

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**A STUDY OF 1TIMOTHY 5:3 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLE  
OF THE GHANAIAN CHURCH TOWARDS THE WELFARE OF WIDOWS  
IN SOME SELECTED PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES IN  
KUMASI**

**PROJECT WORK**

**(LONG ESSAY)**

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**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**

**JUNE, 2023**

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BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY WITH ADMINISTRATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**

**JUNE, 2023**

## DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this project work (long essay) is the result of our own original research except for sections which references have been duly made and to the best of our knowledge no part of it has been presented to this University College or any other institution for the award of a degree.

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## **DEDICATION**

We dedicate this project work (long essay) to the Most High God for His mercy, grace, love and guidance throughout our academic period.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We are most grateful unto the Lord almighty for the strength, grace and wisdom He endowed us with from the beginning and the end of this research work. We are highly delighted to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor, Rev. Godfred Baffour Awuah for his excellent volunteering directions, corrections, contributions and suggestions in this research study.

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## **LIST OF ALL ABBREVIATION**

GPCC	-	Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches
GSS	-	Ghana Statistical Services
PHC	-	Population and Housing Census
NLT	-	New Living Translation
NIV	-	New International Version

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# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the study

Widowhood in Ghana is a social and cultural phenomenon that has been the subject of research for several decades. The practice of widowhood is influenced by traditional customs, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic factors, and has significant implications for the welfare and well-being of widows and their families.<sup>1</sup>

Studies have shown that widowhood in Ghana is associated with a range of negative outcomes for women, including economic insecurity, social exclusion, and physical and emotional abuse.<sup>2</sup> Widows are often subjected to harmful traditional practices, such as forced remarriage, inheritance deprivation, and property seizure.<sup>3</sup> This view is also supported by the World Widow Report in 2015 which stipulates that, little or no social welfare protection, lack of awareness right and entitlement, social exclusion, among others are meted out to widows globally.<sup>4</sup> These practices are usually justified by cultural beliefs that stigmatize widows as cursed or responsible for the death of their husbands.<sup>5</sup>

Despite efforts by the Ghanaian government and civil society organizations to protect the rights of widows, widowhood remains a significant challenge in the country. The lack of legal protection and social support for widows, as well as persistent cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria K. Brown, "Demystifying Widowhood: The Role of the Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana" (PhD diss., America Bible University, Orlando Florida, 2016), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, "Demystifying Widowhood, 72.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, "Demystifying Widowhood, 72.

<sup>4</sup> World Widow Report, <https://www.empoweringwidows.com/World-Widows-Report-2015.html>. Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, 121-125.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, "Demystifying Widowhood, 72.

attitudes that reinforce discrimination and violence against them, contribute to their vulnerability and marginalization.<sup>6</sup>

Recent research on widowhood in Ghana has focused on identifying effective interventions and policies to address the challenges faced by widows. These include legal and policy reforms, economic empowerment programs, social and cultural awareness campaigns, and support services for widows and their families. This study explores the biblical posture on the treatment or care of widows. It looked at the New Testament's response to the care and maintenance of widows. In Acts 6, the Church clearly took responsibility of the welfare of widows leading to the appointment of deacons to handle it. Pauline attitude towards widows also affirmed the position of the early Church in Acts chapter 6. Therefore, this research did a study of 1 Timothy 5:3 to draw implications for the Ghanaian Church on the subject of widows-welfare. "Honour widows who are really widows" (Revised Standard Version).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Many social organizations, philanthropist and non-governmental institutions have initiated a lot of efforts to assist women who lost their husbands over the years. The concerns for widows, due to the pathetic state of many of them, have attracted the attention of many people in our Ghanaian society as to how best to alleviate them from poverty. In Ghana for instance, during festive seasons like Christmas, many institutions and individuals extend helping hands to widows by providing them with food, clothing, cloths, money, soft drinks and other forms of entertainment to bring joy to their homes. For instance, "Adinkra Diaspora Women, a Non-Governmental Organization which has

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<sup>6</sup> Gladys Darkei Djankpa, "Effects of Widowhood Rite on the Psychological Distress and Life Satisfaction of Konkomba Widows in the Saboba District, Northern Ghana" (M Phil Thess. University of Cape Coast, 2021), 1.

its headquarters in Denmark and comprises of Ghanaian women both home and diaspora has extended its support to widows, the aged and the vulnerable in Adukrom-Akuapem in the Okere Constituency of the Eastern region through free health screening and donation of other necessities”.<sup>7</sup>

In the Old Testament, the Priests were instructed to give widows part of the Tithe, to ensure their continuous care in the society (Deuteronomy 14:29, 26:12). Moreover, the records in the New Testament especially Acts 6 reveals a similar practice in the early church.

Occasionally, some Christian denominations in Ghana today have also assisted widows both in and out of the church. In the light of this, the study seeks to find whether some Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Kumasi have instituted an effective welfare program for their widows as demonstrated in the scriptures, particularly from the perspective of 1Timothy 5:3.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the question: what is the response of Ghana Pentecostal/Charismatic churches towards the welfare of widows in the light of 1 Timothy 5:3?

The study further seeks to answer the following subsidiary questions:

1. What is the contextual meaning, and Ghana Pentecostal/Charismatic Church's (GPCC) understanding of 1Timothy 5:3?
2. What are the plights of widows in the Ghanaian society?
3. What has the churches put in place towards the welfare of widows?

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/social/202211/478461.php>.

4. What role should Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic churches play towards the care of widows?

#### **1.4 The Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to examine the meaning of 1Timothy 5:3 to establish its meaning and its implications for the role of the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic stream towards the welfare of widows.

The research objectives of the study include:

1. To assess the contextual meaning and contemporary understanding of the text.
2. To identify the plight of widows in the Ghanaian society.
3. To evaluate the current role of the church towards the welfare of widows.
4. To find out the role that is expected of the Ghana Pentecostal/Charismatic stream towards the welfare of widows.

#### **1.5 The Scope and Focus of the Study**

Even though there are several texts in the Bible that address widows, the study is limited to 1Timothy 5:3 and focuses on its implications for the role of some selected Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in Kumasi on the welfare of widows. The researcher uses the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches as focus for the research based on the available data from the Ghana Statistical Service (G.S.S) in the 2021 Population and Housing Census (P.H.C) on the various church groups in the country. The P.H.C revealed that, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians were the largest Christian group in Ghana, and constitutes 31.6 percent of the total Christian group.<sup>8</sup> With the above figure, it is believed that, the data that will be gathered from the Pentecostal/Charismatic stream

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<sup>8</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, 2021.

would present a fair picture in Ghanaian Christianity. There are many charismatic/Pentecostal churches but the following selected churches under this stream were selected: Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry, Assemblies of God Ghana and Christ Redeemed International.

## **1.6 Research Methodology and Approach**

This is a qualitative research and an exegetical study, although there are different approaches to qualitative work, the historical, and phenomenological approaches were employed. Scientific research of this kind, known as qualitative research, aims to produce conclusions that go beyond the immediate confines of the study. It does this by methodically applying a predefined set of procedures to gather evidence in order to answer a question of a study.<sup>9</sup> Exegetical approach helps in “establishing the meaning of the text taking into account what it meant in the original language and its meaning now.”<sup>10</sup> This was used to establish the contextual meaning of 1 Timothy 5:3 to draw implications for the role of some selected Pentecostal/Charismatic (GPCC) churches in Kumasi with regards to widows welfare. The historical approach which basically deals with past or historical accounts will be employed to give brief background history of the Pentecostal/charismatic churches in Kumasi their role in social intervention for widows. The phenomenological approach made it easy “to understand the essence of a phenomenon by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon.”<sup>11</sup> The churches selected were Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry at Bantama (8 people), Assemblies of God at Atonsu (6 people), and Christ Redeemed

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<sup>9</sup> Samuel Adubofuor, *Research Writing Manual for Project Work and Dissertation* (Kumasi: Christian Service University College, Department of Theology, 2019), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Kang-Ewala Diboro, *The Pentecost event in acts 2 and its implications for the Dagaaba Encounter with the Christian Faith* (Kumasi: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2018), 37.

<sup>11</sup> Adubofuor, *Research Writing Manual for Project Work and Dissertation*, 13.

International at Pataase (7 people), and Calvary Charismatic Church (3 people). They were selected based on their exposition in the knowledge of the scripture.

### ***1.6.1 Data Collection Methods of the Study***

The primary and secondary method of data collection was employed. The research work used interviews as the primary method of data gathering with a few notable personalities in the field of study, such as Pastors, Bible Scholars, Matured Christian believers and individuals who have distinguished themselves creditably in the field were interviewed. The secondary method involves gathering data from publications including books, journals, theses, magazines, and other unpublished works. Internet sources were also reviewed.

### ***1.6.2 Sampling Procedure***

The research will use the purposive sampling method to get the targeted respondents for the interview to gather data for the study. Saaka and Sarah cited Pannerselvan and defined purposive sampling as “a kind of technique where the sampling units are chosen on the advice of some experts or by the intuitive or opinion of the researcher himself.”<sup>12</sup> This method will help the researchers to reach their targeted audience such as pastors, bible scholars, matured Christian believers and individuals. In all, three (3) churches were visited. Out of the three churches thirty people will be interviewed. They shall comprise pastors, matured Christian leaders and widows. The interviews will be done by merit.

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph. F.R. Saaka and Sarah. S. Boateng, An Exegetical Investigation of Ephesians 4:11-12 and its Implications for the Ministerial Offices among some Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in Kumasi (Long Essay, Christian Service University College, 2021), 6.

### **1.6.3 Data Analysis**

Data can be referred to as facts or pieces of information gathered to arrive at a conclusion in the area of study.<sup>13</sup> Data analysis mostly involves making meaning out of report gathered from the field. For this study, data will be gathered through interview and qualitative approach will be used to analyze the information and present it thematically in connection with the outcome of the study of the text.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

This section of the research reviews some scholarly works on the research topic under the following thematic areas: The Bible and Widowhood, Paul and Widows and Widowhood Rites in Ghana and its challenges.

### **1.7.1 The Bible and Widowhood**

God has repeatedly shown love and compassion for widows and the weak in society, including the fatherless, the destitute, and strangers, throughout both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, especially those who are most at risk in society.<sup>14</sup> The Scriptures urges Christians to imitate Jesus Christ and display love, compassion, and advocacy for the disadvantaged because they are more likely to experience abuse, oppression, and other forms of injustice from other people.<sup>15</sup> The researchers believe that, the above injunctions should be upheld in our contemporary world to make the vulnerable in our societies, especially widows, feel secured and mingle well so that they can lead normal life with joy and sound mind.

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<sup>13</sup> John. D. Sanders, Defining terms: Data, Information and Knowledge. <https://www.researchgate.net> > 3054. 2016, 1. Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, "Demystifying widowhood, 75-76.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, "Demystifying widowhood, 75-76.



You shall not oppress any widow or fatherless child, according to Exodus 22:22–24. If you harm them in any way and they cry out to Me, I will undoubtedly hear them, and my wrath will grow ferocious and intense.<sup>16</sup>

In the New Testament, the apostle James also exhorts Christians to treat widows and orphans with compassion. He claims that this is the only religion that is acceptable to both the Father and God. That is to visit widows and orphans in their distress while remaining unseen by others. (James 1:27). This presents a significant issue for Christians since, rather than participating in religious ceremonies, we are expected to be sympathetic to the suffering of orphans and widows and, when we do visit them, to do so in a way that strengthens their faith in the Lord and meets their needs.<sup>17</sup>

### **1.7.2 *Paul and Widows***

Paul did not overlook the welfare of widows in his first letter to Timothy, which was on how to treat church members. The Apostle Paul provided a procedure for widows in the church in I Timothy 5:3–16. He warned Timothy to respect widows who were actually or truly widows.<sup>18</sup> He continued by defining a true widow as someone who trusted in God and continued in supplications and prayers day and night, had raised children, had been hospitable to strangers, and had ministered to the saints and the afflicted. She should also have been the wife of one man who was now left alone because her spouse had died.<sup>19</sup> Those honorable widows without children who were at least 60 years old should be cared for by the church.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Brown, “Demystifying widowhood, 77.

<sup>17</sup> Brown, “Demystifying widowhood, 77.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, “Demystifying widowhood, 78.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, “Demystifying widowhood, 78.

<sup>20</sup> Brown, “Demystifying widowhood, 78.

For the youthful widows in order to prevent them from becoming idle and engaging in other vices that would provide opportunities for the enemy and maybe led them to turn away from God, Paul urged them to get remarried, have children, and manage their homes.<sup>21</sup> The study agrees with the instructions given by Apostle Paul that, the youthful widows should be encouraged to work, remarry and raise up families. This is because they have the strength to keep working and should not be a burden to the church.

### **1.7.3 Widowhood Rites in Ghana and its Challenges**

The requirements for ceremonial breakup of the deceased from the living partner as well as the renewal of the widow to deal with life after the loss of a husband are prominent feature in the practice of widowhood rites in Ghana, like any other African country.

According to Victoria Brown, in Ghana, especially among the southern Akans, as soon as a man passes away, his family sends money and alcohol to the wife's head of family, *Abusuapanin* to inform them of the man's demise. This means that she is to carry out all funeral and widowhood customs because the man's family acknowledges her as his legal wife. The gift of money and drink, known as "Nkaensa," was sent to the wife's relatives. As part of the funeral customs, the widow is required to give her late husband's relatives ten times the amount of money that was handed to her.<sup>22</sup>

Marie-Sossou adds that, widows are required to stay constantly by their late husbands' bodies until burial. Moreover, widows are expected to provide food and gold as well as wear a specific outfit while in mourning.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Brown, "Demystifying widowhood, 79.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, "Demystifying widowhood, 79.

<sup>23</sup> Marie-Antoinette Sossou, "Widowhood practices in West Africa: the silent victims," *International Journal of Social Welfare*, (2002), 4. Accessed 27th November, 2022, pdf.

Moreover, in the polygamous region of Northern Ghana, a man might pass away leaving a large number of widows and children. When a man passes away, his widow or widows must all remain inside, sitting by themselves in their underwear and with leaves covering their private parts. Without the calabash, a representation of the deceased, they are not allowed to leave the house. Clearly, widows in many parts of the world don't get it easy when their husbands give up the ghost.

#### **1.7.4 The Challenges of Widowhood**

In the past immediate section, it was found that there are a lot of uneasy situations surrounding widowhood. This section reviews some of the works done on it. In some cultures in Ghana, widows are required to isolate themselves from the rest of society for a period of time. During this period, they are not allowed to interact with other people and are often stigmatized and shunned by their communities.<sup>24</sup> Due to such unacceptable treatments that this study was done to come out with the way forward for widows care. On the other hand, widowhood rites can be expensive and may involve the payment of large sums of money to the deceased husband's family. This can be a significant financial burden for widows, especially those who are already struggling to make ends meet.<sup>25</sup>

According to Victoria Browne, during the widowhood rites, widows may be required to undergo various rituals and practices that can be physically and emotionally taxing. For example, some cultures require widows to shave their heads or undergo other forms

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<sup>24</sup> Ebenezer Durojaye, "Woman, but not Human: Widowhood practices and Human rights violations in Nigeria" *International Journal of Law and the Family* 27(2), (May 2013), 10. Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023. Pdf.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, "Demystifying widowhood, 74.

of physical mutilation, which can put them at risk of infection and other health problems.<sup>26</sup>

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The conclusions made from this research study would be useful to the Body of Christ in the care for widows, particularly the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Kumasi and Ghana at large. It would help them to identify the need to provide consistent and sustainable care for widows since it is key to godliness. It would help the church to improve upon Widow Care if it is already undertaking such mandate. Again the exegesis done on the study throws more light on the understanding of the topic of study. Lastly, it would serve as a resource material for church leaders, workers of Charity and the Academia in the area of widow care in the contemporary church in Ghana and beyond.

### **1.9 Organization of Chapters**

This research is organized into chapter. Chapter one consist of General Introduction and the background of the study. Chapter two handles the exegesis of 1Timothy 5:3 by looking at the context of the text that comprises the historical background of the book in focus, the authorship, the date, addressee, major theological themes, and purpose of the book and structure of the text. Chapter three considers an understanding the role of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches towards welfare of widows in Kumasi. Chapter four discusses the information gathered through interviews and its implications for the findings of the text. Finally chapter five presents the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

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<sup>26</sup> Brown, "Demystifying widowhood, 72.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXEGESIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 5:3

#### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter one looked at the research's overall introduction. It addressed the problem statement, the research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, the scope and focus of the study, the research methodology, data analysis, and literature review, significance of the study and organization of chapters. This chapter basically presents an exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:3 to draw implications for the field work.

#### 2.2 Background to 1 Timothy

First Timothy is one of the Pastoral Epistles, written by the Apostle Paul to his disciple Timothy. It is considered to be one of the canonical books of the New Testament and is recognized as authoritative by most Christian denominations.<sup>27</sup>

Scholars like Howard Marshall, Fee, and F.F. Bruce generally agree that First Timothy was likely written in the late first century AD, possibly around 64-65 AD. The letter is addressed to Timothy, a young leader in the Christian community at Ephesus, and provides guidance on matters of church organization, leadership, and discipline.<sup>28</sup>

The letter reflects a concern for the proper behavior and order within the church, and it includes instructions on the roles of bishops, deacons, and other leaders. It also addresses issues related to false teaching and the role of women in the church.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistle: An Introduction and Commentary* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 87.

<sup>28</sup> Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistle*, 87.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson L. Timothy, *The Anchor Yale Bible: 1 Timothy* (Yale University Press, 2001), 35.

Scholars like, Jerome, Margaret Mitchel, Raymond and others have debated the authenticity of First Timothy, with some arguing that it was not actually written by Paul himself, but rather by a later author who claimed to be Paul. However, many scholars still maintain that the letter was written by Paul and reflects his teachings and style.<sup>30</sup>

Overall, First Timothy is an important text for understanding the early Christian church and its organization, as well as the teachings of the Apostle Paul. Its emphasis on the importance of sound doctrine and orderly conduct within the church and continues to be relevant for Christians today.

### **2.3 Authorship, Date and Recipient**

Although some scholars, as indicated earlier may not agree to Pauline authorship but internal evidence points clearly to Paul the apostle (1Timothy 1:1). The Apostle Paul is on record to have written this letter to Timothy circa 60 A.D., during a mission trip, though not recorded in scripture.<sup>31</sup> It was written from Rome, Macedonia or possibly Philippi. The letter was written primarily to Timothy.

### **2.4 The Occasion and Purpose**

Paul addressed the problems in the Ephesus church in a letter to Timothy, his colleague. "As the number of churches in the first century grew, concerns about church discipline, soundness of doctrine, and order emerged. Although the apostles personally addressed these issues, it became clear that authoritative teaching concerning faith and order was required as the apostolic period came to a conclusion so that the churches would be

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<sup>30</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Institution* (Michigan: Baker Academics 2012), 440.

<sup>31</sup> *ESV Global Study Bible* (U.S.A: Crossway, 2012), 1709.

guided in the future. First and second Timothy's Pastoral Epistles as well as Titus makes this point clear.<sup>32</sup>

"The letter was mostly motivated by false teachers," They made erroneous legal assumptions in their instruction (1:7–11), prohibited marriage, and forbade the consumption of certain foods (4:1-5). The erroneous doctrine encouraged speculations above unshakeable truths (1:4; 6:4) and encouraged avarice and hubris (6:4; 6:5–10). Paul addressed the problems in the Ephesus church in a letter to Timothy, his colleague. "As the number of first-century churches grew, concerns about church structure and the integrity of the faith For Paul, a truly Christian lifestyle is one that has been molded by the Bible. In addition, Timothy received instruction on worship (2:1–15), how to choose elders and deacons (3:1–13), how to maintain both personal and church discipline (2:9–15), how to care for widows in the church (5:1–7), and finally, encouragement for the young pastor Timothy not to be intimidated by the more experienced members but to boldly exercise his gift (4:12–16).<sup>33</sup>

## **2.5 The Message of 1 Timothy**

Paul's first letter to Timothy gives a healthy church life.<sup>34</sup> It deals with two main points; firstly the qualifications for both Elders and Deacons, godliness is more important than skill defined by the world, and secondary, the basis of the local church, along with all of its various ministries, is the gospel.<sup>35</sup> The scripture serves as the guiding principle for godly service. The message therefore deals with the order in the local church. Paul

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<sup>32</sup> Hagner, *The New Testament*, 440.

<sup>33</sup> Hagner, *The New Testament*, 441.

<sup>34</sup> *ESV Global Study Bible*, 1712.

<sup>35</sup> *ESV Global study Bible*, 1712.

details the effective operation of the local church as the model for the universal church.<sup>36</sup>

## **2.6 The Text in Greek – Koine Interlinear New Testament**

χήρας τίμα τας οντως χήρας

## **2.7 Transliteration Text**

*Cherās tima tas ontōs Cherās*

## **2.8 Text in English – Revised Standard Version**

*“Honour widows who are real widows”*

## **2.9 The Structure of the Text**

This refers to step by step presentation of the exegetical analysis of the text. Below is the structure.

A. Honour widows (1 Timothy 5:3a)

B. who are real widows (1 Timothy 5:3b)

## **2.10 Exegetical Analysis of 1 Timothy 5:3**

Verse 5:3a. τίμα χήρας - Honour widows

"τίμα χήρας" (tima cheras) in 1 Timothy 5:3a;

"Τίμα" (tima) is the second person singular present imperative form of the verb "τιμάω"

(timao), meaning "to honour" or "to value".<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *ESV Global study Bible*, 1712.

<sup>37</sup> William D. Mounce, *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 773.



"Χήρας" (cheras) is the accusative plural form of the noun "χήρα" (chera), meaning "widow".<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, the phrase "τίμα χήρας" could be "honour widows" or "value widows." The imperative form of the verb indicates that, this is a command or instruction given to Timothy by the author (likely Paul). The focus on honouring or valuing widows suggests that they are to be treated with respect and care, and not neglected or taken advantage of.<sup>39</sup>

The New International Version (NIV) translates the text as "Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need". The New Living Translation (NLT) also translates the text as "Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her".<sup>40</sup> The IVP Bible Background Commentary also explains that, "honor" here includes financial support (5:4, 16-18). By "widows indeed" or "real widows" Paul means not simply those bereaved of husband but those both committed to the church's ministry of prayer (5:5) and experiencing the stereotypical Old Testament plight of widows: destitution" (5:4).<sup>41</sup>

The word ("τίμα) "honour" also appears four (4) times in 1Timothy, and each time it has a distinct meaning. It is used to express regard for God in 1:17, support for widows in 5:3, seniors' acknowledgment and compensation in 5:17, and obedient slaves' duty to show respect to their masters in 6:1.<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere in the New Testament, ("τίμα) appears many times. Though almost all carry same meaning as in 1Timothy, the usage

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<sup>38</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 437.

<sup>39</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *1 Timothy* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 247.

<sup>40</sup> Holy Bible, *New Living Translation* (Tyndale House Publishers. 1996, 2004), 254. Digital.

<sup>41</sup> Craig S. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 277. Digital.

<sup>42</sup> William. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistle: Word Biblical Commentary*, 277.

in the Epistle of Romans offers some closeness to the text. It tells us to be committed to one another in affection, according to Romans 12:10. Respect one another more than yourself. "Honour" in this context refers to treating others with respect, thinking them valuable and exhibiting esteem for them.<sup>43</sup>

### **Verse 5:3b. Τας Οντως Χήρας- Who are real widows**

"τας οντως χηρας" (tas ontos cheras) in 1 Timothy 5:3b:

"Τας" (tas) is the feminine accusative plural form of the definite article "ὁ" (ho), meaning "the".

"Οντως" (ontos) is an adverb that can be translated as "really" or "truly." It is derived from the verb "εἶμι" (eimi), meaning "to be."

"Χηρας" (cheras) is the feminine accusative plural form of the noun "χήρα" (chera), meaning "widow".

So, "τας οντως χηρας" could be translated as "the truly widows" or "the really widowed women."<sup>44</sup>

Giving the above Greek meaning of the text, William Mounce believes that, it should be understood in context from verse 3-16. He posits that, scholars are divided over its interpretation, and therefore they fall into two camps. "Mounce cites Ellicott, Bernard, Lock Conzelmann, Hanson and others and opines that, they feel that these verses spell out the duties of widows who have been enrolled in an order of widows, duties that include prayer, hospitality, pastoral house calls, and care for orphans". John Stott also

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<sup>43</sup> Dictionary of New Testament Background, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [https://books.google.com/books/about/Dictionary\\_of\\_New\\_Testament\\_Background.html?id=DmjnDwAAQBAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Dictionary_of_New_Testament_Background.html?id=DmjnDwAAQBAJ). Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 252.

opines that, the text entreats the church to "give proper recognition" to the widows mentioned in verses 3–8, which means "to honour, or rather support," and "put the rest on the list of widows" the widows mentioned in verses 9–16, which means "register" or "enrol" them.<sup>45</sup> According to Guthrie, the text connotes the idea of respect and material support.<sup>46</sup> F. Davidson comments that, giving widows the essential financial support they require is one way to honour them. A true widow, or one who truly qualifies as one, is one who has neither the finances nor the support of family members. She is abandoned and alone.<sup>47</sup> Walter A. Elwell opines that, "widow really in need is all alone."<sup>48</sup>

First of all, some believe that these words outline the responsibilities of widows who have joined an order of widows' responsibilities which include prayer, hospitality, pastoral house calls, and caring for orphans. The majority of these people advocate for a formal widows' order. They are compensated with alms in exchange for their prayers. Others refer to the clerical position of the widows, which entails ongoing prayer in association with celibacy. Secondly, others make the case that these verses do not address obligations; rather, they establish who qualifies for widow benefits and who does not. Although v. 12 does not refer to the admission vow, there was an official order of widows in addition to the legal acknowledgement of those who were actually alone. The precise virtues; pray day and night, be hospitable, and others, are not obligations to be fulfilled but rather signs of a widow's Christian maturity that helped evaluate whether she should be admitted.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> John Stott, Commentary on 1 Timothy. [https://johnstott.org/bible\\_studies/16-jan-2020/](https://johnstott.org/bible_studies/16-jan-2020/). Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>46</sup> Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistle: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1974), 100.

<sup>47</sup> F. Davidson, ed. *The New Bible Commentary* (London: Inter- Varsity Fellowship), 1070.

<sup>48</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Baker Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.), 1107.

<sup>49</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistle: Word Biblical Commentary*, 273.

Moreover, the study agrees and supports the views that, the text exerts some form of responsibilities on the church to provide assistance to widows based on the imperative form of the verb “tima,” and the distinction of widows given by Paul on how they should to be cared for. The study does not comprehend that, the text only gives the order of widows in the church.

## **2.11 Conclusion**

The chapter has considered the background and exegesis of 1Timothy 5:3. The presentation of 1Timothy 5:3 reveals both the duties and responsibilities giving by Paul to Timothy towards widows that should be adopted by the church today, as well as what qualifies a widow to receive such benefits. It is no doubt that widows in the church should be assisted in diverse ways according to the text and supported by scholarly interpretation. The next chapter will look at understanding the Pentecostal/charismatic churches and their role toward the welfare of widows in Kumasi.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE GHANAIAN**  
**PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES TOWARDS THE WELFARE**  
**OF WIDOWS IN KUMASI**

**3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter considered the exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:3. This chapter takes a look into an account of the nature of Pentecostalism and Charismatism in Kumasi (Ghana) and the mission approach of the churches and their role in social welfare toward widows in Kumasi in relation to 1 Timothy 5:3.

**3.2 The Origin of Pentecostalism**

This section briefly presents the history of Pentecostalism. Most Pentecostal historians believe that, the 1906 revival in Los Angeles in the United States of America led by William Joseph Seymour is the cradle of Pentecostalism (others believe co-founded with Parham).<sup>50</sup> This event is popularly known as the Azusa Street Revival.<sup>51</sup> Seymour was a son of former slaves from Centerville, Louisiana.<sup>52</sup> “He taught himself to read and write and was for a time a student in Charles Fox Parham’s Bible School in Topeka, Kansas.”<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately Parham excluded Seymour from his class and only allowed him to listen from outside the classroom through the half-open door due to Parham’s sympathy with the Ku Klux Klan (Klan members sought the restoration of white supremacy through intimidation and violence aimed at the newly enfranchised freed black men).<sup>54</sup> Seymour was not discouraged but accepted the teachings he received on

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<sup>50</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. Massachusetts, U.S.A), 20.

<sup>51</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 19.

<sup>53</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 19.

the baptism of the spirit from Parham and taught in a Holiness church in Los Angeles.<sup>55</sup> He lived out his black heritage by introducing “Negro spiritual” and “Negro music” in his liturgy.<sup>56</sup> “For him Pentecostalism goes beyond speaking in tongues. It means loving in the face of hate by overcoming the hatred of a whole nation by demonstrating Pentecost which is different from the success-oriented American way of life.”<sup>57</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, graphically presents that, Pentecostalism encompasses Non-White Indigenous Churches, Charismatic Movement, Classical Pentecostal Churches and Neo-Pentecostal Churches.<sup>58</sup>

Vinson opines that, under the ministry of Aimee Semple McPherson in 1920’s and 1930’s, hundreds of Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian ministers who were baptized in the Spirit were forced to leave their churches.<sup>59</sup> The Movement however, came into the lime light in the 1960’s as the Neo-Pentecostal Movement and shattered the misconceptions around it for more than half a century.<sup>60</sup> This leads the discussion into the roots of Pentecostalism in Ghana.

### **3.3 Brief Background of the Selected Churches**

The selected churches for the study are Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry, Assemblies of God Ghana and the Christ Redeemed Church International.

#### **3.3.1 *Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry***

The late Rev. Gregory Ola Akin, a Nigerian born in Ghana, founded and served as the head of Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry.

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<sup>55</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 20.

<sup>57</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 20.

<sup>58</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 226.

<sup>60</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 220.

Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry held its first Sunday morning services at Perpetual International School in North Suntreso on November 29th, 1987, with the day's sermon being given by Rev. Stephen Agyen. The church was founded at this point. By the Grace of God, the second Assembly at Mampong Ashanti was granted to the Harvesters Ministry as a result of their enthusiasm to enter the harvest field.

Over 40 branches of Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry now exist in Ghana. There are numerous locations, including Bantama, Techiman, Mampong, Ejura, Bibiani, Tanso-Techiman, Apatrapa, Bolgatanga, Dabaa, Ahenema Kokoben, and Tech Boadi.

The church affirms the deity of Christ, his virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death on the cross, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, and personal return at his second coming. The church also affirm that all men are born into sin and are under the judgement of God; however, by God's grace, all who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are born again by the Holy Spirit become God's children. Water baptism is administered by the church.

They think that the church ought to matter to regular people from all areas of life. Whoever attends this church, regardless of their previous religious affiliation, will find something to like. In order to benefit society as a whole, the church runs the Harvesters International School and the Hope Hospital at Dabaa.<sup>61</sup>

### ***3.3.2 Assemblies of God Ghana***

The Assemblies of God in Ghana is a part of the global fellowship of Assemblies of God, which has branches in 212 nations. Early in 1931, Rev. Lloyd and Margaret Shirer, missionaries from the Assemblies of God in the United States, travelled from

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.harvestersministry.org/church-history/>

Moshiland, Ouagadougou, which is now in Burkina Faso, to the Northern Region of the former Gold Coast on horses. They established the first Assemblies of God congregation in Yendi with the help of their initial recruits, Miss Beulah Buchwalter and Guy Hickok.

In 1948, the Missionaries constructed the first Assemblies of God Clinic in Saboba, Northern Region. In Nakpanduri, another city in the Northern Region, the second one was constructed in 1950. Vivian Smith later oversaw the operation of a third clinic in Walewale, a maternity clinic.

Under the direction of Rev. Fur Thomas, the first Bible School of Assemblies of God Ghana was established in 1950 at Kumbungu in the Northern Region. A second school, the Southern Ghana Bible Institute, was established a year later and later relocated to Saltpond. As the third Bible School, the Mid Ghana Bible Institute was founded in Kumasi in 1988. The first principal of the School in Saltpond was Rev. David Vespa, a missionary in Ghana from 1966 to 2006.<sup>62</sup>

### ***3.3.3 Christ Redeemed International***

Christ Redeemed International was formed on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 at Patasi Estate in Kumasi by Rev. Solomon Appiah as a Charismatic Church. The mission of the church is to seek to reach the world with the gospel of our Lord Jesus, accompanied by the Holy Spirit. Their primary focus is soul winning, sustenance of the church and the illumination of the light of Christ to the world.<sup>63</sup>

The church envisions to reach the world with the compassion of Christ, preaching grace and salvation through generations.

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<sup>62</sup> <https://majoremmanuel.wordpress.com/2017/07/27/history-of-assemblies-of-god-churchghana/>

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Solomon Appiah, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.



Again, like many churches, the church hopes to establish a school and a hospital to give back to society.

### **3.4 Pentecostalism in Ghana**

In Ghana Peter Newman Anim is credited as the father of Classical Pentecostalism (1890-1984).<sup>64</sup> According to Anita A. Ansah, Peter Anim initially was a member of the Basel Mission but in 1917 he read a publication of an American based Pentecostal church known as the Faith Tabernacle and was converted by its teaching in 1920.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, in the year ensuing, Peter Anim claimed healing from guinea worm attack by faith without medication. This compelled him to leave the Basel Mission and started a branch of the Faith Tabernacle church at Asamankese, in the Eastern Region of Ghana.<sup>66</sup> Through him, many branches of the church were established throughout the country.

In 1937, James Mckeown was sent as a missionary to work with Anim and his group.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly both the Faith Tabernacle church and the British Apostolic church that influenced Anim, were born out of the Azusa street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906.<sup>68</sup> By the end of Mckeown's collaboration with the locals, three different Classical Pentecostal group had emerged due to schism. They are namely, the Christ Apostolic Church, the Apostolic Church, and the Church of Pentecost.<sup>69</sup> The next section will look at charismatism.

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<sup>64</sup> Anita A. Ansah, "Gender Empowerment and Personal Fulfillment in Pentecostalism: A Case of Accra Ghana" (MA Thesis, University of Oslo, May, 2015), 34.

<sup>65</sup> Ansah, Gender Empowerment and Personal Fulfillment in Pentecostalism, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Ansah, Gender Empowerment and Personal Fulfillment in Pentecostalism, 34.

<sup>67</sup> Ansah, Gender Empowerment and Personal Fulfillment in Pentecostalism, 35.

<sup>68</sup> Ansah, Gender Empowerment and Personal Fulfillment in Pentecostalism, 35.

<sup>69</sup> Ansah, Gender Empowerment and Personal Fulfillment in Pentecostalism, 35.

### **3.5 The origin of Charismatism**

The Pentecostal movement of the early 20th century is where the charismatic movement's origins can be found. Pentecostalism, which developed within Protestant Christianity, placed a strong emphasis on the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, miraculous healing, and other phenomena. Many people consider the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles to be a pivotal moment in the history of the Pentecostal movement as indicated earlier.<sup>70</sup>

The charismatic movement expanded into larger phenomena in the middle of the 20th century. It crossed religious lines and drew followers from different branches of Christianity, including Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox. The Duquesne Weekend, a retreat for Catholic students at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1967, was one of the significant occasions that characterized the growth of the charismatic movement. Speaking in tongues was one of the Holy Spirit's gifts that many retreat attendees experienced, and this occasion was crucial to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.<sup>71</sup>

### **3.6 Charismatism in Ghana**

In Africa South of the Sahara, the expression 'charismatic' mostly refer to the new wave of independent Pentecostal movements, as opposed to Europe where the term fairly refers to renewals groups working within older and firmly established historic mainline churches.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> W. Jack Hayford, *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006). 324.

<sup>71</sup> Hayford, *The Charismatic Century*, 324.

<sup>72</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah Gyedu, *African Charismatics: Current Development within Independence Indigenous Pentecostal ism in Ghana* (Netherlands: African Christian Press, 2005), 12.

Africa Charismatic Churches largely take inspiration from their foreign counterpart in North America, new Pentecostal, and televangelistic movements with their mega – church philosophies dominating the world for Christianity and religious entrepreneurial ambition that motivate people to translate their salvation into practical everyday achievements in business, education, financial and family life.<sup>73</sup>

Charismatic Christianity is equably the Christianity of attention in Ghana, and has developed last three decades.<sup>74</sup> Their identifying characteristics include; a special attraction for the youth, a lay-oriented leadership, and ecclesiastical office based on a person's charismatic gifting, innovating use of modern media technologies, common for church growth, mostly urban centered congregation, fashion conscious dress code for members, English as principal mode of communication absence of religious symbolism in places of worship ardent desire to be successful.<sup>75</sup>

It is observed that the charismatic ministries became prominent in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1970s. However in Ghana, the movement become popular in July 1988, when the Christian Action Faith International founded and headed by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan –Williams hosted Oral Robert, an American healing Evangelist and Archbishop Benson Idahosa, a Nigerian neo-Pentecostal healing Evangelist in a crusade in Ghana.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, history tells us that, the charismatic ministries emerged from the neo-Pentecostal churches in the late 1970, as noted earlier.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Gyedu, *African Charismatics*, 13.

<sup>74</sup> Gyedu, *African Charismatics*, 13.

<sup>75</sup> Gyedu, *African Charismatics*, 13.

<sup>76</sup> Gyedu, *African Charismatics*, 108.

<sup>77</sup> Gyedu, *African Charismatics*, 108.

### **3.7 The Role of Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in the Provision of Social (Welfare) Service in Ghana**

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Ghana are known for their emphasis on providing social services and support to their members and communities. Some of the social services provided by these churches include: Education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and disaster relief and empowerment programs.

#### ***3.7.1 Provision of Education Services***

On education, many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Ghana operate schools and educational institutions, providing access to education for children and youth from low-income families. Harvesters Evangelistic runs the Harvesters Education Complex at Bantama. Assemblies of God has a number of basic and secondary schools, for instance, Assemblies of God Secondary School at Kwadaso in Kumasi. The Church of Pentecost runs a number of schools across Ghana, including basic schools, secondary schools, and vocational schools.<sup>78</sup>

#### ***3.7.2 Provision of Health Facilities***

Some churches operate health clinics and hospitals, providing healthcare services to members and the wider community. Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry in Kumasi operates the Hope Hospital in the Atwima Nwabiagya District, serving as the largest Hospital in the area. The International Central Gospel Church, for example, operates the ICGC Hospital in Accra, which provides a range of medical services, including surgeries, laboratory services, and specialized care for women and children.<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyedu, *The Prophetic and Charismatic Churches in Ghana*, (1996), 1945.

<sup>79</sup> Harun Mwau, *The Rise of Charismatic Christianity in Ghana* (Africa Research Institute, 2019), 14.

### ***3.7.3 Provision of Social Empowerment Programs***

Charismatic churches in Ghana also engage in poverty alleviation programs, including providing food, clothing, and shelter for vulnerable members of society. For example, the Action Chapel International operates a program called "Operation Feed Yourself", which aims to promote sustainable agriculture and alleviate poverty in rural areas.<sup>80</sup> Under the initiative of ICGC, some communities in Accra have received water Projects. The water project aims to improve community service by supplying clean drinking water to specific catchment areas in Accra, the nation's capital.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Ghana play an important role in providing social services and support to their members and communities, particularly in areas where the government is unable to provide adequate support.

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<sup>80</sup> John Azumah, "The Charismatic Movement and Its Impact on Church in Ghana" (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, 2001), 13.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**IMPLICATIONS OF 1 TIMOTHY 5:3 FOR WIDOWS IN**  
**PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES IN KUMASI**

**4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter considered the origins and nature of Pentecostalism and brief history of Pentecostal/Charismatic streams in Ghana and their role towards the care of widows was covered. This chapter analyzed the field report gathered through interviews; it also interpreted and discussed the data in the light of 1 Timothy 5:3.

**4.2 Findings from Exegesis**

The discussions done in chapter two under section (2.11) revealed the contextual meaning of the text. A careful examination of the text as done in that chapter points to the fact that the church is instructed to care for widows, though not all widows as understood in a broader context from 1 Timothy 5:3-16, but those who neither have the finances nor family members to extend a helping hand to them. From the exegesis the key Greek words in the text has the following meanings "Τίμα" (tima) means "to honour" or "to value" and "Χήρας" means a 'widow'. "Τας" means "the" while "Ὅντως" translated as "to be".

**4.3 Findings and Analysis of Field Data**

On the field, a total of twenty four (24) people were interviewed to solicit their views on the subject under study especially responsibility of the church towards widows. Among these interviewees were ten (10) church leaders including Pastors, Elders, Deacon/Deaconesses and other auxiliary leaders. Five (5) were widows of all categories and nine (9) were other church members of various categories. All these personalities

were from the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches selected within Kumasi. The churches selected were Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry (8 people), Assemblies of God (6 people), Christ Redeemed International (10 people). They were asked to respond to questions in relation to their understanding of 1 Timothy 5:3, how best the church can apply this text to care for widows, challenges of widows and the way forward with respect to the Church's response to their widows welfare.

#### ***4.3.1 Contemporary Understanding of the Text***

Interviewees, respondents and some scholars were consulted on the meaning of the text under study. Five (5) out of the ten (10) church leaders interviewed in a separate interviews pointed out that the text mandates the church to support the widows physically. They observed that, the text commands the church to show proper recognition and care for widows who are genuinely in need, ensuring they receive the necessary support and assistance to meet their basic needs.<sup>81</sup> Their views agreed with the exegetical finding that, the verb “tima” and the cognate noun “time,” carry a degree of a price or honorarium for widows who are in need.<sup>82</sup>

Two (2) of the church leaders noted that, the text gives the distinction between the various categories of widows in the church and therefore means a woman whose spouse is dead and has no chance nor opportunity to remarry, sometimes through old age.<sup>83</sup> From the exegetical study their position can be understood from the broader passage found in 1 Timothy 5:3-16, especially, verse 4-10.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Leaders, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

<sup>83</sup> An Interviewed with Selected Church Leaders, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

However, Three (3) of the church leaders could not offer any explanation as to their understanding of the text as at the time of the interview.

Moreover, the five (5) widows interviewed in a separate interviews, generally understood that, the text enjoins the church to show love and respect to widows through care and support in any area they may need assistance. They really stressed on physical and spiritual support.<sup>85</sup> Giving the verb (tima) which also means respect in 1Timothy 6:1, and the translation by NLT, the understanding of these widows are in the right order.<sup>86</sup>

Again, out of the nine (9) church members of all categories, five (5) understood the text to mean physical support which the church is required to give to widows who have no children or relatives to care for them. They noted, “honour” means to give financial support.<sup>87</sup> This is in consonance with findings of the exegesis that indicated honouring or valuing widows suggests that they are to be treated with respect and care.<sup>88</sup>

Two (2) of them noted that, the text meant the care for widows is not optional for the church but obligatory.<sup>89</sup> Their views can be affirmed through the exegetical analysis of the text in chapter two that, the present imperative of the verb (tima) shows that, this is a command or instruction for the church.<sup>90</sup> The other two respondents in this division also noted that, the text meant the church should show respect to the widows by not infringing on their rights.<sup>91</sup> Their understanding is affirmed by the exegetical analysis that widows are not to be neglected or taken advantage of.

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<sup>85</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Widows, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

<sup>87</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Members, 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>88</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

<sup>89</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Members, 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>90</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

<sup>91</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Members, 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.



Given the responses from the various respondents, and comparing with the contextual meaning of the text in chapter two, it is now clear that, there is an understanding of the text among the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. This implies that, the church is well informed and enlightened to carry on this mandate of caring for widows without excuse.

#### ***4.3.2 Challenges of Widows in the Ghanaian Society***

The focus of the discussions here was to examine the challenges of widows in Ghanaian society, particularly, those in the church and how they can be assisted. The church leaders were asked to define a widow in their own view in separate interviews. Ten (10) out of the ten (10) respondents generally defined a widow as a woman who has lost her husband and no one to provide for her. They further maintained that, though the term “widow” typically refers to women; there is corresponding term “widower” for men who have lost their wives.<sup>92</sup> Their assertion confirms Köstenberger’s views in the exegetical analysis in chapter two that, “‘Χήρας” (cheras) is the accusative plural form of the noun “χήρα” (chera), meaning “widow”.<sup>93</sup> A widow is therefore a woman. Their views also reflect the researches definition of a widow in their general definition that a widow is a woman whose spouse has died.<sup>94</sup>

Moreover, regarding the challenges faced by widows, five (5) widows in separate interviews, four (4) enumerated, financial, accommodation, loneliness and health issues as their major challenges due to high dependency resulting from people under their care, deprivation of inheritance right and widowhood rite. One (1) people claimed not to have had any challenge since the demise of her husband. Of these two (2) of them went through widowhood rites which was approved by the church, while three (3) did not go

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<sup>92</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Leaders, 6th, 11th and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter two Section 2.11.

<sup>94</sup> See chapter one.

through the rites, claiming it is against their faith.<sup>95</sup> Their views affirm that of Victoria Brown and Ebenezer Durojaye on the challenges of widowhood in chapter one.<sup>96</sup> However, concerning the question of widowhood rites, whether church leaders should allow widows within their congregation to go through or not, out of the ten (10) respondents, seven (7) answered in the affirmative, pointing out that, the concept of widowhood rites may encompass various aspects related to the rights and well-beings of widows within a specific cultural or legal context. Three (3) answered no, stating that, the practice is archaic and contain elements that is contrary to the Christian faith.<sup>97</sup>

Again, when the church leaders were quizzed on the challenges they face in assisting widows in separate interviews, all the ten (10) respondents observed financial constrain, varying needs and family dynamics as the main challenges faced by the Pentecostal/Charismatic church in supporting widows.<sup>98</sup>

It is obvious from the views expressed by respondents that widows have challenges that needs to be cared for by the church, yet the church is also faced with many constraints limiting its ability to extend a helping hand to the widows. This definitely calls for drastic responds from the church to fulfill this responsibility according to 1Timothy 5:3.

#### ***4.3.3 GPCC's Response to the Welfare of Widows***

The task under this discussion is to unravel the churches' response in fulfilling the mandate of caring for widows in accordance with the text under study. To do this, ten (10) church leaders were interviewed from selected Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. It was observed that, they do respond to the widows among them yearly. During the

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<sup>95</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Widows, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>96</sup> See chapter one 1.7.3.

<sup>97</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Leaders, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>98</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Leaders, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

end of the year people bring clothes and foodstuffs which are distributed to them.<sup>99</sup> When asked whether widow care is a command for the church or not? Nine (9) answered yes while one (1) said it's relative because it is not categorically stated in the Bible.

Moreover, these leaders generally agree that, the best way for the church to apply this scripture to respond to the needs of widows may include the following; Firstly, the church should establish a ministry for widows within the church that focuses caring for widows. Such a ministry can provide a framework for identifying widows accessing their needs and coordinating support efforts. Secondly, the church cultivates a culture of care. There should be an environment within the church where members are encouraged to be aware of and responsive to the needs of widows. Thirdly and finally, the church should promote empathy, compassion and willingness to help those in dire and vulnerable situations.<sup>100</sup> The five (5) widows interviewed separately, largely opined that, the church should support them financially on monthly bases to enable them make ends meet.<sup>101</sup>

#### ***4.3.4 Expected role of the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in the Lives of Widows***

The charge under this discussion is to determine what the church can do to improve its care for widows under the task of 1Timothy 5:3. Then twenty four (24) respondents interviewed largely agreed that there is more the church can do improve upon this responsibility.

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<sup>99</sup> Interviewed Selected Church Leaders, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>100</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Leaders, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

<sup>101</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church widows, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

Firstly, they agreed that a comprehensive support system should be set up in place to assist widows who need diverse assistance. This should address various aspects of widowhood such as financial assistance, emotional support help and spiritual guidance. This can involve financial planning workshops, grief counseling and pastoral care.

Secondly, there should be clear policies and guidelines regarding the care of widows within the church. This can include defining illegibility criteria outlining the type of assistance provided and establish procedures for accessing needs and delivering report.

Thirdly, there should be regular communication and coordination church leaders, volunteers and support groups involved in widow care, as well as monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the care provided to widows.

Fourthly, the church should provide and equip church members involved in widow care ministry through training. This can include education on grief and loss, cultural sensitivity and understanding specific challenges faced by widows. Well-trained volunteers can offer more effective and empathic care.

Lastly, the church should serve as an advocacy and empowerment for widows by promoting their rights and well- being within the broader community. This can involve raising awareness of the challenges faced by widows, addressing societal injustices and discrimination and promoting policies that protect their rights. The researchers think that, this should be very much prioritized by the church because out of fourteen (14) church members and widows questioned on the knowledge about PNDC Law 111, nine (9) are aware of it, whiles five (5) have not heard about it at all.

#### 4.4 Discussion

The focus under this section is to discuss GPCC'S understanding of the text with scholarly work on the subject matter.

According to five (5) church leaders interviewed, pointed out that the text instructs the church to support the widows physically. They observed that, the text tells the church to show proper recognition and care for widows who are genuinely in need, ensuring they receive the necessary support and assistance to meet their basic needs. This view is supported by the NIV that, the church should give proper recognition to widows, the assertion by Guthrie that, the text connotes the idea of respect and material support and John Stott that widows ought to be given proper recognition.<sup>102</sup>

The understanding by another two (2) of the church leaders noted that, the text gives the distinction between the various categories of widows in the church and therefore means a woman whose spouse is dead and has neither chance nor opportunity to remarry, sometimes through old age. Their views are affirmed by Ellicott, Bernard, Lock Conzelmann, Hanson and others who think the text spell out the duties of widows who have been enrolled in an order of widows, duties that include prayer, hospitality, pastoral house calls, and care for orphans” as cited by Mounce.<sup>103</sup>

Moreover, the five (5) widows interviewed in a separate interviews, generally understood that, the text enjoins the church to show love and respect to widows through care and support in any area they may need assistance. They really stressed on physical and spiritual support. Their understanding agree with, NLT translation, F. Davidsons and Craig Keener that, the text implies care and financial support.

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<sup>102</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter two sections 2.11.

Again, out of the nine (9) church members of all categories, five (5) understood the text to mean physical support the church is required to give to widows who have no children or relatives to care for them. They noted “honour” means to give financial support is a dignified and respectful manner to widows.<sup>104</sup> Their understanding also affirmed by F.F Davidson that, giving widows the essential financial support they require is one way to honour them. Two (2) of them noted that, the text means the care for widows is not optional for the church but obligatory. Their views can be affirmed through the exegetical analysis of the text in chapter two that, the present imperative of the verb (timaao) shows that, this is a command or instruction as opines by Adreas J. Köstenberger. The other two respondents in this division also noted that the text means the church should show respect to the widows by not infringing on their rights. Their views affirms that of Adreas J. Köstenberger that, the focus on honouring or valuing widows suggests that they are to be treated with respect and care, and not neglected or taken advantage of.

The study understands from the discussion, both respondents and scholars that, the scripture has placed upon the church sacred responsibilities that should not either be ignored or under practiced. Throughout scripture God deems it a great honour when the widow is well treated and cared for in any society. With the thorough understanding of the scripture, the study hopes to see GPCC’s being the pace-setters among Christian denominations to creating a sustainable support for widows who are left alone and are part of the church, and even beyond the walls of the church. The study believes that going forward GPCC’s will seek for an avenue to set up a benevolent fund to care for widows and the vulnerable within its reach.

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<sup>104</sup> Interviewed with Selected Church Members, 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

A critical look at the challenges faced by widows who are really widows and the constraints faced by the church to address these needs points to the fact the future of the ministry of widow care bleak. However, from the perspectives of the majority of respondents, there is more the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches can do to honour this noble responsibility as given by Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:3.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary of the Findings**

In summary, the study examined 1 Timothy 5:3 and its implications for the role of the Ghanaian church towards the welfare of widows in some selected Pentecostal/charismatic churches. The research also investigated the meaning of 1 Timothy 5:3 using the exegetical approach. The exegetical finding in chapter two revealed that widow care for the church is a command. Again, it further discussed the challenges confronting widows in the Ghanaian society, particularly, those within the church, the responds of the church towards widow care and how the church can improve its care for widows. The research used qualitative approach to analyze the data collected to arrive at a conclusion.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

The care for widows is an essential aspect of Christian ministry. In view of this, the research investigated 1 Timothy 5:3 exegetically and its implications for the role of the Ghanaian church in some selected Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Kumasi. The research revealed that, throughout the Bible there is a consistent care for the vulnerable including widows, though it is not explicitly stated that care for widows is a command. However, a careful exegetical analysis of the text revealed that such care is a command or an instruction for the church that must be observed strictly. The study has revealed that, “honour widows who are really widows” only refers to those widows who are truly destitute and have no means of support. The researchers observed through our respondents that, the church is aware of the importance or the need to care for widows but have not prioritized it. Reflecting on the social services provided by



Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Chapter three 3.5, it is obvious that the responsibility of caring for widows can be done consistently. The researchers therefore conclude that, consistent and sustainable widow care is a neglected duty among the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and issues that emerged out of the research, the researchers make the following recommendations;

- That the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic church should set up widowhood ministry governed by matured leaders and technocrats within the church to provide holistic widow care for widows at all levels. By adopting a holistic approach, this ministry can ensure that widows receive the physical, emotional, and spiritual assistance they need to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of their loss.
- That the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic church conduct needs assessment of their members and by that set up a welfare fund for widows. This would ensure that these vulnerable individuals receive the necessary support and assistance to navigate through the difficulties they may face. By initiating such an assessment and subsequently establishing a welfare fund, the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic church would demonstrate their commitment to serving their members in a holistic manner, addressing not only their spiritual needs but also offering practical help in times of need.
- That the Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic church should endeavor to educate their members on their human right provided by the constitution. By imparting knowledge and fostering a deep understanding of the constitution and its

provisions, the church can empower its members to advocate for their rights and support widows in their community. This educational endeavor serves not only to enhance awareness but also to promote justice and equality within the church and society at large. Through these efforts, the Pentecostal/Charismatic church can play a pivotal role in upholding and safeguarding human rights in Ghana.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED

No.	Name	Organization/Church	Position	Date of Interview
		<b>CHURCH LEADERS</b>		
1	Patrick Yankyerah	Rhema Assemblies Of God Church-Atonsu	Head Pastor	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
2.	Mr. Akwasi Prempeh	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Financial Secretary	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
3.	Nana Yaw Boateng	Assemblies of God, Ghana	Youth President	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
4.	John Baidoo	Christ Redeemed Int.	Pastor	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
5.	Eric Reginald Frimpong	Christ Redeemed Int.	Pastor/Financial Secretary	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
6.	Hanah Manu	Christ Redeemed Int.	Pastor	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
7.	Nancy Vero Adams	Christ Redeemed Int.	Osofo Maame	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
8.	Frank Kwadwo Agyei	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Elder	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
9.	Samuel Berko Sarpong	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Pastor	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
10.	Benjamin Kwaku Sarpong	Rhema Assemblies Of God Church-Atonsu	Vice President (Youth Department)	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
		<b>WIDOWS</b>		
11.	Ms. Adwoa Gyebi	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Deaconess	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
12.	Ms. Ama Bonsu	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Deaconess	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
13.	Mrs. Gloria Ekua Saba	Rhema Assemblies Of God-Atonsu	Teacher	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
14.	Madam Victoria Amoako	Rhema Assemblies Of God-Atonsu	Women's Ministry Leader	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
15.	Margaret Kafui	Rhema Assemblies Of God-Atonsu	Sunday School Secretary	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023

No.	Name	Organization/Church	Position	Date of Interview
		<b>CHURCH MEMBERS</b>		
16.	Eric Owusu	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Deacon	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
17.	Milicent Dadzie	Christ Redeemed Int.	Usher	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
18.	Helena Gyempeh	Charismatic Church	Usher	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
19.	Mrs. Beatrice	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Member	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
20.	Mrs. Anastasia Boateng	Harvesters Evangelistic Ministry	Deaconess	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
21.	Francisca Ofori	Christ Redeemed Int.	Member	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
22.	Michael Owusu Afriyie	Rhema Assembly Of God - Atonsu	Students Pastor	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
23.	Addai John Harrision	Rhema Assembly Of God - Atonsu	Church Board Secretary/Deacon	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
24.	Mary-Love Adwoa Aduboffour	Rhema Assembly Of God - Atonsu	Administrative Secretary	13 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023



**APPENDIX II**  
**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHURCH LEADERS**  
**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, Ernest Anyimadu Akowuah and Charles Afriyie Gyamfi are undergraduate students of Christian Service University College, at the Department of Theology.

The subject under study is “a study of 1Timothy 5:3 and Its Implications for the role of the Ghanaian church towards the welfare of widows in some selected Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Kumasi”. We humbly request that you help us work on this subject by providing answers to the following questions to the best of your abilities. Thank you.

**PART I**

All information provided shall be handled as confidential.

1. Name .....
2. Gender .....
3. Age (optional) .....
4. Church/Denomination .....
5. Position in Church or Denomination .....

## PART II

6. What is the meaning of 1 Timothy 5:3, to the best of your knowledge? “Honour widows who are really widows”
7. Who is a widow? .....
8. Are there widows in your church? .....
9. Does your church apply this scripture? .....
10. Do you think it is enough on how they should be handled?
11. Do you have any evidence of how your church has been supporting the widows?
12. Has your church any structural program that cares for or supports widows?
13. What name is given to that programme?
14. How does your church currently identify widows in need of care?
15. What is the best way the church should apply this scripture?
16. What challenges does your church face in assisting the widows?  
  
How does your church ensure that the care provided to widows is consistent and sustainable? ....
17. Do you agree that widow care is a command for the church?  
  
Do you approve of widowhood rite for widows in your church? Can you give reasons for or against?  
  
In what ways do you think the church can improve its care for widows?  
  
Briefly give your suggestion, if any .....

**APPENDIX III**  
**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHURCH WIDOWS**  
**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**

Dear Madam,

We, Ernest Anyimadu Akowuah and Charles Afriyie Gyamfi are undergraduate students of Christian Service University College, at the Department of Theology.

The subject under study is “a study of 1Timothy 5:3 and Its Implications for the role of the Ghanaian church towards the welfare of widows in some selected Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Kumasi”. We humbly request that you help us work on this subject by providing answers to the following questions to the best of your abilities. Thank you.

**PART I**

All information provided shall be handled as confidential.

1. Name .....
2. Gender .....
3. Age (optional) .....
4. Church/Denomination .....
5. Position in Church or Denomination .....

## PART II

6. How long have you been a widow? .....
7. How many people do you have under your care? .....
8. Did you go through widowhood rites? .....
9. Describe what you went through if yes.....
10. Did the church approve of your widowhood rites? .....
11. How did your late spouse's family treat you? .....
12. How long did you go through the rites? .....
13. What challenges have you encountered as a widow? .....
14. Does the church help you to cope with widowhood?  
.....
15. If yes, what do they do to help you? .....
16. Do church members help you to cope with widowhood?  
.....
17. If yes, what do they do to help to help you? .....
18. Are you aware of Interstate Succession Law or PNDC Law 111?  
.....
19. What is your understanding of 1Timothy 5:3? "Honour widows who are really  
widows"  
.....
20. Describe how you would like the church to apply this scripture to care of  
widows in the church.  
Briefly give your suggestion if any, .....

**APPENDIX IV**  
**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHURCH MEMBERS**  
**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, Ernest Anyimadu Akowuah and Charles Afriyie Gyamfi are undergraduate students of Christian Service University College, at the Department of Theology.

The subject under study is “a study of 1 Timothy 5:3 and Its Implications for the role of the Ghanaian church towards the welfare of widows in some selected Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Kumasi”. We humbly request that you help us work on this subject by providing answers to the following questions to the best of your abilities. Thank you.

**PART I**

All information provided shall be handled as confidential.

1. Name .....
2. Gender .....
3. Age (optional) .....
4. Church/Denomination .....
5. Position in Church or Denomination .....

## PART II

6. How long have you been a church member? .....
7. Are there widows in your church? .....
8. How do you know them? .....
9. How do you relate with them? .....
10. How does your church support widows?
11. Has your church any structural programme that supports widows?  
.....
12. If yes, mention the name of such programme. ....
13. Do church members support widows individually?  
.....
14. What is your understanding of 1 Timothy 5:3 “honour widows who are really  
widows”....
15. Have you heard about PNDC Law 111? .....
16. If yes, what do you know about? .....
17. Describe how you want this scripture to be practised by the church. Briefly  
give reasons if any .....