianity (Woodhead, 2004), religion is the social expression of engagement with a source of power which is unique to religion ('sacred power'), but religion also involves interaction with 'secular' sources of power, both social (cultural, political, economic, military) and socio-personal (emotional, physical, intellectual, aesthetic). Although women's rights are institutionalized or supported by law, local custom and behaviour sometimes differ from broader notions of human rights through claims of inherent historical and traditional biases against the exercise of rights by women and girls. In many societies, these rights are ignored or suppressed.

Gender inequalities exist across religions. Domination and dehumanization are particularly evident in the dominating and dehumanizing treatment of females, especially women, in churches. Some Biblical texts are used as a weapon against

women who struggle for liberation (Fiorenza, 1995b). Although beliefs do not cause abuse, they matter (Heggen, 1993). Certain beliefs seem to interact with other factors to provide an environment where abuse can occur.

In mainline and charismatic churches in Ghana, discrimination against women or females could exist in terms of access to leadership positions. Among these are all kinds of discrimination such as exclusion from the priesthood, preaching and teaching the Gospel, public administration of the sacraments, and administering or serving the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion).

The perpetuation of human rights abuses and discriminatory practices against women in Christendom remain critical challenges that deviate from international human rights declarations and conventions. Article 18 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights calls on all state-parties to eliminate every discrimination against women and to ensure the protection of the rights of women as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. How does Christendom respond to the above declarations and conventions?

Christendom may respond in certain ways when faced with pressure to observe the rights of women, which is arguably contrary to their doctrines and practices. The nature of the abuses may vary from denomination to denomination depending on peculiar doctrines, practices and socio-cultural setting.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Monyatsi (2008) argues that women continue to face increased exclusion from leadership and decision-making in the church despite their numerical majority. Religions have contributed to women's predicament. Christianity did not change patriarchal structures; if anything, it rather entrenched them (Gaitskill, 2005). The

power of kyriarchy and the patriarchal nature of the church severely limit the ability of women to exercise their gifts for the good of the church community (Rakoczy, 2004).

The Roman Catholic Church and some mainline Christian churches deny women the right to become ministers. No issue is as contentious as that of women's place in the church and their call to ministry. Some religious beliefs and practices place women in a hierarchal relationship to men as dependents. Gage (in Morgan 1999) argues that the history of Christianity was constructed upon an entire 'edifice of sexual inequality and comprehensive female disempowerment.'

In Christian theology, the position of women in churches and in society has been neglected for many centuries, although the subject was debated in the early churches. Many theologians argue that as long as women cannot occupy the same positions as men in the church, their position in the church will remain inferior and this perception of inferiority will continue to flourish in all other spheres of society, as has been the case in many communities. For centuries Christendom has consistently opposed the ordination of women to the divinely instituted ministry of Word and sacraments as contrary to the express teachings of Scripture.

Discrimination against women in society is still the norm. In society at large, disrespect for the human dignity of women and the violation of their human rights are still matters of serious concern. The modern world, with its relative freedom and democracy, still fails women. Leaving church women with no option to be ordained but to assume subservient positions is dehumanising. Despite the acceptance of women's ordination in some churches, the number of women ordained so far is too low to warrant equal representation.

In spite of the efforts of the United Nations, liberal religious bodies and feminist organizations over many decades, the position of women in the modern world is far from satisfactory (United Nations, 1996; Brenner & Fontaine, 1997). Throughout history, religious beliefs, traditions and teachings have been used both to justify and to denounce violence against women. Notwithstanding, the Christian tradition has still encouraged the subordination of women through its theologies and interpretation of Scripture.

There is very scanty and fragmented knowledge on the nature of human rights violations and responses to the rising pressure from the international community to eliminate discrimination against women in Ghana. Research work on practices, doctrines and mechanisms being adopted to address these issues is limited. Research is needed into this area in order to enhance the weak body of information and data; and to highlight the life situation of women in Ghanaian Christendom and generate proposals for enhancing fundamental human rights.

Women in churches in Ghana face all kinds of abuses. In both Catholicism and some other Christian churches, religious doctrines and practices are used to sanction or oppress women, restrict their liberties and maintain men in a dominant position of authority. Women in churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality are no exception to discriminatory practices through church doctrines and practices. The major issues of discrimination against women in some churches include the exclusion, or low numbers, of women ordination into priesthood, exclusion from administration of the sacrament, and male dominance in Christian marriages. Other pertinent issues in that regard revolve round reproductive rights and recognition of the equal spiritual and moral status of the two sexes. Every form of social and cultural discrimination is

incompatible with God's design. The critical question at this juncture is: why is leadership of God's people apparently attributed to males and not females?

There is no published evidence of previous work pertaining to the human rights challenges being faced by women in Ashanti-Mampong Municipality. There is a need for research to investigate the abuse of women in churches through doctrines and practices by mainline (orthodox) and non-orthodox churches at the Mampong Municipality. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of those issues.

### **1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate discrimination against women/abuse of women in churches through doctrines and practices by mainline (orthodox) and non-orthodox (Pentecostal and African independent) churches, in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. describe the human rights situation of women in churches within Ashanti Mampong Municipality.
2. explore how the concern for women's rights are being addressed by churches in the study area.
3. identify the various church practices and doctrines that militate against the rights of women in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality.
4. identify ways to improve women's rights in Ghanaian Christendom, using Ashanti Mampong study as a case in point.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the state of human rights for women in churches within Ashanti Mampong Municipality?



2. How do churches promote human rights concerns for women members within the municipality?
3. Which church doctrines and practices militate against the rights of women in the municipality?
4. How can churches improve female members' rights in the municipality?

### **1.5 Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Human rights violations or abuses of females (women) in Christendom is not significantly associated with Church doctrines and practices.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Human rights violations or abuses of females (women) in Christendom is strongly associated with church doctrines and church practices.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study cannot be over-estimated. The research work would clarify the various abuses women face in the church as far as church doctrines and practices are concerned. The findings of this study would serve as a useful guide to policy makers in churches on ways of dealing with those who abuse the rights of women. It would also add to the literature on the church and human rights.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

This study focused on abuse of women's rights through church doctrines and practices. It studied the abuse of female members' rights within the mainline (orthodox), Pentecostal, Charismatic and African Independent Churches (AICs) of the Mampong Municipality in the Ashanti Region of Ghana only.

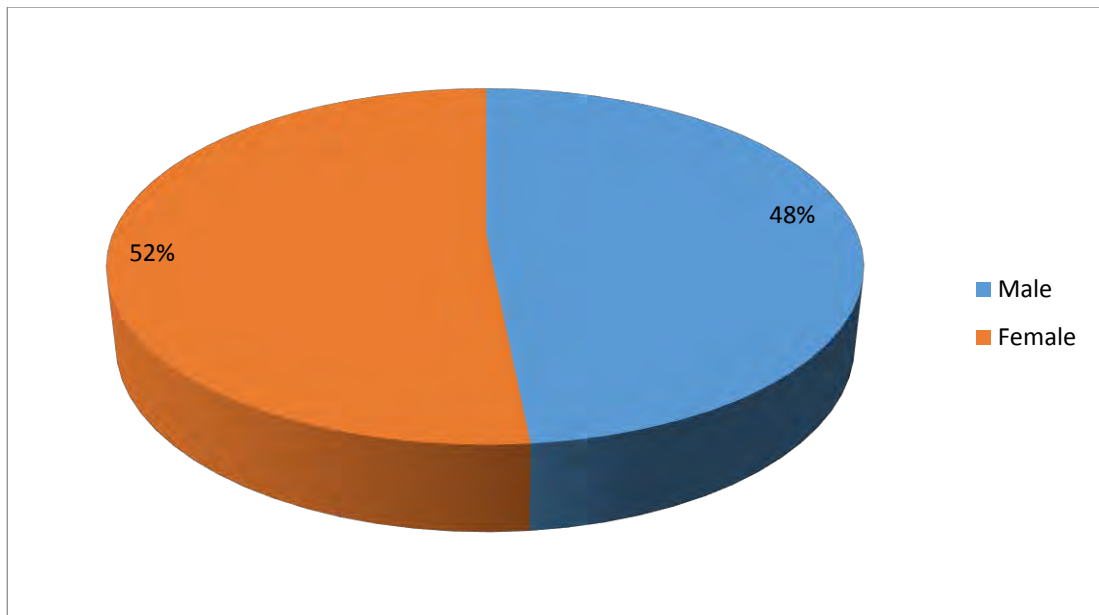
## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Research in any form can be saddled with several limitations and this study is not an exception. Due to the busy schedules of the church leaders and some women, they were unable to answer questions on the stipulated time. Although the researcher is a minister of God, the study participants did not fully cooperate with him. They rather perceived him as a human rights activist. Therefore, the researcher might probably miss out some very important information which otherwise would have improved the findings of this study. This threatened the external validity of the study.

Also, time and financial constraints made the researcher to restrict the study to churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality only. The generalisation of the conclusions is therefore limited in scope.

## **1.9 Profile of the Study Area**

The Ashanti-Mampong Municipality is located in the north-eastern part of Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Municipality shares boundaries with Atebubu Municipality and the Sekyere Central to the North, Sekyere Odumasi to the West. Its total land area is 782 square kilometres. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC), the municipality has a population of 88,051 inhabitants comprising 42,653 (48%) males and 45,398 (52%) females (Ghana Statistical Service: GSS, 2010). The total population of the municipality in 2014 is estimated to be one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) inhabitants (GSS, 2014). Figure 1 below illustrates the population distribution by sex.



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2010).

**Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Population by Sex in Ashanti-Mampong Municipality**

The municipality has 69 settlements which comprise 29 (42%) urban and 40 (58%) rural settlements. Majority of the inhabitants are engaged in agricultural, forestry activities and petty trading. A few of the population are employed in the formal sector. In terms of religion, Christians constitute 87.6% of the population with Moslems constituting 10.9%. Traditional religion forms 2.3 percent, and other religions constitute less than one percent of the population

### **1.10 Organization of the Chapters**

The research is organized into five chapters. Chapter One consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, profile of the study area, and organization of the study.

Chapter Two deals with review of the related literature. Chapter Three, which is on methodology, has the research design, study population, sample size and sampling

techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, ethical consideration and data analysis. Findings and discussion of results of the research are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five deals with the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

This Chapter reviews related literature on women's rights in relation to church doctrines and practices. The essence of this review is to provide a framework which would serve as the basis for comparing the similarities and differences between other writers and researchers in relation to this current study. The literature is reviewed under the following topics:

- a. Biblical (Scriptural) views on the concepts of Gender, Gender Equality and Discrimination,
- b. Human rights and the Rights of Christian Women.
- c. Abuse of women's rights/discriminatory practices against Christian women.
- d. The doctrines and practices of mainline (orthodox) and the non-orthodox churches with regard to the abuse of the human rights of women.
- e. The implications of women's abuse through Church doctrines and practices
- f. Theoretical Framework.
- g. Conceptual Framework.
- h. Summary of review of related literature.

## **2.2 Biblical (Scriptural) Christian Views on the Concepts of ‘Gender Equality’ and ‘Discrimination’, Human Rights and the Rights of Christian Women**

### **2.2.1 Christianity and Gender**

Gender is a social given rather than a biological construct. The term ‘gender’ is understood by the *Holy See* as grounded in biological sexual identity, male or female...[it] thus excludes dubious interpretations based on world views which assert that sexual identity can be adapted indefinitely to suit new and different purposes (Reservations, 1995). The interpretation of gender as a biological fact rather than as a social construct is closely linked to arguments made by the Vatican about equality and also sexuality. To frame gender as pre-given and immutable supports the view that men and women are essentially different, thus justifying their different roles in society.

Historical studies by Laqueur (1990) showed that sex is historically and culturally variable. The ‘sex and gender’ model has also been undermined by a model of sex/gender as produced in and by social processes and performances (Butler, 1999), or as a form of ‘social embodiment’ (Connell, 2002). Psychological research on sex difference has failed to find any large or universal differences between men and women (Kimmel, 2000). As Copelon (2000) noted, it also rules out the possibility of any degree of fluidity in a person’s gender/sexual identity, thus foreclosing the possibility of recognition of homosexual or transgender identities.

Feminist explorations of religion, from Cady Stanton to Mary Daly, focused almost exclusively on the explicit and implicit teachings about men and women, masculinity and femininity, which were to be found in religions’ sacred texts (Juschka, 2001).

Explicit directives about the different nature, capabilities, duties and obligations of the sexes may be unnecessary if assumptions about gender are already deeply embedded in the everyday practices and institutional arrangements of a religion and the society to which it belongs. It is when such practices are called into question that teachings may need to be made more explicit – as is apparent today in many conservative religions across the globe (Woodhead, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Gender, Religion and Power**

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity has become a major focus of the contemporary gender debate, specifically in relation to 1 Corinthians 11:3. Giles (2006) “reinvented” the doctrine of the Trinity to support views of men and women. A heretical view of the Trinity emphasizes “mutual dependence, “but within the Trinity, it reflects “subordination of the Father to the Son,” and this reflected in gender role relations (Grenz & Kjesbo, 1995). Grudem (2004) countered this by asserting that mutual submission in the Trinity cannot be supported by scripture and church history (Grenz, 1995).

Classical Sociology investigated relations between religion and economic power (Weber, 1992), religion and class (Halévy, 1949), religion and political power (Martin, 2005; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). If gender is a complex and interlocking set of power relations constituted in the historical process (Bourdieu, 2001), then it is possible to speak of the ‘gender order’ of a society, despite the impossibility of ever disentangling the full complexities of this order.

The contribution of religion to power relations within society is best understood by viewing religion as a system of power. In relation to Christianity, religion is the social expression of engagement with a source of power which is unique to religion (‘sacred

power’). Religion also involves interaction with ‘secular’ sources of power, both social (cultural, political, economic, military) and socio-personal (emotional, physical, intellectual, aesthetic; Woodhead, 2004). Although it can have independent force, the potency of sacred power is enhanced through alignment with secular power (for example, there is a close historical relationship between the power of the Christian God and the wealth as well as political influence of the church, or between the success of ‘holistic’ therapies and ability to enhance emotional well-being).

To view religion simply as a benign ‘sacred canopy’ over society (Berger, 1967) implies ignoring the ways in which religion(s) can play active roles in: (a) reinforcing and legitimating dominant power interests; (b) generating resistance to dominant power; (c) resourcing groups with little social power; (d) resourcing reconfigurations of power. A group which has little social power can draw on sacred power to improve its access to secular power in a way which would not otherwise be possible (for example, early Christian communities in the second and third centuries, women-dominated holistic self-spiritualities today (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005)).

The implications of religion in a gendered distribution of power cannot simply be read off from its cultural symbols, important though these are. Even representations of the sacred do not necessarily have a one-to-one relationship with gender order. We can think of such representations as running along a spectrum of possibilities, from those which identify sacred power with a supernatural being or beings and their authorised representatives (‘priests’) on the one hand, to those which identify the sacred with life itself, and thus with the inner ‘spiritual’ core of each and every living being on the other (Woodhead & Heelas, 2000). In the former ‘religions of difference’, sacred power is tightly concentrated and controlled, whereas in the latter ‘spiritualities of life’ it is more diffuse and accessible. Clearly the former has a natural affinity with



forms of social and religious organisation in which power is hierarchically distributed, with the few ruling over the many, whilst the latter has a closer fit with flatter, more egalitarian distributions of power.

### **2.2.3 Gender Equality: Biblical (Scriptural)/Christian Views**

The concept of equality takes into account the fact that although women are equal in their human rights and dignity with men, their different roles and responsibilities underlie the need for an equitable system of rights where particular priorities and requirements of the woman in her multiple roles are accounted for' (UN Reservations, 1995). According to the creation narrative in Genesis 1, God created humankind in his image. Verse 27 states that "God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." After the creation of humankind God gave them authority to dominate his creation. The verse seems to imply that the relationship between man and woman is that of equal partnership and that man and woman were to be co-rulers of nature. This verse is often quoted by those who support gender equality to illustrate that the two genders were intended to be on a par (Claassens, 2008; Nasimiyu-Wasike, 1991; Njoroge, 2005; Oduyoye, 1995; Rakoczy, 2008).

Culture concerns the whole way of life of a society and therefore includes religion (Rukuni, 2007). Culture provides a paradigm, a framework within which people think and live (Bourdillon, 1993). It is, therefore, no wonder that people often cite culture to support actions which serve their interests. Exponents of the different traditions in Christianity in the past more or less regarded women as inferior and were satisfied that social relations should demonstrate this inferiority. This is true of the Church Fathers such as Thomas Aquinas (Küng, 2005) and Luther (Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-

Hanks, 2003). Christian traditions were thus part of the entrenchment of the inferior and subordinate position of women in church and society throughout the centuries.

The subordination of women in religious institutions, and thus also in the Christian churches, finds its way into society and develops into a general culture where women are seen as inferior and are treated as such.

The *Holy See* has supported the notion of a ‘complementarity’ between men and women, which recognizes their inherent differences. Moreover, it has also been reluctant to use the language of equal rights preferring instead to focus on the ‘dignity and worth’ of women (Reservations, 1995). The *Holy See* ‘considers women and men as being of equal dignity in all areas of life, but without this always implying an equality of roles and functions’ (*Holy See*, 1995 in Buss, 1998). It has rejected the notion that women should strive for sameness with men as ‘this would only impoverish women, and all of society, by deforming or losing the unique richness...of femininity’ (John Paul II, 1995 in Buss, 1998).

Many female theologians argued for the rectification of the human dignity of women both in church and society. The voice of women is no longer silent (Landman, 2005; Klopper, 2002:). For that very reason Christian theology must take the liberation of women seriously (Schüssler-Fiorenza, 1995).

Glendon (1995) argues, the ‘beneficent’ influence of women must be recognized. ‘The freer women are to share their gifts with society, the better are the prospects for the entire human community to progress in wisdom, justice and dignified living.’ Jesus' teaching recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels suggests that Jesus forbids any hierarchy in Christian relationships: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles *lord it over* them, and their high officials *exercise authority* over them. But it shall not be so

among you” (Mark 10:42-43; Luke 22) While “lord it over” implies abusive leadership, his words “exercise authority” have no connotation of abuse of authority (Marsh, Clive & Moyise, 2005). The egalitarian and complementarian positions differ significantly in their approach to hermeneutics, and specifically in their interpretation of biblical history.

Oduyoye (1995) asserted that Genesis 1:26-28 suggests that women and men are equal and she expresses it, thus. “The biblical notion of equality and partnership in Genesis 1:27-28 is distorted by male-dominated and culture-bound interpretation of biblical texts. Male supremacy is at variance with an egalitarian understanding of Christianity” (Oduyoye, 1995). Oduyoye (1995) contended that the subordination of women in the church is contrary to the spirit of God which regards males and females as equal. In her exegesis of Proverbs 31, Oduyoye (1995) concluded that the text reinforces the subordinate position of women and perpetuates their stereotypical roles as mothers, wives, caretakers and self-sacrificial persons who put others’ needs first (Pui-lan, 1998). Oduyoye’s assertion is that men are not comfortable with the issue of offsetting gender imbalances because they are satisfied with the status quo.

Oduyoye’s perception of the text is affirmed by Asumeng (as cited in Newell, 2005) who admonished wives, on the basis of the text in question, to forget about themselves and be preoccupied with the question: “Will this please my husband?” in everything they do. Oduyoye (1995), in view of unequal gender relations of power, accuses biblical interpretation and Christian theology in Africa of sacralising the marginalisation of women. Oduyoye warns that we must exercise caution when approaching the Bible, because not everything said in the Bible is good news for women (Pui-lan, 1998).

“Partnership of women and men, ordained or not, is the true image of the Church of Christ” (Oduyoye, 1996; Rakoczy, 2005). The original relationship of equality between men and women first established by God at creation (Genesis 1:26-28) was restored in Jesus (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 1991). Nasimiyu-Wasike depicted this relationship as one of equality. However, as Christianity gradually absorbed the cultural ethos of the Roman Empire, its structures began to reflect the patriarchy of the imperial household (Rakoczy, 2008:140). Rakoczy further pointed out that the assertion that “there is neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28) which described the earlier egalitarian community was replaced by traditional patriarchy.

From misogynist biblical texts it may be concluded that the Bible discriminates according to gender, greatly influencing the way women are treated in many societies (Monyatsi, 2008). Monyatsi noted that the Bible clearly relegates women as second-class citizens as their silence and submissiveness are emphasized. This notion is also articulated by Banana (1993) who stated that the Bible has been and continues to be used to “relegate women to a second class status in society, overlooking the liberating themes in the Gospels in favour of the neo-legalism of Paul.” Similar sentiments are echoed by Njoroge (2005) who asserted that the Bible has been misinterpreted and misused to deny women God-given identity and power, despite the biblical affirmation that human beings, female and male, are created in God’s image.

Fiorenza (2005) insisted that “a discipleship of equals” was a good model for religious units. She also argued that women should not be denied ordination because of their physiology. She said, “It remains intellectually and spiritually shocking in a post modern age to realise how a biologicistic reading of texts still keeps women from ordination” (Fiorenza, 2005:87). Fiorenza is suggesting here that ordination should

not be based on sex or physical features of a human being because firstly, it is a spiritual matter and secondly, it is not in keeping with modern trends that advocate gender justice.

Fiorenza's (1995) stressed that the community formed by Jesus was a 'discipleship of equals' and that this egalitarian model- where roles were shared- was replaced by a hierarchical, patriarchal structure by the second or third century after. Equality, according to Fiorenza (1995b), "prevailed in the believing communities until Paul, who was the first to revert to patriarchal thinking and models and commence a process leading eventually to the loss of the vision and reality of equality in the early church." As such, Paul, seen in some sense as an egalitarian, is castigated by Fiorenza for reverting to oppression and marginalization of women in the church. Fiorenza (1985) insisted that "misogynist texts and patriarchal injunctions were generated because the discipleship of equals stood in tension with Greco-Roman patriarchal structures", otherwise patriarchal structures are not inherent to the Christian community.

### **2.2.3.1 Egalitarian View**

Christian egalitarians believe that male and female were created equally (Genesis 1-2) without any hierarchy of roles. God created both woman and man in His own image and likeness. God made the first couple equal partners in leadership over the earth. Both were jointly commissioned to "be fruitful and multiply...to fill the earth...subdue the earth...and rule over it" (Gen. 1:28). At the Fall, God prophesied to Eve that one result of sin entering the human race would be that her husband would "rule over" her (Genesis 3:16; Bilezikian, 2006). Bilezikian (2006) pointed out that throughout the Old Testament era and beyond, just as God had prophesied, men continued to rule

over women in a patriarchal system which he viewed as being a “compromise” or “accommodation” between sinful reality and the divine ideal. Webb (2001) argued that a major challenge is determining which biblical commands are “transcultural” and therefore applicable today, versus those which are “cultural” and therefore only applicable to the original (1st century) recipients of the text (Webb, 2001). His “redemptive movement” hermeneutic is justified using the example of slavery, which Webb saw as analogous to the subordination of women.

Some other New Testament instructions that are almost universally considered “cultural” and therefore only applicable to the original (1st century) recipients of the text are for women to wear veils when praying or prophesying (Corinthians 11:5-6), Christians to wash each other's feet (a direct command from Jesus in the Upper Room discourse (John 13:14-15), the instruction appearing five times in the New Testament, to greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16a, 1 Cor. 16:20b, 2 Cor. 13:12a, 1 Thess. 5:26, and 1 Pet. 5:14a) — among others.

Christian egalitarian beliefs show that both women and men were created equal by God (Genesis 1:27). Neither man nor woman was cursed by God at the Fall of Man (Genesis 3:16) — “So the Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life’” (Genesis 3:14). The human couple were warned by God in a prophetic sense what would be the natural consequences of sin having entered the human race. The natural consequences of sin mentioned by God in

the Creation account included increased pains in childbearing, and the husband will rule over you. Jesus' radical “new Covenant view was correctly articulated by the Apostle Paul when he wrote that” ... there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:28).

A scripture passage considered key to the advocacy of full equality of responsibility and authority for both women and men is contained in a Pauline polemic containing these three antitheses, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Christian egalitarians interpret this passage as expressing that the overarching teaching of the New Testament is that all are “one in Christ.”

Woodhead (2004) noted that the modern “egalitarian emphasis is contradicted by a symbolic framework that elevates the male over the female, and by organizational arrangements that make masculine domination a reality in church life. Theological statements on the position of women from down the centuries testify not only to the assumption that it is men who have the authority to define women, but to the precautions that have been taken to ensure that women do not claim too much real equality with men – in this life at least” (Woodhead, 2004). Biblical patriarchy affirms the equality of men and women, but goes further in its expression of the different gender roles.

### **2.2.3.2 *Complementarian View***

In contrast to egalitarian teaching, complementarians teach that male priority and headship (positional leadership) were instituted prior to the Fall (Gen. 1-2) and that the decree in Genesis 3:16 merely distorted this leadership by introducing “ungodly domination.” Complementarians teach that the male leadership seen throughout the

Old Testament (that is, the patriarchs, priesthood and monarchy) was an expression of the creation ideal, as was Jesus' selection of 12 male apostles and New Testament restrictions on church leadership to men only (1 Tim. 2:11-14; Piper & Grudem, 1991).

Piper and Grudem (1991) representing the Complementarian position, said that they are "not as sure in this wider sphere which roles can be carried out by men or women." Complementarians believe that God made men and women to be equal in personhood and value but different in roles. They understand the Bible as teaching that God created men and women to serve different roles in the church and the home (Koessler, 2008). Complementarians' understanding is that both Old and New Testaments do prescribe a male-priority based hierarchy and gender roles in the church and in marriage, where women have equal dignity with men but subordinate roles. Piper and Grudem (1991) cited a set of concerns shared by Complementarians over other contemporary philosophies about gender:

- a. Cultural uncertainty and confusion over complementary differences between masculinity and femininity.
- b. Unravelling marriages.
- c. Increasing attention given what they termed to be feminist egalitarianism.
- d. Ambivalence about motherhood and homemaking.
- e. Claims of legitimacy for illicit sexual relationships and pornography.
- f. Upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family.
- g. Emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership seen as nonconforming to Biblical teaching.
- h. Non-traditional reinterpretation of apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts



- i. A growing threat to Biblical authority.

Complementarians tend to be biblical inerrantists who take a more literal view of biblical interpretation. They disagree with Christian Egalitarians on theological positions related to gender, such as in holding that:

- a. Man was created with “headship” over the woman by being created first (Genesis 2:22; 1Cor 11:2-9).
- b. Female exclusion from leadership over men is also justified due to her deception by the devil, which resulted in The Fall, for which Adam is also, or primarily, culpable (Genesis 3:16; 1Timothy 2:12-14; Romans 5:12-15).
- c. Both Old and New Testaments set a pattern of male leadership; for instance the priestly and kingly offices of the Old Testament were restricted to males; the Apostles of Jesus were all male; and Paul's instructions regarding church eldership in the epistles 1 Timothy and Titus appear to restrict this position to men. Primary texts in the New Testament which they believe support male headship include 1 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:12 and Ephesians 5:22.

In Galatians 3:28, complementarians believe that the Apostle Paul is establishing that all believers, no matter what their racial, social, or gender status, share the same spiritual status in their union with Christ. However, they do not believe that or any other scriptures put an end to positional and functional distinctions based on gender, which they see as being clearly stated and upheld in the New Testament, as a matter of Christian principle.

### 2.2.3.3 *Tensions between Egalitarian and Patriarchal Tendencies*

Hierarchical authority became paramount and led to women's subordination in theory and practice (Rakoczy, 2004). Fiorenza (1988) pointed out that tensions were bound to arise between the state religion, where there was general acceptance of male religious privilege and authority, and the more egalitarian practices of the first Christian communities, which admitted women as well as slaves. Systematically, the equality in Christ described in Galatians 3:28 – “neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female” - gave way to the injunctions of the Household Codes which led to the domestication of women (Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18f). These Household Codes reinforced patriarchal relationships that were familiar in both Jewish and Roman households and were incorporated into Christianity. In turn, as some argue, they led to incredible suffering in the human community down the centuries, since they were used to condone slavery (Rakoczy, 2004). Domestic relationships in contemporary society have been profoundly influenced, and remain influenced, by these hierarchical patterns that developed in the early church.

Christian egalitarianism holds that the submission of the woman in marriage and womanly restrictions in Christian ministry are inconsistent with the true picture of Biblical equality. The equal-yet-different doctrine taught by complementarians is considered by them to be a contradiction in terms (Strauch, 1999). Christian egalitarians' interpretation of Scripture brings them to the conclusion that the manner and teachings of Jesus, affirmed by the Apostle Paul, abolished gender-specific roles in both the church and in marriage. Nicole (2006) recognized that biblical egalitarianism is still viewed by many as inconsistent with biblical inerrancy, although he disagrees. He wrote that “the matter of the place of women in the home, in society, and in the church is not an issue that can be conclusively determined by a few

apparently restrictive passages that are often advanced by those who think that subordination represents God's will for women" (Nicole, 2006).

Modern complementarians argued that Genesis 1:26-28 and Galatians 3:28 establish the full equality of males and females in terms of status, worth and dignity (Piper & Grudem, 1991). Complementary roles in marriage and church leadership, including the primary authority of men and the submission of wives, are not thought to contradict this principle of ontological equality. The equation of role or functional subordination and ontological inferiority is considered to be category confusion (Grenz, 1995). Groothuis (2005) argued that a woman's spiritual and ontological equality with man rules out the sort of subordination prescribed by gender traditionalists.... It is not logically possible for woman to be essentially equal to man, yet universally subordinate to man on the basis of an essential attribute, that is, femaleness (Groothuis, 2005).

Stagg and Stagg (1978) pointed out that in the Bible the only God-ordained restrictions on the genders is that "only the male can beget, and only the female can bear." Bilezikian, (1989) argued that the New Testament contains evidence of women apostles (Romans 16:7) prophets (Acts 21: 9-10), teachers (Acts 18:26), deacons (Romans 16: 1) and administrators (Romans 16:1). Regarding the contentious matter of women apostleship, Rakoczy (2004:202) argued that Mary Magdalene fulfills all three of the New Testament criteria to determine apostleship: a person must have accompanied Jesus during his lifetime (Acts 1:21), must have seen the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-9; Matt 28:9) and been commissioned by him (Galatians 1:11-17; Matthew 28:10). She accompanied Jesus during his ministry (Luke 8:1-3), saw the risen Jesus at the tomb (John 20:11-18) and was commissioned by Jesus to 'go and

find my brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' (John 20:17-18). Therefore Mary Magdalene can be named an apostle.

#### **2.2.4. Gender Roles in Christianity**

Einwechter (2009, 2008) referred to the traditional complementarian view as “two point complementarianism” (male leadership in the family and church), and he regarded the biblical patriarchy view as “three-point” or “full” complementarianism (male leadership in family, church and society). While complementarianism holds to exclusively male leadership in the church and in the home, biblical patriarchy extends that exclusion to the civic sphere as well, so that women should not be civil leaders and indeed should not have careers outside the home. “Women will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (I Timothy).

God created male and female equally with only a functional differentiation in the sense that they have different obligations (1 Timothy 2:11-13.). The male person is the head of the household and should care for the family. He became the *primus inter pares*. His wife should help him with the human family – not on the basis of subordination but of co-operation, as a help and a partner, because she bears the same image of God. But as Yahweh’s partners, both have the same function in creation. However, the Fall brought about a change in this God-created order.

Owing to sin, this equality became inequality. Sin distorted the co-operation into subordination of females and her ‘sameness’ into inferiority. She was regarded as inferior in jurisprudence, as is evident in Exodus 17:20; Deuteronomy 5:11 and

Numbers 27:8. She was looked upon as a subordinate in social life (Exodus 21:3; 2 Samuel 11:26; Genesis 8:12 and Judge 19:26). The Dutch Old Testament scholar Vriezen draws the conclusion that all forms of patriarchy in Old Israel and in the time of the New Testament are a result of sin. The wife's relationship of dependency on her husband is punishment for sin (Vriezen, 1976).

In general, all evangelicals involved in the gender debate claim to adhere to the authority of the Bible. Egalitarians typically argue that the dispute has arisen because of differences in interpretation of specific passages. New Testament passages such as Ephesians 5:22-24 which teach submission of wives to husbands are typically understood by egalitarians as a temporary accommodation to a harsh first century culture. Nevertheless, Grudem (2004; 2006) and other Complementarians, have accused Egalitarians of adopting positions which deny the authority, sufficiency and inerrancy of scripture.

#### **2.2.4.1      *The Position of Women in Biblical Times***

De Vaux summarises woman's position in Old Testament times in his conclusion:

“The wife called her husband ba'al or 'master'; she also called him 'adôn or 'lord' (Genesis 18:12; Judges 19:26; Amos 4:1); she addressed him, in fact, as a slave addressed his master or a subject his king. The Decalogue includes a man's wife among his possessions, along with his house and land, his male and female slaves, his ox and his ass (Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21). Her husband can repudiate her, but she cannot claim a divorce, all her life she remains a minor. The wife does not inherit from her husband, nor daughters from their father, except when there is no male heir (Numbers 27:8). A vow made by a girl or married woman needs, to be valid, the consent of father or husband and if this consent is withheld, the vow is null and void

(Numbers 30: 4-17) (de Vaux, 1988). Some modern day Christians, for example, in African Christianity, use this historical material to endorse the inferior position of women within their own environment” (Mafube, 1999: 144; Schneider, 1981).

On the other hand, many examples in the Old Testament can be found where women occupied influential social positions in spite of the customs and cultures of the day and contradictory to the andro-centric language of the day. The following examples can be mentioned here:

- a. In spite of occupying an inferior position, in jurisprudence a woman did have legal protection (Deuteronomy. 21:14; Joshua 15:19; Judges 1:15; Numbers 30:10; Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:17, 21; 26:12-13; 27:19). She was also respected in society (Genesis 16:4; Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Proverbs 19:16; 20:20; 30:17).
- b. Deborah acted as a prophetess and as a leader of Israel (Judges 4:4).
- c. Miriam, the sister of Aaron, acted as a prophetess (Ex. 15:20).
- d. Huldah acted as a prophetess (2 Kn. 22:15).
- e. Anna acted as a prophetess (Lk. 2:36).
- f. Athalia became Queen in the place of Ahaziah after his death. She was deposed not because she was a woman, but because she was a murderer and a tyrant. Some Christians find enough reason, in the above biblical material, to believe that women should be emancipated.

### **2.3 Human Rights and the Rights of Christian Women: Biblical (Scriptural) Perspectives**

All of social life is an expression of its unmistakable protagonist: the human person. Every expression of society must be directed towards the human person. Man and

woman have the same dignity and are of equal value not only because they are both, in their differences, created in the image of God, but even more profoundly because the dynamic of reciprocity that gives life to the “we” in the human couple, is an image of God. In a relationship of mutual communion, man and woman fulfil themselves in a profound way, rediscovering themselves as persons through the sincere gift of themselves. Their covenant of union is presented in Sacred Scripture as an image of the Covenant of God with man (Hosea1-3; Is 54; Ephesians5:21-33) and, at the same time, as a service to life. Indeed, the human couple can participate in God’s act of creation: “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’ (Genesis1:28).

The relationship with God requires that the life of man be considered sacred and inviolable. The respect owed to the inviolability and integrity of physical life finds its climax in the positive commandment: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Leviticus19:18), by which Jesus enjoins the obligation to tend to the needs of one's neighbour (Matthew22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke10:27-28).

The Church’s Magisterium has not failed to note the positive value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, which Pope John Paul II defined as “a true milestone on the path of humanity's moral progress.”In fact, the roots of human rights are to be found in the dignity that belongs to each human being. This dignity, inherent in human life and equal in every person, is perceived and understood first of all by reason. The natural foundation of rights appears all the more solid when, in light of the supernatural, it is considered that human dignity, after having been given by God and having been profoundly wounded

by sin, was taken on and redeemed by Jesus Christ in his incarnation, death and resurrection.

Emphasis is given to the paramount value of the right to religious freedom: “all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits”. The ultimate source of human rights is not found in the mere will of human beings, in the reality of the State, in public powers, but in man himself and in God his Creator. These rights are “universal, inviolable, inalienable.” Universal because they are present in all human beings, without exception of time, place or subject. *Inviolable* insofar as “they are inherent in the human person and in human dignity” and because “it would be vain to proclaim rights, if at the same time everything were not done to ensure the duty of respecting them by all people, everywhere, and for all people”. *Inalienable* in so far as “no one can legitimately deprive another person, whoever they may be, of these rights, since this would do violence to their nature.”

### **2.3.1 Women’s Rights in the Perspectives of Scripture**

O’Hanlon (2006:91) defined religions as, “time-tested traditions filled with proven pointers on how to proceed through life.” Nason-Clark (1997) defined organized religion as providing “a context for learning and transmitting religious and often secular beliefs, values and practices.” The central theoretical argument of this investigation is that Christians, in their calling to manifest the attitude of Christ, should always take the human dignity of women to heart and should be the champions



of women's rights in church and society. "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; Ephesians 6:9), since all people have the same dignity as creatures made in his image and likeness. Genesis 1:26-28 dignifies women as an important factor in the creation, equal in power and glory with man while Genesis 2 makes her a mere afterthought (Mace, 2009). Oduyoye asserted that Genesis 1:26-28 suggests that women and men are equal and she expresses it thus:

The biblical notion of equality and partnership in Genesis 1:27-28 is distorted by male-dominated and culture-bound interpretation of biblical texts. Male supremacy is at variance with an egalitarian understanding of Christianity (Oduyoye, 1995). Oduyoye (1995) contended that the subordination of women in the church is contrary to the spirit of God which regards males and females as equal. In her exegesis of Proverbs 31, Oduyoye (1995) concluded that the text reinforces the subordinate position of women and perpetuates their stereotypical roles as mothers, wives, caretakers and self-sacrificial persons who put others' needs first (Pui-lan, 1998). Oduyoye's assertion is that men are not comfortable with the issue of offsetting gender imbalances because they are satisfied with the status quo.

Oduyoye's perception of the text is affirmed by Asumeng (as cited in Newell, 2005) who admonishes wives, on the basis of the text in question, to forget about themselves and be preoccupied with the question: "Will this please my husband?" in everything they do. Oduyoye (1995), in view of unequal gender relations of power, accuses biblical interpretation and Christian theology in Africa of sacralising the marginalisation of women. Oduyoye warns that we must exercise caution when approaching the Bible, because not everything said in the Bible is good news for women (Pui-lan, 1998).

“Partnership of women and men, ordained or not, is the true image of the Church of Christ” (Oduyoye, 1996; Rakoczy, 2005). The original relationship of equality between men and women first established by God at creation (Genesis 1:26-28) was restored in Jesus (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 1991). Nasimiyu-Wasike depicts this relationship as one of equality. However, as Christianity gradually absorbed the cultural ethos of the Roman Empire, its structures began to reflect the patriarchy of the imperial household (Rakoczy, 2008). Rakoczy further pointed out that the assertion that “there is neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28) which describes the earlier egalitarian community was replaced by traditional patriarchy. From misogynist biblical texts it may be concluded that the Bible discriminates according to gender, greatly influencing the way women are treated in many societies (Monyatsi, 2008). Monyati noted that the Bible clearly relegates women as second-class citizens as their silence and submissiveness are emphasized. This notion is also articulated by Banana (1993) who stated that the Bible has been and continues to be used to “relegate women to a second class status in society, overlooking the liberating themes in the Gospels in favour of the neo-legalism of Paul.” Similar sentiments are echoed by Njoroge (2005) who asserted that the Bible has been misinterpreted and misused to deny women God-given identity and power, despite the biblical affirmation that human beings, female and male, are created in God’s image.

#### **2.4 Abuses of Women in Churches /Discrimination and Marginalization of Christian Women through Church Doctrines and Practices: Biblical (Scriptural)/Christian Views**

Major religions are accused of silencing the voice of women who, according to them, should only be seen and not heard (Morgan, 1999). Gage (as cited in Morgan, 1999),

argued that the history of most religions, Christianity included, has been constructed “upon an entire edifice of sexual inequality and comprehensive female disempowerment”. In view of this history, feminism seeks to expose the androcentrism or male centredness of existing scriptural interpretations. By affirming that women are the victims of violence in religious as well as social contexts, this study can best be understood as having a feminist orientation.

The violence experienced by religious women is often compounded by the fact that religion teaches the virtue of silence (Sharp, 2011; Gonzalez, 2010; Nason-Clark, 2009; Sisselman, 2009; Sheikh, 2008; Wendt, 2008; Levitt & Ware, 2006b; Tracy, 2006; Petersen, 1983). MacInnes (1998) argued, “Inequality creates masculinity and femininity as ideologies which serve to mask and legitimate social inequality.” Although acknowledgement of such differences undermines the idea of patriarchy as a single system of oppression of all women by all men, it is compatible with a recognition that the workplace, the home, the political arena, the legal system, and mass culture are organised in mutually-reinforcing ways which, though various and ever-changing, nevertheless result in women being disadvantaged and disempowered relative to men across the globe (Connell, 2002).

An attempt is made to indicate which scriptural texts are used by proponents and opponents of gender equality. Fiorenza (1995b) who argued that while on the one hand the Bible has been used to halt the emancipation of women, slaves and colonized, on the other hand it has provided theological support for Christian women and men who rejected slavery, poverty and patriarchal sexism as against God’s will. Furthermore, Fiorenza (1995b) pointed out that “while clergymen invoked the Bible ... in order to bar women from speaking in public and in order to prevent the

ordination of women, women have pointed to other biblical texts to legitimise their claim to public speaking and the ministry. ”Fiorenza (1995b) posited that both detractors and defenders of women’s liberation refer to the Bible because of its “ecclesial authority and societal influence.”

#### **2.4.1 Abuse of Women: Biblical Injunctions on the Status and Role of Women**

God does not discriminate. However, Genesis 2 seems to contradict equality of man and woman. This text suggests that what motivated God to create Eve was Adam’s loneliness. God saw that it was not good for a man to be alone (verse 18). Eve was created as a suitable helper (*ezer*) for Adam. Eve was created from Adam’s rib (verse 21 and 22) because she was to be like him and be part of him. Adam refers to Eve as ‘bone of my bones’ and ‘flesh of my flesh’ (verse 23) and calls her woman because she was drawn from him. That Eve was drawn out of Adam presents Adam as the prototype of humanity. The text goes further saying that since Eve was made out of Adam, man and woman were to leave their parents and join each other to become one flesh (verse 24). While Adam is depicted as having primacy to Eve in terms of creation, Adam needs Eve. The reference to Eve as Adam’s helper may imply that the woman was to take instructions from the man, being subordinate to him. On the other hand, the phrases ‘bone of my bones’ and ‘flesh of my flesh’ seem to imply equality between the sexes. That Adam names Eve may imply that Adam has authority over Eve because the power to name is tied to the power to define. In view of the preceding analysis, the text seems to support both the subordination of women as well as their equality with men. It would not be surprising, therefore, that both proponents of gender equality and those of gender inequality would use this same text to substantiate their positions.

Genesis 3 explains how sin and punishment came into the world. Verse 6 shows how Eve was deceived into eating the forbidden fruit by the serpent and how she also gave the fruit to her husband who also ate it. For violating God's law both Adam and Eve were punished. While Adam was to work hard to get food, Eve was to suffer in childbearing and was to be subservient to Adam (Genesis 3:16). Adam was to rule over her. In the context of this passage, male dominance comes as a punishment for Eve's disobedience, for being the first deserter of the divine law. The Christian concept of the original sin emanates from this passage, which is often referred to as the account of the Fall. The text seems to suggest that prior to sinning in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were equals, but Eve lost her equal status because she was the first to be deceived by the serpent into violating God's law. Adam and Eve lost the comfort of the Garden and so had to work hard to survive. In this passage we see the disruption of the harmony that used to prevail prior to the coming of sin. Negative attitudes towards women are partly explicable in terms of this passage. The woman is depicted as the one through whom humanity lost comfort and an everlasting life.

The Pauline injunctions (Colosians 3:18; Ephesians 5:21-33) illustrate the way women's ministry and participation in worship became more limited over time in certain communities in the early church. Rakoczy (2005) observed that an early church father stridently declared that no woman was allowed to speak in church, teach, baptize or discharge any man's function, especially the duty of priest. "The divine law has shut women out from the ministerial office but they use force to get inside" (Rakoczy, 2005:230).

#### **2.4.1.1 *The Hierarchical Relationship***

In 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 a leadership hierarchy is depicted. God is the ultimate leader, followed by Christ, man and lastly woman at the bottom of the hierarchy (1

Corinthians 11: 3). Headship signifies authority over or rule over. Every man has a direct relationship with Christ whereas a woman's relationship with Christ is an indirect one. The man rules over the woman. Since women's relationship with Christ is not direct, women take orders from men who in turn take orders from Christ who in turn takes orders from God. Women submit to men while men submit to Christ who in turn submits to God.

1 Corinthians 11:7 refers to head covering during public worship. The verse says that it is a sign of dishonour for one's head if a man prophesies and prays with his head covered whereas the opposite is true for a woman. The verse has it that a woman ought to cover her head as she is the image and glory of man whereas the man is the image and glory of God. The woman according to this verse does not possess the image of God and as such she can only be an indirect image by virtue of her relationship with the man who is the image of God. The verse also seems to imply that men and women do not have the same value before God; a man, who is God's direct image, is superior to the woman who is not. 1 Corinthians 11:8 shows the rationale behind the creation of women. The woman, according to this verse, was created as an existential necessity for the man, to serve the man. The verse further indicates that the woman is for the man, she belongs to him but the man does not belong to the woman.

The implication of the passage seems to be that whereas a woman is man's possession, the man is not woman's possession. It can also be extrapolated that a man has a right to make decisions for a woman but the woman does not enjoy such rights. As such, the woman is to be at the service of the man. Since the woman belongs to the man, she is not supposed to have more than one husband whereas the man, who is not

of the woman, can have more than one wife. Being of the man, the woman has to dance according to the tune of the man. Also implicit in the verse is that since a woman is a man's possession, the man can dispose of her as he wishes. Since the woman has been created for the man (verse 9) she is there to gratify his needs without questioning the man on what he does.

1 Corinthians 11:11 which seems to contradict verse 8 and 9, shows the complementarity of the sexes. The verse seems to suggest that the man needs the woman as much as the woman needs the man. However, even within this framework of complementarity it would appear that the man has the upper hand and that while he can dispense with the woman, the woman cannot dispense of him because, as verses 8 and 9 suggest, she is his possession. In verse 11 Paul seems to move a bit away from his earlier position that the woman entirely belongs to the man. However, although it is a woman who gives birth to a man, it appears the gist of the passage is that man is superior to the woman who is his possession. Texts such as these are often used to justify the suppression of women in different settings, secular and religious (Monyatsi, 2008).

#### **2.4.1.2 *The Virtuous Wife***

In Proverbs 31:10-27, there is a description of a virtuous wife. She is one who does good all the days of her life (verse 12). She is hardworking and provides for her household (verse 19), is generous (verse 20) and because of her virtuosity her husband's status in the community is raised (verse 23). The passage indicates that the wife has to please her husband all the days of his life. The wife's joy seems to be deferred to the future (verse 25) while that of the husband should be experienced here and now. The wife is there to serve her husband, in anticipation of joy in the world to

come. The husband's joy is this-worldly in orientation whereas that of the wife is otherworldly. For the good wife, the needs of others, here represented by the husband and children, take precedence over her own needs.

Masenya (1997) stated that the wife's expected responsibility to protect the interests of her husband leads to the subordination of women if it is not met with reciprocity, that is, if the husband does not make an effort to protect the interests of his wife. Masenya (1997) viewed oppressive tendencies in the text, but she argued that there are also liberative elements, for example, taking full responsibility for the household which she views as empowering. However, she is quick to note that leaving women with no option but to be housewives might be dehumanizing.

Masenya (1997) also stated that while being industrious is virtuous, it soon becomes oppressive when expected of women alone. In Titus 2:4-5 young women are to be sober and love their husbands and be good wives who keep the home and are obedient to their husbands. The theme of female submissiveness surfaces here. Women are advised to keep the home, suggesting that the woman's place is the private, domestic sphere. Although the text is silent, it can be inferred that the place of men is the public sphere. The text indicates that when a wife obeys her husband she will be obeying God. On the other hand if she is disobedient, she will be disobeying God. In essence, the passage shows that homemaking/keeping and subservience are the key attributes of a good wife. By implication, preference for outdoor activities and disobedience to the husband shows that a woman is bad.

#### **2.4.1.3 *Ephesians 5:22-25: The Household Code***

The text is an instruction for wives to submit to their own husbands, that is, not to every man. Since a woman ought to submit to her husband in everything (verse 22



and 24), it is implied that she should not question him concerning what he does and says. The reason given for the wife's submission is that the husband is the head of the wife. The text is reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 11:3 where a hierarchy of power is given in which the man is the head of the woman. In this text, the relationship between husband and wife is analogous to that of Christ and the church. Just as the church is subservient to and dependent on Christ, the wife should submit to and depend on her husband in everything. According to verse 24, the wife's submission should be unconditional and unlimited. By implication, the verse suggests that the wife ought to do as the husband pleases regardless of whether it is right or wrong.

Furthermore, it can be extrapolated that the verse implies that the husband always does and commands what is right, that is, does not err, hence the need for the wife to be subservient to him in everything. Verse 25 exhorts husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Implicit here is Christ's sacrificial love. When verse 25 is read in the light of the preceding verses, the whole text (verse 22-25) seems to indicate that while the husband has to love his wife, the wife ought to respond by being submissive. What if the husband does not show love to his wife or, alternatively, what if the wife is not subservient enough to her husband? The text is silent on these matters but it can be inferred that these issues have a bearing on family relations, especially matrimonial harmony and domestic violence.

#### **2.4.1.4 Colossians 3:18-19**

These two verses consolidate Paul's earlier teaching on female submissiveness. Verse 18 suggests that the subordination of wives to their own husbands is an order that God himself has set. Failure to submit to one's husband implies failure to obey God who has predetermined that wives be subordinate. Verse 19 is an instruction for husbands

to love their wives which echoes Ephesians 5:25 but the verse goes further to instruct husbands not to be bitter against their wives. In this Colossian text submission of the wife to her husband should be paralleled by the husband's kind treatment of his wife. The text suggests what is normative in a Christian family- the wife submits to her husband who in turn treats her kindly, with gentleness. As in Ephesians 5:22-25, the text is not explicit on what course of action should be taken by either party in the event that the norm is not adhered to, that is, if the wife fails to submit and the husband treats her harshly.

#### **2.4.1.5     **Corinthians 14:33b-35: *The Silent Follower*****

The context of this text is the assembly of Christians where women have to be silent, only seen and not heard. That women should not speak in church implies that women cannot be teachers of the Christian faith. The further implication is that women should not hold ministerial positions in the church. Because the text silences women, it is prohibiting women's participation in Christian theology, that is, women are barred from interpreting and teaching the scriptures. The text suggests that if women fail to understand what has been taught during assembly and need further clarification they ought to ask their husbands at home. The implication is that such women ought to have Christian husbands who will clarify the Christian message to them in the event that they need further clarification.

The question of who will teach unmarried women and widows is not addressed by the text. The text implies the intellectual superiority of men. The text considers it shameful for women to speak in church. This text parallels 1 Timothy 2:11-15 which also bars women from speaking in church. If the current text is interpreted in the light of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, it can be inferred that women are barred from teaching because

they can be a source of heresy since a woman, Eve, was deceived and brought sin into the world. Maybe preventing women from preaching would be synonymous with preventing heresy in the church. While this might be a far-fetched extrapolation, it would not be surprising that some theological interpreters may take it that way and so advocate the exclusion of women from religious ministry.

According to Banana (1993:23), people seem to remember passages such as these where women are silenced. Texts that uplift women, for example, Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus learning, and great news of the resurrection being revealed to the faithful women, with Mary Magdalene being the first woman to see the risen Christ, are often ignored. Banana further contends that such texts are frequently quoted to “keep major church bodies from ordaining women into professional ministry.”

#### **2.4.1.6 1 Timothy 2:11-15**

Another passage that endorses the subordinate status of women both in the church and in the home can be found in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Verse 11 echoes 1 Corinthians 14:34 that also instructs women to be silent in church and learn in quietness and submissiveness. Women are prevented from being theological teachers and preachers because, according to verse 12, to do so is to usurp the authority of men. The silence and subordination of women is justified in verse 13 which says that Adam was created first. The argument seems to be that since Adam was created first he is the primary being while Eve is secondary; having been made out of Adam and so the secondary (woman) cannot teach the primary (man) who is presumably the embodiment of full humanity. Verse 14 further justifies the subjection of women and their silencing in the church by explaining that because the woman was deceived and transgressed the law, she should not teach. The verse appears to be saying that the woman cannot be a

teacher of the faith because she is a source of heresy by virtue of her vulnerability to deception.

Furthermore, the text seems to suggest that Adam was not deceived because he was intellectually strong and therefore not easily deceived, thus serving as a rightful teacher of the faith, unlike Eve, the woman, who was deceived. It is no wonder that texts such as this one can be used to bar women from taking on religious leadership and ministry. Verse 15 shows how childbearing, as an important role of a woman, is a source of her salvation, provided that it is coupled with faith, good works and holiness. The woman, according to this verse, can pin her hope of salvation on childbearing, implying that childless women cannot attain salvation. However, while women are thus provided with a window of salvation, they are not granted the opportunity to lead, according to the whole text.

#### **2.4.2 Marginalization of Women in Churches**

In one of Paul's letters (1 Tim 5:3-19) he indicates that the church had a distinct group of women called "widows". Ignatius of Antioch speaks of "virgins called widows" and the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus and the Didaskalia Apostolorum (Syria, c. 230), refers to widows as, "appointed for prayer". The Didaskalia makes many references to deaconesses. For instance, "for there are houses to which you [the bishop] cannot send a [male] deacon to the women, on account of the heathen, but you may send a deaconess" (Zagano cited in Rakoczy, 2005).

In the absence of the priest and deacon they could read the gospel and distribute the Eucharist (Ralphs, 1999). However, both the orders of widow and deaconess steadily declined because of the restrictions placed on women. The Council of Laodicea (c. 364) abolished the order of widow, and the order of deaconess was phased out in the

West by the Synod of Orleans (c. 533), and disappeared altogether by the ninth century in the East (Rakoczy, 2005).

#### ***2.4.2.1 Scriptural Evidence***

For this reason, data from the Old Testament is to be interpreted through the lens of the New Testament, and that data must be viewed as supportive, but not determinative of the doctrine and polity of the church. So with regard to the Old Testament there can be no question that many women were used powerfully by God. Miriam is described as a prophetess (Exod. 15:20 ff.), and there can be no question that women such as Ruth and Esther were greatly used of the Lord (Ruth 1:1 ff., Esther 1:1 ff.).

Again, with regard to what might be called “executive leadership” over the people of God, from Moses to Malachi, the pattern is consistent. It is males who occupy the role of authority over the assembly of believers. The patriarchs and the heads of the twelve tribes were all males (Genesis 31:53, 32:9; 35:22 ff.). Moses and the elders appointed under him were all males (Exodus 18:14 ff.). All of the judges of Israel were male with the exception of Deborah (Judges 1:1 ff, 2:16 ff., 4:4-5:15). The kings of Israel, from King David onward were all male (1 Samuel 16:13 ff., 2 Samuel 12:24; 1 Kings 1:17). All of the major and minor prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi were male, and the Messiah of whom they spoke would be a Son not a daughter (Isaiah 7:14).

### **2.5 The Doctrines and Practices of Orthodox and non-Orthodox Churches in relation to Abuse and Marginalization of Women**

Many Christian churches view the inferior role of women as part of a divinely ordained natural order (Suda, 1996). Walker (as cited in Monyatsi, 2008) argued that the missionaries espoused an ideology of female domesticity that laid stress on

women's reproductive and nurturing roles above autonomy and productivity. Traditional conservative religious groups may quote the Bible to support their position on the subordinate status of women and their roles as helpmate and mother (Takyi & Addai, 2002).

Churches including the Anglican Church, the Reformed Church, Methodist Church, the Baptist Convention and the Seventh Day Adventist Church follow a line of reasoning similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the ordination of priests and do not allow women's ordination. The Charismatic Churches include Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches.

Orthodoxy has remained exclusively ascetic and monastic. The Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox traditions, the Evangelical Movement; the Charismatic Movement, the African Initiated Churches and some large segments of conservative Protestantism still regard the ordination of women in ecclesiastical offices as being against the will of God (Behr-Sigel, Behr-Sigel & Ware, 2000; Katerini, Tertios, 1988). Joyce (2009) identified this perspective as widespread throughout the culture of the evangelical branch of the Christian Church.

### **2.5.1 Ordination of Women**

In the mainstream churches, especially the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making (Rugyendo, 2005). Ordination is a sacrament, an outward sign of an inner spiritual grace in the Catholic Church (Vorster, 1984). Phiri (1997) observed that with a few exceptions, African churches have resisted including women in leadership positions. The masculinity of God confirms a male ministry in the church.

The ordination of women has once again been a controversial issue in more recent years; while many Christian denominations have responded positively to modern views of gender equality, some traditionalists take a more conservative view and oppose the admission of women into the priesthood. For example, some Anglo-Catholics or Evangelicals, while theologically very different, may share opposition to female ordination. Evangelical Christians who place emphasis on the infallibility of the Bible base their opposition to women's ordination partly upon the writings of the Apostle Paul, such as Ephesians 5:23, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, which appears to demand male leadership in the Church (Bromiley, 2002).

Traditionalist Roman and Orthodox Catholics may allude to Jesus Christ's choice of disciples as evidence of his intention for an exclusively male Succession. The Catholic tradition, just as the conservative evangelical one, is characterized by male dominance (De Lange, 2006). The Catholic Church doctrine on the ordination of women, as expressed in the current canon law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is that: "Only a baptized man (In Latin, *vir*) validly receives sacred ordination." In so far as priestly and episcopal ordination are concerned, the Church teaches that this requirement is a matter of divine law, and thus doctrinal. The requirement that only males can receive ordination to the diaconate has not been promulgated as doctrinal by the Church's magisterium, though it is clearly at least a requirement according to canon law. Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) continued the church teaching regarding women's ordination as being "founded on the written Word of God, and from the beginning constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal Magisterium." The ordained minister, when celebrating the Eucharist does so in place of God. In the Roman Catholic Church, women are not equal to men in

status and therefore laws that seek to redress gender imbalances are likely to be resisted (Rugyendo, 2005).

Most Protestant churches in the early nineteenth century opposed female preaching on the grounds that it violated the Pauline injunction to “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law” (1 Corinthians 14:34-35, KJV). They also cited two other Pauline texts: “the head of the woman is the man” (1 Corinthians 11:3b, KJV), and “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:11-12, KJV). According to Clifford (2001) the Anglican community before the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century refused to consider female candidates as eligible for ordination to the priesthood, irrespective of their qualifications.

The Anglican Church has for centuries accepted three levels of ordained ministry: bishops, presbyters, deacons, in that order (Govinden, 1991). A bishop is chosen by an Elective Assembly of the diocese and he is responsible for appointing clergy – after due consultation with other advisers and parish representatives (Canon, 2001).

In African charismatic churches and ministries, women might operate as faith healers or leaders of prayer meetings, and they play leading roles in evangelical crusades and in the general organization of church activities (Marshall, cited in Newell, 2005). The acceptance of women’s ordination in African Independent Churches (AIC), as in other churches, may be attributed to a growing acceptance, in the larger secular culture, of women’s rights and freedoms (Ritchie, 2001). Ritchie further noted that there are a number of African Initiated Churches that have been founded by women and in this regard the leadership of the women concerned comes naturally.



## **2.6 The Implications of Women's Abuse through Church Doctrines and Practices**

Rakoczy (2005) defined patriarchy as an ideology that is a way of thinking, feeling and organizing human life that legally, politically, socially and religiously enforces male dominance and power. She argued that culture, society and religious institutions - including the Christian church - are all structured on this principle. Thus, to be human is to be male, and the female is considered an inferior type of being, 'a second class citizen.' Ackermann (1991) argued that as patriarchy knows no cultural bounds and appears to be found in most societies, it is patriarchy that describes the male-dominated world in which we live today. Patriarchy, however, manifests itself differently and is experienced differently at different times and in different locations.

Paul's letters were, and still are, interpreted by many as stating that women are to be subordinate to men (Charles, cited in Greyvenstein, 1996). According to Ruether (1989:31), Paul's metaphor that the head of a woman is her husband summed up the subjugated status of women. Chakkalakal (2007) argued that the misinterpretation of texts including 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:22-23, from the patristic era even to this day, has helped in the downgrading of women. She argues that Pauline texts have been interpreted out of context otherwise woman's equality with men in all that concerns human nature and dignity is implied in the biblical text (Chakkalakal, 2007). "The effects of patriarchy are found in the social, economic, political and religious inequality between men and women which is

maintained through language, myth, symbol and belief” (Penner, 2000). The symbolic representation of women in religious texts, myths, and stories affects women’s power, subjectivity, and identity (Chakkalakal, 2007; Davary, 2009). Jewett (1983) argued that no responsible theologian would say that the woman is a “kind of appendage” or lesser “helpmate.”

The so-called household code texts in the New Testament (including Ephesians 5:22-24 and Colossians 3:18-19) have sanctioned discourses of subordination that demand submission and obedience from women (Fiorenza, 1995b). The household codes reflect what Fiorenza calls the “ethos of kyriarchy” in that they are concerned with reinforcing hierarchical relationships in households, with the father, as head of the household, being the one to whom all others owe obedience and submission (Nienhuis, 2009:). 1 Timothy 2:11-15, according to Fiorenza (1995b), explicitly links the kyriarchal theology of submission with the teaching on women’s sinfulness. She thus sees woman’s sinfulness as justification for her subordinate status. Furthermore, Fiorenza (1995b) viewed 1 Timothy 2:11-15 alongside 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 as prescribing the silence of women and prohibiting women’s authority over men by claiming that not Adam but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. The religious reinforcement of patriarchal submission has been amplified by theologians throughout the centuries (Fiorenza, 1995b).

Fiorenza (1999), cited in Chakkalakal (2007) has consistently upheld that women “must be acknowledged as human and ecclesial subjects with equal rights and dignity rather than remain objects of kyriarchal theology and clerical governance”. This means that women should be treated with dignity in the church, realizing that they are also human like men. Furthermore, this implies that women should be given an

opportunity to interpret theology and make decisions in the church rather than to be consumers of a theology carved out of a male perspective.

Ruether (1985) and Thistlethwaite (1985) suggest that the basic intention of the Bible is teaching justice and freedom for the powerless. For the two feminists cited above, the only correct reading of the Bible is one in which men and women can share without prejudice the ministry of service in the church. The feminists base the argument on Jesus' inclusion of women in his ministry and his ministering to their distress. In this regard, they argue that the marginalization of women is unjustified. Similar sentiments are echoed by Chakkalakal (2007) who asserts that the criterion for ministry is not the biological factor of being male or female, or the social construction of gender; the deciding factor should be charisma of the individual for a particular ministry or service.

Daly and DiSalvo, as cited in Takyi and Addai (2002) suggested that religious values, emanating from interpretation of religious texts, help to sustain the existing gender relations as they provide the normative framework for the behaviour of the members. Religious views that proclaim the inferiority of women result in discrimination against women in society at large. Indeed, the religious convictions about the divine sanction of the inferiority of women breed a culture of disrespect, and even abuse. Feminist interpretation of the Bible suggests that feminists have no consensus on the value of the Bible for women. The lack of consensus owes to the contradictory nature of biblical texts themselves when it comes to issues of gender relations. One must defeat the Bible as patriarchal authority by using the Bible as liberator.”

Women's contributions often have been overshadowed by church doctrines and practices which discriminate against women in churches. “Religion strongly

reinforced the patriarchal culture,” and so ultimately upheld the system of slavery. “Proper duties” were generally defined as anything that did not require exercising authority over men or doing anything that might conflict with men's primary responsibility of providing leadership in the church (Vickers, 1986). “Women’s work” was expected to be done in silence; propriety prevented them from pushing for the right to speak in the church or to take leadership roles (DeBerg, 1990).

Restrictions against women reflect the limitations of the society rather than God's will. Moreover, proponents found support for women's expanded roles in the church as in Galatians 3, where Paul proclaimed one gospel for all and with all equal in His task. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

In Africa, feminists read the Bible to empower African women (Mbuyeyesango & Scholz, 2009). Although the Christian heritage of biblical, “prophetic denunciation of oppression has served Africa well, oppressive strands of the same Bible reinforce the traditional socio-cultural oppression of women” (Oduyoye 1995).

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Within the framework of Christianity, male dominance approach seems to emanate from the religious teaching that wives should submit to their husbands who are the household heads (Tracy, 2006:282; Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:5). Women are often treated as second-class citizens in society in general and in the family in particular (Ntlama, 2010; Nwankwo, 2003; Kethusegile et al., 2000). “Social position necessarily shapes experience and perspective” (Kesselman, McNair & Schniedewind, 2003). Although many approaches and methods can be utilised in

studying religion-related phenomena, this study was conducted within a framework that combined divergent approaches- the Phenomenological and the Feminist.

### **2.7.1 Phenomenology of Religion**

Phenomenology of religion is an approach by which an issue can be studied, but also provides for a method by which the issue can be studied. The phenomenological approach seeks total objectivity by suspending the “baggage of preconceived ideas” (Young, 2002) and the feminist approach calls for a “reflexivity that examines the perspective of the researcher and names this perspective in the research report” (Jones, 2002). The phenomenological approach was adopted because of the relevance of its key elements *epoche*, empathy and the descriptive element, which are central to the current study. The phenomenological approach allows participants to express their individual perceptions of their experiences of women’s abuse through church doctrines and practices.

#### **2.7.1.1 *Epoche***

Phenomenology employs the procedures of *epoche* to the study of diverse religious experiences (Young, 2002; Cox, 1996). Cox explains that *epoche* involves suspending (bracketing) beliefs and withholding judgments about the matter under study. *Epoche* is a tool for avoiding premature value judgments. Since the phenomenological approach allows suspension of all preconceived ideas in order to permit phenomena to speak for themselves (Young, 2002), it was found appropriate for this study. The employment of *epoche* minimised any preconceptions and assisted the researcher to gain new insights. *Epoche* is maintained throughout the research study.

### **2.7.1.2 Empathy**

After *epoché* the next step in the phenomenological approach, as described by Cox (1996), is the attitude of empathy. This involves “entering into the believing community which one is studying” (Cox 1996). In Religious Studies, the phenomenological approach that includes empathy is instrumental in understanding people in a wide variety of religious and social contexts and from the perspectives of the individuals concerned (Young, 2002). Empathy is based on the notion that the experience of the person is important if their actions are to be understood. This does not call for the researcher to believe what the participants believe, but to make an attempt to enter their world and see from their points of view in order to understand their actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Moon, Dillon & Sprenkle, 1990). Empathising with the abused women allowed for the gaining of some insights into their experiences.

### **2.7.1.3 Description**

The phenomenological approach is predominantly a method that provides good description of phenomena (Young, 2002; Cox 1996). The researcher attempts to describe as accurately as possible the feelings, attitudes and convictions of the participants (Cox 1996).

## **2.7.2 The Feminist Approach**

Feminist research explores realities and experiences of women (Townsend, 2008). The current study investigated women who were or had been victims of abuse through church doctrines and practices. There are diverse feminist perspectives which include Radical, Liberal and Marxist/Socialist perspectives (Moghadam, 2002). However, for the purpose of this thesis, the feminist perspective was based on the common

conviction that cuts across the various perspectives, that is, a commitment to investigating the experiences of women in society and to try to view the world from the perspective of women. A feminist perspective places women at the centre within their respective contexts (Sai, 2007; Hooks, 2000). Hence, women's experience of abuse is central to this investigation. The feminist approach afforded women a safe realm within which to tell their stories and in so doing validated and empowered them.

Since feminism is grounded in the reorientation of the study of religion through the inclusion of women's experiences in every part of religious and theological analysis (Mesatywa, 2009; Cooper-White, 2008; Moyo, 2004b; Hooks, 2000), this study 'breathes a feminist spirit' in that it has given voice to women by letting them describe and evaluate their own experiences of abuse from their own perspectives.

Feminism has challenged Biblical ideals of the subordinate, domesticated female, demanding the political and social equality of the sexes as a God-given right (Morgan, 1999). By treating women as subjects and not objects, this study reflects the influence of feminists such as Radford Ruether and Mercy Amba Oduyoye who insist that women were also created in the divine image and therefore warrant equal representation and recognition in every sphere of life.

The feminist perspective entails a critique of patriarchy (Hooks, 2000). In the 1970s, feminists spoke of patriarchy as "the master pattern in human history"; a system of operation where males dominated all aspects of life, that is, culture, the economy, communication, kinship and sexuality (Sai, 2007). Patriarchy is the institutionalization of men's power over women within economical, religious, social,

political and marital relations (Para-Mallan, 2010; Uchendu, 2008; Moyo, 2004b; Rotunda, Williamson & Penfold, 2004; Rakoczy, 2005; Hooks, 2000).

As described by Hooks (2000), patriarchy favours men at the expense of women since “males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females.” Seen from the context of the preceding conceptions of patriarchy, one would view patriarchy as a system characterised by male dominance and subordination of females. Because patriarchy is based on male dominance, it is hegemonic in nature, subjugating women and silencing them.

The Feminist Approach, regardless of orientation, is a challenge to existing theoretical perspectives by re-examining old materials and concepts in terms of gender and power relations (Miller, 2009; Cooper-White, 2008; Moghadam, 2002). Irrespective of what form it assumes, feminism is grounded in the realisation that society is constructed in ways that under privilege women (Nkealah, 2009; Ntarangwi, 2000). Viewed from a feminist perspective, patriarchy lays a fertile ground for the abuse of women (Partab, 2011; Myamba, 2009; Stahl, 2007; Tracy, 2007; McCloskey, Williams & Larsen 2005; Moyo, 2004b; Bowman, 2003; Battaglia, 2001; Hooks, 2000; Cooper-White, 1996; Hampson, 1990; Ruether, 1989).

Violence against women, in this case discrimination and abuse of women, through church doctrines and practices, is a matter of male power over women (Puhala, 2011; Myamba, 2009; Nkealah, 2009; Sai, 2007; Townsend, 2008; Rakoczy 2005; Tsanga 1999). The “control-over component” gives patriarchy a propensity to violence (Tracy, 2007). While women are also initiators of violence or abuse, gender parity is non-existent when it comes to violence (Ellison et al., 2007; Tracy, 2007). The point



is reiterated by Sisselman (2009) who acknowledges that men are also evidently victims of violence or abuse but “the most common victim and the most socially injured party is usually a woman.”

Many cultures sanction men’s right to control their wives’ behaviour with the effect that those women who are viewed as disobedient or challenging may be subjected to punishment (Hooks, 2000; Yigzaw, Berhane, Deyessa & Kaba, 2010). In view of men’s ‘monopoly of violence’, Maluleke and Nadar (2002) suggested that violence is a factor that is common to all women when they assert that “alongside Coca-Cola, Levi Jeans and hamburgers, nothing is more common, resilient and widespread in the cultures of the world than violence against women.” This study’s consideration of women as victims of violence in a patriarchal culture renders it feminist.

According to the Feminist theory, patriarchy is the ultimate cause, the “overarching construct which ultimately engenders violence against women” (Tracy, 2007; Dunaway, 2002). Seen from this perspective, domestic violence is at the heart of patriarchal relations of oppression. As Mesatywa (2009:33) puts it, “within the African context, patriarchy shapes the construction and perpetuation of African women’s oppression”. Violence against women epitomises male abuse of power and privilege (Nkealah, 2009; Sai, 2007; Rotunda et al., 2004; Kesselman, McNair, & Schniedewind, 2003). In the private sphere of the family, patriarchy asserts power through the control of women which may be social, economic, as well as shaming and blaming (Rakoczy, 2005; Ogundipe, 1993).

Feminism seeks to fight the domination and oppression of women by social patriarchal structures that promote male chauvinism. From a Feminist perspective,

violence against women is a critical tool in the maintenance of male hegemony; it is the means by which the patriarchal requirements of conformity and obedience are extended to women and enforced (Partab, 2011; Poon, 2011; Puhala, 2011; Sai, 2007; Rakoczy, 2005; Rotunda et al., 2004; Hooks, 2000; Rowan-Campbell, 1999).

Abusive men often explicitly or implicitly cite male headship and female submissiveness to justify their abuse, arguing that their wives are responsible for the abuse because they were not submissive (Ogland, 2011; Clowes et al., 2010; Myamba, 2009; Wendt, 2008; Partab, 2011). As Mwamwenda (1995) puts it, “beating of wives occurs because a husband feels that he is superior to the wife”. Since wives ought to be submissive in everything to their husbands, batterers feel permitted to mete out punishment to their wives for perceived misbehavior (Chirawu, 2006).

Considering that the misogynous treatment of women is rooted in culture and reinforced in theology and ministry, “adequate ministry on domestic violence requires a theological reconstruction in a Feminist vein” (Pellauer, 1983). The connection between Feminist theology as liberation theology and the alleviation of violence against women can be extrapolated from the preceding argument.

As suggested by Campbell and Wasco (2000), feminist research is premised on the understanding that women’s life stories are important and that women should be given the opportunity to tell their stories. Given that a Feminist methodology gives the researcher the flexibility to relate to female participants in subjective ways from their own perspective, the methodology empowered participants by giving them the opportunity to tell their stories.

All in all, the Feminist perspective on female subservience and patriarchy provided an appropriate framework for studying women's experiences of domestic violence. Using the feminist framework and capturing the essence of the experiences of abused Christian women formed the gist of this study. The feminist model is critical in explaining discrimination against women through church doctrines and practices which is at the heart of the present study.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

Most often than not, pastors and ministers of religion preach about equality on the premise that God sees man (Adam) and woman (Eve) as equal and a replica of each other. "Women and men are of equal value before God, both created in the image of one God, or else we declare Genesis 1:26 a lie" (Oduyoye, 1995:6). According to Claassens (2008:49), this Genesis text is a profound theological insight that has led feminist scholars to argue that the mystery of who God is includes the truth that both male and female may be used to image God.

Christian egalitarians respond by arguing that God is not gendered, and that males and females image God equally and without any differences (Groothuis, 1997). Christian feminists believe that God does not discriminate on the basis of biologically-determined characteristics such as sex and race (McPhillips, 1999). By implication and in principle, man and woman are all equal before God. God expects us to treat

everyone with equal respect without any discrimination. Nevertheless, according to some modern critiques, the Church's largely male hierarchy and refusal to ordain women implies "inferiority" of women. Schüssler-Fiorenza asserted that religion

played and still plays a huge role in the establishment and continuation of this inferior position of women in society (Vorster, 2004).

In practice, various doctrines and practices of the church contradict the principle of equality between man and woman both in church and the family. By social construct, women are never to equal men with regard to religious tenets. The researcher is aware of such discriminatory doctrines and practices which violate or abuse women's rights in churches. To address this inhuman treatment on women in the church, all stakeholders including leaders of churches should make the church and community as friendly to women so as to guarantee the rights of women. Church leaders should avoid the discriminatory use of power through the ambit of church doctrines and practices in demonizing women. Institutions in the Church which deprive women of their dignity and freedom should change this socio-politico, cultural but religious construct.

## **2.9 Summary of Review of Related Literature**

Culturally, the Biblical world reflects male dominance. The Bible is clear and consistent in favoring male leadership of the people of God. There are Biblical passages that have been used for centuries to limit the roles of women in the church. The major issues of discrimination against women through church doctrines and practices include among others, the ordination of women as priests, male dominance in Christian marriage, recognition of equal spiritual and moral abilities, reproductive rights, and the search for a feminine or gender-transcendent divine (Daggers, 2001); McIntosh, 2007; Polinska, 2004). But if these are taken as universal prohibitions, in every case they directly contradict other passages that emphasize women in every aspect of the church.

The societies of both the Old and New Testaments affirmed male leadership in the community of faith and in the public arena. However, male dominance in the culture of religion did not preclude the active and meaningful role of women in worship and ministry. The Scripture does not permit women to preach or teach in the corporate gathering of the local assembly, to hold authoritative leadership roles in the church (for example, Pastor or elder), or in any other way to exercise authority over men. The Scripture permits women to pray or prophesy within biblical guidelines and with a proper attitude of submission (1 Corinthians 11:3-4; Acts 21:9), to witness to women or men in public, to pray with believers or non-believers in a non-leadership role, and to teach children and other women (Titus 2:3-4; 1 Timothy 5:16).

The modern Church hierarchy has described the male-only priesthood doctrine variously as “infallible,” “immutable,” “unchangeable,” and “definitive” as in “irreformable,” (LadilasOrsy, 2001). While women could publicly pray and prophesy in church (1 Cor. 11:1–16), they could not teach or have authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:11–14), since these were two essential functions of the clergy. The same type of leadership model prevails in the New Testament.

The predominant paradigm in the Old Testament with regard to executive leadership over the people of God is that of male leadership. The patriarchs and the heads of the twelve tribes were all males (Genesis 31:53, 32:9; 35:22 ff.). Moses and the elders appointed under him were all males (Exodus 18:14 ff.). All of the judges of Israel were male with the exception of Deborah (Judges 1:1 ff, 2:16 ff., 4:4-5:15). The kings of Israel, from King David onward were all male (1 Samuel 16:13 ff., 2 Samuel 12:24; 1 Kings 1:17). All of the major and minor prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi

were male, and the Messiah of whom they spoke would be a Son not a daughter (Isaiah 7:14).

Again, the promised Messiah was a male (Matthew 1:18 ff; Luke 2:1 ff.) and the chief witness to him, John the Baptist, was as well (Mark 1:1 ff; Luke 3:1 ff.). When Jesus began his public ministry he chose the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:2 ff., Luke 6:13 ff.), all male and when Judas failed, candidates for his replacement were all males as well (Acts 1:23-26). When it pleased God to reveal himself through an extraordinary revelation and empower another apostle, it proved to be Paul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1 ff., Galatians 1:15 ff.).

Galatians 3:28 says that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but that we are all one in the Lord. No doubt the great leveling effect of God's salvation entailed social implications, but the extent, to which it affected the leadership structure of the church, if at all, is unclear. The New Testament is strangely silent when it comes to explicitly naming pastors and leaders in the church. That is, early church leaders such as James, Peter, Paul and John write to congregations without mentioning the names of the persons who were actually pastoring the individual churches they addressed. The lack of specificity here has led some to argue that some of the leading pastors of the early church were women. Persons such as Lydia (Acts 16:14), Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18, 26), Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11 ff.), and especially Phoebe are cited as proof (Rom 16:1) of female leadership in the church.

But it should be noted that having a church meet in one's house (as was most likely the case with Lydia, Priscilla, and Chloe) is not the same thing as being the leader of the church in that house.

Jesus affirms a status of women which supersedes that of current thought. No biblical overview of ordination events would be complete without including Timothy. Both of Paul's epistles to his son-in-the-Lord refer to this event (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6). From the evidence of Romans 16.7 there seems to be little doubt that even this most significant office in earliest Christianity was open to women.

In Christ the Lord, the Church indicates and strives to be the first to embark upon the path of the human person and she invites all people to recognize in everyone — near and far, known and unknown, and above all in the poor and the suffering — a brother or sister “for whom Christ died” (1 Corinthians 8:11; Romans 14:15). The Bible, certainly more than other cultures and religions, seems to move the church toward complete equality of all who are in Christ. Although only four major principles regarding women in the church have been discussed above, it may be helpful to summarize more extensively several key points made in this treatment of the pertinent Biblical texts:

1. In sharp contrast to the deprecation and suppression of women in ancient cultures, and especially in Rabbinic Judaism, the Gospel record affirms their value and dignity. Jesus clearly shows His regard for women, created equally with men in the image and likeness of God.

2. In the order of creation, God has placed woman in a position subordinate to man. This relationship of subordination, however, is radically different from “secular” interpretations of it. The Scriptural concept of subordination is a matter of function between two persons of equal worth and not a matter of inferiority/superiority. The subordination of woman to man is not a dominative subordination. The subordination of wife to husband is analogous to the relationship which exists between Christ and the church.

3. The relationship between man and woman can also be defined as a headship structure of God-Christ-man-woman, each member of the order super-ordinated to the succeeding member. This is a theological and not merely a sociological relationship.

4. The order of redemption, while affirming that men and women are one in Christ and joint heirs of the grace of life, does not abolish the order established at the time of creation. The distortion of the order of creation brought about by the fall has been remedied by Christ's redemption, but it has not yet become fully manifest in the redeemed. This will happen only in heaven. Therefore, far from annulling the order of creation, the order of redemption sanctifies it. The two orders are held together coordinately within God's purposes. The Lordship of Christ spans both creation and redemption.

5. 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 speak of women's roles in public worship service. The main application of these passages in the contemporary church is that women are not to exercise those functions in the local congregation which would involve them in the exercise of authority inherent in the authoritative public teaching office (that is, the office of pastor).

6. Men who find themselves in positions of leadership and authority must assume the attitude which Jesus Himself requires: "...rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the one who serves" (Luke 22:26). Christian leadership and service must model Him.

7. Women have all of the God-given rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the priesthood of all believers that men do. God's people are called priests not to confer status but to commission all of them to declare His deeds of salvation. All Christians have been given the responsibility to live their Christian faith in their several callings,



including the responsibility to profess and share the Christian faith and to judge all doctrine.

8. The inspired writers of Scripture do not discuss the implications of the order of creation for life in the civil estate. In Lutheran theology there is general agreement on the necessity of distinguishing carefully between that which happens in the civil sphere and that which takes place in the spiritual sphere

These are the primary texts used to support a woman's right to preach. We will consider each text as it appears in the various arguments below:

- a. Joel 2:28-29 – “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”
- b. Acts 2:17-18 – “And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even upon My bond slaves, both man and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.”
- c. Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- d. 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 – “Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved.”

- e. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 – “Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.”
- f. Timothy 2:11-15 – “Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

God can use weak and faltering messengers like Moses (Exodus 4:10-16), as well as eloquent messengers like Apollos (Acts 18:24). The Holy Spirit's power and blessing are the keys to truly effective preaching, not superior communication skills.

Sobo and Bell (2001) argued that the status of celibate women is related to the range of roles and options that are available to women outside the religious sphere

As a result of their reconciliation in Christ and in the employment of their gifts, believers have many obligations in their relationships with each other. These obligations are the following (Kampen & Kok, 1957).

- a. The congregation should love one another (John 4:12; Hebrews 3:1; Romans 12:10 ff; Matthew 5:43; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:9).

- b. The congregation should serve one another (John 13:14; Thessalonians 3:8; 1 Peter 4:10; Galatians 6:10; Mark 10:44; Romans 12:7, 8, 13; Corinthians 12:25; Mark 10:43).
- c. The congregation should pray for one another (James 5:16; 1 John 5:16; Romans 15:30).
- d. The congregation should attend to one another (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 12:14, 15; Jude 22, 23; Galatians 6:1; Act 20:28).
- e. The congregation should enter into the spirit of one another (Romans 12:15, 13:8; Galatians 6:2; Hebrew 13:3; 2 Timothy 1:8; 2 Corinthians 7:3; Matthew 25:31-36; 1 Corinthians 12:360).
- f. The congregation should live in peace (Romans 12:18; 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:13; Colossians 3:15).
- g. The congregation should persevere in the communion of the saints (Acts 1:14; 2:42, 46; Romans 15:6; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 1:3).
- h. The congregation should bear with and forgive one another (Romans 12:14, 19; Galatians 6:2).
- i. The congregation must preserve its unity (Colossians 3:15; 1 Corinthians 12:25).
- j. The congregation should admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16; Thessalonians 4:18).
- k. The congregation should live in harmony with one another (1 Peter 3:8; Romans 12:10).
- l. The congregation should have compassion for one another (Romans 12:15; Hebrew 13:3).

- m. The congregation should speak truthfully to one another (Ef 4:25).
- n. The congregation should join with others in following the example of the apostle (Fl 3:17).
- o. The congregation should accept one another (Romans 14:1; 15:7).



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter gives insight into the methodology adopted for the study. It includes the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedures, ethical consideration, presentation and analysis of the results.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design using the phenomenological approach. The mixed-methods sequential explanatory design consists of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003). It implies collecting and analyzing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study. The sequential explanatory design is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell et al., 2003).

A phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation (Leedy, 2005). Leedy explained that phenomenological study tries to answer question to gain a better understanding of the experiences of others. A phenomenological study is "one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (Patton, 2002). He explained that "phenomenology assumes that there is an essence or essences to shared experience." Patton (2002) indicated that "what various phenomenological approaches share in common is a focus on exploring

how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon.” Traditional phenomenology requires that the researcher separate herself/himself from the phenomenon in order to be able to objectively analyze and understand the experience of the participants. The phenomenological approach therefore assisted the researcher in conducting interviews and conversations to solicit people perceptions, feelings, and sufficient views on the issue.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The target population for this study consisted of the clergy and laity in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. The population for this study was infinite or indefinite since there was no data on membership of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. However, the accessible population for the study was estimated to be 1600 members from sixteen (16) churches which comprised four (4) each of orthodox, pentecostal, charismatic and other churches.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The multi-stage sampling approach using convenience, stratified, simple random and quota sampling techniques were used to sample 100 study participants for the study. The Municipality (Mampong) was conveniently selected for the study due to the fact that the researcher is a reverend minister in the municipality. This was done to ensure easy accessibility with respect to information, reduce time and to get as many respondents as required. Four churches were randomly sampled from each category of

orthodox, pentecostal, charismatic and other churches in the municipality. A sample of 100 church members comprising the clergy and laity were selected via proportional stratified and simple random sampling methods for the study. Stratified sampling is a probability sampling technique in which each stratum is properly represented so that the sample drawn from it is proportionate to the stratum's share of the population; it ensures higher statistical efficiency than a simple random sample.

The Kish (1965) equation was used to determine the sample size for each category of church members. Assaf, Bubshait, Atiyah and Al-Shahri (2001), among others, used this equation:

$$n = n' / [1 + (n' / N)]$$

where,  $n'$  is the sample size from infinite population (church members), which can be calculated from this formula:  $[n' = S^2/V^2]$

The definitions of all variable can be defined as the following:

$n$  = sample size from finite population.

$N$  = total estimated population (1600).

$V$  = standard error of sample population equal to 0.05 for the confidence level 95 per cent,  $t = 1.96$ .

$S^2$  = standard error variance of population elements,  $S^2 = P (1 - P)$ ; maximum at  $P = 0.5$ .

The sample size for the population of church members can be calculated from the previous equations as follows:

$$n' = S^2 V^2 = (0.5)^2 / (0.05)^2 = 100$$

$$n(\text{church members}) = \left[ \frac{100}{1 + \frac{100}{1600}} \right] = 94.1 = 94 \text{ church members (the clergy and laity).}$$

### **Contingency**

The sample was further increased by 6% to account for contingency such as non-response. That is  $6\% \times 94 = 5.6 = \sim 6$ .

$$n + 6\% = 94 + 6 = 100$$

The proportional (proportionate) quota sampling technique was then used to select between 6 and 7 study participants from each sub-group or category of churches as follows: Presbyterian Church (7%); Catholic Church (7%); Anglican Church (7%); Methodist Church (7%); Pentecost Church(6%); Deeper Life Church(6%); Damascus Church (6%); Holy Spirit Fire Church (6%); Praise Congregation Church (6%); African Faith Church(6%); Brotherhood Church(6%); Baptist Convention Church (6%); Apostolic Church (6%); Episcopal Church (6%); and Gethsemane Church (6%). Figure 2 below presents the sample of churches.

In all, 16 clergies including bishops, church priests, prophets/prophetess as well as 32 apostles, deacons and church elders were purposively selected for the study. This comprised 1 clergy and 2 church elders from each church. They were purposively chosen because they were ‘information rich.’ Also, 52 other church members (laity) were conveniently and randomly selected for the study. In each of the churches, 13 church members who attended church service on Sunday were conveniently contacted at their respective churches after closure of church. The researcher requested them to pick pieces of papers at random via the lottery method. “Yes” and “No” responses were written on the 13 pieces of papers. The church members who picked the pieces of papers which contained “Yes” were enrolled in the study. Thus, a maximum of 7 Orthodox Church members and minimum of 6 pentecostal and charismatic church members were sampled from each of the 16 churches. The choice of random selection ensured that each church member had an equal or fair chance of being selected which



is required for generalisation of the results to the target population (Creswell, 2009). Random sampling method also ensured that, selection bias was avoided. The researcher also sampled a wide range or diversity of church members by gender, age group, literacy level and length of membership in church, civil or marital status to ensure representativeness of the study subjects.

Also, the choice of 100 study participants is based on Krecjje and Morgan's (1970) assertion that at least 10% of a study population gives a proportional representation. The justification of the sample size is further buttressed by the assertion that "a sample size of 30 is held by many to be the minimum number of cases if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008, p.101).

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

Two instruments were used for data collection. These were questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide. This was done to ensure triangulation of data collated as noted by (Punch, 2005) and cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data (Berg, 2007).

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire involved a Likert-scale type built on a five-point scale rating ranging from: strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Indifferent (ID), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The items were built to reflect on the key themes raised in the research questions.

The questionnaire was designed into five main sections labelled as A, B, C, D and E. Section 'A' had items on the bio data of the respondents. Section 'B' contained issues

on human rights violations or abuses of female members (women and girls) in the churches. Section 'C' focused on church practices and doctrines that militate against the rights of female members. Section 'D' covered experiences on abuse of females in churches or Christendom through church practices and doctrine. Section 'E' also focused on ways to improve women's rights in Ghanaian Christendom. In all, the questionnaire had 68 close-ended items or questions.

### **3.5.2 Interview Schedule**

A semi-structured interview guide was designed for 6 purposively selected respondents who had some experiences on discrimination against females in churches through doctrines and practices. The interviewees comprised 3 males and 3 females who are clergies, deacon/deaconesses, church elders and laity. The interview items were designed to cover the key themes raised in the research questions with regard to the experience of the participants.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

To ensure content validity of the instruments, two questionnaires were given to colleagues from other districts and the supervisor for scrutiny as well as expert judgment before it was pilot-tested on non-participant pastors and church members in the Sekyere Central Municipality. They were also interviewed. Suggestions received from these colleagues and the supervisor helped the researcher to refine and shape the contents of the instruments to make them more valid and reliable for the study.

To ensure reliability of the research instruments, they were pre-tested on 2 pastors and 2 laity who were randomly selected from 2 churches in the Sekyere Central Municipality. In the following week, the test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The same 4 people were asked to answer the same

questions. The two results were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. A reliability coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.76 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable for use in the actual study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

Data was collected through the administration of questionnaire and face-to-face interview and using English languages and Asante Twi. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher. This was normally carried out during meetings with the pastors, and church members. To obtain appropriate responses, the instructions and items were read and explained in Asante Twi to respondents who could not read and write. The respondents who are literates answered the questionnaire. This was done to ensure high coverage, response and return rates.

The researcher personally conducted the face-to-face interview. Prior to the day of interview, the researcher visited each of the respondents to book appointment with them. On the appointed day, the researcher called on the respondents to conduct the interview. The researcher first of all adhered to the ethical considerations and made sure the respondents were prepared before proceeding with the interview. The researcher asked the questions one after the other, giving the respondents enough time to react to each question. Through the interview or guided conversation, the researcher was afforded an opportunity to hear the participants' stories thereby capturing the deep meanings of their lived experiences. The interview was audio-taped with the consent of the participants, and it was later transcribed.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of Human Rights of the University of Education, Winneba. This was presented to the various churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. This was used to seek approval and consent to conduct the research.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The quantitative data which were responses to each set of items in the questionnaire were coded, and edited. This was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0. It was used to generate descriptive statistics. This was presented in tables as frequency counts and percentages. These were generated according to each research question raised. The interpretation of the descriptive statistics made it possible to make appropriate inferences. The researcher also used the SPSS to run chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test to analyse the link or association between independent variables (church doctrines, church practices and demographic variables) on the dependent variable (human rights violations or abuses of females (women) in Christendom. This was done at a significance level of  $p < .05$  at a Confidence Interval (C.I) of 95%.

The qualitative (interview) data was analyzed through thematic analysis. Specifically, the identifiable themes that emerged from the interview responses were classified under each research question. This was done by playing the recorded tapes for each interviewee. The major themes and analysis of contents were summarized. Again, direct quotations were used to support or clarify the qualitative data when necessary. The interpretation of the qualitative data made it possible to make appropriate inferences.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study investigated discrimination against women/abuse of women in churches through doctrines and practices by mainline (orthodox) and non-orthodox (Pentecostal Charismatics and African independent) churches, in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. This chapter presents the results of this study. Section 'A' focuses on the bio data of the respondents. Section 'B' covers analyses of responses on human rights of female members (women and girls) in the church. Section 'C' contains findings on church practices and doctrines that militate against the rights of female members whereas section 'D' presents findings on experiences of abuse of females in churches or Christendom through church practices and doctrine. Section 'E' also looks at ways to improve women's rights in the study area.

Human right for women in churches is the dependent (outcome) variable in this study; while the presumed causes of change (independent variables) include church doctrines, practices, as well as socio-demographic variables. The socio-demographic variables may likely confound the results.

#### 4.2 Bio Data of Respondents

Table 1 (p.77) gives information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The demographic variables in this study included gender, age distribution, literacy background, length (in years) of church membership, position in the church and marital status.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 100)**

Variable	Variable Category	Freq.	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	16	16.0
	Female	84	84.0
Age group (yrs.)	15-19	10	10.0
	20-24	30	30.0
	25-29	13	13.0
	30-34	3	3.0
	35-39	12	12.0
	40-44	8	8.0
	45-49	6	6.0
	50 & above	18	18.0
Literacy background	Literate	67	67.0
	Semi-literate	23	23.0
	Illiterate	11	11.0
Length (in yrs.) of church Membership	1-10	8	8.0
	11-20	29	29.0
	21-30	16	16.0
	31 & above	47	47.0
Position in the church	Clergy	16	16.0
	Deacon/Deaconess/Elder	31	31.0
	Laity/church member only	53	53.0
Marital status	Married	51	51.0
	Single, not married	32	32.0
	Single (separated, divorced, widowed)	17	17.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

The data in Table 1 indicates that 16 (16.0%) respondents were males whilst, 84 (84.0%) of them were females. Ten (10.0%) respondents were between the ages of 15 and 19 years while 30 (30.0%) of them were 20-24 years of age. Similarly, 13 (13.0%) respondents were within 25-29 years of age while 3 (3.0%) of them were between the ages of 30 and 34 years. Twelve (12) which represents 12.0% of the respondents were between 35 and 39 years of age. Eight (8.0%) respondents were within the age group of 40-44 years; 6 (6.0%) of them were between 45 and 49 years while, 18 (18.0%) of them were 50 years old and above. The result shows that 67

(67.0%) of the respondents were literates or functional literates (they could read and write) because they either had formal or non-formal education. On the other hand, 11(11.0%) of them were illiterates. They virtually had no formal or non-formal education. On the other hand, 23 (23.0%) of them were semi-literates. That is, they either had little formal or non-formal education.

Eight (8.0%) respondents had been members of their respective churches for not more than 10 years. Twenty-nine (29.0%) respondents were members of their respective churches for 11 to 20 years. Also, 16 (16.0%) had spent 21 to 30 years of membership in a church. More so, 47 (47.0%) respondents had spent 31 years or more of being a member in a church. A considerable number (53.0%) of the respondents were just ordinary members (laity) of their respective churches. This was followed by respondents who served as deacon/deaconesses and elders of the churches. The least, which was (16.0%) of the respondents were clergies or priests. This result has implications for priesthood vocation. From the table, 51 (51.0%) respondents were married (intact family). Thirty-two (32.0%) respondents were single while, 17 (17.0%) of them were separated, divorcees or widows/widowers. It could be deduced from the result that over 50.0% of the respondents were married. This implies that they are matured.

Generally, more females than males were enrolled in the study because the focus of the study was on females. This result is skewed towards females, and this suggests that more females than males attend churches. It could be concluded that a significant number (82.0%) of members of the churches were youth or young people. The data revealed that majority (70.0%) of the church population are literates. Also, 92.0% of

the respondents relatively had knowledge and experiences of church doctrines and practices which discriminate against female church members and violate their rights.

### 4.3. Analysis of Research Questions

#### 4.3.1. Research Question 1: What is the state of human rights for women in Churches within Ashanti Mampong Municipality?

To find answer to this research question, responses to items 8 to 18 in the questionnaire, and item 1 in the interview schedule were analyzed. The qualitative (interview) responses and the quantitative data are presented below:

**Table 2. The State of Human Rights of Female Members of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality (n =100)**

Statement		Responses				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
Female members in the church are more represented in leadership positions than male counterparts	Freq	6	12	4	60	18
	%	4.0	12.0	6.0	60.0	18.0
Church doctrines and practices ensure that leadership positions are occupied by women in the Church	Freq	9	12	0	57	22
	%	9.0	12.0	0.0	57.0	22.0
Church doctrines ensure a gender inclusive culture	Freq	3	9	0	61	27
	%	3.0	9.0	0.0	61.0	27.0
Gender gap exists in the leadership of the Church	Freq	45	29	2	15	9
	%	45.0	29.0	2.0	15.0	9.0
Female members have the final word in the Church about decisions involving leadership, power, finance	Freq	9	6	1	36	48
	%	9.0	6.0	1.0	36.0	48.0
Male dominance exists in the Church	Freq	43	30	0	15	12
	%	43.0	30.0	0.0	15.0	12.0
Women face exclusion from leadership positions in the Church	Freq	16	15	12	27	30
	%	16.0	15.0	12.0	27.0	30.0
Women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making	Freq	25	37	3	22	13
	%	25.0	37.0	3.0	22.0	13.0
Female members (women and girls) in churches have equal rights to leadership positions	Freq	16	14	2	40	28
	%	16.0	14.0	2.0	40.0	28.0
Female members in churches have equal rights to ordination to priesthood	Freq	9	16	3	34	38
	%	9.0	16.0	3.0	34.0	38.0
Female members in churches have equal rights to Eucharist/Communion ministrations	Freq	6	12	1	39	42
	%	6.0	12.0	1.0	39.0	42.0



Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

**SA** = Strongly Agree; **A** = Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree.

Eighteen (18.0%) respondents agreed that female members in the church are more represented in leadership positions than male counterparts. Conversely, 78 (78.0%) of them disagreed while 4 (4.0%) respondents were indecisive. Twenty-one (21.0%) respondents asserted while 79 (79.0%) of them denied that Church doctrines and practices ensure that leadership positions are occupied by women in the Church. Twelve (12.0%) respondents confirmed that Church doctrines ensure a gender inclusive culture. In contrast, 8 (8.0%) respondents disclaimed. Seventy-four (74.0%) respondents admitted while 24 (24.0%) of them denied that gender gap exists in the leadership of the Church. Only 2 (2.0%) respondents were not sure.

Also, 15 (15.0%) respondents consented whilst 84 (84.0%) disagreed that women face exclusion from leadership positions in the Church. Only 1 (1.0%) respondent was irresolute. More so, 73 (73.0%) respondents agreed whereas 27 (27.0%) of them denied that women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making in the Church.

Thirty-one (31.0%) respondents concurred that women face exclusion from leadership positions in the Church. Fifty-seven (57.0%) respondents objected to this assertion while, 12 (12.0%) of them were indecisive. Further to that, 62 (62.0%) respondents confessed while 35 (35.0%) of them denied that women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making. Only 3 (3.0%) respondents were irresolute.

Thirty (30.0%) respondents agreed while 68 (68.0%) of them disagreed that female members (women and girls) in churches have equal rights to leadership positions.

Two (2.0%) of the respondents were not decisive. Twenty-five (25.0%) respondents confirmed that female members in churches have equal rights to ordination to priesthood. Conversely, 72 (72.0%) circuit respondents disagreed to this assertion whereas 3 (3.0%) of them were indecisive. Furthermore, 18 (18.0%) respondents admitted while 81 (46.2%) of them disagreed that female members in churches have equal rights to Eucharist/Communion Service ministrations. Only 1 (1.0%) circuit respondent was uncertain.

In response to the interview question, some of the widows gave several opinions on lived experiences. The transcribed responses and direct quotations from the interviews are below:

*Yes, we (women) in the Anglican Church suffer discrimination, and loss of dignity. In fact we don't have the rights to ordination into priesthood. I don't have the Biblical mandate to serve mass, carry out baptism and confirmation of the laity even though I'm an elder and catechist of this church. Does it mean that the so called (sacred) functions are reserved for priests, catechists and elders who are men only in the church? Indeed, we have unequal rights. (Elder & Catechist; 02/03/15)*

*In this assembly of believers, the males occupy most of the "executive leadership" positions.. I'm sad to say that women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making in the Church. I think equal rights is an illusion in the church. (Deaconess; 09/03/15)*

*When I was a teen, I had the intention to become a priest in the Catholic Church. So, I served as a "mass girl". Later, I got to know that females cannot be ordained as priests in the Church. Indeed, this is an act of denial and discrimination. So, no right! (Laity 1; 16/03/15)*

*We are not getting the same equality treatment even though we form the majority in churches. (Laity 2; 23/03/15)*

*Our doctrines do not favour the ordination of women into ecclesiastical offices. That is a culture of the Anglican Church. It is sacred and can't be changed. Frankly, female members in the church do not have equal rights to perform, among others, some sacred rites of baptism, solemnization of marriage. (Priest 1; 30/03/15)*

*God has given me the spiritual grace to be a female priest. This is a God-given right. So, being a priest should be a divine call, and not a pattern of culture or tradition. This church is African; we are not conventional, conservative and conformist. Each member of this church has the religious freedom. (Priest 1; 06/04/15)*

The result of this study shows that female members (women and girls) of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality have unequal rights. The abuse of females in Christendom is tantamount to violence against them. This is evident in the imbalance or uneven distribution of power and authority, and disproportionate representation of females in the hierarchy of Church leadership positions. Women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making in the Church. Female members in churches do not have equal rights to Eucharist/Communion Service ministrations. Generally, there is power imbalance, and male dominance in Christendom. A significant number (62% to 81%) of the respondents admitted these claims. This finding is in consonance with Ariarajah (2002) who indicated that the World Council of Churches (WCC) has acknowledged the existence of violence in, and in the name of, religion. Other studies by Sharp (2011), Gonzalez (2010), Nason-Clark (2009), Sisselman (2009), Sheikh (2008), Wendt (2008), and Tracy (2006) echoed that the violence experienced by religious women is often compounded by the fact that religion teaches the virtue of silence.

Tracy (2007) and Dunaway (2002), Feminist theorists, also cited patriarchy as the ultimate cause, the “overarching construct which ultimately engenders violence against women”. Para-Mallan(2010), Nkealah (2009), Uchendu (2008), Sai (2007), Rakoczy (2005), Moyo (2004b), Rotunda et al. (2004), Kesselman, McNair and Schniedewind (2003), and Hooks (2000) observed that patriarchy is the institutionalization of men’s power over women within economical, religious, social,

political and marital relations, and that violence against women epitomises male abuse of power and privilege. Penner (2000) pointed out that the effects of patriarchy are found in the social, economic, political and religious inequality between men and women which is maintained through language, myth, symbol and belief. This result is in tandem with Rugyendo (2005) who cited that women are not equal to men in status in the Roman Catholic Church. This finding, however, contradicts Piper and Grudem (1991) as well as modern complementarians who argued that Genesis 1:26-28 and Galatians 3:28 establish the full equality of males and females in terms of status, worth and dignity.

#### 4.3.2. Research Question 2

#### **How do churches promote human rights concerns of women members within the municipality?**

To find answer to this research question, responses to items 19 to 42 in the questionnaire were tallied and presented in a Tables 3, 4 and 5 below as frequency counts and percentages.

**Table 3. Church Doctrines in relation to Promotion/Violation of Human Rights of Female Members of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality (n =100)**

Statement		Responses				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
bar women from speaking in public	Freq	12	12	4	42	30
	%	12.0	1.0	4.0	42.0	30.0
prevent the ordination of women	Freq	27	30	1	32	10
	%	27.0	30.0	1.0	32.0	10.0
bar female members from discharging priestly functions such as baptism, distribution of the Eucharist (Communion)	Freq	36	24	2	27	11
	%	36.0	24.0	2.0	27.0	11.0
prevent female members/women from being theological teachers interpreting and teaching the Bible scriptures	Freq	15	12	1	51	21
	%	15.0	12.0	1.0	51.0	21.0
and canon laws of the Church justify that female laypeople are inferior to clergymen	Freq	12	8	5	33	42
	%	12.0	8.0	5.0	33.0	42.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

**SA** = Strongly Agree; **A** = Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree.

Table 8 shows that 24 (24.0%) respondents asserted that church doctrines bar women from speaking in public. However, 72 (72.0%) of them disagreed to this claim while 4 (4.0%) of them were in doubt. Also, 57 (57.0%) respondents agreed that church doctrines prevent the ordination of women. Nevertheless, 72 (72.0%) respondents disagreed to this assertion whilst, 1 (1.0%) of them was indecisive. Similarly, 60 (60.0%) respondents concurred that church doctrines bar female members from discharging priestly functions such as baptism, distribution of the Eucharist (Communion). In contrast, 38 (38.0%) of them objected to this statement while 2 (30.8%) of them were irresolute.

Twenty-seven (27.0%) respondents consented whereas, 72 (72.0%) of them disclaimed that church doctrines prevent female members/women from being theological teachers interpreting and teaching the Bible scriptures. One (1.0%) of them was undecided. Also, 20 (20.0%) respondents admitted that church doctrines and canon laws of the Church justify that female laypeople are inferior to clergymen. Conversely, 75 (75.0%) of them disagreed while 5 (5.0%) of them were indecisive.

**Table 4. Church Practices in relation to Promotion/Violation of Human Rights of Female Members of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality**

Statement		Responses				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
The Church hierarchy.....						
makes fun of women or put them down in front of other Church members through written and spoken language in formal doctrine and informal interactions	Freq	12	30	1	39	12
	%	12.0	30.0	1.0	39.0	12.0
uses doctrines to tease women or uses sarcasm as a way to put them down or degrade them	Freq	10	34	3	41	12
	%	10.0	34.0	3.0	41.0	12.0
often uses homily, interpersonal interactions, doctrine and Canon Law to tell women that their opinions or feelings are “wrong”	Freq	15	12	5	30	38
	%	15.0	12.0	5.0	30.0	38.0
regularly uses homily, interpersonal interactions, doctrine and Canon Law to ridicule, dismiss, disregard women's opinions, thoughts, suggestions and feelings	Freq	15	15	0	51	19
	%	15.0	15.0	0.0	51.0	19.0
prescribes dress codes for female members only	Freq	30	24	0	31	15
	%	30.0	24.0	0.0	31.0	15.0
constantly corrects or chastises female/women members because their behaviour is “inappropriate”	Freq	14	35	3	34	14
	%	14.0	35.0	3.0	34.0	14.0
controls women's spending within the church	Freq	9	11	0	41	39
	%	9.0	11.0	0.0	41.0	39.0
through doctrine and canon law makes female members/women feel as though though the male hierarchy is always right	Freq	13	10	3	44	30
	%	13.0	10.0	3.0	44.0	30.0
label women as "bitter", "angry", "feminist", "emotional", or "liberal" as a way of ignoring women's concerns	Freq	30	33	1	15	21
	%	30.0	33.0	1.0	15.0	21.0
deals with women's concerns through pouting, ignoring, withdrawal or withholding attention	Freq	37	21	2	35	5
	%	37.0	21.0	2.0	35.0	5.0
through doctrines and practices, treats female members/women not as individual people but as an extension of someone else such as their husband or father	Freq	21	42	3	18	16
	%	21.0	42.0	3.0	18.0	16.0
disrespect and disregard women's requests and instead do what they think is best for women	Freq	14	26	14	24	22
	%	14.0	26.0	14.0	24.0	22.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

**SA** = Strongly Agree; **A** = Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree.

Forty-two (42.0%) respondents testified while 51 (51.0%) of them denied that the church hierarchy makes fun of women or put them down in front of other Church members through written and spoken language in formal doctrine and informal interactions. Only 1 (1.0%) respondent was irresolute.

Further to that, 44 (44.0%) respondents corroborated that the church hierarchy uses doctrines to tease women or uses sarcasm as a way to put them down or degrade them. In contrast, 53 (53.0%) respondents disagreed while 3 (3.0%) of them were uncertain. Twenty-seven (27.0%) respondents agreed while 68 (68.0%) of them denied that the church hierarchy often uses homily, interpersonal interactions, doctrine and Canon Law to tell women that their opinions or feelings are “wrong.” Five (5.0%) respondents were not sure.

More so, 30 (30.0%) respondents agreed while 70 (70.0%) of them disagreed that the church hierarchy regularly uses homily, interpersonal interactions, doctrine and canon law to ridicule, dismiss, disregard women's opinions, thoughts, suggestions and feelings. Fifty-four (54.0%) respondents agreed whereas 46 (46.0%) of them denied that the church hierarchy prescribes dress codes for female members only.

Forty-nine (49.0%) respondents concurred that the church hierarchy constantly corrects or chastises female/women members because their behaviour is “inappropriate”. However, 48 (48.0%) of them objected to this assertion while 3 (3.0%) of them were not sure. Further to that, 20 (20.0%) respondents confessed

while 80 (80.0%) of them denied that the church hierarchy controls women's spending within the church. Twenty-three (23.0%) respondents agreed while 74 (74.0%) of them disagreed that the church hierarchy through doctrine and canon law makes female members/women feel as though the male hierarchy is always right. Only 3 (3.0%) of them were indecisive.

Sixty-three (63.0%) respondents confirmed that the church hierarchy labels women as "bitter", "angry", "feminist", "emotional", or "liberal" as a way of ignoring women's concerns. However, 36 (36.0%) respondents disagreed to this assertion while 1 (1.0%) of them was indecisive. Also, 58 (58.0%) respondents asserted while 40 (40.0%) of them disagreed that the church hierarchy deals with women's concerns through pouting, ignoring, withdrawal or withholding attention. Only 2 (2.0%) respondents were in doubt.

Sixty-three (63.0%) respondents concurred while 34 (34.0%) of them disclaimed that the church hierarchy through doctrines and practices, treats female members/women not as individual people but as an extension of someone else such as their husband or father. Three (3.0%) respondents were undecided. Forty (40.0%) respondents consented while 46 (46.0%) of them denied that the church hierarchy disrespect and disregard women's requests and instead do what they think is best for women. Fourteen (14.0%) of them were in doubt.



**Table 5. Male Dominance in the Church in Relation to Human Rights of Female Members of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality (n =100)**

Statement		Responses				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
The male hierarchy of the Church use their positions of power to lobby and to wrest control of women's bodies from women	Freq	15	48	3	19	15
	%	15.0	48.0	3.0	19.0	15.0
The male hierarchy of the Church legislate for female members via canon law, doctrines and civil law because they believe women are incapable of making moral decisions	Freq	33	37	0	18	12
	%	33.0	37.0	0.0	18.0	12.0
The male hierarchy of the Church treats female members/women as though they are inferior to them	Freq	21	32	2	9	36
	%	21.0	32.0	2.0	9.0	36.0
Only clergymen have ultimate say in how church monies are spent	Freq	16	15	3	27	39
	%	16.0	15.0	3.0	27.0	39.0
Clergymen always use doctrines and canon laws to remind female members of issues associated with reproductive health, sexuality and vocational calling	Freq	18	42	2	15	23
	%	18.0	42.0	2.0	15.0	23.0
Christendom, through its doctrines and daily practices, belittle women's accomplishments, aspirations, plans or even who they are	Freq	21	18	1	45	15
	%	21.0	18.0	1.0	45.0	15.0
Female members absolutely need to "get permission" from a clergyman before making decisions about marriage, birth control and other decisions	Freq	34	36	0	12	18
	%	34.0	36.0	0.0	12.0	18.0

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

The majority (63 or 63.0%) of the respondents asserted while 34 (34.0%) of them disclaimed that the male hierarchy of the church use their positions of power to lobby and to wrest control of women's bodies from women. Three (3.0%) respondents were not sure. A significant number (70 or 70.0%) of the respondents consented while 30 (30.0%) of them denied that the male hierarchy of the church legislates for female members via canon law, doctrines and civil law because they believe women are

incapable of making moral decisions. Fifty-three (53.0%) respondents agreed while 45 (45.0%) of them disagreed that the male hierarchy of the church treats female members/women as though they are inferior to them Two (2.0%) respondents were undecided.

A small number (31 or 31.0%) of the respondents agreed that only clergymen have ultimate say in how church monies are spent. However, 66 (66.0%) respondents opposed this claim. Only 3 (3.0%) respondents were undecided. A significant number (60 or 60.0%) of the respondents admitted clergymen always use doctrines and canon laws to remind female members of issues associated with reproductive health, sexuality and vocational calling. Nevertheless, 38 (38.0%) respondents disagreed to this claim and, 2 (16.7%) of them were neutral.

A lesser number (39 or 39.0%) of the respondents confirmed that Christendom, through its doctrines and daily practices, belittle women's accomplishments, aspirations, plans or even who they are. Conversely, 60 (60.0%) of them disagreed while, 1 (1.0%) of them was indecisive. A considerable number (70 or 70.0%) of the respondents asserted while, 30 (30.0%) of them denied that female members absolutely need to "get permission" from a clergyman before making decisions about marriage, birth control and other decisions.

In response to the interview question, some of the interviewees gave several opinions:

*Most churches often use church doctrines and canon laws to define and justify the positions of women/females in Christendom. The leadership of the church often applies the doctrines to degrade women/females. (Deacon 1; 02/03/15)*

*Quite clearly women in the church have a weak bargaining position and their autonomy and choice is being limited to a very high extent. There are subliminal and covert forms of power and coercion in doctrinal teachings and practices. (Deacon 2; 09/03/15)*

*It is disheartening that male dominance is pervasive in the church too. We are to be silent and submissive, so says the Bible. I think the Bible is used as a weapon against us. The church uses it to discriminate. (Laity 1; 16/03/15)*

*In my opinion clergymen often misinterpret and misuse the Bible to deny us the God-given identity and power. This has shut our mouth of females in Christendom. (Laity 2; 23/03/15)*

*Honestly, I admit that the culture of the church which prevents the ordination of females. It is a matter of doctrinal practices which are patterned on patriarchy. (Priest 1; 30/03/15)*

*Well, women have respect in the church society, and they have biblical protection even though they occupy inferior or second-class positions in the church. (Priest 2; 06/04/15)*

The result shows that churches in the municipality rather violate the rights of women. The majority (51% to 70%) of respondents held the view that the Church hierarchy uses canon laws, and doctrines rather than civil laws to control or dominate female members. This empirical research also confirmed that the Church hierarchy uses doctrines and canon laws as weapons to suppress (limit or restrain) female participation in leadership and power. For instance, the Church hierarchy uses doctrines and canon laws to influence the reproductive and family planning decisions of female members. It is also evident from the results that the male hierarchy of the church uses 'male chauvinism', and their positions of power to lobby and to wrest control of women. It was observed that church practices strongly influence the violations of rights of females in churches.

It is also apparent from the result that Christendom finds it somewhat difficult to strictly promote the rights of female members. The promotion of the rights of women in Christendom, therefore, seems to be a mirage (delusion or illusion), and impracticable. The church hierarchy also uses doctrines and canon laws to degrade, and chastise female members. The church also uses doctrines and canon laws to

define the positions and roles of female members. This exposure is consistent with Rakoczy's (2005) observation that the divine law has shut women out from the ministerial office but they use force to get inside. Many Christian churches view the inferior role of women as part of a divinely ordained natural order (Suda, 1996:76). Religion and human rights of women are linked in the sense that some religious beliefs and practices tend to reinforce the acceptance of women's inferiority. These revelations corroborate Miles (2008) and Heggen (1993) who stated that male dominance and female submission is viewed by many within the Christian tradition as the model for human relationships, and that scriptural interpretation and translation bolster this widely embraced doctrinal teaching. Tracy (2006) further elaborated that male dominance approach seems to emanate from the religious teaching that wives should submit to their husbands who are the household heads (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:5).

Chakkalakal (2007) reiterated that the misinterpretation of texts including 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:22-23, from the patristic era even to this day, has helped in the downgrading of women. She argues that Pauline texts have been interpreted out of context. Other studies by Ntlama (2010), Nwankwo (2003), Kethusegile et al. (2000) posited that women are often treated as second-class citizens in society in general and in the family in particular. This assertion concurs with Rzepka (2002) who indicated that the social construct of patterns of relationship in which men (male) are understood as being the standard for human being; women (female) subordinate not just to God but to men, is an object of faith". The symbolic representation of women in religious texts, myths, and stories affects women's power, subjectivity, and identity (Davary, 2009; Chakkalakal, 2007).

### 4.3.3. Research Question 3

**Which church doctrines and practices militate against the rights of women in the municipality?**

Responses to items (questions) 19 - 42 in the questionnaire and item 2 in the interview guide were used to answer this research question. Table 6 (p.92) shows the responses to the items.



**Table 6. How females in Churches (Christendom) Experience Abuse through Church Practices and Doctrines in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality =100)**

Statement	Females in the church/Christendom) experience	Responses				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
male dominance, submission & inferiority	Freq %	30 30.0	45 45.0	0 0.0	15 15.0	10 10.0
humiliation, degradation	Freq %	19 19.0	18 18.0	0 0.0	21 21.0	42 42.0
doctrinal/scriptural negating, judging, criticism	Freq %	30 30.0	48 48.0	1 1.0	9 9.0	12 12.0
scriptural/doctrinal rejection, denial & exclusion from leadership, participation church administration, preaching and other church activities	Freq %	12 12.0	33 33.0	0 0.0	36 36.0	19 19.0
discrimination & marginalization through religious doctrines (teachings) & practices	Freq %	33 33.0	45 45.0	0 0.0	13 13.0	9 9.0
exclusion from Eucharistic ministry	Freq %	18 18.0	39 39.0	3 3.0	22 22.0	18 18.0
denial of equal participation in church administration, Eucharistic ministry & other church activities	Freq %	21 21.0	9 9.0	0 0.0	54 54.0	16 16.0
scriptural brainwashing, mind control	Freq %	39 39.0	27 27.0	2 2.0	18 18.0	14 14.0
Indoctrination	Freq %	30 30.0	42 42.0	2 2.0	12 12.0	14 14.0
doctrinal oppression, coercion, intimidation	Freq %	30 30.0	38 38.0	2 2.0	18 18.0	12 12.0
bondage & control via false teaching	Freq %	27 27.0	9 9.0	3 3.0	45 45.0	16 16.0
bondage & control via doctrinal teachings and practices	Freq %	18 18.0	27 27.0	0 0.0	45 45.0	10 10.0
forced/involuntary and chronic prayer & fasting	Freq %	31 31.0	15 15.0	2 3.0	9 9.0	43 43.0
forced/involuntary tithing & “seed sowing”	Freq %	15 15.0	42 42.0	3 3.0	18 18.0	22 22.0
forced/involuntary dress code	Freq %	27 27.0	21 21.0	0 0.0	36 36.0	16 16.0
forced/involuntary birth control/ family planning techniques	Freq %	9 9.0	14 14.0	2 2.0	36 36.0	39 39.0
forced/involuntary church rituals	Freq %	24 24.0	24 24.0	1 1.0	39 39.0	12 12.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

**SA** = Strongly Agree; **A** = Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree.

In Table 6, 75 (75.0%) respondents agreed while 25 (25.0%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom) experience male dominance, submission and inferiority. Thirty-seven (37.0%) respondents confirmed whereas 63 (63.0%) of them denied that females in the church/Christendom) experience humiliation, and degradation. Also, 78 (78.0%) respondents agreed while 21 (21.0%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom) experience doctrinal/scriptural discounting, negating, judging, criticism. Only 1 (7.6%) respondent was doubtful.

Forty-five (45.0%) respondents confirmed that females in the church/Christendom) experience scriptural/doctrinal deprivation, rejection, denial and exclusion from leadership, participation church administration, preaching and other church activities. Conversely, 55 (55.0%) respondents disagreed to this assertion. A significant number (78 or 78.0%) respondents admitted that females in the church/Christendom) experience discrimination and marginalization through religious doctrines (teachings) and practices. However, 22 (22.0) respondents held opposing views. Similarly, 57 (57.0%) respondents asserted while 40 (40.0%) of them denounced that females in the church/Christendom) experience exclusion from Eucharistic ministry. Only 3 (3.0%) respondents were irresolute.

Again, 30 (30.0%) respondents concurred whilst 70 (70.0%) of them denied that females in the church/Christendom) experience denial of equal participation in church administration, Eucharistic ministry and other church activities. Fifty-six (56.0%) respondents corroborated that females in the church/Christendom) experience scriptural brainwashing, and mind control. Conversely, 32 (32.0%)

respondents disclaimed while 2 (2.0%) of them were indecisive. Seventy-two (72.0%) respondents admitted while 26 (26.0%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom experience indoctrination. Only 2 (2.0%) respondents were irresolute. Also, 68 (68.0%) respondents consented whilst 30 (53.8%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom experience doctrinal oppression, coercion, and intimidation. Two (2.0%) of the respondents were however in doubt.

Thirty-six (36.0%) respondents agreed whereas 61 (61.0%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom experience bondage and control via false teaching. Three (3.0%) respondents were undecided. Also, 45 (45.0%) respondents admitted while 55 (55.0%) of them objected to the assertion that females in the church/Christendom experience bondage and control via doctrinal teachings and practices. Forty-six (46.0%) respondents agreed while 52 (52.0%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom experience forced/involuntary and chronic prayer and fasting. Two (2.0%) respondents were sceptical. Fifty-seven (57.0%) respondents consented while 40 (40.0%) of them denied that females in the church/Christendom experience forced/involuntary tithing and “seed sowing”. Three (3.0%) of them were indecisive.

Similarly, 48 (48.0%) respondents asserted while 52 (52.0%) of them denounced that females in the church/Christendom experience forced/involuntary dress code. Twenty-three (23.0%) respondents admitted that females in the church/Christendom experience forced/involuntary birth control/family planning techniques. In contrast, 75 (75.0%) respondents disagreed to this assertion while 2 (2.0%) of them were irresolute. Forty-eight (48.0%) respondents concurred while 51 (51.0%) of them disagreed that females in the church/Christendom experience forced/involuntary church rituals. Only 1 (1.0%) respondent was undecided.



A considerable number (57% to 78%) of the respondents affirmed that females in the church/Christendom experience oppression, coercion, intimidation, brainwashing, and mind control through doctrinal or scriptural teachings and practices. It was also revealed that they experience indoctrination, discrimination and marginalization through religious doctrines (teachings) and practices. It was also evident that they experience male dominance, submission and inferiority. Relatedly, female members of churches in the municipality experience deprivation, rejection, denial and exclusion from leadership, participation in church administration, preaching and other church activities. It could be concluded that Church doctrines and practices are limiting factors for females participation in ordination into priesthood, and from discharging priestly functions such as baptism, distribution of the Eucharist (Communion). The findings of this study is relatively consistent with Monyatsi's (2008) assertion that women continue to face increased exclusion from leadership and decision-making in the church despite their numerical majority. Monyati (2008) noted that the Bible clearly relegates women as second-class citizens as their silence and submissiveness are emphasized. According to Monyatsi (2008), the Bible discriminates according to gender, greatly influencing the way women are treated in many societies. Rakoczy (2005) further postulated that the power of hierarchy and the patriarchal nature of the church severely limit the ability of women to exercise their gifts for the good of the church community.

The conjecture is that the Bible has been misinterpreted and misused to deny women God-given identity and power (Njoroge, 2005), and clergymen often invoke the Bible in order to bar women from fighting for equal rights. This observation substantiates Fiorenza (1995b) who noted that the Bible is used as a weapon against women who struggle for liberation. Other studies by Banana (1993) affirmed that the Bible has

been and continues to be used to relegate women to a second class status in society. Ruyendo (2005) empirically found that mainstream churches, especially the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches do not give real positions of leadership and decision-making to women.

During the interview, the interviewees were asked to talk about the experiences of abuse through church practices and doctrines. Their responses suggested that women in Christendom significantly experience discrimination and marginalization. Some of the interviewees commented:

*The culture of patriarchy in the Church has really limited the woman. My experience is that doctrinal or scriptural teachings have been used to discount, negate, judge women. For instance, the priest often preaches on how we (women) should behave. (Deaconess 1; 02/03/15)*

*Do not be surprised that the Bible has been used as a weapon to prescribe dress code, sexual behaviour, birth control and family planning services as well as contraceptive use for women. I am deeply distressed because I feel that doctrines and practices are being forced on women in Christendom either without dialogue or with limited dialogue. (Church Elder; 09/03/15)*

*I perceive there is no religious freedom for the woman in Christendom. Often time, I feel the clergy uses Biblical or scriptural teachings to rather control the minds of female members of the church. I feel deprived, submissive, and inferior because of the scriptural teachings. (Laity 1; 16/03/15)*

*I think the Bible has been written to enslave women. I feel women in Christendom and other religions are in bondage. Are we really slaves? I feel the Bible is full of a misnomer on women. I always feel deprived, rejected, and excluded in the church because of how the clergy uses biblical teachings to define some roles of female and male members of the Church. I feel the Bible is continually used by the clergy to coerce women or female members to accept the status of second class citizens. Some pastors have forced tithing, "seed sowing" involuntary and chronic prayer and fasting on female members. (Laity 2; 23/03/15)*

*Christian doctrinal practices have stood the nation for over 2,000 years. I cherish the inheritance embodied in the established church doctrines and practices. There is a presumption that religion is the problem and is against human rights. I don't think so. (Church Pastor 1; 30/03/15)*

*Women cannot occupy certain leadership positions in the Church. I mean priesthood position. It is sacred position for men only as chronicle in the Bible. The default pattern of power and authority is patriarchy as evident in the holy trinity, discipleship*

*and all of the doctrinal teachings. Certainly, females in the church/Christendom) experience exclusion and denial of equal participation in church leadership; but it is scriptural. (Church Priest 2; 06/04/15)*

#### 4.3.4. Research Question 4

#### How can churches improve female members' rights in the municipality?

Responses to item (question) 63 - 68 in the questionnaire and item 4 in the interview guide provided answers to this research question.

**Table 7. Ways to Improve Women's Rights in Ghanaian Christendom (n =100)**

Statement		Responses				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
Christendom has an overall Church policy and/or legal framework on gender equality	Freq	18	9	4	33	36
	%	18.0	9.0	4.0	33.0	36.0
Christendom has actions aimed at tackling the gender gap in its leadership	Freq	15	18	0	31	36
	%	15.0	18.0	0.0	31.0	36.0
The Church has a 'Gender Desk' at its zonal/regional/national offices	Freq	19	9	0	27	45
	%	19.0	9.0	0.0	27.0	45.0
The Church campaigns to attract female executive members or leaders at the national/regional and zonal levels	Freq	17	13	0	37	33
	%	17.0	13.0	0.0	37.0	33.0
I consent to a quota system (reserved seats) which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women in executive positions in the Church	Freq	30	39	3	18	10
	%	30.0	39.0	3.0	18.0	10.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

**SA** = Strongly Agree; **A** = Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree.

Twenty-seven (27.0%) respondents confirmed while 69 (69.0%) of them repudiated that Christendom has an overall Church policy and/or legal framework on gender equality. Four (4.0%) respondents were indecisive. Thirty-three (33.0%) respondents

concurrent whilst 67 (67.0%) of them disagreed that Christendom has actions aimed at tackling the gender gap in its leadership.

Also, 28 (28.0%) respondents admitted whereas 72 (72.0%) of them denied that the Church has a ‘gender desk’ at its zonal /regional/national offices. More so, 30 (30.0%) respondents agreed while 70 (70.0%) of them disagreed that the church campaigns to attract female executive members or leaders at the national/regional and zonal levels.

Further to that, 69 (69.0%) respondents consented to a quota system (reserved seats) which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women in executive positions in the Church. In contrast, 28 (28.0%) respondents held divergent views while 3 (3.0%) of them were irresolute.

**Table 8. Top Relevant Measures which the Church should Adopt to Promote Female Representation in Church Leadership Positions (n= 100)**

Measure	Multiple Response	
	Freq	%
Changes in Church doctrines/statutes	38	20.4
Seats reserved for women in decision-making bodies	44	23.7
Campaigns to encourage women to stand for decision-making positions	40	21.5
Specific arrangements to facilitate participation in meetings, i.e. childcare	28	15.1
Dissemination of figures on decision-making broken down according to gender	36	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork data (2015)

In the opinions of the respondents, the top relevant measures which Christendom must adopt to promote female representation in Church leadership positions were: seats reservation (quota system) for women in decision-making/leadership positions (1<sup>st</sup>); campaigns to encourage women to stand for decision-making/leadership positions (2<sup>nd</sup>), and changes in Church doctrines/statutes (3<sup>rd</sup>). These measures seem

to be contrary to Biblical and patriarchal tenets because not everything said in the Bible is good news for women as observed by Pui-lan (1998).

This finding suggests that the Church should use civil mechanisms to promote the rights of females in Christendom.

#### 4.4 Test of Hypotheses

Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was used to analyse the link or association between human rights violations or abuses of females (women) in Christendom and Church doctrines as well as practices. The hypothesis is tested at a significance level of  $p < .05$  at a Confidence Interval (C.I) of 95%. The  $\chi^2$  test result is presented in Table 9 below:

##### 4.4.1 Hypothesis 1:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Human rights violations or abuse of females (women) in Christendom is not significantly associated with Church doctrines and practices.

**Table 9. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) Test of Association**

	<b>HR</b>	<b>CD</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>HAE</b>	<b>M</b>
Chi-Square	55.520 <sup>a</sup>	94.400 <sup>b</sup>	64.700 <sup>c</sup>	69.740 <sup>d</sup>	73.940 <sup>e</sup>
Df	31	17	44	40	12
Asymp. Sig. (p-value)	.004	.000	.023	.002	.000

\***Test variables:** Dependent variable (*Human rights violations or abuses*) & Independent variable (*Church doctrines & practices*).

\*\*Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test-statistics

\*\* df - degrees of freedom

\*\*\***p-value:**  $\chi^2$  is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*\*\* **HR** – Human rights; **CD** – Church doctrines; **CP**– Church practices; **HAE** – Human rights abuse experiences; **M** – Measures to promote the rights of females in Christendom.

Table 9 shows the  $\chi^2$  test result of the hypothesis. The survey revealed that female members (women and girls) of Churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality experience unequal rights. The  $\chi^2$  test result revealed that the human rights violations or abuses of females (women) in Christendom is statistically found to be linked to or associated with church doctrines and practices ( $df = 31$ ;  $\chi^2 = 55.520^a$ ;  $p = .004$ ). It becomes clear that independently of the demographic characteristics of females, Church doctrines and practices largely predict whether females in Christendom would experience human rights violations or abuses. The null hypothesis (**H<sub>01</sub>**) is rejected since  $p < .05$ .

#### 4.4.1 Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Human rights violations or abuses of females (women) in Christendom is strongly associated with church doctrines than church practices.

The chi-square analysis or test for the association between human rights violations of females in Christendom and Church doctrines resulted in a test statistics of 94.400<sup>b</sup> with a degree of freedom of 17 and a probability of 0.000. This signifies a marginal but significant association.

The output also indicates a strong and significant positive association between human rights violations of females in Christendom and Church practices ( $df = 44$ ;  $\chi^2 = 64.700^c$ ;  $p = .023$ ). It was also statistically found that females in Churches in the municipality had significant experiences of human rights abuse ( $df = 40$ ;  $\chi^2 = 69.740^d$ ;  $p = .002$ ). The results further indicate that human rights abuses of females in Christendom were largely dependent on Church practices rather than Church doctrines. Since  $p < .05$ , the null hypothesis (**H<sub>02</sub>**) is rejected.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study investigated discrimination against women or abuse of females (women) in churches through doctrines and practices by mainline (orthodox) and non-orthodox (Pentecostal, Charismatic and African indigenous) churches in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. It adopted a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design using the phenomenological approach. A total of 100 respondents from 16 churches were sampled via proportional stratified and simple random sampling methods for the study. Structured questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.76) and semi-structured interview guide were used as research instrument. The quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and presented in tables as frequency counts and percentages. The qualitative data was transcribed and presented in themes as narratives, verbatim or direct quotations. This chapter highlights the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study. Suggestions for further studies are also put forward.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are presented below:

- a. Female members in churches within the Ashanti Mampong Municipality have unequal rights; there is imbalance or uneven distribution of power and authority. It was statistically found that females in churches in the municipality had significant experiences of human rights abuse or violence ( $p = .002$ ).

- b. The church hierarchy uses canon laws, and doctrinal practices as mechanisms to violate the rights of female members in churches within the municipality. Human rights violations or abuses of females in Christendom is statistically found to be linked to or associated with church doctrines and practices ( $p = .004$ ).
- c. The church hierarchy uses patriarchy and 'male chauvinism' as weapons to suppress, limit female participation in leadership and power in the church ministry.
- d. The church hierarchy uses doctrines and canon laws to degrade, and chastise female members, as well as to define their positions and roles. For instance, doctrines and canon laws have been used to influence the reproductive and family planning decisions of female members.
- e. Females in the church/Christendom experience discrimination, marginalization, oppression, coercion, intimidation, brainwashing, and mind control through doctrinal or scriptural teachings and practices.
- f. Female members of churches in the municipality experience male dominance, deprivation, rejection, denial and exclusion from leadership, participation in church administration, preaching and other church activities.
- g. There is a marginal but significant association between human rights violations of females in Christendom and Church doctrines ( $p = .000$ ).
- h. There is a strong and significant positive association between human rights violations of females in Christendom and Church practices ( $p = .023$ ). It was empirically found that church practices strongly influence the violations of rights of females in churches. Thus, human rights abuses of females in



Christendom was largely dependent on Church practices rather than Church doctrines ( $p = .023$ ).

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Generally, female members in Churches within the Mampong Municipality have unequal rights because of the imbalance or uneven distribution of power and authority. Patriarchy, male dominance, and male chauvinism have been used as mechanisms or weapons to limit female participation in the church ministry. Clearly, violation of the rights of females in Churches within the Mampong Municipality is attributable to Church doctrines and practices. Hence, the promotion of the rights of women in Churches within the Mampong Municipality seems to be a mirage (delusion or illusion), and impracticable. It is clear that the Church finds it somewhat difficult to strictly promote the rights of female members.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. The Christian Council of Churches in the Ashanti-Mampong Municipality must adopt gender equality policies on women's representation in leadership. It should design actions aimed at tackling the gender gap in the leadership of the Christendom.
- ii. Some churches are run as prayer camps for healing and prosperity; they have deviated from the very essence of their existence, which is liberation of the human spirit from evil. Hence, their teachings and practices are tantamount to violation of the rights of members especially female or women members. The Christian Council of Churches in the Ashanti-Mampong Municipality should

register all churches, closely monitor and regulate their activities which contradict human rights of the members.

- iii. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and the Ghana Education Service should flush out all the charlatans operating private orphanages. Enough checks should be put in place to ensure that relief items donated for the upkeep of the children are actually put at the disposal of the inmates.
- iv. The Christian Council of Churches in Ghana should campaign and support females/women to stand for decision-making or leadership positions in churches.
- v. The World, Regional and National Council of Churches should formulate civil and legal frame work that prohibits religious activities, doctrinal teachings and practices which violate the human rights of worshippers. Whosoever violates these prohibitions should be liable to prosecution.
- vi. The Christian Council of Churches in the municipality should campaign against the clergy who misinterpret, and misrepresent the Bible against the rights of females. They should also campaign against the clergy who engage in doctrinal practices which violate the rights of females in Christendom.
- vii. The Christian Council of Churches in Ghana through the assistance of the local council of Churches within the study area should campaign and support females/women to stand for decision-making or leadership positions in churches.
- viii. The World Council of Churches as well as the Christian Council of Ghana should have a civil and legal frame work that will protect and promote the rights of all its members, including women.

### **5.5 Suggestion for Further Research**

There is the need to carry out further research to draw conclusive evidence that the imbalance or uneven distribution of power and authority for females in Church by the church hierarchy is biblical, and marginally attributable to biblical doctrines and teachings.



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**APPENDIX A**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS**

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN RELATION TO CHURCH DOCTRINES  
AND PRACTICES**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to solicit your views on females/women in churches (Christendom) and their rights in relation to church doctrines and practices in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. The information would solely be used for research purposes. The information which you provide would be treated as confidential.

**Thank you.**

**SECTION A: Bio Data of Respondents** (Please *Tick (✓)*)

1. Gender: Male  Female
2. Age group: 20-24  25-29  30-34  35-39  40-44  45-49   
50 yrs & above
3. Literacy Level: Literate  Semi-illiterate  Illiterate
4. Christian Denomination: Presbyterian  Catholic  Pentecostal  Other   
**Specify:** .....
5. Length of membership in the Church  1-10yrs  11-20yrs  21-30yrs   
31yrs & above
6. Position in the Church: Bishops/Priest/Clergy   
Apostle/Elder/Deacon/Deaconesses  Prophet/Prophetess   
 Laypeople/Layperson  Other ,  
.....

7. Marital Status: Not married/Single [ ] Separated [ ] Divorced [ ] Widowed [ ]  
 Married [ ] Cohabitate with a male/female partner but not in a legal union [ ]  
 Other [ ], *Specify:* .....

**SECTION B: HUMAN RIGHTS OF FEMALE MEMBERS (WOMEN AND GIRLS) IN CHURCHES**

*Read the following statements carefully and answer the items to express your knowledge and practices of the rights of female members in Churches in the municipality: Please tick [✓] where appropriate to reflect your level of agreement or disagreement.*

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	I	D	SD
8. Female members (women and girls) in the church are more represented in leadership positions than male counterparts.					
9. Christendom/Church doctrines and practices ensure that leadership or executive (supervisory and management) positions are occupied by women in the Church.					
10. Church doctrines ensure a gender inclusive culture.					
11. Gender gap exists in the leadership of the Church					
12. Woman members have the final word in the Church about decisions involving leadership and power, finance, etc.					
13. Male dominance exists in the Church.					
14. Women face exclusion from leadership positions in the Church.					
15. Women are not given real positions of leadership and decision-making					
16. Female members (women and girls) in churches have equal rights to leadership positions					
17. Female members (women and girls) in churches have equal rights to ordination to priesthood					
18. Female members (women and girls) in churches have equal rights to Eucharist ministry.					
19. Female members (women and girls) in churches have equal rights to					



\*SD – Strongly Agree; \*\* A – Agree; \*\*\*I – Indifferent; \*\*\*\*\*D – Disagree; \*\*\*\*\*SD – Strongly Disagree.

**SECTION C: CHURCH PRACTICES AND DOCTRINES THAT MILITATE AGAINST THE RIGHTS OF FEMALE MEMBERS OR WOMEN**

*Read the following statements carefully and answer the items to express your knowledge and awareness of Church doctrines and practices that militate possibly against the rights of female members or women: **Please tick [√] where appropriate to reflect your level of agreement or disagreement.***

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	I	D	SD
20. Church doctrines bar women from speaking in public					
21. Church doctrines prevent the ordination of women					
22. Church doctrines bar female members/women from discharging priestly functions such as baptism, distribution of the Eucharist (Communion)					
23. Church doctrines prevent female members/women from being theological teachers interpreting and teaching the Bible scriptures.					
24. Church hierarchy makes fun of women or put them down in front of other Church members through written and spoken language in formal doctrine and informal interactions					
25. Church hierarchy uses doctrines to tease women or use sarcasm as a way to put them down or degrade them					
26. The Church hierarchy often uses homily, interpersonal interactions, doctrine and Canon Law to tell women that their opinions or feelings are “wrong”					
27. The Church hierarchy regularly uses homily, interpersonal interactions, doctrine and Canon Law to ridicule, dismiss, ignore or disregard women's opinions, thoughts, suggestions and feelings					
28. The Church hierarchy prescribe dress codes for female members only					
29. The male hierarchy of the Church (pope, bishop, clergymen, etc) use their positions of power to lobby and to wrest control of women's bodies from women.					
30. The male hierarchy of the Church legislate for female members via canon law, doctrines and civil law because they believe women are incapable of making moral decisions.					
31. The Church hierarchy constantly corrects or chastises female/women members because their behavior is “inappropriate”					
32. Female members/women absolutely need to "get permission" from a clergyman before making decisions about marriage, birth control and other decisions.					

33. The Church hierarchy controls women's spending within the church					
34. Only clergymen have ultimate say in how church monies are spent					
35. Only clergywomen have ultimate say in how church monies are spent					
36. The male hierarchy of the Church treats female members/women as though they are inferior to them					
37. Doctrine and Canon law of the Church justify that female laypeople are inferior to clergymen.					
38. The Church hierarchy through doctrine and canon law make female members/women feel as though the male hierarchy is always right?					
39. Clergymen always use doctrines and canon laws to remind female members/women of issues associated with reproductive health, sexuality and vocational calling.					
40. Christendom, through its doctrines and daily practices, belittle women's accomplishments, aspirations, plans or even who they are.					
41. The Church hierarchy label women as "bitter", "angry", "feminist", "emotional", or "liberal" as a way of ignoring women's concerns					
42. The Church hierarchy deals with women's concerns through pouting, ignoring, withdrawal or withholding attention.					
43. The Church hierarchy, through doctrines and practices, treat female members/women not as individual people but as an extension of someone else such as their husband or father.					
44. The Church hierarchy disrespect and disregard women's requests and instead do what they think is best for women.					

\*SD – Strongly Agree; \*\* A – Agree; \*\*\*I – Indifferent; \*\*\*\*\*D – Disagree; \*\*\*\*\*SD – Strongly Disagree.

**SECTION D: EXPERIENCES OF FEMALES/WOMEN IN CHURCHES  
(CHRISTENDOM) THROUGH CHURCH PRACTICES AND  
DOCTRINES**

**Please write or tick (√) as applicable to reflect your possible experience of abuse through church doctrines and practices**

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	I	D	SD
<b>Females/Women in the church (Christendom) experience .....</b>					
45. male dominance, submission & inferiority					
46. humiliation, degradation					
47. doctrinal/scriptural discounting, negating, judging, criticism					
48. scriptural/doctrinal deprivation, rejection, denial and exclusion					

from leadership, participation church administration, preach and other church activities					
49. discrimination & marginalization through religious doctrines (teachings) & practices					
50. exclusion from Eucharistic ministry					
51. denial of equal participation in Eucharistic ministry, church administration & other church activities					
52. scriptural brainwashing, mind control					
53. Indoctrination					
54. doctrinal oppression, coercion, intimidation					
55. bondage & control via false teaching					
56. bondage & control via doctrinal teachings and practices					
57. forced/involuntary and chronic prayer & fasting					
58. forced/involuntary tithing & “seed sowing”					
59. forced/involuntary dressed code					
60. forced/involuntary birth control/family planning techniques					
61. forced/involuntary church rituals					

\*SD – Strongly Agree; \*\* A – Agree; \*\*\*I – Indifferent; \*\*\*\*\*D – Disagree; \*\*\*\*\*

SD – Strongly Disagree

62. Other abusive experiences [ ], *Specify:* .....

**SECTION E: WAYS TO IMPROVE WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN GHANAIAN CHRISTENDOM**

*Read the following statements carefully and answer the items to express your knowledge and awareness of the inclusion and participation of men and women in the leadership of the Church: Please tick [✓] where appropriate to reflect your level of agreement or disagreement.*

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	I	D	SD
63. Christendom has an overall Church policy and/or legal framework on gender equality.					
64. Christendom has actions aimed at tackling the gender gap in its leadership.					
65. The Church has a ‘Gender Desk’ at its zonal/ regional/national offices.					
66. The Church has developed campaigns to attract female executive members or leaders at the national/regional and zonal levels.					
67. I consent to a quota system (reserved seats) which guarantees a fixed proportion of places for women in executive positions in the Church.					

\*SD – Strongly Agree; \*\* A – Agree; \*\*\*I – Indifferent; \*\*\*\*\*D – Disagree; \*\*\*\*\*SD – Strongly Disagree.

68. Choose the *three (3) top relevant measures*, according to your opinion, which the Church(Christendom) must adopt for the implementation of gender equality policy regarding women representation in leadership positions.

- (a) Changes in Church doctrines/statutes, i.e. quotas in elections [ ]
- (b) Seats reserved for women in decision-making bodies [ ]
- (c) Campaigns to encourage women to stand for decision-making positions [ ]
- (d) Specific arrangements to facilitate participation in meetings, i.e. childcare [ ]
- (d) Dissemination of figures on decision-making broken down according to gender [ ]



**APPENDIX B**

**ABUSE OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS THROUGH CHURCH DOCTRINES  
AND PRACTICES**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FEMALE MEMBERS (WOMEN & GIRLS) IN  
CHURCHES**

1. What is the state of human rights for women in churches within Ashanti  
Mampong Municipality?

.....  
.....

How do churches either promote or violate the human rights of female members  
within the municipality?

.....  
.....

2. How do church doctrines and practices militate against the rights of female  
members?

.....  
.....

4. How can churches improve female members’ rights?

.....  
.....