

The Role of Culture, Patriarchy, and Ordination of Women Clergy in PCEA Church: A Review of Forty Years of Women's Ordination between 1982–2022

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ABSTRACT

The ordination of women into ministry remains a theological and scholarly debate. Even though PCEA was among the earliest churches to ordain the first woman clergy, the progress of ordination of women compared to men remains inadequate. Cultural aspects, patriarchy, and religious traditions of the Church have influenced the position of women in the church. Patriarchy as a theology of headship continues to be a roadblock to having many women ordained in the church. This paper investigated the cultural aspects and their effect on the ordination of women. Further, the paper explores the effect of patriarchy on the ordination of women into the holy ministry. The paper was anchored on egalitarian theology. The study concludes that no theological, biblical, or traditional ratification hinders women from being ordained as ministers of word and sacrament. The study criticizes a theological standpoint that hinders the ordination of women and recommends the ordination of women not only in the Presbyterian Church but also in other mainstream and African-instituted churches. The church should extirpate all forms of discrimination, patriarchy, negative attitudes, and cultural practices that deny women life in its fullness.

Keywords: Culture, ordination, patriarchy, women clergy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the ordination of women is a matter of scholarly and theological debate. Some churches are opposing, while others are in support. Scholars indicate that culture has healthy and unhealthy aspects that hinder women from leadership and ordination ([Mudimeli, 2021](#)). Indeed, the role of women in the church generates the greatest disagreement among committed Christians, both from dogmatism and liberals, as well as evangelicals. This includes Churches, denominations, and Christian organizations that have even been torn apart over the issue of ordaining women for the pulpit ministry, as asserted by [Njoroge \(2023\)](#). Ordination to the priesthood is a spiritual right of all who are called and bestowed with spiritual gifts. According to [Rantho \(2020\)](#), the ordination of women remains complex, just as the denominations themselves are complex. The twenty-first century is not spared from the debate on the ordination of women. Efforts must be deliberately made by any church that intends to ordain women.

This is because many handles stand in the way of ordaining women.

Even though the Presbyterian Church of East Africa was among the first churches to ordain female clergy in 1982, this happened fifty years after the ordination of the first Kenyan male clergy. Between 1982 and 2002, only fifteen women clergy were ordained. An oral interview with Naomi, a lady trained as a sister, indicated that in 1989, the church trained thirteen sisters who were trained in certificates in theology. In 1990, they joined a continuing class doing a diploma in theology. After graduating, they were posted to work in the institution while the regular theological classes they studied with were ordained. The interview revealed that the church had no clarity on their roles. Though trained in



theology, they were posted to serve in institutions and departments like the Boys and Girls Brigade and Christian education. Later, the sisters left the institutions and were ordained. It became clear that the church, while training them, had no intention of ordaining them. Between 1982 and 2022, the church trained 103 women clergy ([Her Story, 2022](#)).

The indication is that the number of female clergies ordained persistently remains low compared to men. This was critiqued by [Kairu et al. \(2020\)](#); even though the PCEA church laid a foundation of women's ordination, they continued to depict a low profile on the position of women as compared to men. Although women account for over 75% of the membership in the PCEA church, the ordination of women clergy remains relatively low. It can only account for less than 10 percent of the entire population of the ordained clergy. They only account for 9% of the entire population of all ordained clergy. The first Presbyterian woman to be ordained was Rev Dr Nyambura Njoroge in 1982. The interview indicated that the church has not created equal opportunities for theological training in equal numbers, and the trend is worrying concerning the need for gender equity and gender representation. The church experienced financial restraints that hindered increasing the number of theological students. This led to the rise of privately trained theological students as a new phenomenon.

Ordination is about leadership and pastoral position. Ordination is a form of religious ceremony practiced in the church to invest a person with authority in the office of a priest and leadership. This is done by laying on hands by somebody already ordained and holding a higher ministerial position than the one ordained. Ordination bestows upon the ordinary the ecclesiastical dignity of the priesthood.

In addition, it is also referred to as consecration because a person is set apart, and the laying on of hands with the consecration prayer by the moderator or the bishop constitutes the visible sign of ordination of the person being ordained ([Thairu, 2021](#)). The ordination of women is about fulfilling an individual call from God, taking a vow of service, and spreading the gospel of transformation.

In the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, ordination is a process that starts with an interview for the holy ministry, subsequent training, and placement in a parish for practical ministry, and then ordination follows. The Ordination of women did not come without struggle. The PCEA women's guild had to petition the general assembly and demand the ordination of women. [Njoroge \(2000\)](#) describes how, through the PCEA Women's Guild (WG), Presbyterian women in Kenya reclaimed motherhood to support women's ordination. The PCEA's male-dominated decision-making bodies had long objected to women's ordination regarding the apparent bodily and emotional 'obstacles' of motherhood. This rhetoric is still prevailing in different Christian denominations that refuse to ordain women. In this case, the women's guild members responded to the church's criticism of motherhood by defending it as a source of valuable insights and asserting that reciprocity between men's and women's roles is important. [Njoroge \(2000\)](#) asserted that the woman's guild response in terms of moral agency, claiming that taking the initiative to act on the ethical-social issue of women's ordination is a means of resisting the sexism in the church. The moderator, then Right Rev John Gatu, in one of the general assemblies, retorted that there is nothing in the Bible or theology to stop a woman from becoming a priest. This implied that for women to be ordained in the church, it was important that egalitarian theological understanding be implemented.

2. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND THE PLACE OF WOMEN

Since time immemorial, the relationship between Christianity and culture has remained complex. Traditional African culture has continued to influence the lives of people. The mainline churches were influenced by the traditions, wisdom, art, and way of life of worship that the Africans practiced before the advent of Christianity, especially in songs, prayers, and sermons. [Mbiti \(2015\)](#) puts it that traditional African religious conceptualization has deeply influenced the religious thinking of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. In the African context, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes concerning the role and status of women in society are still predominant, and many women are part of this system, finding it difficult to dislocate from this culture and tradition lest they be ostracized and considered as liberals. [Jegede and Gbenga \(2012\)](#) argue that cultural values, traditional beliefs, norms, and stereotypes have been the major obstacles to realizing women's spiritual leadership aspirations in the church. According to [Højgaard \(2002\)](#), the societal conventions regarding gender and leadership traditionally exclude women and top leadership is viewed as a masculine domain. In African societies, men are believed to lead, and women follow ([Grant, 2005](#); [Ngcongco, 1993](#)). [Oduyoye \(1995\)](#) observes that traditions continue to shape women's lives, directly and indirectly. [Mwaura \(2005\)](#) opined that in most African traditional cultures, women were considered subordinate and submissive to their husbands.

Cultural expectations and responsibilities interrupt women intending to join the holy ministry. This results from family responsibilities such as caring for children or aging parents, while when it comes to men, it doesn't pose a threat ([Kenyatta, 1978](#)). This shows that women are faced with unique challenges.

In addition, interview panels for the holy ministry are dominated by male clergy who deny some women opportunities simply because they have small babies. Worse, in the interview panel, women are asked if their husbands have allowed them to serve, a notion earlier advanced by [Oduyoye \(2001\)](#). This can be considered to intimidate women and also remind them of their position in society and that they should be submissive to their husbands.

On the other hand, in the interview panels, women turned out only thirty percent compared to their male counterparts. Probably, there is an ingrained patriarchal mindset that needs to be conquered in the minds of women. In addition, sexism and inequality in terms of power relations between men and women that existed in our culture and were later buttressed by the colonialists and affirmed in the theological education and teachings of the church that women should be subordinate remains a serious problem ([Mombo, 2008](#)). Moreover, the missionary women did very little to mentor women for ordination into the priesthood. They taught domestic roles such as sewing, cookery, and childcare. So, the African women were socialized to take roles such as cooking, serving tea, decorating churches, and providing care services whenever needed. They advocated for the abolition of culturally harmful practices such as female genital mutilation but advanced domesticity ideologies, which continue to shape the thinking of the church when it comes to gendered roles ([Wainaina, 2015](#)).

African traditional culture has many practices that affect people in various ways, with some cultures not allowing women to fully participate in all aspects of society. Nevertheless, God is patient and allows the gospel dogmas to permeate each culture. This is because the gospel can only be heard and experienced from a cultural context, so the importance of culture cannot be underestimated. It is observed that women have remained behind in many ways as compared to men. Most of the African cultures stereotyped women negatively ([Wainaina, 2015](#)). [Mlilo and Soédé \(2003\)](#) validate this by noting that the social change in Africa has often benefited men at the expense of women. This concurs with the observation by [Njoroge and Dube \(2001\)](#), who opined that, like the bleeding woman in the Bible, “*most African women find themselves unnamed, without professions, associated with illness in their respective societies and institutions and are living in poverty and marginalization*” (p. 74). Scholars observe that in the protestant churches, fewer women are found in leadership roles than men ([Kairu et al., 2020](#); [Wainaina, 2015](#)). Several female theologians have continued to challenge this state. The fact that most of the women are not at the decision-making table indicates that there could be some bias in the decision-making on issues relating to women’s ordination in the PCEA church. Furthermore, this is congruent with traditions that men are in leadership by their rights and privileges, and they handle power issues. The study noted with concern that in most African traditional cultures, nothing hindered women from taking leadership in religious activities because, in some cultures, women were seers and prophets.

3. PATRIARCHY AND ORDINATION OF WOMEN

In African culture, women are designated for their position as a homemaker and are assigned supportive roles. Emphasis is given to her role as a wife and mother. According to [Mbiti \(2015\)](#), becoming a mother is a celebrated role. In the Kikuyu society, women were involved in worship. [Mbiti \(2015\)](#) observes that African traditional religion engaged both genders. For instance, women were seers, prophets, and Priestesses ([Kenyatta, 1978](#); [Wainaina, 2015](#)).

On the other hand, the literature indicates that patriarchal ideologies denied women kindness and humanities. Patriarchy can be construed as social organization and arrangements of culture that are hierarchical and male-dominated in terms of power. Patriarchy is also androcentric, with dominant values and norms centered on male experience, interpretations, perception, needs, and interests ([Cooley et al., 1973](#)). [Oduyoye \(2001\)](#) deduced that women face hierarchical pyramids that put women in lower positions.

The study continues to evaluate the role of the Kikuyu patriarchy and its silent effect on the ordination of women as clergy. Kikuyu culture is mainly patriarchal. Kikuyu’s structure of leadership was initially matriarchal, as led by Mumbi. To understand and demystify a Kikuyu woman’s identity, we will briefly explore the myth of origin. The Gikuyu community originated from Mumbi and Gikuyu, and they had nine daughters. Gikuyu was concerned about who would marry her daughters. God provided husbands to the nine daughters in his bounty, and each clan was named after the daughter of Gikuyu and Mumbi. This was an important landscape for the Gikuyu woman as the founder of clan systems and was accorded respect and autonomy. The Gikuyu clan system was matriarchal.

However, later, it was reported that the Gikuyu women became stubborn, ruthless, and dictatorial, so men conspired to overthrow them in a coup. It was simple: just impregnate them. This is how the patriarchal leadership system got its way in the Kikuyu system. The economic, political, social, and religious institutions in Gikuyu’s traditional life were so intertwined that it was difficult to divorce

one. Headship of fatherhood in every homestead began. Part of the agenda was to ensure that the wife recognized and submitted to the authority of a man.

To make matters worse, this authority was further exercised through wife beating. So, the authority was exercised through a relationship where the wife was submissive, and the husband dominated her (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2020). Even in death, the authority was not passed to the wife but to the eldest son. Women had no room for decision-making in their homes. Ironically, a son she had given birth to now takes dominance and leadership over her. This became real to me when my father died when my younger brother would make all the decisions, and even when my elderly mother wanted to visit me, she had to inform him first. This is unconsciously submerged in her cognition and affirms that girls are socialized to be under men's leadership when they grow. The study critiques this thinking and calls for women's liberation.

Clans were composed of several families, and women were no longer elected to be members of Mbari (council clan) leaders led by a muramati (a guardian). He convened council meetings that made major decisions. So, women were passive and never consulted when decisions were made. They were thought to lack leadership competencies and wisdom, as alluded to in their proverb. For instance, women would never be trusted; the Proverb goes, "Giathi githaragio ni gaka kamwe" (One small woman can disrupt an assembly). It was interpreted that a woman creates dissonance in a gathering of orderly men. Findings from oral interviews done with male clergy indicated that women should undergo theological training and ordination by merit and not as a favor or as affirmative action. For instance, in a class of ten males, only two females were picked just to fill in the space to avoid being asked if there were no ladies in that class. A Kikuyu saying that says "mairia ndua" just picked them to join the theological class to fill space. The oral proverbs stereotyped women as incompetent, unreliable, and disruptive. The researcher criticizes this and affirms that women are capable and competent just as men are and should not be denied a chance to fulfill their calling to serve God in the great commission of "go ye into the world making disciples" (Mathew 2: 18–20).

4. CULTURE AND ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Culture is carried from one generation to the other through socialization. In Kikuyu culture, roles were designated between the public domain and domestic. Each gender was assigned roles that they were expected to perform. Women were given duties that domesticated them while men were in the public domain. Women were denied public participation, where decisions were made, and were socialized to take domestic roles. This issue has contributed to women's roles as homemakers, which is still associated with women even today. Moreover, each gender had a divined religious role. Men became seer's prophets and acted as mediators between God and man. Even the personal naming of personified men using names like Ngai (God) was associated with men. "*In Komathai there was ngai wa kimama and in kirinyaga there was Ngai wa Tonyi*" (Oral interview Kiburi 1/2022). It is, therefore, clear that the woman was suppressed, oppressed, and marginalized by cultural attitudes, language, and even beliefs. For instance, proverbs used then and have continued to depict that women cannot be trusted as leaders. A case in point is that women were not leaders of the decision-making council. It is clear they were denied leadership by the patriarchal systems as they were stereotyped to be weak in their proverb "mutumia na kionje nikindu kimwe", (women were considered and equated with a disabled person) means they were considered to be weak. Women were considered inferior as this inferiority of gender roles was well-defined through gender roles. The gender roles elevated the role of men as compared to women, a perspective that should be dismantled and deconstructed. The study found that the patriarchal culture structured the roles of the woman in a way that clearly defined their place and worth in society. Male children were more valued than female children. Likewise, women were treated as outsiders (and anja)," people from outside, and as personal property.

Oduyoye (2001) argues that women and power are like oil and water in patriarchal societies. This is attributed to traditional mindsets and attitudes going back to generations. The author suggested that in African culture, the voices of the ancestors and elders reflect patriarchal concerns. The assertion is that men are apprehensive that power will get into the hands of women. Those oppressive cultural and traditional practices that have remained a stumbling block for women's ordination should be abolished. Oral literature passed down through generations in the form of proverbs should be deconstructed. At this point, the study introduces the story of Grace, who sought ordination until her death.

Grace was born in 1966 in the Kieni Nyeri sub-county. She had a call for holy ministry, and she attended countless interviews seeking ordination. Later, after trying many times without success, she enrolled as a private student at St Paul's University for a bachelor of divinity, still hoping to be ordained. She did a master's, and before her death, she was pursuing her doctorate in systematic theology. Grace continued to knock on the door for ordination by doing interviews as a trained theologian. She still did not make it in her last interview for the holy ministry because she was above the

required age. Grace continued to serve God as a layperson and believed in women's empowerment. She followed her dream of ordained ministry, hoping to be ordained by the Anglican Diocese of Bungoma. While undertaking the journey, she collapsed in Nairobi city and died, and in her bag were clerical shirts for her ordination. During the burial service, Prof Mombo represented the circle of concerned women theologians where she worked as an administrator. Grace died looking for a greater mission. She likened grace to the widow in Luke 18:1-8 who persistently knocked on the door. Grace had knocked on the door for ordained ministry without success. She likened her story of seeking ordination to many other women who found inhospitable spaces in the ministry, and they knocked on the door, but no one would open the door for the sisters. Grace was a single mother, and she left one son. Some researchers assert that women lacked theological education, but this is not the case. Given this story, it is clear that women's competencies do not hinder ordination, yet a glass ceiling exists for women as they seek ordination (Kariuki, 2022).

5. CHURCH AND WOMEN ORDINATION

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa can be traced from missionaries' work, and it adopted traditional Scottish structures. The PCEA church ordained its first ministers in 1926, and they were all male. With time, the missionaries handed over leadership and power to the ordained young African ministers. The church continued growing, and in 1934, two ministers were sent for further studies. When they returned, they began drafting the church constitution (Mungiriria, 1996). The church continued to grow but failed to empower or prepare women for ordination (Kariuki, 2022; Wainaina, 2015). Probably, they were influenced both by African traditional culture and, in particular, Kikuyu culture, as well as missionaries' ideologies that were very patriarchal in practice. The missionaries advocated for male dominance over women. Indeed, patriarchal ideologies governed the church, and the place of women was domesticated and suppressed. This notion was critiqued by Russell (1993), who indicated that it was expected that as the time came and women were ordained in church, it would be liberating and empowering, but this was not the case. Patriarchal ideology directed socio-political interfaces at all levels of Christianity in Africa. Most of the missionaries were male, even though their wives accompanied them. Most were also domesticated to care for their family and assist in mission work (Macpherson, 1970). The white missionary women carried supportive roles in the local congregations. They participated in various church activities, such as visiting the sick (mission of compassion), performing acts of compassion and kindness, singing in the choir, praying, teaching other women and children, and cleaning and decorating the church. So, women seemed to have been allocated supportive duties (Njoroge & Dube, 2001). According to Njoroge (2000), as early as the 1920s, women had requested that the missionaries train and ordain them as evangelists, but this was not forthcoming. Later, in 1965, women were ordained as elders.

Therefore, we can conclude that the mission boards did not give the female missionaries official status. Nevertheless, they were expected to become role models to the other women on how Christian females should serve God, behave, and do things. A literature review indicates that the missionaries were patriarchal and passed down the same (Wainaina, 2015). Thus, missionaries greatly impacted the formation of the PCEA church, which has continued to affect women's past and future roles in the church. So, the church became structurally and ministerially male-dominated. Even though the ministers who took leadership were able to handle some of the barbaric cultures, such as female genital mutilation, it is clear they guarded the patriarchal roles and values. In addition, the church trained men for ministerial roles, leaving women behind. While the study appreciates the bold step of ordaining women, there are still many roadblocks hindering women's ordination. Women with a call to ordained ministry today are faced with other roadblocks, such as unfriendly interviewing panels, age, marital status, and sexism. For instance, one interviewed woman indicated that she had tried to interview the holy ministry six times without any breakthrough. Since the age of joining the holy ministry was capped between twenty-five and forty-five years, age caught up with her, and in the last interview, she had passed but was barred by age as she was almost hitting forty-five years.

An interview with one of the elderly ministers indicated that when he was sent for training at St. Paul's, he went together with his wife, who was not given equal opportunity for theological studies. The missionaries had set the example by advocating for missionary-oriented Christianity and advancing androcentric to African societies. All these factors explain why the Pcea church took over half a decade since its inception in 1891 to ordain the first female clergy. In 1963, Presbyterian women clergy owed gratitude to the women's guild, which passed a resolution requesting the General Assembly to deliberate on ordinating women elders and ministers (Kairu *et al.*, 2020; Njoroge, 2000). An oral interview with Naomi, a lady trained as a sister, indicated that in 1989 the church trained thirteen sisters in theology, but they were not ordained. This study applauds the Presbyterian church for ordaining 103 women clergy between 1982 and 2022. There is a need for deliberate efforts to upscale the number

of women who are ordained, especially single mothers, women who are psychically challenged, and women from marginalized communities ([Her Story, 2022](#)).

5.1. *Church Father's Perception of Women's Ordination*

Some scholars indicate that church fathers used the masculine image of God in their language. Tertullian viewed women negatively, in a demeaning way, and associated them with sin, as suggested in the fall of man in Genesis. He further regarded the female gender very negatively by referring to them as devils gateway, deserters of divine law by eating the forbidden tree in the garden of Aden ([Williams, 2011](#)). While referring to Timothy 2:14, Ambrose had the same interpretation and view that the woman was responsible for the man's wrongdoing in the Garden of Eden. While writing his commentary on Genesis three, he indicated that the woman dragged the man with her into sin.

According to Origen, women should not be allowed to speak in church based on Corinthians 14:4; 14:33b–36 contains the injunction by the apostle Paul that women should keep silent in the church. Luther thought that women should be either prostitutes or wives. However, he credited the New Testament women for their heroic bravery in their confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Further, he indicated that ordaining women into pastoral ministry contradicted divine law, as stated in Corinthian 14. This text has given rise to controversy about whether women should participate in church public activities or its leadership. It became the bedrock for the argument against women's leadership in the church. For some, the implication is that they can lead but not at the same level as men ([Linonge-Fontebo & Baloyi, 2023](#)). Thomas Aquinas believed that women should have no authority to speak unless granted by their husbands and should refer to their husbands as “My lord” ([Will, 1950](#)). Calvin thought that based on the creation story, women were subordinate and companions to their husbands, who were to be treated respectfully ([Wright, 1984](#)). A critical review of the teachings of the reformers asserts that they were not able to either liberate or unchain women nor were they able to bring gender equality ([Kairu et al., 2020](#)). Women theologians have continuously wrestled with the issue of women's ordination. Many scholars acknowledge that women account for over 75% of the membership in most churches, yet the ordination of women is not commensurate with their numbers ([Kariuki, 2022](#)). They have critiqued male dominance, patriarchy, and the association of the image of God that is closely associated with masculinity ([Phiri, 1997](#)). [Kanyoro \(2001\)](#) insinuates that cultural hermeneutics should criticize the white myths and colonial missionary views of women. The study criticizes the stand of most church fathers to have had no gender balance and equity in their thoughts, writings, and actions.

5.2. *The Theology of Ordination in the Synoptic Gospels*

The controversial debate on the ordination of women leaves scholars with the question of whether women are fully human. There are two views regarding the ordination of women: egalitarianism and complementarianism. The latter holds that women complement men in the ministry, while egalitarianism holds that equality was restored by Jesus Christ's death and the holy spirit's empowerment ([Wendot, 2019](#)). The study acknowledges and affirmatively states that women are human beings and Jesus Christ died for the redemption of humanity, not masculinity alone. From this argument, therefore, we can deduce that women have a place in the ministry of Jesus Christ, and in no way should women be denied the rights of ordination. Even though the synoptic gospels have not used the word ordination, we see the active role of women in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was called and ordained for a particular ministry as the mother of Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:38, Mary received the call through Angel Gabriel, and the Holy Spirit assured her and accepted the call. Here, we find all aspects of ordination followed by the call, accepting the call, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Mary followed Jesus and was a witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, Mary accompanied the disciples in the upper room, as indicated in Acts 1:14. This brings the conviction that any woman who has a genuine call to serve God and is willing to submit to God's purposes should be ordained. The synoptic gospels use feminine language in the language of the early Christians. Luke 23:34 states, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings . . .” This referred to the redemption that Jesus would bring to the house of Israel. This means that Christians who have been redeemed can partake in the abundance of life, and the ordination of women helps the church to grow into the fullness of the statutes of Christ ([Lalrinawmi, 1998](#)). Throughout the synoptic gospels, Jesus depicted women as faithful followers (disciples) compared to the disciples like Peter, who denied Jesus Christ three times. [Gill and Cavaness \(2009\)](#) asserted that Jesus acknowledged an egalitarian style in his ministry and teaching by embracing and including both women and men. He did not give higher status to one gender only. According to [Wendot \(2019\)](#), raising the status of one gender against the other can be referred to as “gender apartheid”.

5.3. *Pauline Theology and Ordination of Women*

Women played a very important role in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the post-resurrection ministries. The Hellenist and Jewish traditions influenced Pauline's theology. He inherited some of the Judaism beliefs on the position of women as probably second-class citizens and help mates. In Pauline's epistle letters, fifty-five men are associated with Paul's mission and ministry, and only seventeen women were actively involved. His theology was a two-sided coin. The first woman mentioned was Chloe in 1Cor1: 11 as having informed Paul of the factions in Corinthians. Others mentioned are Fortunatus and Achaicus, who were Corinthian church representatives in Acts 16: 15–17. Phoebe is mentioned in Romans 16:1–2 as a fellow Christian and a servant, implying she was a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea and was not required to be able to teach. She used her finances to support missionary journeys and host traveling Christians like Paul. She was a patroness but not a leader of the church. Andronicus and Junia, a couple, are only called countrymen, friends, and close associates of Paul and fellow prisoners' Philomena 23. Priscilla and Aquilla were the most strategic allies of Paul's ministry in his mission to the Gentiles Romans 16:4. They were a distinguished senior missionary couple, and the designation of the apostle referred to both of them. Women like Trophimus and Tryphus were said to have worked hard and were Godly women but not leaders.

Paul talks of women like Euodia and Synteché as coworkers in Christianity, as indicated in Philippians 4:2, and affirms them for their struggle alongside him in the ministry. They supported Paul's mission significantly Phil 4: 10–19, Romans 15: 25–29. Other women are mentioned in practicing house teaching. For instance, Priscilla instructed Paul in her house with her husband, Andronicus. Nympha is mentioned in that the church met at her house. Other women were only greeted. So, the study concludes that the contribution and influence of women were mainly informal and centered in their homes. This was expressed in practicing hospitality, providing home churches, raising children, supporting their husbands, and others supporting Paul's missionary journey and activities financially. Only a few were engaged in missionary work in their husband's company. The study shows that women are capable of holding leadership positions. While talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit, Paul reckoned that there is no discrimination Corinthians 12:1. On the issue of praying and prophesying, he instructed women to cover their heads 1corinthians 11:5 2cor 12 1–2. The fact that Paul mentions women prophesying indicates that women had the gifts of prophecy, as indicated in Acts 21:9, where we find Philip's four daughters who prophesied.

Meanwhile, in 2 Corinthians 14:34–36, he states that women should be silent in church. In Romans 16:6–7 there is evidence that women were also called to be apostles. Paul instructed the church to Greet Mary, who worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles and were in Christ before him. Critically, in examining the above, we see that although very few women qualified to be apostles, they were acknowledged for their great ministry and leadership. Therefore, the study recommends reexamining scripture to reconstruct negative traditional attitudes towards women and support the ministry of women's ordination. This is because there is no prejudice regarding God's gifts to humankind (Dei & Osei-Bonsu, 2015).

5.4. *The Theology of Ordination of Women*

Different factions supporting the ordination of women and women holding leadership positions are inclined to some biblical texts. In contrast, those who do not advocate for women's ordination and leadership use different texts. There has been misinterpretation of the scripture and misapplication, which has led to contradicting views. Ordination of women has been faced with two major divides, namely complementarian and egalitarian views, with each group advancing a very strong argument (Kairu *et al.*, 2020). The study advocates for egalitarian theology, which conceptualizes and teaches that God has called all believers to take different roles and ministries in the church of Jesus Christ regardless of race, gender, or class. Instead, all have been given the holy spirit gifts for the church's edification. This means that all should use their God-given gifts. Scripture was written in a cultural context; therefore, Paul's idea was to liberate and not subjugate and subordinate women. In Galatians 3:27–28, all of you baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. The implication is that Christ's baptism transcends their earthly status.

The complementarian view holds that God has created men and women, and because man was created first, hierarchical gender roles were ordained from the beginning. Based on Genesis 2: 18–22, a woman is created as a helper for the man's interest. The implication is that women should be given supplemental and supporting roles as helpers, such as youth ministry director education (Parker, 1991). They advocate for male headship based on Genesis 1–2. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, states that Christ is the head of the church, man is the head of the family, and the woman is subordinate Ephesians 5: 22. This preposition established male headship both in homes and in church.

This study is anchored on an egalitarian proposition that advocates that women should be included in the ministry as ordained and holds that all humans are equal before God based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and that no one gender should be elevated over the other. Giving the right perspective to 1 Timothy 2:2, they hold that Paul did not give an all-time mandate against women teaching and leading. Instead, Paul reprimands false teaching advocated by some uneducated women in Ephesians' church. That being the case, Paul was addressing disorderly actions in worship (Corinthians 14:34). The egalitarian theologians base their argument on Galatians 3:28 on the equality of all humanity in Christ (Dei & Osei-Bonsu, 2015). Based on the preposition of the church's theology, there is a possibility of encouraging and ordaining women and giving them leadership positions. The researcher advocates for an egalitarian view in support of the ordination of women to have equity in ordination and the leadership of the church and to fulfill the great commission that Jesus left as the mandate of the church.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes the need to deconstruct the patriarchal theology that has maintained a hierarchical structure as a significant hindrance to the ordination of women clergy. The study concludes that there is a need for gender equality in ordination in the Presbyterian church. The study observed that the number of ordained women clergy is still very low compared to male clergy. Based on the notion that women have a great passion for serving God, the church should increase the ordination of women to a level of equality and equity 50/50. This can only be practical when women are given equal or more training opportunities in theological studies, followed by ordination. The church should adopt the privately trained theologians in equal numbers to join the holy ministry. In addition, the age for the holy ministry intake should be reviewed upwards, bearing in mind that the retirement age is sixty-five years. Therefore, the study recommends a dire need to increase the number of ordained women. The study suggests that the church should be motivated to provide theological training for women to enhance pastoral work. There is a need to challenge patriarchy, sexism, stereotypes, cultural practices, and prejudices that hinder women's ordination. The study suggests the application of hermeneutics of suspicion and egalitarian theology to have a balanced view of humanity as created in the image of God as compared to the existing patriarchal that leads to dominance. The study concludes that no theological, biblical, or traditional ratification exists that women should not be ordained as ministers of word and sacrament. The study criticizes a theological standpoint that hinders the ordination of women and recommends the ordination of women not only in the Presbyterian church but also in other mainstream and African-instituted churches. The church should extirpate all forms of discrimination and address negative attitudes and cultural practices that deny women life in its fullness. There is a need for proper biblical interpretations to liberate women. The church should lead by example in affirming the teaching of Jesus Christ of inclusion and not exclusion.

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