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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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**THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN THE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION**

by

ZAKHELE MELCOME KAMBULA

(Student number 20796392)

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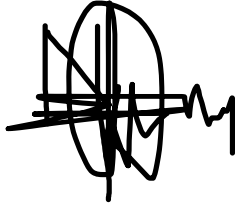
SUPERVISOR: PROF Y. DREYER

2022

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that this dissertation which I submit for the Master of Theology in practical theology at the University of Pretoria is my original work and has not been previously partially or its totality submitted for the attainment of a degree at any institution of higher learning.

Signature (student):

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'M' with a vertical line through it, and a horizontal line crossing it, followed by a small flourish.

Date: 13 April 2022

Signature (supervisor):

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all female persons in the Africa Evangelical Church who have served and continue to serve the Lord despite the limitations and restrictions imposed on them because of their gender, especially regarding the issue of ordination to ministry.

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To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be the glory for God's work in the Africa Evangelical Church. Blessed be the Godhead for the divine orchestration of events which planted a seed, the passion, motivation, and tenacity for the undertaking of this academic route to foster practical implementation.

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Abstract

Ordination in the Africa Evangelical Church of Southern Africa has been subject to male exclusivity since autonomy in 1962. This practice was carried over from the founding mission organization, the Cape General Mission. The AEC is part of the larger “evangelical” denominations which for many years have perpetuated the requirement of masculinity for ordination and church leadership. In its 60 years of autonomy, female persons in the AEC have been barred from ordination. The effect of this limitation extends beyond the church walls. It also keeps women from pursuing professional careers such as chaplaincy. Female persons in some local churches in the AEC do the work of pastors but are designated as “church workers”. They are therefore not beneficiaries of all things reserved for ordained pastors. This study investigates the role of gender in the evangelical tradition in general, and the AEC specifically. Responses in the evangelical tradition to this situation include the rise of the evangelical feminist, egalitarian, and complementarian movements. The study investigates, compares, and evaluates these movements and their views regarding women in church leadership. The study provides a critical evaluation of the scholarship of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 because of its centrality within the AEC’s gender-exclusive approach to ordination. The study shows that the phenomenon of gender exclusivity in the church can be linked to a patriarchal interpretation of Scripture. The findings contribute from a practical theological perspective toward the advancement of the inclusion of women and the cause of the ordination of women.

Key terms

The ordination of women, gender and church leadership, Africa Evangelical Church, Evangelical tradition, Feminism, Egalitarianism, Complementarianism, I Timothy, *Kephale*

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Until fairly recently, the issue of gender roles in the church has been a neglected discussion in many South African churches. By questioning this and seeking theological solutions for the problem of unequal gender roles in the churches, the churches have failed women especially. This is also the case in the Africa Evangelical Churches where women are restricted from occupying ecclesiastical offices such as pastor, elder and deacon. Their roles are mostly confined to those of *deaconess* (i.e. women to women ministry) and children's ministry. This study aims to peruse the existing literature to utilise the insights to articulate guidelines for the way forward for the ministry and ordination of women in the Africa Evangelical Church.

1.2.1 Problem statement

Gender distinctive roles in ministry, especially in evangelical denominations, is a subject of ongoing discussion. There are debates on whether ordained ministry is and should be gender-exclusive or inclusive. On the side of gender inclusivity, there are also differing opinions among the various groups who designate themselves as "evangelical feminists", "egalitarians", or "complementarians". The review, analysis and examination of these views will shed light on the issue which is the focus of the study, namely the role of women in ministry, and the question of whether ordination can and should be open to them.

1.2.2 Literature overview

The issue of women in church leadership positions is not an isolated matter which is restricted to only certain denominations. It has been a universal concern of churches. Some depart from the premise that the church is instructed "to oblige to biblical command that women are *second in sequence* to men [who] bear the *primacy of service* before God in divine order, therefore, this communicates real subordination" (see Dorrien 2015:487). Roese (2013:25) explains the situation in the first-century Greco-Roman world which was the backdrop of the New Testament Scriptures. In this world, women were excluded from education and higher learning: "This meant, private spaces like households were to be the areas in which female dominance was to be prevalent and thus inevitably this ideology made its way into the early church setting." Voerman (2014:21) describes the situation in the early

church: “The office of the bishop, overseer or presbyter applies to man only according to the context of Titus (1:5-9), because the Greek words used about these officers are masculine”. The historical background of such texts are not taken into account adequately in many denominations. Throughout history, this matter was debated occasionally. However little change has taken effect even after the Protestant Reformation. Many areas in the church have seen transformation, but the ministry and ordination of women remain an area where inequality remains evident to a large extent.

Tucker and Liefeld (1987:172) point out that Martin Luther, “in his sermons and commentaries occasionally mentioned and proclaimed the priesthood to all Christians”, but because not much attention was given to the matter, “this left the people with more questions than answers, and little consideration to none, on whether women could hold the clerical office or not”. Later on in church history, in the 18th century, a prominent figure in Methodist circles, John Wesley, “had licensed and allowed women to be given the prerogative to preach. However, after his death in 1791, the licenses were revoked” (Blue 2011:68).

These kinds of differences and inconsistencies gave rise to ongoing arguments regarding gender roles and ordained ministry in contemporary evangelical circles. Some emphasise that Scripture and church history *oppose* the idea of women in leadership, whereas others argue that Scripture *promotes* the idea of women in leadership. This is evident in biblical passages that refer to female persons who assumed positions of leadership in the early church.

A focal point of the debate revolves around the term *kephale* as it is used in Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Corinthians 11:3-16. Some claim that this term implies “authority over”. Proponents of this view include prominent evangelical scholars such as Wayne Grudem and John Piper (see Kroeger & Beck 1991:40). This interpretation implies that husbands in the marriage have authority over their wives, and in the church, men, in general, have authority over women. Therefore, wives and women should be submissive in both contexts. Others find that the intention of the term *kephale* was used as a metaphor for “source”. Evangelical scholars such as Stephan Bedale (1954), F.F. Bruce (1971), Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty (1974) (see Kroeger & Beck 1991:40) are proponents of this view. The implication of this interpretation is that *kephale* as “source” indicates “mutual submission” of believers to one another. The third interpretation of *kephale* emerged in 1990. It proposed the idea of “preeminence”. This was the suggestion of evangelical scholar R. Cervin (see Kroeger & Beck 1991:41). Anthony Thiselton (2000) understands *kephale* as “[representing] a synecdoche whereby the specific (head) stands for the whole” (see Husbands & Larsen

2007:94). These three perspectives summarize the major views within evangelical circles on the interpretation of *kephale*.

The debates between the various camps extend further to the terrain of church ministry. The relevant texts include 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. Those of the *complementarian* persuasion find that these texts restrict governing and leadership positions in the church to men. Furthermore, they “are unified in agreeing that the command of I Tim 2:11-15 is permanent and transcultural because it is grounded in creation” (Williams 2011:7). Therefore, women cannot *authoritatively* teach men. That would amount to exercising authority over men. Women can pray and prophesy, but they cannot judge prophecies in public worship (see Macgregor 2019:300). Those of the *egalitarian* persuasion and the group that calls themselves “evangelical feminists”, counter-argue that 1 Timothy (2:11-15) is historically conditioned, not universal. The Corinthians text could have been a later addition and not the work of Paul who repeatedly encouraged *all* to prophesy. Therefore, normative theology should not be established from a contextually limited text (see Payne 2015:16).

A recent study by Burke (2020) found the following about the application of biblical texts in practice in evangelical churches: “Research done on the context of evangelical ministries, including the examination of sermons, indicated more messages encouraging men to act as leaders in racially diverse contexts” (Burke 2020:7). Burke also points out that “sociological research on evangelical women bypass how race has an impact on their gender ideology and other areas of inequality” (Burke 2020:7). Gichuhi et al (2014:2) points out that “the fact that there has been a male-dominated leadership in the church does not mean that all people in the church are comfortable with the status quo. Voices of disquiet have emerged especially from feminist theologians”. This has led to doctrinal clashes in the churches where the dominance of men is questioned, also from Scripture. Gichuhi et al (2014:2) conclude: “They [feminist theologians] see no reason for the presentation of male dominated images and narratives which elevate men over women and deny the latter the opportunities to lead”.

The views on the exclusion of women from full participation in church leadership are not only perpetuated through sermons. They can be traced back to institutions of training, secular universities in general and theologates specific. These Bible institutions are responsible for the shaping of the preachers’ theology and ideologies. These are then carried over into congregational ministry. In some instances, people in the churches are exposed to the various perspectives that are to be found within evangelical circles. However, in many cases, they only hear a single perspective with a very specific bias. An interviewee

who participated in this study (see Appendix G, Question 1) related her experiences in a Bible College. Though the courses were all gender-inclusive, women were restricted from teaching in the presence of men according to the law of God (Interview, 24 September 2020).

Ellen Blue (2011:67) points out that there are differences in the professional experiences of male and female pastors. She warns against the danger of legitimizing discriminatory treatment based on gender because such “differentiations have been catalytic in the prevention of equality concerning pulpit access”. “Women’s issues” should not be separated from “human issues”. There are no “women’s rights” that are isolated from “human rights” (Kugler et al 2019:22). Therefore, there is a need for, “effective theological education that engages the issue of gender competently and reduces (or possibly removes) faulty Scripture interpretations that sponsor ‘gender troubles’” (Kuglar 2019:22).

Gender issues are not only a problem in Christian churches, but also in the workplace, politics, society, culture, and other religions. In the workplace “women are one of the fast growing populations of entrepreneurs worldwide and make a significant contribution to employment, innovation and economic growth in all economics” (Lewis et al 2014:11). Often because women experience discrimination in the work environment they venture into entrepreneurship (see Kugler 2019:15).

The tension caused by the gender divide is not a newly emerging phenomenon (Kugler 2019:16). Historically, women make up the majority of church membership and attendance. This has not changed. Stiller et al (2015:116) point to similar dynamics in the mission field: “In the early twentieth century, women outnumbered men on the mission field by a ratio of two to one. When the women’s missionary agencies were forced to merge with the male-dominated denominational boards, fewer women were appointed as missionaries.” This phenomenon led to women becoming less involved in decision-making and eventually having their voices completely silenced. Stiller et al (2015:116) explain the dynamic as follows: “Often when Christianity is first welcomed into a culture, women are freed from many of their cultural restrictions. Later, however, those Christian women may encounter limitations to their leadership possibilities” (Stiller et al 2015:116). Blue (2011:69) emphasises that traditional theological education leaves women “unprepared, unskilled and untrained to deal with resistance to their presence in ministry”.

On the topic of the ordination of females which has been the subject of extensive theological debate, Gary Macy (2008) enquires whether there *is evidence in the past* that supports the *ordination of women in the present*. Grudem (2006:266) explains the historical progression

of the matter: “The trend among several denominations to approve the ordination of women only began in the 1950s, well after liberal theology had gained controlling influence over those denominations.” The period mentioned by Grudem is an era associated with “the rising social and political call for equality, [which] began also to affect most Christian denominations” (Macy 2008). However, in 1960, Jean Danielou in an article titled *Journal Maison-Dieu* argued for the ordination of women as an ordinance that was practised in the past, long before the political and social uprising for women’s equality in the middle decades of the twentieth century (Macy 2008). A contemporary of Danielou, Hay van Der Meer, argued in favour of women in ministry in 1969 pointing out that the grounds on which women were excluded from priestly ordination were historically conditioned (see Macy 2008). Until this period the arguments for the ordination of women, “did not seek to prove that women were ordained in the past, but rather that the reasons for the exclusion of women from ordination were based on misogyny, and in some cases, on forged documents” (Macy 2008).

About women being relegated to the position of “deaconess” throughout history, O’Brien (2020:50) comments as follows: “*Deaconess* was a paraphrase that became popular in the third century, [but] funerary inscriptions ... well into the Byzantine period, indicated the widespread use of the masculine form in referring to women who ministered in an official capacity as deacons”. Grenz and Kjesbo (1995:87) attest to it as follows: “The designation *deaconess* did not develop until the late third or early fourth century, at which time it indicated a role that differed greatly from that of the first-century deacons.” This fits well with Paul’s use of the same masculine form of deacon when referring to Phoebe in Romans 16:1. This makes the post-third century understanding of the term different from that of the preceding centuries. Nate Krupp (1993:95) notes that according to Tertullian, “until A.D. 363 at the Laodicea council, there were four orders of female church officers: deacons, widows, elders, and presiding officers”. Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis (circa the late 3rd century) reported that “they ordained [*kathistantai*] women to the episcopate and presbyterate ... The role of women overseers and bishops continued for some centuries in the church until the early fourth century the council of Laodicea canon 11” (Harvey & Hunter 2008:397). This continued for a long period. Only in the 20th century, there was an increase in the number of ordained women in churches such as the evangelical free Methodist Church.

1.4 Aims of the research

This study aims to contribute to a framework for a contemporary application of the ministry and ordination of women in the Africa Evangelical Church in Southern Africa. The study presents constructive criticism on the matter and challenges the current theoretical and

practical approaches toward the ministry and ordination of women as applied in Africa Evangelical Churches in Southern Africa. Both theoretical and practical recommendations for the ministry and ordination of women in the Africa Evangelical Churches in Southern Africa will be made.

1.5 Research gap

The contribution of this study is to consider the existing literature on the topic in the specific context of evangelical churches critically and bring the insights into a discussion with the views and practices that are prevalent in the Africa Evangelical Church to facilitate a new direction for church practice.

1.6 Methodology

To analyze and examine the arguments of evangelical feminists, complementarians, and egalitarians, a historical overview of the development of these evangelical perspectives is given. Using the existing literature the roots and origins of these perspectives will be traced. The aim is to indicate that they have developed over the years to what they have become today. The negative and positive aspects and contemporary implications of these perspectives are identified in the study. The development of the evangelical feminist movement is linked to the 1950's social and political uprising for women's equality (see Macy 2008). For Grudem (2006:2660) it is the liberal theology of the era that forms the basis of the advocacy for women's ordination. The founding of the Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC) can be traced back to 1973. Nancy Hardesty, one of the pioneers of the movement, submitted six proposals at an evangelical workshop on social concerns (Cochran 2005:12-13). These proposals are the focus of the review, analysis, and examination of the feminist movement in this study since they are both central and foundational to the movement.

For the discussion on the complementarian movement, the Danvers Statement together with the movement's supplementary texts is the focus. The study adopts Wong's (2017) definition of complementarianism as a theory that underscores the equality of men and women *before* God, but with distinctive roles that are divinely ordained. According to these roles, men assume the authoritative headship role and women the subordinate role in both the home and the church. The reason for the selection of this definition rather than the movement's statement of faith as a point of departure is that the statement of faith is rather similar to those of the two opposing movements. The major disagreements are found in the Danvers Statement and the scriptural texts are chosen to substantiate the argument.

For the discussion on the egalitarian movement, the differences with the core values of the complementarian affirmations are the focal point. These core values will be sourced from Payne's (2015) biblical gender equality summary documents.

To clarify the position of the Africa Evangelical Church, the church's constitutional documents (i.e. the Constitution, Bylaws, and Distinctives) are consulted. These are brought into dialogue with the results of interviews with male and female academics in the AEC. This provides insight into the AEC's theoretical and practical understanding of the matter of women's ministry and ordination. The constitutional documents provide insight into the AEC's understanding of gender roles, primarily about the offices of pastor, elder, and deacon. The interviews highlight the contemporary discussions within the AEC and the views prevalent in the theological schools of the AEC.

This is a qualitative study with an inductive approach that "begins with the collection of data rather than with a theory and uses the data to identify regularities or themes" (see Hayes 2000:789). To indicate how biblical texts are applied to the matter of the ministry and ordination of women in Africa Evangelical Churches, interpretations in this ecclesial context of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 will be brought into discussion with the socio-rhetorical and the historico-grammatical methods of biblical interpretation. While the former deals more with the function of the text for its historical recipients, the latter deals with aspects of language and grammar.

1.7 Chapter outline

In Chapter 2, the arguments of evangelical feminists, complementarians and egalitarians regarding the ministry and ordination of women are discussed and compared. Since these movements all claim to be "evangelical", the investigation focuses on the historical definitions and understandings of the term. The key elements and characteristics are highlighted to come to an understanding of which elements are regarded as "normative" and "universal" within evangelical circles in general. The theological essentials (such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and salvation by faith) and non-essentials (such as church apparel, styles of worship, and ministry approaches) are identified. Though evangelicals can afford to differ on the non-essentials, when it comes to the essentials consensus is seen as imperative. Nancy Hardesty's six proposal points will be examined to establish the main points of the *evangelical feminist* argument. To clarify the *evangelical egalitarian* position,

this chapter examines the core values of the movement “Christians for Biblical Equality”. The “Biblical Manhood and Womanhood” will be examined to establish the arguments of the evangelical complementarians.

In Chapter 3 the history of the AEC is traced briefly. The constitutional documents of the AEC are examined with a focus on gender in the governing and leadership positions of the church. The results of the interviews are brought into discussion with the contents of the official documents to highlight the focal points of the current discussion within the denomination. This will clarify the position of AEC and its understanding of ordination, with a specific focus on the offices of pastor, elder and the splitting of the office of deacon.

Chapter 4 examines the understanding of the scholarship of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and its practical application in evangelical circles.

Chapter 5 presents the findings and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION AND WOMEN

2.1 Introduction

This study has opted for a qualitative approach to exploring the role of women in clerical offices within the evangelical tradition because such an approach is appropriate for exploring people's experiences and life histories (see Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2020:10). Women have long been relegated to supportive roles. Men were and are often still the ones to govern and lead the churches. Leadership roles in the church have been defined by gender, and men have been given priority over women. Even when women have the same education, qualities, and ministry experience as men, they are bypassed based on gender. Leadership is not evaluated based on a person's capability and capacity but gender. Women are by default deemed "less competent" and unqualified for clerical leadership. The leadership roles for which they are considered fit are restricted to leading women's ministries and "children's corner". Summer (2003:26) puts it as follows: "Every Christian woman is told not to lead too much. She can lead women but isn't to be called the women's pastor." In instances where a man lacks the necessary education or other leadership qualities, his maleness supplements his weaknesses and automatically makes him a suitable candidate. For example, skilled women with expertise and a leadership position in the workplace are not considered for similar roles in church leadership simply because of their gender. Many church projects have suffered at the hands of unskilled men. In contrast, capable women remained overlooked (see Summer 2003:26).

In conservative Christian circles, a husband assumes the leadership role in the home and is seen as the "provider and protector" of the family. Grudem (2002:40) puts it as follows: "Two aspects of male headship in marriage are the husband's responsibility to provide for his wife and family and protect them." Though women are given a supportive role, they run the household entirely on their own. Throughout history, contemporary cultural and ideological practices had an impact on church practice. Roese (2013:25) puts it as follows: "The popular Greco-Roman ideology of restricting women to the household made its way into the church setting." In extreme cases, women are no more than slaves or servants to their "king-husbands".

The evangelical tradition for many decades has favoured men over women in pastoral leadership. This male partiality is evident in evangelical teachings and practices. Historically, women have outnumbered men in the church, but the majority are in a disadvantaged

position when it comes to power. Also, in the mission field women, outnumbered men. When missions merged, male dominance ensured lesser female participation in decision-making (see Spencer 2015:116). Eventually, women's voices were silenced completely.

Similar restrictions on women can be seen in the Christian evangelical tradition and non-Christian cultures. Spencer (2015:116) explains it as follows: "Often when Christianity is first welcomed into a culture, women are freed from many of their cultural restrictions. Later, however, those Christian women may encounter limitations to their leadership possibilities." These restrictions pertain to leadership or preaching and extend to things such as a "Christian code of conduct" for women and the appropriate appearance of a Christian woman. In other evangelical churches, sitting arrangements emphasize the distinction in the status of men and women in the faith community. For example, women would be seated at the back in the church, separated from their husbands. Women are instructed from Scripture to remain silent in the church and are barred from teaching because that would be assuming authority over men.

Within the prevailing social structures and how this promoted masculinity, the evangelical tradition could flourish. Male persons enjoyed the privilege of being educated. Roese (2013:25) puts it as follows: "In the first century, the deprivation of women from higher learning was normative and this was predominately a Greco-Roman philosophy." In biblical times, the education of women was the prerogative of husbands. Husbands could teach their wives only what they wanted them to know. Through this accepted method, the status quo was preserved. Scribes and teachers of the law were men. Women had no opportunity of becoming teachers. Depriving women of education was instrumental in keeping them ignorant and dependent on men. Even when women were later admitted to seminaries, the education material did nothing to eradicate gender inequality among the clergy. The training was tailored to the roles already carved out for women.

Scripture and tradition are at the core of the debates on the ordination of women in evangelical circles. For some, Scripture does not support the ordination of women. They regard the ordination of women as a later phenomenon in the church. Those who support the ordination of women argue that although Scripture might be silent on the matter, the words and actions of women in the Bible support the possibility of women actively participating in the faith community also as leaders. The historical context of biblical writings is critical for understanding the matter of women's active participation in the faith community and society. Historical distance should be taken into account.

The context today differs significantly from that of biblical times. In the Old Testament, believers gathered for worship in a temporary tent structure and were led by Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. In New Testament times, worship took place in the temple and synagogues. After the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., early Jesus' followers gathered in houses for prayer. The household setting came with new terminologies such as *episcopos* (overseer), *oikonomos* (household manager/steward), and *diakonoi* (deacons/servants) (Young 2011:26). The “overseer” or “organizer” was in charge of the gathering with the deacon's help. Stewards were former slaves entrusted with managing the master's household.

The word “elder” was another term associated with the early church worship in a household setting. The word can refer to “older” or “old”, depending on the context. For example, in one instance, the word “elder” would mean a person who is older or senior in age to another. The other meaning would be of an “elder” in a council, therefore denoting a position of authority in a community. In other words, “elder” indicated age or social status. In the church context, elders were people to whom the care of the faith community was entrusted. Paul's use of the words “elder” and “overseer/bishop” in Acts 20:17 and 28 indicates his synonymic understanding of these terms. In Acts 20:17, Paul sends word to the elders of the church in Ephesus. In verse 28, he instructs them to pay attention to themselves and the flock, which the Holy Spirit has made them “overseers/bishops”. Over the centuries, the general understanding in the church was that “overseer” and “bishops” could function as synonyms.

In the mid-twentieth century, when female persons began to speak out against gender inequality. The conversation on the gender disparity in the church emerged. Scholarly content from across Christian denominations, including Evangelical, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Churches, was generated. Evangelical scholars refer to this period as *the birth of the ordination of women debate* and credit to the influence of liberal theology. Grudem (2006:266) puts it as follows: “The trend among several denominations to approve the ordination of women only began in the 1950s. Well, after liberal theology had gained controlling influence over those denominations.” However, Jean Danielou (1961:60) and Hays van de Meer (1973:130) trace active female participation in church leadership too long before social and political uprisings for gender equality. For example, in Romans 16:1, Paul refers to Phoebe as *diakonon* using a nominative form for male reference (see Osiek and Madigan 2011:12-13). The nominative form provides evidence that women served as deacons in the same capacity as men.

Gender separation within the office of the deacon gained popularity and is contemporarily maintained using “deaconess.” According to evangelical tradition, “deacon” applies to men

and "deaconess" to women. This evangelical tradition not only carries gender specifications but the difference in roles. According to Grenz and Kjesbo (1995:87), "the designation *deaconess* did not develop until the late third or early fourth century, at which time it indicated a role that differed greatly from that of the first century deacons". In most traditional evangelical churches, superiority and inferiority labelling is significant, where the "deacon" is more superior to the "deaconess."

Until the early 1970s, the traditional and cultural favouring of the male in marriage, society, and the church was an accepted practice, which had little to no opposition. Male dominance had to be endured by women, as they had no way of bringing about change and equality between men and women. The early 1970s saw the rise of the evangelical feminist movement, pioneered by Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty. They argued from a scholarly perspective for gender inclusivity within clerical offices that all human beings are equal. The term used to echo this understanding is "common humanity". The implication of a "common humanity" would be total equality in marriage, church and society between women and men. This move was not well received and was deemed a radical movement with subtle motives to introduce distortions regarding gender differences. Although most of the opposition was from men, as would be expected, some women were sceptic of the feminist movement and kept quiet. They did not publicly show support for the campaign. This response from the women had the potential to hinder the progress and growth of the evangelical feminist movement. Therefore, feminist leaders visited women in their homes to educate them on gender equality. According to Cochran (2005:15-16), "feminists did not leave all the responsibility for change in the hands of the pastors and husbands but set ambitious goals for themselves organizing Bible studies on women in the church, family and the working environment". This approach proved to be critical in the advancement of the feminist movement. It brought motivation, encouragement, and empowerment to women in an era when education was a privilege reserved for males.

The feminist movement focused not only on equality for women in the church and marriage but also in society, particularly in the work environment. Women were eventually enrolled in theological institutions. However, some discrimination remained. Specific courses such as preaching, and teaching were only for males. If women were to preach and teach, that would jeopardize male exclusivity in church and academia. According to some, that would contradict the teachings of Scripture. In the *Danvers Statement* 1988, complementarians affirm that "some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men". This declaration by the complementarians prompted a decisive response from the feminist movement. Theological institutions were approached to make provisions for women's

studies. Cochran (2015:15-16) puts it as follows: “Feminists made plans to contact every evangelical college and seminary to encourage offering women studies programs.”

The feminist understanding of the “common humanity” was not accepted unanimously within the movement because of the potential threat of it blurring the lines of the “inherent difference” between men and women. This internal disagreement led to a split in the campaign and the founding of the egalitarian movement in 1986. The two activities shared commonalities since the one stemmed from the other. The egalitarian movement set out to make their differences known from the feminist view. They were heterosexist in their approach to gender relations. The feminist perspective was inclusive of sexual minorities. According to the egalitarian view, the acceptance of female equality was not accepting sexual minorities and vice versa. Egalitarians argued for “mutual submission” in marriage instead of the traditional views of the submission of women to male authority and dominance. The implications of “mutual submission” meant that husband and wife are equal and have no distinctive gender roles. The wife could equally perform duties previously regarded as “male roles”, such as leading, providing for, and protecting the family. Males would also equally share the responsibilities initially reserved for women, such as nurturing children, doing household chores, performing home-related duties and playing a supportive role.

In the church context, women were not to be excluded from leadership or authoritative positions because of their gender. Gender should be neither an advantage nor a disadvantage to a person in the church. Since both men and women were created in the image of God, each can fulfil any adult responsibility. According to egalitarians, Paul did not bar women from authoritative leadership but prohibited unauthorized assumption of authority considering contemporary issues within the Ephesian church (see McGregor 2019:351). Therefore, according to Paul's teaching, women can teach and lead congregations comprising of men and women.

Between 1985-and 1886, the call for gender inclusivity within clerical offices gained momentum. The feminist and egalitarian movements saw exponential growth. A counter-movement to both appeared in this era, namely the *complementarian* movement. It stood in opposition to feminist and egalitarian views. The complementarian view mainly supports the widely accepted traditional idea of male headship, primarily in the home and church. The complementarians gained support more readily than the feminists and egalitarians. Their arguments were consistent with widely accepted traditional views. The complementarian view represented a perspective that aimed to preserve tradition and protect it from being

extinguished by modern movements. The complementarian view had a broad appeal within the general evangelical community as an old approach with a new name. The complementarian view supported existing norms in the home, church, and society. For example, husbands were leaders in the house. Men were leaders in the church—primarily men occupied positions of authority in a society. Therefore, the message of the complementarians did not meet much resistance. Media such as television and radio leaned towards their ideas.

Complementarians regard the feminist and egalitarian idea of “mutual submission” as contrary to church tradition. In Ephesians (5:21-33), Paul uses the relationship between Jesus and the church to illustrate what marriage should be. Christ's authority over the church is akin to the husband's authority over his wife, represented by the church. Therefore, according to the complementarian view, the “mutual submission” argument should be rejected because it would then imply “mutual submission” between Christ and the church. Grudem (2006:115) argues that Paul was not teaching “mutual submission” in marriage, nor was he instructing women to submit to men in general. They were to submit to their husband. Complementarians caution that the egalitarian teaching of mutual submission makes Ephesians 5:21-33 redundant. Grudem (2006:115) puts it as follows: “Paul did not have in mind a vague *mutual submission* understanding but a specific kind of submission to an authority, namely that the wife is subject to the authority of her husband.”

Complementarians trace the argument for male leadership in marriage back to the Old Testament, where God first gave humanity instruction in Genesis 2:16-17. God instructed Adam on what and what not to do in the Garden of Eden. Eve received God's instructions from Adam. After the fall, God came looking for Adam, not Eve. For complementarians, this indicates male leadership with women in a supportive role. Complementarian arguments are presented as agreeing with the order of creation. Dorrien (2015:487) puts it as follows: “The church is instructed to oblige to the biblical command that women are *second in sequence* to men. Men bear the *priority of service* before God in divine order; therefore, this communicates real subordination.” The creation sequence in Genesis is critical to the complementarian argument for male exclusivity in clerical leadership. Complementarian theology regards “the evidence” of Genesis 2:16-17 and 1 Timothy 2:13-14 as a clear indication that male leadership and the supportive role of women is not just a human cultural phenomenon, but a command rooted in the Old and New Testaments. According to the complementarian view, this tradition was further ratified by Jesus, who appointed twelve male apostles (Luke 6:13-16) through whom the church was established. The apostles

passed down this formula to the early church fathers. Therefore, the inclusion of women in clerical leadership would go against apostolic teaching.

Complementarians do not prevent women from teaching entirely. Women can teach other women and children, but they cannot teach adult males. Support for such restrictions is primarily sought in two texts, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. According to the complementarian interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, women are called to silence because allowing women to speak would bring disgrace to the church. 1 Timothy 2:11-12 also repeats the command for women to be quiet.

2.2 “Evangelical”

The term “evangelical” is from the Greek *euangelion*, meaning “good tidings” or “good news”. In New Testament times, good news had two meanings: firstly, the literal meaning – news, information or knowledge communicated to a person/people to whom such news was unknown. Popular modes of communication included art, writing and word of mouth. Secondly, “good news” referred to the proclamation of God's message of salvation to humanity through faith in the works of Jesus Christ. Concerning salvation, the term “gospel” is a compound word consisting of “god” and “spell” (*Godspell*), denoting a discourse or story about God (see Elwell 2001:405). In the New Testament text, *euangelion* is a noun, but in the latter part of the first millennium of the church, the adjective form became increasingly popular. Kidd (2019:9) puts it as follows: “In Germany during the 1500s, the word *evangelisch* came to denote ‘Protestant’. Until the early 1800s, English-speaking people typically used *evangelical* as an adjective, as in *evangelical faith*.” The English term “evangelical” is a description of the practice of evangelism. Hatcher (2017:8) puts it as follows: “Evangelical simply describes the religious practice of proclaiming the good news.”

In Germany, the term “evangelical” besides its synonymous use with the term “Protestant”, has a more specific reference to the Lutheran church (see Gushee and Sharp 2015:17). Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D.), born in Eisleben, Germany, is generally regarded as the founder of the Protestant movement. A former priest in the Roman Catholic Church and professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, Luther was excommunicated for refusing to recant his statements in his 95 theses (see Mead 1884:24). Luther's theology was heavily influenced by the church father, Augustine (see McGrath 2011:1544). Roman Catholicism continued with its emphasis on the power invested in the church. The evangelicals rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of salvation through the church. Evangelicals argued that only faith in Jesus Christ can save. These views caused a separation between Roman Catholics and evangelicals, which is still apparent today.

In Britain, evangelical history emerged in the early 1730s. It transcended denominationalism and influenced the existing churches (see Bebbington 1989:1). Elwell (2001:405) explains it as follows: “Evangelicalism transcends denominational and confessional boundaries. It emphasizes basic tenets of the faith and missionary outreach of compassion.” The word “evangelical” soon became the description for denominations that dedicated themselves to spreading the gospel message. Bebbington (1989:2) explains that the lower- and upper-case spelling of “evangelical” means different things. The lower case “evangelical” was understood as referring to the gospel. The upper case “Evangelical” referred to the movements that emerged in the 1730s.

The Evangelical movement differed from the Church of England in theology and practice (see Bebbington and Jones 2021:1). George Whitefield and John Wesley were among the pioneers of evangelicalism in Britain. They initiated revival crusades during the early eighteenth century. The emphasis in these crusades was on what Bebbington (1989:2-3) calls “the Evangelical Quadrilateral”, the priorities that form the basis of evangelicalism. These four priorities are the following:

- **Conversionism**

Conversionism is about a turn away from sin in repentance and putting one's trust in the redemptive work of Christ through faith. For orthodox evangelicals, this indicates the work of the Holy Spirit (see Milner 1789:228). Conversion is to be “born-again”, which is based on Jesus’ response to Nicodemus’ questions in John 3:1-5. It refers to the regeneration of the human spirit by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Being born-again according to Hatcher (2017:10), “for many meant an individualized awakening, often marked by a specific time and place, as a transformative moment in life”. This transformative moment, in evangelical thought, is followed by a desire for the knowledge of God. This desire fosters a relationship with God and Christian fellowship.

- **Activism**

The second quadrilateral is *activism*, the practice of evangelism (Bebbington 1989:2-3). The focus is on testimony about Christ. The aim is to lead unbelievers to his redemptive work. According to Hatcher (2017:10), activism is the “expression and demonstration of the gospel in missionary and social reform efforts”. The aim is to perpetuate the evangelical doctrine

within communities. The urgency and speed with which the gospel is spread today differ from times past. Today travel and technological advancements can be utilized.

- **Biblicism**

The third quadrilateral is *biblicism* (Bebbington 1989:2-3). *Biblicism* emphasizes the authority of Scripture over humanity, denomination, culture, and society. Against Roman Catholic tradition-maintained church authority, evangelicalism aimed to return to what the emphasis was in the first century. Opposition arose from Anglican apologetics (see Bebbington 1989:12). This resistance from Anglicans raised the question of the inspiration of the Bible. Evangelical arguments in support of the final authority of Scripture were seen to undermine the church's authority. Anglican ideas were seen to undermine the authority of Scripture or attempt to equate the church with Scripture. Although evangelicals among themselves agreed on the divine inspiration of the Bible, over the years, differences regarding the implications of inspiration became apparent (see Bebbington 1989:13). These differences ultimately led to the emergence of two groups, namely *conservative* and *liberal* evangelicals.

- **Crucicentrism**

The fourth quadrilateral is *crucicentrism* (Bebbington 1989:2-3), the foundation of the gospel. The cross is where humanity meets the mercy of God and through Christ is reconciled with God. The message of the cross was central to the teachings of Paul. He constantly reminded the Corinthians of the reconciliation with God, which was made possible through Christ (2 Cor 5:18, 20, 22). Bebbington (1989:15) points out that evangelicalism regards the cross as the fulcrum. Any theological system without the cross at its centre would be moving away from evangelicalism.

The beginnings of evangelicalism in the United States of America, known as the “Great Awakening” dates back to the early 1700s. According to Harton (1991:41), there were two Great Awakenings one in the mid-eighteenth century led by George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards, and one in the early nineteenth century. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), a pioneer of evangelicalism in the United States of America led doctrine-based revivals in 1735 in Boston, Massachusetts. The first Awakening focused on the grace of God, demonstrated through the works of Christ, for the benefit of humanity. It emphasized that no human effort could deserve God's favour. However, the second Awakening moved from God to society, to the deeds required for receiving grace (see Harton 1991:41-42). In the United States, evangelicalism is often associated with the religious right, right-wing politics

and social conservatism (see Brown 2016:6). In the past, evangelicalism shaped the values of American society; however, this has changed over time. Popular culture now has a much more significant influence. According to Kyle (2017:1), though evangelicalism has its roots in Europe, it may be one of the most Americanized and dynamic religions in the United States.

2.3 The term “feminism”

In instances where a single term is generally used by multiple groups of people, understandings of the term are likely to vary. One of the reasons for the differences can be that people’s experiences and connotations attached to the term differ. They then allocate a specific personal meaning to the term. Walby (2011:3) puts it as follows: “Self-definition is perhaps the most common approach in that it is based on a person's own experience.” One of the reasons for the self-definition approach was the lack of sufficient literature to address women’s struggles. The lack of literature meant that female writers had to turn to personal experiences to communicate the struggles faced by women. That is the struggle against gender inequality. Thompson (2001:6) explains “define” as follows: “Defining something is not to fix it irrevocably or for all time. Definitions are tentative, open to challenge, and must be argued for and substantiated, and can always be modified.” This approach to defining terms keeps the door open for the inclusion of new developments as the literature advances. The modification of terms is among key features in the advancement of a cause as it allows scholars to add modern perspectives. This addition of modern developments prevents younger scholars from feeling left out and supersedes the “outdated” definition.

The themes of gender and roles are among the most common features in the descriptions of feminism (see Thompson 2001:6). Women pioneered most feminist movements; however, it is not uncommon to find that men were also in these movements (see Walby 2001:3). Jenainati and Groves (2007:1) describe feminism as “the struggle to end sexist oppression”. Sexist oppression among other things includes domestic violence, unequal access to education, unfair treatment based on gender or marital status, and unequal pay. Gross (2003:9) defines the term feminism as “freedom from the prison of gender roles”. Jenainati, Groves and Gross’ denotations convey a similar meaning though they use different terminology. They refer to it as liberation for women. Where personal experiences come into play when meaning is allocated, there will be different understandings attached to the term. For Thompson (2001:7), feminism “is a social enterprise, a moral and political framework concerned with redressing social wrongs”. The fulcrum of Thompson's definition is social ethics. A community of people rarely functions “properly” without guidelines or laws

set up to govern the behaviours of community members. The implementation of guidelines and laws constitutes social ethics for a community of people.

2.4 The waves of feminism

Scholarly consensus is that historically at least three waves of feminism can be identified (see Pettigrew and Robinson 2017:61). The first wave was from 1880-to 1920, the second wave from the 1960s-to 1980s and the third wave from 1990 to the present.

2.4.1 The first wave

Gender inequality has been a prominent issue within society for a long time. Because of the patriarchal social structure, arguments against gender inequality did not have a platform. The patriarchal social structure benefits men. Although some women saw and understood the injustice of this social imbalance, their voice was silenced. The silencing of the opposing voice of women served to perpetuate the system. Before the first wave, there were critics of gender inequality, but they did not have much of an impact. McPherson (2000:208) puts it as follows: “A long tradition of writers and thinkers has criticized the position of women but not until the nineteenth century did that critique inspire a mass movement.” In the home, women had little to no input in family affairs and decisions. In the workplace, women were in positions that supported the work of men. Men had control over decision-making and leadership both in the home and workplace. Women remained in a disadvantaged position and had no authority. These oppressive social structures were not exclusive to a particular place, culture, or nationality. It was a global phenomenon. Women across the globe were experiencing male dominance. The change would only come about if women collectively would take a stand against gender inequality. The principles, values and morals of a movement would have to represent the struggles of all women, irrespective of ethnicity or nationality. The failure to overcome differences among women would pose a threat to the success of a women’s movement. Global collaboration was vital. Forestell and Moynagh (2014:65) put it as follows: “Cross-border collaborations and connections were a key feature to the first wave feminism.”

Before the emergence of first-wave feminism, household production was how most families made their living. People would sell what they had produced in the public markets. Before the era of industrialization in Western societies, people’s income was dependent on private production. The introduction of industrialization contributed to the emergence of first wave feminism. McPherson (2000:208) puts it as follows: “The origins of the nineteenth-century feminism lie in the changes that transformed western societies and foremost was industrialization.” This brought about a revolutionary transformation in the established

economy, which shifted from agriculture to manufacturing. This change hurt household production, putting many people out of business. Industrialization focused on mass production, which went beyond human ability. Machinery would be a key feature in this new order. Education was essential for innovation and the operation of machinery. The education system excluded females. Therefore, women were at the mercy of men in this new economic order. Industrialization elevated the position of men and exacerbated the oppression of women. This oppression provided women with the motivation to make their voices heard.

The women's movement argued for equal rights and opportunities for all in the public sector, education and workplace, including wages and improved working conditions (see McPherson 2000:208). Political involvement was required because major economic transformations were decided within the political sphere. Swinth (2018:2) explains how this matter developed in the United States: "The first wave feminist movement ultimately secured passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote." Later some women procured political positions through which they furthered the cause of women. The first wave movement ended with the First World War. Although there was some sustained feminist activism globally, the momentum of the first wave had diminished (see McPherson 2000:208).

2.4.2 The second wave

The second wave feminist movement which spans from the 1960s to-1980s owes credit to its predecessor, the first wave feminist movement. Although the movements have differences, they also had much in common, in that the second wave movement faced similar challenges to the first. Forty decades had passed since the "end" of the first wave feminist movement. Times and the environment had changed. The women of the second wave had advanced in education, politics and working experience also in professions such as law and medicine. Such exposure meant that the second wave movement had the potential to move the cause for gender equality further than its predecessors did. Evans (2018:27-28) puts it as follows: "Women had gained political skills and self-respect and they put those newly honed skills to the task of understanding and changing their reality." The change in time and environment provided more opportunities for success than was possible for the first wave movement. In other words, although things were a little complex in the context of the second wave movement, the first wave movement did demonstrate the potential power of a unified women's movement. In the first wave movement, the patriarchal system underestimated the power of unified women. The second wave movement faced more sophisticated restrictions.

The uprising led by women's movement activists in the United States of America against the family wage system ignited the second wave feminist movement. This uprising for economic and social change was motivational for feminists' cause. Swinth (2018:3) puts it as follows: "Feminism did not initiate the economic and social changes but was in part sparked by those changes." The wage system was meant to keep women at home and families living on the single wage of working men (see Swinth (2018:3). However, American families found it increasingly difficult to survive on a single wage. This was primarily due to factors such as rising costs, no wage increases and the expansion of families. These conditions could be alleviated by two wages per family if both men and women would be employed. The second wave feminist movement accomplished much in its quest for social justice. They achieved some legal and legislative success. They established policies in the workplace opening opportunities for employment for women (see Swinth 2018:4).

The second wave movement had three internal branches, namely Liberal, Radical, and Black feminism. This first branch, namely that of *liberal feminism*, consisted of a combination of older and younger women. The characteristic of this branch was the high value they placed on professionalism and tertiary education. Most liberal feminists procured employment in the government, the field of medicine, and the law profession (see Swinth 2018:6). They aimed to create platforms for breaking down social injustice. Liberal feminists focused on the law as the primary source of the oppression of women; therefore, if the change was necessary, it had to begin with the law. Changing the law was central to social transformation and a key feature in the eradication of the oppression of women (see Riswold 2009:9).

The second branch within the second wave movement was *radical feminism*. The focus was on redressing male domination to bring about liberation for women and ultimately for all of humanity. Thompson (2001:135) puts it as follows: "Radical feminist struggles against male domination had political priority over others because the liberation of women would mean the liberation of all." The focus included redressing the negative impact of racism, masculinity, and dehumanization.

The third branch within the second wave feminist movement was that of *Black feminism*. Black feminists are divided into two groups namely: (1) liberal and radical Black feminists and (2) national Black feminists. The liberal and radical black feminists were a bridge between the racial civil rights movement and the women's rights movement. The national black feminists focused on welfare rights and improved working conditions for domestic employees (see Swinth 2018:9).

After two decades of public activism, the impact of the second wave movement diminished. Most leaders who had been active in public service had retired. Time and change require adjustment. Some of the older leaders saw an adjustment to changing times as a shift away from the principles on which a movement was built. Changing times and a changing environment come with advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, knowledge and the identification of these are critical for the continuation of a movement. An example of radical change is the innovation of the internet, which affected every sphere of human life.

Technological advancement contributed to the success of the third wave, which reaches further than its predecessors did (see Whelehan 2007:16). The same technological advancement, which helped to propel the third wave, widened the gap between the third and second wave movements. Therefore, since change is inevitable, movements must consider methodological and application adjustments not only for survival but also for the growth and strengthening of movements. The tension between the second and third wave feminist movements is apparent. Although the tension between the first and second waves also existed, it was not on the same scale as that between the second and third waves. Most third-wavers prefer to disassociate themselves from the second wavers. They regard the second wavers approach as limiting and not advancing the cause of women. Dicker and Piepmeier (2003:14) put it as follows: “Many third wave feminists perceive the second wave as a movement to which they don't want to belong.”

Each movement had its strengths and weakness. The conflict has however reduced the impact that both movements had on their generation. Bobel (2010:5) puts it as follows: “Representatives from one wave tend to overlook the diversity within the other, while they minimize (or ignore) what the other has achieved.” The second wave had little race and ethnic diversity within their movement, while the third wave has a rich diversity. A cohesive approach between the second and third wave movements would benefit the cause of women. According to Dicker and Piepmeier (2003:16), “the current generation of feminists is – and should be – working on many of the same issues as the second wave, often alongside older feminists”.

2.4.3 The third wave

A decade after the second-wave feminist movement had disappeared from the mainstream domain, the third wave surfaced in the early 90s in the United States of America. In 1991, Clarence Thomas seemed to be the likely African American candidate to replace the first African American justice of the Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall. The confirmation process was fraught with controversy after Anita Hill, a Black law professor at the University

of Oklahoma, came forward with accusations of sexual harassment. The hearing broadcast on national television gained much media coverage and became a national conversation. Nevertheless, Clarence Thomas denied the charge and was sworn in as Justice of the Supreme Court. Feminist scholars point to the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill controversy as a major contributing factor that sparked the third wave movement. Fraiman (1999:527) puts it as follows: "The Clarence-Anita controversy was a wake-up call for many women in America, which led to mainstream feminist activism." Young women with tertiary education predominantly led this "new" feminist activism, sparking debates on women's inequality, sexism, and misogyny. Some of the debates were not entirely new conversations but were compatible with those of their predecessors (see Dicker and Piepmeier 2003:10). However, the third wave focuses also on "new" issues such as globalization, domestic violence and eating disorders. The approach of the third-wave feminist movement took a more personal turn (see Bobel (2010:3). Although the personal approach resonates with most feminists, it has little effect in scholarly circles. Works with such personal content include Barbra Findlen's (1995) *Listen up: Voices from the next feminist generation* and Rebecca Walkers' (1995) *To be real: Telling the truth and changing the face of feminism*. Findlen and Walker's publications are seen as personal and anecdotal collections of first-person narratives (see Dicker and Piepmeier 2003:12). Opposition uses this to render the content null and void, labelling it as simply personal feminist issues. This personal approach hurts the advancement of the movement. Therefore, third wave feminists have called for a more scholarly approach and contribution (see Bobel (2010:3).

At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the public presence and activism of the third wave received much criticism. Publications began to declare the end of the third wave. Among these were Tasker and Negra's 2007 work, *Interrogating postfeminist: Gender and the popular culture*, and Angela McRobbie's 2008 work, *The aftermath of feminism*. The rise in personal feminist content, which led to a decrease in scholarship for advancing the cause of women, also affected activism. This is one of the reasons for the declared end of feminism. However, some believe the third wave is still active but hidden behind new terms. Walby (2011:2) puts it as follows: "Third-wave feminism is vibrant and alive, although less visible partly because gender inequality projects less often label themselves as *feminist*."

Justice and human rights movements have been at the forefront when it comes to the issue of gender inequality. Like gender inequality projects, some authors choose to avoid the term "feminism" in their scholarship (see Gross 2003:9). Although the term feminism is less used, the ideals are maintained in their message. Some third-wave feminist leaders claim that such projects are of a feminist origin. Walby (2011:2) puts it as follows: "Projects for gender

equality are less likely to call themselves feminist when they exist in alliance or coalition with other social forces; they adopt a more generic terminology.” The particular understanding of the relation between social justice movements and feminism determines the perspective on whether the third wave still exists or not.

2.5 Evangelical feminism

The Christian feminist movement was not the only feminist movement that had to balance faith and feminist activism. Evangelical feminists were in a similar position as Christian feminists. While the Christian feminists challenged the Roman Catholic Church, evangelical churches had to contend with evangelical feminism. Evangelical feminists interchangeably call themselves “biblical feminists” (see Sowinska 2007:168). The term “evangelical feminist” was coined to distinguish them from other Bible-believing feminists such as Roman Catholic feminists. This study opts for the term “evangelical feminists”.

In 1969, Nancy Hardesty, a female assistant editor of the Christian magazine, *Eternity*, resigned from that position and became an English teacher at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago (see Cochran 2005:11). A month later, Hardesty met up with Letha Dawson Scanzoni, a female evangelical author and proponent of the liberation of women. Hardesty had previously supported Scanzoni when her published work, *Scanzoni's articles*, was criticised. This work challenged traditional evangelical views on gender roles (see Cochran 2005:11).

The rise of evangelical feminist scholars gave a voice to women in evangelical churches who could not identify with either the secular or the Christian feminist movements. The second wave of feminism was possibly the most prominent era of feminist activism because of the emergence of a variety of feminist movements from different contexts. Women from different ethnic backgrounds, faiths and demographics had options with whom they wanted to associate. Among many deciding factors faith, convictions, and personal objectives were likely to be at the forefront. The evangelical feminist movement shared common struggles with other activists for the liberation of women but differed in that they were arguing from an evangelical perspective. For example, Christian feminists were arguing from Scripture and Western church tradition, but the evangelical feminists were arguing from Scripture and Protestant church praxis. Productive tension between faith and the general social struggle for the liberation of women was critical. This required balance meant that evangelical feminists, to some degree, would agree with the general struggle for the liberation of women but could not agree when ideals and praxis conflicted with their evangelical convictions. Scripture is the key feature that separated evangelical feminists from “secular” feminists

(see Hardesty 1977:156). As with Christian feminists, evangelical feminists' social activism is influenced by their faith.

In 1974, Scanzoni and Hardesty collaborated on a publication titled *All we're meant to be: A biblical approach to women's liberation*. This book was a contribution toward the liberation of women from an evangelical perspective. Hardesty (1974:7) called their collaboration a "union of two souls". Public critics initially thought the book would not have commercial success because of the influence of patriarchy in the church and society. However, the book received much praise and also support from some conservative Christian women (see Cochran 2005:11). This was exciting for evangelical women who were also feminists. The book built a bridge between evangelicalism and feminism. Sowinska (2007:170) puts it as follows: "This book showed evangelical women for the first time that evangelicalism and feminism could be reconciled." Kassian (1992:217) describes the popular belief of the day as follows: "Feminism and Christianity are like thick oil and water; their very natures dictate that they cannot be mixed." However, the book's success inspired more projects that are evangelical. Hardesty and Scanzoni's book, along with the Evangelical Women's Caucus (now known as Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus – EEWC), were at the forefront—leading the biblical movements for liberation of women. The addition of the letter E to the EWC marked a merging of two Christian feminist movements, evangelical and Christian feminism. This merged the Protestant and Catholic Christian traditions in a way that was foreign to the two mother groups. Nevertheless, this was a demonstration of bypassing denominational divides and dogmatic differences to advance the cause of the liberation of women.

The intention of evangelical feminists was not to lead women away from Christianity because of patriarchy. They intended to expose the contemporary oppressive practices that were the result of misinterpretation of the Bible. Sowinska (2007:171) puts it as follows: "Women active in the ECW did not reject the Bible but reinterpreted it to show its liberating – not limiting and oppressive – power. They did not consider the apostles sexist but misunderstood by the patriarchal church." Reinterpretation of the Bible was critical for evangelical feminists but a threat to the established patriarchal structure. In broadening their perspective, evangelical feminists turned to hone their hermeneutical skills. They exposed themselves to broader feminist philosophical literature (see Cochran 2005:26). Evangelical feminists argued that texts like 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are historically and contextually confined. This went against the teachings of conservative evangelicals. For evangelical feminists, the traditional conservative approach was concerned with keeping females out of ecclesiastical leadership. The evangelical feminists' focus on hermeneutics for

the liberation of women within evangelical circles was revolutionary at that time since women in the past had not taken such a daunting step (see Cochran 2005:26). This hermeneutical approach was a demanding responsibility for evangelical feminist scholars, who were contending with established gender roles.

Scanzoni and Hardesty's (1974) approach to biblical interpretation begins with a hermeneutical focus on the creation account. It is precisely in the creation account that conservatives root their understanding of gender roles. Evangelical feminists argue that Genesis 1 teaches a dual responsibility. It was given to the man and the woman. To restrict leadership roles and responsibility to males only is an indication of a faulty and biased interpretation. For evangelical feminists, God's intention was "mutual submission" sacrificial love, and shared responsibility from the beginning. Scanzoni and Hardesty (1974:22) put it as follows: "In Christ, there is no chain of command, but a community founded on self-giving love." Evangelical feminists base their argument on this and reject claims by opponents who accuse them of wanting the upper hand over males.

Others did argue for female superiority over males. Spencer, (1985:24-25) for example, argued that the Hebrew word *kenegdo* in Genesis 2:18 translated as "suitable" is a combination of *ke*, "according to" and *neged*, "in front of", which suggests superiority. It refers to Eve as "suitable for Adam". According to Spencer's line of thought, Adam was expecting someone superior to himself. However, Spencer's claims were not convincing for complementarians and some egalitarians. Often people's response to being declared inferior is to turn the tables and then the oppressed becomes the oppressor. However, this is not an effective way of resolving the problem of oppression. Most evangelical feminists argued for equality for all people based on their human values and human dignity as created in the image of God.

In 1973, Paul Henry organized an evangelical Christian meeting in Chicago, Illinois. Nancy Hardesty was among those invited and she brought along six proposal points. This resulted in the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concerns. The opening statement declares the Evangelical Christian commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture. The focus of this declaration was on a social reconstruction of the current government structure from an evangelical perspective. The declaration included a confession of the failure to address discrimination against women, racism, and social injustice. On discrimination against women, the declaration reads as follows: "We acknowledge that we have encouraged men to prideful domination and women to irresponsible passivity. So, we call both men and women to mutual submission and active discipleship."

Evangelical feminists led by Hardesty felt the declaration was too general and not nearly specific enough. Hardesty's six proposal points were not part of the final publication. Nancy Hardesty wrote to Ron Sider, the editor of the Evangelicals for Social Action (now Christians for Social Action). Her focus was on gender inequality in the workplace, church, home, and marriage. The content of Hardesty's writing included the six proposal points that did not make it into the Chicago Declaration. The exclusion of the proposal points from the Chicago Declaration was one of the factors that caused a rift between the evangelical feminists and Christians for Social Action. These proposal points were eventually published in their journal, the *Daughters of Sarah*.

Hardesty's (1973:11) first point is "All persons, male and female, are created in God's image and are thus equal." This first point focuses on three things: gender, image, and equality. The first aspect of *gender* makes a clear distinction between males and females. This distinction is significant because the contemporary evangelical feminist movement, which traces its origin back to the 1973 evangelical feminists, does not make this binary gender distinction. The second aspect is that of creation *in God's image*. Although the woman was extracted from the man in the narrative, they were both created in the image of God. This means both equally share and carry all that comes with the image of God. The third element is *equality*. For evangelical feminists, equality does not stem from gender distinctions but the image of God. Therefore, equality rooted in gender distinctions is a misconstrued understanding of the root of human equality. Hardesty's first proposal point dealt with the gender distinction, the implication of God's image, and equality. All three are based on the image of God and not on the gender distinction.

Hardesty's (1973:11) second point is: "All persons are given equal responsibility by God for the propagation of the human species and the preservation of the earth." In this second proposal, the focus is on the responsibility of both husband and wife about God's intended purpose. The purpose of God is two-fold, namely the propagation of the human species and the preservation of the earth. There is no disproportion but rather an equal responsibility of husband and wife according to God's plan. The propagation of the human species is from Genesis 1:28. There is consensus about the blessing of procreation among contemporary egalitarians and complementarians. They differ regarding the roles and responsibilities that come with procreation. Evangelical feminists and egalitarians argue for shared responsibility and accountability in procreation by Genesis 1:28. In other words, gender does not dictate responsibilities. Gallagher (2004:230) puts it as follows: "A dad can do as good a job nurturing his kids as his wife – just depends on who is more gifted and who has the time." However, the complementarians argue for gender-based roles. The husband provides,

protects, and leads the family and the wife nurtures, runs the household, and submits (see Grudem 2002:40). Thus, according to complementarian view, males and females are born into established roles. Egalitarians and feminists argue against gender roles that are tied to the creation order pointing to sin as the cause of gender-based roles.

The preservation of the earth is implied in Genesis 2:15. When God put the man in the garden to work it, evangelical feminists claim that this responsibility also applied to the woman. At this point, the woman was still “within the man”. In other words, God was not merely speaking to the man but rather to humans. Therefore, working in the garden was a shared responsibility. The implication of this responsibility is that females just as males can be the provider for the family. This contradicts established social norms. According to evangelical feminists, the woman was not an afterthought. God already had her in mind. The afterthought argument undermines the omniscience of God, which is an attribute of God (see Heger 2014:12). Hardesty's second point covered procreation and the preservation of the earth as a dual human responsibility and accountability.

Hardesty's (1973:11) third point: “Women must be treated equally with men. In the church, women must be allowed to exercise fully whatever gifts the Holy Spirit has endowed them with, including public leadership in worship administration on both local and national levels.” This third point concerns the treatment of women in the functioning and operation of the church. Letham (1992:4) puts it as follows: “The goal of evangelical feminism is that men and women be allowed to serve God as individuals according to their unique gifts rather than according to a culturally predetermined personality slot called *Christian manhood* or *Christian womanhood*.” This reality is not limited to any specific platform but extends to the whole spectrum of local, national, and global platforms.

The term “public worship” has a somewhat different connotation today than it did in prior generations. Today “worship” in evangelical circles is synonymous with singing praise songs or hymns. In previous generations, public worship focused very much on the preaching and teaching of the word with perhaps little emphasis on music. The evangelical feminist understanding of “public worship” and their argument for full female participation, therefore, included women preaching and teaching the word of God. This was contrary to the established tradition that Scripture precludes women from teaching and preaching in public gatherings. Opponents deemed this view “unbiblical” because for women to teach in the church where men are present, women would be assuming authority over men. This is prohibited by Scripture (see Neste 2008:2228). Hardesty's third point covered full rights and participation for all in church leadership.

Hardesty's (1973:11) fourth point is: "In the home, women should exercise equal rights and responsibility with their husbands in the marital relationship and regard to any children. A woman's homemaking should be considered of equal value with other work outside the home and compensated equally." This point has two areas of focus, namely equality and equal responsibility in the home, and equal compensation for work done. The idea of equal rights and responsibilities in the home established equality between husband and wife in the home. This included shared parental responsibilities and accountability. Marital duties such as maintaining the marriage and caring for the children should be the responsibility of both. This evangelical feminist argument was counter to the cultural norms of the day, where household and childcare duties were allocated to women. Evangelical feminists advocated for change. Both males and females should be responsible for all they create together. These duties were not to be associated with gender.

Complementarians criticised evangelical feminists for blurring the line between the roles in a household setting. Evangelical feminists argued that male headship reflected a master and slave relationship. Felix (1994:171) puts it as follows: "A predominant concept in the literature of evangelical feminism is that the relationship between masters and slaves parallels that between wives and husbands, thus impacting the issue of women and church leadership." In other words, the idea that husbands have authority over their wives is nothing less than perpetuating slavery. Kenner (1992:207-208) puts it as follows: "Those who today will admit that slavery is wrong but still maintain that husbands must have authority over their wives are inconsistent." Regarding the aspect of equal compensation, men mostly worked outside the home whereas women managed the home. Evangelical feminists argued for an equal value of the home and public responsibilities. The source for the compensation for women remains unclear. Would the husband then be the employer? Hardesty's fourth point covered "mutual submission", equal responsibility and equal compensation for work done.

Hardesty's (1973:11) fifth point is: "In the business world, women should be given equal pay and equal benefits commensurate with their training and experience without regard to sex or marital status. This commensuration also includes so-called Christian organizations." A lack of appropriate knowledge and skills was one of many hindrances for women in acquiring better-paying jobs. This resulted in many women becoming domestic workers. The lack of knowledge was the result of the exclusion of women from higher learning. Educated males had better-paying jobs with benefits. The social structure and design were not "suitable" for women, let alone untrained females. This was not only the case in society but also in so-

called Christian organizations. Evangelical feminists did not regard Christian organizations that ignored these concerns to be truly Christian.

Most Christian feminist movements were less active in politics. They intentionally sought to focus on matters concerning the Christian faith rather than the social platform. Change in the field of labour required collaboration and association with political unions and labour organizations. However, other movements established political affiliations and often infused them with their religious perspective in their struggle against social injustice. Like the Christian feminists, evangelical feminists drew inspiration from their religious convictions in their engagement with social problems (see Coffey and Delamont 2000:6). However, gradually evangelical feminists did become more involved in social and political activism. This resulted in a significant decrease in membership. Cochran (2005:111) explains it as follows: "Some American evangelicals no longer consider the group evangelical because of its increasingly radical views on scriptural interpretation and social injustice." Hardesty's fifth point covered equality in the workplace, arguing for equal recognition and compensation commensurate with training and skills without discrimination on the grounds of gender or marital status.

Hardesty's (1973:11) sixth point is: "In education, women should be given equal opportunity to pursue their goals without discrimination in admissions, course offering, financial aid, athletic facilities, faculty appointments and promotions." Patriarchal values influenced almost every aspect of life and human affairs, including the education system. Males drafted education structures, policies, and constitutions. Women were not accommodated much in facilities of education, neither as students nor as teachers or lecturers. Abdi (2006:81) puts it as follows: "Advocates of women's education, in particular, called for the expansion of available facilities to raise women's profile in both the school system and paid employment." This approach was like that of evangelical egalitarians, who sought to pursue theological education for Christian females to provide them with the necessary tools for the interpretation of Scripture (see Payne 2015:3). Cochran (2005:15-16) describes the advocacy and actions of evangelical feminists as follows:

They made plans to contact every evangelical college and seminary to encourage offering women's studies programs. On an individual basis, the women were encouraged to attend consciousness-raising workshops and think as role models of gender equality. They called for women in hiring positions to promote qualified women and suggested readings on sexist language for personal development. They recommended establishing a committee to evaluate translations of the Bible for their use of sexist language.

This was the practical implementation of the ideas of the evangelical feminist movement. The conference held in 1973 presented a platform for evangelical feminists to make their plans and strategies known. Subsequent conferences drew substantial numbers and the cause of the liberation of women expanded. Women themselves implemented their goals rather than wait for their male counterparts to do so. Given the sensitivity of the issue, male persons did not participate with great enthusiasm. Through door-to-door visits, women at home were made aware of feminist content. The plan to reach out to evangelical schools was critical because these institutions are primary places where theological perspectives are formulated.

Some theologates in the USA responded positively to the evangelical feminist proposition by introducing course materials for equipping females. The positive response from institutions contributed to future scholarly exploration in advancing the cause of women. More females got involved in the reinterpretation and evaluation of sexist translations of Scripture. A substantial number of women attended seminary, and some could even become pastors. One of those who encouraged this approach was Anne Eggerbroten, a founding member of the Evangelical Women Caucus (see Cochran 2005:35). Although evangelical feminist success influenced seminaries, this success could not be replicated within the evangelical subculture. Sowinska (2007:175) explains the reason as follows: "Because evangelical feminists focused on the theological and ideological rhetoric, they failed to change the larger evangelical subculture, which remains dominated by traditional views." Hardesty's sixth point dealt with equality and recognition for females in the sphere of education, including theological education. These six points provide a summary of the first phase of the evangelical feminist movement.

2.6 Evangelical feminist arguments for the ordination of women

Evangelical feminists often see themselves as evangelical first and feminist second. Their priority is their faith. This ultimately influences their feminist activism. Ordination certification is required by churches for people to practice as clergy. Only those who have been ordained can participate in clerical leadership. For a very long time in the history of Christian churches, women were excluded from ordination and leadership in the church. Also in the workplace, an ordination certificate is often required for employment, for example as a lecturer in a theological seminary or faculty, or for a position as a chaplain. Exclusion from ordination can therefore keep women from full participation in churches and the workplace.

The debate on the ordination of women revolved around the interpretation of "biblical principles". Especially in evangelical churches, public, political, or social arguments do not

carry much weight. Evangelical churches regard the Bible as the final authority, and they oppose conformity to worldly standards. Evangelicals want to influence societies, not the other way around. Romans 12:2a is used to substantiate maintaining a different lifestyle from that of the world. However, although evangelical and “worldly” ideas and practices may differ, the challenges and problems faced by females, in general, are mainly similar. Evangelical feminists have much-needed support from other general feminist movements and feminists in other traditions, but not so from their faith community. Collaboration with Roman Catholic feminists, for example, does not provide evangelical feminists with the support they need, because of denominational differences regarding matters such as doctrine, worship, and tradition. These essential elements set a denomination apart from the rest of the faith community. For example, Roman Catholic feminists’ limited acceptance of the authority of the Bible differs from evangelical feminists’ total reliance on Scripture alone (see Lundy 1992:57; Letham 1992:4). Therefore, Christian and evangelical feminists will have different perspectives because of their biblical interpretation and tradition.

Evangelical feminist arguments for the ordination of women would have to be derived from scholarly biblical interpretation and should be based solely on personal experience. In any topic of debate, there are critical biblical texts for discussion. Evangelical feminists could not avoid the texts used by the opponents of women’s ordination. They too had to address these texts. The debate on women’s ordination grew exponentially when evangelical feminists joined in. They had advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages was the ongoing conversation about the liberation of women in the secular realm. These insights could have provided the motivation and empowered women to also engage in the struggle for the liberation of women within the evangelical context. Among the disadvantages was the lack of evangelical feminist literature. Most of the scholarly literature was against the ordination of women rather than providing arguments in favour of the ordination of women (see Ladouceur 2020:167). Women were fulfilling assigned supportive duties within the faith community, a role that most females had come to accept. Gender was the fulcrum of the arguments against the ordination of women. Thus, evangelical feminists had to argue for equality first and base the ordination debate on the evidence of equality.

On the instruction of 1 Timothy 2:12, evangelical feminists argued that its inclusion serves as testimony that the opposite was practised (see Sales 2020:63). In other words, there would have been no reason for the author of 1 Timothy to stop a nonexistent practice. Therefore, rather than keeping females barred from leadership, the approach should be an exploration of the reasons behind the restriction. In this manner, *both* males and females should be barred from leadership because of the same reasons. However, in the absence

of the reasons, which led the author of 1 Timothy to restrict females from teaching in the church, both females and males should have full access. Ladouceur (2020:167-174) provides what he calls “six major constellations” of arguments against the ordination of women. These are ritual impurity; the “natural hierarchy” of men and women; the priest as an icon of Christ; the different charisms of men and women; the absence of female apostles, and the tradition of the orthodox church. These six reasons for barring women from ordination are now discussed briefly.

- **Ritual impurity**

According to Ladouceur (2020:167), “ritual impurity is associated with contact with objects, places, or persons considered impure”. In the Hebrew culture, people who had been in contact with objects, places, or persons considered impure, were themselves regarded as impure. People who were regarded as impure were not allowed back into the community, as this would put others at risk. Ritual cleansing was required to be reunited with the community. There were procedures to be followed and things to be used during the process of cleansing. Some used water mixed with herbs, while others used animal blood to complete their cleansing rituals. An unusual discharge of bodily fluid (see Leviticus 15:2-13) and blood such as menstruation blood (see Leviticus 15:25-28) were regarded as impure. Ladouceur (2020:167) puts it as follows: “The argument concerning the ordination of women is that a woman's loss of blood during menstruation renders her impure and hence unfit for the Eucharist and other sacraments.” This was a critical argument used by the opponents of women in leadership. However, evangelical feminists argued that such ritual practices ceased with the New Testament era. The bodily sacrifice of Christ was not only restricted to the atonement of sins but also extended to the cancellation of many ancient Old Testament ritual practices. In the Old Testament, impure/unclean people after ritual cleansing had to present two doves or two pigeons to the priest as an offering to atone for their uncleanness (see Leviticus 15:14-15). However, now that the priestly order according to Aaron is no more and Christ serves as the high priest, Old Testament rituals of atonement are redundant. Old Testament notions of ritual impurity are not applicable under the New Covenant (see Ware 1983:35). Arguments based on these notions are therefore invalid.

- **The “natural hierarchy” of men and women**

From a natural standpoint, opponents of the ordination of women argue that the superiority of males over females inherently restricts females from clerical office (see Ladouceur 2020:168). This argument is rooted in the second creation account, where the woman is extracted from the man (Genesis 2:22). Two points are highlighted from this creation

account. Firstly, the woman was formed after the man, and secondly, the material of her creation was taken from the man. However, evangelical feminists argue that there is no implication of inferiority or subordination in the second creation account. To imply that the sequence of human creation justifies the subordination of women is reading into the text. Ladouceur (2020:169) explains it as follows: “This is a logical fallacy of *non sequitur* – jumping to conclusions unwarranted by the premises.” Evangelical feminists argue that just as “headship” within the Trinity does not imply subordination or inferiority, in the same way, the creation sequence does not imply male or female “headship”, but shared responsibility (see Ladouceur 2020:168-169).

- **The priest as an icon of Christ**

The maleness of Christ is a key feature in the argument against females in the clerical office. Maleness bears symbolic significance and is, therefore, a requirement for ecclesiastical leadership. However, Scripture and the ancient fathers emphasized the incarnation of the Son of God as *human* rather than as a male (see Ware 1983:50). Those who emphasize the maleness of Christ as the teaching of Scripture are concerned with defending the patriarchal view about church leadership. Many opponents of females in church leadership have taken the meaning of analogy to the extreme. For example, some tend to interpret biblical analogies as meaning an exact copy of something. Ladouceur (2020:170-171) explains an analogy as follows: “Analogies only partially reflect or parallel the original; it is not identical in all aspects, which could make the analogy a clone or identical copy. Priests are not identical copies of Christ. This means the copy and the original are not necessarily identical or equal.” The humanity of Christ rather than his maleness is, therefore, significant for church leadership. Moreover, representing Christ does not make one Christ himself. Ware (1983:51) puts it as follows: “If men can represent the church and the bride (of Christ), why cannot women represent Christ as Bridegroom?” Therefore, the gender requirement for ecclesiastical leadership is not a logical necessity but a subjective (and self-serving) interpretation of the Scriptures (see Ladouceur 2020:171).

- **The different charisms of men and women**

The gifts of grace are critical in any ecclesiastical role and leadership. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, Paul makes it clear that every believer has been given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. In addition to the manifestation of the Spirit, people who seek to fulfil clerical responsibilities must have certain characteristics and qualities. These characteristics and qualities include faith in Christ, noble character, self-control, and the ability to teach. However, conservatives have set up masculinity, male characteristics and qualities as

qualifying factors and femininity, female characteristics, and qualities as a disqualifying factor for clerical leadership. Therefore, men qualify, and women are excluded. Evdokimov (1994:215-216) puts it as follows: “Males’ charisms are typically those of initiative, activity, creativity, and rationality, with which the male penetrates and sanctifies the world. In contrast, female charisms are those of reception, vivification, safeguarding, and protection of the holiness of being brought about by the actions of men.” These statements are derived from the human order of creation. Masculinity is presented as one of the primary requirements for clerical office. The feminine quality is regarded as weak/soft and therefore females fall short of the primary requirement. This, however, is not the teaching of Scripture but rather denominational views and biases to retain the clerical offices exclusively for males. Differences in the qualities of males and females do not necessarily mean males can do certain things that females cannot do or the other way around. Ware (1983:23) puts it as follows: “Even if women do indeed possess, as a sex, distinctive spiritual gifts, it does not, therefore, follow that they cannot perform the same tasks as men; we are only justified in concluding that they will perform these tasks differently.” In other words, differences in outcomes are not guidelines for determining church leadership responsibilities. Rather, a diversity of outcomes should be appreciated if the responsibilities are met.

- **The absence of women apostles**

The historical observation that there were no women apostles has been among the foremost arguments for opponents of the ordination of women. Although females were not part of the literary construct of “the Twelve” as symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, or even “the seventy-two” as others have asserted, women played a critical role in the ministry of Jesus. For example, certain women followed Jesus providing for his needs (see Mat 27:55). Pricilla and Aquila were companions of Paul (see Acts 18:2). Pricilla and Aquila invited Apollos into their home to explain the way of God more adequately (see Acts 18:26). Homes functioned as modern-day churches, in other words, this instruction of Apollos by Pricilla and Aquila took place in “the church”. If instructing Apollos in this manner was contrary to Scripture, Apollos as an apostle himself would have rejected the invitation. Evangelical feminists point out that Mary and Mary Magdalene were the first people to see the resurrected Jesus. Evangelical feminists’ reasoning behind the absence of female apostles differs from the traditional understanding. Some evangelical feminists propose that the reason Jesus did not choose a female apostle was socially and culturally motivated (see Ladouceur 2020:173).

In the first century, in Palestine, female activities were predominantly limited to the home. The social and cultural spheres were the domains of males. In other words, men shaped

society, cultural perspectives, and practices. Therefore, the inclusion of a female apostle would have undermined the credibility of Jesus' teaching in the Hebrew society of his day (see Ladouceur 2020:173). A female apostle's ministry would have faced twice the challenges of those faced by males due to social and cultural biases.

Many church traditions use interpretation methods that turn the social-ethnic setting of the text into a model for clerical legitimacy. The failure to separate social-ethnic settings from guiding principles for the practices of the faith community over time has led to female subordination and oppression within the church. Ladouceur (2020:173) explains it as follows: "Even though Jesus chose *only Jews* as apostles, the church never took this socio-ethnic characteristic as a model for the church to follow in the selection of clergy and church leadership." If they did, then all church leaders would have to be of Jewish parentage. Therefore, the absence of women in the literary construct of apostolic selection does not undermine the value of women as part of the body of Christ and it does not affirm male superiority. Implications drawn from the absence of female apostles to provide "evidence" that female persons are incapable of fulfilling apostolic responsibilities are subjective and lack biblical support. Ware (1983:30) points out that "an argument from silence is a weak argument, not a definitive one". Although Jesus did not choose a female apostle, he never forbade it either. Ladouceur (2020:173) puts it as follows: "Jesus did not select a woman as an apostle, but neither did he instruct his followers not to allow women to occupy positions of responsibility and authority in the church, including sacramental and liturgical functions." Based on these arguments, evangelical feminists reject the absence of female apostles as biblical support for the exclusion of females from ecclesial leadership.

- **The tradition of the Orthodox Church**

Over time, the church moved further away from the biblical context. Besides biblical manuscripts, the testimonies of the early church fathers are the closest records to elucidate first-century church practice. It is critical for the contemporary faith community to distinguish between the teachings of Scripture and the traditional practices and doctrines that evolved in the faith community over time. The Roman Catholic Church struggled to maintain this distinction and in effect elevated church tradition and practices over Scripture. Peter was a disciple of Jesus and an apostle; all his actions and practices were not necessarily inspired. For example, when Peter separated himself and would not eat with the gentiles, Paul opposed him (Gal 2:11-12). This serves as an example of the social and cultural pressure the apostles themselves experienced at times. Ladouceur (2020:173) puts it as follows: "The church canonizes the fathers as holy persons; it does not canonize everything that they

wrote.” To regard church tradition as immutable is to burden the church with an “unbearable yoke”. Church practices were observed in the socio-ethnic setting. Some practices were the response to immediate internal or external issues and concerns. To take such practices and present them as normative for all time is to do irreparable damage to the church. Church traditions are intertwined with Christian doctrines such as the doctrine of the Trinity, salvation, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For some, to question these traditional church practices is to “deny our tradition” (see Ladouceur (2020:175).

Galatians 3:28 is a central text in the debate about the status of females in the history of the church. To the feminist proponent, Galatians 3:28 eradicates gender and gender roles in Christ. However, this understanding finds no reconciliation with the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:4, where he emphasized the gender distinction described in Genesis 1:27. A proposed understanding of the text is Paul's emphasis on baptism in Christ but not the end of gender distinction. Besides the common element of baptismal liturgy of these three texts (Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13, and Col 3:11), the emphasis is predominantly on the unity of believers in Christ. Others interpret Galatians 3:28 in light of the conflict between Jews and Gentiles in the church in Galatia. Sales (2020:59) puts it as follows: “Surely this phrase [Galatians 3:28] was meant to counter the practice of Jewish law in the Galatian church.”

Evangelical feminists point out that critical texts used against the ordination of women, particularly those written by Paul, teach the opposite. In Acts 16:6, Paul on his missionary journey around 53 CE, went to Galatia and Phrygia. Paul did not write directly to the people of Phrygia. However, because Phrygia shared a border with Galatia, some scholars have suggested that the Letter to the Galatians might have had both communities in mind (see Sales 2020:59). An inscription about women bishops written in around 371 CE by Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis (c.310-403) provides details about a Christian community called the prophetic Christian movement or Montanists, a name given them by their contemporary opponents. Epiphanius (Panarion 49.2.5; see Williams 1994:22) puts it as follows:

They have made women bishops, presbyters and the rest; they say that none of this makes any difference because *in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female*.

Epiphanius (Panarion 49.2, 2; see Williams 1994:22) continues to explain the reasons as follows:

They cite many texts, which have no relevance, and give thanks to Eve because she was the first to eat from the tree of wisdom. And as scriptural support for the ordination of women as clergy, they say that Moses' sister was a prophetess. What is more, they say Phillip had four daughters who prophesied.

Epiphanius' writing serves two purposes. Firstly, it provides insight into fourth-century practices of the faith community in Phrygia. Secondly, it discredits the practices of this faith community in Phrygia as unacceptable and contrary to the practices of the larger faith community (see Douglas 2016:115). In other words, according to the Phrygian faith community, Galatians 3:28 does not necessarily abolish gender distinctions but merges them in Christ. Douglas (2016:115) explains it as follows: "For this community male and female have been merged in Jesus Christ, and those in leadership within the church will naturally be made up of people who are male and people who are female." This approach conflicted with the mainstream churches for whom church leadership was patriarchal. The Phrygia community's emphasis on women in leadership can be seen as a preservation of an earlier church practice, which was silenced by the socio-ethnic context of the day. Sales (2020:60) puts it as follows:

The appointment of women to institutionally authoritative positions was probably the earliest Christian apostolic practice. Conversely, women's exclusion from these ranks was a subsequent development promoted not based on earliest Christian beliefs and customs, but of Greco-Roman patriarchal predilections that historically triumphed.

In other words, for the Phrygian community, the exclusion of females from the clergy was a foreign ideology. Galatia and Phrygia were located on the edge of the Roman Empire. They were disconnected from the popular Roman mainstream culture and influence (see Sales 2020:59). Therefore, unlike churches located in the Roman mainstream, the probability of their practices being non-Greco-Roman influenced was higher. This is possible, why Phrygian Christian practices differed from those of other faith communities, especially from communities within Greco-Roman borders.

Tertullian (c.155-220) was a well-known early Christian author who became a Montanist in the latter part of his life. For some scholars, the latter part of Tertullian's life serves as evidence that he had departed from the "mainstream" church. Barnes (1985:55) distinguishes between Tertullian's "pre-Montanist and Montanist" literary works. The latter is seen by some as heretical because it conflicted with early church tradition and practice. However, Dunn (2004:8-9) opposes this interpretation of Barnes' distinction:

Nowhere does he [Barnes] suggest that his [Tertullian's] later works are to be treated with suspicion as heretical. The notion that Tertullian's Montanism meant that he ever left the church is one that does not seem sustainable today. I am not inclined to see two distinct phases in his literary life. There is no dramatic or sudden catharsis.

In simple terms, Tertullian literary work shows no evidence of Montanist influence to make a distinction between Tertullian's pre-and post-Montanist work and identify him as a Montanist, would therefore be unfounded.

In summary, the evangelical feminist argument for women's equality and the ordination of women made the following points:

- *The ontological equality of men and women*

Although Eve was extracted from Adam in the creation story, this does not give males primacy over female persons. Though Adam was created first, according to the story, this does not legitimize male persons' superiority over female persons. Therefore, men and women are equally human beings, equally created in the image of God. The sexual difference does not mean a difference in nature (see Ladouceur 2020:177). The nature of men and women is that of a human being.

- *Men and women are equally gifted spiritually*

Spiritual gifts do not have a gender specification or requirement. In Christ, all are gifted without discrimination on the grounds of gender. Therefore, gender has no place in the conversation about the clerical role in the church.

- *Equality in marriage*

Husbands are not "born into" a leadership role and neither are wives "born into" a subordinate role. Marital roles are dictated by socio-cultural norms. They are not scriptural commands and should not be treated as such. Both husbands and wives are equally capable human beings. Different ways of doing should be appreciated as enriching rather than be used against the other.

- *Equal opportunities in society, education, and the workplace*

No person should be denied a position of leadership in society, access to higher education or the opportunity for promotion in the workplace because of gender or marital status.

- *Ordination for all*

Gender should not be a requirement for ordination. Socio-ethnic and Old Testament laws and practices that restricted women on all levels of life, should not be treated as normative and perpetuated. They should be viewed as subject to their immediate contextual limitations.

2.7 Egalitarian views

The roles of men and women in the church, marriage, and society have been a debated issue over many years and through this came an emergence of camps within the evangelical

Christian circle. People had to take sides, identify, and associate themselves with whatever camp seemed to agree with their view. Personal preference was possibly based on personal conviction, church tradition, and the interpretation of Scripture. The separation did not end there, because some eventually found their current camps no longer representing their convictions adequately, which led to smaller movements within the larger camps. The evangelical egalitarian view is no stranger to this phenomenon. Before discussing the evangelical egalitarian view, we shall start by exploring the term “egalitarian”.

Similar to the term “feminist” the word “egalitarian” is a broad term with different meanings. Depending on the use of the word, definitions of the term will vary from one person or movement to another. The English term “egalitarian” is derived from the French word “egal” which means “equal” (see Kolb 2007:661). In most definitions of the term “egalitarian”, the word “equality” is a common feature. The Merriam-Webster collegiate (2021) defines egalitarianism as: “A belief in human *equality*, especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs.” The term “equal” or “equality” is used in correspondence to one object or one person to another. Gosepath (2011:1) puts it as follows: “Equality signifies correspondence between a group of different objects, groups, or persons, processes or circumstances that have the same qualities in at least one respect, not all respects.”

The ideal of equality scarcely stands by itself. It is dependent on other ideals. Afolayan (2015:4) explains it as follows: “The idea of equality can be seen as *trans-conceptual* because its significance is concurrent and intersects other critical ideals like liberty, rights, poverty, and justice.” These intersections with other ideals are key features in the variety of definitions. In other words, an understanding of equality in one ideal may differ from another ideal. Although equality signifies correspondence between things or people with similar qualities, this does not necessarily mean that such things or persons are identical. Gosepath (2011:1) puts it as follows: “To say that men are equal is not to say that they are identical. Equality implies similarity rather than *sameness*.” The term “egalitarian” is interchangeable with the word “equalitarian”.

Some groups and movements have historically identified with the word “egalitarian” without religious connotations. Below is a brief look at egalitarian movements which do not identify themselves with the Christian faith.

- **Analytical egalitarians**

Sandra Peart and David Levy, authors of the book *Vanity of the philosopher* coined the term analytical egalitarian. The term is defined as “a doctrine, which makes no distinction between the street porter and the philosopher” (see Peart and Levy 2005:4). This

understanding is formulated on the basis that from birth, all people have the same opportunities. In other words, analytical egalitarians believe that all people are born with the same opportunities and all can make decisions (see Peart and Levy 2005:4). All socio-political strategies and plans should be based on the premise that all people are equal. No socio-political strategy should depart from apparent inequalities. Afolayan (2015:6) puts it as follows: “For them [Peart and Levy], sociopolitical considerations should strategically be based on the assumption that people are homogeneous, rather than asserting that they are.”

- **Liberal egalitarians**

Smith (2017:1-2) defines liberal egalitarianism as follows:

We may define *liberal egalitarianism* negatively as a rejection of the thesis that some individuals are inherently of greater worth than others. More positively, *liberal egalitarianism* can provisionally be taken to refer to positions in normative social theory accepting the *Moral Equality Principle* that all persons are of equal worth as ends in themselves.

People tend to associate power or opulence with human value or worth. In other words, the less power and opulence one possesses, the less value or worth one has. The Moral Equality Principle promotes the importance and value of human life. This echoes Immanuel Kant's “formula of humanity” on the principle of morality, which is about treating people “always as an end, never merely as a means” (see Kant 1785:429). In other words, rather than treating people as mere objects for achieving objectives, the value and importance of human life should be maintained at all times.

The terms “liberal” and “egalitarian” in most disciplines are treated separately. They have different definitions and are not likely to have much in common (see Smith 2017:1). For example, in the discipline of theology, these terms not only represent different groups but also differ in definition, doctrine, and practice. The combination of “liberal” and “egalitarian” implies that those who identify themselves with these views are proponents of two primary routes of argumentation. The first route is that of *moral individualism* – which is anchored primarily on the availability of core freedoms and liberties, for example, freedom of speech, expression, religion and freedom from gender based discrimination (see Afolayan 2015:5-6). The second route is that of socio-economic equality – namely that no persons should be discriminated against in the distribution of resources and opportunity. Social and economic equality is for all. If some are overlooked in the distribution or redistribution of resources, socio-economic progress will be impeded.

- **Global egalitarians**

This egalitarian view seeks to promote a global understanding of social justice, which goes beyond regional or national borders. This egalitarian theory argues that global social justice is denied when well-being is dependent on differences such as race, gender, geographic location, economic class, or social status. According to Afolayan (2015:7), “equality, for the egalitarian means that everybody must be equally and substantively well off”. This view has a broader concern. It aims at a global application despite apparent differences. There is a variety of other egalitarian views that are not relevant to this study. These include, for example, Luck egalitarians; Telic/Deontic egalitarians; Non-intrinsic egalitarians; Conditional egalitarians; Constitutive egalitarians; Pluralistic egalitarians; Domestic egalitarians; and Non-egalitarians (see Afolayan 2015:6-7). There are at least two main egalitarians movements that identify as Christian, the progressive and evangelical egalitarians.

2.8 Evangelical egalitarian movements

The progressive evangelical egalitarian movement emerged in the late 1990s from the politically progressive evangelical left wing which was founded in the early 1970s (see Vermurlen 2020:66-67). The difference between the 1970s and 1990s groups is political activism. The former is less active compared to the latter. Similar to evangelical feminists, progressive egalitarians claim to be evangelical and hold to evangelical roots. They hold to salvation through faith in Christ alone and to evangelical doctrines such as that of the Trinity, resurrection, baptism and the Eucharist. In terms of gender issues within the evangelical circle, the term “egalitarian” means association with the egalitarian position within the broader evangelical movement. Vermurlen (2020:69) puts it as follows: “Progressive evangelicals are uniformly egalitarian on gender issues and support women serving in all offices of church life, including as pastors.” They also support the cause of LGBTQI persons and racial or ethnic minorities, as well as issues of peace, justice and reconciliation. On the topic of marriage, progressive evangelical egalitarians condone rather than condemn non-heterosexual marriage and celebrate such unions (see Vermurlen 2020:69).

In 1986, the evangelical feminist movement experienced internal division. The internal schism was due to some members feeling that their views and convictions were no longer represented comprehensively. At least two publications contributed to the split. The first publication is Scanzoni and Mollenkott's 1978, *Is the homosexuality my neighbour: Another Christian view*. This work aimed to provide a reinterpretation of the Bible to prove its support

for non-heterosexual unions. The second publication is Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty's 1992-revised edition of *All we're meant to be*. In this work they explain their position as follows (Scanzon and Hardesty 1992:14):

All distinctions between people – male and female, rich and poor, black and white, *gay* and *straight*, Western World and Third World, Christian and non-Christian – are attempts to deny our common humanity. Such is the essence of sin, the desire to lord it over one another that we see so graphically displayed in sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, nationalism, and materialism.

For Scanzoni and Hardesty, “common humanity” means no distinctions. The existence of any kind of distinction would be a denial of people’s “common humanity”. Galatians 3:28 is quoted as Scriptural support for the “common humanity” understanding. However, opponents disagree with the evangelical feminist interpretation of Galatians 3:28. Grudem (2002:44) puts it as follows:

The egalitarians are trying to make the verse say something it does not say and never has said and never will say. [The verse] tells us that we are united in Christ and that we should never be boastful against others or feel inferior but does not say men and women are the same or they have to act the same.

Since Scanzoni and Hardesty were the pioneers of the evangelical feminist movement, whatever they argued for was taken to be the unitary voice of the evangelical feminists. However, in this instance that was not the case. This became evident in the 1986 split. The evangelical feminists’ “common humanity” understanding led to many regarding them as non-evangelical. Saucy and Tenelshof (2001:346) put it as follows: “Although they still claim to be *evangelical* and *biblical feminists* holding *to a commitment to the authority Scripture*, it is obvious that they have departed considerably from the historical meaning of that commitment.” The “historical meaning”, in this instance is the traditional perspective contemporarily represented by the complementarians of which Saucy and Tenelshof are proponents. However, to some degree, those who split from the evangelical feminist movement could find “consensus” in Saucy and Tenelshof’s remarks about the diversion of evangelical feminists. Among the topics of the debate which were later published as resolutions of the evangelical movement in 1986, included gay and lesbian civil rights (see Horner 2002:113). This resulted also in the amendment of the evangelical feminists’ statement of faith from the position of “Scripture as infallible” to a position of inclusiveness towards homosexuality. This inclusiveness was phrased as: to “affirm the multiplicity of perspectives that our membership represents” (see Cochran 2005:179).

In 1986, the evangelical egalitarian movement was founded. Two years later, in disassociating themselves from the evangelical feminists, the evangelical egalitarians, now known as the Christians for Biblical Equality – CBE published their statement of faith and core values (see Payne 2015:3, 4, 5). For the CBE, biblical equality is confined to the authority of Scripture (see *Christianity Today* 1990). Since egalitarians originated from the feminist movement, they needed to be clear about their affirmations to separate themselves from the feminists. In instances like these, where a movement splits from its founding group due to disagreements, guilt by association is one of the first things that has to be addressed. The publication of the affirmations helped to clarify the differences between the emerging groups that split off from existing groups. However, some ignored these differences and chose to identify evangelical feminists and egalitarians as the same. That, however, would be unfair to the movements. Giles (2008:28) explains it as follows: “To call temporary evangelical egalitarians *evangelical feminists* is the equivalent of egalitarians calling those they disagree with *evangelical misogynists*, which would be both untrue and unfair.” It is therefore essential to mark the distinction between the evangelical feminists and egalitarians to avoid mislabeling the groups.

The same guilt by association finds room within the egalitarian movement. Yarbrough (1995:193) puts it as follows: “Egalitarians obliterate our God-given gender distinction.” However, this is not entirely true, because only progressive evangelical egalitarians hold to this view, not evangelical egalitarians. There are at least two main evangelical egalitarian groups, namely *progressive* and *evangelical* egalitarians. The difference is equality in identity and sameness. Progressive egalitarians argue for the equality of males and females including in identity and sameness. Evangelical egalitarians uphold a gender distinction between males and females. Catherine Kroeger (1978:12), co-founder and former president of the CBE put it as follows:

Against such blurring of sexual differentiation, the Apostle Paul speaks out: it is good to be a man; it is good to be a woman. He defined sexual identity in terms of God's loving creation of men and women's need for another. To repudiate or obliterate the identity God had bestowed on us as sexual beings is a *disgrace*, a remnant of pagan religion the Corinthians had so recently left.

In other words, authors who claim that all evangelical egalitarians obliterate gender distinctions are intentionally ignoring the egalitarian co-founder and former president's statement. About the evangelical feminists and egalitarians, the difference is primarily on inclusion and audience. Scanzoni (2010:70-71) puts it as follows:

The two groups while not abandoning their evangelical roots, overlap in some respects but also differ in their respective audiences, with CBE's outreach concentrated more on the moderate evangelical community (taking great care to remain within certain theological and social conservative boundaries). Whereas EEWC has a more expansive outreach, offering a safe and welcoming place to those who have felt emotionally and spiritually abused by conservative churches (both Protestant and Catholic). [Alternatively], have been marginalized because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, or have been ready to give up Christianity because of its teachings on women, or whose general doubts and theological questioning have not been welcomed elsewhere.

According to Scanzoni, evangelical feminists' "expansive outreach" does not compromise their evangelical roots. Unlike egalitarians' "narrow" perspective that is concerned with maintaining a conservative approach, the EEWC has a broader view. Evangelical feminists offer more to society and humanity at large in that more people from diverse backgrounds find comfort within the movement. The evangelical feminist movement offers a safe place for those marginalized because of their sexual orientation. The CBE overlooks this concern. On the other hand, egalitarians see the evangelical feminist element of inclusion as a departure from evangelical and Scriptural principles as stated by Saucy and Tenelshof (2001:346).

The evangelical movement emerged during the second wave feminist movement under the influence of liberal theology. Egalitarians and complementarians such as Grudem, oppose evangelical feminists because they conform to the standards of non-Christian feminism and the doctrines of liberal theology (see Grudem 2002:44). The CBE's statement of faith is a declaration of their evangelical position, which finds consensus within movements that identify as evangelicals. However, the difference that sets the CBE apart from their evangelical counterparts such as the EEWC and the CBMW is in their eight core values, namely (see Payne 2015:4):

1. Scripture is our authoritative guide for faith, life, and practice.
2. Patriarchy (male dominance) is not a biblical ideal but a result of sin.
3. Patriarchy is an abuse of power, taking from females what God has given them: their dignity, and freedom, their leadership, and often their very lives.
4. While the Bible reflects patriarchal culture, the Bible does not teach patriarchy in human relationships.
5. Christ's redemptive work frees all people from patriarchy, calling women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership.

6. God's design for relationships includes faithful marriage between a man and a woman, celibate singleness and mutual submission in the Christian community.
7. The unrestricted use of women's gifts is integral to the work of the Holy Spirit and essential to the advancement of the gospel in the world.
8. Followers of Christ is to oppose injustice and patriarchal teachings and practices that marginalize and abuse females and males.

These eight core values articulate the essential declarations of the CBE, which differentiates them from their former associates, the evangelical feminists and their opponents, the complementarians.

In the first core value, the movement sets Scripture as its final authority. Faith, life, and practice are subject to the teachings of Scripture. The CBE (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1) puts it as follows: "To be truly biblical, Christians must continually examine their faith and practise under the searchlight of Scripture." Faith, life, and practice are directly influenced by the interpretation and understanding of Scripture. To uphold Scripture as the final authority is not to be influenced by social, political, economic, or religious matters, but to hold to a biblical perspective. Bruce (1988:17) explains that Scripture is "in a unique sense, the *rule* of belief and practice". The commitment to Scripture should drive one's activism in all spheres of life. Instead of being influenced by public opinion on social matters, the final authority of Scripture should be sought on all matters. This requires an acceptance of the divine inspiration of Scripture. The CBE (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1) describes the divine inspiration of Scripture as "relating to the divine impulse and control whereby the whole canonical Scripture is the Word of God".

On the point of divine inspiration and the authority of Scripture, the CBE and the CBMW agree but differ when it comes to the interpretation of Scripture. Patriarchy is one of the main points of disagreement. The CBE regards patriarchy as an unbiblical ideal and a result of sin (see Payne 2015:4). Patriarchy denotes a hierarchy where males have higher positions and responsibilities than females. In other words, female persons remain under the leadership of males and must submit to their rule. Merriam-Webster (2021) defines patriarchy as: "A social organization marked the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line. Broadly: control by men of a disproportionately large share of power." What is apparent from this definition is male primacy in the social sphere. In addition to supremacy within the family, the father also assumes the responsibility of provision and recognition for

parentage. The roles of wives are primarily supportive. This includes being submissive, dependent, supportive and nurturing.

For the CBE, patriarchal practices are not by the divine order of God in creation but came to be as the result of human disobedience (see Payne 2015:4; Bilezikian et al 1989:1). Had sin not entered the world through disobedience, patriarchy would have not become what it is. Social systems are to blame for patriarchy, but inherited sin is (see Benckhuysen 2019:201-202). If patriarchy was the result of sin, the question is: What social structure would then be by the creation order? According to the CBE mutual, responsibility in marriage and equal opportunities in the church and the workplace would be by creation. Freedom is declared for all in Galatians 3:28. Therefore, patriarchy should not exist in the faith community. The CBE argues for the shared authority of males and females. Before the fall, God gave earthly authority to Adam and Eve. This shared authority meant the shared responsibility for caring for and working on the earth. It is not only the responsibility of males to work the earth and females to be confined to the house. Both were given equal responsibility. Both should be equally accountable (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1-2).

In the creation story, the woman was made from a rib taken from the man (Gen 2:22). This extraction is not grounds for a distinction between superiority and inferiority. It intends to “demonstrate the fundamental unity and equality of human beings” (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1). In Genesis 2:18 and 20, the word “suitable helper” is used about the woman. This does not imply that she is lesser or inferior to the man. It denotes equality and adequacy (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1). Egalitarians have long called out traditionalists for misconstruing the meaning of “suitable helper” and keeping females subject to the rule of males in the home, in church and the workplace.

In English “helper” denotes a person of lower status and class than the one who is to be helped. However, the word “suitable” as it can be translated from the Hebrew *kenegdo* in combination with “helper” from the Hebrew *ezer* can be construed as “suitable helper”. This denotes a person of equal status and power (see Spencer 1985:26-29). In other words, for egalitarians *ezer* denotes equal status and power rather than lesser power and status. However, Webb (2001:128) cautions against using *ezer* to justify either egalitarian or complementarian arguments, because *ezer* says nothing about the helper. It is contextual factors that establish the status of the helper.

In the faith community and particularly about ecclesiastic leadership, the CBE argues for equally shared authority in service and leadership. Gender discrimination has no place in the clergy. Gender should not be a requirement for assuming an ecclesial role. Traditionally,

gender has been the determining factor in ecclesiastic leadership and females have had only limited leadership responsibilities. However, through the advancement of egalitarian scholarship, the arguments for equality and shared responsibility have gained acceptance and brought change to many denominations. Egalitarian arguments on shared service and leadership in the church are substantiated by Paul's teaching of the equal distribution of the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7. Since gifts are not distributed based on gender, males and females equally possess the gifts necessary for church service and leadership. The CBE (see Bilezikian et al 1989:2) states: "In the church, spiritual gifts of men and women are to be recognized, developed, and used in serving and teaching ministries at all levels of involvement." In other words, beyond the fact that all persons are spiritually gifted, the faith community should also acknowledge this reality. It should develop and utilise the resources of all without discrimination. Gifted people should be utilised in all levels of ministry. In this way, the church will be honouring God and fulfilling its mandate of stewardship without the exclusion of one gender from positions of responsibility (see Bilezikian et al 1989:2).

Although there are only limited examples of female leadership in the Bible, this does not support the exclusion of female persons from leadership positions. This is because of the socio-ethnic setting of the biblical faith communities that were patriarchal. Despite the patriarchal environment, there were female leaders in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, Miriam was a leader together with Moses and Aaron. Collectively, they were responsible for the elders and the people. In Judges 4:4, Deborah is called a prophet and leader of Israel. Miriam and Deborah are examples of women leadership positions that extend beyond religious leadership also to social leadership. In 2 Kings 22:13-14 Huldah, a female prophet, is mentioned. McKnight (2018:174) explains the story as follows: "Huldah is not chosen because no men were available; she is chosen because she is truly exceptional among the prophets."

In the New Testament, Paul not only encourages females in leadership but he works together with them. Paul mentions women by name as potential leaders in the churches (see Rom 16). Giles (2018:98), an egalitarian scholar, puts it as follows:

Paul's *practice* reflects closely his theology of ministry. The number of women in leadership in the early Pauline churches, given the cultural context, is breath taking. Nowhere is it more obvious than in the sixteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. In this last chapter, he mentions ten women; he names eight of them and commends the ministry and leadership of seven. Most of them were almost certainly women of some social standing. If we consider all the early Pauline [letters] more than one-quarter of the leader's Paul mentions by name are women, twelve in number.

The mention of female names by Paul is a key feature in the equalitarian defence of women in leadership. Although females were not among the New Testament writers, the inclusion of their names and songs by male authors speaks to their participation in ministry. The faith community in Paul's day did not own copies of the Scriptures. The letters of the apostles were read aloud in the presence of the faith community. When Paul named these women, the faith community would have understood that Paul regarded them as leaders. As Giles (2018:98) points out, this went against the cultural norms of the day and broke the stereotypical mindset. Egalitarians argue that to keep females from ecclesiastic leadership is to deny the teachings of Scripture. Gender was neither consideration nor a barrier for women in the service of God. Ministry flowed from the quality of character and the gifts given to the persons by God (see Hill 2020:38).

Other examples of women ministers in the New Testament include Anna, who praised God and prophesied about the infant, Jesus (Luke 2:38). Phillip the evangelist had four daughters with the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:9). This was a fulfilment of God's promise in Joel 2:28, which was quoted by Peter in his first sermon (Acts 2:14-41). Those who were filled by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost were both men and women (Acts 1:14). Along with other examples in the New and Old Testaments, egalitarians argue that the traditional practice of female exclusion in church service and leadership in the faith community over the millennia is not based on Scripture. To continue to restrict women in ministry would be to adhere to socio-ethnic confines.

In relationships, the CBE advance the course of heterosexual and celibate relationships. In the sixth core value, the CBE state God's plan for relationships as being between male and female (see Payne 2015:4). With this core value, they disassociated themselves from the ECWC and supported homosexual relations. This core value is one of the reasons for the 1986 split. To substantiate their position, the CBE cites Genesis 1:27: "So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; *male* and *female*." This verse articulates the type of relationship that is by the creation order, particularly in relation to gender. For the CBE, the Bible teaches against same-sex couples and supports only heterosexuality or celibacy. On this matter, the CBE perspective is echoed by the CBMW.

The Danvers Statement outlines the motivation behind the CBMW's arguments. It observes contemporary developments with great concern. According to the Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood (2002:291-292) the fifth concern is: "The growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse." This is a reference to same-sex and other relationships excluding

heterosexuality and singleness. Grudem (2002:90) puts it as follows; “Singles and married people have only one common task. All of us need to seek to become more like Christ so that we will better be able to fulfil the responsibilities God gives each of us to do.” The most commonly quoted New Testament text for the condemnation of any relationships other than heterosexuality and singleness is Romans 1:26-27. Both the CBE and CBMW highlight Paul's negative view of same-sex orientations and his emphasis on such practices as contrary to nature. In this view, the term “unnatural” refers to sexual acts that are seen to conflict with “the order of creation”. Those who practice anything other than heterosexuality or celibacy contradict God's design. Brownson (2013:17) puts it as follows: “The most common form of moral logic that traditionalists discern in this passage [Rom 1:26-27] has to do with the claim that same-sex erotic behaviour defies the purpose of God found in the creation narrative.” In support of singleness, Jesus, John the Baptist and Paul are examples of people who fulfilled the purpose of God for their lives as single persons. However, Grudem (2002:91) explains that singleness is not a call to isolation. Taking the example of Jesus, Grudem (2002:91) highlights that though Jesus was single, he still needed support from others, for example, his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. In other words, just as married people need support for fulfilling the purpose of God, singleness should not be taken to mean “independence” in the mission of fulfilling God's plan.

In the family, the CBE argues for equally shared responsibilities against gender-based responsibilities. For the CBMW, gender-based roles are derivatives of biblical teachings. Grudem (2002:40) explains it as follows: “In Genesis 2:15,18-23, 3:16-17, Eve is assumed to have the primary responsibility for childbearing, but Adam for tilling the ground to raise food, and pains are introduced both their areas of responsibility.” The husband's role is to provide and lead and protect the family. This leadership position comes with authority. The husband has the final say about all family matters. If the wife disagrees with him, she is regarded as being disrespectful to the (God-given) authority of the husband.

In many traditionalist families, the husband's ability to provide is closely associated with his maleness. A man who fails to provide for his family for whatever reason is regarded as less of a man. This is a popular perception in many societies and even more so in African cultures. This has been detrimental to many families because husbands often go to extremes to meet these expectations. Those who fail often become resentful of their families whom they perceive as a burden. Where the wife earns more money than the husband, this hurts the husband's manhood. He sees himself as a failure. This is why traditionalist men prefer “stay at home” wives to women with a profession. Grudem (2002:40) describes the role of the woman as follows: “A wife would not be fulfilling her role as a *helper* if she became

the permanent primary breadwinner, for then the husband would be the primary *helper*.” In other words, not only are roles gender-based but they are also associated with a specific purpose. For the CMBW, women who are the primary provider hinder the fulfilment of their role of “suitable helper”. Other than biblical reasons for this view, Grudem (2002:41) also purports to know what is in people’s hearts: “There is internal testimony from both men's and women's hearts. There is something in the men's heart that says *I don't want to be dependent on a woman* and something in a woman that says *I want my husband to provide for me*.” However, it is dangerous to build a theology around the personal conviction. It is subject to change in response to external influences, such as from culture and the environment. The “protection” of the family, which is associated with masculinity, is based on the physical strength of male bodies. According to Grudem (2002:41), women are the “weaker vessel” and therefore generally stronger husbands should use their strength to protect wives and children. Wives should perform household chores such as cleaning, cooking, nurturing children, and serving the husband. Women who fail to meet these requirements are seen as a failure in most societies. In extreme traditionalist households, wives are therefore little more than servants.

Egalitarians argue against gender-based roles that favour male persons over female persons. According to the CBE (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1-2), wives and husbands are joint heirs of the grace of life and are bound together in a relationship of mutual submission. Christ restored “mutual submission” and eradicated gender-based roles. The wife and husband carry a mutual responsibility for the family. Women can assume responsibilities that have traditionally been reserved for men and vice versa. Leadership in the family is not reserved for male persons but is a shared responsibility. Children are not the responsibility of the mothers but both parents (see Bilezikian et al 1989:1). Shared responsibility and leadership in the family reflect the biblical teaching, according to egalitarians.

In marriage, the CBE against the CMBW's position of female subordination, argue for mutual submission. The two major analogies for marriage in Scripture are the relationship of Christ and the church, and the relationship between the Father and the Son. Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are the key texts. The Bible teaches Christian believers to submit to human authority (1 Pt 2:13). Some see this as political or military authority. Egalitarians also point to another kind, which is mutual submission. Padgett (2011:58) puts it as follows: “[Submission to political or military authority] is an external and involuntary submission that in practice is pretty much the same as obedience and [mutual submission] is more interpersonal, voluntary and motivated by the internal desire to put others needs first.” The

egalitarian interpretation of these texts (Eph 5:21-33 and 1 Co 11:2-16), leans towards mutual submission between the husband and the wife.

On the other end of the spectrum, the complementarian interpretation leans towards female subordination. For egalitarians, interpretations that motivate subordination reflect a negative understanding of the texts. Such teachings and practices are misleading and contradictory to Paul's intention with the analogy. Some egalitarian proponents liken subordination to slavery and call out those who condemn slavery but advance subordination as inconsistent (see Kenner 1992:207-208). Such inconsistency indicates a subtle attempt to keep women enslaved to male dominance. Freedom in Christ for egalitarians also includes wives' freedom from husbands' authority. To advance subordination in marriage is to deny what Christ has done for women in marriage. Piper and Grudem (1991:60-61) protest the comparison of subordination with slavery. They argue that, in contrast to slavery, the creation order provides an unshakable foundation for the institution of marriage.

In defence of the mutual submission interpretation, egalitarians argue that Paul's intention with the analogy of Christ and the church in Ephesians was to call husbands to imitate Christ. Christ's sacrificial death signifies the meaning of headship, which is submission. Walt (1988:33) explains it as follows: "Egalitarians argue that headship is a role where the husband, like Christ, is to give up his life, that is, to submit himself." The implication of Christ submitting himself to the church is that the wife and husband should mutually submit to each other. Though this does not find much support in the Old Testament, egalitarians do not see the absence of mutual submission after Genesis 3 as evidence for the idea of female subordination. They see biblical support for mutual submission as rooted in the creation order attested to before Genesis 3. After Genesis 3 there is a distorted picture of marriage due to sin. The shared authority given to man and woman in the creation story shows that God regarded them as equals.

The reference in Genesis 3:13, "your desire shall be to rule over our husband", is discussed in both camps. For complementarians, this verse explains two things: firstly, because of the curse, the woman would desire to rule over their husbands. Before sin, her inclination as per God's design would have been willing submission to the husband. Secondly, because of the curse, husbands would tend to abuse their power over women and children. Before sin, according to the creation order, the husband's rule was motivated by love. The Danvers Statement (see Grudem 2002:293) describes this distortion due to sin. The fourth affirmation states: "The husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or

servility.” In other words, in Christ roles, which were distorted by sin, are restored. The role of the husband is restored to loving and humble leadership and the wife's role is restored to intelligent and willing submission. According to Grudem (2002:36), the New Testament provides a reversal of the curse. Therefore “we should expect to find an *undoing* of the wife's hostile or aggressive impulse against her husband and the husband's response of harsh rule over his wife”.

To some degree, the egalitarian argument agrees with the complementarian, primarily on the interpretation and implications of the word “rule”. The difference of opinion regards the pre-curse state of humanity. For complementarians, sin distorted the “natural” female tendency to subordination. For egalitarians, sin distorted the “mutual submission” of the pre-curse state. Cottrel (1994:134) puts it as follows: “Jesus Christ restores the original egalitarian order in the *new creation* of which the church is supposed to be a model.” Where the one does not have more authority over the other, mutual submission provides the appropriate platform for people with equal power to coexist. To bring subordination into the picture is to deny and violate the other's choice to submit voluntarily. For egalitarians, mutual submission is one aspect through which marriage brings glory to God. To advance subordination is to achieve the opposite of what the institution of marriage was designed to be.

Opponents argue that Ephesians 5:21-33 explicitly calls for wives to submit, not the husband. However, Padgett (2011:58) points out the following: “The fact that the whole periscope begins with submitting *yourselves to one another, out of reverence for Christ* provides us with a central and essential understanding of submission.” In other words, the opening statement of verse 21 includes the husbands in the call to mutual submission. For some, “out of reverence to Christ” is an indication that this went against the social-ethnic norms of the day. Mutual submission would be in obedience to Christ rather than in obedience to the socio-ethnic practices of the day. Padgett (2011:61) puts it as follows: “The pronoun *to one another* and the prepositional phrase *in the fear of Christ* influence the meaning of the verb *to submit* in decisive ways.” In so doing, husbands would be demonstrating their sacrificial love to their wives despite the preconceived social ideals. Keener (1992:167) explains it as follows: “Paul calls on husbands to love their wives sacrificially, not to rule or to govern them, as was commonly prescribed in the household codes of secular philosophers in the ancient world.” Such a display of sacrificial love would differentiate Christian marriage from other marriages. For egalitarians, when the wife and the husband submit to one another, it would be a marriage of servanthood. Both the husband and wife would take on the role of servants in the marriage. This approach leaves

no room for a “slave-master” kind of marriage. It is about sacrificial servanthood. Taking up the role of a servant is not a permanent act. It is applicable when the need arises. It is done out of love (see Padgett 2011:62).

The egalitarian understanding of mutual submission is not necessarily limited to a marriage, but covers the praxis of all in the faith community. For example, leaders in the faith community do not lord their authority over others but serve others as the teachings of 1 Peter 5:3 prescribe. The members of the faith community do not rebel against the leaders but submit to them in servanthood by the teaching of Hebrews 13:17. Padgett (2011:62) summarizes mutual submission as follows: “There is no permanent role-hierarchy in the church of one Christian over another or of husbands over wives.” Therefore, Christians in all situations should place the needs and good of others before their own.

The Trinitarian analogy is utilised both in the egalitarian and complementarian camp. The significance of this analogy is that it provides an order that goes beyond creation and into eternity. It is used by both camps to provide evidence that their position is an order established in eternity. Grudem (2002:51) puts it as follows: “The idea of headship and submission existed *before creation*. The Father has eternally had a leadership role, an authority to initiate and direct, that the Son does not have.” The Father-Son relationship displays the character and nature of God. In other words, Trinitarian support of either position would depict an ordinance rooted in God's character and nature rather than God's preference. The complementarian defence of the subordination of women is associated with the subordination of the Son to the Father. The argument is that, just as the Son who was equal to God in nature and status, was subordinate to God, so women are subordinate to men. Therefore, to say that female person are subordinate to male persons is not to indicate that females are lesser in nature and status. It only means they differ in terms of role designation, which is according to a hierarchal structure. George and Dora Winston (2003:51-52) put it as follows: “One human person can be in the relationship of authority or submission concerning another without their being either superior or inferior in dignity or worth.” Therefore, according to complementarians, in terms of role distinctions, males have a higher role than females. Just as Christ followed the lead and instruction of God, females should follow the lead and instruction of males.

Egalitarian Trinitarian theology differs from the complementarian. The understanding of the submission of the Son to the Father differs. According to egalitarians, the Son's incarnate submission was voluntary, not a requirement. Jewett (1975:142) puts it as follows: “Egalitarians hold that the complementarian comparison between the Son submitting

himself to the Father and the so-called wife's submission is invalid since the Son voluntarily submitted himself and the wife's submission is required." The Father did not force the Son to submit. The Son did so out of his own free will. Therefore, the Son's voluntary submission means that the submission of women should also be voluntary. Mutual submission is individual voluntary submission as opposed to required submission.

According to 1 Corinthians 11:3, the "head" of the woman is the man. According to Ephesians 5:23, the husband is the "head" of the wife. The interpretation of the meaning of *kephale* (head) keeps egalitarians and complementarians divided. Egalitarians propose that the meaning indicates a "source" or "fountainhead". Complementarians propose that it is about "authority".

The implication of the "source" interpretation is that man is the source of woman as the woman was extracted from the man in Genesis 2:21. The implication of the complementarian interpretation of "authority" is that women should submit to the male head of the household and that women should submit to male leadership in general. Since teaching is seen as assuming authority over the congregation, women cannot teach in the presence of men. In Greek literature, the word *kephale* has multiple meanings. It is about more than just "authority" or "source". Depending on the context, the word *kephale* can mean the literal physical human head in the anatomical sense (see Fitzmyer 1988:342). The other most common meaning of *kephale* is the "head" as the representative of the "whole", for example, the head as a body part that represents the whole human body. When *kephale* is used in this way, then it stands for the whole person. Another common usage of the term *kephale* is when it refers to "ruler" or "leader". This indicates a person of high social status who has other people working under their leadership. It is a person with authority over others. Though there are many more definitions of *kephale* in Greek literature, these are the most commonly used. The debate is about whether Paul used the *kephale* in a literal or metaphorical sense of the word. The literal meaning would imply that it designates "authority over", whereas in the metaphorical sense it does not have the intention of authority.

Egalitarians opt for the metaphorical usage of *kephale* as Paul's intention. Although *kephale* is most often used in the "ruler" or "leader" sense of the word, the context determined the meaning, not the number of times a term is used. The figurative route is regarded as a Byzantine interpretation most commonly used during the patristic period (see Fitzmyer 1988:345). Egalitarians argue that if Paul wanted to use *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 to denote "ruler", "leader", or "authority over", he would have used the slave and master example rather than husband and wife/woman. They point out that the Christ and God

example in the same passage eliminates the possibility of a “ruler”, “leader”, or “authority over” interpretation. If *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 means “ruler”, “leader”, or “authority over”, Christ would not be equal with God. However, in Philippians 2:5-7 Paul unequivocally declares Christ as equal to God. For egalitarians, the voluntary submission of Christ to the Father is evident in this passage. Though he was equal with God, he chose to submit himself in his incarnation. This, however, did not make him less of who he was to God. Tracy and Tracy (2009:96) explain the implications of the Trinitarian model as follows: “As the Father initiated love, care/protection, and honour/empowerment with the Son. So too, the husband should initiate love, care/protection, and honour/empowerment with the wife in a relationship of authority-love, not of authority-submission.” According to this view “head”, especially in marriage, is about being a “provider-nurturer”. This perspective is close to the mutual submission view, but is wary of “role-sameness”. To some extent, this view, therefore, maintains role distinctions.

Spencer and Spencer (2009:97), proponents of the “mutual submission” view, argue as follows for “source” as the meaning of *kephale* in marriage:

Authority is not gender-based in the home and church. The metaphor of *head* does not refer to authority, especially in Ephesians, but to the source of life. Thus, even as the husband can (and should) protect the wife, the wife might also protect the husband, as Sarah intended to protect Abraham from Pharaoh.

This viewpoint leans towards leadership in the home and church based on mutually agreed responsibilities rather than gender-based roles. In 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, the discussion focuses on men and women rather than husbands and wives. It is therefore not about marriage or marital roles. It is about a social matter in the context of the faith community. In Ephesians 5:22-123, the focus is on marriage rather than on men and women in general. The usage of *kephale* in these two different contexts means that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 can not necessarily be applied to the context of marriage. The context is crucial to understanding the intention of the term (see Spencer and Spencer 2009:97). The shame and honour described in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 are seen as concerning men in general, rather than specific leaders. For complementarians, the context that gives meaning to *kephale* is to be found in verses 7-9: Paul's teaching is deemed transcultural and rooted in the creation order (see Schreiner 2005:18).

Complementarians claim that Jesus' confession in John 14:28, “The Father is greater than I”, indicates order and authority. However, egalitarians caution that Jesus' confession was rooted in the incarnate Christ, not his divine nature. Summer (2003:145) puts it as follows:

“The text says God is the head of Christ. It does not say that the Father is the authority over the Son within the Trinity.” Summer's careful use of the God-Christ and Father-Son titles are indicative of two different relationships, namely earthly and heavenly. Gilbert Bilezikian (1985:138) criticises the complementarian interpretation as follows: “Complementarians have taken the liberty to reorder the text rather than accepting it in sequence as Paul offers.” In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Christ is mentioned first and God second. According to Bilezikian (1985:138), this order means that Paul intended to communicate an egalitarian perspective. Summer (2003:146) puts it as follows: “If egalitarians are right, the text is not jumbled. It appears jumbled only to those who presume that Paul was describing a hierarchy.” For egalitarians, the sequential order in this text certainly excludes any notion of hierarchal order.

2.9 Evangelical egalitarian arguments for the ordination of women

Progressive egalitarians are more politically active and argue for the equality of men and women. They see no difference in identity and sameness. Evangelical egalitarians also propagate gender equality. They differ on the point of the identity and sameness of men and women. These two egalitarian views also have different perspectives on the issue of the ordination of women. Both argue *for* the ordination of women. The difference is that progressive egalitarians argue also for the ordination of gifted and qualified people in same-sex unions. Evangelical egalitarians do not. Complementarians tend to put all egalitarians in the same boat. Groothuis (1997:188) puts it as follows:

Liberal denominations seem to justify the ordination of women and the ordinance of practising homosexuals for the same reasons. Conservatives follow suit and condemn the ordination of both women and practising homosexuals, as though they were a single issue rather than two separate issues requiring separate considerations.

Complementarians should be specific rather than generalise about liberal/progressive egalitarians as though their arguments represent those of all egalitarians. General references are a misrepresentation of the ideals of the various groups. Evangelical egalitarians see the ordination of women and same-sex union as *two different* issues. Progressive egalitarians and evangelical feminists are proponents of the ordination of gifted practising homosexual people in the church. Evangelical egalitarians oppose the ordination of practising homosexuals. Ordination is of importance because ordained ministers are allowed full access to the clergy without restriction. Ordained ministers participate in

decision-making and have access to local, national and international platforms within their denomination.

The task of egalitarians is to re-interpret texts that have been used by traditionalists to undergird a sexist approach in the church. The texts of 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 commonly feature in the debates on the ordination of women. For traditionalists, these texts restrict females from the clerical office. Paul repeated these instructions in his communications with two different churches. This emphasizes the importance of this command. When this restriction is linked to the creation order it becomes normative and timeless. Egalitarians who take the social and cultural environment of the texts into account, rather than give these texts universal authority, are seen as rebellious and going against Scripture.

Egalitarians have a different approach to these texts, which brings them to a different position on authority, leadership and gender. The arguments based on 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-25 aim to answer the question whether *these texts are normative or not*. If normative, the texts are seen as transcultural. The same teaching will then apply throughout the church for all time. If it is culturally bound, then it applies to churches that face identical challenges to those of the first hearers. In other words, to churches without similar challenges as those of the Ephesian or Corinthian churches, the specific restrictions articulated in these texts would not be applicable.

Egalitarians favour a non-universal approach, arguing that these are contextual instructions. Paul wrote these instructions to resolve an immediate problem within the churches. Paul's use of present tense verbs supports the idea that the instructions were given based on specific issues. Payne (2015:6) explains it as follows: "Paul's expression *I am not permitting* uses a verb that favours a presently ongoing prohibition over a universal prohibition, particularly in the first person present indicative grammatical form." In other words, understanding this text as nominative in the sense that it should be regarded as a universal restriction of women from the clergy, is to go beyond Paul's intention. Egalitarians see a distinction between "having authority over men" and "assuming unauthorized authority over men". In this sense, Paul was not forbidding only the latter. Paul's instruction in 1 Timothy 2:12 did therefore not apply to all women in the church at Ephesus but to a specific group of women. The women in question were under the influence of false teachers in the city of Ephesus. To prevent the spread of false doctrine in the church, Paul gave these instructions about that particular group of women. According to egalitarians, "assuming unauthorized authority over men" means exercising authority without the church's consent (see Payne

2015:6). In other words, since Paul's instruction was primarily directed at dealing with an issue of the moment, women assuming authority and authoritatively teaching men with the church's consent (i.e. ordination) would not be a problem. In Timothy 2:12, the Greek conjunction *oude* translated as "nor", conveys a single idea. The function of "nor" makes "to teach" equivalent to the verb "to have authority". This understanding of this text means that Paul did not prohibit women like Pricilla, who was in Ephesus according to 1 Timothy 4:19, from having authority over men (see Payne 2015:6). In Acts 18:26, Pricilla and Aquila explained the way of the Lord adequately to Apollos. This is evidence that a woman could authoritatively teach a male in the early church. Therefore, according to egalitarians, 1 Timothy 2:12 does not prohibit *all* women from exercising authority over men but only a particular group of women.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is another text that is often quoted to keep women silent in the church. Again, the question of whether the text is normative or not should be considered. If this text is normative, then universally, women ought to keep silent in the church. If not, the question is: to what kind of women did this text speak, and what lessons could be learned for contemporary application? Traditionalists, as with 1 Timothy 2:12, understand 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as normative. In very traditional churches, women are not allowed to speak in public. In less extreme churches, women are barred only from teaching in the presence of men. Payne (2015:7) puts it as follows:

Verse 35 prohibits even a respected woman, a wife, from the most justifiable kind of speech by a woman in the church, namely asking questions out of a desire to learn. This clarifies that the prohibition is on all speech by all women in public assemblies of the church, not a limited restriction.

In 1 Timothy, Paul addresses women in general, but in 1 Corinthians, Paul seems to be addressing married women. The difference between the immediate contexts of 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy is the audience that is addressed. The restriction in the context of 1 Corinthians raises the question of whether *are unmarried women, including female eunuchs, are excluded from this restriction or not*. The statement in verse 35 about women who should ask their husbands at home, provides context as to the women Paul had in mind. To say Paul was addressing *all* women, as Payne (2015:7) claims, would be to ignore "they should ask their husbands at home" in verse 35. Unmarried women and female eunuchs do not have husbands to ask at home.

Another question is whether *verse 34 prohibits all women from speaking in church*. If verse 34 is understood as prohibiting *all* women from speaking in the church, Paul would be

contradicting himself. In 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul says: “Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head.” The immediate context of 1 Corinthians 11 is public worship, as is chapter 14. In other words, this eliminates the temptation of restricting one text to a private setting. The immediate context of both texts is public worship.

The instruction to be silent is repeated three times. Paul's statement in verse 35a, “If they want to inquire about something” shows what kind of prohibition it is about. Paul does not contradict himself. The ban is about *enquiring* for understanding, primarily by married women. This approach agrees with 1 Corinthians 11:5, where women are not barred from praying and prophesying in public worship. The prohibition of verses 34-35 pertains to married women. Unmarried women and eunuchs are not included.

Egalitarians are sceptic of the inclusion and location of verses 34-35 in the letter. Concerns they raise include: (1) joining of *silence* and *submission* and making it a law, contradicts Scripture; (2) these verses were a later addition. For egalitarians, the association of silence and submission as a requirement does not have biblical support. Payne (2015:7) explains it as follows: “Contrary to what verse 34 says, the law never commands women to be in submission, much less to be silent, in religious gatherings, but several times encourages women to proclaim God's word publicly.” The second concern about the location of these verses in the original manuscripts is the fact that these verses in the original manuscripts are not located where they are in the English translations. They appear after the last verse of the chapter (see Payne 2015:8). Gordon Fee (2014:699) explains it as follows:

In this case, there are three options: Either (1) Paul wrote these words at this place, and they were deliberately transposed to a position after v. 40; or (2) the reverse of this, they were written originally after v. 40, and someone moved them forward to a position after v. 33; or (3) they were not part of the original text but were a very early marginal gloss that was subsequently placed in the text at two different places. Of these options, the third one best fits Bengel's first principle. One can give good historical reasons both for the gloss itself and its dual position in the text, but one is especially hard-pressed to account for either options 1 and 2, the other being original.

Bengel's (1725:255) principle states: “The form of the text is more likely the original which best explains the emergence of all the others.” Whether the verses belong before verse 33 or after verse 40, the key thing is the elimination of the idea that someone other than Paul or his scribe made a later addition. According to egalitarians, the Bible does not prohibit women from speaking in public worship gatherings. Traditional biased interpretations do

this. There is no biblical support for the prohibition of women to form part of the clergy. Other than identifiable socio-ethnic influences that affected church practice, Scripture supports women in leadership positions. Female persons can therefore be ordained and allowed to function fully in leadership positions just as their male counterparts.

A summary of the arguments presented by egalitarians is the following:

- the image of God qualifies man and woman as equals both physically and spiritually;
- by creation, man and woman were given equal responsibility to care for the earth;
- role distinctions are not gender-based, men and women have shared accountability;
- sin resulted in distorted gender-based role ideals;
- in marriage, mutual voluntary submission is a biblical ideal as opposed to the submission only of women.

The example of the Father-Son relationship is indicative of voluntary submission rather than involuntary submission. Wife and husband should both submit to each other in reverence of Christ. Mutual submission means that one should voluntarily become a servant of the other, putting the needs of others first. Voluntary mutual submission does not make one inferior or superior to the other but demonstrates sacrificial love. Sacrificial love in marriage reflects the same kind of love Christ showed for the church.

In the home, both husband and wife have to shared responsibility and accountability. Gender has no significance concerning the fulfilment of any role in the house. Therefore, the husband is responsible for the children as much as the wife. About *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:22-23, it refers to prominence rather than “authority over”. Just as Christ is the image of God and represents the invisible God, so “man” represents all of humanity. In the church, female persons should not be prohibited from being ordained clergy because of their gender. The criteria for candidates for clergy positions should not be about gender but should focus on giftedness, character, and the willingness to serve. The absence of a female apostle among the twelve disciples of Jesus should not be understood as that women should be excluded from leadership. The socio-ethnic background of Jesus’ time should be considered. Should male leadership be based on this selection, pastoral ministers should all be of Jewish origin. There are many examples in the Old and New Testaments that support female leadership. Therefore, women in modern-day churches should be ordained and allowed full access to church leadership.

2.10 Complementarian views

The publication of the Denver's Statement in 1988 by the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood marked the emergence of the complementarian movement. This was fourteen years after the beginning of evangelical feminist activism and two years after the evangelical egalitarian movement came to the fore. Until 1990 the Council was named "traditionalist" and "hierarchical". In 1991, the name changed to "complementarian". Grudem and Piper (1991:11) state the reasons for the name change as follows:

We are uncomfortable with the *traditionalist* because it implies an unwillingness to let Scripture challenge traditional patterns of behaviour. We certainly reject the term *hierarchical* because it overemphasizes structured authority while giving no suggestions of equality or the beauty of mutual interdependence.

The words "uncomfortable" and "reject" explain the CBMW name change and new direction. The term "hierarchical" was rejected but not the designation of "traditionalist". According to the CBMW (see Grudem and Piper 1991:10), their vision is "not entirely the same as the *traditional view*". In other words, the complementarians and traditionalists share similarities, but also have their differences. Grudem (2006:13) describes complementarianism as follows: "Complementarian' reflects the fact that men and women *complement* each other in our equality and differences." However, egalitarians regard this as a disguised reinvention of traditional and hierarchical views. Giles (2015:27) explains it as follows: "They were seeking to establish a new term for what had hitherto been called the *traditional* or *hierarchical* position."

The CBMW is a council of evangelical scholars and leaders from different denominations and geographic locations. Wayne Grudem and John Piper are among the leaders. In the Denver's Statement (see Grudem 2002:291-294), the Council's rationale, the CBMW states its purpose as a response to contemporary developments that had raised concerns in evangelical circles. These worrisome developments include the views of evangelical feminists and egalitarians. The concern is that these views contribute to uncertainty and confusion in evangelical culture about men, women, their values and roles. The CBMW was founded to be a corrective to erroneous views that had infiltrated evangelical culture. The mission of the CBMW movement was to save the "sinking" evangelical ship caused by the contemporary movements. The complementarians sought to restore and correct errors about marriage and relationships, as well as the home and church context. Modern trends were posing a threat to these spheres of life. The aim was to return to the creation order.

According to complementarians, modern trends were specifically distorting the institution of marriage as designed by God. This design by God was that husbands were “to humbly and lovingly lead their redeemed and willing wives” (see Grudem 2002:293). Modern trends about relationships included legitimizing sexual relationships that were seen as illicit and perverse on the grounds of Scripture and the church tradition. In the setting of the home, there was confusion about gender roles. Male roles included protecting, providing and leading the family. The functions that women historically performed included house chores, nurturing children and managing the household. Gender roles that did not conform to biblical teaching were making an appearance. This was jeopardizing and undermining biblical authority and putting church tradition and practice into disrepute. Therefore, restoration in these areas of church life was urgently needed.

The Affirmation section in the Denver's Statement expounds on the CBMW's understanding of biblical teaching. The first affirmation reads: “Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood” (see Grudem 2002:293). The three aspects that are dealt with in this first affirmation includes the “image of God”, “equality” and “male and female distinctiveness”. Across all evangelical movements, there is consensus on the biblical teaching that man and woman are created in the image of God. However, divisions arise when it comes to the implications of this biblical teaching.

For the complementarians, men and women are equal *before* God as persons. They believe in the spiritual but not physical equality of man and woman. Physically there is no equality, because men rank higher than women. In the complementarian understanding of gender “equality”, there is no equality when it comes to social relationships (see Giles 2015:24). The implication is that men rule and women obey. Complementarians caution against the misunderstanding that this “social inequality” between men and women means that men are superior and women are inferior. Being equal before God means man and woman are equally important and valuable to God (see Grudem 2002:21). Equality about importance and value *before* God, however, does not have implications for social arrangements and relationships. Complementarians assert that human dignity is not lost when the social difference in the positions of men and women is acknowledged, because all people should be treated with equal dignity on account of their being the image of God.

Complementarians emphasise the gender distinction between man and woman according to the design of God. In other words, although man and woman are created in the same image, there are gender differences. Whereas evangelical feminists and progressive

egalitarians argue for a “common humanity”, complementarians and evangelical egalitarians are proponents of a definite gender and gender role distinction. According to Genesis 1:31, God regarded creation as good. This includes human beings created as male and female. The gender distinction is then seen as rooted in the creation order. Any attempt to blur the gender distinction is deemed a sin and a distortion of God's design. Complementarians reject the evangelical feminist and egalitarian claim of equality based on their interpretation of Galatians 3:28. Richard Hove (2002:140) puts it as follows:

Egalitarians commonly argue like this: *you are all one*, means, *you are all equal*. And, *you are all equal* means *there is no gender-specific role distinctions in the home and church*. Both of these moves from oneness to equality and from equality to no gender-specific roles – are illegitimate.

Complementarians agree with the notion of equality but emphasise that Paul does not introduce new religious rights and privileges. This equality is not tied to things such as gender, and social and economic status. It pertains to salvation. Salvation is no longer for the Jews only, but is for all, whether Gentile, slave, or free. According to Hove (2002:140), Galatians 3 – 4 emphasizes a new blessing for all who suffered under the old covenant. It is not about new privileges for particular classes of believers. It is about the oneness in Christ, not equality. There is no mention of equality in the text. It emphasizes unity in Christ, which does not mean equal identity or gender sameness (see Hove 2002:141).

In marriage, complementarians argue that the gender distinction comes with gender-based roles. Evangelical egalitarians hold a different position. According to them, gender roles are not rooted in the creation order but only in the gender distinction. Gender-based roles are the result of the distortion introduced by sin. In the third affirmation, complementarians maintain that gender-based roles are part of the creation order of God (see Grudem 2002:293). God established Adam's headship and Eve's submission. However, because of sin, the woman harbours a desire to rule over her husband. Wayne Grudem (2002:25-37) provides ten reasons showing male headship before the fall. These are the following.

- **The order**

According to Genesis 2:7, Adam was created first and Eve second. This sequence is seen as evidence that male headship is rooted in the creation order. Man and woman were formed from different components. Adam was created from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7). Eve was extracted from the side of the man. In a sense, Adam came from creation elements, but Eve came from Adam. The male headship referred to in 1 Timothy 2:13, therefore, is an ordinance which is rooted in the creation order. Males who physically

represent Adam also bear headship responsibilities as husbands in marriage. Females who are physical representatives of Eve should submit as wives in marriage. In response to these arguments, McKenzie (1954:559) finds that the “Yahwist account moves to its climax, not its decline, in the creation of woman”. This approach presents the woman as a culmination rather than an afterthought of God’s creation. Similarly, though Adam and Eve were created last, they were the crown of all creation (see Tribble 1973:35). Opponents argue that if a man has authority over a woman based on the sequence of creation, then animals should have authority over human beings based on the same principle. The fact that a woman was extracted from a man does not imply male dominance or female submission. Tribble (1973:37) points out that God was the creator of human beings. They had no part in it. Only God has authority over humankind. The creation story is indicative of equality rather than domination and submission.

- **The representation**

According to Genesis 3:6, Eve ate the fruit first and then gave it to Adam. Logically this means Eve sinned first and then Adam. However, Scripture teaches the opposite. The Bible teaches that all humanity inherited sin through Adam, not Eve. Despite the Scripture's description of Eve as the first to disobey God's instruction, Adam is regarded as the chief representative of humankind. Christ is viewed as the last Adam, not Eve, in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. According to Grudem (2002:26), “it was *Adam alone* who represented the human race because he had a particular leadership role that God had given him, a role that Eve did not share.”

- **The naming of the woman**

In Genesis 2:19-20, the man is given the responsibility to name the animals. Whatever name he gave them, God established. In Genesis 2:23, Adam called the person extracted from his side “woman”. Grudem (2002:26) explains it as follows: “The original readers would have recognized that the person doing the *naming* of created things is always the person who has authority over those things.” This understanding implies that Adam had authority over Eve. The “naming” argument is not entirely convincing. In Matthew 1:21, the angel of the Lord gives the name Jesus to the son to be born of Mary. Acts 8:29 reveals the identity of the Angel of God as the Holy Spirit. If naming is done by the one with authority, the Holy Spirit would have authority over Jesus. Some can argue that the “humanity” of Jesus and not the deity of Christ was in view here. However, egalitarians would argue that this amounts to required rather than voluntary submission. The naming of the animals was not indicative of some special authority bestowed on Adam, which the woman did not have. Man and

woman were given dual authority over the animal kingdom. Adam was merely fulfilling a responsibility that comes with delegated dual authority. Grudem (2002:28) uses the naming of children by parents as an example of authority embedded in the “naming”. The problem is that the naming is tied to gender. If a father dies before a male child is born and the mother names the child and gains authority over him because of the naming, at what stage in the child's life would the authority transfer back to him to maintain male domination over women. According to the text, the word Adam gave the person extracted from his side was a *common* noun rather than the *proper* noun that would be a name. Tribble (1973:37) puts it as follows: “*Woman* itself is not a name. It designates gender; it does not specify a person. Adam recognizes sexuality by the words *ishshah* and *ish*. This recognition is not an act of naming to assert the power of male over female.” The naming of the woman, Eve, happens after the fall. If names in the narrative of creation carries any significance in relation to authority, the woman's naming paints a conflicting picture of what complementarians purport. Tribble (1973:41) puts it as follows: “It is at this place of judgement that *the man calls his wife's name Eve*, thereby asserting his rule over her. The naming itself faults the man for corrupting a relationship of mutuality and equality.” Therefore, the naming itself could have been an attempt to rule over her.

- **The naming of the human race**

The naming of the human race after “man” is associated with male leadership. Throughout the text, the name “man” is used for humanity and as a gender distinctive. “However, opponents argue that the naming of the human race after “man” does not hint at authority or submission in the text.

- **The primary accountability**

After the fall, God came looking for the man. This act by God proves that God held man accountable. Adam was responsible for the conduct of his family. He was the leader in marriage and the family. Adam was alone when God gave instructions concerning their behaviour in the Garden of Eden. Eve received the teaching of God from Adam. The instruction given to Eve supposedly by Adam had an added component. In Genesis 2:17, God said, “you must not eat from the tree”. In Genesis 3:3, Eve says, “God said we must not eat from the tree and *not touch it*”. This addition means that Adam built in an extra preventative measure to ensure that the woman adheres to God's command. Adam inserted his restriction which was presented as part of God's words. This is a dangerous practice. Many deductions have been made about the reasons why the serpent chose to approach the woman instead of the man. Genesis 3:1 says nothing about the serpent's decision to

approach the woman. Tribble (1973:39) puts it as follows: “The simplest answer is that we do not know. Yahwist does not tell us any more than he explains why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the garden.” Therefore, any arguments drawn from this silence are speculative.

- **The purpose**

Eve was created as a helper for Adam, not the other way around (see Grudem 2002:32). The word *ezer* or “helper” is used for God and human beings in different contexts in the Bible. The modern English understanding of “helper” is someone in a supportive role. It is also an indication of lower social status. A worker or helper obeys the commands of a person of higher social status, such as an employer. This working relationship depicts an authoritative-submissive relationship. However, in the Bible, this is not always the case. For example, Psalms 33:20 mentioned God as the “helper” of people, which does not mean that God is submissive to those God helps. Tribble (1973:36) puts it as follows: “*Ezer* is a relational term; it designates a beneficial relationship; and it pertains to God, people and animals.” A variety of people from different social or economic backgrounds can help people of classes other than theirs. Grudem (2002:32) quotes 1 Corinthians 11:9 to illustrate Paul's understanding of Eve as a helper. Complementarians and egalitarians agree that “helper” does not mean inferiority, but equality, adequacy, and complementary functions though this equality does not eradicate distinctive roles. Some egalitarians do find that it does away with the notion of gender distinct roles. Grudem (2012:18) cautions against both positions, explaining it as follows: “The term itself neither implies nor excludes differences in roles in their relationship.” Grudem simply points out that this text of Scripture says nothing about the difference in gender roles.

- **The conflict**

About the consequences of the fall, sin and the curse, Grudem (2002:32) explains it as follows: “The curse brought about a distortion of gender based roles, not an introduction of new roles.” The distortion of sin includes the man's domination of the woman and the woman's desire to rule over the man. Creation order implied that the man would lead with love and humility, and the woman submitting willingly. Due to the curse, the woman desires to assume leadership that was reserved for the man in the creation order. The word “desire” in Genesis 3:16, is the same Hebrew term used in Genesis 4:7 where God warns Cain that sin desires to have him, but Cain should be the one to rule over it. Sin wants what it cannot have. That is what it “desires”. Cain had the choice to rule over it or to submit to it. For complementarians, a similar “desire” is at work in the woman (Eve). The narrative about

Cain brings clarity to the meaning of “desire” in Genesis 3:16. Grudem (2002:33) explains it as follows: “It is almost as if the other usage [in Genesis 4:7] is put here by the author to know how to understand the meaning of the term in Genesis 3:16.” This is therefore not about sexual desire, as some have proposed. In marriage, sexual desire is not condemned by Scripture. It was part of the creation of humans, not a result of sin. This desire in marriage served as instruction to be fruitful and subdue the earth (Gen 1:28). In marriage, sexual desire is positive whereas outside of marriage it is deemed negative.

A consequence of sin is that the woman desires to rule over the man aggressively. The Hebrew term *mashal*, translated as “rule” implies force or power of a military kind. According to Grudem (2002:34-35), the curse had three consequences, (1) painful toil for Adam, (2) pain at birth for Eve, and (3) conflict within the relationship. For complementarians, the consequences of Genesis 3:16 are women's wrong desire to lead and men's abuse of authority. According to the creation order, females are expected to submit to the humble and loving male leadership. From an egalitarian perspective, however, Tribble (1973:41) explains it as follows:

Through disobedience, the woman has become a slave. Her initiative and freedom vanish. The man is also corrupted, for he has become master, ruling over who is his God given equal. Whereas in creation, man and woman knew harmony and equality, in sin, they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning.

In other words, sin has replaced a relationship of shared authority with an authority-submission relationship. In Christ, the shared authority is restored.

- **The restoration**

Salvation in Christ reaffirms the creation order. The complementarian and egalitarian camps agree on this. However, they do not quite agree on the meaning of the creation order. For complementarians, the reaffirmation is that of male leadership with love and humility and female woman submission to men without the desire to lead. Grudem (2002:36) explains it as follows: “In the New Testament is the reversal of the curse. We expect to find an *undoing* of the wife's hostile impulses against her husband and the husband's response of harsh rule over his wife.” Colossians 3:18-19 serves as substantiation of this reestablishment in Christ. Egalitarians, on the other hand, hold to a different kind of creation reestablishment. In Christ, we find a reaffirming of mutuality and equality as it was with creation. Male leadership and female submission cease in Christ.

- **The mystery**

The relationship between Christ and the church is a model of that between husband and wife. The relationship between Christ and the church is a mystery. In the Old Testament, the relationship of man and woman before the fall is a partial revelation of the mystery. In the New Testament, the relationship of Christ and the church gives a detailed view of what the marital relationship should be like. In Ephesians 5:31-32, Paul uses the analogy of Christ and the church to explain marriage. Adam and Eve's "marriage" was a partial explanation of a mystery yet to be understood through the relationship of Christ and the church. Genesis 2 and 3 give little information about the relationship between Adam and Eve before the fall. This short period in the story of humanity does not provide much that is useful for understanding marriage. The relationship of Christ and the church gives a more detailed picture of marriage and explains the consequences of the creation order. The period after the fall presents a picture of how marriage was distorted. What humanity knows about marriage is a picture defined by culture and traditions. Some many different cultural practices and observations influence modern-day marriages in various cultures all over the world. As times change, each cultural tradition is subject to change. However, the relationship between Christ and the Church is not about cultural variation (see Grudem 2002:37). Adam represents Christ and Eve before the fall represents the church. Christ has a leadership role that the church does not have (see Grudem 2002:37). This translates to marriage. Complementarians find that the hierarchal difference between Christ and the church should be mirrored in marriage.

The church over many centuries has understood marriage in terms of the husband as the leader and the wife in a supporting role. This understanding of marriage began to be questioned at least in the 1900s, concurrently with social questioning of gender roles. For traditional proponents of gender roles in marriage, the questioning of an 1800-year-old church practice is seen as a threat from the outside. The church should be protected from:secular influence". About biblical texts on marriage, the challenge was more about how to put the requirements into practice than it was about how to understand the texts (see Doriani 2002:203). In other words, the church over the years did not have any problem with the meaning of Ephesians 5:21-22. Husbands were to lead and women were to submit and support the man's leadership. Concerns since the 1900s about the meaning of the texts about marital roles were a "new" concern. This phenomenon was compared to the "false doctrines" with which the early church had to contend. A swift response was needed to protect the tradition and practice of the church. Complementarians came out in defence of the church and church tradition.

Evangelical feminists and egalitarians were deemed the “enemy” that would cause malicious damage to church tradition and practice. They argued that the traditional interpretation of Ephesians 5:22 ignored the preceding verse 21, which teaches mutual submission. Bilezikian (1985:154) puts it as follows: “Being subject to one another is a very different relationship from being subject to another.” The understanding promoted by church tradition is therefore in conflict with verse 21. Doriani (2002:209-210) provides at least three options for the interpretation of the phrase “one another” in Ephesians 5:21 as follows:

Option 1 A call to all Christians to submit to all authority

In this understanding, Christians are to submit to established authority rather than to “one another” as individuals. This understanding supports hierarchal institutional relationships. These include the master-slave, government-civilian, and husband-wife relationships. In defence of this position, proponents emphasise that submission in most New Testament teachings is tied to authoritative roles.

Option 2 The end of divinely ordered authority relationships

This understanding of the phrase “submit to one another” rejects the idea of submitting to established authority. Mutual agreement is what the requirement of Paul is about. Nobody has the prerogative to exercise authority over another. For the sake of mutual agreement, one person can choose to give up their “authority” to another.

Option 3 Submission driven by sacrificial love for one another

Putting others and their needs first is the fulcrum of this kind of submission, which depicts sacrificial love. This kind of submission eradicates any notion of submission.

Complementarian arguments lean towards Option 1. The established roles rooted in creation are a critical feature that connects complementarians and Option 1. Historical sources in support of this stance include the Cement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215). Clement (see Robertson and Donaldson 1965:419-420) put it as follows: “There is sameness concerning the souls of men and women so that they can attain to the same virtue. Yet women are destined for childbearing and housekeeping, but not for war or manly work and toil.” Clement understood men and women as equal, but with a gender role distinction. The gender role distinction has no impact on the human soul of men and women. The argument for gender roles does not affect human equality. The man is as human as the woman is, however, each has distinct gender-based roles. The responsibility of “work and toil” is

assigned to the man as the provider. For a woman to be the provider of the family is to contradict traditional practice. These gender-based roles define the identity of men and women. The role of a person is based on their kind. A man or woman is created for that very purpose. Complementarians do not reject mutual submission between husband and wife. The difference lies in their understanding of what it entails. Whereas the egalitarian understanding of “mutual submission” is that the husband submits to the wife just as the wife submits to the husband, the complementarian understanding is that wives submit to husbands and husbands love their wives (see Doriani 2002:217). In this view, for the husband to submit to his wife as the wife does to the husband, would be to deny “mutual submission”. Grudem (2002:223) explains it as follows: “Mutual submission means being considerate to one another and caring for one another's needs, and being thoughtful of one another, and sacrificing for one another.” Grudem's understanding of “mutual submission” does not nullify the authority of the husband in marriage but rather upholds it.

Complementarians caution against the egalitarian understanding of “mutual submission” since such an approach would set Ephesians 5:21 over against verse 22. Instead of forming a unit of thought as intended by the author, the egalitarian understanding of “mutual submission” makes the verses seem foreign to each other. For complementarians, the unity of Ephesians 5:21 and verse 22 is continued in the proceeding verses, which describe children-parents and master-slave relationships. The egalitarian understanding of “mutual submission” would then imply reciprocal submission also in these other relationships: the parents would then submit to their children just as their children are submissive to their parents and masters would submit to slaves just as the slaves submit to masters. Since the reversal of these texts is contrary to those teachings, the husband and wife's submission in marriage can also not be turned around. Grudem (2002:225) puts it as follows: “In each case, the person in authority is not told to be subject to the one under authority but Paul gives wise guidelines to regulate the use of authority.”

For complementarians, the analogy of Christ and the church signifies love and submission. The death of Christ represents his sacrificial love for the church. It is not a requirement for husbands to die for their wives as a demonstration of their love. The requirement emanating from Christ's demonstration of his love for the church is that husbands should show *sacrificial love* for their wives. The church, in response to the sacrificial love of Christ, should submit to his headship and leadership. This submission is motivated by sacrificial love. In the same manner, wives should willingly submit to the headship and leadership of their husbands. In this way, wives will show appreciation for their husbands' sacrificial love. In using the analogy of Christ and the church, Paul's explanation of marriage ties these

requirements in marriage to the creation ordinance. This makes them normative and transcultural requirements ordained by God. Knight (1991:170) puts it as follows: “This is a powerful argument for the fact that Christ-like, loving-headship and church-like, willing submission are rooted in creation and God's eternal purpose, not just in passing trends of culture.”

- **The parallel with the Trinity**

The Trinity is another analogy used for understanding the relationship between males and females. The sequence is as follows: first is the Father, second is the Son, and the third is Holy Spirit. In the marriage, the husband represents God, and the wife represents Christ. Although the Father and the Son are equal in deity and attributes, the Son submits to the Father not the Father to the Son. The difference in roles does not mean ontological difference. In essence, the Father and the Son are equal but in roles, the Father has an authoritative role over the Son. In the same manner, the husband as a representative of God in marriage does not submit to the wife. The wife as a representative of Christ submits willingly to the husband. Therefore, just as the Father has authority over the Son, the husband has authority over the wife. This authority-submission relationship does not hinder equality because equality and differences can coexist (see Grudem 2002:49). The Son, with the help of the Holy Spirit, carries out the commands of God. The Son and the Holy Spirit never command the Father. In other words, God has eternal authority over the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Egalitarians, on the other hand, argue that what is true of the Trinity is not necessarily true of the relationship between males and females. There are two dangers to the direct application of the Trinitarian relationship to the male-female relationship, namely the number of persons, and gender. On the number of persons, there are three members of the Trinity, but only two in marriage. If the Trinitarian analogy is applied, the third person should also be accounted for within the marriage relationship. In other words, if the Father and the Son represent the husband and wife, then the Holy Spirit has no representative in marriage (see Bird and Shilaker 2012:306). Secondly, in the Trinity, only the male gender is represented and not the female gender. In the marriage relationship according to the creation order, there are male *and* female. If the Father-Son relationship is applied to marriage, then marriages should be male and male. The analogy of the Trinitarian relationship therefore has its limitations when applied to the marriage relationship. The roles in the Trinity have nothing to do with gender roles or relations. Bird and Shilaker (2012:306) put it as follows: “They may be compatibility between equality of nature and an accompanying differentiation

in rank within the Trinity and human relationships. However, that does nothing to prove that rank must necessarily be determined by gender.”

Egalitarians argue that the working relationship between the Father and Son supports a theological justification for egalitarianism. The Father entrusted his authority to the Son, thus the Son can execute judgement and impart life. Even in the existence of authority and submission in the Trinity, the Son can execute the works of the Father by the same authority. In the same manner, if wives represent the Son, they should not be barred from executing the very same works of the husband just as the Son does the works of the Father. Therefore, if the Trinitarian analogy can be used to support two opposing ideals, then its effectiveness remains questionable for both positions.

These ten reasons by Grudem (2002:25-37), support male headship rooted in the creation order. The Bible teaches male authority and female submission, but sin distorted these roles. The church must function according to the pre-fall accounts of human relationships, which reflects gender roles that go beyond creation indicated in the Trinitarian relationship. The husbands are to love and humbly lead their families and the wives are to willingly submit to and manage the household.

2.11 The interpretation of “*kephale*”

The various groups with their stance on gender roles all interpret the biblical texts differently when it comes to the debate on women in ordained ministry. The meaning of *kephale* is one of the most debated terms in the discussions on gender in ministry and the home. Evangelical feminists argue for “source” as the meaning of *kephale*. *The source interpretation implies* that there is no hierarchy of gender roles. The husband and wife are called to mutual submission. In ministry, males and females have equal access to clerical leadership and equal responsibilities. Egalitarians and evangelical feminists agree on mutual submission in marriage and equal access to church leadership. However, only evangelical feminists maintain the gender distinction. Egalitarians propose “source” rather than “head” as the meaning of *kephale*. Just as spring is the source of rivers, to the man is the source of a woman. Complementarians find “source” to be a misinterpretation of the term. Grudem (1991:424) puts it as follows: “The evidence to support the claim that *kephale* can mean the *source* is surprisingly weak, and, in fact, unpersuasive.” Grudem does not necessarily reject the “source” interpretation, but only regards it as unsubstantiated. In his survey of 2 336 examples of *kephale* he found a translation of “source” only in the work of Herodotus (5th century BC) (see Grudem 1985:40). However, “source” in the plural means “river”, but in the singular, it refers to the “mouth” of the river. Herodotus's example had

inanimate things in view. It cannot be applied to people. The husband cannot be seen as not the mouth of the wife. The plural form of the analogy can also not be accounted for, “therefore this text cannot be used to show the *kephale* validly meant *source*” (see Grudem 1985:41). The proposal of “source” as the meaning of *kephale* is an attempt to introduce a new meaning which is foreign to church tradition and practice.

The traditional understanding, according to complementarians, is “authority over”. However, Cervin (1989:112) disputes both egalitarian and complementarian interpretations as follows: “He [Paul] does not mean *authority over*, as traditionalists assert, nor does he mean *source*, as the egalitarians assert. I think he is merely employing a head-body metaphor, and that his point is preeminence.” The term “preeminence” denotes rank or superiority. If *kephale* then means “preeminence”, then men have a higher ranking and are superior to women. Cervin's understanding of *kephale* in effect supports the complementarians interpretation, which Grudem (1991:425) points out as follows: “So it seems to me that if all Cervin's criticisms of my articles were valid, his article would still be seen as a rejection of the egalitarian claim. [Thus] would have been as a modification of my position.” In other words, Cervin's comments advance the cause of the CBMW over that of the CBE. This means that male persons have authority over female persons in the church. Therefore, female persons cannot lead men in the church or preach in their presence. Ecclesial responsibilities are reserved for men. Husbands have authority over wives in marriage. Therefore, leadership in the family is reserved for men. This does not mean women have no say in marriage, but if the husband's word is final, then in effect does mean that women have no say in marriage. However, when the husband strays from the path of faith, the wife should not follow him into sin.

The metaphoric use of *kephale* about “head” and “body” therefore means authority. Instead of the meaning of “representation” of the whole, complementarians argue for “authority over” the whole. Grudem (2002:181) puts it as follows: “In every case, ancient readers would have readily understood that a person called the *head*, was in a position of authority or rule over the person or group thought of as the *body* is a metaphor.”

About *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul writes in verse 3: “I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is a man and the head of Christ is God.” Among other verses in the New Testament, this verse appears regularly in scholarship debates on the matter of authority and gender roles. For complementarians, this verse would read as follows: “I want you to realize that the *authority over* every man is Christ and the *authority over* every woman is a man and the *authority over* Christ is God.” This

literal reading of verse 3 would mean that the man submits to Christ, the woman to the man, and Christ to God. Submission in this instance is voluntary, not forced. The Son submits to the Father willingly, in the same manner, a woman should submit to a man.

However, the interpretation of the text itself is not as simple as it seems. Scholars consider it to be difficult and controversial (see Fee 1987:492). Some have cautioned against building a doctrine on such a difficult and controversial text. Others find the main thrust of the passage to be sufficiently clear. Schreiner (1991:117) puts it as follows: "The central thrust of the passage is clear. There are difficulties, but some of the key issues are not as difficult as it has been claimed." For complementarian scholars, the central thrust of the passage is "authority over".

Among the controversial things would be the cultural significance of the passage. For some the passage is transcultural, for others, it is related to the culture of the time and place. Those who see it as transcultural apply "the principles" in the passage. Those who see it as bound to cultural values of a specific era argue that it is not directly applicable to the present age.

The difficulty of this passage is verse 2. For some, verses 2 and 3 are not easily reconcilable. Scholars have questioned the authenticity of verses 3-16. In verse 2, Paul praises the faith community in Corinth for holding to his teachings. Among these Pauline traditions are the conduct of men and women, husbands and wives, and church order. However, in verses 3-16 in general and verse 16 specifically, Paul seems to be correcting practices that could conflict with his teachings. Schreiner (1991:118) puts it as follows: "Presumably, Paul would not instruct the Corinthians regarding proper adornment for women if they were already following his instructions in this matter. It is probably the case, then, that 11:2 functions as a complimentary introduction before criticism."

The criticism begins in verse 4, which focuses on head coverings during public worship. In his criticism, Paul's instructions include both men and women. Some scholars treat it as though Paul were addressing only women. Both men and women would herefore have possibly been at fault. The uncovering by men and covering by women only relates to public worship. Paul is not instructing all men to remain uncovered or that all women should have their heads covered but those who are leading public worship at that specific time.

There are different understandings concerning the customary significance of head covering alluded to in this passage. The three most accepted meanings of head covering in this passage are (1) Long hair that hangs loose, (2) a veil that covers the face, and (3) a shawl

or scarf over the head (see Thielman 2008:2206-2207). Firstly, long hair for women in the times of Paul meant to honor and shaving disgrace. Loose long and untied hair meant to shame. For example, in Numbers 5:18, a woman suspected of adultery would be brought to the priest who would loosen her hair and pronounce a binding curse. In public women would have fastened their hair.

Paul uses the same shame and disgrace logic. He compares a woman's participation in public worship with *loose hair* to the disgrace that comes with a woman suspected of adultery or a shaved head. Paul, therefore, instructs women who serve in public not to do so with loose hair. Schreiner (1991:118) puts it as follows: "Paul objects to long, loose hair that falls down the back; he wants women to follow the usual custom of piling their hair up on top of their heads." Secondly, the veil that covers the head is the least popular interpretation of head covering in the scholarship. This *veil* covering is similar to what Muslim women wear in public. In Muslim circles there are at least five head coverings: the hijab, khimar, chador/abay, burqa, and niqab (see Welborne et al 2018:13). However, there are only a few scholars who support the Muslim-like head covering as a customary early church practice. Schreiner (1991:118) puts it as follows: "There is no extant evidence that full veiling, familiar in Islam, was current in Paul's time. Therefore, the custom described cannot be veiling." Thirdly, the option of head covering by a *shawl* or scarf was a popular practice, especially among married women. Married women in public would be seen wearing scarfs that cover their heads but reveal their face. It was a shameful act for a married woman to be in public without a scarf over her head. The connotation of women with uncovered heads in public meant sexual availability or unmarried status (see Thielman 2008:2207).

In Roman customary religious practices, men with an uncovered head were regarded as irreverent (see Thielman 2008:2207). However, in the Christian faith community, the opposite would be the case. There are at least three reasons why men in the first-century church never wore head coverings. Firstly, men with covered heads in the first-century church were seen as infusing pagan customary practices in the worship of God. This would have indicated pagan influence, which would have conflicted with the teachings of Paul. In other words, not only was the faith community different compared to religions of the day in terms of how they worshipped but they also had to look different. Secondly, since women were instructed to keep their heads covered in the worship of God and honour of their husbands, this was a way in which women were identified. For a man to cover his head would be akin to imitating women or appearing as a woman. Thirdly, head covering in the church served as a distinction of the sexes.

The dishonour associated with women without a head covering and men with a head covering in the church had a dual meaning. Firstly, head covering for men and uncovered heads for women brought disgrace to themselves as individuals. Secondly, head covering for men and uncovered heads for women was disgraceful to the “head” of the family. In the case of men, since Christ is the “head” of men, praying and prophesying with a covered head was a shameful act toward Christ. For woman to pray and prophesy without a head covering was disgraceful to her “head” who is the man. In 1 Corinthians 11:7, Paul writes: “A man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man.” In this verse are distinctions between man and woman based on image and glory. The man is the image and glory of God and the woman is the glory of man but not the image.

For complementarians, in this context, the appearance of a woman says as much about the man as it does about God. Since the woman was taken from the man she represents the man, also in her appearance. Paul does not mention the woman as the *image* of man but only as his *glory*. Genesis 1:26-27 shows the creation of both man and woman in the *image* of God. For Paul to leave out the image of God about woman is not to question the legitimacy of God's image in the woman. For example, In Genesis 5:3, the writer speaks about Cain who was in the image and likeness of Adam but does not mention Cain being made in the image of God. This does not mean Cain was not made in the image of God. The image and likeness of Adam in which Cain was made was the very same image and likeness of God in which Adam was made. The only difference between the formation of Eve and Cain is that, in the former, Adam was not involved but, in the latter, he was co-creator together with Eve and God.

In 1 Corinthians 11:7, the appearance of a man says much about God but nothing about the woman. Unlike the woman who resembles both God and the man due to image and formation, the man only resembles God. Woman as the glory of man communicates honour. Complementarians support their argument of “authority over” as the meaning of *kephale* in light of verses 8 and 9 where Paul emphasises the “source” and purpose of woman. She comes from the man, whereas the man comes from the earth. In verse 9 Paul puts it as follows: “Neither was man made for woman but woman for man.” Complementarians understand this verse as clearly spelling out the purpose of woman, which is to be for the man. Both a woman’s formation and her purpose, therefore, depend on the man. That is according to the creation order.

The English translations of 1 Corinthians 11:10 differ. The New International Version (2011) translates it as: “A woman ought to have authority over her head.” The English Study Bible (2008) translates it as: “A wife ought to have a symbol of authority over her head.” The extreme egalitarian argument is that since the man is the “head” of the woman, in the light of this text, the woman ought to have authority over the man. Some suggest that Paul was permitting women to exercise authority over a man. This is indicated by the active tense of the term “authority” (see Hooker 1964:410). However, some are not convinced of this inference. Paul was not introducing a newfound authority or role for women in worship but 11:10 is simply a reemphasis of 11:4 just in different words. Taylor (2014:263) puts it as follows: “The close linguistic parallel with 11:4 suggests that *to have authority upon her head* is another way of referring to head covering. The natural flow of thought indicates that both expressions [in 11:7, 10] refer to head covering.”

Egalitarians are critical of the English Study Bible translation because it includes “symbol”. This inclusion would promote male superiority. In the Greek text, the term “symbol” is absent. It is an ESV translation inclusion. The implication of this ESV inclusion is symbolic of the man's authority over the woman. Some complementarians are in support of this symbolism inclusion and further cite it as a sign of female submission to male authority (see Schreiner 1991:126). In other words, the head covering does not only serve as honouring the head but also as a symbol of the woman's submission. A female's submission to male authority does not make women persons of less worth than men (see Schreiner 1991:127). For complementarians, this symbol of authority and submission over the head of the woman does not necessarily exclude them from participation in worship activities. However, complementarian references to women's participation in worship are rather limited. The limitation is specifically that women are not allowed to interpret prophecies during worship. One of the reasons complementarians use to defend this position is the phrase “as the law says” in 11:34. They claim that Paul ties this instruction to the creation order and teaches female submission to males (see Carson 1991:143). For complementarians to allow female participation in the oral weighing of prophecies would be to violate the creation order. This line of argumentation, however, fails to distinguish between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament prophecy. In the Old Testament, the prophetic gift of interpretation was not as functional as it was in the New Testament and the post-apostolic era. At most, Old Testament prophecies did not need interpretation. In the New Testament prophecies were interpreted by people with the gift of tongues. If New Testament prophecy is seen as equivalent to Old Testament prophecy then women in Paul's time would have been able to function as Old Testament prophets would have. Secondly, if Paul was banning women from

teaching in the church because that would be assuming authority over males, why then would he allow them to prophecy, unless teaching and prophecy were not regarded as equal. If the sequence is important, then prophets would be above teachers in light of 1 Corinthians 12:28. If prophesying is equivalent to authoritative teaching, how does it differ from the gift of interpretation? If females can prophesy but are barred from the interpretation of prophecies, then prophesying is not equivalent to interpretation. In other words, interpretation of prophecies is authoritative, and prophecy is not, whereas interpretation is dependent on prophecy. However, Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:5, understood prophecy and interpretation as equal gifts because of their ability to produce mass edification. Therefore, the arguments for restricting the interpretation of prophecies to males are not convincing.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is a central text for the complementarian argument to restrict the interpretation of prophecies by women during worship. The interpretation of prophecies during worship is an activity attached to the male role. However, Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:5, assumes that women do participate in public worship through prayer and prophesying and does not restrict such. To restrict women from participating in public worship, especially in prayer and prophesying would conflict with Paul's remarks in 11:2-16.

The attempt to reconcile what is assumed as the tension between 11:2-16 and 14:34-35 has led to different interpretations of women's participation in worship. Carson (1991:137-138) identifies the following five interpretations:

- that there is a distinction between home and public faith community gatherings;
- that the two texts contradict each other;
- that woman should submit to ecclesial order rather than to men;
- that the restrictions are for married women, not for all women;
- that texts are not normative for all time but should be understood in their context.

These interpretations will now be discussed briefly. The first interpretation proposes that 11:2-16 refers to a *home setting* and 14:34-35 to a *larger public gathering*. When Paul speaks about women praying and prophesying with heads covered, he had the household in mind. In the first century, Christians household churches were quite common. It was only later that large public gatherings for which specific places of worship were built, became possible. This could already have taken place in Paul's lifetime and could explain 11:2-16 and 14:34-35. When Paul was speaking about women praying and prophesying in 11:5, he was referring to worship in a household setting. This means women were not barred from participating in public worship when the gathering was in a home. With 14:34-35 Paul had

a large gathering in mind. In such large public worship spaces, all women were instructed to remain silent. Critics argue that it is unlikely that Paul distinguished between a household and a public worship setting when he wrote to the churches. If so, he would have indicated this specifically. For example, Titus Justus, a worshipper of God had opened up his house for faith community worship in Acts 18:7. Justus's house was located within the city of Corinth. There were probably similar house churches in Corinth. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, it is unlikely that he was referring to a specific house church when addressing "the church of God in Corinth". In his introduction to what is widely known, as the First Letter of Paul to the church of God in Corinth (1 Cor 1:2) Paul writes: "To those sanctified in Christ Jesus, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord." To Paul, the church of God in Corinth was neither a house church nor a large public gathering, but all who were believers in Christ. In Paul's mind it was not about types of gatherings, but about believers in general. This approach is in line with most of the contents of the letter to the church in Corinth. The gathering of the faith community is regarded as the gathering of the church. Therefore, attempting to reconcile 11:2-16 and 14:34-35 through the home and large public assembly conflicts with the introduction and contents of Paul's writing to the church in Corinth.

The second set of interpretations does *not try to reconcile* the passages of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. The complexities and contradictions are acknowledged, but no attempt is made to resolve the tension between these texts. The position is simply that Paul contradicted himself. This brings the divine inspiration of the text into question.

The third set of interpretations acknowledges that women are instructed to submit, but not to men as traditionally been taught. They should submit to *the order of worship*. Paul was instructing women to submit to ecclesial order. In this interpretation, men do not have authority over women in the church. The requirement for women to cover their heads and remain silent in the church is not about honouring male authority. Kahler (1960:61) is among the leading proponents of this interpretation. Submission to the order of worship is a general requirement rather than specific. Both men and women should submit to the order of worship. This is clear in the command to men to worship with uncovered heads and women with covered heads. Criticism of this interpretation focuses on its understanding of submission. Carson (1991:138) puts it as follows: "The verb for *submit* or *submission* normally involves subordination of a person or persons to a person or persons, not to an order, procedure, or institution." If the submission is acknowledged as a requirement, then it should be about a person or persons rather than an order of some sort. Since Paul

specifically instructs women not men to be kept silent, female submission should be to male persons and not to the ecclesiastical structure of worship.

The fourth set of interpretations makes a *distinction between women and wives* about 11:2-16 and 14:34-35. In 11:2-16 Paul refers specifically to unmarried women. The topic is adornment in public worship. In 14:34-35 married women are addressed. This is substantiated by what Paul says in verse 35: "If they want to enquire about something they should ask their husbands at home." In 14:34-35 Paul was instructing wives to remain silent in the church, not unmarried women. It also pertains only to enquiry, nothing else. Otherwise married women could participate in what unmarried women are allowed to do in 11:5. "Enquiring" is about seeking clarity on a subject or matter. In this instance, it was about seeking clarity on what was heard in public worship. This is therefore not a general injunction for all women to remain silent in the church. The instruction is focused on married women seeking to understand. Participation in worship activities, which are mentioned in 11:5 was therefore open to all women.

The fifth set of interpretations argues that the *context* of the texts should be taken into account. In both texts Paul was addressing, correcting, and bringing order to the church in Corinth. There is much speculation as to what was amiss in Corinth and why these disciplinary instructions were needed. If Paul instructed women to be silent, it could be because they were noisy or uneducated. The criticism of this stance is: why would Paul then instruct *all* women to be silent? The reason could be that he did not have first-hand experience of what was going on in the church. He was not there to witness the disorder in the church in Corinth. The news was brought to him by word of mouth or per letter. Those who told him of the disorder in the church could have referred to women in general rather than to a specific group.

In summary, complementarians are proponents of male authority over females in the church, marriage, and home. According to the ordinance of creation, men have the primary service to God and women have a supportive role. Women are therefore permanently barred from the pastorate and leading worship in the presence of men.

2.12 Summary

This chapter presented the three major evangelical perspectives on gender within the contexts of the church, marriage, and home. These are the evangelical feminist, egalitarian, and complementarian perspectives. Feminists and egalitarians argue for gender inclusivity within the clergy. The fulcrum of their arguments is Genesis 1:26-27. They argue that males

and females were created in the image and likeness of God and were given dual responsibility on earth. The feminist and egalitarian stances have much in common but differ on the topic of gender distinctiveness and same-sex marriage. The complementarians are proponents of male leadership in the church, marriage, and home. This sequence of the formation of man and woman and the “responsibility” placed on Adam is taken to mean that men are born leaders and women play a supporting role. These evangelical movements, therefore, have similarities and differences. Though all agree that humankind was made in the image and likeness of God, the implications that are drawn from this, differ. For feminists and egalitarians, it implies equality without gender roles, whereas for complementarians it means that there is “spiritual” equality, but still distinctive gender roles.

CHAPTER 3

THE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

From an overview of the history of the Cape General Mission (CGM) relevant information for this investigation is gleaned. The theological background and perspectives of the founders of the CGM are reflected in the faith practice of the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC). The Cape General Mission was established in 1889 in Cape Town, South Africa. Martha Osborn, Spencer Walton, and Andrew Murray were the founders of this interdenominational mission organization. It was therefore established through the collaboration of two men and a woman. This gender inclusivity diminished over the years, particularly in churches and organizations that sprung from the CGM. Martha Osborn married George Howe and together they established the South East Africa General Mission (SEAGM) in 1891 (see SIM 2021:9). Three years later, the SEAGM and the CGM merged and became the South Africa General Mission (SAGM). In 1965, the SAGM changed its name again to Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) and spread through the southern regions of the Africa continent (see SIM 2021:9). In 1998, the AEF merged with Serving In Missions (SIM).

3.2 The founders of the South East Africa General Mission

The background, cultural context and institutional affiliation of the missionaries influenced the way in which they did their missionary work. Christian missionary work aims to bring people to faith. Missionaries often had to depart from their church's traditional practices in order to find ways to communicate the gospel more effectively with the local people. The local community was more appreciative of the missionary's efforts when the missionaries endeavoured to understand local culture and practices. However, some missionaries simply presented their own cultural norms and convictions as "biblical requirements". Church institutions that founded missionary churches tended to do the same. This is indicative of the great influence the founders exerted over the local faith communities. It sheds light on the origins of these local churches. Therefore, to better understand the faith practices of missionary founded churches it is essential to explore the background of the founders. Each will now be discussed briefly.

- **Andrew Murray**

In 1822 the Murray family arrived in South Africa from Scotland. After the colonization of Cape the British government recruited Scottish ministers. Murray Senior was among the

recruits (see Pauw 2019:2). The plan was for these ministers to serve within the already established South African Dutch Reformed Church. Murray pastored a church in the Karoo settlement of Graaff-Reinet. The Murray family house became a parsonage where missionaries such as Livingstone, Moffat, and Casalis stopped by on their journeys (see Neethling 1909:7). Andrew Murray Junior was born in 1828 in Graaff-Reinet. He authored many popular evangelical writings and became a prominent Christian missionary. He served as the first president of the South Africa General Mission until his death in 1917. In their missionary work the Murrays cooperated with various churches, but their affiliation was with the South African Dutch Reformed Church. Andrew Murray Junior and his brother were sent to Scotland and the Netherlands for their education. Andrew Murray Junior was a Dutch Reformed theologian and minister. He therefore belonged to a tradition heavily influenced by the theology of John Calvin.

Most of the Scottish ministers who were recruited by the British government to serve in South Africa belonged to the “Auid Lichts Presbyterians” a section of the Church of Scotland (see Pauw 2019:1). This is one of the reasons most churches founded under the Cape General Mission have a Presbyterian Church structure. Presbyterian Churches emerged as the result of a split in the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland has been ordaining women since 1968. This was in the wake of the second wave of feminist activism for the liberation of women in secular and religious institutions. However, other churches with roots in the Church of Scotland did not follow suit. Some Presbyterian churches with roots in the Church of Scotland did ordain women to the pastorate. For example, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa approved the ordination of women to the ruling eldership during the period 1966-1967. In 1978, Charity Majiza became the first woman to be ordained in the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa (see Duncan 2019:4).

Andrew Murray Junior was part of the holiness movement, also called the Keswick movement. This is where he met William Spencer Walton. In 1998, the Keswick Convention “reintroduced” female speakers during its conventions and fellowships. Lamb (2020:2) puts it as follows: “The council agreed in principle to *reintroduce* women to the speaker team. They used the word *reintroduce* because, during its nearly 150 years of ministry, women have played a significant speaking role.”

- **William Spencer Walton**

William Spencer Walton was born in 1850 in London, England. His father was a shipping merchant and his mother a homemaker. Spencer’s mother’s saintly character greatly

influenced him (see Weeks 1907:30). He received his education in a boarding school led by a Baptist principal. Although he was exposed to Christianity at elementary school his conversion only happened at the age of twenty-two. Before his conversion Walton served as secretary and teacher of the children's corner at the Stockwell Congregation Church. Reflecting on this, Walton confessed to having been nothing but a "dead professor" and a "thorough worldling" at the time (see Hidden Pearls 2021; Huntingford 1989:7). Also before his conversion Walton went through the entire seminary training and began working in church ministry.

The Stockwell Congregation Church was founded in the late 1700s. Later its name was changed to the Stockwell Green United Reformed Church. The name change which took place in 1972 was the result of the merger of the Congregationalist and the Presbyterian churches in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Walton's early exposure to Christianity and his active participation in the Congregational Church indirectly shaped his future vision of church ministry. In 1872 when he was 22 years of age, his brother invited him to a revival led by evangelist Honk (see Higashi et al 2021). At this meeting his conversion took place. He joined the British Plymouth Brethren for fellowship. This group consisted of various Christian groups in Ireland and England that met regularly for prayers and fellowship. John Nelson Darby, a former clergyman in the Anglican Church, led the British Plymouth Brethren. Due to disputes over doctrine and church structure, the Brethren split into two groups, the Exclusive Brethren and the Open Brethren. However, both Brethren groups did not maintain a distinction between clergy and laity.

Walton eventually returned to his Anglican roots. Many considered him an Anglican minister though he was never ordained in the Anglican Church (see Fiedler 1994:184). It was not rare for ministers to serve as missionaries without having been ordained in their denomination. Most missionaries understood ordination as a divine calling by Christ. They did not need human confirmation for that. Fiedler (1994:187) puts it as follows: "Faith missions did not feel human ordination (by men) to be important, but neither did they oppose it, as long as those did not require special treatment."

In 1882 at the Keswick Convention held in England, Andrew Murray Junior invited Walton to join a missionary expedition to South Africa. Walton only responded to the invitation after a he had received a letter from Mrs Osborn-Howe. The Convention was known for its evangelistic preaching for deeper spiritual maturity and practical holiness (see Huntingford 1989:7). After the Convention, Spencer ended his employment and joined the Church Parochial Mission. These organizations had a profound impact on his approach to ministry.

- **Martha Osborn-Howe**

Martha Osborne (née Lister) was born in 1846 on a farm near Uitenhage, South Africa. In 1864 at the age of 18 she married Edward Osborne, a captain in the Indian Army. The Lister family were members of Christian Brethren. Martha's conversion did not take place while she was in this church. It took place in Calcutta, India, where she travelled with husband and contracted a life-threatening illness. Through Bible study she experienced a new closeness to God and through a hymnal she experienced God's calling (see Huntingford 1989:5; Frizen 1992:158). After the sudden death of her husband while the couple was in England, Martha Osborn set sail to South Africa. She worked among seamen and soldiers in South Africa. After her arrival in South Africa, she wrote to George Howe, whose aim was to win soldiers for Christ. She suggested a partnership. It was through this partnership that a ministry to the soldiers, led by Martha Osborne, was established mid-1880s. As the work expanded, she travelled to England to recruit more missionaries and raise funds. Upon her return, she established the Christian Worker's Union on the advice of Andrew Murray (see Huntingford 1989:6). Only women were members of the Christian Worker's Union. This was a means to enhance female participation in the southern missionary field. In South Africa Martha Osborne established the Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA), first founded in London. The aim of this movement was to empower women for leadership and to support the rights of women globally. Martha Osborn was a leader in her own right. She co-founded a magazine, *The pioneer*, which aimed to keep missionaries in England and South Africa updated on the progress of the ministry to soldiers, the Christian Worker's Union, and the YMCA.

Martha Osborne wrote to Spencer Walton to invite him to South Africa. She petitioned Andrew Murray to have Spencer Walton take over the work she and Howe had begun in the Cape (see Huntingford 1989:9). The first council of the Cape General Mission consisted of five men and three women. When Martha Osborn and Howe got married they resigned from the Cape General Mission and travelled to Durban where they collaborated with Otto Witt, Fred Suter, and Ludwig Olsen-Feyling whom they had met during a previous visit (see Huntingford 1989:11). As the work in Durban grew, it evolved into a fully-fledged missionary organization. A constitution was proposed, drafted, and approved by Witt, Suter, Olsen-Feyling, and the Howes. Together they formed the executive (see Huntingford 1989:11). Immediately after the drafting of the constitution, the organization was named the South East Africa General Mission (SEAGM). Martha Osborn-Howe was the only female

representative in the drafting of this constitution. Churches that were established by the South East Africa General Mission and given autonomy, in particular the Africa Evangelical Church, adopted many of the practices and documents of the SEAGM, but that did not include female participation at the national board level. For example, women in the African Evangelical Church cannot attend the national board meeting at the Annual General Church Conference where decisions are made that affect all the AEC churches in the southern African region. The participation, role and influence of women in the establishment and functioning of the SAGM/AEF are downplayed in the churches established under the auspices of this mission organization. Martha Osborn-Howe's instrumental role did not end with the establishment of the CGM and the SEAGM.

The Howes went to the council in London to liaise the amalgamation of the CGM and the SEAGM to become the SAGM. Martha Osborn-Howe is possibly the most influential female in all these missionary organizations. Other women did have an impact in the mission field as well. The CGM's first general report mentioned that twelve men and seventeen women were part of the first group of the CGM (see Huntingford 1989:23). Bassie Porter served as the first president of the YMCA. Jemison's book, *Intambu eMbomvu*, was part of the collection of material used at the Johannesburg Bible Institute (see Huntingford 1989:28). Joan Scutt served the AEF for more than least fifty years. Most of her service was in Swaziland (now Eswatini). She pioneered *The House of the Industrious*, which was established when women complained about the inadequate stipends paid to church workers (see Huntingford 1989:38). Some of the proceeds from these products were used for building of missionary houses, schools, and church buildings. Olive Ngwenya, a pastor's widow was also instrumental in the establishment and running of projects. Olive Ngwenya (see Huntingford 1989:38) put it as follows: "I learned the life of a Christian; how to witness to others, how to teach Sunday school, and how to work with my hands." This in effect is a summary of the role of a pastor's wife in the AEC.

3.3 The South Africa General Mission/Africa Evangelical Fellowship

Though Martha Osborn served in the mission field long before she married George Howe, historians focus largely on the period after her marriage. In addition to her role in convincing Walton to come to South Africa, she was also instrumental in his establishment of a mission organization in South Africa, which was in an area where she labored among the soldiers and sailors (see Higashi et al Hidden Pearls., 2021). Martha Osborne was a cofounder of the Cape General Mission and the South East Africa General Mission. She was the only

female. In 1894, five years after the founding of the Cape General Mission and when the South East Africa General Mission had existed for three years, the organizations merged to become the South Africa General Mission. Even though Martha Osborne was a cofounder of the Cape General Mission, she was not part of the administrative team. Andrew Murray served as the president and William Spencer Walton as the director. Missionaries sent from the “mother mission” in London occupied the remaining administrative positions. Klaus Fiedler in his 1994 book, *The story of faith missions*, explains how European missionaries altered their missionary practice when it came to an African environment. Fiedler (1994:303) puts as follows:

In many of the early faith missions, women were effective evangelists and preachers of the gospel, and this greatly helped to speed up the spread of the good news. However, as a rule, the female missionaries' comparatively advanced position in the church was not passed on to African women. This is more astonishing because in Asia, classical missions and faith missions had developed the institution of *Bible Women*.

This is like the approach adopted and implemented by William Spencer Walton and his missionary organization in England. A lack of higher education has been used as one of the reasons for restricting females from leadership positions. The AEC, following the missionaries' blueprint, regarded board and council meetings as “men's business”. In support of this approach, some have argued that since in most Africa cultures women have a lower rank than men, the missionaries and churches were conforming to an accepted customary practice (see Fiedler 1994:304). However, not all African cultures regarded all women as lower than men. For example, a woman, Blanche Pigott, led the Gospel Missionary Union and trained Moroccan evangelists (see Fiedler 1994:294). The problem was not as much African culture as it was missionary sub-culture (see Fiedler 1994:305). Therefore, rather than introducing gender equality to which they subscribed in their native lands, they altered their approach to gain favour with the local leaders who were predominately male. Faith missions, or evangelical missions as they were interchangeably called, did not necessarily deem woman missionaries lesser than men. This was the case in European and Asian countries but not so much in African countries. Fiedler (1994:293) puts it as follows:

All faith missions followed Hudson Taylor [founder of the China Inland Mission] insofar as they always counted women, single or married, as missionaries. This

meant that in principle, women were to receive the same training as men. Married or engaged couples could not be accepted as a couple; each of them had to pass the process of being accepted into the mission individually.

In principle men and women received the same training, but this was only rarely the case in practice. Fiedler (1994:303) puts it as follows: “The early Bible schools were designed to train minor clergy for emergent churches. Often their wives attended, too, but they were not trained like the men. Most often, a reduced practical program for wives was administered.” Upholding of gender equality in principle but not in practice was also the case in churches planted by missionaries. For example, the Africa Evangelical Church encourages women to attend formal ministry training, but fully trained women cannot serve in the same capacity as men. Women missionaries in Europe and Asia had a different experience than those in Africa. Despite the faith missions’ gender equality principal, almost all faith mission organizations in Africa barred women from “having control over men”, unlike in European and Asian countries. Fiedler (1994:310) put it as follows: “The rationalization was that women could work well on their own in China, but not in Africa.”

The work of the SEAGM expanded exponentially in Southern African countries such as Basutoland (Lesotho), South West Africa (Namibia), Mozambique, Swaziland (Eswatini), Nyasaland (Malawi) and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The motto of the SAGM was *God first – Go forward*, later shortened by the Africa Evangelical Church to *God first*. In a 1963 meeting a name change was proposed, ostensibly because of the expansion into other countries. Therefore, the name became the South Africa General Mission – Africa Evangelical Fellowship. However, over the years, Africa Evangelical Fellowship became the more prominent of the two.

The mission of the Africa Evangelical Fellowship was not to establish a new church but rather to channel converts to existing local churches (see AEF 2021). The aim was also to include areas not reached before or those without established churches. Although women were not ordained as pastors and did not serve as church elders, many were evangelists who established faith communities in these new areas. Fiedler (1994:294) emphasizes: “In the AEF, women were in the majority. Many of them were single, and most of them worked as evangelists.”

After the planting of churches, local men were be trained by Africa Evangelical Fellowship ministers and they continued to shoulder the daily responsibilities of running a local church.

What the British mission organization did to the AEF, the AEF in turn did to churches under their watch. The local churches were dependent on the AEF and did not have autonomy. As the number of churches grew within a district, the local church leaders began to participate in district meetings with the AEF missionaries. In the early 1960s, political tension increased in South African, and the majority radically contended with the apartheid laws. This led to the renaming of country from the Union of South Africa to the Republic of South Africa. Since most AEF missionaries were “white” people of foreign nationality, their safety became a concern. In 1961, the AEF decided to give autonomy to the churches (see Milner and Milner 2011:8). The AEF's decision to release local churches from its control was prompted by the concern for the safety of the AEF missionaries. A year later, the Africa Evangelical Church was “founded” and become a church independent from the AEF mission.

In 1980, Serving In Missions, a missionary organization founded in Lagos, Nigeria in 1893, merged with two existing missionary organizations in the southern region of Africa: the International Christian Fellowship (ICF) and the Andes Evangelical Mission (AEM). In 1998, Serving In Missions merged with Africa Evangelical Fellowship. All missionary organizations that merged with SIM relinquished their names and went by the name SIM. This is possibly an indication that these missionary organizations were declining in membership and needed financial support. The SIM had the advantage in both these respects.

3.4 The Africa Evangelical Church of Southern Africa

The SEAGM in Durban established the first African church in 1893. The CGM, merged with the SEAGM the following year in 1894. Fred Suter and the Howes were the founders of this first African church (see Huntingford 1989:55). Waka Ndlovu, a convert at the Gillespie Street Church became instrumental in the exponential growth of the SEAGM among the African communities in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In 1962 the AEC became independent from the AEC and gained full autonomy. The SAGM had to address certain matters to facilitate a healthy transference of power and the church's transition from dependence to independence. An agreement to that effect was drawn up. A constitution was drafted and an organizational structure compatible with existing social structures was designed (see Huntingford 1989:61). The focus was on the national church rather than on the local churches. Local churches would be under the governance of the national board. The national church had four regional bodies. The circuits and local churches would submit to these regional bodies. Churches established under mission organizations continued certain practices implemented by their founders. When these proved to be ineffective the churches

failed to acknowledge that it was a mistake to adopt these practices without proper examination of what the founders' motivations had been. When these were questioned changing times required different measures, leaders tended to use Scripture to support their continued use of outdated and ineffectual practices.

The Declaration of Independence in 1962 was on paper but not really put into practice. According to Huntingford (1989:71), "the younger churches simply took the form of the mother church and became sister churches". Independence meant that the national church would no longer receive any support from the SAGM. They had to raise their own funds to maintain their mission. Initially, missionaries and local evangelists and pastors received financial support from the SAGM headquarters in Cape Town, which later moved to Johannesburg. The financial support of workers would no longer be the responsibility of the SAGM, but became that of the national church. The implications of autonomy included that the national church board would take over the responsibilities of the SAGM. It would no longer have to report to the SAGM headquarters about matters relating to governance.

With the drafting of its own constitution, the national church also gained constitutional independence. It became a separate legal entity. There were still many similarities in the constitutional documents of the two entities (see Huntingford 1989:72). The constitution was "Bible based". For the organizational structures to be compatible with the social structures meant that the regional, circuit, and local church boards would have to adhere to the national government's requirements and regulations. Churches in countries with a monarchical governance, such as Eswatini for example, would have to abide by the laws set up by those authorities. The idea was to propagate "law-abiding churches".

The SAGM which later became the AEF, provided guidelines for a new name for the national churches. These included an indigenous element and contained the term "evangelical". The new name adopted by the national churches had to reflect the geographical location of the churches. Since South Africa is a multicultural nation, the name would have to represent all the different cultures. The churches would have similarities and differences. Among the differences would be the specific culture and the immediate geographical location of the church. Churches in KwaZulu-Natal would not have similar cultural elements as those in the Transkei (now Eastern Cape). Despite the vast cultural diversity, they did not want to split into different national churches (see Huntingford 1989:72).

The second guideline was to retain an “evangelical” element. This evangelical identity would set them apart from other Christian churches. The name of the national church would identify them as a denomination rooted in evangelical Christianity. The SAGM in 1964 implemented a name change in line with the guidelines given to the churches. The SAGM became the Africa Evangelical Fellowship. The churches were The African Evangelical Church of South Africa (AECSA) and the Evangelical Church (AEC). Again, this displays independence on paper. The ECSA was established in 1904, after the missionary work of Walton, Miss M. Day, and Miss E. Hargreaves, which had begun in 1898 (see Huntingford 1989:41; SIM 2021:9). The mission was focused on the Indian people in Phoenix, Durban. Therefore, the ECSA has a large Indian population. The ECSA and AEC received their independence and autonomy in different years. The ECSA declared independence from the AEF in 1967. The AEC was declared independent from the AEF in 1962-1963 (see Huntingford 1989:72; SIM 2021:8). In both the SAGM and the AEC, the first elected board members were exclusively male. The president served as the head of the national church and the national executive board formed the consultation team. Denominational decisions are approved at this level.

3.5 The Africa Evangelical Church organizational structure

The AEC has at least five main administrative bodies, which have different delegated authority, accountability, and responsibilities. Table format and design (see Kopp 2001:76).

Level 5	General church conference	Has the final say. Elects the church board, ordains ministers, communicates with the regional offices. Decisions made at this level are final. When approved the constitution is amended accordingly.
	Gender representation and requirement	Men only

Level 4	AEC Church Board (nine members) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority and responsibilities • Gender requirement and representation 	Second in command after the GCC. Administers the denominational activities and implements decisions of the GGC. Discusses and resolves denominational disputes, represents the church in legal disputes, organizes the GCC, and evaluates denominational progress.
		Men only
Level 3	Regional executive (nine members) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority and responsibility • Gender requirement and representation 	Third in command after the GCC. Responsible for the annual church workers/ministers conference, regional offices, regional executive committees – men's, women's, young adults, youth, and Christian education.
		Regional executives are recognized church workers in terms of article 4.4.10.2 of the Constitution of the AEC (see appendix A). The reference alluded to in article 4.4.10.2 of the Constitution of the AEC (see appendix A) states a church worker as follows: "Pastors, evangelists, youth workers and others according to the church needs acceptable to the regional conference" (see Article 3.d, 2020:6). The regional executive chairpersons are male. In terms of article 4.4.2.2A of the Constitution of the AEC (see Appendix A), this person automatically becomes a national board member. Therefore, since females do not qualify as church elders and ordained ministers, they are automatically ineligible.
Level 2	Circuit quarterly meetings (nine members) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority and responsibility 	Fourth in command after the GCC. This committee runs the affairs of the church from a circuit level. Local churches reports matters beyond its authority to the circuit committee. Concerns, suggestions and complaints are referred to the regional level. Circuit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender requirement and representation 	<p>level chairman are pastors according to article 11.2D of the Bylaws of the AEC (see Appendix C)</p>
		<p>Gender inclusive. It comprises of local church delegates from local structures representing men, women, young adults, and the youth.</p>
<p>Level 1</p>	<p>Local church committee (nine members)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority and responsibility 	<p>Firth in command after the GCC. This is the primary level of contact, which deals with local church matters. The local church committee is responsible for the running if the daily church responsibilities. Matters beyond its control are referred to the circuit level. Ordination candidates are first recommended by the local church until the highest level of authority. Moreover, the local committees are responsible for the execution and implementation of decisions made from the GCC to the circuit level. In addition to local ministers, local churches are expected to recommend two/three delegates to participate in the GCC delegation/business meetings. These candidates are include the local chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Local chairperson are mostly males. In instances were a female occuppies one of these positions, when it comes to the GCC recommendations, they are to be replaced by a male figure in the local church leadership.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender requirement and representation 	Gender inclusive
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3.6 Church offices

In terms of Article 3.D and 4.A of the Bylaws of the AEC (see Appendix C), there are nine recognized church offices. These are pastors, evangelists, elders, deacons, deaconess, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, women's group leaders, and men's group leaders. This study focuses on the following offices: pastors, evangelists, elders, deacons and deaconesses. They are now discussed briefly.

- **Pastor/evangelist**

In terms of Article 15.1.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (see Appendix B), the pastor is “an elder who has been appointed to shepherd the flock in a local church”. There is not much detail on the distinct office of the evangelist. Evangelist falls under the office of the pastor. The minister in the office of pastor can function as pastor and evangelist. Since these titles appear to cover the same office, this study uses the term pastor for both. With regard to the qualification of the pastor/evangelist, Article 6 of the Constitution of the AEC states ten requirements for church leaders. These requirements are not clear on the matter of gender, unlike the Bylaws and Distinctive Documents. However, the wording and terminology used in the constitution document indicate the gender bias. Article 6.3: “According to the first book of Timothy, a church leader may be disqualified by the uncommendable character of his wife.” This communicates that maleness is the preferred gender. Article 6.5 states: “Women are commanded by the word of God to be silent, not to be slanderous, to be sober, faithful in all things.” This command according to the AEC is applicable to all females in general. Article 6.6 states: “The wives of church leaders shall be expected to be exemplary in this regard.” The wives of church leaders are expected to model the command of 1 Timothy 3:11 and through their actions, women in general shall follow. Therefore, from these three constitutional requirements for church leaders the position of the AEC on gender becomes clear, namely that church leaders in the pastorate are exclusively male.

The documents of the Distinctives (Appendix B) stipulate that only men are accepted as pastoral candidates. Article 15.1.1-15.1.9 of the Distinctives stipulates 10 points that cover

the identity of the pastoral candidate, the requirements for the candidate, and the process and procedures to be followed by both the potential candidate and the local church in the recommendation and appointment of the person to become a pastor. The term “male” is used 9 times and the pronouns “he”, “his” and “him” are used 23 times. The constitutional documents of the AEC therefore exclude females from pastoral candidacy.

The president of the AEC presides over the whole denomination. In this respect the leadership structure of the founding mission, the SAGM, is mirrored. The SAGM first had a superintendent and later a president. It is not clear from the constitutional documents of the AEC whether persons in a pastoral office should be married or not. Some unmarried men have been ordained and served as pastors of local churches. For example, the current president of the denomination is unmarried but serves as pastor of a local church. The duties and responsibilities of the denominational president although not mentioned in the constitutional documents of the AEC include reading and delivering annual church reports at the AGCC; representing the denomination in meetings with AEC associates for example, mission organizations, Bible societies and theologates; and occasional visitation of fellowships and gatherings held by the various denominational church bodies. Article 15.2.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) describes the pastor's responsibility as follows: “The pastor is responsible for the overall spiritual ministry of the local church.” Though the spiritual ministry of the local church is the sole responsibility of the pastor, it does not mean that he does all things pertaining to the spiritual ministry of the local church by himself at all times. He rather acts as the “overseer” of the local church. He can utilize persons in offices of elder and deacon. The responsibilities associated with the pastor's office include active personal devotional life, public ministry of the word and discipleship, presiding over the Eucharist, leading baptism and various visitations, officiating over marriages and funerals. The pastor enjoys the rights associated with the office and should resist the temptation of power. In summary, candidates for the pastoral office should be male persons who meet scriptural and constitutional requirements as understood and specified by the AEC.

- **Elder**

In terms of article 15.3.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B), an elder is “a man who, having met the scriptural qualifications and having been recognized by the membership of the local church as having spiritual gifts, assists in the ministry of the local church”. The four characteristics of an elder as stipulated by the AEC therefore pertain to gender, scriptural qualifications, recognizable spiritual gifts, and assisting the pastor in the local church. Regarding gender only male persons are regarded as suitable candidates.

Women cannot function at this level or in this capacity. In terms of article 15.4.3 of the Distinctives of the AEC, the office of an elder is not applicable to all males in general but rather to married men. Only husbands can assume the office of an elder. They must meet criteria in accordance with Scripture. Regarding recognizable spiritual gifts, this characteristic is determined by the local church who then approves the candidate. A candidate who possesses these characteristics and meet these requirements qualifies to be an assistant in the local church ministry. Therefore, any potential candidate who does not meet all three characteristics cannot function as elder in the local churches of the AEC. Article 4.1A of the Bylaws of the AEC (Appendix C) describes an elder as follows: "Mature in the faith, spiritual men with qualities written in 1 Timothy 3:1-7." In terms of article 15.3.3 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) in addition to the requirements in 1 Timothy 3:11, elders must be males in good standing with the local church. In terms of article 4.1C:1-4 of the Bylaws (Appendix C) and article 15.3.5 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B), elders have singular and dual responsibilities. The singular responsibility is to visit the sick and bereaved to offer prayers and comfort and serve the spiritual needs of church members. The dual responsibility is to assist the pastor in the following: the Eucharist, caring for the spiritual needs of the church members, preaching and counselling, baptism, and participating in evangelistic ministry intended to expand the reach of the local church in new areas. In summary, candidates for the office of elder should be male, have recognizable spiritual gifts, function as pastoral assistants, and meet the requirements for elders as stipulated in the constitutional documents of the AEC.

One of the biggest debates concerning the office of an elder involves the epistle of 2 John. 2 John 1:1 "The elder, to the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth – and not I only, but also all who know the truth." Complementarians argue that this was a reference to the whole church rather than an individual person, indicating to the shift between singular and plural use of "you" in the whole letter. Complementarians further argue that if the "elder" were a woman, then the phrases "whom I love in the truth" and "I ask that we love one another" in verse 5 would clearly indicate a personal love relationship between John and this supposed female elder. In response to the "church" reference, the following is pertinent. Firstly, the reference "whom I love in the truth", seems to be addressed to the "children" rather than the elder. Secondly, if the elder means "church", who then are the children? Can the "elder" be the "lady" and the "children"? There is no evidence in Scripture were the church is called the "elder", but there are instances where the church is called "children", for example in 1 John 3:1-2 and 5:19. In Romans 8:14 and 16, the author refers

to those who are led by the Spirit as the children of God. "The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (8:16). The church can therefore not have children because the children themselves are the church. Therefore "the elder" was the person to whom care of the children/church was entrusted.

There is further evidence of the distinction between the elder and the children/church. In verse 10 John writes: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them." The church gathered in the house of the woman elder/bishop and was responsible for hosting travelling ministers. The hospitality attribute is one of the multiple character qualities required for bishops mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:2. In verse 8 the woman bishop is warned not to lose what "they/we" have worked for to receive her full reward. The pronoun "we" means the female bishop labored along with the apostles in establishing the work left under her care. In verse 13 John writes: "The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings." This possibly means that there was another church under a female elder known to both John and the elder who was the recipient of this epistle.

The relationship argument is irrelevant, because if we discard the overwhelming evidence of the "elder" being a woman because of the phrase "whom I love in truth" or "I ask that we love one another", then the same understanding should be consistent in the following letter. In 3 John 1:1 the author writes: "The elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth." There is no certainty amongst scholars of who this Gaius was. There are three possibilities. The first is that Gaius was Paul's fellow traveler and the one who provided hospitality. He is identified as a man due to the masculine form of the name in Romans 16:23. This is possibly the same man who is mentioned as Paul's travelling companion in Acts 19:29, and possibility the same man whom Paul baptized in 1 Corinthians 1:14. Moreover, given Paul's reference in Romans 16:23 to Gaius having provided him with hospitality, and most commentators' consensus that Romans was written in Corinth, this could have been the same person. The second possibility is that this Gaius was from Derbe, who accompanied Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem in Acts 20:4. The third possibility is that Gaius was from Asia Minor, a dear friend of John to whom the Third Letter of John is addressed. Gaius was a man. To discard scriptural evidence that 2 John was addressed to a female elder because of the phrase "whom I love in the truth" or "I ask that we love one another" in verses 1 and 5, is a rather desperate attempt. Firstly, the same phrase is found in 3 John addressing Gaius who was male. Would this then also indicate a love relationship?

The Bible teaches that Christians should love one another. For example, in John 13:34, Jesus tells his disciples who were males to “love one another”. The word “love” is the Greek verb *agapate* from *agape*, which refers to God's kind of love or the unconditional love of God. In John 11:3, Jesus received a message about the death of the one “he loves”. The word “love” is the Greek verb *phileis* from *phileo*, which means brotherly love. In John 11:5 the author writes: “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus”. In this text, *agapao* means “to love” in a social or moral manner. The stem of *agapao* is *agape*, which is the God-kind of love. The same word is used in 2 and 3 John. There is no indication of romantic love in these references. If it were about romantic love, the author would have used the Greek verb *eros*, which denotes erotic love.

The adjective “elder” in 2 and 3 John has a masculine gender. This means that the office of the elder held by these two recipients, was not gender distinctive. They both served in a similar capacity. This continued until the third-fourth century. Krupp (1993:95) puts it as follows: “Several writings in the early church indicate that there was an office of female elders until it was eliminated in A.D. 363 at the council of Laodicea. About A.D. 200 Tertullian, one of the early church apologists wrote that they were four orders of female church officers: deacons, widows, elders, and presiding officers.” The office of elder and presiding officer were the only two that were restricted to male persons. Harvey and Hunter (2008:397) put it as follows: “The role of women overseers and bishops continued for some centuries in the church until the early fourth century at the council of Laodicea canon 11.” The Laodicea council 11 (see Madigan and Osiek 2005:164) reads as follows: “Concerning those who are called presbyters or female presiders it is not permitted to appoint them in the church.” One of the reasons women were barred from the offices of elder and presiding officer was possibly because women functioned in the same capacity as males. The restriction of females from the office of elder/bishop was not a requirement of Scripture, but rather third-fourth century church practice which later became tradition. To place a gender requirement onto the offices of elder/bishop is to disregard the teachings of the first apostles and conform to the biased practices of the third-fourth century church fathers.

- **The diaconate**

The constitutional documents of the AEC make a distinction between the office of deacon and deaconess. There are differences and similarities. Article 15.4.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (see Appendix B) describes a deacon as “a man who has met the spiritual qualifications and who is recognized by the membership of the local church to have the gift of wisdom in ministering to the needs of the local church”. Three things are specified:

gender, spiritual adequacy, and the recognizable gift of wisdom. The first characteristic specifies “male” as the required gender. Only males can be deacons in the AEC. In terms of article 15.4.3 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B), deacons should be married men. Only husbands can assume the diaconate office. Secondly, the male candidate should meet the spiritual requirements named in Article 4.2a of the Bylaws of the AEC (see Appendix C) as in accordance with Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-11. Thirdly, the recognizable gift of wisdom is required when the person ministers to the needs of the local church.

Article 15.5.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) describes a deaconess as: “A woman who is spiritually mature and having demonstrated spiritual gifts has been given certain responsibilities by the local church.” The spiritual qualifications are in accordance with I Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5. There are difference with regard to the responsibilities and duties of deacons and deaconesses. In terms of article 15.4.4 of the Distinctives of the AEC (see Appendix B), “Deacons have a responsibility in sharing in the ministry of the local church with pastors and elders according to their spiritual gifts, with particular concern for the practical needs of the congregation.” It is not clear whether deacons also share with the pastor and elders in the *ministry of the word of God* in the local church. The statement “sharing in the ministry of the local with the pastor and elders” can possibly be taken to include the ministry of the word. This is evident in practice. Deacons do share in the ministry of the word in local churches. In terms of article, 15.5.1-15.5.7 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) the ministry of a deaconess is restricted to ministering to women. Article 15.5.3-15.5.4 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B), restricts the following female persons from assuming the office of deaconess: women who live with a man other than their husband if that husband is still alive, women in polygamous relationships, and women who are married to a divorced man. However, the same is not stipulated in the constitutional documents of the AEC regarding male persons.

Article 4.2C:1-6 of the Bylaws of the AEC (Appendix C) describes the shared duties and responsibilities of deacons and deaconesses. These include taking care of the property of the church, dealing with church expenses including hiring and building, and representing the local church in quarterly meetings.

In summary, there are two distinct offices separated by gender, namely male deacons, and female deaconesses. One of the major differences is that deacons practically share in the ministry of the word of God together with the pastor and elder, while deaconesses are limited to a female audience. The similarities of these offices are that they equally share in taking

care of the property of the church and that both represent the local church in quarterly or regional meetings.

Unlike the offices of the elder/bishop, the deaconate office was divided into two on the grounds of gender during the end of the third century and in many churches today. Male persons were called deacons and female persons deaconess. The gender separation within the diaconate was not a requirement of Scripture. The term “deaconess” does not appear in the Bible. The term “deaconess” developed in the late third-fourth century to indicate a role that differed from the first century deacons (see Stiefel 2016:18, Grenez and Kjesbo 1995:87). Romans 16:1: “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae.” The word translated as “deacon” is the Greek word *diakonos*, which also means “servant”. The debate is whether “deacon” in this context denotes a service or ministry. *Diakonos* in the times of Paul carried a primary meaning of servant/attendant in a household setting (see Jankiewicz 2013:10). Servants of the household attended visitors. Servants differed from *doulos* or slaves in the sense that they were not the possession of their master. However, in the NT the terms servant and slave are occasionally used in conjunction. For example, Mark 10:45 Jesus calls himself a servant of the people. In Philippians 2:7 Paul calls Jesus a slave. In other words, the context dictates the meaning of the *diakonos*. Paul equates Phoebe's ministry to that of his and Christ's though not in the same capacity since Phoebe's was limited to the local church in Cenchreae. However, Phoebe's ministry could have reached as far the church in Rome since she carried the epistle to the church. This is similar to Tychicus who ministered in Ephesus and Colossae, and possibly carried the epistle of Ephesians and Colossians to the churches (see Eph 6:21 and Col 4:7).

Since neither Paul nor Christ waited on or attended to people as household servants, it is evident the Phoebe's diaconate was more of a ministry rather than a household service. Marucci (2016:12) puts it as follows: “The noun [*diakonos*] signifies above all a title, a stable function, a ministry not purely civic rather ecclesiastical.” This understanding is supported by the fact that the noun “deacon” is in a masculine form. The masculine form functions here as a default gender. It is gender inclusive not exclusive. This provides further evidence that the office of the deaconate was not exclusive to men in New Testament times. The same masculine form of *daikonos* used to refer to Phoebe is also used in reference to Tychicus, Epaphras, and Timothy (see Jankiewicz 2013:11). Phoebe therefore possibly served as a local pastor in the church in Cenchreae in the same capacity as Tychicus and Timothy did in Ephesus and Epaphras in the church in Colossae (see Eph 6:21; 1 Tim 4:6; Col 1:7). In

Romans 16:2 the author calls Phoebe a *prostatis* or “official in charge”, or “one who stands before others”. This Greek noun *prostatis* appears only once in the New Testament and is therefore a *hapax legomenon*. Phoebe therefore had a leadership role in the local church. This set her apart from other female “helpers”.

In New Testament times there were women whose service was to provide financial support for travelling ministers. They were called *boethos* “helpers” and *ballo polu* “being of great help”. Although the noun form of *prostatis* only appears once in the New Testament, other forms of *prostatis* such as the verb *proistamenos* does appear. An example is Romans 12:8, which refers to “leading” as one of the gifts of the Spirit. The importance of the noun *prostatis* is overlooked by most English translations. Jankiewicz (2013:11) explains the reason for such as follows: “The most likely answer to [this] question is that perhaps the translators may have felt uncomfortable with a notion that a woman could carry any leadership or presiding role in the early church.” Phoebe's leadership in a local church setting was so exceptional that Paul entrusted the epistle to the Romans to her. The deaconate of Phoebe differs from that of the gender-based third-fourth century “deaconess” (see Marucci 2016:12).

3.7 Ordination in the Africa Evangelical Church

The constitutional documents of the AEC have gone through various amendments over the years. The constitution was amended in the December of 2001 2006, 2018, 2019, and 2020. However, gender inclusivity in the pastorate and the ordination of women has been subject to decades of procrastination. Article 12.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) describes ordination as follows:

Ordination is the setting apart of a person to a ministry in the church, which takes its biblical precedent from the laying on of hands for a specific work. Ordination is a public recognition and confirmation that an individual has the appropriate gifts and has been called of God to His service. Hence, an ordination service has no validity without this divine gift and call, and does not give the candidate any special powers, abilities, or knowledge. Ordination is not necessarily for a lifetime and may be revoked. Furthermore, an ordained person is subject to the discipline of the local church. Pastors or other full-time male workers may be ordained in the Africa Evangelical Church - Acts 6:6, 13:3. Ordination carries the use of the title *Reverend*.

The following aspects require further examination for clarification: the definition, biblical testimony and the purpose of ordination; public recognition; the mutable nature of ordination;

the subjection of the ordained to the discipline of the church; gender criteria, and the title that is conferred with ordination.

With regard to the first aspect of *biblical testimony and purpose*, ordination is defined as the setting a person apart for ministry in the church. Specific ministries in the AEC are only to be fulfilled by ordained people. The last sentence of article 12.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B), mentions “pastors and other male workers” as the intended persons. Regarding biblical testimony, the laying on of hands serves as a physical confirmation in the process of ordination. The person receives an ordination certificate. The biblical texts used as the guideline for this process are Acts 6:6 and Acts 13:3. Acts 13:3 refers to the “ordination” of Barnabas and Paul by the church in Antioch. If taken literally, this was the “ordination” of apostles not pastors. However, it seems a principle was preferred over literalism. Acts 6:6 mentions seven men chosen for the primary purpose of serving tables distributing food to widows. It seems apparently clear from the apostle's remarks in Acts 4:2 that their own ministry differed from that of the chosen seven. Prayer, preaching and teaching of word characterized the ministry of the apostles. The ministry of the seven did not have these characteristics. Although Stephen performed signs and wonders (Acts 6:8), he was not “ordained” for that purpose but for the serving of tables. Stephen serves as an example of what the “ordination” of the seven entailed in addition to serving tables, signs, and wonders. The element of “wisdom” is demonstrated when false accusations are brought against him in Acts 6:8-7:53. The element of “filled with Holy Spirit” is demonstrated in the manifestation of signs and wonders in Acts 6:8. Scripture does not necessarily mention Stephen engaging in the ministry of the word as was the case with the apostles. Stephen is mentioned as performing signs and wonders, engaging in arguments, defense of his case, and the demonstration of wisdom. This is a summary of the ministry of the seven men.

In most evangelical churches, the office of the diaconate is named after the ministry of the seven chosen in Acts 6:6. Therefore, the office of the diaconate in these churches comes with ordination. However, this is not the case in the AEC. Therefore, the “other full-time male workers” referred to in article 12.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) pertain to missionary workers who work in close association with the AEC and could seek ordination in the AEC. This is derived from Article 12.2 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) which states: “The Africa Evangelical Church may, at its discretion and as need arises, request the ordination of a missionary serving or to serve with the Africa Evangelical Church. Such a request shall go through the proper and defined channels of communication between the Africa Evangelical Church and the missionary's home church.” In the AEC people are only ordained for pastoral and missionary work, nothing else.

Regarding the second aspect of *public recognition*, Article 7 of the Constitution of the AEC (Appendix A) states the following: “Candidates for ministerial work of the Africa Evangelical Church shall be ordained at the General Church Conference. These shall serve the Lord where they are called and according to their gifts within the church ministry or in other Christian work approved by the Church. The Board shall, if necessary, ordain candidates for the ministry when the Church Conference is not in session.” Ordination therefore takes place during the General Church Conference were the whole denomination gathers. In special circumstances where ordination is needed before or after the General Church Conference, the National Board has the prerogative to conduct the ordination ceremony.

Regarding the third aspect of the *mutable nature of ordination*, ordained pastors who fail to meet the biblical standards mentioned in article 15.1.9 of the Distinctives of the AEC (see Appendix B) must relinquish their ordination certificate. If they do not comply, the denominational board will attempt to retrieve it. The aim of retrieval of the ordination certificate is to prevent an incompetent pastor from performing pastoral duties within the AEC denomination. Ordination certificates are not retrieved from pastors who opt to leave the AEC. The certification can be used beyond the AEC for either similar or different purposes. In personal communication on 11 June 2021 the Reverend V. Ndinisa, the National General Secretary, confirmed that the AEC does not revoke ordination because it maintains a “once ordained always ordained approach”. Retrieved ordination certification is often only for a period. Should the pastor prove to be competent, reinstatement is possible. It would therefore be plausible to replace the word “revoke” with the “retrieve” in Article 12.1 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) to avoid confusion. An ordination certificate does not necessarily qualify a person for the pastoral office. It is the scriptural qualifications mentioned in article 15.1.9 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) that serve as the basis for entry into the pastoral office. Male persons who are recommended through the proper channels and meet the scriptural requirements can also assume a pastoral position even without an ordination certificate. Male persons with an ordination certificate from other denominations, who have acquired AEC membership, were recommended through appropriate channels, and meet the scriptural requirements, can also assume a pastoral position.

With regard to the aspect of *discipline*, ordained ministers occupy the highest authoritative position in the local church, but are not above the delegated authority of the local church in accordance with constitutional documents of the AEC. In terms of article 15.1.9 of the Distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) the local church has the authority to remove a pastor from his duties if he proves to be inadequate.

With regard to the aspects of *gender* and the *title* conferred on an ordained pastor, ordination in the AEC has a specific male gender requirement. Women cannot be ordained and cannot be conferred the title of “Reverend”. Article 15.1.1 -15.1.9 of the distinctives of the AEC (Appendix B) provides details on the process and procedure of appointing of a pastor for ministry in the local church. Though the constitutional documents do not include the questions used by the Board in the ordination interviews these were acquired from the office of the national secretary of the Africa Evangelical Church (Appendix D).

The constitutional documents and faith practice of the AEC indicate that the denomination adopts an evangelical complementarian position. Complementarian evangelicals argue for men only in the ecclesial office.

3.8 Ordination of women in the AEC

Since its independence in 1962, the AEC has never ordained a female to the pastorate. During the first years after independence, the people sent to theologates from the AEC or in association with the AEC were predominantly male, but women were also active in the field alongside ordained and lay male persons. During the last three decades, increasing numbers of women have heeded the call into ministry and taken the steps towards attaining formal ministry training in AEC approved theologates. Upon completion of their ministry training and having met all the requirements, the gender element imbedded in these requirements prevent them from being recognised as legitimate candidates for ordination. The male gender requirement for ordination is the only requirement that women are contending. Regarding all the other requirements women have proven their adequacy and competency which equate or sometimes exceed those of male candidates.

The lack of an ordination certificate for reasons of gender hinders women in more than one way. Besides limitations with regard to ministry, women who pursue employment in professions that are commensurate with their ministry qualifications, fail in their application due to the lack of an ordination certificate. Whatever the theological qualifications held by women within the AEC, it does not benefit them financially, either denominationally or professionally. The opposite is true for their male counterparts. A woman in the AEC who holds a theological qualification, would have to obtain a second qualification if they were to have a source of income.

Some women in the AEC have done pastoral ministry in practice to the same degree as ordained male persons, but without the recognition of ordination and without remuneration. For example, in practice women have to some degree fulfilled the duties of an ordained

minister in either local, circuit, or regional capacity. It seems acceptable to the denomination that women do the work, but remain barred from ordination due to their gender. However, the gender requirement has not deterred women from heeding the call of God in their lives and fully equipping themselves for ministry.

3.9 Women's experiences in the AEC

Some women have contemplated leaving the AEC due to the gender requirement for ordination. However, the majority opt to remain because they find it better to engage the matter internally. Some two decades ago such an attempt was made. There are two versions of the story. According to the first version, from current and former local and regional members, a letter on the matter of women's ordination was addressed by the Mofolo local church to the Annual General Church Conference (AGCC). This was in accordance with article 4.5.2.7 of the Constitution of the AEC (see Appendix A) which states the following: "It [the denominational church board] receives reports, problems, and questions on and about the ministry of the Africa Evangelical Church as a whole to discuss and solve them." This letter went through all the channels as specified by Article 4.5.5.1-4.5.6.6 of the Constitution (Appendix A).

The second version of the story from the office of the general secretary is that the letter pertained to women's participation not ordination. The letter requested that inclusive terminology be used in all AEC constitutional documents. The term "delegate" should replace male terminology in order to be gender inclusive. This would allow women to participate on all denominational levels.

Since there are no original records of the letter, these stories cannot be validated. A former circuit committee member states that the confusion began when the letter submitted to the regional office differed from the one submitted by the local church to the quarterly meeting. The letter, which was about the ordination of women, was changed to become a request for more female delegates and greater female participation in denominational gatherings. This could explain the reason for the two versions of the letter. However, the consensus is that the discussions have gone back and forth without a resolution. The past three years have seen a slight increase in female participation in preaching and directing gatherings in the presence of males on a denominational scale. Although female participation has not been included in the constitutional documents of the Africa Evangelical Church there have been some improvements in practice.

This contribution of this study is to approach the matter of the ordination of women in the AEC from a theological perspective. The study includes the testimony and experiences of

three women who are members of the AEC. Their narratives relate personal encounters, conversations, and experiences. Their narratives represent the voice of women in the AEC.

3.10 Results of the interviews

See Appendix E for the type of questions addressed to the interviewees. To keep the identities of the interviewees confidential the titles “interviewee 1, 2, and 3” will be used.

Interviewee 1 has been a member of the AEC for thirty-three years. She has been in ministry since the age of sixteen. Twelve years later she responded to the call to ordained ministry. She received seminary training at the George Whitfield College in Cape Town. The George Whitfield College is a Reformed, evangelical, and Anglican theological college. At the college she was one of three female seminarians and the only black female in her class. She was exposed to different theological perspectives due to the diverse denominations served by the college. Course material and teachings were gender inclusive, but female students were barred from preaching to males. Their audience was limited to youth, children's corner, and a female audience. The local church she serves is in the process of finding a new pastor after the retirement of the pastor. In this process she is overlooked because of her sex. She recalls an incident where her actions were questioned on the grounds of gender. During circuit gatherings dedication services are led by pastors. After having led a dedication service a senior pastor questioned her authority to do so and demanded that she refrain from doing so in the future. Another incident took place at an annual pastors' retreat. Pastors and their wives attend a 3-day conference. She had attended these conferences for six years. In the seventh year she was accompanied by her husband. Though male pastors brought their spouses, a board member questioned her right to bring her husband stating that only pastors were supposed to attend. She has since stopped attending the pastors' conference because of this. In another incident during the pastors' conference, Interviewee 1 raised the question whether women could seek ordination in other churches and then return to serve in the AEC. The members were against the idea. Male persons who were ordained in other churches and then become members of the AEC are recognized as pastors. Interviewee 1 reports that many women commended her for bringing the matter to light and represent their silenced voice.

At a particular pastors' conference in 2018, the topic was gender and spiritual gifts. During the discussion Interviewee 1 pointed to the procrastination on the matter of the ordination of women that had been submitted to the national board. Her ethics and respect toward male persons were then questioned. Many AEC pastors from a traditional and cultural background regard women who speak in the presence of males to be disrespectful. This

was even more problematic since her enquiry pertained to a “sensitive issue”. A participant referred to the minutes of the GCC business meeting in which the matter was postponed to the following business meeting. Women have no access to these meetings. This postponed discussion remains unaddressed. Interviewee 1 concludes that it is unlikely that a cause that does not affect the people themselves directly, will be given priority by them.

Interviewee 2 was born in KwaZulu-Natal. She received a call to ministry at the age of seventeen. Twenty-five years later at age forty-two she attended the Union Bible Institute, a theologate with a long history and association with the SAGM/AEF and later the AEC (see Huntingford 1989:41-43). At this institution there was gender inclusivity. Unlike the experience of Interviewee 1, she could preach in a setting where male persons were present. In the AEC she could not be ordained and had to serve under and report to ordained male ministers. She had no source of income from her church work. She could not pursue related professions because she was not ordained. She was referred to as a “church worker”, not as “Reverend”. It is her desire to see women who are called to ministry attain the same status as that of men in the AEC.

Interviewee 3 had an encounter with God at the age of 10, while she was in Grade 2. She told her Sunday school teacher about the encounter. She struggled in high school, left school early and found work as a domestic worker. After three years she returned to school, but failed her matric examinations. She went to a technical college to complete her secondary education. Later, working as a receptionist, she heard a voice saying: “Why don’t you want to do my will?” As the sole breadwinner in a large family, she resisted the call to ministry for fear of letting her family down. The pastor convinced her family that she should attend Bible College. One of her brothers had returned and could provide for the family. She attended the Union Bible Institute (UBI) the following year.

During the three years of formal training she struggled with financial and health issues. She benefitted from a bursary from the estate of an anonymous missionary who in her will specified that her wealth be used to fund women in Bible colleges. Her health remained poor beyond her college days. Two years after graduation she received healing. This happened in a counselling session at a revival gathering in her area. After a prophetic word, she went on a ministry journey with a movement called *hamba vangeli*, which means “spread the gospel”. She served in the *hamba vangeli* ministry for 10 years. Because of challenges hindered the progress of the *hamba vangeli* ministry, she returned to her home church, the AEC. A pastor from her *hamba vangeli* ministry days invited her on a ministry journey which lasted for 9 years. During the 19 years of her ministry outside the AEC she always kept

contact with the AEC. When the building used as a church collapsed, Interviewee 3 and her family offered one of their houses for Sunday services. Together with other women from the AEC in her local church, she led the project to build a new church building. The women made the bricks by hand. The church building was officially opened in 1993.

Under the leadership of the chairperson, the local branch was encouraged to plant churches to become a stand-alone circuit. Female “church workers” were given certificates of recognition which allowed them to fulfil pastoral duties such as conducting funeral services, blessing babies, conducting baptism services, and participating in the Eucharist. These are duties limited to males by the constitution of the AEC. The East Rand circuit is the only circuit that recognizes female workers in this manner. This attests to the leader's perspective on the matter of gender and the clergy. Though AEC church policy tend to be complementarian, this does not represent the view of all AEC members. The East Rand circuit chairperson defended the circuit's decision to recognize and allow female “church workers” to perform duties that, according to the constitution, are reserved for men. The circuit chairperson also expressed the need for amendments to the constitutional documents of the AEC. These were rather hastily drafted in consultation with the late Reverend Bhengu of the Assemblies of God (AOG). This explains some of the similarities between the AEC and AOG. One such example is the exclusion of females from ordination. With the huge need for pastoral work necessitated by the Covid 19 pandemic, the circuit chairperson points out that the pandemic has exposed the weakness of gender restrictions in the pastorate.

Interviewee 3 has been approached by various churches for her services. These invitations come with ordination and monthly salary. However, she would not leave the AEC which she regards as her home. Although not formally set apart for service, doing God's work is testimony to her heavenly ordination. In her experience male pastors with whom she worked in the AEC did not treat her differently because of the AEC's constitutional dictations. Regarding financial resources and her livelihood, support streams come from some individuals from the AEC but mostly from outsiders. The local church supports her to some degree but due to the economic difficulties of the local people, the church itself survives through the generosity of individuals and other churches. From the garden in her backyard she provides food for the less privileged. The church membership includes 150 Sunday school children, 50 women, and 15 men as well as some youth and young adults. She did not allow her work in God's service to be hampered by the lack of an ordination certificate.

The experiences and testimonies of these women give voice to female experience in the AEC. Gender restrictions when it comes to the pastorate not only affect women who are called to ministry but are also detrimental to the growth of the national church. Local churches have since been losing members for different reasons. Some of these are preventable. The present gender inequality that is apparent in the leadership in some instances contributes to other challenges the national church encounters. However, some pastors in the AEC do not subscribe to the AEC policies on the matter of gender and the pastorate. Some opt to remain silent while others choose to engage with the matter on the ground level.

3.11 Summary

The AEC was established by the Cape General Mission under the leadership of Martha Osbourn, Spencer Walton, and Andrew Murray. The AEC became autonomous in 1962-63. The AEC restricts leadership positions and ordination to male persons using 1 Timothy 2:12 as substantiation. The testimonies of female “workers” indicate that women do take up ministerial responsibilities but without the necessary recognition and compensation.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-15

4.1 The First Epistle to Timothy

The first epistle to Timothy is used by the Africa Evangelical Church as a guideline for the offices of pastor, deacon, and elders. Article 6:1 of the Constitution of the AEC (see Appendix A) puts it as follows: “The first book of Timothy shall be used by the Africa Evangelical church as the scriptural measurement in appointing church leaders. It is therefore strongly advisable for all church leaders to study it and be familiar with its content.” It is for this reason that this chapter explores the role this biblical passage specifically. In biblical scholarship over the past 200 years, the Pauline authorship of this epistle has been questioned. However, for the purposes of this exploration authorship is not relevant. It is the content of the epistle in its context of the faith community in the city of Ephesus and the role that this content plays in the AEC still today that is of significance for this study.

The First Epistle to Timothy is often used in churches as a guideline for how people should conduct themselves as church leaders in a modern faith community. Although there is a variety of interpretations and understandings of the passage, the common element is that this epistle is concerned with the life of the faith community. This is one of the reasons why the letter is categorized as one of the “Pastoral Epistles” of the New Testament.

Timothy is named as the intended recipient. The author of the epistle had left him behind and entrusted him with Christian leadership in this specific faith community. Most churches had challenges, which emanated from their immediate surroundings. The city of Ephesus was an economically well-developed business hub. Swindoll (2014:9) puts it as follows: “Ephesus therefore commanded a strategic position offering access in all directions from the sea, making the city a busy and affluent economic hub for the Roman province of Asia.” The people of the city were highly literate compared to other areas where there was little economic development. Among the advantages was its potential for religious success. The diverse population provided an opportune setting for religions to spread beyond the confines of the city. People who went back to their native lands after having spent time in Ephesus could be returning home as new converts of some religious movement. The potential for religious growth in the city brought about competition among various religious perspectives who all hoped to win the confidence of the populace. The Christian faith community in Ephesus was not immune to this combat of faiths and doctrines.

Paganism was among the most popular forms of religion in the city and posed a threat to the life and growth of the church in Ephesus. Artemis or Diana was among the most popular objects of worship and her temple was renowned as one of the seven wonders of the world. It drew crowds to the city (see Small 2013:24). Divination, which predicts the future or tries to change it and Spiritism, which claims to be able to communicate with the dead were among the popular practices in the city. Ephesus was also a philosophical hub. Swindoll (2014:10) puts it as follows: “Ephesus had become a veritable cauldron of competing repository of texts on Greek philosophy.” In light of this, the author of 1 Timothy writes to provide Timothy with guidelines on how to deal with threats to the faith community in Ephesus. These included false teachers, questions surrounding the author’s apostolic appointment, the practices of the faith community, godly contentment, and final instructions to Timothy to flee from ungodliness and pursue holiness.

4.2 Gender in 1 Timothy 2: Universal or contextual?

This section of the study focuses on the second chapter of 1 Timothy in general, but on 1 Timothy 2:11-15 specifically. Chapter 2 gives instructions regarding worship. In verses 1-7 the instructions regard the kinds of prayers in the faith community. The attention shifts in verses 8-15 to the conduct of men and women during these prayer sessions. The fulcrum of the debates on this chapter is whether its instruction is to be seen as *normative* or *contextual*. Some argue that the author 1 Timothy was giving universal instructions to all believers. Other’s counter-argue that the instructions were addressing an internal church matter of the day. If seen as *normative*, the implications of would be that woman in general should be barred from teaching or having authority over men for all time. The implication of the non-universal approach is that the contemporary faith communities ought to draw principles and apply them in ways that are appropriate to their context. Most complementarians are proponents of the normative approach and the evangelical feminists and egalitarians do not see the instructions as universal.

In verse 8, the author of 1 Timothy instructs men on their behavior. The guideline is two-fold. They should be able to *lift up holy hands* when they pray, and they should pray without anger or dispute. The first guideline relates to a person's inner condition rather than an external posture. Swindoll (2014:42) puts it as follows: “[The author] calls for prayer by lifting up holy hands. His emphasis is on holy not hands. [The author] does not care as much about the position of the body as about the purity of the person offering prayer.” As Christians, the author of 1 Timothy wanted the faith community to understand the importance of holiness. Holiness or the lack thereof had the potential to aid or hinder one in

prayer. Holiness in this context refers to consecration, which is more about being free from contamination than about a state of perfection (see Swindoll 2014:42). A consecrated and uncontaminated individual is useful to God. God can use them for the purpose for which God set them apart.

The second guideline is relational. The men are instructed to do *refrain from anger* because it has the potential to cause disorder in the church and affect unity within the faith community. In verses 9-10, the author turns his attention to women. He contrasts apparel to deeds. When worshipping God, the emphasis should not be on expensive clothes, but on modest dress and godly deeds. The author wanted the women in the church to differ from those in the city. Godless women in the city flaunted their appearance and wealth. The author of 1 Timothy wanted God-fearing women to rather “flaunt” good deeds.

4.3 Women, teaching and learning

In 1 Timothy 2:11 the injunction to women is: “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission”, is subject to ongoing debates. The question is whether those addressed were unmarried women or married women. It seems unlikely that the writer of 1 Timothy referred only to married women. The Greek word *gyne* referred to “woman” or “female” and only secondarily also to “wife”, namely a married woman. If the author of 1 Timothy was referring to married women, he would likely have used the Greek word *gunaikos* instead of *gyne*. If only married women were in focus here, then the unmarried women in the church at Ephesus were not subject to this restriction. Therefore, it seems likely that the author of 1 Timothy was referring to females, and particularly to those who were the cause of disorder in the church in Ephesus. This could possibly have been a group consisting of both married and unmarried women.

Contrary to the cultural understanding of the day that women were not permitted to learn anything other than that which pertained to household duties, the author of 1 Timothy *instructs women to learn* in the church. Rose (2013:25) puts it as follows: “The surprise is that [the author] was expressing a view that ran counter to the first-century culture. First century women were excluded from higher education, including instruction in Scripture.” In that cultural setting an instruction to learn holy scriptures was outside of the norm and would have been received negatively in the social environment. Women who pursued education beyond the confines of their home would have been regarded as rebellious and lawless, bringing shame on themselves and their household. Rose (2013:25) puts it as follows: “If a woman ventured out into the public sphere to gain instruction, her chastity would be

questioned. Given the cultural context, it is shocking to hear [the author] command women to learn sound doctrine at all.”

In the Greek text, the word “quiet” or “silent” comes before the word “learn”. This indicates that silence or quietness is the way in which *women should learn*. This is repeated in verse 12c. There are at least two possibilities for how to understand this quietness. In scholarly debates it is seen as either silent attentiveness or as freedom from disturbance. Murphy and Starling (2015:145) put it as follows: “While neither implies absolute silence, and both imply that the function of quietness is to aid learning, the idea of *freedom from disturbance* chimes with the instruction to men to pray *without anger or disputing*.” Most commentators make the issue of quarrelling and arguing in the church in Ephesus as a matter of women. However, verse 8 clearly includes men in this. In verse 4, the arguments about endless myths and genealogies taught by false teachers are what promoted controversy rather than advancing the Gospel. Murphy and Starling (2015:145) put it as follows: “[The author's] instruction to Timothy is that women should learn without causing disturbance or turmoil, just like the men should avoid anger and disputing in their prayer.” In other words, both men and women had issues, which had the potential to be disruptive during worship services. Therefore, the instruction is more of an exhortation for a good cause than promoting a restriction for all women. It was specific to disorderly females not females in general. They were not alone in being disorderly either. McKnight (2008:202) puts it as follows: “[The author's] focus here is not on what women cannot do but on what women must do: *learn*.” In other words, the author of 1 Timothy was encouraging the disorderly females to remain silent *to learn* sound doctrine.

The exhortation to learn in silence is accompanied by “full submission”. It is that this term is understood within its context, rather than to regard it as a rule such as that women should be in full submission to men in general. The full submission combined with quietness is a prerequisite to aid the woman in their learning. This submission pertains to the speaker during the worship service, the one who is doing the teaching. From him the women should learn. Murphy and Starling (2016:145) put it as follows: “There is no reason to believe that the *full submission* of 2:11 is of women in general to men in general, but of women learners to whoever is their instructor.” Therefore, submission to the teacher and silence would benefit learning. Since women received no education, this hindered their understanding of Scripture and whatever ability to teach women might have possessed. Learning sharpens one’s ability to teach and boost confidence in communication. This means that the men in the church were educated compared to women, therefore, at this point in history it would not have been possible for women to teach the men. The learning in silence was not passive,

but active. Women were instructed to actively participate in silence. In so doing, they would gain an understanding of that which they had learned. McKnight (2008:202) puts it as follows: “[The author’s] principle was *learning before teaching*.”

If learning were important, the question is why men were not included in the instruction to learn. The social structure of the day sheds light on could be the reason for the exclusion of men in the call to learn in silence. The reason is that men already had the privilege of education and that is why the author would mention women and not men regarding learning. In other words, the immediate context of the text is essential in the understanding of the author’s intended meaning. McKnight (2008:202) puts it as follows: “Any reading of the Bible, especially a passage like this [1 Tim 2:12] that does not recognize male privilege will not come to terms with the social codes in the text.” In other words, if the social structures reflected gender equality, the author would possibly have included men in the exhortation. This learning was not for the purpose of obtaining intellectual knowledge, but rather for the purpose of passing down the knowledge to others in practice. Veloso (1988:6) puts it as follows: “This learning is expressed by the verb *manthano*. It indicates the idea of *becoming accustomed to something or obtaining an experience, learning to know*. It indicates the process through which the human mind is subject to God’s will and knows that which he will ultimately practice and perform.” This means the instruction to learn in silence was for a specific reason and purpose. This purpose could not be fulfilled without first having learned. 1 Timothy 2:12 is then about learning with a specific intent in a specific context: “I do not permit a woman to teach or assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.”

The author of 1 Timothy having given instruction to women on what they ought to do, then moves to what they should not to do. Many who object to women in the pastorate, cite verse 8 which they find supports the traditional idea of barring women from teaching in the church. The author uses “teaching” and “assuming authority” as synonyms. Therefore, instead of the conjunction “and”, “or” is preferred by most English translations. Each conjunction communicates a different meaning. “And” means that what comes after is an addition to what came before it. However, the conjunction “or” links different words together that communicate the same idea. There are different scholarly perspectives on what the Greek verb *didaskhein*, translated as “to teach”, means. These include the official teaching within the church; an authorized proclamation of the word; a public discourse; the formulation of doctrine; and an informal teaching service (see Veloso 1988:6). The first two interpretation have the most scholarly support.

Complementarians are in support of the first and the evangelical feminists and egalitarians support the second. The implication of the first is that the author *prohibited women* from teaching in the church, however, only in the presence of male persons. The implication of the second interpretation is that the author *prohibited unauthorized teaching* by women in the church. He did not teach as such. In other words, the author did permit authorized teaching recognized by the faith community. There are at least two similarities between these two interpretations. Firstly, the setting is a full church service. This would be in line with a Sunday service in contemporary understanding. Secondly, it is about the authoritative teaching of the word of God. The authoritative nature of this teaching for the proponents of the second interpretation, such as feminists and egalitarians, ties in with the previous instruction: “to learn” in verse 11. Veloso (1988:6) puts it as follows: “A lack of such preparation is seen in those rebels who teach *what they ought not*, with the false objective of earning money. The result is the confusion of the people (Titus 1:11).” In other words, the prohibition was aimed at preventing the spread of destructive teachings on an authoritative platform such as the worship service.

Veloso (1988:7) proposes that the author of 1 Timothy prohibits women from exercising authoritative teaching as a function of the *pastorate*. In other words, women cannot assume the office of pastor. Since the verb *authenteo* is translated as “authority over”, allowing women to teach as pastors would contradict the teaching of Genesis 3:16. The weakness in Veloso's argument is that the text in Genesis on which he relies to substantiate his argument, is a text that announces judgement. This approach is then based on the consequence of sin rather than on the creation order. Since Christ came to restore what sin had distorted, this is not appropriate under the new covenant. Therefore, it is important to consider the contextual background before building theological arguments and presenting them as normative. Davis (2009:7) puts it as follows: “This diversity – the fact that women's authoritative leadership is sometimes prohibited (1 Tim. 2) and sometimes permitted (Deborah in Judg. 4) – indicates that *circumstantial* factors are in play, not merely *transcultural, creational* norms that are applied without regard to local problems.”

Men were therefore most likely those who did the teaching in the worship service and to whose teaching women should have dedicated themselves (submitted). The word for “authority” which is used interchangeably with “teaching” is a different word from the one generally associated with the authority that is given to believers. In other words, the authority in this context is not the same authority as that given to the preachers and teachers in Acts 1:8. It is authoritative teaching. It is the authority that emanates from the *teaching* not the

teacher. This activity of *teaching* comes to God's people with the authority of God and the Word. The "teacher" exercises *derived authority* (see Moo 1991:185-186).

Many take lightly the importance of the context and have caused confusion regarding the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:12. A cause for confusion is when verse 8 is treated differently from verse 12 regarding the identity of the men in these texts. Some understand the men in verse 8 to be men in general and those in verse 12 to be men in authoritative positions (see Tkach 2006:11). This is because the "full submission" in verse 11 is not to men in general, but to those in authority, considering verse 12 (see Schreiner 2005:99). Now if the men in verse 12 are those in authority, where then does this leave those without authority in verse 8? Does it mean that the females in question are permitted to assume authority over males without authority, or not? The solution is to understand the author to be referring to the same people in verses 8 and 12. Verses 8-15 are then seen as part of the same unit of thought. The author in fact uses the same word for "men" and "man" in verse 8 and verse 12 respectively. The difference is only the plural and singular form of the word. Since the women in question are instructed to learn in silence and full submission from the one who is teaching – not all men – the same principle is applicable. People without authority are subject to the one teaching, whether they are male or female, because the authority emanates from the activity of teaching not gender or a leadership position. The women who were barred from assuming authority were those who were causing trouble in the church – not women in general. The main problem was those who perpetuate false teaching (1 Tim 1:3-4). The author refers to them as "people", rather than being gender specific. It is therefore possible that these "people" could have been men or women or both.

4.4 Creation order and authority

Traditionalists understand 1 Timothy 2:13-14 as substantiation for the restriction of women: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." The restriction is then rooted in the second account of creation. Should women be permitted to teach, that would be to go against the creation ordinance. However, the author's reference goes back to the formation of man and woman not the creation of humankind. This means that his argument does not engage with anything before Genesis 2:7. The differences and similarities between the *creation* and *formation* account of humankind should be noted.

Firstly, the *differences* will be discussed. In the creation account in Genesis 2:27, there is no sequential order. Humankind was created at once and in the same verse God announced them as male and female. In verse 26 God states that the source and intention for the

creation of humankind is God's image and likeness. No gender distinction is mentioned. The image of God, according to Colossians 1:15, is Jesus Christ. In addition to the source of creation, humankind will also have a likeness to the image, which is Christ. In other words, not only is humankind created in Christ, but also likens him. Then God states God's intention for humankind, the purpose for which God created humankind. In Genesis 2:26 the Hebrew text has "humankind" a singular form with the masculine gender used as the default gender of the word (see Loader 2004:57). However, some translate *adam* as a plural, "human beings" (see Dei and Osei-Bonsu 2015:43). The danger of translating *adam* as plural is that it can then seem as if there were more than one kind of human. Therefore, the singular form of *adam* translated as "humankind" should be used to avoid confusion. In the same verse 26, God outlines God's purpose for humankind, which is earthly dominion over plants and animals. This dominion will be given to humankind in the future. The actual creation, however, takes place in verse 27. This verse provides additional information about humankind. This additional information that was not mentioned previously, is the gender distinction. The additional detail does not in any way change the *source* and the *purpose* of humankind. In other words, this one humankind will consist of two distinctive genders who will exercise dual authority and responsibility over the earth, plants, and animals. In verse 28, the blessing of God is on both. This blessing includes being fruitful and increasing in number. The purpose of this blessing is to fill the earth. The last part of the blessing in verses 27-30 provides further detail on the dual authority and responsibility mentioned in verse 26.

There are more differences in the formation account than the single gender difference mentioned in account of human creation. These are differences of source and sequence. With regard to source, the man is formed from the dust of the ground, but the woman is formed from a rib of the man. Traditionalists argue that the difference in the formation source of man and woman indicates the man's authority over the woman. However, this subjective deduction does not find support in the text. The reason why God used the man's rib rather than earth is not stated in the text. Subjective deductions can be made but a new element should not be read into the text if it is not there. Such deductions should have textual support, either the same or from older texts. Dei and Osei-Bonsu (2015:45) deduce from the text that which correlates with the text: "[God] was re-emphasizing His intention of making an image of Himself in two forms – male and female." However, they then substantiate their deduction as follows: "Without the other, each is incomplete as the image of and likeness of God. Hence an occasion for the assertion of God concerning the plight of the man who was alone." This contradicts the testimony of the text. Firstly, the gender distinction does not refer to two halves of the whole image and likeness of God. The text states: "In the image

of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). This implies that each possess the complete image and likeness of God. Secondly, the use of Genesis 2:18 as support for the “half image and likeness” of God flawed. In Genesis 2:18, God says it is not good for the man to be alone. The noun “man” here refers to the male person rather than humankind. This is derived from verse 7. The man in the garden was the male form of the image and likeness of God. The Hebrew word *l'badow* translated as “alone” can also be “apart” or “bad”. The material part of man seems to be apart not the immaterial/spiritual. If “alone” is taken to be an “incomplete human”, then the question would be whether eunuchs (Matt 19:12) and unmarried human beings, including the incarnate Son of God, would be only incomplete representations of God.

The second difference between formation and the creation account is the sequence. Traditionalists argue that the sequence in the formation of man and woman supports firstly the man’s authority over the woman, and secondly that woman was simply an afterthought of God. The argument of man’s authority is substantiated by the instructions given to the man in the garden in Genesis 2:16-17. There is no scriptural evidence where God provides a reason for forming the man first. All deductions that are made from this lack of information as speculative. Tkach (2006:28) puts it as follows: “It is not clear why Adam being formed first would give all subsequent men authority in the church but not in civil government.” The approach of restricting authority to men in the church based on the formation sequence overlooks the fact that Adam represented all of humankind and not only men in the church. Secondly, logically instructions in Genesis 2:16-17 were given to the man only because the woman was not yet formed at that point in the story. Any deductions other than simply the absence of the woman at that point, lack scriptural evidence. Some even claim that since the woman was still in the man at that time, God was speaking to both. This too is unfounded because the woman did not exist “in the man”, just as the man did not exist “in the earth” from which he was formed. God did not speak to the earth and the man appeared, nor did he speak to the man's rib and the woman appeared. In both instances, God *formed* or created man and woman.

Instructions given to the man in the garden were about responsibility and included a warning. They were not about more authority than what had been given earlier in Genesis 1:26, 28. When God called to the man after they had sinned in Genesis 3:9, this was not an indication of the man's authority but of his accountability. The woman as “suitable helper” does not make her the man’s employee or him the boss. It says nothing about class or hierarchy. Webb (2001:128) cautions against using *ezer* to justify either egalitarian or complementarian arguments. The word *ezer* says nothing about the helper. Only contextual

factors can be used to establish the status of the helper. Since the word, “helper” says nothing about standard and class, therefore what was said before the formation remains, namely dual authority and responsibility on earth. The idea that woman was God's afterthought is without scriptural evidence. Genesis 1:26-27 testifies to the fact that God thought of humankind as *both* male and female. The dual responsibility given to the man and the woman was not spiritual but natural and practical. God made provision for both.

There are also *similarities* between the creation and formation accounts of humankind. An important similarity is that humankind was completely inactive in both the creation and the formation accounts. They themselves made no contribution. Regarding formation, God took from the man – the man did not contribute anything toward the formation of the woman. In Genesis 2:21-22 the man in a passive state during the formation of the women (see Tribble 1973:37).

4.5 Woman, sin, and salvation

1 Timothy 2:14 speaks of Adam and Eve in the light of deception: “And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” To some the statement that it was not the man who was deceived but the women, is scriptural evidence of the difference in the intelligence of male and female persons in general. To others it means that women are more deceivable than men. History, however, gives a different picture of deception and gender. Nathan (2011:12) puts it as follows: “Why has virtually every major heresy in the history of the church been started by men?” The idea that women are more deceivable than men is a deduction made by scholars not the author in 1 Timothy 2:14. Most of these scholars are proponents of the traditional view based on the idea that the author of 1 Timothy instructed the females to learn in silence and never have authority over males. 1 Timothy 2:13 does refer to Genesis 2, but then shifts to the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. The fulcrum of the author's reference in 1 Timothy 2:14 is of Genesis 3:1-6. From this the last words of 1 Timothy 2:14 are derived: “And became a sinner.” This is a possible reference to verse 6 in the Genesis story where the women first ate from the tree before she gave some to the man.

Proponents of male headship argue that 1 Timothy's reference to Eve as the first sinner suggests that she unlawfully assumed religious responsibility and in so doing violated God's established order (see Scaer 2012:320). Firstly, the writer of 1 Timothy was merely repeating a historical narrative of what happened in Genesis. Secondly, there is no scriptural evidence that God gave Adam any religious responsibility, as Scaer's suggests. Thirdly, there is no law in Genesis, which indicates an established order of God that Eve violated.

MacArthur (2005:17874), another proponent of male headship, explains the meaning the woman's act as follows: "By nature, Eve was not suitable to assume the position of ultimate responsibility. By leaving Adam's protection and usurping his headship, she was vulnerable and fell, thus confirming how important it was for her to stay under the protection and leadership of her husband." Problems arising from this deduction are as follows:

- **"By nature"**

The formulation "by nature" means that Eve had different inherent (natural) qualities. The question is what these could have been, since both man and woman were made in the same image and likeness of God. The implication this is that both male and female possessed the qualities and attributes of God to some degree. If the man had different qualities than the woman, then that must have come from the formation account rather than the creation account. However, the formation account says nothing about additional qualities given to either one.

- **"Eve was not suitable"**

If Eve was not suitable it was not according to God, but according to man. In Genesis 2:18, God refers to the soon to be formed woman as suitable. Responsibility was dual and equal in nature. No one person possessed more than the other.

- **"Leaving Adam's protection was her downfall"**

If leaving Adam's male protection resulted in the woman's fall, this is seen as confirmation of the importance of male head and leadership. However, Genesis 3:6 reads as follows: "She also gave some to her husband, who was with her and he ate." The text indicates that Adam was present right there where the conversation between the serpent and Eve took place. The man was with the woman all along. In other words, the man kept his silence during the verbal exchange between the serpent and the woman. The woman did then not "leave the protection of the man". He was there but he was quiet. It then seems that the transgression of the woman had nothing to do the supposed God-given "headship" or "leadership" of the man. Proponents of male headship such as like Scaer (2012:320) and MacArthur (2005:178) further substantiate their argument with 1 Peter 3:7, which calls wives the "weaker partner". Such a reference is found only once in the New Testament. The context here is marriage. The question would then be whether this "weakness" also applies to unmarried female persons or not. If it does such an inference would be ignoring the context in which the verse is found and that is marriage. If it does not apply to unmarried

females, then marriage is the cause of this “weakness” for married women not the women themselves.

In Roman 5:12-21, the author calls Adam the individual through whom sin entered the world. However, in 1 Timothy 2:14, the author singles out Eve as the first person to sin. In this text there is no mention of her sin bringing death to all people. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, 5, the author is concerned with the false teachings of the “super apostles”. The author of 2 Corinthians had the whole church in view, not specific people. Davis (2006:6) puts as follows: “In this text, the figure of Eve is clearly taken to apply to the entire congregation and not specifically to the women within it, as though they, merely by virtue of their gender, were uniquely susceptible to such deception.” In the churches in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus, the peculiar circumstances of each church were considered in the various letters addressed to them. The authors of the epistles did not have a one-size fits all approach to “the church”. The restriction of women in 1 Timothy 2 should also be seen in that light. Davis (2009:6) explains it as follows: “Applications are drawn from Genesis in a Church-specific and contextually sensitive way.”

In 1 Timothy 2:14 the author emphasizes that it was the woman who was deceived, not the man. This does not mean, however, that men are incapable of being deceived. One perspective among scholars is that, since Adam was not deceived, he willfully disobeyed (see Hurley 1981:215-216). According to some, the author of 1 Timothy was comparing the actions of Adam and Eve. Regarding Eve, 1 Timothy then meant that she acted out ignorance (see Hurley 1981:215-216). Unlike Adam, Eve did not act out of willful disobedience. However, this line of argumentation leaves more questions than answers. Firstly, “ignorance” means a lack of knowledge or information. If Eve acted out of lack of information, to what would this knowledge or information then refer? Hurley (1981:215-216) explains it as follows: “Being created second, her knowledge was not received firsthand from God.” It is true that Eve did not receive the information about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil first hand from God in her formed state. However, she knew that the information supposedly ‘passed on to her’ (no scriptural evidence of communication but assertion of what God said) about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was from God. In Genesis 3:3, Eve says, “But God did say we must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden.” In whether first or second hand, the knowledge was received. The source makes no difference. Therefore, to base the difference between the actions of the Adam and Eve on ignorance, is flawed argumentation. Secondly, Adam's act of willful disobedience is not different from that of Eve. The word “disobedience” means refusal or neglect to obey rules or laws. In this case, Genesis 2:17 states what the law was. Both Adam

and Eve knew that law. Both willfully disobeyed. The idea that Adam disobeyed, and Eve acted out of ignorance, is a weak attempt to preserve male leadership and link it to the creation sequence.

The question is then what does 1 Timothy mean by saying that Adam was not deceived but Eve? In Genesis 3:1 Satan disguised as a snake conversing with the woman. A wild animal therefore functions as an 'agent' of Satan. In verse 6, after having eaten the forbidden fruit, Eve gave some to Adam. In this instance Eve functions as an agent of Satan. If Eve was deceived by an 'agent' of Satan (the snake), so was Adam. How can the author of 1 Timothy then say that Adam was not deceived? Although there is no mention of any interaction between Adam and Satan, before or after the existence of the woman, the author's remarks about Adam fit in better with the period when the woman was not yet there (Gen 2:15-20).

The text in 1 Timothy 2:15, "But the women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, holiness with propriety" also presents problems. The grammar is obscure therefore many scholars formulate it in such a way that it fits their perspective for example, Grudem (2006:41) leans towards interpretation that suits the complementarian view. There are two verbs in verse 15, which are the fulcrum of this struggle. The first verb is "will be saved", in the third person singular. The second verb is "continue" in the third person plural. The struggle is in determining the subject of these verbs. Is it Eve or the women mentioned in verses 9-10? Not one of them alone can be the subject of both verbs because of the discrepancy between singular and plural. Kubo (1984:3) suggests the following: "The rest of the verse clearly shows that the reference goes beyond Eve to all women in general." Therefore, Eve is the subject of the first verb, and the women of the second verb. However, given the context, "the women" were those in the church in Ephesus, not all women in general. This is supported by the fact the preceding verses include both Eve and the women in the church at Ephesus. Thus, it seems logical for the author of 1 Timothy to use the singular and plural verbs to denote both subjects in verse 15.

Regarding the opening in verse 15, the question is whether it then implies that women in the church in Ephesus will be saved through the literal childbirth experience. That is not the case. Firstly, not all women go through the physical childbearing experience because of a variety of factors. Secondly, if salvation for the women in the church in Ephesians depended on childbearing, this would contradict Paul's theology of salvation through faith and grace alone *not* by works (Eph 2:8-10). Most evangelical scholars link verse 1 Timothy 2:15 to the account of human formation in Genesis because the preceding verses mention it. However, the difference is in their underlying biases. Grudem (2006:41) explains verse 15 as follows:

“So the point of 1 Timothy 2:15 is that women are not eternally lost because of Eve’s sin, but they will be saved and will experience the outworking of their salvation throughout their Christian lives *if they follow the roles* God has given to them and continue in faith and obedience.” The problem with this is, firstly, that the verse indicates nothing about women being eternally lost in a sense that men are not. Secondly, the prohibition imposed on the women in the church in Ephesus should not necessarily be seen as a biblical injunction that women should submit to male dominance. Thirdly, it does not mean to single out females as the greatest sinners and the only people destined for eternal destruction unless they find hope based on their continual subordination to males.

The connection between salvation and childbearing should be clarified. The phrase “if they continue” makes the whole sentence indicative of three things. Firstly, if the “childbearing” is accepted as a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus, then the Greek singular form of “she will be saved” in verse 15 is a reference to the earthly connection between Eve and Jesus, her offspring. Eve's salvation as is the case with all believers, centers in the person and work of Christ. Secondly, if the women in question are believers, then “if they continue in faith” makes sense. Thirdly, women should then focus on faith, love, and holiness with propriety if they are to continue in what they have received through Jesus, the child who was born of Mary. Though this is also true of the Ephesian men in their journey of faith, the focus in this instance is on the women in the church at Ephesus. Fourthly, the verb “she will be saved” is in the passive voice. This is in agreement with Paul's theology of salvation by faith through grace (e.g. Eph 2:8). The second verb “they continue” is in the active voice. This agrees with Paul's theology of “working out your own salvation” in Philippians 2:12. Nathan (2011:13) puts it as follows: “What [the author of 1 Timothy] is saying, is that women in that church will find their place among the saved if they continue in faith, love and holiness.”

4.6 Summary

In summary, the above discussion has shown the following: firstly, the first epistle of Timothy was context and church specific. Secondly, the author encouraged the women in the church in Ephesus to learn in silence and full submission to the teaching where the church is gathered. Both were conducive to their learning. It is not about their submission to men in general. Thirdly, the author restricts women associated with false teachings in order to curb further damage to the congregation. Fourthly, the author merely repeated the historical events of Genesis without blaming the one sex and letting the other off scot-free. Fifthly, the author encouraged the women in the church of Ephesus to continue focusing on their

salvation. Childbearing is reconciled with Genesis 3:15, linking the birth of Christ as the offspring of Eve. The salvation of women does not depend on their submission to men.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the investigation on the ordination of women in general and in the Africa Evangelical Church in particular. The investigation focused on the ecclesiastical offices in the Africa Evangelical Church, namely the pastorate, the office of elder, and the diaconate which is comprised of deacons and deaconess.

The AEC declared its independence in 1962, separating itself from its founding mission organization the SAGM/AEF. The AEF was established in 1889 as the Cape General Mission (CGM) in Cape Town. The work of the SAGM grew exponentially beyond South African borders and in 1965 became the Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF). Churches established under the AEF continued its tradition and practices. The AEC was among these churches that adopted and continued the evangelical tradition of the AEF. The governing structure of the AEF and AEC was Presbyterian. Leadership positions in the church remained gender exclusive. In both the AEF and the AEC men assumed the leadership positions and women were relegated to supportive roles.

Fifty-nine years later, the AEC still holds to the gender role distinction in ecclesiastical offices. Like its founding mission organization, which had an exclusive male executive board, the AEC maintains a similar practice. Women outnumber men in the mission field, but in church ministry the gender requirement for ecclesiastical office has remained unchanged. The AEC limits female participation to ministry in the local churches. However, over the last three years restrictions have been eased. A small number of women, the wives of ministers, have been allowed to direct programs where men are present. Women's participation is not extended to denominational platforms where decisions are made. The "delegates" remain exclusively male.

The aim of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of the ordination of women in the AEC and provide some possible guidelines for the way forward. In order to achieve this aim, an overview of the broader evangelical tradition was first given. It was then narrowed down to three major evangelical movements that are at the forefront of the evangelical debate on gender and the church, home, and marriage. These three movements are the feminist, egalitarian, and complementarian movements. The position of the AEC, its faith and practice was viewed through the lens of these evangelical movements. The study found that the AEC

is closest to the complementarian stance. The constitutional documents of the AEC were scrutinized. Qualitative interviews with three female “workers” in the AEC provide insight into women’s experience in the denomination. The interviewees’ experiences and stories elucidate the current gender roles in the AEC. From a theological perspective, scholarship on 1 Timothy 2:11-15 was perused, since this text is so fundamental to church practice in the AEC. Essential guidelines are drawn from this text for church practice. This has implications for the place, role and participation of women in the church.

5.2 Findings

This study explored the question of the ordination of women as it is discussed in the evangelical tradition. The evangelical tradition has, throughout the history of the church, restricted church offices and that of the clergy, to male persons only. This church practice is substantiated by a traditional interpretation of Scripture and church tradition. Throughout the history of the church, men have been the leaders of the church and have occupied a position of primacy in God’s service. Women were relegated to supportive roles. In the early church and throughout most of history, the social structure favoured men over women. Men had access to education, whereas women did not. Due to the benefits that come with education, male persons were more privileged than female persons in all spheres of life. Men were regarded as the “breadwinner” which gave them economic power and rendered women dependent. Women were often subject to male exploitation. Women had little chances of surviving without the agency of males. This perpetuated their dependence on men, disempowered them and silenced their voice. Male dominance flourished for many generations and was accepted as the norm. Many women were and are reluctant to participate in activism due to their socialisation and acceptance of male dominance.

Social influence and male dominance found their way into the church where women could not participate in leadership roles. This was regarded as a “biblical injunction” and became the traditional view. In the home, husbands were regarded as the “head”, the leader. The man was the provider and protector by creation design. Wives were to support the husband and assume responsibility for the home and children. These were the gender-based roles assigned to women. This family structure in the household was in keeping with the social structure and public opinion. The household setting mirrored social and public norms and practices. In the public sphere women had no representation and in the private sphere the man assumed the leadership role. Female voices were silenced without much opposition.

Round about the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, female led social activism emerged. This was the first wave of feminism. The demand for gender equality became a

concern in male dominated structures. Some small adjustments were made on paper, but without much effect in practice. In the 1960s and 1970s, the voice for gender equality emerged for the second time and found a global audience. This was the second wave of feminism. Now more women became involved and most of them were educated. Women in the religious context became motivated by secular feminist movements and began to question male dominated religious structures. Between the years 1970 and 1986, the evangelical church witnessed the emergence of three popular movements, namely the feminist, egalitarian, and complementarian movements.

Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty pioneered the movement for gender equality within the evangelical church. The movements came to be known as the evangelical feminist/biblical feminist movement. In 1974, Scanzoni and Hardesty's published *All we're meant to Be: A biblical approach to women's liberation*. The book was well received and to some degree fueled the conversation on gender inequality within the evangelical debate. The evangelical feminists called for gender equality in all spheres, including the church, the home, and marriage. These demands for change were submitted to the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concerns in the form of six proposals. However, these proposals were not included in the Chicago Declaration. Hardesty then published the six proposals through the journal - *Daughters of Sarah Journal*, an evangelical feminist journal.

While evangelical feminists were engaging with issue of gender inequality on their context, Roman Catholic women were following suit. The evangelical and Catholic feminist movements had much in common and eventually merged. The Evangelical Women's Caucus (EWC) became the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus – EEWC. In 1978, Scanzoni and Mollenkott published a work in support of non-heterosexual marriage. This was later supported by Scanzoni and Hardesty's revised edition of *All we're meant to be: A biblical approach to women's liberation*. The phrase used to describe their approach was: “common humanity”. The matter of homosexuality caused a schism within the feminist movement which resulted in a split in 1986. Some left and founded the evangelical egalitarian movement now known as *Christians for Biblical Equality* (CBE). Substantiation for the “common humanity” approach is Galatians 3:28. However, Galatians does not abolish the gender distinction, but it does include *all people* as children of God (see Douglas 2016:115).

The movement, Christians for Biblical Equality was established in 1986 after the split from the evangelical feminist. The CBE set out to distinguish themselves from evangelical feminists. This is apparent in the documents that articulate their core values. The CBE

propagates *mutual submission* between husband and wife. Taking the Christ-Church relationship as the example, Christ's sacrificial love is understood as his act of submission to the church. However, the problem with this approach is that submission is to a higher authority. Also, Christ's submission was a voluntary act to God the Creator and not the church. Interpreting the sacrificial love of Christ for the church as his submission to the church is unconvincing.

The example of the relationship between Christ and the church for the marriage relationship between husband and wife has limitations. Complementarians affirm the equality of man and woman before God, but adhere to socially, distinct roles that in practice make women “second” to men. These distinctive roles are “earthly” and therefore temporary. Spiritually, that is “before God”, men and women are regarded as equal. However, the submission of wives to husbands and the perpetuation of existing gender roles in effect means that this hierarchy is permanent. Such a hierarchy exists in the church and is perpetuated by church leadership structures. The example of the relationship between Christ and the church is used in this regard. However, the immutable characteristic of the relationship between Christ and the church cannot be used to sustain a temporary hierarchal structure. If women are subject to male leadership in accordance with the Christ-Church analogy, then this subjection would be permanent – that is physically and spiritually. However, if female submission is temporary, as complementarians claim, then the Christ-Church analogy does not support their theory.

The same applies to the “mutual submission” proposed by egalitarians. If the same Christ and church relationship signifies “mutual submission”, whether temporary or permanent, when then does Christ submit himself to the church? Sacrificial love does not entail submission. Christ's death on the cross was a demonstration of his love for the church and voluntary submission to God, not the church. Therefore, both arguments based on this analogy lack validity. Egalitarians find equal responsibility and accountability within the home to be of a dual nature. Authority comes with responsibility. Household responsibilities remain dualistic in nature.

In 1988, the Christians for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) was established. Formally known as “traditionalist”, they changed the designation to “complementarian”. Opponents accuse complementarians of still being traditionalist at heart, only with a modernized designation. The movement was established in opposition to the EEW and CBE. The evangelical roots of all these movements can be clearly discerned throughout their statements of faith. This is the source of the many similarities among them. However,

the Danvers Statements shows some differences between the CBMW and the others. The CBMW affirms the equality of man and woman before God. Spiritually man and woman are equal but in the physical reality there is no equality. Genesis 2:7, 16-17, 3:9 are the texts used by complementarians to substantiate their argument. This complementarian view establishes male leadership in the church, marriage, and home. Genesis 2:18 is interpreted as “evidence” of the supportive role that was designed for females.

The texts used to substantiate male leadership are not as clear as complementarians claim. What complementarians present as “scriptural evidence” remains subjective deduction. For example, the creation sequence of humankind, God's instruction of Adam, and the calling of Adam after the fall, say nothing about male leadership. Genesis 3:9 is used by many proponents of patriarchy in marriage. However, God calling the man is not indicative of patriarchy that is established in the creation order. The text does not give any reason why God called on the man first. To build an entire theology on this, amounts to eisegesis. Genesis 1:26-30 specifically indicates equality between the man and the woman. This equality is both on a physical and a spiritual level.

On the interpretation of *kephale* complementarians argue for an interpretation of “authority over”. The implication is that males have authority over females and husbands over wives. However, then the Greek word *archon* meaning “ruler” or “chief” would have fit the complementarian understanding better. The interpretation of *kephale* as prominent rather than preeminent has a different connotation. Romans 5:12-21 refers to Adam as the representative of humankind. In other words, Adam as a human being not specifically as a man, serves as the “face” of humanity, not as the authoritative figure over the woman.

The review and examination of the constitutional documents, qualitative interviews and faith practice of the AEC indicates that a complementarian perspective prevails. The examination indicated that the pastorate, diaconate, and office of elders remain restricted to men.

The office of the pastor akin to “prophet” in the Old Testament and “apostle” in the New Testament is regarded as the highest office in the modern-day church. Those who hold this office are not limited in their functioning in the church. Pastors are not leaders of every church structure but can act *ex officio* in all church decision making meetings. Pastors are responsible for the whole church. In the Bible the title “pastor” appears only once, in Ephesians 4:11. It is a masculine form in language, but not necessarily in practice. The association of gender with the title “pastor” is a tradition of the church. Those who “shepherd” can be either male or female, though female shepherds were rare. Shepherds had the

responsibility of caring and feeding sheep. In the church, pastors as shepherds are responsible for the caring and feeding of the congregation with the word of God.

In 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 1 Timothy 2:12 the focus is on females in two churches. In the former, the topic is *prophecy* and *teaching* in the latter. Those who argue for the silence of women as normative try to either explain away 1 Corinthians 11:5 or define prophecy and interpretation on the grounds of gender. They claim that Paul allowed females to prophecy in the church but restricted the weighing of prophecies to males. In other words, only males were to determine the legitimacy of prophecy. This male exclusivity is derived from the masculine gender of the noun “prophet” in 1 Corinthians 14:29. However, the masculine is the default gender in that language. If English translations choose masculine pronouns, this is the translator's gender preference and not a necessity of the English language. The King James Version, the American Standard Version, The English Standard Version and the New International Version use as default “someone or anyone”. This seems to agree with the intention of the Greek text.

The only gender distinction is found in verse 34, where Paul's attention moves to women and married women specifically. The restriction articulated by verse 34 does not necessarily eliminate married women from participating in the praying and prophesying mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:5. The word “enquire” in 14:34 indicates the connection between the restriction and the kind of activity in mind. If Paul wanted all women to remain silent in the church at Corinth, he would have not instructed them two chapters earlier to pray and prophesy with their heads covered. In other words, the praying mentioned together with prophesying in 11:5 is not a prayer of enquiry. One who prophecies brings revelation, not enquiry. In other words, the restriction imposed on married women in 14:34 concerns enquiry. What kind of enquiry, Paul does not specify. However, it is probably connected to what is indicated as revelatory gifts. The failure to understand the context will lead to restrictions on female participation in a church setting. Restricting the interpretation of prophecies to male persons is subjective and amounts to a biased interpretation of Scripture. 1 Timothy 2:12 imposes a restriction on women due to a specific *kind of conduct* within the church. There this conduct does not manifest; this restriction is not relevant. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 should be understood in the context. Therefore, women and men should have equal access to the pastorate. Gender restrictions can be understood as the influence of traditional practices not as a scriptural requirement.

The term “elder” refers to either age or a civil authority in ancient Israelite society. In 1 Timothy 5:1 the author instructs Timothy not to rebuke an older man harshly. Titus 1:5

speaks of the “appointment” of elders who have responsibilities and duties in the church. These duties include preaching and teaching. Not all elders were ministers of the word. The adverb *malista* translated as “especially” indicates that a select few among a large group of people are meant. Because of these responsibilities and duties, the office of an elder has specific requirements. However, many denominations today fail to make this distinction. In the AEC all elders are males.

Paul seems to have understood elders and bishops as the same people. He refers to elders as “overseers” and instructs them *to feed* the church. The separation of these “offices” came later and led to schisms in the church. In churches today one person is appointed “bishop” over the whole denomination. In New Testament times local churches had more than one elder/bishop (e.g. Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17). The AEC is among the modern churches who have one person at the helm; however, the title is “president” rather than bishop.

In Titus 1:6 the requirements for elders are specified. The phrase “faithful to his wife” is taken by complementarians to mean that females are excluded from this office. There are questions regarding these requirements. Should elders only be married men? Should an elder be a father? Should the children of an elder be trustworthy? If the answer to these questions is yes, then unmarried men or people whose children are not trustworthy cannot be appointed as elders. Therefore, the “male” reference in Titus 1:6 should not overshadow the other requirements for becoming a bishop/elder. Regarding the “husband of one wife”, this does not eliminate women from the office of elder. There are instances in the Scripture where one only one gender is mentioned, but what is said applies to both. This injunction seems to be referring to monogamy rather than a specific gender.

5.3 Recommendations

Women in the AEC who feel themselves called to ministry should utilize their majority presence and unite for the recognition of women’s, gifts, calling and full participation in the body of Christ. Proponents of the ordination of women in the AEC should evaluate and possibly broaden their approach. Historically the lack of a strong theological approach has hindered the cause of women and their voices have largely remained silent. Without theological arguments with substance, traditional ecclesial practice based on ancient social norms have been dictating the matter. The struggles of women in the AEC are common to a number of evangelical denominations. Intentional exposure to contemporary theological insights can open up opportunities for collaboration between denominations who face the same struggles and pursue similar goals.

On the ground level, there are male ministers in the AEC who are proponents of the cause for the ordination of females. Some are silent and others speak out only on the level of the local church. One of the reasons is a lack of confidence when it comes to theological argumentation. The scriptural references in the AEC constitutional documents and the apparent consensus with the evangelical tradition intimidate many who do not have the confidence to speak out, often due to a lack of theological education. Some do pursue further theological qualifications, but still conform without question or critique to denominational views and practices. Changes to church practice should be based on a solid theological foundation. However, there are those in the church who tend to perceive theological advancement as a threat and fail to see the benefits. Developments and proposed changes are then condemned without any consideration in order to “preserve” evangelical tradition and church practice. Evangelical tradition has not only influenced the interpretation of Scripture but in some denominations has superseded it. Church history and tradition are important for modern faith practice, but this does not make it immune to misconstrued interpretations of Scripture. The interpretation of texts on gender in ecclesial leadership have historically shown the bias of being pro-male and anti-female. Tkach (2006:29) puts it as follows: “Scholars of *all* persuasions today recognize errors in the historical interpretation of passages about women.”

The AEC in recent years has made some small practical changes concerning female participation on a denominational level and even smaller changes in constitutional documents. Though in theory women can now participate on a denominational level, practical changes must be corroborated by constitutional documents. There is much procrastination in this regard. Women are often on the receiving end of double messages: they are allowed participation, but that participation is yet again restricted. Kwaramba (2018:187) articulates these double messages as follows: “You are welcome but know your place.” These double messages can be seen as tactics to remind women to tread carefully and remember that leadership in the church is male territory.

When “new” pastors start full ministry leadership, they should not be left to their own devices, which would amount to setting them up for failure. They should receive appropriate mentorship in the church. Both genders should be mentors and mentees. Considering the investigation of the evangelical tradition and the constitutional documents of the AEC on the matter of women in church leadership, the following recommendations for amendment are proposed:

Firstly, an amendment to Article 6, Cl. 6.3 & 6.6 of the Constitution of the AEC (see Appendix A) is proposed: rather than gender exclusive texts use gender inclusive texts. Regarding married couples, the term “spouse” will represent both genders adequately. Where the term “spouse” is not preferable, 1 Timothy 3:11 can be added to verse 8 to include both genders.

Secondly, if women are acknowledged as preachers and teachers in the AEC, then the amendment of article 6, Cl. 5 of the constitution of the AEC (see appendix A) is necessary. Considering the study’s scholarship of 1 Timothy 2:12-15, which indicates the contextual limitation of the quoted text, the emphasis should be on the conduct rather than gender.

Thirdly, in article Cl. XV, 15.1.1 -15.1.9 which deals with the distinctives of the AEC (see appendix B), the section on the pastorate should add equivalent feminine nouns and pronouns. This pertains to all leading and governing positions. Both women and men should be allowed to participate and to be elected as representatives across all denominational bodies. Decisions made at the denominational level affect both men and women, therefore, business meetings should not be a “men's fellowship”, but should include female representatives. The body of Christ is constituted of male and female persons. Further schisms on the grounds of gender should be prevented by including all in the structures of the church body.

Fourthly, in the bylaws and distinctives of the AEC (see appendix B and C) the proposal is that the term “deaconess” be removed and only “deacon” used to include both men and women. This will re-align the office of the diaconate with the original understanding of the early apostles, rather than perpetuating with the influence of the third-fourth century regarding this matter. In this way the office of the diaconate will align with Scripture rather than with “church tradition.”

Fifthly, the study recommends that the AEC recognize female servants of God as equals to male servants of God. This should manifest also in practice where women with a similar calling to ministry and a similar training who meet the biblical requirements for the office, should be allowed to go through the same process and procedures as their male counterparts to be ordained and carry the title of “Reverend”. This is in accordance with Article XII, Cl. 12.1 of the distinctives of the AEC (see Appendix B).

These proposed recommendations primarily focus on the policy documents of the AEC because it is at this level that the denomination structures are established. It is also in these documents that the AEC's interpretation of Scripture can be seen. Some minor practical changes on the ground level have little significance if official policy is not also amended.

Women do excellent work also without being acknowledged and supported by policy. Their work should not be regarded as “rebellion” against the church, but rather as service to the church and to God. This service should be recognized as any other. Then maybe more women will be encouraged to heed a calling to ministry without the fear of condemnation and being silenced by church policies and authorities or seek recourse in other churches. The AEC has made great progress since its independence. It would make even greater progress if there would be cooperation between men and women in all ecclesial offices.

5.4 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate the issue of the ordination of women in the AEC and present some guidelines for the way forward. To this end, the broader evangelical movement was explored to provide context for the evangelical tradition and practice. Micro contemporary perspectives were placed within the framework of the macro evangelical movement. These micro contemporary movements include the feminist, egalitarian and complementarian movements. The feminists and egalitarians argue for the ordination of women in ministry. The complementarians argue against women in ministry. Feminists and egalitarians argue for the equality of the sexes. The image of God in humankind forms the basis of this equality which should be expressed in the church, marriage, and the home. Feminists and egalitarians differ on the matter of sexual orientation.

The evangelical tradition and its practices have generally opposed the ordination of women. In this sense complementarians are “preserving” the evangelical tradition and its practices. They subscribe to the idea of the primacy of male persons in worship and service to God, and the supportive and submissive role of female persons. Complementarians interpret the creation order in Genesis as that male and female person are spiritually equal, but not physically. Their male gender gives men authority and a distinctive role.

The history and policies of the AEC, as well as the results of the qualitative interviews show that the complementarian perspective is the default in the church. Though the church’s perspective is largely based on the biblical text of 1 Timothy 2:12-15, contemporary scholarship has emphasized the contextual particularity of the text. The plain sense of Scripture cannot simply be universalized. A more refined hermeneutical exercise is needed. Scripture testifies to gender inclusivity as opposed to traditional exclusivity when it comes to church offices. Gender distinction when it comes to ecclesial leadership is a scriptural imperative or requirement. The AEC can amend its policies and practices to fully include all human beings created in the image of God, in the body of Christ and the service of God.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH

ARTICLE 1. NAME

1.1 The Church shall be known as the AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH and shall be administered by the bona fide members of the Church.

1.2 The Africa Evangelical Church is a legal entity with the capacity to sue and be sued in its own right.

ARTICLE 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 To proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ as the only way whereby man can be reconciled to God, with a view to establishing congregations of believers.

2.2 To engage in such agencies and programs as may be necessary to help further the ministry of the Africa Evangelical Church.

2.3 To train called Church members as Pastors, Evangelists, Writers, Bible Teachers, Radio Preachers and others, so that a more effective Christian Leadership can be developed.

2.4 To produce Christian literature (tracts, books, magazines, etc.) suitable to the readership of today.

2.5 To cooperate with other Christian groups and promote such cooperation among those that preach free salvation through Jesus Christ, and whose beliefs and aims are compatible with those of the Africa Evangelical Church.

2.6 To evangelize and make disciples in Africa and the world.

2.7 To invite persons who can give the required technical assistance to the Africa Evangelical Church.

2.8 To enrol newly saved persons for Church membership, providing encouragement and a system of analysis for each local church that will contribute to a healthy growth rate.

2.9 To propagate the Church of Jesus Christ spiritually and physically - (i.e. both as an organism and as an organization).

2.10 To give services of advice or arbitration in cases of difference or dispute, with the consent of the parties concerned.

2.11 To act as Trustee for any church or Association, whether established or to be established, acceptable to the Africa Evangelical Church.

2.12 To invest any funds of the Africa Evangelical Church in such a manner as may be prescribed by the by-laws.

2.13 To encourage the prayer life of the Church.

2.14 To teach and defend the faith once delivered and to discourage false doctrine by the propagation of the Word of God as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and as set forth in the Statement of Faith of the Africa Evangelical Church.

ARTICLE 3. STATEMENT OF FAITH

3.1 THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures as originally written, were given by verbal and plenary inspiration of God, and are supreme and final authority in Christian faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Heb. 1:1-2.

3.2 THE TRINITY OF GOD

We believe there is only one living and true God, who exists eternally in three Persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Deut. 6:4-5; Gen. 1:26; I John 5:7; 2 Cor. 13:14.

3.3 THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was begotten of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary, that He might come into the world to save man from sin by His death upon the cross, making atonement through His shed blood. John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:28-34; John 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Heb. 9:12,14,22.

3.4 THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave and ascended into Heaven where He lives to make intercession for us, and is the One and only Mediator between God and man, and that He shall come again to receive unto Himself all who have been cleansed from sin by personal faith in His shed blood. Matt. 28; Acts 1:10-11; 1 Tim. 2:5,6; 1 John 2:1,2.

3.5 THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit who is the Third Person of the Trinity. He is the One Who convicts man of sin, regenerates those that believe in Jesus Christ, baptizing them into the Body of Christ at their conversion. He seals, indwells, sanctifies, and fills believers, producing in them the fruit of the Spirit, and giving them power for service. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers as He wills. No gift is given to a believer as an indispensable sign of the fullness of the Spirit. John 16:7-11; 3:5-7; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 1: 13-14; 4:30; John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Acts 4:8,31; Eph. 5:18; John 15:5; Gal. 5:22-23; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11,12; 1 Cor. 12:28-30.

3.6 SATAN

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the perpetrator and sustainer of evil, who with all his servants will suffer eternal death in the lake of fire. Matt. 4:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:1-15.

3.7 MAN

We believe that man was created by God and in His image. He rebelled in Adam, and is therefore a sinner by nature, which is expressed in sinful thoughts and deeds, and is of himself not able to please God. Unless He is saved by the grace of God, he stands condemned. The believer will be raised in a spiritual body to live in eternal fellowship

with God, while the unbeliever will be raised to eternal punishment. Gen. 1:27-31; Rom. 5:12; Ps. 51:5; Is. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 17:21-23; Rom. 3:10-18; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 8:7-8; John 3:18; Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Cor. 15:12,44; Rom. 5:18; Heb. 9:11-12; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:29; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15.

3.8 THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

We believe that the Church universally consists of all those, and only those, who have been redeemed by personal faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ without any reference to their denominational affiliation. John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:22; 5:2.

3.9 CHRIST'S RETURN

We believe in the return of Christ to receive the Church, His Bride, unto Himself; and that the Church possesses all prerogatives of self-government, having only One Head, Jesus Christ our Lord, and is free from interference from any super imposed authority. 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Titus 2:12-15; 1 John 3:2.

3.10 ORDINANCES

We believe that the only ordinances of the Church are baptism and the Lord's Supper as taught in the Word of God, and that one is not eligible for Church membership unless he accepts and believes in practicing these ordinances. Matt. 3:16-17; 26:26-30; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Cor. 11:23-32.

3.11 CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, and is for the good of human society; that magistrates, rulers and all in authority are to be prayed for, honoured and obeyed, except in things contrary to the clear teachings of the Word of God. Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:17; 1 Tim. 2:2.

3.12 ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS AND PUNISHMENT

We believe in the eternal blessedness of believers in God's eternal kingdom and the eternal punishment of nonbelievers with Satan and his angels in complete separation from God. Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-48; John 3:16, 36; Rev. 21:8.

3.13 THE GREAT COMMISSION

We believe that commission to preach the gospel to every creature is directed to every believer in Jesus Christ. Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8.

3.14 SECOND ADVENT

We believe in the triumphant second advent of Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on earth. Rev. 20:1-3, 11-15.

ARTICLE 4. ADMINISTRATION

4.1 BODIES

4.1.1. DENOMINATIONAL:

4.1.1.1 CHURCH CONFERENCE

The aforesaid Church shall hold an Annual General Conference to provide fellowship and discuss matters relating to its ministry and activities.

4.1.1.2 CHURCH BOARD

The Africa Evangelical Church shall be administered by a Board elected by the General Church Conference from the names provided by each of the declared Church Regions with equal representation. Elections shall be by secret ballots.

4.1.1.3 THE DENOMINATIONAL MEN'S COMMITTEE

The Men's Section of the General Church Conference shall elect a committee to conduct and direct men's meetings other than those conducted by the Church Board. Each

region shall present three names, elected at their Annual Regional Men's meetings, from whom committee portfolios shall be elected. The Regional Men's Committee Chairpersons shall be among those presented by the Regions. Church Workers may not be elected into this committee.

4.1.1.4 THE DENOMINATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The Women's Section of the General Church Conference shall elect a committee which shall conduct women's meetings during the General Church Conference, conduct women's business in between General Church Conferences, and which shall also advise the Church Board on matters affecting Church Women.

4.1.1.5 THE DENOMINATIONAL YOUNG ADULTS COMMITTEE

The Young Adults Section of the General Church Conference shall elect the Denominational Young Adults Committee which shall conduct young adults' business in between General Church Conferences and advise the Church Board on matters that have to do with the Church young adults.

4.1.1.6 THE DENOMINATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

A committee shall be elected by the Young People's Section of the General Church Conference. This committee shall conduct Young People's meetings during the General Church Conference, conduct youth business in between General Church Conferences and advise the Church Board on matters that have to do with Church Youth.

4.1.1.7 THE DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A Christian Education Committee shall coordinate the Christian Education Program of the whole denomination. Its responsibilities, duties and limitations shall be defined in the Christian Education Guidelines.

4.2 REGIONAL LEVEL:

4.2.1 THE CHURCH WORKERS' CONFERENCES

The Africa Evangelical Church shall hold Annual Church Workers' Conferences in each region to discuss spiritual matters, church policy matters and to provide Biblical teaching.

4.2.2 REGIONAL CHURCH CONFERENCES

Each Region shall hold an Annual Conference to discuss matters relating to its ministry and activities.

4.2.3 REGIONAL OFFICES

Each Region shall have an office administered by the Regional Executive Committee. In accordance with its needs, a Regional Executive Committee may have an Administrative Secretary to work under its direction.

4.2.4 THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Each Region shall have a nine-member Executive Committee elected by the Regional Church Conference to administer the affairs of the Church in the Region.

4.2.5 THE REGIONAL MEN'S COMMITTEES

Each Region of the Africa Evangelical Church shall elect a nine member Men's Committee to conduct Church Men's activities in the Region and to advise the Regional Executive Committee in the Region on Men's affairs.

4.2.6 THE REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEES

The Africa Evangelical Church, in each of its Regions, shall elect a nine member Women's Committee to conduct Church Women's activities in the region and to advise the Regional Executive Committee in the Region on Women's matters.

4.2.7 THE REGIONAL YOUNG ADULTS' COMMITTEES

Each Region, during its Regional Church Conference, shall elect a nine-member Young Adults Committee to conduct young adults' activities in the Region and to advise the

Regional Executive Committee in the Region on young adults' affairs.

4.2.8 THE REGIONAL CHURCH YOUTH COMMITTEES

Each Region, during its Regional Church Conference, shall elect a nine-member Youth Committee to conduct Church Youth activities in the Region and to advise the Regional Executive Committee on Young People's affairs.

4.2.9 THE REGIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEES

Each Region of the Africa Evangelical Church shall elect a Christian Education Committee to administer the following and to advise the Regional Executive Committee on them: Sunday School Work, Extension Bible School, Secular School and any other Christian Educational matters.

4.2.10 THE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH EDUCATION COMMITTEES

A Region shall elect an Africa Evangelical Church Education Committee (AEC Education Committee) consisting of seven (7) bona fide AEC members to govern the affairs of the Africa Evangelical Church schools within the region and in line with the AEC Schools Constitution.

4.3 CIRCUIT, LOCAL AND OTHER LEVELS:

4.3.1 CIRCUIT QUARTERLY MEETINGS

The Africa Evangelical Church shall hold Circuit Quarterly Meetings to discuss matters relating to Circuit ministry and activity. These shall each be administered by a nine-member elected Circuit Committee.

4.3.2 CIRCUIT COMMITTEES

Each circuit shall elect a nine-member committee to administer the affairs of the Church in the Circuit.

4.3.3 THE LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEES

Each local church shall have a committee responsible to administer the total ministry of the local church.

4.3.4 OTHER COMMITTEES

Other committees shall be elected and appointed in accordance with the need. Their election procedure, composition and duties shall be determined and defined when the need for them is realized. They shall comprise of no more than nine members each, serving for a term of not more than three years at a time.

N.B. All the committees mentioned above shall be elected by secret ballot.

4.4 THE STRUCTURES OF THE VARIOUS BODIES

4.4.1. THE GENERAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

The General Conference shall comprise of bona fide Africa Evangelical Church members.

4.4.2 THE CHURCH BOARD

4.4.2.1 Composition:

The Church Board shall comprise of:

- a. The President
- b. The Deputy President
- c. The General Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. The Publicity Secretary
- g. Additional members

4.4.2.2 Election Procedure

- a. Regional Chairperson shall automatically become Board members by virtue of their

Regional offices.

- b. Each Region shall elect two others onto the Board during its Regional Conference. These shall become Board members if approved by the General Church Conference.
- c. From these the General Church Conference shall elect the officers of the Church Board.

4.4.2.3 Term of Office

- a. The term of office for all Board members shall be five years.
- b. The President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer shall relinquish their Regional Executive Committee membership immediately after being voted into the Denominational portfolios.
- c. Any Region whose representatives are elected into the above three Board portfolios shall have to elect replacements of these on Regional Executive Committees at special Regional Conferences convened for that purpose, no later than the 30th of March after the AGCC at which they were elected, so that the Regional Executive Committees and their work are not inconvenienced.

4.4.3 THE DENOMINATIONAL MEN'S COMMITTEE

4.4.3.1 Composition

The Denominational Men's Committee shall be composed of the following portfolios:

- a. The Chairman
- b. The Vice Chairman
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Additional Members.

4.4.3.2 Electoral Procedure

- a. The Regional Men's Committee Chairmen shall automatically become members of the Denominational Men's Committee by virtue of their offices in the Regions.
- b. At their Annual Meetings, the men in each region shall elect two others into the Denominational Men's Committee. If accepted by the Denominational Men's Annual Conference, these shall form the Denominational Men's Committee from which officers shall be elected by the said Denominational Men's Conference.
- c. At their Annual Conference, the men shall elect officers of their committee.

4.4.3.3 Term of Office

The term of office for this committee shall be three years.

4.4.4 THE DENOMINATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

4.4.4.1 Composition

The Women's committee shall comprise of:

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Additional Members.

4.4.4.2 Electoral Procedure

- a. The Regional Chairpersons shall be members of the Denominational Women's Committee by virtue of their office at Regional Level.
- b. At their Regional Conferences, the Women, shall elect two others per Region to be on the Denominational Committee if approved by the Denominational Women's Conference.

c. The Women's Section of the General Church Conference shall elect officers of their Committee from among the above.

d. The President's wife shall be an *ex-officio* member of the Denominational Women's Committee.

4.4.4.3 Term of Office

The term of office for this committee shall be three years.

4.4.5 THE DENOMINATIONAL YOUNG ADULTS COMMITTEE

4.4.5.1 Composition

The composition of the Young Adults Committee in each region shall be as follows:

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Additional Members

4.4.5.2 Electoral Procedure

a. Each Regional Young Adults Chairperson shall become a member of the Denominational Young Adults Committee by virtue of his/her Regional position.

b. The young adults at each Regional Young Adults Conference shall elect two members from a list of names submitted from circuits within the region.

c. If approved by the Young Adults section of the General Church Conference, these shall, together with the Regional Young Adults Committee Chairpersons mentioned above, form the Denominational Young Adults Committee.

d. From these the said Young Adults section of the General Church Conference shall elect the officers.

4.4.5.3 Term of Office

All the officers and members of this committee shall serve a term of three years at a time.

4.4.6 THE DENOMINATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

4.4.6.1 Composition

The composition of the Youth Committee in each region shall be as follows:

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Additional Members

4.4.6.2 Electoral Procedure

- a. Each Regional Youth Chairperson shall become a member of the Denominational Youth Committee by virtue of his/her regional position.
- b. The youth at each Regional Youth Conference shall elect two members from a list of names submitted from circuits within the region.
- c. If approved by the youth section of the General Church Conference, these shall, together with the Regional Youth Chairpersons mentioned above, form the Denominational Youth Committee.
- d. From these the said Youth Section of the General Church Conference shall elect the officers.

4.4.6.3 Term of office

All the officers and members of this committee shall serve a term of three years at a time.

4.4.7 THE DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

4.4.7.1 Composition

The composition of the Denominational Christian Education Committee in each region shall be as follows:

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Additional Members

The Sunday School Coordinators shall become members of the Denominational Christian Education Committee by virtue of their office in the regions.

4.4.7.2 Electoral Procedure

- a. Each region shall elect two others to submit to the Annual General Conference.
- b. These, if approved by the Annual General Church Conference, together with the three Regional Christian Education Coordinators shall form the Denominational Christian Education Committee.

4.4.7.3 Term of office

All the members of this committee shall serve a three-year term.

4.4.8 REGIONAL CHURCH WORKERS' CONFERENCES

Each Regional Executive Committee shall organize an annual Church Workers' Conference, which shall be attended by all recognized Church Workers in the Region.

4.4.9 REGIONAL CHURCH CONFERENCES

The Regional Church Conferences shall be attended by church members, members of the Women's Committee, elected Women's delegates, members of the Men's committee, elected Men's delegates, members of the Young Adults Committee, elected Young Adults delegates, members of the Youth committee, elected Youth delegates, members of the Regional Executive Committee, two elected Men delegates from each local church and all recognized Church Workers in the Region.

4.4.10 REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

4.4.10.1 Composition

The composition of this committee shall be as follows:

- a. The Chairman
- b. The Vice Chairman
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Four additional members.

4.4.10.2 Electoral Procedure

The Regional Executive Committees shall be elected from among the recognized Church Workers and delegates present at the Annual Regional Conference in accordance with the Church Bylaws.

4.4.10.3 Term of office

The term of office for Regional Executive Committee members shall be three years.

4.4.11 THE REGIONAL MEN'S COMMITTEE

4.4.11.1 Composition

The Regional Men's Committee shall comprise of the following portfolios:

- a. The Chairman
- b. The Vice Chairman
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Four Additional Members

4.4.11.2 Electoral Procedure

The Regional Men's Committee shall be elected by the Annual Conference of the Regional Men's Committee from nominees from Circuit Men's Committees within each region.

4.4.11.3 Term of office

The term of office of the Regional Men's Committee shall be three years.

4.4.12 THE REGIONAL CHURCH WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

4.4.12.1 Composition

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Four Additional Members

4.4.12.2 Electoral Procedure

The Regional Women's Committee shall be elected at the Annual Regional Women's Conference from nominees from circuits within the region.

4.4.12.3 Term of office

The term of office of the Regional Women's Committee shall be three years.

4.4.13 THE REGIONAL YOUNG ADULTS COMMITTEE

4.4.13.1 Composition

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Four Additional Members.

4.4.13.2 Electoral Procedure

a. Each circuit in the Region shall submit two names to the Young Adults Section of the Annual Regional Conference.

b. The business meeting of the Young Adults Section of the Regional Conference shall elect the Regional Young Adults Committee from the list of nominees from circuits

4.4.13.3 Term of office

All the members of this committee shall serve a three-year term of office.

4.4.14 THE REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

4.4.14.1 Composition

- a. The Chairperson
- b. The Vice Chairperson
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Vice Secretary
- e. The Treasurer
- f. Four Additional Members.

4.4.14.2 Electoral Procedure

- a. Each circuit in the Region shall submit two names to the Youth Section of the Annual Regional Conference.
- b. The business meeting of the Youth Section of the Regional Conference shall elect the Regional Youth Committee from the list of nominees from circuits

4.4.14.3 Term of office

All the members of this committee shall serve a three-year term of office.

4.4.15 THE REGIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

4.4.15.1 Composition

The Regional Christian Education Committee shall comprise of not more than nine members made up of Circuit Sunday School Coordinators plus elected members nominated from the circuits.

4.4.15.2 Electoral Procedure

These shall elect their officers at their first meeting and report to the Regional Executive Committee.

4.4.15.3 Term of office

The Regional Christian Education Committee shall serve a three-year term.

4.4.16 CIRCUIT QUARTERLY MEETINGS

These shall be attended by delegates of each local church within the circuit, elected to represent the Women, the Men, the Young Adults, the Youth, by all recognized Church Workers within the circuit, and their services by church members.

4.4.17 CIRCUIT COMMITTEES

4.4.17.1 Each of the represented groups shall elect a committee of not more than nine members to run its affairs.

4.4.17.2 Each of these committees shall comprise of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary, the Vice Secretary, the Treasurer, and a maximum of four additional members.

All the members of these committees shall serve for a period of three years.

4.4.18 LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEES

4.4.18.1 Each local church shall elect a nine-member committee from its membership comprising of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Secretary, the Vice Secretary, the Treasurer and a maximum of four other members all of whom shall serve for a period of three years.

4.4.18.2 Other committees shall be elected as determined by the need.

4.4.19 QUORUM

The quorum of the nine member committees shall be six members present to constitutionalize the meeting.

4.5 DUTIES OF THE BODIES MENTIONED ABOVE:

4.5.1 THE GENERAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

4.5.1.1 It shall elect the Church Board, the Women's, the Men's, the Young Adults, the

Youth, the Sunday School and any other Denominational Committees to work together with the Board.

4.5.1.2 It shall ordain the ministers of the Church.

4.5.1.3 It shall receive reports from the Church Board, the Regional Executive Committees, the Women's, the Men's, Young Adults, Youth, Sunday School and any other Denominational Committees.

4.5.1.4 It shall discuss and make decisions on matters sent to it by the Church Board, the Regional Church Conferences, or any of the appropriate Committees.

4.5.1.5 It shall declare Regions as it deems fit, which Regions shall consist of Regional Executive Committees as provided by Article 4.2.4.

4.5.1.6 It shall provide spiritual nurture and biblical teaching for its membership.

4.5.2 THE CHURCH BOARD

4.5.2.1 The Africa Evangelical Church Board shall administer the work of the Church as a whole.

4.5.2.2 It shall publicize the activities of the Church.

4.5.2.3 It shall be responsible for the finances of the Church collected by and/or sent to it for its use and/or distribution.

4.5.2.4 The Board shall sue or be sued on behalf of the Africa Evangelical Church.

4.5.2.5 The Board shall organize and coordinate the Annual General Church Conference.

4.5.2.6 It shall evaluate the work of the whole Church.

4.5.2.7 It shall receive reports, problems and questions on and about the ministry of the Africa Evangelical Church as a whole, discuss and solve them.

4.5.2.8 It shall see to it that the decisions of the General Church Conference are effectively implemented.

4.5.3 THE CHURCH WORKERS' CONFERENCES

4.5.3.1 They shall provide an opportunity for Church Workers to discuss matters that might need their attention by themselves.

4.5.3.2 They shall provide times of spiritual refreshment suited for church workers.

4.5.3.3 They shall provide an opportunity for the workers to discuss matters of Church policy.

4.5.4 REGIONAL CHURCH CONFERENCES

4.5.4.1 These shall receive reports from their respective Regional Executive

Committees, Women's, Men's, Sunday School, Youth, Young Adults and any other Regional committees.

4.5.4.2 They shall discuss and resolve matters referred to them by Circuit Meetings within the regions.

4.5.4.3 They shall refer all intricate matters to the Board and the General Church Conference for finalization.

4.5.4.4 They shall accept candidates for ordination for the ministry and recommend the suitable ones to the Board and General Church Conference for ordination.

4.5.4.5 They shall provide spiritual nurture and biblical teaching for their membership.

4.5.5 REGIONAL CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

4.5.5.1 These Committees shall receive reports and problems about the work, in writing, from all the Circuit Meetings within their respective Regions.

4.5.5.2 They shall discuss and resolve matters referred to them by their respective Regional Church Conferences.

4.5.5.3 They shall make investigations and evaluations as well as conduct interviews on behalf of the Regional Church Conferences on matters passed on to the Regional Church Conferences by the Circuit Meetings.

4.5.5.4 They shall be responsible for the allocation of workers within their regions, seeing to their well-being and encouraging them in their work.

4.5.5.5 They shall evaluate the whole work of the Church in their Regions.

4.5.5.6 They shall refer all intricate matters to the Board for finalization.

4.5.5.7 They shall make decisions on behalf of the Regional Church Conferences in between these conferences.

4.5.5.8 They shall see to it that decisions of the General Church Conference as well as those of the Regional Church Conferences are effectively implemented in the regions.

4.5.6 REGIONAL OFFICES

4.5.6.1 These shall administer the affairs of the regions.

4.5.6.2 They shall act as a go between the regions and the following bodies:

4.5.6.3 The Church Board, Mission Agencies, Government bodies, local authorities and any agencies within their respective Regions; as well as between each Region and the other Regions of the Africa Evangelical Church.

4.5.6.4 They shall keep records and inventory within the regions.

4.5.6.5 They shall act as resource centres for the regions.

4.5.6.6 They shall receive and keep reports - each from its own region - and report to the Board for and on behalf of the regions.

4.5.6.7 The Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee shall have the power of attorney to sign legal documents on behalf of the Regional Executive Committee.

4.5.7 CIRCUIT MEETINGS

4.5.7.1 The Circuit Quarterly Meetings shall attend to Circuit Church matters and to such matters as shall be presented to it by local churches within that circuit.

4.5.7.2 They shall see to the needs of the Circuits and make recommendations to the Regional Church Conferences through the Regional Executive Committee.

4.5.8 LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEES

4.5.8.1 These shall administer the local churches.

4.5.8.2 They shall see to the needs of the local churches.

4.5.8.3 They shall report local church matters to the Circuit Meetings.

4.5.8.4 They shall present candidates found suitable for ordination to the Board through the Circuit Meetings, the Regional Executive Committees and the Regional Church Conferences.

4.5.8.5 They shall see to it that decisions of the General Church Conference, the Regional Church Conferences, the Circuit Meetings and the Local Church Meetings are effectively implemented.

ARTICLE 5. EXIT CLAUSE

Should a need arise for a member of the Church Board or of any of the church committees to vacate his/her seat from that committee for reasons other than a sinful act, the following shall be the procedure to follow:

5.1 If the member him/herself Requests to vacate:

5.1.1 Such a request shall be submitted to the chairperson of the said committee in writing, with the reason/s clearly stated. If it is the chairperson that wants to vacate, he shall present his request to his deputy who shall take the matter through the appropriate channels as defined in the rest of this clause.

5.1.2 The request shall be tabled at the earliest possible meeting of the committee where it shall be discussed.

5.1.3 If the individual concerned is a port-folioed member of the committee, the member shall present an up to date report of the work entrusted to him/her.

5.1.4 Having satisfied itself with the report the committee shall grant the request and appoint an interim replacement pending a report to the meeting of the body that elected that member which body shall make the final release and replacement.

5.2 If the need arises from the Board/Committee of which he/she is a member, the committee shall talk to the member concerning the reason that might necessitate the release. If the situation continues the committee shall give him/her a warning in writing. Then report the matter to the electorate who shall make the final decision on the matter.

5.3 In the case of Denominational Committees and where the need for release is proposed by the Region which that member represents:

5.3.1 The Region shall thoroughly discuss the matter at home, talk to the individual concerned, and report the matter to the committee of which he/she is a member.

5.3.2 The committee shall report to the Regional conference and the body that elected

that member and make a proposal in writing to release the member in question.

5.3.3 If approved by a two-thirds majority, the proposal shall stand and the member shall be released, and replaced by the person suggested by the Region concerned.

5.3.4 The new member shall not automatically fill the portfolio that the released member had. It is the prerogative of the body concerned to fill in the portfolios with whomever they deem most suitable.

5.4 The member who exits for any reason shall return to the structure from which he/she exits the properties and documents of the church in his possession.

5.5 In every case, the replacement shall serve for the duration of the term of the released member.

ARTICLE 6. QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH LEADERS

6.1 The first book of Timothy shall be used by the Africa Evangelical Church as the Scriptural measurement in appointing church leaders. It is therefore strongly advisable for all Church leaders to study it and be familiar with its content.

6.2 All those going into full time church work shall also be expected to measure up to the standards set forth in the aforesaid book besides their call into the ministry.

6.3 According to the first book of Timothy, a church leader may be disqualified by the uncommendable character of his wife (1 Tim. 3:11).

6.4 A church leader found short of this standard later on, after engagement by the church, shall be subject to demotion.

6.5 Women are commanded by the Word of God to be silent, not to be slanderers, to be sober, faithful in all things (1 Tim.3: 11).

6.6 The wives of church leaders shall be expected to be exemplary in this regard.

6.7 It shall be desirable for pastors to have a minimum of ten years of secular education; and for Board members to have a minimum of Matriculation.

6.8 They shall be persons of spiritual maturity with a passion for souls, and who

subscribe unreservedly to the Statement of Faith as contained in this Constitution.

6.9 They shall be persons who have had Bible training at a recognized Bible Institute or School, or who satisfy the Church Conference either by having completed an approved Bible Correspondence Course, or by their own experiential knowledge of God's Word.

6.10 They shall be persons who do not practice tribalism or racialism, "For God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34; James 3:2-9).

ARTICLE 7. ORDINATION

Candidates for ministerial work of the Africa Evangelical Church shall be ordained at the General Church Conference. These shall serve the Lord where they are called and according to their gifts within the church ministry or in other Christian work approved by the Church. The Board shall, if necessary, ordain candidates for the ministry when the Church Conference is not in session.

ARTICLE 8. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the local church is for regenerated believers who subscribe fully to the foregoing Statement of Faith, who live daily lives which conform to their profession of faith, and who promise to obey the regulations of the Africa Evangelical Church, to engage in its activities and to support it by prayer and offering. Converts who show evidence of repentance toward God will be instructed in Christian doctrine and prepared for baptism and Church membership.

ARTICLE 9. BAPTISM

Believers' baptism is an act of obedience, which symbolizes the sinner's death to sin, and his resurrection to newness of life in Christ Jesus. Only those who have truly repented, showing signs of spiritual growth, and who are willing to be baptized, shall, after a period of spiritual instruction by a competent leader, be eligible for baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19; Rom 6:1-5).

ARTICLE 10. HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion shall be partaken of by baptized believers who have been approved

and received into full membership. Believing visitors who normally do partake of Holy Communion in their respective churches shall be invited to participate in Holy Communion in the Africa Evangelical Church local churches and Church Conferences.

ARTICLE 11. DISCIPLINE

All matters of church discipline shall be dealt with by the local church as directed by the Lord in Matthew 18:15-20 and by other relevant Scriptures. Church discipline shall be as follows, according to the nature of the offense:

11.1 Reproof by the church.

11.2 Temporary discipline debarring from the Communion table and other privileges attached to church membership.

11.3 Suspension from office in the church.

11.4 Ex-communication from the church.

11.4.1 All cases that cannot be settled by the local church shall be investigated by the Circuit and/or Regional bodies for settlement.

11.4.2 The Church Board shall be the final disciplinary authority and also the final court of appeal for the accused.

ARTICLE 12. FINANCE

12.1 The work of the Africa Evangelical Church shall be supported by the tithes, donations and offerings of the Lord's people in accordance with Scriptures.

12.2 All monies obtained in the name of the Church shall be banked in the Church's Banking Account within ninety-six (96) hours.

12.3 All local churches, preaching points, structures and other formations of the Africa Evangelical Church shall open bank accounts only in the name of the Church. The name of the local church, preaching point, structures and other formations may be added to the name "Africa Evangelical Church".

12.4 For the purpose of opening a bank account, the local church or preaching point of the Africa Evangelical Church must satisfy the following requirements: -

12.4.1 Furnish the bank or financial institution with a signed Resolution of the local church or preaching point on a Letterhead of the Africa Evangelical Church.

12.4.2 Furnish the bank or financial institution with the Constitution of the Africa Evangelical Church.

12.4.3 Furnish the bank or financial institution with three names of the members of the local church or preaching point committee point, being the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

12.4.4 In the event that the three members of the committee resigns, provision shall be made for their replacement, provided a Resolution of the church or preaching point committee effecting such replacement is furnished to the bank or financial institution.

12.5. Cheques drawn on the Africa Evangelical Church shall be signed by no less than two persons duly authorized:

12.5.1 In the case of the Church Board, by the General Church Conference;

12.5.2 In the case of a Regional Executive Committee, by the Regional Church Conference;

12.5.3 In the case of a local Church Committee, by the local Church Meeting.

12.6 The books of the Africa Evangelical Church shall be kept in a recognized Accounting System and be subject to audit.

ARTICLE 13. PROPERTY

13.1 All property, movable or immovable, purchased or obtained in the name of the Africa Evangelical Church shall remain the property of the Church.

13.2 All property, movable or immovable, purchased or obtained in the name of the African Evangelical Church (as the Africa Evangelical Church was then called) and registered or known as such, shall remain the property of the Church.

13.3 All property, movable or immovable, purchased, obtained in the name of the South

Africa General Mission and the Missionaries Church Elders/Leadership before the establishment of the African Evangelical Church and subsequent Africa Evangelical Church shall legally devolve to the Africa Evangelical Church, which shall become the lawful successor in title of all such properties.

13.4 All property of the said Church, movable or immovable, shall be vested in Trustees elected by members of the Church.

13.4.1 On behalf of the said Church the said Trustees may take over, purchase, take on lease or otherwise acquire, hold, develop, manage, let, sell, exchange, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of real and personal property or any tenure and of any interest, and to accept (with or without condition) and hold gifts, devices and bequests of any such property or interest (including subscriptions and donations of cash and investments).

13.4.2 For any of the purchases of the said Church the said Trustees may borrow money with or without security, and secure the same by mortgage, charge, debentures or debentures stock, or other security, charge on all or any of the property of the Church, and they may give any guarantee or undertaking, on behalf of the said Church.

13.4.3 The said Trustees shall, jointly or severally, be absolved from the furnishing of any security, of whatsoever nature, for the due and proper performance of their duties, and/or the proper and faithful administration of the Church's property, either to the Master of the Supreme Court / High Court, or any other competent person, official or authority, who are hereby directed to dispense with any such security.

13.5 Any power of attorney, consent or other document required for the purpose of transfer or mortgage or in connection with any deed of transfer or mortgage bond, or any power of attorney required for instituting, conducting or defending any action or other proceedings brought by or against the Africa Evangelical Church and/or by or against the officiating members of the Church Elders/Leadership in their official capacity, shall be deemed to be duly executed when signed by any of the elected officials in their respective capacities.

ARTICLE 14. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

14.1. There shall be a Board of Trustees at each of the following levels:

14.1.1 General Church Conference Level.

14.1.2 Regional Church Conference Level.

14.2 There shall be only one Board of Trustees at the General Conference Level, which

shall consist of the following Church Board members:

14.2.1 The President

14.2.2 The Deputy President

14.2.3 The General Secretary

14.2.4 The Vice Secretary

14.2.5 The Treasurer

14.3 There shall be only one Board of Trustees at the Regional Church Conference Level for each existing Region or Region to be declared by the General Church Conference in terms of Article 4.5.1.5. Each Regional Board of Trustees shall consist of the following members of the relevant Regional Church Conference Executive Committee:

14.3.1 The Chairman

14.3.2 The Vice Chairman

14.3.3 The Secretary

14.3.4 The Vice Secretary

14.3.5 The Treasurer

14.4 The Board of Trustees at the General Church Conference Level shall be responsible to the Church Board and the General Church Conference, and it shall hold church property entrusted to it on behalf of the Africa Evangelical Church.

14.5 The Board(s) of Trustees at the Regional Church Conference Level shall be responsible to the Regional Church Conference Executive Committee(s), the Regional Church Conference(s) and the Church Board, and shall hold church property entrusted to them within the Region on behalf of the Africa Evangelical Church.

ARTICLE 15. REGULATIONS

The Africa Evangelical Church shall have a handbook of rules, which every member shall be expected to obey.

ARTICLE 16. PRIVILEGES

It is desirable that all Church Workers, employed by the Church, be provided with parsonages. Traveling expenses on the ministry of the Church shall be covered by the

Church.

ARTICLE 17. PENSION SCHEME

There shall be a pension scheme for all full time Church Workers payable upon attaining the retirement age as laid down in the Church's handbook of rules. The retirement age of all church workers shall be optional between sixty (60) and sixty-five (65) years, sixty-five years being the cut off age for all.

ARTICLE 18. SERVICES OF RETIRED WORKERS ON CHURCH STRUCTURES

Church workers who retire while serving in any church structure shall continue to serve in that capacity until the completion of their terms of office. After that they shall retire from official service and may be used as consultants and/or advisors.

ARTICLE 19. LEGAL ADVISORS

The Africa Evangelical Church shall have a Legal Advisor for each region.

ARTICLE 20. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution shall be amended whenever necessary. The amendment of the Statement of Faith shall require a four-fifths (4/5) majority accented votes while the rest of the Constitution shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority accented votes of the General Church Conference Delegates at the ordinary General Church Conference of the Africa Evangelical Church, notice having been given in writing to all churches at least two months before the Annual General Church Conference.

ARTICLE 21. DISSOLUTION

21.1 The Church may only be dissolved by a resolution passed at an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of registered bona fide Members of the Church held specifically for that purpose.

21.2 The said Meeting may only be convened by the Church Board upon a signed petition comprising of two-thirds majority of registered bona fide Members of the Church.

21.3 Notice of the said meeting shall be given to each registered bona fide Member, not less than 14 days before the date of such a Meeting.

21.4 A competent independent presiding officer must be appointed by the Church Board through a resolution to oversee the voting process and provide a comprehensive report of the process and outcome thereof.

21.5 The Church shall only be dissolved by a minimum of a two-thirds majority of registered bona fide Members present and entitled to vote.

21.6 The Church shall be determined to have ceased when a statement to that effect is adopted by the Church Board as supported by the comprehensive report of the independent presiding officer.

21.7 Once the Church dissolves, after the satisfaction of all obligations, debts, and liabilities of the Church, all the assets of the Church including its personal and real property, and effects, shall, subject to applicable law, be transferred to one or more charitable and/or educational organizations doctrinally aligned to the Church and willing and able to accept the assets of the Church.

21.8 Upon the dissolution of the Church, no residual assets including its personal and real property, and effects shall be distributed to any Church or Staff Member.

21.9 The governing rules of the recipient charitable and/or educational organizations must specifically forbid the distribution of any part of its assets to its Members, owners or Staff.

21.10 The Church may attach any conditions to the transference made as it deems fit.

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APPENDIX B

AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH DISTINCTIVES

I. BAPTISM

10.1. Christian baptism is an ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ: Matt 28:19. All believers are commanded to be baptized as a symbol of an inward experience. This is a symbol of a believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection - Rom. 6:3-11.

10.2. In baptism, the believer publicly confesses that in Christ's death he is dead unto sin, and in Christ's resurrection he is alive unto God..... Col 2:11-13; Gal. 3:27. Therefore, baptism is only for those whose lives clearly demonstrate true repentance from sin and a new life through faith in Christ - Acts 2:37, 38, 41; Acts 8:12; II Cor. 5:17.

10.3. The Africa Evangelical Church does not practice infant baptism, neither does it teach that water baptism is necessary for salvation, or the belief that water baptism gives power to overcome sin.

10.4. The Africa Evangelical Church practices water baptism by immersion once in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, believing it is the command of the Lord for all true believers, and is an ordinance of the local church as practiced by the apostles and the New Testament believers.

II. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

10.1. Marriage is a holy relationship, ordained by God. Believers are exhorted to keep it honourable, Heb. 13:4. Young men and women must keep themselves holy both before and as they approach it.

10.2. Those who are married in the church must be married according to the way set out by the church. The pastor shall have a book containing the order of service, e.g. "EyabaPhathi Bebandla" or any other approved by the church.

10.3. Two Christians must not live together as husband and wife without being married by Christians rites, and registered as husband and wife according to the laws of the country.

10.4. Polygamy is forbidden in the church - I Cor. 7.2; I Tim. 3:2,12; Eph.5.31,33. Polygamists or wives in a polygamist situation may be accepted into church membership, but may not be elected to any church office. Believers who take a second wife or marry a man who already has wife shall be liable to church discipline.

10.5. Believers intending to be married should allow enough time between engagement and marriage for the following reasons:

10.5.1. To demonstrate before the church their faithfulness to the Lord and to one another.

10.5.2. To prepare well for their marriage and the establishment of their home.

10.5.3. To continue to seek assurance from the Lord that their marriage is His will.

10.6. Children are an added blessing to a marriage. The birth of children does not consummate a marriage. The marriage is consummated by leaving father and mother, cleaving to each other and becoming one flesh - Gen. 2:24.

10.7. Married couples should be urged to study Scripture and pray together.

10.8. Married couples should agree together when taking responsibility regarding relatives.

10.9. The practice of living apart for long periods of times is discouraged in order that each partner may remain faithful to each other and to the Lord, that no place will be given for Satan to bring temptation - I Cor. 7:5.

10.10. Christians should treat with love and care the living partners of deceased relatives. A widow is one who needs comfort and sympathy, and according to James 1:27 should be visited - and not troubled!

III. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

3.1. THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE

The primary objective of discipline as exercised by the church is to restore the offender. Discipline is not exercised merely to give out punishment, or simply to set an example. What the church wants is for the offender to repent, change his ways, and take his proper place in the body of believers. The holy standard God sets for His church requires that sin should be dealt with by disciplining the offender who refuses to confess wrong, and persistently and deliberately continues to sin.

3.2 PROCEDURE

All matters of church discipline shall be dealt with by the local church as directed by the Lord in Matthew 18:15-20 and by other relevant Scriptures.

Church discipline shall be as follows, according to the nature of the offense:

10.1.1. Reproof by the local church.

10.1.2. Temporary disciplines debarring from the Communion Table and other privileges attached to church membership.

10.1.3. Suspension from office in the church.

10.1.4. Ex-communication from the church. All cases that cannot be settled by local and/or Regional bodies shall be investigated by the Church Board for settlement. The Church Board shall be the final disciplinary authority and also the final court of appeal for the accused.

10.2. MATTERS REQUIRING DISCIPLINE

Discipline shall be exercised on members who stay away from church services over an extended period of time without reason; whose lives are inconsistent with the direct teaching of the Word of God, who are guilty of sexual, criminal as well as other public offenses.

3.4 APPEAL PROCEDURE

Appeal against disciplinary measures taken against a member shall follow the set chain of command as set out in the AEC constitution.

3.5 THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLINE

In all these matters of discipline the spirit of love should prevail. There can be no place for personal animosity, partiality or vindictiveness. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth."

IV. DEMON POSSESSION

4.1 Demons are unclean spirits opposed to God - Mark 7:25-26. They are not spirits of the dead people. The head of the demons is Satan, the arch enemy of God.

4.2 A person may be possessed by a demon or demons, causing such a person to behave strangely or even to be ill: Matt. 9:32-33; Luke 13:11,16. However, sometimes strange behavior or illness may be due to mental or emotional disturbance or some sin problem. Demons desire to occupy and control people Luke 11:24; 8:32. Because the Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit - I Cor.6:9 - and because the Holy Spirit is stronger than Satan (I John 4:4) a Christian who is filled with the Spirit will not be possessed by a demon. However, Satan does continually seek to attack, influence and use Christians for his own purposes, and believers need to guard against him . I Peter 5:8; Eph. 6:11-13; James 4:7- 3 - Demons also promote false doctrines - I Tim. 4:1-3; James 3:14-15.

4.3 The diagnosis of demon possession should be made only in accordance with Scriptural example.

4.4 DEMON EXPULSION

It is only through God's power that a person can be delivered from demon possession, control and influence - Matt. 8:31, I John 3:8. Demons cannot be cast out by cleansing through the use of herbs, roots, drumming or dancing. Any apparent deliverance by such means is the deception of Satan, because Satan cannot be expected to fight against himself - Matt. 12:25-26. Christians will find no true healing in such practices, therefore they must not engage in them. 4.5 Demon possession cannot be eliminated by visiting so called "prophets" or traditional healers.

V. DEATH AND BURIAL

5.1 Sickness and death are urgent calls to every member of the local church to help, which must not be neglected.

5.1.1 When a member of the church dies, the pastor or leader should go promptly to comfort those who are left and to make plans for the funeral service. It is his duty to plan for the proper funeral, and this should be done carefully in consultation with the family.

10.1.1. The purpose of the funeral service is to bring comfort to those who mourn and to be a testimony to the unbelievers - I Thess. 4:13-18; John 11:41-45.

10.1.2. No unauthorized persons should be allowed to push themselves into taking part in the service. The wishes of the family should be taken into consideration in planning the service, but the pastor should take care not to allow anything to be included which would be against Scriptural principles. Practices related to death which do not continue to the comfort and consideration of the bereaved, as well as those practices which deny the Lordship of Christ and the hope of the Christian, should be discouraged.

10.1.3 If, and where possible, funerals on Sundays should be discouraged as they conflict with the church services.

10.1.4. At the grave, the pastor or leader should keep in mind that the whole service is intended for comfort. Anything, therefore, that tends to add to sorrow or distress should be avoided.

10.1. The Africa Evangelical Church does not encourage and practice post burial ceremonies such as cleansing, use of mourning clothes, unveiling of tomb stones, feasts connected with the dead.

10.2. Use of mourning clothes shall be left at the discretion of the families. Believers who use them should not participate in unscriptural practices of any sort.

10.3. Mourners shall be free to participate in all church activities - including singing in choirs or musical groups, attendance of church services, fulfilling their normal church duties and offices. They shall be accept and treated as in normal and ordinary circumstances.

10.4. Care should be taken that the handbook used by church leaders at funerals (and at any other services of the church) are scriptural and consistent with the confession of faith of the Africa Evangelical Church as defined in the Africa Evangelical Church constitution.

VI. ESCHATOLOGY

10.1. Concerning the Biblical Doctrine of the Last Things, the Africa Evangelical Church teaches the following, recognizing that some of the terminology may be figurative:

10.1.1. The rapture of the church: that when Christ all returns all true believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air - I Thess. 4:16-17; I Cor. 15:51-52. - 4 –

10.1.2. The revelation of the man of sin - II Thess. 2:3-9.

10.1.3. The great tribulation period - Matt. 24:21-22; Rev. 7:14.

10.1.4. The appearing of all believers before the judgement seat of Christ, give an account of the deeds done in the body, and receive rewards - I Cor 3:12-15; II Cor. 5:10.

10.1.5. The marriage Supper of the Lamb - Rev. 19:7-8.

10.1.6. The return of Christ with His saints - I Thess. 3:13; Jude v.14.

10.1.7. The judgement of the Nations - Matt 25:31-32.

10.1.8. The reign of Christ upon the earth for a thousand years - Rev. 5:10; 20:6.

10.1.9. The final judgement of all unbelievers at the Great White Throne - Rev. 20:11-15.

10.2. The final blessedness of all believers, forever with the Lord - I Thess. 4:17.

VII. FAITH HEALING

10.1. To “heal” means to “restore to health, make well or cure”. In the New Testament, healing was usually instantaneous and long lasting.

10.2. The gift of healing is one of the spiritual gifts - I Cor.12:12-28. This gift was used by the Lord Jesus Christ throughout His earthly public ministry. Healing demonstrated His divine authority, His compassion for man, and resulted in glory to God - Matt. 14:14; Luke 5:26. He gave the same authority to His disciples when He sent them (Matt. 10:1), who continued to use it after the coming of the Holy Spirit - Acts 3:1-8; 9:32-40; James 5:14-16.

10.3. We reject the present day practice of professional healers who conduct healing campaigns. The claim that all may be healed, failure to identify with the local church, and the receiving of financial reward we believe to be contrary to the Word of God.

10.4. Physical healing should not be given priority over the salvation of souls, nor should it be treated on a par with it.

10.5. Praying for the sick should not be done out of habit or because everybody does it!

VIII. SPEAKING IN TONGUES (GLOSSOLALIA)

10.1. The Africa Evangelical Church recognizes that speaking in tongues is one of the spiritual gifts revealed in Scripture and given by the Lord when and to whomsoever He will - I Cor. 12:10-11.

10.2. However, I Corinthians chapters 12 and 14 clearly discourage rather than encourage the use of this gift in public meetings of the church:

10.2.1. This gift is clearly not given to all Spirit-filled believers - I Cor. 12:10,30.

10.2.2. Speaking in tongues is, therefore, not an indispensable sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

10.2.3. Even though speaking in tongues edifies the speaker, it does not edify the church (unless they are interpreted), and edification of the church should be the main concern of believers in public gatherings - I Corinthians 14:2,4,6,9,12.

10.2.4. Therefore, the following restrictions were put on the use of the gift in the meetings of the church:

10.2.4.1. Only one to speak at a time; 10.2.4.2.No more than three to speak on one occasion;

10.2.4.3. None to speak unless there is an interpreter.

10.3. Scripture also teaches that the true evidence of the fullness of the Spirit in a Christian's life is seen in the Fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:22-23, and a willingness by the believer to submit one to another - Eph. 5:18-21.

10.4. The Africa Evangelical Church further recognizes that Satan continually seeks to counterfeit the gifts of the Spirit.

10.5. In consideration of this and out of concern for unity among the members of the Africa Evangelical Church, we, the members of the church conference, make the following declaration:

10.5.1. Individual members of the Africa Evangelical Church are not free to propagate any teaching that asserts or implies any of the following:

10.5.1.1. That there is an experience subsequent to regeneration called the “baptism of the Spirit” essential for every Christian.

10.5.1.2. That Glossolalia is the indispensable sign of this experience; that Glossolalia is the indispensable sign of the fullness of the Spirit.

10.5.1.3. Any worker who has difficulty in conforming to the church's position is encouraged to share his/her difficulty with his/her Quarterly Meeting Chairman/Regional Chairman / Africa Evangelical Church President.

IX. THE MISSIONARY MANDATE

9.1 We believe that the commission to preach the gospel to every creature is directed to every believer in Jesus Christ.

9.2 The role of believers in the world is that of ambassadors, light, salt, witnesses, their relationship to the spirit of the world is that of strangers and pilgrims.

X. CULTURAL PRACTICES

10.1. Culture is a stage of development and manner of behaviour brought about by education, discipline and training based upon a particular set of values.

10.2. Items of culture may be good or bad, or a mixture of both. Items of culture may be neither good or bad, but simply traditional or expedient, depending on climate, food or trade.

10.3. Some of the customs handed down by ancestors are good, some come out of deep superstition and fear of witchcraft. Some of the modern customs are practical and useful, while others are but imported forms of evil from other cultures.

10.4. Items of culture which are in conflict with Christian principles found in Scripture must be rejected. The Bible is the standard of measurement which shows whether a cultural practice is good or bad. The Bible warns against being forced to do what everyone else is doing - Romans 12:2.

10.5. Some practices which have a mixture of good and bad are very difficult to reject or accept. Individuals need to seek guidance as to how they can reject the bad and yet retain the good. In some cases the good part has to be sacrificed in order that the evil, or the appearance thereof, may be avoided.

10.6. Culture does not remain the same but is constantly changing. The Christian church may have a strong influence upon the culture of a country or group of people, by bringing to

it the standards of the Bible as a whole, and by refusing to participate in practices that are contrary to the Scriptures.

10.7. Some questionable practices, both traditional and modern, which are considered “culture” in the present African context are:

10.7.1. Customs of inheritance and cleansing connected with the death of a husband and/or wife.

10.7.2. The wearing or use of charms for protection or help.

10.7.3. Seeking help from a witchdoctor.

10.7.4. Circumcision and other initiation rites.

10.7.5. Polygamy and divorce.

10.7.6. Social dancing and beer drinking which promote promiscuity and immorality.

10.7.7. Immodest form of dress.

XI. THE LOCAL CHURCH

The local church is a group of baptized believers who are in agreement with the Aims and objectives, as well as the Statement of Faith of the Africa Evangelical Church as set out in its constitution. Each local church shall be recognized by the Regional Executive Committee concerned of the Africa Evangelical Church before it is accepted as an Africa Evangelical Church. Every local church must have at least one male leader who shall lead them in meeting regularly for prayer, worship, Bible Study and other Christian endeavours. A group that meets regularly but does not have a male leader shall be considered as a preaching point and be linked to a nearby local church. For a preaching point to be recognized as a local church it must have a male leader recognized by the Regional Executive Committee. (Details on this shall appear in the Handbook of Rules.)

XII. ORDINATION IN THE CHURCH

12.1 Ordination is the setting apart of a person to a ministry in the church, which takes its biblical precedent from the laying on of hands for a specific work. Ordination is a public recognition and confirmation that an individual has the appropriate gifts and has been called of God to His service. Hence, an ordination service has no validity without this divine gift and call, and does not give the candidate any special powers, abilities, or knowledge. Ordination is not necessarily for a lifetime and may be revoked. Furthermore, an ordained person is subject to the discipline of the local

church. Pastors or other full-time male workers may be ordained in the Africa Evangelical Church - Acts 6:6; 13:3. Ordination carries the use of the title "Reverend".

12.2 The Africa Evangelical Church may, at its discretion and as need arises, request the ordination of a missionary serving or to serve with the Africa Evangelical Church. Such a request shall go through the proper and defined channels of communication between the Africa Evangelical Church and the missionary's home church.

XIII. DIVORCE

13.1 Married couples are not free to divorce one another (I Cor.7:10-11). Whatever problem may bring a marriage to the point of divorce, such as barrenness, adultery or domestic problems must be dealt with for the purpose of forgiveness and reconciliation.

13.2 A man who is living with any woman other than his first wife who is still alive, either in a polygamous marriage, or a divorce and remarriage, is not qualified to be a church leader even if the divorce and remarriage took place before he became Christian. **13.3** Similarly, a man who has married a divorcee does not qualify to be a church leader.

XIV. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

14.1 In order to be accepted as a member of a church of the Africa Evangelical Church a person must show evidence of repentance from sin to God and profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his/her personal Saviour, and must have followed the Lord in Believers' Baptism in obedience to the Lord's command.

14.2 He/she must understand and accept the aims and objectives of the Africa Evangelical Church; and must sign the Member's Covenant of the Africa Evangelical Church.

14.3 A member of a local church of the Africa Evangelical Church who moves to the area of another local church of the Africa Evangelical Church can have his membership transferred on presentation of a letter from his church. His name shall be written on the church roll in the new church and be removed from the active role of the church he/she has left.

14.4 A person who comes from a church with which the Africa Evangelical Church is in agreement and brings a letter of recommendation, saying that he/she is in good standing, and is received at the Lord's Table, may be received into membership of the Africa Evangelical Church. In addition to this letter, the local church leadership must be satisfied that such a person is walking in fellowship with the Lord, and that he understands and accepts the Statement of Faith as well as the Aims and Objectives of the Africa Evangelical Church. He must sign the Member's Covenant of the Africa Evangelical Church.

In some cases, further instruction may be necessary before he is accepted as a member.

14.5 A person who comes from a church about which the Africa Evangelical Church has doubts must attend the New Believer's class until the local church leaders are satisfied that he/she has fulfilled the conditions of membership for New Believers set out above. If he/she has already been baptized as a believer, he need not be baptized again.

14.6 A missionary worker shall be accepted by the Africa Evangelical Church as a full member on presentation to an Africa Evangelical Church local church of a letter of recommendation from his/her sending church. This shall be done as soon as possible after the arrival of an Africa Evangelical Fellowship worker at his place of allocation. It is understood that membership in an Africa Evangelical Church local church does not entail relinquishing membership in the sending church of the Africa Evangelical Fellowship missionary worker.

14.7 As a full member of the local church a missionary worker shall be eligible to vote and hold office and be subject to discipline the same way as any other church member. A missionary worker may hold office only if this is consistent with the development of the local church.

14.8 A missionary worker shall be active in the local church where he/she is a member, assisting the local church in achieving its goals. The general principle is to work in fellowship with the leadership of the local church.

14.9 Any person who is accepted as a member of a local church of the Africa Evangelical Church, whether by baptism or by transfer from another church, should be publicly welcomed as a member at a regular service of that local church. Each member of the Africa Evangelical Church shall have his/her membership in one local church. Dual membership will be considered and granted in exceptional cases of necessity but shall be treated with caution.

XV. CHURCH WORKER STATUS

15.1 PASTOR

15.1.1 The pastor is an Elder who has been appointed to shepherd the flock in a local church.

15.1.2 In order to serve as a pastor of a local church a man must have Scriptural qualifications and meet the standards for elders as outlined in the constitution of the Africa Evangelical Church as well as its bylaws. He must have those spiritual gifts that enable him to shepherd and teach the local flock. The "fruit of the

Spirit”, according to Galatians 5:22-23, should be visible in the life of a man who is a pastor.

15.1.3 A pastor must be, or become, a member of the Africa Evangelical Church and be a graduate of a resident Bible School training programme or its equivalent recognized by the Africa Evangelical Church.

15.1.4

The local church wanting a pastor must prayerfully seek a man who is suitable for this position. They may ask a man to come and visit them and preach to them so that they can get to know him well. Once they feel they know God's they will send the man's name to the Regional Executive Committee to see if there is any reason why he should not be their pastor. Should the Regional Executive Committee have a reason why he should not be their pastor, they must meet with the church concerned to explain the difficulty so that they may seek another man. If there is no reason then the local church may interview the man, discuss terms of service, and call him to be the pastor of their church. If the man agrees, then the time for him to begin this work must be arranged. A special service of appointment to the pastorate of that church shall be held with members of the Regional Executive Committee taking part.

15.1.5

The local church that calls and employs a pastor has the authority to receive him, to warn him if he is not doing well, and also to put him out of his work in that local church. In the case of a pastor's service being terminated, adequate notice must be given to the pastor and the action reported to the Regional Executive Committee.

15.1.6 If a man has the gifts of a pastor and believes that the Lord is calling him to serve as a pastor, he may write to the Regional Executive Committee telling them of his desire.

15.1.7 Similarly, a pastor who would like to serve in another local church or ministry of the Africa Evangelical Church may write to the appropriate Regional Executive Committee and indicate his feelings. Any transfer of pastors, however, will be dependent upon the Lord's leading in the heart of the pastor. If the pastor desires so to terminate his services, he must resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the local church committee at least three months in advance of his intended date of resignation.

15.1.8 If the pastor feels that his ministry in a local church has been completed, he may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the local church at least three months in advance of his intended date of termination.

15.1.9

Should a pastor fail to maintain the Biblical standard of conduct and faithful service required of him in I Tim 3:1-7; I Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:5-9 and I Tim 5:19-20, he may be removed from service as pastor of the local church. A pastor may be removed only upon the basis of evidence given by at least two witnesses. The evidence of the witnesses must be in agreement concerning the failure involved. A vote of two-thirds of the members of the local church committee is necessary to remove the pastor. Such action shall be reported promptly to the local church at a business meeting for ratification. Such action shall be reviewed by the Regional Executive Committee.

15.2 PASTOR'S WORK

15.2.1 The pastor is responsible for the overall spiritual ministry of the local church.

15.2.2 The pastor must persevere in prayer, reading and study of the Word (Acts 6:4) both in private for his own enrichment and in public for the enrichment of his people, and in preaching it regularly in his church. (I Tim 4:13).

15.2.3 The pastor must give himself to teaching the whole congregation and to training leaders in his local church. He must especially teach the new believers or appoint and train other to do this work. He has the responsibility to train his people in evangelism.

15.2.4 The pastor will normally preside at the Lord's Table.

15.2.5 The pastor, in consultation with the local church committee, has authority to baptize believers and to receive them and others into membership of the church. He should visit the people in their homes, praying with and comforting those who are sick, suffering hardship or recently bereaved. He should also visit the unsaved in his area in such times of need.

15.2.6 The pastor has authority to conduct marriage services, dedicate infants and lead funeral services.

15.2.7 The pastor has authority to warn those who need warning.

15.2.8 The pastor will be an ex officio member of all local church committee.

15.2.9 The pastor must put all of his heart into the work of the church.

15.2.10 The pastor must not act as dictator of his people, but he should love them, lead them, and seek to bring them to maturity in wisdom, understanding of the Word of God, and behaviour.

15.3 ELDER

15.3.1 An Elder is a man who, having met the Scriptural qualifications and having been recognized by the membership of the local church as having Spiritual gifts, assists in the ministry of the local church.

15.3.2 There may be more than one elder in a local church depending on the size and ministry of the church (Acts 14:23, 20:17; Phil 1:1; 2 Peter 5:1).

15.3.3 To be eligible to serve as an Elder, a man must be a member in good standing of that local church, and must have the scriptural qualifications, and meet the standards as outlined in the constitution and bylaws of the Africa Evangelical Church.

15.3.4 An Elder is elected by members of the local church for a term of three years, according to the procedure outlined in the bylaws of the Africa Evangelical Church. A man may be re-elected to office. After appointment to the office of Elder, the local church should meet and dedicate the elder to the Lord's service, with the members of the Regional Executive Committee taking part at that service.

15.3.5 An Elder may serve the local church in such ways as leading meetings, preaching and counselling people with spiritual needs. He may also preside at the Lord's Table and conduct baptisms.

15.3.6

An Elder may be removed from office if he fails to maintain the standard of Christian living and faithful service required of him according to I Tim 3:1-7; I Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:5-9. An Elder may be removed only on the basis of evidence given by at least two witnesses. The evidence of the witnesses must be in agreement concerning the failure involved. A vote of two-thirds of the members of the local church committee (excluding the member in question) is necessary to remove an Elder. Such action shall be taken promptly to the church at a business meeting for ratification. Provision may be made for the election of another Elder to complete the term of office.

15.4 DEACON

15.4.1 A deacon is a man who has met the Scriptural qualifications and who is recognized by the membership of the local church to have the gift of wisdom in ministering to the needs of the local church.

15.4.2 To be eligible as a deacon in the local church, a man must be a member in good standing of that local church. He shall be a man of good reputation, wisdom and filled with the Holy Spirit. He must have the Scriptural qualifications and meet the standards for a deacon as outlined in the bylaws of the Africa Evangelical Church.

15.4.3 He must have the same standards of marriage as an Elder as stated in Scripture - I Tim 3:5-8.

15.4.4 Deacons have a responsibility in sharing in the ministry of the local church with the pastor and Elders according to their spiritual gifts, with particular concern for the practical needs of the congregation, for example:

15.4.4.1 To provide assistance as much as possible from the local church to those with physical needs.

15.4.4.2 To assist the pastor or elder in regular visitation of members of the local church and others in the community.

15.4.4.3 To assist the pastor or elder by distributing the elements at the Lord's table.

15.4.4.4 To assist the pastor or elder in the practical matters of conducting baptismal services.

15.4.4.5 To provide or arrange hospitality for visitors and guests.

15.4.5 Deacon shall be elected by the members of the local church for term of three years, according to the procedures outlined in the bylaws of the Africa Evangelical Church.

15.4.6 A deacon may be removed from office if he fails to maintain the standard of Christian living and faithful service required of him according to I Tim 3:8-13. A deacon may be removed only on the basis of evidence given by at least two witnesses. The evidence of the witnesses must be in agreement concerning the failure involved. A vote of two-thirds of the local church committee (excluding the member in question) is necessary to remove a deacon. Such action shall be reported promptly to the church at a business meeting for ratification. Provision may be made for the election of another deacon to complete the term of office

15.5 DEACONESS

15.5.1 A deaconess is a woman who is spiritually mature and having demonstrated spiritual gifts has been given certain responsibilities in the church.

15.5.2 To be eligible to serve as deaconess, a woman must be a member in good standing of that local church, and have scriptural qualifications as found in I Tim

3:11 and Titus 2:3-5. She is to be an honourable woman showing reverence to God and able to teach younger women not to gossip, nor given to alcoholic beverages.

15.5.3 A woman living with a man other than her first husband who is still alive, either in a polygamous marriage or by divorce and remarriage, is not qualified to be a deaconess, even if the divorce and remarriage took place before she became a Christian (Mark 10:12).

15.5.4 Similarly, a woman who has married a divorcee does not qualify to be a deaconess.

15.5.5 A deaconess serves the local church by giving assistance to women in the church in situations where it is more suitable for a woman to help. She may also help in the following:

15.5.5.1 Teach and train younger women of the church to be good wives and mothers (Titus2:4-5).

15.5.5.2 Engage in the regular teaching of the Word to other women and children

15.5.5.3 The provision of hospitality

15.5.5.4 The care of the Lord's house.

15.5.5.5 The ministry of regular prayer.

15.5.5.6 The leadership of the women's organization in the local church.

15.5.6 A deaconess elected by the members of the local church for the term of three years.

15.5.7

The local church committee shall appoint a nominating committee which shall prepare a list of candidates for the office of deaconess. Those listed shall be asked if they are willing to stand, and the names of those who agree will be presented to the local church committee for their approval. The names of those who are approved shall be made known to the whole congregation at least three weeks before the date of election. The election will take place by secret ballot at a regular business meeting of the local church. They shall be commended to this office by prayer at the following Sunday morning service in their local church. The terms of office for the deaconesses may be staggered if the local church so desires.

15.5.8 A deaconess may be removed from office if she fails to maintain the standard of Christian living and faithful service required of her according to I Tim 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5. She may be removed by a two-thirds of the members of the local church committee, only on the basis of evidence given by at least two witnesses who agree concerning the failure involved.

15.5.9 The deaconesses of the local church shall be recognized as the women's committee to assist in the ministry of that local church.

DISTINCTIVES OF THE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH retyped 1995

Kindly read this portion which has been taken out from the DISTINCTIVES of AEC

XIV. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

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14.2 He/she must understand and accept the aims and objectives of the Africa Evangelical Church; and must sign the Member's Covenant of the Africa Evangelical Church.

14.3 A member of a local church of the Africa Evangelical Church who moves to the area of another local church of the Africa Evangelical Church can have his membership transferred on presentation of a letter from his church. His name shall be written on the church roll in the new church and be removed from the active role of the church he/she has left.

14.4

A person who comes from a church with which the Africa Evangelical Church is in agreement and brings a letter of recommendation, saying that he/she is in good standing, and is received at the Lord's Table, may be received into membership of the Africa Evangelical Church. In addition to this letter, the local church leadership

must be satisfied that such a person is walking in fellowship with the Lord, and that he understands and accepts the Statement of Faith as well as the aims and Objectives of the Africa Evangelical Church. He must sign the Member's Covenant of the Africa Evangelical Church. In some cases, further instruction may be necessary before he is accepted as a member.

14.5

A person who comes from a church about which the Africa Evangelical Church has doubts must attend the New Believer's class until the local church leaders are satisfied that he/she has fulfilled the conditions of membership for New Believers set out above. If he/- she has already been baptized as a believer, he need not be baptized again.

14.6

A missionary worker shall be accepted by the Africa Evangelical Church as a full member on presentation to an Africa Evangelical Church local church of a letter of recommendation from his/her sending church. This shall be done as soon as possible after the arrival of an Africa Evangelical Fellowship worker at his place of allocation. It is understood that membership in an Africa Evangelical Church local church does not entail relinquishing membership in the sending church of the Africa Evangelical Fellowship missionary worker.

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APPENDIX C

THE BYLAWS OF THE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION: The purpose and aim of these bylaws are not for them to take the place and authority of God's Word, but rather to direct us to it that is the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

1. **HAVING TO DO WITH THE S I M AND ITS MISSIONARIES:**

The Africa Evangelical Church accepts the Africa Evangelical Fellowship (now merged with and superseded by the S I M) as its mother body, and it is the wish of the church to maintain an unbroken relationship, a continuous spiritual fellowship and cooperation with the Mission. The church fully understands the fact that the Mission may, of necessity, have ministries that it engages in which, by the nature of the need or demand, embraces other church groups beyond, and at times in exclusion of, the AEC. It cannot be expected to please just the Africa Evangelical Church.

1.1: **SIM MISSIONARIES AND OTHER WORKERS THAT DO NOT WORK WITH THE A E C:**

1.1.1: This means all the missionaries who do any work of the Mission either full time or part time as well as all the employees involved in those ministries.

1.1.2: The church will recognize these in the work that they do, but they shall not be involved in the AEC and its work. They shall attend local church or conference business meetings only at the invitation by the AEC or because they have formally been accepted as bona fide members of the A E C.

1.1.3: They may be free to attend services at AEC churches for spiritual fellowship with the church, and they may be invited by church leaders to preach.

1.1.4: The AEC pastors of the churches whether they either worship or have

membership shall form the link between them and the AEC.

1.1.5: Any missionary that is involved in a ministry or starts a new work that he/she wishes to leave with the A E C when they leave, must employ a member of the A E C to whom they shall give training to do the work to the extent of being able to lead and do it after they have left themselves.

1.2: **MISSIONARIES WORKING WITH THE CHURCH:**

1.2.1: No missionary shall be appointed to work with the church without full consultation with a relevant Church Committee as well as with the church where the missionary is being considered to work.

1.2.2: The church, as an autonomous body, shall have the last say in the matter of which missionaries shall work with it.

1.2.3: The church may request the Mission to set aside a missionary of its choice to do the work that it feels he/she can do for it.

1.2.4: The **Mission Field Committee** may recommend missionary to a relevant Church Committee, especially those missionaries that are unknown to the church leadership either because they are new to missionary work or new to the Field; make recommendations as to how and where he/she may serve in church work considering their gifts, training, ability and experience.

1.2.5 These missionaries shall be inducted **into their work and place of service** by the AEC Regional Executive Committee concerned.

1.3: **MONETARY GIFTS FROM THE MISSION, MISSIONARIES AND OTHER SOURCES SENT THROUGH THE MISSION:**

1.3.1: All monetary gifts designated and undesignated, from SIM, its missionaries and others shall be sent to the SIM Field Office which shall in turn send them to the relevant AEC Regional Executive Committee concerned. The members of the A E C shall send them

directly to the Secretary of the relevant Regional Executive Committee.

1.3.2: The recipient Regional Treasurer shall issue receipts on each gift received on behalf of the church and send them to the sender of the gift.

1.3.3: The church Executive shall be careful that all designated gifts are passed on to those for whom they are designated, and it shall be the prerogative of the Executive committee to designate and cause to be used any gifts that come undesignated.

1.3.4: The church Finance Committee shall send reports to the Mission on how the gifts received from the mission were used.

2. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

The Africa Evangelical Church is part of the Church Universal of the Lord Jesus Christ where people are accepted into membership by new birth that results from their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Believers who are thus born again shall be accepted into membership of the Africa Evangelical Church by their acceptance into membership of an AEC local church wherever they live.

2.1: ACCEPTANCE INTO MEMBERSHIP:

The following procedure shall be followed to accept people into the membership of the A E C.:

- a. By Baptism.
- b. By bringing a removal note from the church of their membership before they applied for membership of the A E C.

2.1.1: BY BAPTISM:

- a. The teaching of the Word of God is that believers only be baptized: Matthew 28:19, Acts 8:36-37.

- b. Baptism is not part of the way of salvation from sin; neither does it do anything to help a person grow spiritually. It is a witness that the individual being baptized accepts the death of Jesus Christ as his/her own death to sin so that in as much as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, he/she, in the same way shall walk in the newness of life in Christ: Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12.
- c. Since man is accepted into the universal church of Jesus Christ by new birth and baptism in the Holy Spirit, so is he/she accepted into a local church, by confessing faith in Christ and water baptism?
- d. Anyone desiring to be baptized shall first be taught, and be helped to have an assurance of salvation before he/she is baptized so that he/she understands clearly what baptism is all about.
- e. As a church, we believe in baptism by immersion since we believe that that is what the Word of God teaches.
- f. The names of candidates for baptism shall be announced to the church at least two weeks before the date of baptism.
- g. The church must approve the candidates as worthy of baptism before they are baptized.
- h. It is recommendable that baptism be done on a Sunday where many people are likely to attend the service, or on another pre-arranged day that is announced in advance so that many people will be able to attend, and it has to be a public service.
- i. Everyone must make a personal decision to be baptized in obedience to the Lord's commandment.
- j. The candidates for baptism shall give testimonies before they are baptized after they arrived at the place of baptism.

N/B: Nowhere in the Word of God are we told that one has got to understand the whole teaching of the Bible or be able to answer all the questions to be ready for baptism. There is only one qualification that we read about: "Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ." Nevertheless, an unclear life of faith that shows no good testimony can prevent one from being baptized. This must be kept in mind when dealing with people who want to be baptized and be emphasized during teaching sessions.

2.1.2: BY TRANSFER FROM OTHER CHURCHES:

- a. These must produce removal notes from the churches from which they come. Normally anyone coming without a removal note may not be accepted. Even AEC members coming from other churches must produce a removal note from their previous churches even if they are going to another AEC local church.
- b. There must be a clear testimony that the candidate is born again before they are baptized. It is recommended that the Local Church Committee interview the candidate before he/she is accepted.
- c. When one brings a removal note from a church whose teaching we do not know or for whatever reason cannot bring a removal note and cannot obtain it, or if there is doubt about his/her spiritual life (even if he/she has a removal note!) they must be put in a new believers' class until his situation is clear.
- d. People who come from evangelical churches that practice baptism by sprinkling and they are satisfied with the baptism with which they were baptized, their spiritual lives showing a testimony that they are saved, must not be compelled to be baptized by immersion as a condition for acceptance into membership of the AEC. But it is alright to baptize them again if they request to be immersed.
- e. Both of these groups – the baptized and the transferees by removal notes – must acquaint themselves with the Church Bylaws and the Statement of Faith as it is in the Constitution and must wholeheartedly accept them before they may be accepted as members of the Africa Evangelical Church.
- f. Every local church shall have a membership record book where shall be recorded names and surnames of church members, their residential addresses, dates of their acceptance to membership, and a space being left for remarks.

2.1.3: THOSE THAT CANNOT OBTAIN REMOVAL NOTES FROM THEIR CHURCHES:

- a. It is possible that some people may fail to get removal notes from their previous churches. It is, nevertheless, necessary for the local church committee to satisfy themselves that there is a genuine and acceptable reason for them not to get it. It shall not be treated lightly that they are not able to get it.
- b. Those that the local church leadership is convinced that they cannot obtain notices for genuine and acceptable reasons, having satisfied themselves of his/her spiritual life and that he/she is the kind of person they would have as a member with them, the Local Church Committee may go ahead and accept him/her. They must give themselves time to watch him/her before they accept him/her.

2.1.4: THE PROCEDURE TO ACCEPT NEW MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH:

- a. The newly baptized candidates shall be accepted into membership on the day of their baptism.
- b. There shall always be a communion service on the day of baptism where the new members shall be accepted.
- c. Those coming from other churches shall be introduced to the church by the Local Church Committee which shall have satisfied themselves concerning them, and accept them to membership.
- d. On the day of their acceptance into church membership, all new members who will just have been accepted shall sign the Statement of Faith of the Africa Evangelical Church as well as the Local Church Covenant.

2.1.5: THE PRIVILEGES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

- a. Participation in the Lord's Supper.
- b. Voting at Local Church Business Meetings.
- c. The Local Church Leadership (deacons, deaconesses, the Local Church Committees) shall be elected from among Church Membership (I Timothy 3:1-7).
- d. Local Church delegates to represent the local church at higher meetings of the church (Circuit Quarterly Meetings, Regional Church Conferences, Annual General Church Conferences) shall be elected from the church membership.

2.1.6: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS:

- a. As members of the Body of Christ, which is His Church, each church member should make it its duty to keep the name of Christ undefiled, hallowed, magnified by the kind of lifestyle that he/she lives, by his/her walk and daily speech, so that no one shall be put off from accepting Jesus Christ because of what that Christian does: Mat.5:16; II Cor. 3:13; I Peter 2:12. Due to a Christian's unbecoming behaviour the name of Christ and the doctrine is blasphemed the world – Rom. 2:24; I Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5.
- b. Every Christian has a spiritual gift given to him/her by God to use in His work in the Church so that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, may be edified. Let every believer diligently seek to know and use his/her gift.
- c. A church member, whoever they are, may be elected to do a certain work or to a certain office in the church in accordance with his/her gift. Each one is urged to seriously consider and accept election and diligently do their best to fulfil its requirements – II Tim. 4:14.
- d. It is the responsibility of each member of the church to support the work of the church by prayer and giving.

- e. It is expected of each member of the church to attend all the organized services and meetings of the local church of which he/she is a member.
- f. It is expected of every member of the church to read the church bylaws, and to keep them.
- g. A church member who does not keep the teaching of God's Word and the church bylaws shall face the disciplinary action of the church.

2.1.7: DISCIPLINE:

- a. The Bible teaches that discipline is a way of bringing back a straying believer so that he/she sees his/her sin and seek to come back to the Lord and to right fellowship with the church – I Corinthians 5:5.
- b. Discipline is for the warning of others since sin spoils the testimony of the church and is blasphemy to Christ.
- c. It must be noted that the purpose of discipline is to maintain the holiness and purity of the Church before unbelievers.
- d. Those that apply discipline must do it in the spirit of humility **and love**, remembering their own weaknesses – Galatians 6:1.
- e. It is still the responsibility of the church to seek and bring back the discipline member, seeking him/her with love as an unbeliever – Matthew 18:17.
- f. The door to come back to the church must be left open that the straying member may, by repentance, come back from his/her waywardness, confessing and leaving his/her sin, restoring what he/she needs to return in restitution, and show fruit of repentance – Matthew 5:23,24; Revelation 2:5.

- g. The way to handle a straying member:
 - i. One shall talk to him/her concerning the matter where he/she has allegedly gone astray. If he/she does not succeed in winning him/her back, a third person shall be called in to help, and the three shall discuss it together.
 - ii. He/she shall be brought before the local church committee that shall talk to him/her.
 - iii. The matter shall be reported to the local church, and he/she shall be warned.
 - iv. The church shall discipline him/her by debarring him/her from partaking of the Lord's Supper and from all the privileges of church membership.
 - v. If he/she holds a church office or position, he/she shall be withdrawn from it.
 - vi. He/she shall be excommunicated from the church.

2.1.8: LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP:

A church member stands to lose his/her membership if he/she absents him/her-self from church attendance for six months without reporting.

3. CHURCH WORKERS:

- a. These are those that are known and accepted by the Regional Conference as Church Workers, because of their personal commitment, their recognition of their gifts and burden to preach the gospel.
- b. All Church Workers must attain to the standards set by the Word of God in I Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9.
- c. No one shall be accepted as a Church Worker in the A E C unless the Regional Executive Committee that shall present him/her to the Regional Conference has accepted him or her.
- d. Church Workers shall be: Pastors, Evangelists, Youth Workers, and others according to church needs acceptable to the Regional Conference.

- e. Anyone nearing retirement age may not be accepted as a new Church Worker; but may be accepted as a Circuit Church Worker to be used according to his/her gifts but may not be presented to the Region.

3.1: THEIR QUALIFICATIONS:

- a. An unquestionable call of God on him/her to His work.
- c. The testimony of his/her local church concerning his/her call and gifts.
- d. The qualifications that we read in I Timothy.
- e. A burden for the lost, a desire and preparedness to help them.
- f. Presentation of an official Three-Year Diploma (minimum) from an Evangelical Bible College that is acceptable to the Africa Evangelical Church.
- g. An unreserved acceptance of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Africa Evangelical Church as they are.
- h. Preparedness to serve the Lord anywhere as the need may demand and in consultation with the church leadership.

3.2: THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. The first responsibility of a servant of God is to God and then to the Africa Evangelical Church denominationally of whom he/she is a minister. He reports to the Regional Executive Committee as well as to the Local Church Committee where he/she serves.
- b. His/her first responsibility is to pray and study the Word to prepare him-/herself to do his/her ministry better – II Tim. 2:15, Acts 6:2-4.
- c. To faithfully proclaim the Word at church services and meetings.

- d. To visit and pray for the sick and the distressed, comfort and give them spiritual help.
- e. To serve the church by doing its work in a full-time capacity or as per an arrangement mutually agreed between him/her and the church.
- f. Pastors and Evangelists shall administer Holy Communion.
- g. Pastors: to accept new members into the church, to conduct services to baptize believers, to dedicate babies, to conduct Holy Communion services, to induct local church leaders into their work, to chair church leadership election meetings.
- h. To accept any church ministry to which he/she may be asked or elected to serve at circuit level, at regional level or even at Denominational level within the Africa Evangelical Church.
- i. To be prepared to do church work anywhere where there is need or where the Regional Executive Committee feels he/she can better serve the church.
- j. To lead the church to holiness by instruction in the Word and by being an example by the way he/she lives and conducts him/herself daily before the church – I Timothy 4:12.
- k. To remember that they are servants of the church, they are not to lord it over it. They must behave themselves as servants – I Peter 5:2.3.
- l. They must be careful to show respect for their high calling by not meddling in politics. They serve the heavenly kingdom even when they do community work.
- m. To protect the church from false doctrine by visiting church members to pray and study the Word of God with them at their homes.

- n. To conduct marriages (those that have legal authorization) and funerals.
- o. To attend all church business meetings: At local church, circuit, Regional and Denominational levels as well as all the meetings, ministries where all church workers are invited. A church worker is not requested to attend these but is obligated as they are part of his/her responsibilities to attend them. Attendance is not optional on his/her part. Should there be a compelling reason for him/her not to attend, he/she should write a letter of apology to the Chairperson of that meeting/conference.

3.3: **THEIR INDUCTION INTO THE WORK:**

- a. The Regional Executive Committees that accept them as workers on behalf of the denomination shall set the workers aside for their work.
- b. Before one is set aside as a church worker, they shall be interviewed by the Regional Executive Committee which shall ask them about their call and which shall also counsel them concerning the work that expected of them as defined in the church Constitution and Bylaws.
- c. Every prospective worker need be taught to the point of understanding the church Constitution, Bylaws, Distinctives and the Statement of Faith as defined in the church Constitution.
- d. It is the Regional Executive Committees that shall appoint workers in accordance with the need from place to place, and it shall be ensured that the work is constantly inspected, reviewed and changes effected from time to time if it be so desirable. The objective of the review of the work should be to encourage the worker and to update the work to keep up with the times.
- e. A local church may suggest the worker that they would like to have to minister among them; nevertheless, it is the Regional Executive committee that shall approach the candidate concerned and send back to the local church the response of the worker.

- f. The Regional Executive Committee shall talk seriously to the local church that requests for a worker reminding it of its responsibilities and their expected support of the worker.
- g. It is the Regional Executive Committees that shall induct the workers to their places of service. The Induction Service shall be conducted by the Regional Chairman or by his representative. He shall exhort the worker in the presence of the local church concerning his work and shall also exhort the local church regarding their work and responsibilities.
- h. The transfer of workers shall be by negotiation between the Executive Committee and the churches – the one from which the worker is being transferred and the one to which he is proposed to go. The Executive Committee shall also negotiate with the worker concerned.
- i. All church workers shall be pensioned from their work: males at the age of 65 years, and females at the age of 60 years. But this does not mean that they shall no longer do the Lord's work. They shall be released from the responsibilities of leadership and administration that they shall have been doing. They shall continue to use their gifts in the work of the church at the request of the pastors who are leading at the time or by pastors of places where their gifts can benefit the work. A worker may be given early retirement from the work for health reasons after the Executive Committee has examined his/her case and recommends his/her release from the work, or when they have a written letter from a Medical Doctor in which he/she recommends their release.
- j. A worker may be released from his/her work if or when he/she shows signs of unworthiness or when he/she has committed sin.

3.4: **THEIR SUPPORT:**

- a. All church workers shall be supported by the church in an organized manner in accordance with a procedure agreed upon by the Regional Conference. This is their God decreed privilege.

- b. It is the duty of the deacons to remind the churches of their responsibility to adequately support the workers in their midst. It brings disgrace to the gospel for a church worker to go begging or urging the church for his own support.
- c. A church that fails to adequately support its worker runs the risk of losing the privilege of having a worker.
- d. The Regional Conference shall elect a subcommittee that shall suggest the floor and ceiling support figures for church supported workers. This suggested figure shall be tabled at the Regional Conference – with all church workers sequestered while the report is being tabled. When the decision has been made the workers shall be called in and informed of the decision, and they shall be given freedom to air their feelings about the decision made.

4. CHURCH OFFICES:

- a. These are the offices that shall operate in the church: Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Sunday School Teachers, Youth Leaders, Women's Leaders, Men's Fellowship leaders who voluntarily do the work on a part time bases, and any others who shall be decided upon by the church to meet the needs of its work. People shall be set apart for the work according to their gifts.
- b. Anyone elected into a church office may be relieved of their office even before the expiry of the office for which they were elected if they are found to be misbehaving or if they or their partners be found behaving in a manner not in line with their office, if they do not forsake what they are alleged to be involved in after having been warned and counselled by the church.

4.1: ELDERS (PRESBYTERS):

- a. Their Qualifications:

They shall be mature in the faith, spiritual men, with the qualities written in I Timothy 3:1 – 7.

b. Their Election:

- i. They shall be elected at the local church Annual General Business Meeting.
- ii. The term of office for the candidates shall be three years serving in the offices to which they are elected. The candidates that have served well may be re-elected for a further three year term
- iii. The pastor or his representative shall preside over the election process.
- iv. The date of election shall be announced at least two weeks before hand.
- v. Every church member must make it his/her duty and responsibility to pray that the Lord will lead in the election.
- vi. The names of the nominees shall be written on a surface easily visible to all in the election room. Voting shall take place and those scoring the highest votes shall be deemed elected officers.
- vii. The number of elders shall be determined by the membership of each local church and by the circumstances in each place.
- viii. Elections shall be done between March and June and the new elders shall assume their responsibilities after the elections.
- ix. The pastor shall set the elders apart to their work by praying for them and reminding them of the duties for which they have been elected.

c. Their Responsibilities and Duties:

- i. They shall visit the sick and the bereaved to pray for and with them and to comfort them; and they shall take care of the spiritual needs of the church, assisting the pastor.
- ii. They shall assist the pastor in serving at Communion Services.
- iii. They shall investigate spiritual needs among church members.
- iv. They shall assist the pastor in arranging evangelistic meetings or any other ministries to enhance the work into new areas.

4.2: DEACONS AND DEACONESSES:

a. Their Qualifications:

- * As they are listed in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13

b. Their Election:

- * In the same way the Elders are elected.

c. Their Duties and Responsibilities:

- i. They shall be responsible to the church that elects them.
- ii. Their responsibility shall be to look after all the properties of the church: chairs/benches, furnisher, the church building, finance, the manse, tools, vehicles, immovable property.
- iii. They will deal with all matters involving the church in expense: whether in purchasing, hiring or building.
- iv. They shall assist the pastor in serving the Lord's Supper (where there are no elders).

- v. They shall represent the local church at Quarterly Business Meetings, may be elected to be delegates representing their local churches at Regional or Denominational Conferences.
- vi. They shall play the role of elders where there are no elders.

4.3: **SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS:**

- a. The local church shall invite some from among its members to volunteer to be Sunday School Teachers in accordance with their gifts.
- b. Their duty shall be faithfully teaching the Word to those to whom they are assigned to teach, remembering that the purpose of teaching the Word is to help those that are being taught to understand the way of salvation, attain to the knowledge of Christ and be saved; and it is also to help them grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. They must make it their personal responsibility to pray individually for each one those that they teach, praying for their salvation and for their growth in the Lord. They must also make it their responsibility to take opportunities to speak to them individually to know their spiritual needs and to help them with them.
- d. If possible, each teacher must have his/her own group to teach.
- e. Each teacher must be diligent to plan and prepare his/her lesson a few days before the day he/she is due to teach it.
- f. Local church Sunday School Teachers' meetings must be organized at least once a month where they shall discuss problems, pray, revise their lessons for the whole month and plan for the coming Sunday School events.

- g. If at all possible, the pastor must attend Sunday School Teachers' Meetings but not to chair them. The Sunday School Superintendent is the Chairperson of the Sunday School Teachers' Meetings. The pastor shall chair the Sunday School Teachers' Meetings only when there are going to be held elections of the Superintendent or when requested by the Superintendent.
- h. When the teachers have been elected the pastor shall introduce them to the church at a Sunday.
- i. It is encouraged that while a children's Sunday school is in session the other age groups also meet at Sunday school. It is recommended that the group of older people be taught by the pastor or by an elderly man who is a church member, matured in the faith and taught in the Word.

4.4: SECRETARY:

- a. Every local church shall have its own Secretary, elected to serve a three-year term by the members of that local church from among themselves, elected during the general elections at that local church. He/she must be of a commendable character and be able to do his/her work efficiently.
- b. Because of his/her office, the Secretary shall be shall be a member of the Local Church Committee that elected him/her, shall be an ex-officio member at all the business meetings of the church and at the meetings of all the committees of that church, unless it has its own secretary who will write its minutes.
- c. The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:
 - i. Keeping the register of the Local Church membership.
 - ii. Writing and keeping of the minutes of all the Local church business meetings of the Local Church Committee or of any other meetings where he/she will be admitted as Secretary.
 - iii. Writing of the removal notices for those leaving the local church to go to other churches, which shall be signed the pastor and the Secretary.
 - iv. To read the announcements and notices at all church services.

- v. Writing all letters on behalf of his/her local church that he/she and the pastor will sign.
- vi. Keeping all the correspondence, reports, documents and records of the local church of which, he/she is secretary.

4.5: **TREASURER:**

- a. Every Local Church shall have a Treasurer elected for a three-year term at the election meeting at which all the office bearers of the local church of which he/she is a member shall be elected. He/she should be a person of integrity and good character.
- b. The duties of the Treasurer:
 - i. To keep the financial books of the local church of which has elected him/her.
 - ii. To collect and count, together with the Secretary, all the finances of the local church as they come in.

- iii. To bank, at an appropriate time, the finances of the church of which he/she is Treasurer.
 - iv. To organize, prepare and present a financial report at the Committee meeting each time it meets, and to present it to the Local Church whenever it is required, at least once a year.
- c. The church financial books are liable for audit any time.

5. THE CHURCH ORDINANCE:

The following are the general ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ, given to it by Him:

- a. Baptism
- b. The Holy Communion.

5.1 : Baptism:

This has been discussed above in II.A.a – “Church Membership”

5.2: The Holy Communion:

Holy Communion signifies the fellowship that exists between Christ and His Church. He Himself established it for His own to remember Him by until He comes.

- a. It is the privilege of baptized believers only to partake of the Holy Communion.
- b. Everyone must examine himself or herself before they partake of the Holy Communion at any time.
- c. An unworthy character may disqualify one from partaking of the Holy Communion whether their sin is known or not.
- d. Members of other churches who may be visiting shall be invited to partake in Holy Communion if they are in a position to do so.

6. ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE:

- 6.1: The Word of God prohibits intermarriage between Christians and non-Christians – II Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; I Corinthians 7:39.
- 6.2: God has some one that He has chosen for each one – “a help meet” for him – Genesis 2:18. God is the only One that knows that one.
- 6.3: Those that wish to marry must be encouraged to pray much when they get to that stage, remembering the holiness of this ordinance and not enter into it rushing and without serious thought. They must pray and ask the Lord to show them the right person for them to marry, following the example of Eliezar (Gen. 24:12-14) [The most important thing in this story is that Eliezar prayed that the Lord would show him the right girl for Isaac because he realized that he could get confused choosing from the many girls that he was going to see, all of them having the qualifications that Abraham had given him (Genesis 24:4)!]
- 6.4: The engagement of the children of God must be announced at a church service. The announcement of their intentions to marry shall be taken as an engagement even if they did not have a formal church engagement.
- 6.5: It is the preference of the church that the engaged couple gets married within about six months of the announcement of their engagement.
- 6.6: The engaged couple must be careful of their behavior while waiting for their marriage date: keeping themselves in pure, not giving a place to the devil, but rather that they stand an example of the faithful in their love and conduct (I Timothy 4:12), fleeing youthful lust.
- 6.7: As a church we expect and encourage believing young people to keep

themselves chase and not to propose love to the opposite sex unless they are ready to get married. Just falling in love as the world does can get young people into trouble and discredit their testimonies.

6.8: The way in which young people handle the matter of love should be done in such a way that they shall be above board and not be suspected as 'going the way of the world'; they should not do things in secret to avoid gossip. It would be nice of them to let their leaders know about their intentions so that they can counsel and pray for and with them.

6.9: As a church we do not encourage church leaders to match make and to go between the young man and the lady in these matters. There are many workers who have lost their testimony because of their involvement with the young people in these matters. They must remain neutral counsellors, maintain their integrity and not take sides in these matters.

7. A CHRISTIAN WEDDING:

7.1: As a church, we favour marriage by Christian Rites, in accordance with the laws of the country.

7.2: No Christian people may live together as husband and wife without first getting married. This practice is detestable in the sight of God (Heb. 13:4). This applies to going into a deceased brother's wife. A widow or widower who still wishes to have a husband/wife must get married!

7.3: As a church we do not accept same-sex lovemaking and/or marriages. We believe that the One Who made man at the beginning made them male and female (Gen 1:27) When He made a male "a help meet" for him (suitable for him) He made him a female, brought her to him, thus marrying people of different genders. It was concerning a female that the man said "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:21-23). Marriage between people of the same sex is not natural; it comes from the evil one who is bent to always destroy the things that God appoints.

7.4: As a church we believe that the teaching of the Word of God forbids polygamy.

7.5: No married man who got married in any way other than Christian Rites or is a polygamist may be accepted as a church worker or set apart for ministry within the A E C.

7.6: Those that failed to keep their virginity shall not be married in a church building.

7.7: Divorce and divorce and remarriage (while the divorced spouse is still alive) is forbidden in the Word of God – Matt. 19:3-9; 5:31-32; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; I Cor. 7:27.

8. DEDICATION OF CHILDREN:

8.1: We accept the teaching of the Word of God about dedicating and blessing children by laying hands on them: - Mark 10:13 – 16.

8.2: We do not confuse dedication of children with baptism. Dedication of a baby is the fulfilment of the desire of the parents in which the baby has no say; whereas baptism is done on a believer who personally requests it himself/herself, as a testimony to his/her faith in Christ and in obedience to the commandment of Christ to believers. (Check II.A above).

8.3: When parents bring their children to be dedicated, they make the following commitment:

- a. That they shall teach the Word of God to their child and do everything within their power to lead their child to the saving knowledge of Christ.
- b. That they shall endeavor to bring their child to all the services of the church and to Sunday school.
- c. That they shall live an exemplary life of faith before their child since it is their desire for him/her also to be a believer.
- d. That they shall pray for their child and pray for themselves to be given wisdom to bring their child up in the way that is pleasing to the Lord – Judges 13:8.
- e. That they shall not hinder or stop their child from doing anything in pursuance of the Lord's will for him/her, even if He calls him/her into Hiswork!

8.4 : It is suggested that a child be dedicated while he/she is still young before he/she is able to make a personal decision to believe. The child who can understand the gospel is encouraged to repent.

9. GIVING

9.1: Its basis:

- a. The Bible puts it clearly that God is the Creator and Owner of everything on earth – Gen. 14:22, and that we are His stewards to take care of those things that He has entrusted to our care – I Chronicles 29:14; Matthew 25:14 – 30.
- b. It is the privilege of every believer (members of the Church of Jesus Christ), in obedience to the Scriptures which, at many places, command that they first give themselves to the Lord together with everything that they have, worshipping God with their belongings and with the first fruits of their labour – II Cor. 8:5; Pro. 3:9-10.
- c. The Bible plainly teaches that every believer must support the work of

the God by being faithful in systematic giving – I Cor. 16:2, giving cheerfully – II Cor. 9:7, liberally – II Cor. 9: 6, in humility as to the Lord – Matt. 6:4-6; and that withholding our giving to God is stealing from Him – Malachi 3:8.

- d. Since tithing and giving offerings was commanded in the Old Testament, it is evident that believers of the New Testament era must give much more than those that were under the law. The Church can begin at what was commanded in the Old Testament and go on to that which the Lord commended in the widow who did not give at the abundance of her possessions, but gave her very life indeed, withholding nothing – Mark 12:41 – 44.
- e. This is to provide food in the Lord's house – Numbers 18:12-18

9.2: Handling of church Finance:

- a. The work of the Africa Evangelical church shall be supported by the tithes and other finances given by God's people in accordance with the teaching of God's Word.
- b. Having been given, the money shall be counted and recorded by the Treasurer and Secretary.
- c. All the money given for church work shall be deposited into the bank that shall be chosen by the church at an official business meeting; they shall be deposited within 96 hours of their receipt
- d. Two of three signatories duly authorized shall sign for withdrawals. Signatories shall be authorized as follows:

* Board Funds, by the General Church Conference.

- * Regional Funds, by the Regional Church Conference
- * Circuit Funds, by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.
- * Local Church Funds, by the Local Church Meeting.

Generally speaking, the signatories are usually the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary of the committee concerned. (In the case of a local church the Chairman is usually the pastor.)

10. THE REGIONAL

FUNDS:10.1:

MALIHAMBE:

- a. The main purpose of this Fund is the spreading of the gospel primarily to new areas. All the local churches of the Region shall give contributions to this Fund once every year, and these contributions shall be collected at the Regional Conference.
- b. Every church member must be diligent to give towards this fund.
- c. The Regional Executive Committee shall be responsible for this Fund on behalf of the Regional Conference to which it shall give regular reports when this conference meets. This report shall be attached to the minutes of the Regional Conference
- d. This fund shall be banked in the name "AEC KZN / Gauteng / Eastern Cape / Swaziland Regional Conference Fund" as the case may be; with two of three Regional signatories signing in any transaction.
- e. No money from this fund shall be distributed or used as cash. It shall first be deposited into the bank and cheques shall be drawn for any expenditure.
- f. The purpose for which each cheque is drawn shall be clearly designated, and it shall be recorded in the finance books how it was used.

- g. No money from this fund shall be used except by authorization by the Regional Executive Committee as to what it shall be used for, or if it has been used the Executive Committee, at its meeting shall ratify the decision to use it by approved it as a worthy and acceptable cause.
- h. The Treasurer shall give a financial report each time the Executive Committee meets.
- i. An auditor appointed by the Regional Church Conference shall audit the financial books.
- i. This Fund shall be subdivided among the following funds:
 - A. Half [1/2] the annual income shall be for the spread of the gospel.
 - B. One third [1/3] of the remaining half shall go for the Executive Committee operation fund.
 - C. A second third (1/3] of the said remaining half shall goto the Building Fund.
 - D. The third one third [1/3] shall go to the operation Fundof the Denominational Church Board.
 - E. The Fund towards helping Bible School students shall befrom one quarter [1/4] of the ½ towards the spreading of the gospel (in A above).
- k. The requests for help in constructing church buildings shall be sent to the Regional Executive Committee, which shall assess them. Let it be known that the amount that they are given may notbe the same as that requested, depending on how much money thefund has as well as on the number of requests received. It must be remembered that this fund is meant to help in the construction funding.

- k. A local church that does not contribute to the Malihambe Fund must not expect to receive help from the Building Fund.
- m. All the members of the Regional Executive Committee shall use the Executive Committee Operation Fund to go to the meetings of the Executive Committee when the Regional Church Conference is not in session, or when an Executive Committee member (or even a non-Executive Committee member) is sent either by the Executive Committee or the Regional Church Conference to do church work. Even their meals while in that mission shall be taken care of from that Fund.
- n. Church workers who are not doing church work, and church members who are members of the Executive committee and not sent to conferences as delegates from their local churches, shall be paid for from the Executive Committee Fund to attend Church Conferences.

10.2 : PENSION:

The church shall be encouraged to open Retirement Policies for their Workers – in Group Scheme programmes towards which they (the churches shall support regularly each month.

10.3 : OTHER CHURCH FUNDS:

The church may have other funds according to the needs. Decisions concerning any funds that are to be started shall be made at the annual meeting of the relevant church body (AGCC, Regional Conference, Circuit or Local Church). The maintenance and handling of the fund shall be clearly written in the minutes of the meeting where the decision was taken.

11. THE DIFFERENT CHURCH MEETINGS – LOCAL CHURCH, CIRCUIT AND REGIONAL:

11.1: THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE:

- a. A Regional Conference shall convene annually.
- b. This conference venue shall be at different places each year as agreed upon by the business session of the Regional Conference each year for the following year. The Regional Conference Secretary shall notify the church proposed as the venue in writing as soon after the conference as possible.
- c. This conference shall be for all who wish and like to attend as it shall be arranged to have two components to it as follows:
 - i. Plenary teaching and preaching services: Arranged by the Regional Executive Committee. Anybody and everybody shall be free to attend these services.
 - ii. Business sessions for different groups: Men's, Women's, Youth, and church delegates together with church workers.
 1. It shall be the prerogative of every church worker who works with that particular group and the elected delegates of each group representing the churches that elected them and any invited guests.
 2. Each of these business sessions shall discuss the matters presented to it by its committee, make decisions on each item on its agenda except for those matters that have to do with policy or that affect the whole denomination. The matters that are brought to these business sessions shall only be those that shall have been discussed at local church and Circuit

levels and agreed by a minuted decision to be taken to Regional level.

3. Only the matters on the agenda, arranged by the relevant committee, shall be discussed at each of these business sessions. This means that those that have agenda items should present them to the Committee concerned in writing, the letter duly signed by the elected chairman and secretary at home before they come to conference so that they shall be put on the agenda. Neither the items presented at the business session not appearing on the agenda, nor those verbally presented shall be entertained for discussion.
 4. It is these meetings that shall elect Regional Committees for each group to serve relevant terms of service.
 5. This is the channel to pass matters on to the Church Board or to the Denominational Church Conference from the Regions or from a local church in that Region.
 6. It is this conference that shall decide on the venue for the following year's Regional Conference or for the Denominational Conference if and when it is due to be held in that Region.
- d. The Regional Church Executive Committee:
- i. The Regional Executive Committee shall be elected to serve a three-year term comprising of the Chairman and his Deputy, the Secretary and his Deputy, the Treasurer and four additional members.
 - ii. The Chairman and his Deputy shall be elected from among church workers involved in church work on a full time basis.
 - iii. This Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Regional Conference when the said Regional Church

Conference is not in session. It can investigate matters and make decisions on behalf of the Regional Conference, and then report to the Regional Conference when it meets.

- iv. The Regional Executive Committee shall replace a member who fails to continue in his office as a member of the Executive Committee and report to the Regional Conference.
- v. The quorum shall be five members and no discussions and/or decisions may be arrived at if there are less than five in attendance.
- vi. The Regional Executive Committee shall be responsible for the funds of the Region.
- vii. It shall interview, accept, and introduce church workers to the Region and on behalf of the Region after talking to them individually, whether new from within the AEC or from other churches, or new SIM workers.
- viii. It shall investigate all matters that have to do with church workers in their work, and be a refuge and protection for church workers and take care of the churches.
- ix. It shall accept business items from the churches and decide on those that need go on the R C business agenda and those that still need to be attended by them. No business agenda items shall be discussed at the Regional business meeting unless they have gone through the Executive Committee.
- x. It shall investigate the needs of the places where the church considers preaching the gospel or starting new church work for the Africa Evangelical Church in its Region.
- xi. It shall make it its work to see to it that church workers and the churches are careful to keep and abide by the bylaws of the church and the teaching of the Word of God, and respect the Constitution of the Africa Evangelical Church. It shall counsel those they astray and discipline the hard-hearted.

- e. The churches shall bear the expenses of their workers and delegates when they go to church conferences.
- f. Those that attend church conferences must provide themselves with money to pay registration fees the amounts of which shall be decided upon by the business session of the RCC or AGCC as the case may be.
- g. The minutes of the conference shall be sent to all church workers individually, to all the churches in the Region, to all the delegates individually who attended the conference and to the Africa Evangelical Church Board.

11.2: CIRCUIT QUARTERLY MEETINGS:

- a. The churches in one circuit shall meet together once every quarter to discuss business that concern all of them primarily to encourage the growth of the work and to remind one another of the policies of the church and the decisions of its conferences.
- b. It is this meeting that shall forward business items from the Circuit to the Regional Executive Committee and the Regional Conference.
- c. It shall have authority to discuss and make decisions on business items affecting the local churches in the circuit.
- d. This meeting shall be chaired either by the Circuit pastor or a chairman elected by the circuit from among the pastors in that Circuit, his Deputy who shall either be a church worker or someone else who has the efficiency to do that work and is available to attend all the Circuit Quarterly Meetings, and then the Secretary, his Deputy and the Treasurer.

- e. The Secretary shall record all the minutes of the meetings of the Circuit and keep them in a book set aside for that. These minutes shall be read at the succeeding business meeting and be adopted as a true record. The minute book shall be kept safe because it is the property of the church.
- f. All the churches in the Circuit shall send delegates to the meetings of the Circuit, and all the church workers in the Circuit shall be obligated to attend the Circuit Quarterly meetings.
- g. An announcement about the Quarterly meeting shall be made at least two weeks before the date of the meeting.
- h. If there happens to arise a matter that affects and calls for the discipline of a church worker, the Quarterly Meeting shall be empowered to exercise discipline on that worker, but it may not sack him. Having exercised discipline of him, it must give a report the case to the Regional Executive Committee as soon as possible. It is the Regional Executive Committee that shall take the final decision on the matter as well as on the fate of that worker.
- i. The Quarterly meetings shall not be complete without the preaching of the Word and reviving one another.
- j. These meetings shall be held in March, June, September and December.

11.3: LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- a. Each local church shall have a committee that shall be responsible to administer and organize the affairs of that local church.

- b. This committee shall have a chairman who shall be elected by the local church when they elect all the church officers who shall serve a three- year term.
- c. The other members of this committee shall be the Deputy Chairman, the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, the local church Treasurer, as well as the deacons and deaconesses.
- d. The minutes of each meeting of the local church and the local church committee shall be organized and clearly recorded in legible hand writing in the minute book that shall be kept by the local church Secretary.
- e. This committee may meet any time and as often as dictated by the need.
- f. It is this committee that shall investigate matters affecting the local church and pass on to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting those that it cannot solve or those that affect the circuit.
- g. They shall investigate all the matters that must be discussed by the local church, interview the candidates for baptism and those that apply for church membership, investigate the cases of those that are getting engaged to marry, as well as all matters that relate to the local church that elected it.
- h. They shall organize for a local church general business meeting to be held at least once a year when the church shall hear reports of the work of the local church committee and of the finances of the local church. The announcement concerning this meeting shall be made in adequate time before hand so as to enable as many to attend as possible.

12. POLITICS IN THE CHURCHES:

- a. We accept the teaching of the Word of God that governments (good and bad) are established by God, and that they stand responsible to Him and shall answer to Him about their work while they were in power – Romans 13:1.

- b. For this reason, it is shameful for a Christian to get him/herself into political fighting in opposing the laws of the country except wheresuch laws are directly opposed to a clear teaching of the Word of God.

- c. In accordance with the command of the Word of God, the Church must pray for the governments “that we may live a quiet and peaceable life” – I Timothy 2:2.

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APPENDIX D

AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH BOARD QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW OF ORDINATION CANDIDATES

1. Surname:
2. Full names as they are in the National ID Document
3. Date of birth
4. Education:
 - Academic
 - Biblical/ Theological
 - Continue?
5. How did you come to know the Lord as your Savior?
6. When and how did you sense the call of God on you for the ministry?
7. Gifts:
 - What ministry gifts do you know yourself to be having?
 - What other gifts do you have?
8. Marital status:
 - Are you married?
 - What is your wife's attitude towards your call into ministry?
 - How do you see your wife's place in the ministry?
9. What is your view towards your financial and other material in the work?
10. How would you react to a transfer to other places of ministry from where you are currently serving?
11. How do you regard the Bible in your personal life and in your work?
12. What do you think of the documents of the Africa Evangelical Church and how do you respond to them?
13. How do you accept the structure and organization of the AEC?

APPENDIX E (study's interviewees questions)

Basic demographical questions

1. What year were you born?
2. Where do you currently reside?
3. What is your gender?
4. Which of these best describe you? (Heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or other)
5. What is your current relationship status?
7. Considering the Africa Evangelical Church's position on the ordination of women, why have you remained or left?
8. What is your occupation?
9. Are you ordained?

Discernment questions

10. At what age did you experience a call to ordained ministry?
11. In what institution did you receive your theological training?
12. What are your reasons for seeking to be ordained?
13. What advantages and disadvantages have you encountered?