

WOMEN'S PRIESTHOOD IN ANGLICANISM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract: *Despite their natural and spiritual capacities, women are excluded from ecclesiastical power in the Anglican Communion, especially, the priestly order. With a special emphasis on the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), this article objectively examines the arguments on women priesthood. Discourse analysis, hermeneutical analysis, and historical methodologies are used in this study to critically explore the arguments for and against female priesthood in the Anglican Church. The research reveals that: (1) approximately 3% of the Anglican Communion globally forbids women from holding ordained positions, while two-thirds permit women to serve in traditional priesthood orders; (2) the notion that Jesus Christ is God's inferior often serves as the basis for opposition of women priesthood; and (3) the Scripture such as 1 Corinthians 11:8–10; 1 Corinthians 14:33–35; 1Timothy 2:11–14; 1Timothy 3:1–2, etc. forbids women*

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from being ordained as priests. Applying the liberal feminist theory, theology, and Christian complementarianism, the paper concludes that women should be ordained as priests to uphold their human rights and interests in Christian service.

Keywords: Women, Priesthood, Argument, Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion

Introduction

With more than 80 million members in 165 nations, the Anglican Communion is a global network of national Christian churches. It is divided into two-thirds of its membership, or nearly half of the 41 provinces and jurisdictions that allow women to serve in traditional priesthood orders, including the Episcopal Church in the United States. The remaining provinces, which account for around 3% of the Communion's membership, strictly prohibit women from being ordained (Knoll, 2018). The Anglican Communion is discussing the exclusion of women from ecclesiastical authority and decision-making processes, despite their religious membership, natural endowment, educational, and spiritual capabilities. Feminists argue that women are no longer considered inferior beings, contrary to the weak perception of

women from Genesis to the apostolic era. This article critically examines the arguments about women's priesthood with special reference to the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). The research uses discourse analysis, hermeneutical, and historical approaches to collect its data. The study contributes to existing knowledge in the areas of church history, Christian feminism, Christian priesthood, and service.

Women's Status in the Bible

The Hebrew Bible, which dates to a late Bronze Age Near Eastern civilization, features a sizable number of female characters. Due to several challenges in computing the figure, including multiple names for the same woman, translations, and the use of names for both men and women, the number of women referenced in the Bible may be unknown. Despite these differences, the Bible's androcentric nature is reflected by the fact that women's names make up between 5.5% and 8% of all names (Blumenthal, 2005). The Bible also contains examples of notable women who were instrumental in challenging established hierarchies of authority, like the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah (Moore, 2015). Various roles for women are

depicted in the Bible, including those of wives, mothers, daughters, servants, slaves, and prostitutes. While some women have authority over events, others do not. Most of them are unidentified and anonymous. Women who are respected and treated equally are depicted as being in Jesus' inner circle in the New Testament. The Bible, which was penned by men, has historically been seen as having tighter regulations regarding marriage, inheritance, and sexual conduct (McClure, 2018). Recent literature accepts both patriarchy and heterarchy, suggesting gender equality and a lack of attempts to minimize the value of women.

Women who are prominent in public life and frequently engaged in reversal and dismantling social power structures are frequently seen in the Bible (Blumenthal, 2005). Examples are Esther, Jael, and Abigail. Also featured are the founding matriarchs, prophetesses, judges, heroines, and queens. Also emphasised are women's contributions to early church leadership. But over time, attitudes towards women in the Bible have evolved, impacting art and culture. Women were frequently given lower responsibilities in patriarchal Near Eastern civilizations during the Bronze Age and Axial Age (Frymer-Kensky, 2006).

Egyptian women enjoyed high status but lacked power. In ancient Greece and Rome, women were expected to take care of the home. They contributed significantly to the religion of classical Greece and Rome and occasionally had independence in their religious practices (Stol, 2016). Priestesses of state cults, such as the Vestal Virgins, might attain high prominence and acquire vast wealth. Rape, fornication, and incest were the three sexual offences against women that were subject to legal punishment in patriarchal societies (Maine, 2015). In like manner, men's reproductive rights were safeguarded by ancient laws, and rape and fornication were considered wrong and subject to the death penalty.

In order to define the views towards gender in ancient Israel, Meyers (2014) favours heterarchy over patriarchy. Heterarchy admits the possibility of many power systems existing side by side in a given society, each with its own hierarchical frameworks that may intersect laterally. According to Meyers (2014), the Old Testament describes twenty various professional-type professions that women had in ancient Israel. Women were responsible for upkeep tasks in both the home and society. As the Hebrew Bible does not explain or

justify cultural subordination by depicting women as deserving of less due to their naturally evil natures, Frymer-Kensky (2006) contends that there is evidence of gender blindness in the text. The Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 contain elements of both male priority and gender balance, and the Bible represents both male priority and gender balance. Women like Hagar, Tamar, Miriam, Rahab, Deborah, Esther, and Yael or Jael were frequently portrayed as heroes, leaders, and victorious women whose traits Israel ought to imitate (Richardson, 2016). They were also portrayed as both victims and winners, as shown in Texts of Terror and Numbers 31. Women did play a little part in religious rituals, but they were unable to serve as priests because only male Levites were eligible for the position. Even though they did so less frequently, on a somewhat smaller and generally more discreet scale, they nonetheless took part in many of the important public religious duties that non-Levitical males could.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, Christianity offered a framework that allowed powerful women to play new and varied roles in society. As shown by the Acts of the Apostles, which mentions

Lydia, the purple vendor at Philippi, women of note were drawn to Christianity (Blomberg, 2009). There is no indication that women's duties or status were equal to men's in Second Temple Judaism. Lindsey (2016) opines that the Roman Empire was a time when gender inequalities were recognised and misogynistic discussions about social duties were prevalent. Roman culture viewed Christianity as a threat because Paul adopted a strategy of bringing opposites together to erase social differences. Early on, female converts faced peril as they risked their lives to proclaim the gospel and guide people away from the proper authorities.

Male authority figures held the power to expel disobedient females from their homes, declare them mad or possessed, and sentence them to a life of prostitution (Lindsey, 2016). The ascetic forms of Christianity's discourse must have offered a potent set of validating processes, drawing a sizable number of women. However, today, evangelical Christians and liberal Christians do not yet agree on the exegetical and theological concerns surrounding the New Testament's treatment of women, especially with regard to their role in the church, thus leaving contemporary

Christianity split on the topic (Onimhawo & Ottuh, 2010). To date, Christianity still has divisions, including those who favour spiritual equality and contemporary patriarchy.

Holy Orders in Anglicanism

Anglicanism sometimes referred to as the "middle way" of Christianity, is a Christian tradition that mixes Catholicism and Reformed principles. Scripture, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and the Sunday Eucharist are considered to be the main services in the majority of Anglican churches. They typically adhere to the teachings of the Archbishop of Canterbury and base their beliefs on the Bible, reason, and tradition (Shaw, 2014). The sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist are observed by Anglicans, and ordained Anglican priests typically perform baptisms in times of emergency. Non-ordained priests may officiate at Eucharistic ceremonies in some jurisdictions.

The Anglicans also maintain a wide variety of theological perspectives, such as Calvinism, Arminianism, and Anglo-Catholicism (Shaw, 2014).

The Church of England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century, and today there are a variety of organisations from around the world that belong to the Anglican Communion (Trisk, 2013). Whereas two branches in Scotland and the United States (US) refer to themselves as the "Episcopal Church," many branches call themselves the "Anglican Church." Due to doctrinal differences, certain organisations have also split from the Episcopal Church in the USA. Although they claim to be Anglican, these organisations are not a part of the Anglican Communion.

In the Anglican Church, a person becomes a member of the clergy, also known as a "minister," by receiving holy orders, also known as ordination. In Anglicanism, there are three stages or sorts of ordination: deacon, priest, and bishop (Knoll, 2018). A deacon is a person of service. This was a permanent ministry among women in Anglicanism prior to the ordination of women (Reaves, 2018). Today, the diaconate is thought of as a trial run before becoming a priest and being allowed to administer the sacraments. While there are still organisations that perform social work, such as the Church Army, there is no longer a

permanent diaconate for either men or women in the traditional sense.

A priest must have been a deacon, and a bishop must have been a priest, as one must be ordained at one level before being ordained to the next. There is some debate among the Anglican churches regarding whether or not ordination is a sacrament, although they all agree that bishops are in apostolic succession (Shaw, 2014). The ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons is performed according to Anglican liturgical texts, with three bishops being needed for the episcopate and one for the priesthood and diaconate.

Other churches that Anglicans are in full communion with, including the Independent Philippine Church, the Syrian Mar Thoma Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran churches of the Porvoo Communion in Scandinavia, recognize Anglican Holy Orders (Knoll, 2018). In other words, a Catholic priest may behave similarly in Anglican churches, and the reverse is also true. Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox faith both recognize Old Catholic orders, while neither faith recognises Anglican orders.

There are positions in the church where becoming a priest is a requirement. These include the canon, vicar, and rector positions. Each Anglican province has its own definition of these phrases. However, in the United Kingdom, "vicar" is typically used to refer to the parish priest, and "rector" is rarely used. In the US, a rector is the chief priest of a parish, and a vicar is the rector's associate priest. In many nations, women can be ordained to a variety of religious orders, including bishops in Old Catholic, Anglican, and Episcopal churches (Adewara, 2019). In 2013, Pat Storey was ordained to the episcopate in Dublin, becoming the first female bishop in the Church of Ireland.

In 2014, the General Synod of the Church of England approved the ordination of women to the episcopate, with Libby Lane becoming the first female bishop (Adewara, 2019). But still-existing Anglican churches forbid women from becoming ordained. In some Protestant churches, women are permitted to serve as assistant pastors but not in positions of congregational leadership. For some religious orders, some churches permit female ordination while others do not.

Women's Status with Regard to Female Priesthood in the Anglican Church

Since the 1970s, more women have been ordained in the Anglican Communion; however, certain provinces and dioceses continue to solely ordain men. Progressive movements like the Anglican realignment and Continuing Anglican movements were sparked by disagreements over women's ordination (Shaw, 2014). While some provinces ordain women to the three traditional holy orders of deacon, priest, and bishop, others only do so for the positions of deacon and priest. The General Synod of the Church of England endorsed the Draft Legislation of Women in the Episcopate (GS 1924) in November 2013 as part of a package of policies that would have allowed women to hold the position of bishop (Trisk, 2013). In July 2014, the legislation was approved by a two-thirds majority in each of the General Synod's three bodies. Libby Lane, who was chosen to serve as the Bishop of Stockport in December 2014, is the first woman to be ordained as a bishop in the Church of England. In March 2015, Rachel Treweek was named the 43rd Bishop of Gloucester, Alison White was named the Bishop of Hull, and at Canterbury Cathedral, Treweek

became the first woman to be ordained as a bishop (Ayeni, 2023). She also became the first person to serve in the House of Lords under the 2015 Lords Spiritual (Women) Act. Rose Okeno became the second female bishop and first full bishop in the Anglican Church of Kenya's history, while Emily Onyango became the first female bishop in the church's history (Buchanan, 2015).

With most provinces ordaining women as priests and many reducing impediments to women becoming bishops, the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion has been a difficult topic. The Church of England established "flying bishops," also known as regional episcopal visitors, to assist clergy who reject women's ministry (Buchanan, 2015). The Evangelical and Catholic Mission and Forward in Faith North America are two protest organisations founded by conservative Anglicans. Since the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* was published in 2009, the Continuing Anglican Movement, which seeks a formal ecclesiastical structure for those unwilling to remain inside mainstream Anglicanism, has been more active (Scarfe, 2012). Although it is unknown how *Anglicanorum Coetibus* will affect the

continuing movement in the long run, the loss of important affiliates and resources calls for discussion and discernment.

Arguments on Women's Priesthood

Anglicanism has been plagued by the folly of women's ordination for almost fifty years, and no matter what one does to right the wrongs, one will never seem to be able to completely free himself of it. Women receiving ordination are viewed by many conservative Anglicans as being akin to the annoying relatives they have to put up with because they will unavoidably attend every family event. For most opponents of women's priesthood, the Scripture forbids women from holding ordained church leadership positions (Rodgers, 2006). A few verses of the Scripture they mention are:

1. 1 Corinthians 11:8–10: “Man was not formed for woman; rather, woman was created for man. Woman did not come from man; rather, man came from woman. A woman should be able to control her own head because of the angels”.

2. 1 Corinthians 14:33–35: “Women should maintain silence in churches, as is customary in all houses of worship for the saints. Thus, as the law likewise states, they should be silent and in submission. Let them ask their husbands at home if there is anything they want to know. Because having a woman speak in church is embarrassing”.
3. 1Timothy 2:11–14: “Let a lady study in silence and complete submission. I forbid a woman from instructing or ruling over a man; instead, she is to be silent. Because Eve came after Adam was created and Adam was not tricked, it was the woman who was tricked and turned into a transgressor”.
4. 1Timothy 3:12: “The adage is true: Anyone aspiring to the position of overseer wants a noble duty. As a result, an overseer must be a husband to one wife and above reproach”.

Article XX condemns egalitarian Biblical researchers' frequent attempts to refute verses by using nebulous and unrelated sources (Davis, 2009). This method undercuts the plain meaning of some verses, rendering some passages of Scripture offensive to

others. Additionally, the sufficiency and perspicuity qualities ascribed to Scripture by the formularies are called into question by the assertion that some passages are enigmatic and cannot be understood without esoteric insights. The verses listed in the above texts plainly refer to women in positions of church leadership, and choosing obscure passages or neglecting their context goes against the hermeneutic of the Anglican Formularies (Shaw, 2014). For most Anglicans, one must understand the Bible to prohibit women from giving sermons, teaching classes, or exercising leadership roles within a church. For some Anglicans, female priesthood is illegal.

According to the homily, a true church must exhibit three characteristics: solid theology, sacraments administered in accordance with Christ's holy institution, and proper ecclesiastical discipline. Since it entails a doctrinal statement about spiritual leadership, the church itself, the nature of gender, and humanity, the error of women's ordination affects these marks. The distribution of the sacraments is directly impacted by the ordination of women to lead Holy Communion (Rodgers, 2006). Allowing women to transgress God's prohibition against teaching or

exercising power over males is a breach of good discipline and is subject to God's wrath. The homily's description of a legitimate church differs slightly from those that ordain women. Women's ordination is perceived as the influx of a feminist and man-made tradition into the church.

The idea that the Son is forever subject to the Father in the life of the Trinity is frequently the foundation for the objection to the ordination of women as priests and bishops (Linsley, 2019). This argument contends that women's subjection to male authority in the church reflects the triune nature of God and is based on the teachings of two well-known evangelical scholars (Ottuh, 2021). However, there are significant logical, historical, and biblical/theological issues with this argument. First, if the Son is eternally submissive to the Father, then drawing the conclusion that women are subordinate to men in the church is illogical. For this reason, women should be subordinate to men in the ordained ministries of the church since subordination in role or function is compatible with equality of essence or nature (Rodgers, 2006). However, this comparison is more dissimilar than similar since there are many more

distinctions between the temporal, limited, enfleshed human beings of different genders in the historical church and the eternal, infinite, divine, discarnate persons in the eternal Trinity than there are similarities.

Lewis (cited in Blumenthal, 2005) warned in his 1948 essay, "Priestesses in the Church?" that the Church of England's plan to appoint women as priests would cause division. He maintained that the theological essence of the incarnation itself was the primary issue. Although the case for Jesus' male gender and incarnation is strong, there are a number of issues attached. The idea that a male priest is an icon of Christ misunderstands and over specifies the aim of the incarnation because it fails to recognize how fundamentally different the nature of priesthood is between the Old and New Covenants (Rodgers, 2006). These distinctions are eliminated by the New Covenant, and everyone has access to God and His grace on an equal basis.

The Father or Son language of the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus' relationship to the Father, is a revelation of a genuine

Father-Son relationship as well as a guide for how human fathers and sons should interact in the context of the Christian community (Ayeni, 2023; Davis, 2009). Second, it appears that this argument is flawed because it reads a particular interpretation of the human father-son connection in the past into the eternal existence of the Trinity. Human father-son relationships evolve throughout time, with the son becoming dependent on their father's authority as they get older and the father becoming subordinate to the son in terms of both money and other things (Radner & Turner, 2006). In this case, it appears that the hierarchical argument is guilty of picking one facet of a shifting connection and bringing that temporally constrained component back into the everlasting Father-Son relationship within the Trinity.

Marxist philosophy, also known as ideological feminism, reframes class conflict as a struggle between men and women (Onimhawo & Ottuh, 2010). By challenging biblical headship as a manifestation of the sovereignty of God the Father and God the Son, it aims to give women more power over institutions and society. Women can be priests since Jesus was a woman, according to Susan Cornwall, but feminist

views are frequently illogical and unsupported by evidence (Blomberg, 2009). The Church of England's Canon Emma Percy emphasised the use of a vocabulary about God that expresses God in a variety of ways, contending that adopting language that is both male and female would dispel the idea of God as an elderly man in the sky. The only gender exchanges in the biblical conception of humanity are between men and women (Davis, 2009). This does not apply to God, who is revealed to be the Father of the Son, Jesus Christ; rather, it alludes to the mystery of the Godhead.

The language used in prayer and while speaking about God, which is preserved in the biblical language for God Father and God Son, expresses the relationship between the church and God. The doctrines of Jesus' dual natures and the Trinity are reflected in the terminology of God the Father and God the Son, which is crucial to the Gospel. Thus, women priests, who stand in for God, alter the perception of him, yet this revisionist terminology undermines the authority of the Bible. Females and those who identify as "others" assume leadership positions during the Eucharist, altering customary prayers and disregarding Catholic doctrine, for instance (Zagano, 2008; Linsley,

2019). They create stories to circumvent Scripture and tradition and criticize the received faith as antiquated, sexist, and patriarchal (Ottuh, 2021). Thus, the Anglicans think of Christ's body and blood as masculine while thinking of the Annunciation and Incarnation as a Mary-centred event. This story avoids Jesus' reality and reframes the Eucharist.

The Western Church's love of innovation is a clear indication that the manufactured story denies the authority of the Church Fathers, who advocate vigilance in upholding the received tradition. The Western church's creativity and arrogance, which contributed to the Great Schism of 1054 and other sectarian splits, can be seen in the presence of women priests (Trisk, 2013). St. Epiphanius argues that women should be ordained as priests for God and Mary, and Sts. John Chrysostom and Augustine discuss the heretical Pepuzians who give women such principality that they even honour them with priesthood (Zagano, 2008). The Church Fathers have a clear consensus on this issue. Despite the election of seven women as diocesan or suffragan bishops in 2019, the top-down corporate paradigm of the Episcopal Church has not supported women in local ministry.

Parish, prison, and outreach work require women with leadership skills, yet the priesthood isolates them from other women and grassroots ministry.

As observed in the Church of England, the feminization of the clergy inhibits men from joining the church. While the number of full-time male clergy decreased between 2002 and 2012, the number of full-time female clergy rose by 41% during that time (Knoll, 2018). The priesthood of the Church, which has its roots in ancient Hebrew religion, is a special and deeply ingrained office that stands for the possibility of eternal life. The binary division between male and female blood work, in which men offered blood sacrifices and women gave life through childbirth and blood flow, is where the priesthood had its start (Radner & Turner, 2018). Due to gender constraints, women were never ordained as priests since they were forbidden from performing blood rituals that involved death. God warns covenant people not to mix up the ideas of life and death, which the priesthood stands for. Jesus' special sacrifice of blood on the cross serves as justification.

It has been asserted that the ordination of women will cause orthodox theology in mainline churches to disintegrate. Nevertheless, it is still unclear if the church has benefited more from this or not. Wherever women have been ordained, theological compromise has followed. Women who hold orthodox theological beliefs, engage in church ministry, and uphold the authority of Scripture have different opinions regarding the ordination of women (Radner & Turner, 2018). The argument for women being allowed to be ordained is founded on the notion that they have a "right" to do so, although this has nothing to do with fairness or personal freedoms. Women's ordination proponents make use of a vocabulary of individual rights that is at odds with traditional Christian doctrine.

The Anglican Communion has a very limited amount of official control over its member provinces, which are essentially free to enact any laws they see fit in their own territories. Instead, when the Communion wants to influence its member provinces, it uses a much less formal "authority of persuasion," particularly in relation to Episcopal discussions at Lambeth Conferences and Primates Meetings (Knoll,

2018). However, given that it so strongly contradicts their larger cultural and political settings, these findings imply that Anglican bishops in provinces that either partially or totally oppose women's ordination will very likely not be susceptible to persuasion on this issue. In cultures with greater religious diversity and egalitarian economic and political frameworks, Anglican provinces frequently appoint women to the clergy. Until their cultural or political settings develop in a more equal direction or until their economic contexts improve, provinces that do not ordain women to the priesthood or solely the diaconate or presbyterate may continue with their current policy. The above stance collaborates with Onimhawo and Ottuh's (2018) argument for the inculturation of the Christian religion in Africa.

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)'s Stance

The ideas reviewed to argue for women's priesthood in this study include Christian complementarianism and liberal feminist ideology and theology. Despite the positions within the church, women have not been consecrated as priests by the Nigerian Anglican Church. In contrast, the Church of

England decided to allow women to serve as bishops in 2014 (Adewara, 2019). Historically, members who voted against permitting women to be ordained as bishops were 72, while 10 members of the Church of England's Synod abstained (Adewara, 2019). Christian Ebisike, the Anglican Bishop of Ngbo, criticised the choice as departing from biblical principles. According to the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), women's ordination to the episcopate and priesthood would alter the church's beliefs and order.

Opponents argue that the church's priests are a part of Christ's priesthood rather than possessing a separate priesthood. Thus, there is no entitlement to the priesthood; ordination is a gift of the Holy Spirit. They also argue that the priesthood position might become a family issue if women are permitted to be ordained in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), which could cause division and strife within the Church (Adewara, 2019). In the Church of Nigeria, there is still a contentious debate over the topic of women being able to hold ordination positions. The matter has not yet been resolved definitively, so it is tabled pending additional discussion and decision.

The General Synod of the Church of Nigeria in Enugu, the Church decided against allowing women to be ordained in the Anglican Church (Church of Nigeria, 2018). A similar decision was also taken by the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ughelli, Cyril Odutemu, who stated that 32 participants voted in favour of allowing women to be ordained out of the 514 people present (Church of Nigeria, 2018). Women from all walks of life who make up the laity also voted, with 211 voting against and 2 voting in support (Anglicans Vote against Ordination of Women, 2014). This means that ordination of women will not start in the Church of Nigeria, but the topic might be brought up again in the future. The Church of Nigeria will not begin the ordination of women, according to a pastoral letter from the Church's primate, conservative Archbishop Peter Akinola (Adewara, 2019). The problem, though partially resolved, can come up again in the future.

Appraising Women's Priesthood in the Light of Some Underlying Theories

According to complementarianism, male headship in the home, the church, and society is encouraged because men and women were given the

same dignity by God when they were created. While maintaining conventional gender norms, it does not use the words traditionalist or hierarchicalist (Strachan & Peacock, 2016). Many Anglicans are in favour of complementarianism, which holds that God grants all people the same level of personal dignity and that community concord depends on how well the sexes get along and support one another. Given that they do not hold positions of leadership that require them to educate or have control over males, complementarians think that women's roles in church settings are restricted. Even though both men and women have special abilities for service, the Bible only recognises men as qualified to hold the position of pastor or priest.

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood maintains that while men and women both partake in salvation via Christ's atonement, some leadership and educational positions are reserved for males only (Strachan & Peacock, 2016). Women should not be ordained as pastors or evangelists, according to some complementarians, while others allow them as evangelists but not as pastors. Complementarianism is criticised by Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) for

disregarding the advantages of gender distinctions between men and women (Lindsey, 2016). They and complementarians have a love for Jesus Christ, a desire for justice, and a desire for the world to accept the gospel as true. According to CBE, these contrasting worldviews have enormous ramifications and are comparable to the disagreements over patriarchy and slavery.

On the other hand, liberal feminism is a philosophy that supports equal rights for men and women in a range of contexts, such as the workplace, the health care system, the educational system, marriage and family life, as well as public life and politics (Lindsey, 2016). According to liberal feminism and complementarianism, men and women are equally valuable, essential, and humane, with men serving in leadership positions and women in submissive ones. Asserting that all people, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, or colour, have equal standing before the Creator and in Christ, have equal accountability, and have been assigned roles and ministries, these theories support women's rights and interests. The liberal theologians' secularist, liberal goal is connected to the ordination of women. Those who support the

liberation of women share this secularist egalitarian vision (Frymer-Kensky, 2006). The reasoning also implies a link between the ordination of women and that of openly gay people.

In the church's history, freedom has been expressed in a variety of ways and has been established gradually. Christians have learned to acknowledge that these ideas have ramifications for salvation, social liberty, and gender equality, thus challenging Luther's limited understanding of Christian liberty. Instead of a secularist idea of egalitarianism, this knowledge of Christian freedom and equality is what motivates a fully orthodox case for women's ordination.

Patristic authority and church tradition both support the traditional notion of a male-only priesthood in the Anglican Church. However, a deeper comprehension of biblical texts can help to transcend this tradition. The Galileo scandal at the Vatican made it clear how crucial it is to update prior interpretations of biblical scriptures, particularly those that support female ordination (Moore, 2015). A futile and misguided endeavour is the defence of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father against women

serving as priests. If supporters believe that the Son's subordination to the Father in time justifies the subjugation of women to men in the earthly church, it is debatable whether they extend their reasoning to eternity. This deprives God the Son of his coeternal as well as coequal glory, majesty, and sovereignty and condemns women to perpetual subjection (Richardson, 2016). The New Evangelical Subordinationists ought to reevaluate their stances and seek out further justifications for barring women from the priesthood.

The thesis in "Discrimination" contends that the church discriminates against particular groups of people in the ordination process, including atheists, mentally ill people, and others (Grout, 2020). Witt's book, however, makes the point that these situations do not constitute discrimination against a group of people just because they belong to that group (Zagano, 2008). Instead, they are debates over flaws that can be fixed. Witt's (cited in Zagano, 2008) reaction is that the church only discriminates against a group of people because they are members of that group in the instance of the ban on women being ordained. Due to their ability to communicate their goals or physical

constraints, women are not discriminated against when they preach or exercise pastoral leadership. However, the assumption that women should not be ordained is not based on moral ineligibility or physical disability.

Conclusion

The research has shown that nearly half of the 41 provinces and jurisdictions that permit women to serve in traditional priesthood orders make up two-thirds of the Anglican Communion globally, and about 3% of the remaining provinces, however, expressly forbid women from holding ordained positions. In most Anglican provinces, the basis for opposition to women being ordained is frequently the notion that the Son (Jesus Christ) is permanently subordinate to the God-Father in the life of the Trinity. As the theological nature of the incarnation itself is the main issue, the Church's decision to appoint women as priests would provoke conflict. The goal of ideological feminism gives women more control over institutions and society, challenging the traditional understanding of gender roles in the church. Feminist viewpoints, however, are frequently illogical and unsupported by facts.

Furthermore, it is claimed that the ordination of women will lead to the breakdown of orthodox theology in mainline churches, including the Anglican Church. However, it is still unclear whether or not this is ultimately to the contemporary church's advantage. From the perspectives of liberal feminists and theologians and Christian complementarians, it may be contended that women should be ordained as priests in order to uphold their rights and interests as humans in Christian service.

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