

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**WOMEN'S MINISTRY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROWTH OF
THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST- SUNYANI CENTRAL DISTRICT**

**BY
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DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JUNE, 2019

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY
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AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY WITH
ADMINISTRATION.**

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JUNE, 2019

DECLARATION

I, Daniel Okaakyire Ameyaw, do hereby declare that this project work report is the result of my own original research except for sections of which references have been duly made and to the best of my 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

To the glory of the Most High God, this research is dedicated to my treasured and dear wife; Mrs. Mary Ameyaw, to my Area Head; Aps. Mark Obeng Andoh, my first born, Moses A. Ameyaw together with my children; Jonathan Ameyaw, Mercy Ameyaw, Emmanuel Ameyaw, Samuel Arthur Ameyaw and Johnson Ameyaw.

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Moreover, not forgetting Apostle Ekow Badu Wood (The Church of Pentecost, Former Area Head Asokwa) who permitted me to pursue this course. Thank you all and I wish you all the very best in life.

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And not forgetting Miss Victoria Tweneboah popularly known as “Mother” for typesetting and printing of this project work. May the good Lord replenish you a billion-fold whatever you have lost because me. God richly bless you all.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoP	Church of Pentecost
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Ps.	Pastor
Dr.	Doctor in philosophy
Prof.	Professor
PIWC	Pentecost International Worship Centre
Presbyters	This entails The Area Head, District Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Deaconess and all other Ministry leaders

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Without conducting any official census, it is obvious in most churches not only in Africa but across the globe that women form the majority in terms of membership. Notwithstanding this fact, it is quite evidential yet a little contradictory to realize that this same majority are less recognized in the frontline when it comes to church matters. Every year, Forbes Magazine releases its list of, “*The World’s Hundred (100) Most Powerful Women.*” Such activity as embarked by Forbes is a clear indication of how the secular society fully embraces and are concern about the contribution of women towards any given organization. On the contrary, it seems churches are not fully clear about the involvement of women. Questions such as how to integrate women in their leadership? Should the women speak on the pulpit? What kind of authority should be assigned to women and among others are some issues that most churches battle with.¹

In recent times, there is a growing number of women in the high ranks of organizations, businesses and even in leading countries. For instance, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the twenty-fourth (24th) President of Liberia, is the first female President in Africa. These recent changes have led to probing further into various traditional beliefs and limits which women are often tagged.

In the Church context, many women have proven to be good leaders in their various position. Some who are assisting pastors and even pastors of their own ministry have exhibited great leadership skills and have mass church growth. For instance, Paula

¹ <http://christinaryanclaypool.com/blog1/2012/06/27/the-role-of-women-in-a-growing-church/> accessed on June 27, 2012.

Michelle White is an international Christian evangelist and teacher, an author of many books, a philanthropist and a TV personality. She presides and leads (pastors) the New Destiny Christian Center in Apopka, Florida. Her church has thousands of members, not bounded by culture and it's also non-denominational.² Some of the contributions these women bring on board towards church growth and the societal building are very great and this seems to question the ancient perception about the involvement of women in church activities and their abilities (potentials) towards church growth.

From my own pastoral experience, I have witnessed several events where women were able to change the whole atmosphere, gave out their best and caused significant changes that promoted church affability and growth. In the Church of Pentecost for instance, when the women ministry is celebrating their week, their costume, organizational skills, and general conduct are very unique. You can really see they've taken charge (they plan the program, preach and take on the various role). Everyone around knows that there is something special going on. Even aside their week, they often teach, have regular prayers and their general support towards various needs contribute massively to church growth. Biblically, for example, one of the people who was used by God, in the Old Testament, during the departure of the Israelites from Egypt was Prophetess Miriam (Exodus 15:20, KJV). Also, in order to ensure a national victory, Deborah, an influential leader who served as a judge and Prophetess at the same time, was used by God in leading the army of God (Judges 4–5, NIV). In the ministry of the early church, the New Testament also helps us to find some of the essential roles played by women in the direction of the growth of the Church. Though the status of women was not given much attention as well as most of their contributions even ignored, it never stopped the apostle Paul from frequently

² <https://www.ranker.com/list/famous-female-pastors/reference>, accessed on 24th April, 2019.

acknowledging and appreciating the support of the various women who significantly contributed to his ministry. For instance, Paul acknowledged women who “worked hard with him” in the work of the gospel (Romans 16:6, 12; and Philippians 4:3, NIV).

Putting these few ideas together, the researcher seeks to explore the limits of women in ministry towards church growth. Are women really contributing their quota towards church growth? Or there seem to be one in a million of women who can make a significant contribution. These and many other questions that will be later unfolded are the reasons that drive the researcher's interest in the chosen field of studies. The focus of this research is basically centered on the Church of Pentecost Sunyani Central District. The phenomenon of women's ministry is found already in the Church of Pentecost as one of its numerous ministries. It is a deliberate ministry adopted by the church for various significant reasons.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

David Crabtree mentioned in his research that the sustaining congregational force are women and they always form the large majority of the active church members.³ This simply means that ignoring the involvement of women in the growth of the church is somehow difficult.

This reveals that the role of women in ministry need to be paid to its responsibility of the various churches to steer the contribution of women towards church growth. It is on this premise that the researcher seeks to explore further about women in ministry – an implication for church growth. The case study of the research is the Church of Pentecost Sunyani Central, one of the fastest growing Churches in Ghana.

³D.F. Crabtree, “Women Liberation and The Church” *In Sarah Betley Doely* (ed) *Women*, (1970): 19.

The main question of the study is: what's the contribution of Women's ministry of the Church of Pentecost in Sunyani District? The study further seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is the impact of the leadership of women in the growth of the Church of Pentecost Sunyani District?
2. What are the challenges women face in their ministry in the Church of Pentecost Sunyani District?

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the study is to investigate the ministry of women and their contribution to the growth of the Church of Pentecost in Sunyani District. The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the impact of women's ministry in the growth of the Church of Pentecost in Sunyani District.
2. To assess the challenges of women's ministry in the Church of Pentecost, Sunyani District.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study centered on the Sunyani Central District of the Church of Pentecost and discusses the ministry of women in the Church of Pentecost and whether the ministry of women is relevant or not to the growth and survival of the church. Also, the limited time made it difficult to study the whole Church of Pentecost. There are many reasons for the choice of setting the limit. For one, the area provides more information which will enhance the depth of the work. Two, financial constraint is one other major reason for the limitation

of the area of data collection. Hence, there is a need for future studies on the topic, using any district and even other issues related to the concept.

1.6 Research Methodology

Qualitative research is an inquiry aimed at unfolding and clarifying human experience as it occurs in people's lives⁴. The researcher used qualitative research as a means of gathering the relevant information related to the research area.

1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The secondary data was obtained from relevant books and journals, and the database of Sunyani Church of Pentecost. The primary data sources form the core of this study and it was obtained through field interviews, and personal observation.

The researcher tried and braced his thought and perception of the research topic. According to Munhall, bracketing phenomenological researcher as the process of identifying and holding abeyance of any pre-conceived belief and opinion about the phenomenon under study.⁵ It was necessary to allow the participants to describe their experience openly and remained interested, attentive and non-judgmental.

1.6.2 Study Population and Sampling Design

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the respondents. The sample was drawn from a population of the church of Pentecost, Sunyani Central District aged group between 24 and 65 who volunteered and agreed to participate in the study. Six groups from

⁴ D. E. Polkinghorne, "Language and Meaning: Data Collection in Qualitative Research" *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), (2005): 137.

⁵ P.A. Munhall, *Nursing Research: A Qualitative Perspective* (Boston, MA: Jones & Bartlett, 2001), 470.

different local assembly in the church of Pentecost Sunyani central district were invited to voluntarily participate in the study.

The study population includes lay leaders, ministry executives, elders, deacons, deaconess, and members of the church in Sunyani district of the Church of Pentecost. These people constitute the respondents since they are the stakeholders in the church at the district level.

1.7 Literature Review

Every research requires the consideration of the views of some other scholars who have carried out similar studies. This is essential in order to give a sense of direction to the study on hand.

1.7.1 *Women and the Church*

According to Kroeger, one of the well-kept yet known secrets in Christianity is the chief role played by women in the Church⁶. Her statement is backed by scriptures, in that during the death of Jesus Christ; women were the last disciples to have left the cross (Luke 23:55, NIV) and not only that, but records also has it that women were the first to visit the empty tomb on the third day. (Luke 24:1, NIV).

There are two main approaches to the involvement of women, particularly in the Church. They are the Traditional view (majority perspective) and the Egalitarian view (minority perspective). Gasque further explains that the traditional view lay much emphasis on submission and dependence. They are of the view that a woman's role; whether in the Church, at home, or in the society should be subjected to the leadership of her husband or a male leadership. Nonetheless, the Egalitarian's are of the opinion that there are no

⁶ Catherine Kroeger, *The Neglected History of Women in the Early Church*, (2018)
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-17/neglected-history-of-women-in-early-church.html#storystream> accessed on April 17, 2016.

scriptures which deter women from sharing in the leadership with men at Church or at home.⁷ These different perspectives have stirred up many controversies in the integration of women in the main-frame of the Church. A typical example is about the need for women to be silent in the Church.

1.7.2 Women's Silence in the Church

“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.” (1 Corinthians 14:33-35 NIV). At first glance of this scripture, one may easily conclude that women should not speak at all in the Church. Thus, anything with regards to public speaking in the Church should never be done by any woman. Nonetheless, the same author, Apostle Paul, mentioned situations where women are allowed to pray and prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:34, NIV).

Notwithstanding this, there is a different argument on the issue of women being silent at Church. As explained by Deligiannides, 1 Corinthians 14:33 – 35 means that women shouldn’t teach in the Church and also, they are not permitted to exercise any authority over men; which implies that they shouldn’t take any leadership position that will give them influence over men. He further said that if any woman is gifted to teach, she should teach the young women to love their husbands and to be self-controlled, pure, working hard at home, to be kind, and to be submissive to their husbands (Titus 2: 3 – 5).⁸

⁷ W. Ward Gasque, “The Role of Women in the Church in Society and in the Home.” *Priscilla Papers*, Vol. 2, (1988): 2.

⁸Hariton Deligiannides, *The Role of Women in the Church*, August 30th, 2016.

According to Jackson, the G./reek word for silence as used in 1 Corinthians 14:34, is “Chicago” (keep silence). He further added that “siago” doesn’t demand absolute and unqualified silence, rather, a careful examination of “siago” divulges that the context mentioned the nature of stillness under consideration.⁹ Other researchers show that there are two main rationales behind the scripture. First is to ensure proper order in the Church and second is for proper demonstration or acknowledgment of authority.¹⁰ God is a God of order but He also doesn’t segregate between males and females; for we are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28, NIV).

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study is limited to the Sunyani District of the Church of Pentecost because of its immense contribution toward the church’s growth.

The research work is significant in the following ways:

1. The knowledge of women in ministry will help identify, appreciate and strategize the contribution of women towards Church growth.
2. One of the main goals of every Church is to promote the growth of the Church. This research will bring factors that will be highly advantageous to this goal.
3. An appropriate and appreciative understanding of the role of women in the Church of Pentecost will serve as a benchmark of knowing whether the ordination of women as clergy is really necessary.

⁹Jackson Wayne, "1 Corinthians 14:34 - "Silence" in the Church." Christian Courier.com. Access date: December 5, 2018. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/471-1-corinthians-14-34-silence-in-the-church>.

¹⁰ Do women have to remain silent in church? <https://www.gotquestions.org/amp/women-silent-church.html>

In general terms, the research findings will not only benefit a local church but the Church of Pentecost worldwide and many other Churches. Therefore, the study is valuable to be noted.

The research will also be a very vital document to the leadership of the church especially at a time where there is an ongoing debate that women should be ordained as ministers in the church. Also, the impact of the ministry of women towards Church growth and the development of women as a whole can be enormous and needs be considered. The study is significant because of the assertion that with the ministry of women the greatest variable is the growth of the church.

1.9 Organization of the Research Report

The study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one evaluated the general introduction to the study. The aim of the study is to examine the ministry of women and their contribution to the growth of the Church of Pentecost in Sunyani District.

Chapter two explores previous works in the field and throws more light on the subject matter. The history of the Church of Pentecost and the evolving history of the women ministry in the Church were examined.

Chapter Three emphasis on how women have contributed towards the growth of the Church, the challenges they faced and the way forward they expect to behold.

Chapter Four was finding and discussion. That's where the various interviews, expectations, and observations were critically analyzed. Also, possible scientific meanings behind the observed results were discussed.

Chapter Five considered the entire summary of the research. It also included a conclusion and recommendation. As part of the studies, certain areas like limitations and challenges the women ministry face in the church of Pentecost - Sunyani Central District were identified for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter, therefore, concentrates on providing certain basic information about the history of the CoP and the history of Sunyani Central District. The Literature centers more on general but related information on the research topic.

2.2 History of the Church of Pentecost (Centered on Women)

An Irish missionary by name James Mckeown, from the Apostolic Church, Bradford, U.K pioneered the CoP. As part of the founder's wife passion and strong faith in God even though she was considered by doctors as having a fragile body, that didn't stop Mrs. Sophia Mckeown from joining her husband in Ghana (then Gold Coast) on 7th March 1937. Mrs. Sophia really assisted her in building the CoP; aside from using her gift of tongues and profession as a seamstress to contribute to church growth, she was also known for her consistent emphasis on how God's word in relation to women. Mrs. Sophia also drew the attention of the church on the significance of "Holiness to the LORD" which since then has become a special salutation to the women's movement.

Among the first women to be ordained as deaconess in CoP in 1945 was Mrs. Christiana Obu, the mother of Mrs. Eunice Addison and Mr. Kwame Bentsil). A year afterward, in 1946, she was appointed as the leader of the Women's Movement. Under her leadership, the first Women's convention was held at Agona Swedru. Also, due to her formal education background, she served as the interpreter of the founder and his wife. At the early stages of the church, it faced a big financial challenge which became a great burden

to the founder, Rev. James Mckeown. Nonetheless, by divine intervention through a dream, Mrs. Christian Obu was led to give her box of gold and jewelry to the church. This brought great relief to the church. In addition, it spurred many women to contribute to the sustainability of the church. Upon her retirement, Mrs. Eunice Addison, her daughter, was appointed in her stead.

One of the greatest gifts, the CoP has ever had, in relation to music is Mrs. Eunice Addison. She never composed any music except that received through divination at meetings, conventions and most especially through her moments of fasting and prayers. She has over three hundred songs. Mrs. Eunice was ordained as Deaconess in 1946. With her professional teaching experience, she was able to clearly teach others the word of God, encourage them as well as visit them. She was able to start a church meeting the residence of Elder Bonner and as their numbers rapidly grew, they moved to the sitting room of Ps. E. N.A. Vanderpujie. Mrs. Addison became the first presiding deaconess for the Group¹¹. The growth of the Church is clearly evident in its established functional ministries.¹² In the CoP, it's very evident many women have played a major role in its growth process.

2.3 The Advent of the Church of Pentecost in Sunyani Central District

This section deals with the history of Sunyani Central District of the Church of Pentecost (CoP). The categories identified were the circumstances that triggered the start of the church, the key changes and leadership of the church over the years.

¹¹ S. O. Asare-Dual, *The Gallant Solidiers of the Church of Pentecost* Vol. 1 (Accra: Wise Image), 171 – 179.

¹²E.K. Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 183.

2.3.1 Circumstances that Triggered the Commencement of the Church of Pentecost in Sunyani Central District

The church of Pentecost Sunyani Central District is an integral aspect of the church in the Brong-Ahafo Region. The church was introduced in Sunyani by one Elder E.F.S Manu, a hospital Superintendent, on his transfer from Kumasi to Sunyani-Government Hospital with his wife, Deaconess Mercy Manu. According to history, Deaconess Mercy was one of the first two midwives Ashanti Region produced at that time. Yet she followed her husband to Sunyani and when they arrived, aside from their occupational duties, they started with the propagation of the gospel. Fortunately for them, they won some souls for Christ. Their names are Sister Kate Kusi as first convert (soul won), sister Ama Ayiwa, Peter Kyere, Kwame Kumah, and Martha Tawia. Aside these adults were other children in the persons of Christiana Kyere and Aboagye Kingsley. They started worshipping in a house at Sunyani Victoria Park currently known as Midway Sport.¹³

The members later moved to a new place, which was equally somebody's house. They finally got a permanent place by the help of the Chief of Sunyani Traditional Area in the person of Nana Kwaku Yeboah in 1954. To this effect, a new minister by name D.Y.A Owusu was posted by the General Council of the CoP, to Sunyani, serving as the maiden district pastor.

Prayers were really offered to solidify the foundation and development of the Church. They could spend the whole day at a confined place praying to God for miracles to happen. Many chains were broken and a lot of people were set free from all forms of bondage.

However, according to history and even in present days, unlike what happens in recent times in many parts of the world, where church growth is intricately linked with signs,

¹³Interview with Deaconess Mercy Owusu Sekeyere, Former Area Women's Executive Member, 12th April, 2018.

wonders, and miracles, the CoP does not emphasized on such things. The reason has to be that the early leaders, especially, the founder, Rev. James McKeown placed a greater premium on personal salvation and a subsequent encounter with the Holy Spirit (thus, Baptism of the Holy Spirit) than on physical healing and miracles.

2.3.2 The Set of Leadership

Tichy & Cohen, leadership is highly essential to the development of any organization.¹⁴ And so the need for the church to have pastors became very paramount. During its different stages, the following ministers of the gospel have led the administration of the church in Sunyani.

Table 2.3.3 Pastors who Pastored the District and the Area from the Early' 50s to 2019¹⁵

No.	Title	Name	Years of Service
1	Pastor	D.Y.A Owusu District	1951-1957
2	Pastor	S.K Ankomah District	1657-1962
3	Pastor	S.K Chemel District	1962-1964
4	Pastor	E.D Aninkorah District	1964-1966
5	Pastor	J.A Bimpong District	1966-1969
6	Apostle	F.D Walker	1969-1973
7	Apostle	Patrick Asiamah	1973-1982
8	Apostle	C.C.A Hushie	1982-1985
9	Pastor	S.K Osei District	1985-1989
10	Pastor	Ale Osei Bonsu District	1989-1991
11	Pastor	Francis Ofori Yeboah	1991-1996

¹⁴N. M. Tichy, & E. Cohen, *The Leadership Engine* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997), 43.

¹⁵ Interview with Elder Peter Amponsah Manu, Marriage Counsellor, 2019.

12	Pastor	Jacob Narh Affum	1996-1998
13	Pastor	F.K Andoh	1998-2003
14	Pastor	J.S Mainoo	2003-2008
15	Pastor	C.B Asante	2008-2012
16	Pastor	James Nana Ofori	2012-2017
17	Pastor	Daniel Okaakyire Ameyaw	2017-

According to the participants, the first five (5) Pastors did not have it easy at all, because the District had not developed as at today. Also, some of the members were being chased by their families to stop fellowship with the church and stick to their mother churches.

Some of the participants indicated that the long list is mainly males but they all came with their wives. Their wives also contributed a lot by solving most of the problems of the females and that saw new members joining in their numbers. Their contributions have in fact had a long-chain significant growth of the District. Wainaina observes that the missionaries, who came between the 1906's and the early 1940s, gave women service delivery roles similar to the same roles in traditional societies.¹⁶ And so, in most cases the roles that the various wives of Pastors played were; teaching children, visiting, cooking for both church leaders and members, solving disputes, cleaning and decorating the church building, etc.

¹⁶E. N. Wainaina, Factors Influencing Women's Non Participation in church administrative leadership in the Presbyterian Church of east Africa, Mililani Presbytery, Nairobi County; 1908-2012 (Doctoral Dissertation, Kenyatta University, 2015).

2.3.4 Changes over the Years

Increased in membership: As indicated earlier, the church of Pentecost, Sunyani Central District started with less than ten (10) members but the church can now boast of 4,055 membership at the District level and 47,954 members at the Area level (both with children inclusive).¹⁷ Due to the increased membership, the CoP has created twenty-nine districts in Sunyani Area alone. A district in CoP is a set of local branches (assemblies) with a trained minister as a Pastor as approved by the General Council on the recommendation of the Executive Council of the Church of Pentecost. However, within every District are Elders, Deacons, Deaconess, Ministry leaders, other leaders and members (congregation).¹⁸ A district in CoP can have a congregation size between 1,000 and 5,000 (NB: It could be either less or more)

To every set of Districts within a specified terrain is an Area with an Area Head, who supervises the Pastors and the activities within the Area. An Area can have about fifteen districts and above with membership of twenty-five thousand and above (NB: It could be less). Now the three regions Bono Region, Bono East, and Ahafo Region can boast of seven areas with over hundred thousand members. This was a result of less than ten (10) members started in Sunyani Central District.

Proximity to a place of worship: The participants indicated that changes in terms of distance have occurred over the years. The participants affirm to the fact, before, history has it that they needed to travel a very far distance before they could gather together to worship but now, the fellowship have been split to small locals and spread across the cities of Sunyani. This indeed has brought the Church very close to the reaching distance of

¹⁷The Church of Pentecost, Sunyani - Area Statistical Report Form, 2018.

¹⁸ The Constitution of the Church of Pentecost of Pentecost, 2016.

many others and hence has served as one of the major boosters to increase in membership. According to the respondents, this has helped them a lot to save time and money.

Reduced Persecutions: The Church faced a lot of persecutions and challenges at its early ages. This scared many people especially the new converts yet with the encouragement through the leaders, they were spurred up to stand firm to do the work of God.

Increase in the involvement of women: Unlike before where a very large majority of women were serving behind the scenes as well as bring less involved in the activities of the Church, now, the rate of involvement among women has increased. Now, there are women Ministries that actively engages women. Also, some women do take-on some other leadership tasks such as Children's Ministry leaders.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented history relating to the CoP and Sunyani Central District, a branch of the CoP in the Brong-Ahafo Region. We realized that the founder and first chairman of the CoP was James Mckweon (Pastor). With regards to Sunyani Central District, we discussed the circumstances that triggered the start of the church, the key changes and leadership of the church over the years.

It was realized that the CoP, which started in Sunyani Central with less than ten (10) members can now boast of seven areas with over hundred thousand members in the three regions; Bono Region, Bono East, and Ahafo Region.

Some of the key changes being an increase in membership, reduced in persecutions, proximity to the place of worship, and the increase in the involvement of women. This, therefore, set the pace for us to look at women ministry in details in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN'S MINISTRY AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST, SUNYANI DISTRICT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter basically entails the contribution of women and the women's ministry, it gives a brief history of the CoP in a whole and narrowed to the Sunyani Central District. It presents the immense and various dedication and sacrifices made by women to support the growth of the church.

3.2 Women's Ministry in the CoP

The active role and diverse contributions of women is a major contributor to the growth and success of the CoP as an African Pentecostal denomination. This is in harmony with what Oduoyoye (1995), had rightly pointed out that women are chief clients in the drive of religion in the context of Africa.¹⁹

The activities of the women movement centered basically on group prayers and Bible studies. But later, it expanded its horizon to evangelistic outreaches. In addition, the acquisition of skills such as vocational, sewing, cooking, and housekeeping became part of the learning streams of the women's movement. This was chiefly initiated by the wife of the founder, Mrs. Sophia McKeown. She was a Professional seamstress. In the early stages of the Church, she gathered most of the women to occasionally nurture them on how to keep and maintain their homes, as well as assisting to cultivate skills that could

¹⁹Mercy Amba Oduoyoye, *Daughters of Anowa; African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), Chapter 5.

benefit them both for the household and as an occupation.²⁰ During such gathering, Mrs. Mckeown took the opportunity to groom and build participants up spiritually as well.²¹

The name, "Women's Movement" was officially changed in 2012, to "Women's Ministry." The reason for the change was to ensure its conformity to the other ministries in the Church.²²

3.2.1 Leadership of Women in the CoP

Within the years 1955 - 1983, the women's ministry (then movement) had males as the Head and females as the deputy. This provoked many questions about such a system of leadership. The basic response was that the leadership of most Ghanaian societies was predominantly male. And also, the CoP leadership system was generally male-dominated. Aside these, no particular reason was given in response.²³

The trend was eventually changed in 1994. From that year upwards, women have sphere headed the affairs of the ministry. The maiden Director of the Women's Ministry was Mrs. Perpetual Owusu (1995 - 2004). The rest are as follows; Mrs. Beatrice Kwaffo (2004 - 2012), and Deaconess Grace Lucy Yeboah-Asuma (2012 - to date). The substantive Deputy General Women Leaders were Mrs. Christiana Obo Mends (1941-1958), Mrs. Eunice Addison (1958-1983) and Mrs. Esme Siriboe (1983-1994).²⁴ Presently, the deputy director of the Women Ministry is Deaconess Margaret Osei.²⁵

²⁰Asem, *A History*, 69.

²¹ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 185.

²²A. J. Markin, *Spirit and Mission: The Church Of Pentecost as a Growing African Pentecostal Denomination* (Doctoral Dissertation, South African Theological Seminary, 2018).

²³Markin, *Spirit and Mission*.

²⁴CoP, *Excerpts from Women Directorate write-ups on the Movements Operations*, 2013.

²⁵<https://thecophq.org/index.php/womens-ministry/> accessed on 14th December, 2018.

In the various roles of the Women Ministry, the Church still had patrons who were men. But at the 2015 November Area Head's meeting with Apostles, Prophets, and Directors of ministries of the Church, the use of patrons was collectively agreed to be scrapped. From that time, until now, the Women Ministry was given the nod to fully navigate the affairs of their ministry.²⁶ The Women Ministry currently has its National Executives. The names are as follows; Deaconess Grace Lucy Yeboah-Asuama, Deaconess Margaret Osei, Mrs. Comfort Quampah, Deaconess Victoria Aboah, Deaconess Juliana Asare Debrah, Deaconess Gladys Atujona and Mrs. Rebecca Assabil (she replaced Mrs. Georgina Osei Amaniampong in 2016).

The contributions of the Women's Ministry towards Church growth can't be underrated. For instance, with regards to evangelism, during 2018 Council meeting, the Chairman, as part of his address on the "State of the Church" mentioned that the Women's Ministry in the CoP cannot be left out or overlooked. The Ministry had it on records to have organized 1,716 evangelistic outreach programs won 13,564 converts and saw to 2,820 receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.²⁷

The core values of the Ministry have not changed much from those of its early stages; instead, their modes of operations have been enriched. Aside the original focus on prayer, evangelism, Bible study and vocational training, the Ministry has included literacy drive, skill training, and entrepreneurship, and ministering to and winning other business-women, queen mothers, lady politicians and female professionals among others.²⁸ The Ministry has established a few schools such as Kasoa Pentecost Preparatory School and

²⁶CoP, Proposal for Amendment of the Constitution, March 31, 2015.

²⁷CoP, State of the Church Address, presented by Apostle, Dr. M.K. Ntummy, Chairman of the CoP, at the opening ceremony of the 37th Session of the general council meetings held at the Pentecost University College, Accra, on Thursday, 24 April 2008.

²⁸CoP, Women Directorate write-up on the Movements Operations, 2013.

Gbawe Pentecost Vocational Training Institute.²⁹

In August 2011, the first kind of Professional Ladies' Club was also officially inaugurated at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi. The main rationale behind the establishment, according to the Director, is to build fellowship among all manner of women and also to serve as a platform where professions can come together and share ideas for the benefit of all.³⁰

3.3 Women Contribution in Sunyani Central from 1950 to 2019

Of a truth, the CoP definitely recognizes the efforts of feminism. Therefore, the contributions and efforts of females towards the propagation of the gospel are highly commendable and never over-looked. From the history of Sunyani Central, the efforts of the following women are well appreciated: Madam Mary Adu aka Mama Adu, Martha Tawia aka Maame Tawia, Madam Kate Mmeraah Madam Mercy Manu, Madam Juliana Nsiah, Madam Amma Ayiwah, Madam Hannah Amissah aka Maame Agyele and many other women who sacrificed and gave out their all for the posterity of the church are indeed worthy to acknowledge.

3.3.1 Leadership Impact

In the split of the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo confederation in the year 1963 Madam Mary Adu aka Mama Adu, who was a teacher by profession was nominated as the first leader of the women's movement in Sunyani Central District of the CoP. During her days in office, she championed the women's movement by leading by example as well as her unique spiritual fervor. As the maiden leader, she encouraged teamwork and through

²⁹CoP, Excerpts from Women Directorate write-ups on the Movements Operations, 2013.

³⁰CoP, Excerpts from Women Directorate write-ups on the Movements Operations, 2013.

various counseling and guidance was able to organize as well as attract many women to the women's ministry and the Church as a whole. Together with her team, they were able to fight against most evil forces and shrines in Sunyani Township especially Asifiri, Brakunne, Ampomasu and Akuoko in the vicinity close to the Roman Catholic and the High Court area through their prayers.

3.3.2 Cheerful Support and Visitation

Madam Tawia aka Maame Tawia for instance personally sponsored most church programs and activities such as church engagements, funerals, and other recreation activities at her own expense. This encouraged and facilitated many marriages among the youth as well as lessened the sorrow of the bereaved

As at the 50s and even now, leaders in the women's ministry and other women periodically have visitation, especially amongst sisters. They often find time to visit the sick, backsliders', etc.³¹

3.3.3 Church Planting

Over the years, many women have really supported the growth of the church. The following women; Madam Hannah Emissah, Margret Shai and Mary Nkrumah had unique leadership and organizational skills. In 1975, through their dedication, efforts and leadership excellences, they were able to plant a church at Yahima. Also, Maame Atta, as she was popularly known, and her husband, Mr. Opani Awupei due to their educational background were able to serve as the interpreter to the founder Pastor James Mckeown.³²

³¹Interview with Elder Peter Amponsah Manu, Marriage Counsellor, 2019.

³²Interview with Deaconess Mercy Owusu Sekeyere, Former Area Women's Executive Member, 2018.

3.3.4 Revival Impact

There was something spectacular about Maame Tawia which attracted and incited in many their desire for the Holy Spirit and the things of God. Maame Tawia who has never stepped foot in a classroom before was able to communicate in the foreign language (English) perfectly as well as praying in English, all because of the presence and enablement of the Holy Spirit.³³

Also, Mrs. Martha Teya due to her unique passion and prayer life led to the destruction of the idols of a fetish priest. This eventually caused the fetish priest to surrender his life to Christ. Indeed, the fervor of such women has really given a great “push” to the CoP, particularly, at Sunyani Central District.

3.3.5 Formidable Ministry

In recent times, most women are still contributing their special quota to church growth in CoP, in spite of the challenges. For instance, the most vibrant ministry in the CoP is the Women’s Ministry. To a very large extent, this, reveals the massive contribution women offer unto the church’s growth. Whenever, the women are given a week to celebrate or run activities, everything changes. Their enthusiasm, appearance, composure, ministration and general organization are very distinctive. They can easily change the atmosphere in the church and they are able to stir up the heart of many during their week program. Mostly on Tuesday’s, they spend time together to pray for the families, the District, the CoP, the Nation and other prayer points.³⁴

³³Deaconess Grace Adjei, Former Area Women’s Leader (1994).

³⁴Deaconess Mary Magdalene, Area Women’s Leader (2017).

3.3.6 Numerical Growth

The church was introduced in Sunyani by one Elder E.F.S Manu, and his wife, Deaconess Mercy Manu. This means there was an equal representation of gender, due to the immense contribution of women and their various dynamics, the numerical strength of the women have out-numbered the men in the district. There are 1,855 females and 1, 075 males (excluding children).³⁵ Thus the females are almost two thirds more than the population of men, nevertheless, in terms of leadership, the females form the minority.

3.3.7 Education and Acquisition of Skills

Almost every women's ministry leader has played a major role in educating the women in acquiring various skills that are needed both at the home and even for occupational purposes. Sunyani District since its inception has trained many women in the various vocational fields such as sewing, cooking. Also, knowledge of housekeeping and being financially prudent were very evident in their teachings. However, it has helped improve the marriages of many as well as giving them a life skill.

3.3.8 Evangelist Impact

Maame Tawia was very passionate about evangelism, no wonder a lot of people often referred to her as the evangelist. For instance, during a Regional Convention in 1973, she led the congregation to win 23 souls for Christ and into the church. She also assisted in ensuring that all new converts receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.³⁶

In 2018, last year, during the Christmas Convention of Sunyani Central District, Mrs. Mary Ameyaw (Pastor's wife) and Deaconess Augustina Kyereme ministered the word of

³⁵The Church of Pentecost, Sunyani - Area Statistical Report Form, 2018.

³⁶ Deaconess Grace Adjei, Former Area Women's Leader (1994).

God in a unique manner as well as made alter call respectively. And to the glory of God and the special grace of such women, 15 souls were won to Christ.

Finally, in 2018, the Chairman of the CoP, Apostle Eric Nyamekye introduced, “Gospel Sunday” which started in 2019. A day dedicated solely to evangelism (preaching of salvational messages) as well as inviting someone to the CoP. In Sunyani Central District, an average of about 10 visitors are brought to the church during such days. And mostly, the women were able to invite others more than the men. Indeed, the contribution of women over the years means a lot to the church’s growth.

3.4 Set of Leadership

The line of leaders who have led the women’s movement, which is now referred to as the women’s ministry, from the 1960s to the present include the following.

Table 3.1 Set of leadership in the women’s ministry of Sunyani Central District³⁷

Names	Period Served
Deaconess Mary Adu	1969 – 1984
Deaconess Adu Nsiah aka Maame Julie	1982-1984
Deaconess Adu Amakwa Assisted by Deaconess Amobroni Cynthia	1984-1991
Deaconess Grace Adjei Assisted by Deaconess Dorothy Adjei	1991-1994
Deaconess Bertha Owusu Assisted by Comfort Boateng of Berekum	1994 – 1998
Deaconess Comfort Boateng leader Assisted by Comfort Osei	1998 – 2002
Deaconess Grace Yeboah Asuamah (now National Women’s Director of the CoP) Assisted by Hannah Aperkwa	2002 – 2011
Deaconess Beatrice Tandoh Assisted by Lawyer Mary Bonsu	2011 – 2017
Deaconess Mary Magdalene Assisted by deaconess Dina	2017 -

³⁷Deaconess Grace Adjei, Former Area Women’s Leader.

3.5 Challenges, and Changes of the Women Ministry over the Years

It is clear from the above introduction that women did contribute significantly to the establishment of the church of Pentecost Sunyani Central from the beginning. They were found to have the phenomenal influence in the church though most often than not, they were operating from behind the scenes. They were also cleaning and decorating the church, preparing meals (during conventions, meetings for the pastors, elders, and deacons). Daswani also points out that when critically analyzing the above roles they seem to indicate women's work which is confined to the marginal levels of the church.³⁸ The researcher agrees with the observations made by Daswani and further notes that proper duties are generally defined as anything that does not require exercising authority in the church. "Women's work" was mostly expected to be done in silence or in total decorum. This was to primarily prevent them from engaging in conflict with the men's primary responsibility of providing church administrative leadership. During the very early ages of the church in Sunyani, very little was known about women's ministry or movement. This was a big challenge to the women's movement.

They also pointed out that those who assigned duties to women seemed to presuppose that women should be allocated supportive duties only but forgot that they comprised the majority in the church and they equally had the ability to influence a lot of people. The major change that has occurred over the years is that now, unlike before, women are given chance to be part of decision making, leading the women's ministry, the most vibrant and pivot ministry around which the growth and the development of the church revolved.

The researcher has observed that the driving force behind the growth of the church of Pentecost is the "Women factor" which is promoted by the women's ministry. The success

³⁸Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward*, 42.

of the CoP as an African Pentecostal denomination has been made possible partly through the active role and various contributions of its women since its inception. This affirms what Oduyoye has rightly put out that in the African context, women are observed as religion's chief clients.³⁹ In the church of Pentecost, Sunyani Central, women's involvement and participation in terms of development growth and proper change cannot be underestimated.

3.6 Conclusion

Having looked at the women's ministry in the CoP as well as the women's ministry in Sunyani Central, it's very obvious that women have played some contribution through-out the history to date. It was realized that women have played major roles in the commencement of every phase of the church. In spite of their immense contribution, they knew very little about the women's ministry hence it impeded their contribution. In the next chapter, the researcher presents in much details on the further findings and discussions in Sunyani Central District, primarily focused on the women ministry.

³⁹ Oduoyoye, *Daughters of Anowa; African Women and Patriarchy*, 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS: AN ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST IN SUNYANI CENTRAL DISTRICT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter primarily presents in much detail on the findings from respondents and it as well discusses and relates the findings to other literature. It cuts across the following areas; the main office of women into leadership in the CoP (women as deaconess), the major contribution of women towards church growth, factors limiting the women in ministry (serving in the house of God) and the difference between men and women in terms of their involvement and leadership.

4.2 Women Serving as Deaconesses

The main office for women into leadership in the CoP is the service of a Deaconess. The Pastor in consultation with the local presbytery recommends a female to serve as a deaconess.⁴⁰ Deaconesses are involved in taking care of the church's assets (stewards) and the preparation of the communion. They are also expected to minister the gospel, preach, teach and groom the females in particular. Also, they are to direct and instruct female converts who surrender to Christ. Again, they encourage those who come to them with problems, using the word of God. They perform other duties related to their ministry as well as occasionally serving/supervising cleaning the church building and Mission House, supporting them from time to time. The above duties run through virtually every branch in CoP and Sunyani Central is no exemption. It is therefore highly impossible for a deaconess of the CoP to be looked over when it comes to church growth.

⁴⁰The Constitution of the Church of Pentecost, 2016.

According to participants: “The Deaconesses’ contributions are seen everywhere in the local. They manage the affairs of the church and the properties of the church.” “We see Deaconesses helping the local Presbytery, carrying-out District assigned duties, keeping congregation church attendance records, caring for the poor and assisting elders and ministers in the spiritual life of the congregation in the Church of Pentecost.”

The above arrangement is in line with that of Kawale (2001), who emphasizes that it is the responsibility of the church to look after those who have spiritual, physical and psychological problems. Women make a major contribution by visiting and counseling the sick, comforting the bereaved and giving assistance to the poor.⁴¹ This is an area of importance which a Deaconess is greatly expected to render to the church to contribute to its growth. The women also do much to complement the locals, district and area presbytery’s efforts.

4.3 Major Contribution of Women towards Church Growth

The women’s ministry nationwide was officially inaugurated in the CoP in 2012. The reason for the change was to ensure its conformity to the other ministries in the Church.⁴² Right from the inception of the CoP, the founder’s wife, Mrs. Sophia Mckeown, set the pace for the integration and support of the women in the propagation of the gospel. Her nurturing, teaching and involvement in the Church’s activities have virtually spread across every corner where the CoP exist.⁴³

And so, in Sunyani Central Women’s Ministry, the activities and contributions of the women initially centered on group prayers and Bible studies and later developed into

⁴¹W. R., Kawale, “Women, Social Transformation and the Bible in Nkhoma Synod” (Malawi): *International Journal of Bible, Religious and Theology in Southern Africa* 77: (2001): 225-238.

⁴²<https://thecophq.org/index.php/womens-ministry/> accessed on 14th December, 2018

⁴³Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 185.

evangelistic outreaches. This role became a dominant feature of the movement. Later, lessons in various vocational training such as sewing, cooking, and housekeeping were very evident in their teachings.

Some participants mentioned the following during the interview: “I have seen women in the CoP who have really contributed and some even still contributing immersing quota to the growth of the church. These women performed so well with duties given to them.” “Most at times the leaders trained and didn’t keep it to themselves but made it their duty to teach others.” “Most women I knew showed much concern when it came to visiting female members, the aged, the sick, advising the youth and, see to their welfare of others. All the respondents (100%) mentioned emphatically that women contribute significantly towards church growth.

Can you ever imagine a church without women? According to Birkey (1991), women really played a significant role in the survival of the church during the missionary work in past years.⁴⁴ It’s very obvious now also that women have not relented in offering their very best towards church growth. Today, they are contributing through evangelism, home visitation, and numerical growth.

4.4 Factors that Limit Women in Ministry

Despite the church’s efforts in empowering women, there still exist some challenges that limit the involvement of the women ministry and the women in their full involvement in the church’s activities.

According to the respondent’s observation, they expressed the following concerns: “Most women they knew saw themselves as not qualified enough to take-up leadership

⁴⁴D. Birkey, “The House Church: A Missiological Mode” *Practical Anthropology*, 19(1), (1991): 73.

responsibility, probably due to their culture or low confidence in self.” “Because of the ‘bossy’ nature of some male leaders, it often reduced the interest of most women in contributing their best quota.” “The Church structure of leadership is largely dominated by men hence hindering the women from taking-up leadership positions” “Society sometimes frowns on females that seem to be very ‘strong’ about her leadership. Hence, they preferred working behind the scenes.”

From the perspectives of the respondents, 40% mentioned the church’s structure as a limiting factor, 30% stated that the low self-confidence among women, 16% blamed the perception of society while 14% revealed that the bossy nature of some male leaders as some of the key factors that limited women’s contribution in the church.

This can partly explain why there has been an underrepresentation of women in church executive leadership. James (2003), points out that women in most cases form the majority of the church’s membership and they serve a driving force in most congregations yet they have very little power within the structures of the church.⁴⁵ The above observation by James indeed confirms the researcher’s findings. It unravels the underlying factors that women are allocated limited access to administrative leadership. Thus, the low authority given to women does greatly affect their enthusiasm for serving in the church’s leadership.

4.5 Should Women in the Church of Pentecost be Ordained as Pastors?

The researcher wanted to determine whether women in the CoP should be ordained as pastors to contribute their best quota to the growth of the church. The church since inception has not ordained women as pastors.

⁴⁵ R. M. James, *Factors that Hinder Women’s participation in Theological education in Kenya* (Unpublished PhD Thesis) (Kenya, Kenyatta University, 2003), 97.

In the course of the interview, one Deaconess Mercy Owusu Sekyere, a former District Women's leader of Sunyani central as well as a former Area Women's Ministry Executive member, suggested that ordaining women as pastors would be highly impossible.⁴⁶ She was of the view that during times of transfers, it will demand that the family move together. Nonetheless, it may be more difficult for the husband to quit his job to follow the wife. Also, she believes that it will not be easy moving the whole family along as a female. The basis for her argument was that husbands are the head while wives are help-mates. And so, it is quite easier to move along with the help-mate than the head.

Below are the response of other participants; "We have seen other churches like Methodist and Presbyterian Churches having women ministers and are discharging their duties well without fear or favor." "I am of the view that any long-serving person gets experience from the job. So if given the needed exposure and trained, women can equally discharge their duties well when ordained as the clergy." "I know it can be possible but it will be very challenging for the woman." Basically, about 50% of the participants answered no. Their main reasons were that the women in CoP are not really ready for such a calling, also, being a clergy is very involving. To the 30% who answered yes, they believed that since other known churches have already ordained women pastors, it's possible to do same in the CoP. The rest, 20%, were not really deceive on the above question.

Linking the factors limiting women in the ministry to the above question, it seems very obvious that women are not fully certain of them being in the frontline of Church leadership as well as being ordained as ministers of the gospel. According to Edward (2011), women shy away because the position of the minister (pastor) is very much

⁴⁶ Interview with Deaconess Mercy Owusu Sekyere, A Former District Women Leader, Sunyani Central District, 12th April, 2019.

involving.⁴⁷ In light of the above, one can argue that male dominance stands out as a factor that militates against the access of women to such a leadership mandate. Also, Hogaard (2006) mentioned that women on the other hand are mostly socialized to be submissive, docile, service givers, decision-makers and administrative leaders are viewed as a masculine domain and so, taking up the ministry of a Pastor might be very difficult for most of them.⁴⁸

4.6 Are Women Different from Men in terms of Church Involvement and Leadership?

The researcher wanted to find out whether there exists any difference between the leadership of men and women. Thus, if their leadership styles and culture are the same then there will not be the need for considering an increase in the leadership among the women.

According to the majority of the respondents; “There are certain duties such as cleaning, cooking and serving that the leadership and involvement of women always make it far better.” “When it comes to sensitive issues relating to women, the leadership of men may totally fail, that reveals a major difference between the two leaders.” “Women can easily become emotionally weak, and so they need the complement of the men.”

From respondents’ perspective, 70% were of the view that women are totally different from men in terms of church involvement and leadership. Their reasons were centered on the fact that there are many sensitive issues and concerns of women, only women can best address. Also, there are some duties such as evangelizing, showing care, and some kind of

⁴⁷ P. Edward, *Overcoming the Gender Gap: Women Entrepreneur as Economic* (Vesterlund: Niederle, Muriel and Lise, 2011), 43.

⁴⁸ L. Hogaard, *Gender Equity Development Higher Education in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Tertiary Education Linkages Project Publication, 2006), 89.

services, that women have a unique way of doing it. In spite of all these, it was quite unfortunate to realize that there are less women in the administrative leadership of the church. The remaining 30% believe that there isn't any difference between men and women in terms of the church leadership and involvement. They believed that in the house of God, we are all one; no difference.

From the foregoing facts, it can clearly be seen and agreed with Linguli (2007), that the number of women in administrative church leadership is often named as an afterthought.⁴⁹ Surely, men and women are totally different and a balance of their leadership will help in meeting the various needs of the congregation. Linguli (2007), further adds that having a balanced representation of gender is of critical importance. And so, a considerable increase in the number of women in leadership will, in the long run, help the Church's leadership structure as well as boasting the involvement of women in leadership.

Finally, Ruether observed in her book, "Women-Church; Theology and practice of feminist liturgical communities" patriarchy have defined women in the church as inferior. This has triggered in most cases, male dominance and women are subservience in the church.⁵⁰ Consequently, women continue to face discouragement and discrimination as they climb to the higher portfolio of the church.

4.7 Conclusion

From the above findings and discussions, the support of women towards church growth can never be underestimated. And even though, women have been involved in church growth, they still need many opportunities to exhibit more of their competence and

⁴⁹M. B. Linguli, *Women empowerment and societal transformation: The voice of Women in Pastoral Ministry and Church Leadership of the Methodist Church in Kenya* (Master's thesis, VID vitenskapeligehøgskole. Diakonhjemmet Oslo, 2017).

⁵⁰R. Ruether, *Women-church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 23.

contribution. Things have changed over time, culture, the church's leadership structure, and other limited mindsets which serve as a stumbling block to many women in the church. Therefore, when the women in the church are given the needed exposure, it will surely sharpen their competence. So CoP should look at this subject again to help their women to do effective work to help the growth of the church.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The final chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary

Significantly women were involved in the early growth of Christianity or the Church. For instance, during the death of Jesus Christ; women were the last disciples to have left the cross (Luke 23:55, NIV). Also, women were the first to visit the empty tomb on the third day (Luke 24:1, NIV). In the history of CoP, women like Mrs. Christiana Obu gave out her jewelry and gold to support and sustain the church in times of financial crisis. Also, Mrs. Eunice Addison has blessed the church with over 300 songs. This research added uniquely to the literature by using the CoP, Sunyani Central District as a sample, to know more about the contribution of women towards church growth.

An Irish missionary by name James Mckeown, from the Apostolic Church, Bradford, U.K pioneered the church at Asamankese, in Ghana. The wife of the founder, Mrs. Sophia Mckeown, who was a professional seamstress, chiefly initiated the women's ministry which was then referred to as the women's movement. She took time to groom the females both physically (with the acquisition of skills) and spiritually (growing in the Lord).

Sunyani Central District of the CoP is an integral aspect of the church in the Brong-Ahafo Region. The church was introduced in Sunyani by one Elder E.F.S Manu, a hospital Superintendent, on his transfer from Kumasi to Sunyani-Government Hospital with his wife, Deaconess Mercy Manu. The church in Sunyani Central District started with less

than ten (10) members but the church can now boast of 4,055 membership at the District level and 47,954 members at the Area level (both with children inclusive). In terms of numerical differences, as of 2018, they were 1,855 females and 1,075 males (excluding children).⁵¹ Now the three regions; Brong Region, Brong East, and Ahafo Region can boast of six areas with over hundred thousand members (100,000). This was a result of less than ten (10) members started in Sunyani Central.

From the history of Sunyani Central, the following women; Mrs. Mary Adu, Martha Tawia, Mrs. Kate Mmeraah, Madam Mrs. Mercy Manu, Mrs. Juliana Nsiah, Mrs. Amma Ayiwah, Mrs. Hannah Amissah, and many other women sacrificed and gave out their all for the posterity of the church. However, during the very early ages of the church in Sunyani, very little was known about women's ministry or movement. This was a big challenge to the women movement. In terms of the activities and contributions of the women, it was initially centered on group prayers and Bible studies and later developed into evangelistic outreaches.

These roles became the dominant features of the movement. Later, lessons in various vocational training such as sewing, cooking, and housekeeping were very evident in their teachings, as well as visiting the sick, assisting the females, particularly, on marital issues or any other female related situations, cleaning and others. But due to many reasons, principally, the patriarchy structure of the church's leadership, the men by far, are the dominated gender in terms of leadership. Hence, though many women contribute significantly in relation to the church yet, a lot of others could have contributed more if their potentials are given much attention.

⁵¹The Church of Pentecost, Sunyani - Area Statistical Report Form, 2018.

5.3 Limitations and Challenges

Prior to the interview, the researcher assured the participants of their confidentiality. In the case of anonymity, participants were assured of that. However, it turned out that though it increased the interest of the respondents to share their opinions, it also resulted to the fact that most participants didn't want their names to be attached to their opinions. Some of the participants were reluctant in providing some key information especially making negative statements. They were of the view that negative things of the past should be allowed to rest.

To enhance the researcher's proper recording, the researcher asked for the permission of participants, to record and transcribe their views and comments. A few participants felt uncomfortable about the use of a sound recorder during the interviews. Also, this research limited the collection of data from respondents within the Sunyani Central District. Perhaps, a widened scope may provide different findings.

5.4 Conclusion

From this research, it clearly showed that right from the onset of the church, a woman was available, assisted and attracted other women towards the building of the church. Nonetheless, respondents expressed the following key concerns that due to the church's leadership structure, the bossy nature of some male leaders and the other key reasons such as women having less confidence in themselves due to low self-esteem or unawareness of their potentials, the interest of many other women have been dwindled to serving behind scenes or serving less with regards to church growth.

More so, even though most often it seems the role of women towards church growth are left unmentioned and not recognized, that does not dispute the singular truth that women contributes immensely towards church growth. Yes, the church's leadership structure, low

self-confidence of many women, the bossy nature of some male leaders, and the perception of society stalled some women from their full involvement in church leadership, but none of these can fully hinder them from their expected contribution.

The Apostle Paul in his acknowledgment mentioned the services of the following women; Phoebe, Priscilla, Andronicus, Junia and many others (Romans 16: 1 -27, KJV) who were of great assistance to him. In this research, the researcher discovered a lot of such women particularly, Mrs. Sophia Mckeown, Deaconess Christiana Obu, Deaconess Eunice Addison, Deaconess Mercy Manu, Mrs. Mary Adu and Madam Tawia whose assistance have greatly uplifted the image and expansion of the CoP as a whole and, the church in Sunyani (Sunyani Central District) respectively. Indeed, women do contribute significantly to church growth and when given the nod, they will even do much better.

5.5 Recommendations

1. It is evident from this research that women have played a major contribution in terms of church growth. Nonetheless, in terms of leadership engagement or roles, they have a very limited slot. Hence, further studies or research can be done, solely centered, on the leadership of women in the CoP. This will assist the researcher to delve much deeper into the leadership structure of the church and unravel the need to integrate more females in leadership. In terms of the ordination of women as Ministers of the gospel (Pastors), the women were not really certain if they could take up such bold leadership step. And so, I recommend that other researchers can consider the ordination of women into the clergy in CoP as their topic. There is always room for improvement in every field and research helps identify such loopholes.

2. The church is the body of Christ and it needs the full participation of every aspect of it to ensure its full functioning. The full involvement of women, alongside men, will always serve as a great means to build the house of God.⁵² Also, women being side by side with the men, in terms of leadership training and development will greatly help in the propagation of the gospel. Women are equally gifted and talented and so increasing their scope and empowering them through diverse training opportunities, will assist them to become better-off and sharpen their gifts as well.
3. Most women have low confidence in themselves due to culture, traditions, intimidation from others especially men, and prejudice. Due to all these factors, most women are often scared away on taking leadership tasks or being fully involved in terms of their contribution to church growth. The bottom-line is that women will need much training and platform (opportunities to often preach and lead) to gain the needed experience so as to sharpen their mindset in terms of increasing their scope of influence in the church.
4. The researcher observed that most often, women were able to win more souls whenever they were given the opportunity to evangelize during any church programs or activities. And so much attention should be given to the women in order to nurture their potentials towards the growth of the church and the body of Christ as a whole.
5. In order to facilitate the integration and involvement of women in the affairs of the CoP, the researcher proposes that a prayerful consideration, as well as careful research, should be made to involve at least one woman as part of the National Executives, Area Executives, District and local Executives of the CoP. This bold

⁵²Birkey, "The House Church: A Missiological Mode", 73.

step will definitely help know more about the competence of women and this can assist in fully engaging the women in sharing their opinions and support towards church growth.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I am Rev. Daniel O. Ameyaw, a degree candidate of Christian Service University College Department of Theology at Kumasi. I'm conducting research under the topic; **WOMEN'S MINISTRY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST- SUNYANI-DISTRICT**. You are therefore invited to participate in our interview. All the data collected will be kept confidential and used for academic purpose. Participant's discretion shall be duly observed. Thank you.

1. The Church history of Sunyani District

- A. When did it start (year, month) & circumstances that triggered the start of the Church
- B. Some names and those involved during the start-up.
- C. The set of leadership
- D. The various changes that have happened over the years (Change in the location, numbers, and leadership, etc).

2. The History of the Women's Ministry in Sunyani District

- A. Who were the first leaders?
- B. What activities did they often have?
- C. What were their challenges?
- D. What Initiatives did they bring on board?

3. What major contribution have the Women's Ministry or women in the Church contributed to Church Growth?

4. What changes have the Church experienced because of the Women Ministry?

5. What are the various factors that limited or limits women in contributing their best quota towards Church growth?
6. How different are women from men in terms of Church involvement and leadership?
7. What challenges have the women's ministry overcome over the years?
8. Should women be ordained as Ministers of the Gospel (Clergy [Pastors])? Yes/ No.
Please kindly give reasons to buttress your answer.
9. How have the Women's Ministry helped in the expansion of the Church
10. Over the years, have the women in the Church be really involved in Church activities?
Such as Preaching, Taking leadership roles, etc

Your time is well appreciated. Thanks a lot.