

Developing an understanding of the Role of Women in Zambia Baptist Association

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Declaration

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this mini-thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted by any institution for a degree.

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Abstract

The debate on the roles of women, both in politics and religion continue to be both an emotional active and divisive subject. In Christianity both evangelical and non-evangelical denominations continue to grapple with the roles women should play in church particularly roles to do with leadership. The divisive nature of this issue demands that association and local churches reflect on the subject matter biblically. It is with this in view that this mini-thesis is an effort to reflect on what the role of women in the Zambia Baptist Association (ZBA).

The introduction of the mini-thesis provides the objective, background, brief literature and design of the research. The focus of the mini-thesis is to describe the practices and beliefs that influence the ministry of women in the association. It employs an empirical analysis of the practices in ZBA with respect to women in ministry. The objective is to seek understanding of the beliefs that are in operation, which give rise to the practices. It an attempt to describe what is happening and why it is happening. The research is descriptive as opposed to prescriptive.

An outline of the four major positions on the roles in ministry is briefly explored in the literature section. The study has also surveyed the major biblical passages which discuss roles of women in the life the church

This discussion has endeavoured to lay out what the findings mean regarding to the role of women in the ZBA, and hopes that relevant and helpful steps will be taken in seeking to enhance the biblical role of women in the ZBA. The results of the research suggest that the roles of women in the ZBA are not harmonious. The study as a matter of necessity has proposed that the association through various methods and stake holders addresses the disharmony as good organization demands and effectiveness in ministry requires

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Chapter1

Introduction

The role of women, not only in the Church but in all aspects of human life, is a passionately debated issue. Equality of women and men at work places, at home, in politics and in the military, is a battle that still rages. In countries like Zambia, it is in principle law that government executive, judiciary and legislature offices should be equally distributed between women and men, but this is not the case in practice. The thinking in many churches and ministries in Zambia is similar regarding the roles of women. They are theoretically equal, but are not equally represented when it comes to ministry roles. The Zambia Baptist Association (ZBA) has not been spared the confusion that has arisen. What has aggravated the situation in ZBA is the fact that the issue has not been reflected on conclusively, biblically and practically, to provide an associational position. In this introductory section, based on the IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) Model, I will seek to present a summary of the whole research under the following headings: objective, background, brief literature review and research design.

1. Objective

The objective of this study is to describe the operative theology of the Zambia Baptist Association (ZBA) with respect to women in ministry. By operative theology, I have in mind the beliefs that are in operation in the practices of the churches in the ZBA. It is a theological study that encompasses both the practices and the beliefs of the ZBA with respect to the ministries of women. The focus is to describe the practices and beliefs that influence the ministry of women

in the association. The study takes the form of an empirical analysis of the practices in ZBA with respect to women in ministry. The objective is to seek understanding of the beliefs that are in operation, the functioning theology that gives rise to the practices. The study will attempt to describe what is happening and why it is happening. The research is descriptive as opposed to prescriptive. The study will attempt to paint an accurate portrait of the present practices of the ZBA.

2. Background

The question of the involvement of women in ministry, in Zambia, became prominent with the growth of Independent, Pentecostal and Charismatic ministries in the 1990s. The main line denominations such as Baptists, Anglicans, Reformed Church in Zambia (Dutch Reformed Church), Brethren in Christ, Christian Missions in Main Lands (CMML), and many others, were compelled to debate the issue because of what was happening in the Pentecostal and Charismatic circles. While in many Charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Zambia e.g. Vineyard Church, Dunamis ministries, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Four square Gospel church, Apostolic Pentecost Church circles, it is a foregone conclusion that women must participate in any ministry and at every level of leadership, the debate in some main line churches is still far from being concluded, and as rightly observed by Domeris (2014:158), it continues to be one of the things that divides evangelicals. ZBA also to the Baptist World Alliance through the Baptist Union of Zambia, the Baptist World Alliance' theological position is egalitarian on the roles of women in the church.

In Zambia, in the late 60s and early 70s, there were only two church mother bodies, the Episcopal Conference (EC) and the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ). Evangelical churches were generally part of the CCZ. The developments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire) indirectly influenced the formation of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ). The formation of EFZ was a reaction to what was observed as liberal developments in the CCZ. This development had a chain reaction in that mainline denominations formed denominational bodies. The birth of ZBA from the Baptist Union of Central Africa (BUCA) came about by the wind of change that was blowing in the country.

What is important to observe here is that while theology had some role in the formation of the denominational organizations, expediency was the main catalyst.

ZBA traces part of its roots from the Lambaland Baptist Mission. Reinard (2009:9) observed that ZBA can be traced from two historical streams, the Malawian historical stream and the Zimbabwean historical stream. The Baptist Union of Central Africa, which traces its roots from Northern Rhodesia, developed into the ZBA. It was formed in 1971. The main object of the ZBA was to be a vehicle to reach out to the urban community. At its formation, ZBA primarily comprised local churches from the Copper belt province, today, however, ZBA affiliate churches are found across the whole country and through the ministry of the BUZ, its influence has reached parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo as well. BUZ is a union of Associations namely, Northern Baptist Association (NBA), Mpongwe Baptist Association (MBA) and ZBA.

The Zambia Baptist Association is one of many Baptist streams in Zambia such as the Baptist Convention, Baptist Fellowship, Reformed Baptists, Mpongwe Baptist Association (MBA), Northern Baptist Association (NBAZ), Independent Baptists and Seventh Day Baptists. The differences among these Baptist bodies are mainly geographical, and the foreign missionary bodies that pioneered the work. The Reformed Baptists are one of the few Baptist bodies that are distinguished by their theological position as opposed to geographical location or the foreign missionary body that pioneered the work. According to its statement of faith, ZBA is conservative theologically. Going by the statement of faith alone, ZBA leans towards the Calvinistic or Reformed position. However, the practices, at various levels, the role of women being one of them, are not a uniform practice across local churches.

In ZBA practice, both in leadership and worship, a wide range of influences are evident including those from Charismatic, Pentecostal, Word of Faith and Episcopalian trends. The word of God is not the only force at work influencing the worship practices of the ZBA. The political climate, the pragmatic convenience and culture are all forces that influence worship and ministry practices, in the ZBA and in other denominations in Zambia.

The association is still not quite defined on several theological issues, the role of women being one of the issues. This is partly because of Baptist polity and ZBA structure.

In keeping with Baptist convictions of local church autonomy, the Executive Committee does not have oversight authority or responsibility over the local churches. "Local churches in the ZBA are autonomous and therefore the ZBA executive has only an advisory function and no power to direct any local church" (Reinard 2009:212).

The conviction of the overseers of individual local churches has influenced the ministry roles that women fulfil. The roles women play, differ significantly, creating some level of disunity and confusion in certain situations. The role of women in ZBA can be placed in two extreme and opposite positions. One practice is where women are completely excluded from any leadership or critical ministry involvement, while the other one is a blanket inclusion of women at any possible level the church may deem fit. The membership of the association cuts across all social and economic structures of society--the very educated and the most illiterate, the rich and the very poor. Interestingly women make up the largest constituency in the association.

The roles women played at the time when the work was being established by men like W.A. Philips from the Metropolitan Tabernacle (South Africa Baptist Historical Society 2005:1), a Particular Baptist Church theologically, is today probably the extremely conservative end of the continuum. While the ZBA traces some of its roots to a theologically clearly defined church mission, its theological position is not still the same as that of some of its roots. A lesson from this experience by the ZBA is that background and theological anchorage at a particular historical time and theological heritage, may not necessarily endure unless-despite the fact that continuance cannot be absolutely guaranteed-great and deliberate effort and strategies are implemented for perpetuation of what is believed in, by a particular church, mission or association.

A brief explanation of the structure of the ZBA is important in understanding the background of ZBA, because the structure has gone through several revisions. The structural changes have had impact on the ministry of women in the

Association. The organizational structure and functions of the association are generally taken from the Constitution of the Association. At the top of the ZBA structure is the General Assembly, which is composed of member churches. It is the association's policy making body. Directly beneath the General Assembly is the General Executive Committee, which is the administrative body. The General Secretary (Executive Director) is the Chief Executive officer. Connected to the office of Executive director are the various office staff, district fellowship committees, subcommittees, departments and ministries.

3. Literature Review

The problem of whether women should be ordained to the ministry, to the positions of elder, pastor and other senior leadership positions in the church, is a problem the church has grappled with for some time. It is a problem confronting all denominations. The debate on the subject continues to rage. The exclusive dominance of male church leadership, particularly the exclusion of the ordination of women as pastors, elders and any other senior church office has been challenged historically and theologically. Margaret Howe (1989:129), a student of F.F. Bruce, argues that women have been deprived of honour and recognition in leadership positions. Her argument is that there are biblical and historical reasons to challenge customs which have led to male dominance in church leadership. She is not the only one. In a 2010 a book titled, *How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories by Prominent Evangelicals*, edited by Alan F. Johnson, reflects the significance of the question of women in ministry.

The traditionalist, complementarians and many conservatives argue that there is no biblical support for women to serve in the office of elder and pastor. For example, Piper and Grudem (1991:61), in answering the question, "where in the Bible do you get the idea that only men should be the pastors and elders in the church?", state that, "most explicit texts relating directly to the leadership of men in the church are 1Timothy 2:11-15; 1Corinthians 14:34-36;11:2-16". This is in refuting the egalitarian and the plural ministry positions on leadership.

The evangelical literature generally falls in four categories about the role of women in local church life. The key book, which deals with the four views in

detail, is one edited by B. Clouse and R.G. Clouse, *Women in Ministry: Four Views*. The four views evangelicals mainly hold to in outline are:

First there is the *traditional view*. This view holds the view that women should not hold the office pastor, elder and deacon. The tradition view asserts that woman should not exercise a teaching ministry over the congregation at large. This position states that women can be gifted to teach but teach only women and children because congregation teaching is a qualified male God ordained responsibility. (Tanner 04 February 2016) Some of the passages this view quotes are 2Thess 2:15; 3:6; Titus 2:3-5 and 1Timothy 2:12. The main issue the traditional view addresses is whether women should serve as elders or hold the ministry of teaching the Word over both men and women in the context of the assembled church? (Tanner 04 February 2016). They very assertively say no they should not because they are not permitted by God's word. The traditional position holds that church leadership is male.

The second is *the moderate view*. This position states that women are excluded only and exclusively from holding the office of elder or pastor; they are free to hold other offices like deacons, church treasurers, and board members of churches and seminaries. This view sees no contradiction between allowing women to serve in various ministries in the church while excluding them from the office of elder and pastor.

The third position is *the plural ministry view*. The core emphasis of this view is the fact that women should not be restricted in terms of what ministry they do. The argument is based on passages such as Acts 2:17-18 and Romans 12:1-9 and other passages that emphasize spiritual gifting as opposed to gender. The belief of this theological position is that the Bible does not restrict women from holding any office in the local church.

The fourth position is *the egalitarian view*. Egalitarians believe in equality, holding that all are in principle equal and as such should enjoy equal social, economic, political and religious rights and opportunities (*Encarta Dictionary* 2009). While the argument for women in ministry in the pluralist view is gifting, the emphasis of the egalitarian view is equality, and the main text used for this view is Galatians 3:28.

In summation, these four views can be reduced to two views: those who argue and practice the ordination of women and those who do not, and this is the argument in the book titled, *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, edited by Beck and Bloomberg.

Some of the key works, on those who argue that leadership is male or that women are not allowed by the Scriptures to serve as pastors, elders and other senior church office leadership positions, particularly those that come with exercising authority by oversight and teaching, are: *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*”, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. The thrust of arguments in this book, from the theological, psychological, biological, family and political perspectives is that leadership--pastor or elder or any executive position in the local church must be occupied by qualified men.

The other key book by those who argue against the ordination of women as pastors or elders is a book by David Pawson, *Leadership is Male*. As the title clearly communicates, Pawson’s position (shared by many churches and theologians today) is that senior leadership must be reserved for men. *“Good, the Joy of Christian Manhood and Womanhood”*, edited by Jonathan Parnell and Owen Strachan, is also a key book from this theological position.

The works that argue for ordination to the office of elder or pastor and any other senior church office include: *Building Consensus on Christian Leadership: Men and Women in the Church*, by Sarah Summer. The view of the author of this book is that the Bible does not teach that women cannot be pastors or elders. For example, the author writes, “It’s conspicuous that so many of us believe that women can’t be given as apostles, pastors or preachers. Where did we get that idea? Not from 1Timothy2!” (2003:244). *Recovering Biblical Ministry by Women: An Exegetical Response to Traditionalism and Feminism*, by George and Dora Winston, is one of the books that argues for women leadership. The authors argue that women can serve, exercise the authority and occupy the office of apostles, that women can be deacons and that they can be elders and pastors. The work is an exegetical response to the traditionalism and feminism. Overall the book endorses the ordination of women to what may be called full service to

Christ. The authors' purpose is to bring out inductively what they consider the thrust of the passages bearing on the subject. *Why not women?*” by Loren Cunningham and D.J. Hamilton is another work that argues for women leadership or ordination. Their basic argument is that women are called to ministry and leadership positions just as men are and as such must equally be freed into all ministry opportunities including those of leadership.

The major schools of thought on women in ministry diverge in their interpretations of some of the key biblical passages. I shall now briefly summarize the major positions on a variety of key texts.

1Corinthians 14:34-35. One of the exegetical and interpretative issues in relation to 1Corinthians 14:34-35 is the question of Paul's authorship of these words. A good number of scholars have questioned whether 14:34-35 is part of the original letter. France 1995:52 cites scholars such as Gordon D. Fee, C.K. Barrett and H. Conzelmann among those who question Paul's authorship of 1Cor.14:34-35.

If Paul did not write verse 34b-36, then the whole argument and teaching of the passage must be thrown out. Many of those who support ordination of women to the pastorate argue that the text was not authored by Paul and as such not binding. “Some scholars argue that 1Corinthians 14:34–35 was not written by Paul but was inserted by a copyist or that it is a question from Paul's opponents in Corinth which Paul denounces in 1 Corinthians 14:36 (Fuller 2016). Scholars who argue that 1Corinthians 14:34-35, was not written by include:

Mowczko (2012) writes:

“The view that 14:34-35 is a non-Pauline quote is one of the few which offers a plausible explanation for the jarring change of tone which verses 34-35 bring into the text, and the subsequent abrupt change of topic, tone and gender in verse 36. If this explanation is the correct one, then Paul is not silencing women in 14:34-35. Rather, Paul quotes and then rebukes the people who are trying to silence the women.”

Preato, in answering the question, Did Paul Really Say, "Let the Women Keep Silent in the Churches?" states

This article provides objective evidence that verses 34-35 do not represent the inspired writings of the Apostle Paul or any other inspired writer. These verses

are best understood as a slogan or rabbinic saying based on the Jewish "oral law," not the written word of God. Therefore, these verses cannot be used to prohibit women from pulpit ministry within the church. (2005)

C.K. Barret, Hans Conzelmann, Gordon D. Fee and David W. Odell-Scpott, are among the scholars who hold the position that these words in 1Corinthians14:34-35 are not the Apostle Paul's; they are either an interpolation or a quotation and therefore not prohibiting women in anyway.

If, however Paul wrote these words, then we must abide by the teaching that the text brings out, whatever that teaching and however difficult the teaching may appear. Those who argue against the ordination generally uphold Pauline authorship of the text. Morris (1985:197) takes it for granted that Paul wrote this section as the rest of the letter. He writes about these verses "Paul is calling on the Corinthians to conform to the accepted Christian standards." Wilson (1997:209) also states the same conviction. He writes, "Paul enjoins silence upon the women". Carson (1991:140-153) in a detailed and extensive treatment of 1Corinthians 14:33b-36, also argues for Pauline authorship.

What then is the problem of 1Corinthians14:35-36? The first problem is whether the text was written by Paul. If the authenticity of the text is established, the second problem raised by the text is whether the prohibition is absolute or not. Was it a culturally necessitated exclusion or not. Whatever the school of thought and whatever position one holds on the ministry of women in the local, sound biblical exegesis and hermeneutics must govern the whole process and interpretation of this text. The demand on any biblical exegete traditional or egalitarian is to be faithful to the rules and sound biblical exegesis.

1Timothy2:11-14. Regarding to 1Timothy 2:11-14, the debate focuses on the meaning of Paul's key statements: (a) "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission". (b) "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent". Those who support the pastoral or eldership role of women argue that Paul was addressing a specific cultural issue, while those who argue against pastoral or eldership role of women hold that the principles are binding on all churches, since they are based on the creational order.

Galatians.3:28. The questions that are raised in discussing the Galatian passage, particularly in relation to the role of women in the church are basically twofold: Does the text support the egalitarian function in the church in terms of ministry and leadership or does the text simply support the egalitarian of privileges as Jonson Jr. argues, on the side of the traditionalists and complementarians, “from this brief survey it is clear that none of the major teachers of the history of the church thought Galatians 3:28 abolished the male-female role distinction in marriage or church”(1991:156). Is there evidence provided that the text is egalitarian in ministry function and leadership? The question that begs to be answered in relation to Galatians 3 is whether the focus of the text speaks only about soteriological matters or whether it also teaches ecclesiastical equality. Does Paul intend to convey that men and women are equal in terms of ministry in the local church or is he only speaking about them being equal in terms of how they are saved? Mickelsen (1989:204-5) has argued, is Paul teaching that men and women minister equally with gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit, because Christ has freed them equally?

The egalitarian scholar, Mickelsen, quotes F.F. Bruce as saying, “Paul states the basic principle here: if restrictions on it are found elsewhere in the Pauline corpus...they are to be understood in relation to Gal.3:28 and not the other way around” (1989:205). If this is true of this text the implication is that every passage in the Pauline writing that restricts or excludes women in ministry including leadership must be disregarded because Galatians stated that there should be no such thing full stop. Bruce’s position on the role of women in church is that just as the divide between Jew and Gentile, and slave and master was broken down not only in redemptive terms but regarding religious or spiritual roles, so the same is true of men and women in church life. Bruce writes;

“Paul is concerned with practical church life in which men and women (like Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free persons) are here and now fellow-members. It is not their distinctiveness, but their equality of religious role that is abolished ‘in Christ Jesus’ he argues , that, no more restriction is implied in Paul’s equalizing of the status of male and female in Christ than in his equalizing of the status of Jew and Gentile or slave and free person. If in ordinary life existence in Christ is manifested openly in Church fellowship,

then, if a gentile may exercise spiritual leadership in Church as freely as Jews or a slave as freely as a citizen, why not a woman as freely as a man (1982:190).

It is in this context that Mickelsen quotes Paul.

Romans 16:7, *“Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was”*, (NIV).

Romans 16:7. The textual question on Romans 16:7 is whether the reading should be Junias or Junia. The exegetical issue is whether Junia or Junias is male or female. It is argued that if Junia is a woman, women can function as senior leaders in a local church. The following are some of the scholars who have conclude that the person greeted by the name of Junia was a woman; Schreiner: “the likely conclusion is that Junia is a woman (1998:798); Kruse: “there is now an emerging consensus that it should have been accentuated as a feminine name, in other words Paul was referring to Junia a woman not Junias a man” (2012:561); Moo “scholars have recently inclined decisively to this same view” (1996:923).

If it is accepted that Paul was speaking about a woman called Junia, what did he mean when he wrote, “They are outstanding among the apostles, or they are of note among the apostles”? Wallace(2004), having considered textual and historical data, concludes that the person referred to by the name of Junia is a woman but not an apostle, but one who was prominent among the apostles. He closes, “In sum, until further evidence is produced that counters the working hypothesis; we must conclude that Andronicus and Junia were *not* apostles, but were known to the apostles.

Nancy Vyhmeister (2013) on the other hand, argues that Junia was not only a woman but an apostle, not just who well known by the apostles-she was an apostle, “It is difficult to complete this study without finding that Paul is referring to a woman named Junia, who, together with Andronicus (probably her husband), was part of the group of apostles. Paul recognized her as one of the apostles, a woman who was willing to suffer for the gospel she was busily spreading” (Vyhmeister 2013).

In summary, then, there are basically three scholarly positions on Romans 16:7: (a) Junias was a man and one of the apostles, (b) Junia was a woman, but not an apostle, and (c) Junia was a woman and an apostle.

1Timothy3:11. Those who argue for ordination of women state that women here have an authoritative office, which is discussed in the context of deacons and elders. Those who argue against the ordination of women, simply see in this passage, the qualification of a deacon (not even an elder) in relation to the character of their wives. The question that this text raises is the role women should play in a local church? Those for ordination of women argue that the passage lays out three possible offices-deaconesses, elders or pastors or an official recognized position for women in the church.

This then in highly summarized form, is the state of the debate in terms of theological scholarship about women in ministry, the major schools of thought and the major points of debate and some of the biblical passages on which the debate is based.

4. Research Design

The design of the chapter is a descriptive-interpretive study of the operative theology of the ministry of the ministry of women in Zambia Baptist Association. It seeks to understand the present realities in the ZBA. It follows an empirical design, in which qualitative data is collected by means of semi-structured focus groups. The focus groups are semi-structured in that they follow a set of developed questions.

Chapter 2

Methodology

1. Introduction

The chapter will focus on showing how the information in the research was gathered. It presents the methodology, “a description of the steps taken” (Smith: 2008) to answer the question, “What are the roles of women in the ZBA?” It will provide some historical background about the respondents in the context of the ZBA. The chapter will answer the questions, “Who were the respondents to the questionnaire?”, and “Why were these individuals and group of people selected?” It will explain the delimitations (the limits or the boundaries of the research) and the limitations of the data collected. The kind of information that this research expected, will be brought out in the questions asked and the answers provided. The rationale for choosing the semi-structured focus group as the instrument of research will be provided. The chapter will also show what was done to prevent a biased outcome of the research. Towards the end of this chapter I will seek to show how the information gathered by the method employed in this research is helpful and useful in answering the research problem: How to develop an understanding of the role of women in Zambia Baptist Association. In summary, the chapter is a documentation of “what was done and why it was done” (Smith 2015) and the way it was done.

2. A Brief Background of the Kabwe District Churches in the Context of ZBA

Kabwe is the administrative and provincial headquarters of the central province. The work force of the town constitutes mainly civil servants and men and women in uniform. The main economic activity is agriculture. The membership of the ZBA Kabwe District Churches is naturally composed of this population.

As a district of the ZBA, Kabwe is one of the oldest districts in the Association. ZBA was formed in 1971 (Mbewe 2006:3) and the first local Baptist church in Kabwe, by the verbal report given, was started in the same year. Some of the respondents to the survey research were leaders who have been members of ZBA Churches since 1971, and are still members of some of the local churches in Kabwe.

Currently there are nine local churches in the Kabwe district. The membership of these local churches is difficult to state precisely because except for one, the churches do not have clear membership registers. The Combined membership of the nine local churches is estimated at 850. Only two of these churches had pastors at the time of the survey. (The lack of pastors may have affected the churches negatively, both numerically and doctrinally.)

3. The Rationale for Generally Delimiting the Research to Kabwe District Churches

The churches in Kabwe are among some of the oldest churches. Some of the leaders and members interviewed have been in the ZBA circles for a long period and have quite some valuable background historical and theological information.

The theological representation of the local churches in Kabwe made it an ideal district in which to conduct the survey. Kabwe churches have basically three theological streams represented: the reformed or Calvinistic, the mid-way churches, i.e. Churches who are partly Calvinistic and partly Arminian and the group that one would call Baptistostal-these are local churches that embrace some Baptist practices as well as some Charismatic-Pentecostal practices.

The decision to delimit the research to the Kabwe District was largely a pragmatic one. By focusing on the Kabwe District, the researcher could minimise the cost of travel and the time required to visit the pastors and churches. It also ensured that follow up, if needed, would be possible. The diverse composition of the focus group helped to ensure that it would provide representative insights into the beliefs and practices of the ZBA. The group included leaders and non-leaders, men and women and a cross-section of ages from youths through to

elders. It was judged that the group was the ideal grouping to seek views from because of their positions and levels of influence in Zambia Baptist Association local churches and districts.

4. The Information Provided to the Respondents during the Whole Process of Gathering Information

The respondents were informed about the purpose of the exercise, that it was an academic research project to answer a specific question. The respondents were also informed that this was not just a theoretical or academic exercise, but that it was sincerely intended to provide a proposed solution to the question of the role of women in the ZBA. The respondents were informed that they needed to answer the questions as honestly and transparently as possible. During the meetings, the respondents were free to respond to the questions in the language they were most comfortable speaking. The respondents were also advised that if they needed access to the final product of the research, it would be made available. The respondents were also told that this exercise was being done with the full knowledge and permission of the associational leaders.

5. The Demographic of Respondents by Age, Gender and Leadership Position

Initially the plan was to interview all the nine ZBA Executive Committee members. Since each district executive committee has a minimum of eleven and maximum of fifteen members, the total number of the district executive would have been ninety- nine to one hundred and ten, with the inclusion of the pastors who did not sit on the District Committees, the numbers would have gone to one hundred and fifty. This was impractical due to consideration of time and cost. The number of people interviewed was 53 and instead of all nine districts being interviewed, the interviewees were drawn just from one district. They came from these local churches: Mine, Lukanga, Makululu, Bwacha, Chindwini, Wire and Kabwe Central Baptist. The fifty- three was the group that was split into the focus groups.

Gender: Of the 53 focus group participants 33 were men and 20 were women.

In percentage terms 62% were men and 38% were women.

Age: 6 men and 3 women; 9 in total were between 45-60 (16.9%)

4 men and 3 women; 7 in total were between 35-44 (13.2%)

23 men and 14 women were between 18-34 (69.8%)

Leadership position: of the 53 focus group participants,

4 were elders.

15 men and 9 women were deacons and deaconesses.

5 men and 6 women were church leaders in different capacities.

4 of the respondents were pastors and 3 were at the district level.

In percentage terms of the 53-people involved in the research, 52.8% held various leadership positions.

6. The Research Method

6.1. The rationale for using the focus group research method

This is a qualitative research project on the role of women in the Zambia Baptist Association Churches. The primary research methodology was the semi-structured qualitative structured focus group questions. Since the data collected was in the form of words, they were qualitative in nature. This focus group as an empirical method is a well established method of gathering data. "Focus groups are well - established as a legitimate data collection method within the qualitative research tradition. The method has become frequently used in social sciences, health and related disciplines" (Gronkjaer, Curtis, deCrespigny & Delmar 2011). Heary (2000) has observed that, "increasing recognition of the benefits of the qualitative research paradigm has opened up new means of exploration and investigation. As part of this trend, there has been an increase in the use of focus groups as a viable alternative to traditional one-to-one interviews."

The semi-structured focus group questions approach was chosen because it provides a response rate that is almost 100%, in that all those present in the meeting participate. This is one of its main advantages particularly as compared with a written questionnaire, which is distributed to individuals who respond to it at

different times. The response to a questionnaire given to individuals who respond at different times tends to be between 30-50 percent (Smith 2008:240). The interviews in this paper, guided by a set of questions, was chosen because “it permits a deeper and fuller understanding of the attitudes of the respondents” and “because interviews, (in this case in a group form), provide information not available through surveys” (Smith 2008:236-237).

6.2. Definition of a Focus Group

“A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging” (Temkin 2016). The above definition of a focus group emphasizes where the attention in this research method is; it is on a select group of people, based on certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of research. It is usually a group of about 6-10 people. It is a small group guided by an able leader. It is used to learn about opinions on a designated topic, and to guide future action (Temkin 2016). Heary (2000) has outlined the thrust of the focus group very helpfully in five points including the four that are cited below. (1) the group is an informal assembly of target persons whose points of view are requested to address a single topic; (2) the group is small, 6-12 members, and it is relatively homogeneous; (3) a trained moderator with prepared questions and probes sets the stage and induces participants' responses; and (4) the goal is to elicit the perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and ideas of participants about a selected topic. The focus group methodology was not only selected because of what it is and focuses on but also because of its many advantages as a research method.

6.3. The Advantages of the Focus Group

The Focus Group method has many advantages. Some of these advantages are:

The focus group method promotes interaction of the participants as opposed, for example, to individual questionnaires. “Interaction between group participants is considered the distinct advantage and hallmark of focus group research” (Gronkjaer; Curtis; deCrespigny & Delmar 2011). The members of each focus group interacted actively and openly, enriching the whole research process.

The other advantage of this research method secondly is that it adds a human dimension to impersonal data. The research process was not simply a dry impersonal gathering of information as other qualitative research methods tend to be. The focus group method added the human element in a personal way in a group dynamic. "Focus group discussions allow the researcher to probe both the cognitive and emotional responses of participants while observing the underlying group dynamic" (Heary 2000).

Thirdly, the focus group deepens understanding, in that where there is need; clarification can be sought by follow up questions. Morgan observes that one of the strengths of the focus group is that participants both query each other and explain each other (1996:12). This was demonstrated in the various focus groups by the way follow up questions were asked and clarifications were given. Since follow up questions could have easily distracted focus on the main research question the group leaders were instructed to ensure that follow up questions that would easily deviate from the main question be wisely responded to and not allowed to become the focus.

Fourthly, one other great advantage of the focus group approach is that it is very economical if properly planned and executed, "The focus group, method of research, saves time and money in comparison to individual interviews. The focus group also provides a broader range of information" (Temkin 2016).

This research method affords the researcher an opportunity to interact with and ask the participants on areas, needing clarity. Morgan (1996:12) has observed:

"A further strength comes from the researcher's ability to ask the participants themselves for comparisons among their experiences and views, rather than aggregate individual data in order to speculate about whether or why the interviewees differ."

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation outlines in summary four other benefits of using a focus group.

The focus group has ability to produce a large amount of data on a topic in a short time; it provides access to topics that might be otherwise

unobservable; and it can ensure that data directly targets researcher's topic and provide access to comparisons that focus group participants make between their experiences. This can be very valuable and provide access to consensus/diversity of experiences on a topic.

6.4. Possible weaknesses or disadvantages of focus group

The focus group as a qualitative method of research has some disadvantages, however it must be pointed out at the very beginning of this section that the reason this method was chosen was because the advantages outweigh the weakness. In most critical cases the disadvantages or weakness can easily be mitigated as will be demonstrated below.

There can be, if not well regulated and moderated, disagreements and irrelevant discussion which distract from the main focus. This can be mitigated by efficient moderation and clear lay out of the object of the focus group.

“The focus group relies heavily on assisted discussion to produce results; consequently, the facilitation of the discussion is critical. The quality of the discussion depends on the skill of the moderator, who should be well trained and preferably from the target population” (Fok-Han.L &Ratnapalan S.2009)

If not well planned, information compilation can be a challenge. This can be mitigated by adequate preparation, for example by having two or more people to compile data and then compress the information as accurately as possible. “All data should be transcribed verbatim. However, these large volumes of qualitative data might be difficult to analyse.”(Fok-Han &Ratnapalan 2009)

The other disadvantage as again observed by Fok-Han and Ratnapalan (2009), is that “while a focus group format prevents the dangers of a nominal group process, outspoken individuals can “hijack” and dominate a discussion.”

Moderation or facilitation is the critical in ensuring this is not the case.

A further weakness Fok-Han and Ratnapalan (2009), rightly caution about is that, inherent to the focus group format is its participant selection system—participants are self-selected and study results are therefore harder to generalize to the larger population. An extensive study should be done to come up with a comprehensive representative position; this paper is simply a mini-thesis.

Temkin (2016) has also observed that some of the weaknesses of a focus group as research method is that “Respondents can feel peer pressure to give similar answers to the moderator's questions.” And that the moderator's skill in phrasing questions along with the setting can affect responses and skew results”. These are some of the weaknesses of a focus, but as stated at the beginning of this section, most if not all of the them can be effectively mitigated.

6.5. The Selection and composition of the Focus group

Kabwe District was the district identified for this research. From the Churches in Kabwe District, 53 people, leaders and non-leaders, men and women were ranging from 18-60years old. This group of 53 was, for practical reasons, interviewed at two different times and locations. The group at Chindwin was interviewed separately because they were unable to make it on the date agreed with the other group that gathered at Lukanga Baptist Church.

There were two focus groups at Chindwin. One group had 5 and the other group had 6. I moderated one group and one the leaders moderated the other group. There were two sessions, one in the morning, and the second one in the afternoon. Light lunch was provided. The two sessions were agreed on so that all questions be discussed as exhaustively as possible and each participant be given as much time as possible.

At Lukanga there were 4 groups, two groups had 11 people and the other two groups had 10. At Lukanga we had three sessions, two in the morning and one in the afternoon. Lunch was provided and some drinks and snack in the morning.

The set of questions that were devised to be a guide, were given to this group of 53 people in advance so that they could process the questions in advance for a more effective interaction. The group leaders were chosen two weeks before the focus groups were convened.

The procedure during this group meeting was that, one question was asked at a time and if the question needed further clarification, the clarification was given and then as many individuals as were ready to respond to the question, were given the opportunity to respond to the question. The clarifications of the

questions were done in English, Lamba and Bemba. The focus group setting gave the opportunity to the respondents to seek clarifications on the questions that were not clear and gave opportunity to ask follow up questions to the response or responses given to a particular question.

7. Steps Taken to Safe Guard the Data Collection

7.1. Measures were taken to ensure that people, young and old, male and female and those who were not in leadership were not intimidated in the whole exercise. No individual was permitted to monopolise the discussions and space was created for everyone to contribute. The facilitator actively sought to draw out the views of quieter participants. Everyone was assured that they could feel at liberty to respond in the whatever way, they judged best to the question.

7.2. In attempting to encourage participants to give transparent honest answers it, was emphasized that the purpose of the research was to help the Association and its churches. The researcher took pains to emphasize that the questions had no right or wrong answers, so the respondents could feel free to answer the questions as sincerely and as exhaustively as possible from their individual point of view.

7.3. It was underlined that confidentiality would be maintained at the highest level, no reference by name or detail would identify a respondent unless permission was expressly given to do so.

7.4. The respondents were encouraged not to think of the researcher in terms of his former associational position-as the General Secretary-but as primarily one who was seeking their help and participation in this whole pursuit of understanding the role of women in ZBA. They were urged to see themselves as contributors to a solution on the question of the roles of women in ZBA.

7.5. The respondents were encouraged to communicate in a language they most felt comfortable speaking. There were five main languages that the people in the focus groups could speak namely, English, Lamba, Bemba, Kaonde and Nyanja except for English all the languages are quite interrelated in dialect and construction. The challenge among these tribes is not understanding each other

but speaking fluently in other language. For those that could not to understand English, the questions were translated and explained in the vernacular they were most knowledgeable in. About two thirds were able to speak English and Lamba fluently. Even though Zambia has 73 tribes, the tribes for official communications purposes, have been grouped in seven major tribal groups. This division is not just academic or political; it refers to actual groupings that are able to communicate well as tribes. The tribes that composed the focus group were from one such division and as such the challenges were not as grave.

7.6. The answers given were recorded by the group leaders and then summarized by three people; two volunteers from the group leaders and by the researcher. Later a comparison was made and summary responses composed. The detailed record of each individual response was kept as a record of the research. The questions used in the instrument and the explanations why each question was asked and why it was asked the way it was, is given below.

In formulating these questions, under the guidance of the lecturer the following guidelines were followed as outlined on the focus group tips website.

The researcher strove to the best of his ability to ensure that the questions were open ended, because open ended questions allow the respondents to the answer the questions the best way they can without being restricted (2009-2012)

The researcher tried as much as possible to avoid what Kruger (2002:6) calls dichotomous questions that is questions that can simply be answered with a yes or no. The researcher endeavoured to be as unbiased as possible. The questions were chiefly framed with the research topic in focus. The questions were set among other important considerations such academic and flow; the practical aspect was among the main considerations as well.

8 Research Questions

8.1. What role or roles have the women in the Zambia Baptist Association and local churches played?

Based on the popular definition of theology as faith seeking understanding (Smith 2011:6), the understanding of history is important in this pursuit. The aim of this question was to trace as much as possible the roles women in the ZBA have played since the formation of the Association. The aim was try and establish an understanding of the current practices in relation to women in the ZBA by considering historical practices of women in the ZBA. If we are to understand the current social context in which women in the ZBA play the roles they play, history is important. The objective of the question was to explore the history in relation to the roles of women in ZBA. The expectation in asking this question, was that, if we are to pursue practical theology well, understanding practical theology in the way that Smith has summarized it, "Practical theology is ...correlates the past (tradition), present (praxis), and future (theory of action) (2011:15), historical reflection is essential. Since practical theology involves a correlation of the past, present and future, the question hoped to address that past which would be later related to the current of the roles women play in the ZBA. The objective of this particular question was, to help the researcher, through the historical lens, to understand the context in which women play the roles they play in the ZBA.

8.2. How have the roles women have played in the Association and local churches changed over time?

Having reflected on the roles women played in the past, it was important to ask whether the roles have changed over time, and if they have, how they have changed. The question anticipated the why question, but particularly focused on the how. It was designed to probe the respondents understanding of the processes, the winds and situations that caused the changes that may have taken place in the roles women played in the ZBA. The question further aimed at seeking clear information about the nature, extent and causes of changes in women's roles.

8.3. Why do you think the roles women have played changed over time?

The objective of this question was to explore the forces at work that brought about the changes in the roles women played in the ZBA. The question included whether the changes were a result of cultural, political, theological, religious or social trends. It also probed whether the changes were *intentional* (because of thoughtful interventions) or *incidental* (simply pragmatic responses to situations).

8.4. In your opinion, what roles should women play in the Association and local churches?

The aim of this question was to get a sense of the extent to which present realities reflect the beliefs and convictions of the respondents. The question assumed that the respondents, having some reflection on the past, would at this particular time, move to provide their own independent suggestions or opinions on what they thought were the roles women in the ZBA should play. The responses would give some understanding as to whether the respondents wished to reinforce the past and present traditions (roles women played in ZBA in the past) or wished to see changes in the roles that women play in the ZBA.

8.5. What leadership roles do you think women should play in the Association and local churches and why do you think so?

The question sought the views of the respondents on particularly what they thought were the leadership positions women should play in ZBA and why they thought women should play those leadership roles both at the local church and at the Association level. The question assumes that women should play some leadership roles, and probes the respondents' beliefs as to which leadership roles they should play. The question was presented in the context of the roles women are playing in other churches outside the Baptist circles and particularly outside the ZBA churches and whether those roles should be the same in ZBA. The question's main thrust was to hear the position of the respondents on the leadership roles they felt women should play in the ZBA and to record their reasons for their view.

8.6. How has the Baptist belief in local church autonomy and religious liberty affected the role women have played in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches?

Church autonomy is one of the Baptist Distinctives. The question is not probing whether the belief in local church autonomy is biblical or not; it is simply exploring how that the belief has affected the roles women play in local churches. If the Baptist understanding of associations is that it is a voluntary decision from individual churches, how has the role of women within the local church, affected the role of women in ZBA affiliated churches? The question also addresses how the understanding of freedom of worship has affected the role of women in ZBA. The emphasis in the question was on the “how”, that is in what way and to what degree have these two Baptist Distinctives influenced and shaped the understanding of the roles of women in the Association.

8.7. Do you think that Ordination of Women to the Pastorate and the Office of Elder in the Zambia Baptist Association is conclusively clarified?

What is meant by ordination is that initial formal setting apart by the local church or the Association of a person to full-time Christian service or church office, in this context the pastorate or eldership. At the time of the research, there were no female elders or pastors in any ZBA-affiliated local church according to the best of knowledge of the members of the focus groups. The position on women ordination in ZBA from the respondents’ perspective was that no women are allowed to be ordained to the office of pastor or elder. The one Baptist Union college to which ZBA generally sends men for the ministry though accepts women to do the same courses such as pastoral theology, women in the association do not get ordained as pastors or elders. With this background, with which many of the respondents are familiar, the question sought to compel the respondents to think through what they thought were some of the reasons why the ZBA does not ordain women to the office of Pastor or elder.

8.8. What Cultural or Tribal Practices in Your Opinion Affect the Role Women Play in the Zambia Baptist Church Affiliated Churches?

Culture affects church life sometimes negatively and sometime positively. Church history is always in a context. Meyer says that Church history is necessary influenced by other forces in society, such as those motivated by economic, political, cultural and intellectual factors (Brodie 2014:92). If the role of women in the ZBA is to be understood the influence culture must be appreciated. This question's focus is to understand how culture has influenced the roles women play in ZBA.

8.9. In your judgment what should be practically and specifically done to enhance or improve the role women play in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches?

The focus of this question was to have the respondents give their practical and specific suggestions on what they thought are some of the ways the that role women play in the ZBA can be enhanced. The assumption of the question was that in Christian life and practice, there is always room to improve.

8.10. What teachings have been presented on the roles of women in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches?

The design of the question was to determine whether some teachings have been presented on this topic, and if any teachings have been presented, what some of these teachings were. The aim here was to establish whether teachings have been presented on the roles of women in the association and local churches, and if teachings have been presented on the roles-whether gaps between the present reality and the preferred praxis to which the respondents aspired was due to dubious teachings or doubtful implementation. The teachings being considered were not simply those organized by the ZBA secretariat but those presented in local churches.

8.11. What effect do you think would a female pastor or elder have on church attendance (e.g. on the main services; in the women's meetings, in the youth meetings)?

The purpose of the question was to understand whether having a female pastor or elder would have a positive or negative effect. The question's focus was to help establish whether a shared leadership at the pastoral and eldership level would impact attendance at different levels of church meetings.

9. Conclusion

Chapter 2 focused on documenting what was done and how it was done in the gathering of data which would be helpful in answering the question: What is the role of women in the Zambia Baptist Association? It briefly provided a historical background of the respondents in the context of the ZBA. It also stated the chief instrument and the method utilized. It sought, to motivate and defend the research questions. The main aim of this chapter was to describe and defend the methods used. In the next chapter, I will present the respondents' answers to the questions. The next chapter will be structured around each question asked and the answers provided.

Chapter3

Results

Introduction

In chapter two, the focus was on showing what was done and how it was done in the gathering of data helpful in answering the question: What is the role of women in the Zambia Baptist Association? It provided a historical background of the respondents in the context of ZBA. This chapter will present the respondents' answers to the questions. Because this is primarily a qualitative study, the chapter is structured around a set of questions that were asked in the interviews. The chapter is organized question by question, with summaries in the responses received to each question.

Research Questions

1. What role or roles have the women in the Zambia Baptist Association and local churches played?

The aim of this question was to trace as much as possible the roles women in the ZBA have played since the formation of the Association. The aim was to try and establish an understanding of the current practices in relation to women in the ZBA by considering the historical practices of women in the ZBA.

The responses on this question, from the respondents fell in three categories. The first category was a set of respondents who pointed out that generally in Z.B.A. and in the ZBA affiliated churches women do not play significant leadership roles. For instance, most of Lukanga Baptist respondents indicated that, "at Lukanga Baptist, the women do not, in a significant way, play any leadership role and according to them the reason women do not have any influential leadership roles is because they are not elected in positions of influence".

The second category of respondents, which was most of the respondents, fell in this category. This group stated that women did play several significant roles in ZBA, though not necessarily at prominent leadership levels; they none the less have played some significant roles. Some of examples of the roles that were outlined as played by women in ZBA are:

1. Fundraising. Women fundraised towards works at the local church and the association. Works such as building, meeting the needs of orphans, and any need judged by the women or the deacons as needing a practical response in terms of financial help.
2. Preaching. While some asked why women do not preach on Sundays, for example one person said, "We do not know even why women are not allowed to preach on Sunday or on special occasions like women's Sunday" it was pointed out however that, Women preach or teach the children or as is traditionally referred to in Union Churches as, Sunday school. They are not involved in preaching at evangelistic meetings like open air crusades and special evangelistic meetings and women conferences. They however preach at evangelistic meetings like tea parties, fellowship meals when these events are primarily organized by them and when most of the attendees targeted are women.
3. Evangelism. The other role that was identified as an area in which women were involved was evangelism. "Women are involved in evangelistic activities, such as door to door, distributing gospel tracts, and distributing invitation slips supplied by the local church leaderships."
4. Follow up. The respondents indicated women are also involved in following up of visitors. These follow-ups are generally of fellow women and young ladies.
5. Discipling of other women. The respondents stated that, women were involved in discipling of young Christians at an informal level and on a one-on-one discipleship arrangement.

6. The other role that this second group of respondents identified was what they indirect roles of influence. “Women they indicated are involved at ZBA and local church level by indirect influence through their husbands (the married) and those they are close to.”
7. General visitation of other church members and women in various situations of need. Women are involved in Visitation, for example, at hospitals, young mothers to unveil the babies. Unveiling is ceremonial cultural practice that women do. It is the visiting of a mother to see the baby as a group and corporately celebrate the baby as a gift to that family but also to community and to the local church.
8. Teaching. Women are involved in teaching young ladies on how to keep their homes, counselling and instruction in feminine activities in society. “We teach young women on issues in and of marriage. Not just matters found in the Bible but cultural and traditional issues,” one woman explained. A follow up question was asked whether these traditional and cultural lessons women teach young ladies on entering marriage are evaluated from the scriptural point. The answer was that the lessons were not always evaluated based on the scriptures.
9. Helping in funeral and other church and social functions. It was also stated that women were actively involved in cooking and doing other chores at funerals, at church functions such as conferences, church socials and church fellowship meals and works of hospitality and care.
10. Praying. The respondents observed that in some churches women lead in prayers. They participate in praying at different segments of worship while the congregation is gathered.

The third category was the minority. It is a group that felt that the Zambia Baptist Association has not stipulated what roles women should play. They mostly questioned how women can play roles that are not stipulated, “How can they play any influential role when these roles are not stipulated; instead any role they play is really as a result of need or traditional understanding of what women should do in a local church,” one stated.

2. How have the roles women have played in the Association and local churches changed over time?

Having reflected on the roles women have played in the past, it was important to ask whether the roles have changed over time, and if they have, how they have changed. The aim was to seek clear information about the nature, extent and causes of changes in women's roles.

Many of the respondents indicated that the ZBA churches tend to maintain tradition and routine, leaving little room for significant change. For instance, one lady from Katondo Baptist Church commented, "we do things routinely, with if any, very little room for change." One reason for this is that meetings are seldom called to evaluate whether changes might be needed. Despite the tendency to maintain traditions and practices uncritically, the respondents did mention several examples of changes. For instance, respondents from Nkwazi Baptist Church told of a time when the church did have women elders, but indicated that this is no longer permitted; some churches that used to have deaconesses no longer have them."

The other change that would have impacted the ZBA, was when a woman who went to study at Fiwale Bible College, started calling herself a pastor. This went on for some time and according to some respondents, it was thought that a positive change had taken place in the association, but this was also stopped by the executive. Because of these actions by the executive, many churches are not ready or are even scared to make big changes in relation to the role of women in the ZBA.

Notwithstanding these decisions by the executive, the respondents observed that some changes had taken place, even though the changes were not necessarily deliberate. The changes that the respondents highlighted as having taken place, in some churches included: the allowing of women to be ushers in churches where this was almost a taboo, wives of the men in Fiwale Bible College are allowed to do pastoral courses alongside their husbands, this in the life of the ZBA, one respondent said, is quite a drastic change regarding women. Some respondents observed that Women in the ZBA in the past were not praying all at once, or what is generally called Pentecostal prayer, but now because of interdenominational interactions, this has become the common practice in many ZBA local churches. In some

reformed Baptist Churches, for example Chingola Central Baptist Church, women are allowed to pray in worship services on the Lord's Day, this was unheard of 4 or 5 years ago. For example, in Kabwe, out of the eight local ZBA local churches, seven allow this Pentecostal prayer style. Praying for the sick in the Pentecostal style, what is called spiritual clinics in some Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Zambia, has become a common practice in women meetings, in some local churches in the ZBA.

3. Why do you think the roles women have played changed over time?

The objective of this question was to explore the forces at work that brought about the changes in the roles women played in the ZBA.

In reflecting on forces that have been at work in bringing the changes that have come about regarding the roles women play in the ZBA, it was generally reported that, where the roles have changed, it has been mainly due to tradition and imitation of what others are doing. "We are fond of copying and we copy because that is what we think is working and as such some changes that have taken place have done so simply by copying from what other denominations," several respondents said.

The respondents observed by and large that some changes which have taken place, in relation to the role of women play in ZBA have happened by accident, that is, they have happened not by deliberate planning and reflection. For example, several women pointed out that, "The change it is not something that has been reflected upon or planned. One person may introduce some practice like women being the ones to compact the grave after the burial of a loved one, and then it is repeated once or twice and before long it is a practice associated with women at burials of Christians that are members of ZBA"

The respondents noted several forces that have brought about changes in the ZBA. Copying; for example, the practice of women standing around a coffin in church with candles before and after preaching was cited as being copied from the Roman Catholics and the United Church of Zambia. The political climate in the country: Because politicians are promoting women leadership and more participation of women in politics and the leadership of the country, the church

including the ZBA churches are pressured into doing what politicians are urging people to do. The personality and the conviction of the pastor or the elders at a particular time: For example, one woman observed, “When one local church had a pastor who believed that women must be deacons, that church had deacons but when that pastor left, another who came did not believe that the practice was biblical that church did not have women deacons.” Interaction with other sister churches: The interaction particularly of women from the ZBA with sister Baptists associations such as the Baptist Fellowship of Zambia (BFZ), the Baptist Convection of Zambia (BCZ) and the Bible Believers Baptists (BBB), on the platform of the Baptist World Alliance women's Fellowship has resulted in some practices being learnt for better or for worse.

Increased levels of literacy: Some changes in the ZBA regarding women have come about because of the increased levels of literacy and affluence among women. This has been facilitated primarily by the government's emphasis of the rights of women and the promotion of the girl's/child's rights to education. Women particularly in towns are able to question certain decisions and argue effectively. Other changes have taken place because of increased exposure to other neighbouring countries. Zambia moving towards a middle-income country, has enabled many Zambians to be exposed to other countries and women have not been left out. One of the Zambian proverbs regularly quoted to underline this is: “Umwana ashenda atasha banyina ukunaya ubwali- meaning a child who does not visit other homes thinks the mother is the best cook.”

4. In your opinion what roles should women play in the Zambia Baptist Association and churches?

The aim of this question was to get a sense of the extent to which present realities reflect the beliefs and convictions of the respondents. It sought to understand from the responses whether the respondents wished to reinforce the past and present traditions (roles women played in the ZBA in the past) or wished to see changes in the roles that women play.

In responding to this question, the respondents suggested several roles which they felt women in the ZBA and the ZBA affiliate churches should play. They suggested

roles such as Treasurers. "The Bible does not say anything about who specifically should keep the money of the church", one lady stated.

The majority stated that women should be secretaries, not only of the church records, that is just writing letters, but also involved in the making of the announcements in Church and being financial secretaries and any other office or position in the local church. They indicated that, "At associational and district levels they should be voted in the offices of, Secretary, committee members, treasurers, vice chair- persons, they should be exempted only from the office Chairman and Executive Director."

A follow up question to the response that women should be exempted from the Chairman and Executive Director was posed. The reply given was that women should be exempt from the office of Chairman and Executive Director of the ZBA, because the office of Chairman is equivalent to that of Pastor, one person said, "which according to my understanding women are not allowed to occupy." It was further observed regarding to the position of executive director, that only pastors or those who have been to Bible School can occupy the position of Executive Director, and women in the ZBA do not in my view, one respondent said, normally go to Bible School to become pastors.

It was also pointed out that women must be allowed to Preach on the Lord's Day and during funerals and even other church meetings or conferences and preaching on women Sundays and other special occasions. "Even though I can't prove my answer from the Bible for now," one man said, "women should be allowed to become pastors and elders on equal basis with men. In fact, he argued, some women are better preachers than men. For example, the wife of one bishop in Lusaka preaches better than the husband. She should be allowed to preach more often than the husband."

As can be observed from the above responses, the respondents differed particularly on whether women should play pastoral roles. However, quite a few respondents argued that women should be allowed to be involved at any level of leadership, at the local church, district and Associational levels because they are also filled with the Holy Spirit and because the times in which we are as we read in

Acts, women should also be involved in preaching, like Deborah who was a preacher.

To enforce this proposition, it was further proposed that, women must also be trained as pastors, they should be allowed to study in the colleges where the men are trained for the ministry and do the same courses. "They must be allowed to do pastoral work," several respondents said. The women argued that they also should be elders. For example several ladies argued that Miriam, the sister of Moses assisted Moses in the position of eldership. Some women in the Bible were pastors, such as Nympha in Colossians 4:15. In addition to women playing pastoral roles, most of the respondents suggested that Women should be Deacons or deaconesses. "They must be deacons or deaconesses, because there are women deacons in the Bible such as Dorcas and Phoebe," they stated.

The other role that the respondents pointed out that woman should be involved in, particularly in those churches where they are not, was leading in prayers and Bible studies. The reason, given was that many times women pray more fervently than men and generally women are better teachers than men, because they are patient. The other role that women should be encouraged strongly to be involved in, the respondents said, was the Prison's and hospital visitation ministries.

5. What leadership roles do you think that women should play in the Association and local churches and why do you think so?

The question sought the views of the respondents on particularly what they thought were the leadership positions women should play in the ZBA and probed the respondents' beliefs as to which leadership roles they should play. The previous question focused on roles in general; this question focuses primarily on leadership roles.

In general, the responses given to this question are fairly similar to those given to the above the question, the difference here is that the focus on leadership and the reasoning from the respondents on why they felt women should play the leadership roles being proposed.

The respondents reiterated the fact that women should be free to occupy every leadership position at the district and at ZBA level, except that of chairperson and

executive director. The reasons they gave was that women should be free to occupy every leadership position at the district and at ZBA level because men and women are equal and that the world is also changing and the church should follow suit.

The above response was reinforced by some respondents' proposal that women must be Elders in local churches because the Bible, according to some respondents, does not forbid women from becoming elders. They argued that some women in the Bible occupied very senior leadership positions, for example, they said, Deborah, Phoebe and Junia were among such women who exercised senior leadership positions.

Others stated that since almost all churches in the world today, a several respondents pointed out had female elders, Reverends, Pastors Bishops and female deacons, we should also as the ZBA have women serve in these offices or positions. This is one area in which the ZBA is lagging behind. One person stated that "Women should become Pastors and Reverends; we must have pastors who are women in our local churches, because other churches like Pentecostals, Anglicans and even Baptists like Baptist fellowship of Zambia and others in other countries have women pastors, why not us; are we the only ones who follow the Bible better than others?" One of the leadership positions the respondents said women should play, is preaching. We must have women preachers as the ZBA because some of the powerful and great preachers are women. Women Preachers should be used all round not only to selected audiences and conferences.

The respondents generally re-echoed the fact that women should be Treasurers at the district level, because women are also capable; in certain situations even more faithful than. Very few women compared to men are involved in stealing especially church money. Women should also serve as Secretaries, and the reasoning was that, women throughout the world over are better secretaries than men. The respondents also indicated that women must serve as deaconesses, because we have deaconess in the Bible. The last two leadership roles that respondents mentioned as leadership roles women should play at the Associational level and the local church level are Matrons and Children's ministry

teachers. Matrons for the youth, they pointed out, should have a focus on training young women in the official capacity not unofficially but in recognizable leadership capacity, of the local church and the ZBA. Women should also be children's ministry teachers, but not just teachers; they must also be made Sunday school superintendents at the local church and at the national level.

6. How has the Baptist belief in local church autonomy and religious liberty affected the role women have played in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches?

The question was not probing whether the belief in local church autonomy is biblical or not; it was simply exploring how the belief has affected the roles women play in local churches if at all it had. The emphasis in the question was on the “how”, that is, in what way and to what degree have these two Baptist Distinctives influenced and shaped the understanding of the roles of women in the Association.

(Many people were not aware of this model of church government. Those who answered generally did not think it is a good church government style. This comes out quite clearly in the responses and the reasons given to the responses).

Several respondents said that, with the church autonomy things are not working because in most churches it is difficult to discipline a leader living in sin. Many respondents said, “church autonomy is bad because the local church is not accountable to anyone but to themselves and many times just makes the church stubborn.” It is bad, they said, because it only works for churches with money; such churches, they argued, can do whatever they want to without being fearful of the financial support being withdrawn if they disagree with those supporting the church financially. The respondents further indicated that, church autonomy is not good because many times it causes leaders and local churches to mistreat pastors, because the pastor is not protected by anyone above the local church leadership.

Liberty of worship is good but it should not be without control, because it has the potential of introducing strange practices in the church as is happening in the

Christian circles in our day. Autonomy, if not checked and understood properly, causes churches to lose track in their worship and belief system. Church autonomy many times promotes isolationism and inequality. The respondents stated that church autonomy delays and in certain cases stops decisions from being made quickly or being made at all. Church autonomy and liberty of worship hinders collective efforts and resources; consequently slowing down the spreading of the gospel. These convictions, the respondents indicated, restrict cooperate utilization of resources and personnel, and therefore hinders the lord's work.

Several respondents suggested that we should operate like Seventh Adventists, with a Governing Body that can overrule local church decisions. Church autonomy instead of hindering the establishment of a central governing system, must promote it. "We should learn from Pentecostals, they said, "where the Bishop or Overseer is the final authority. This accelerates decision making and one vision for the whole denomination."

7. Do you think that the Ordination of Women to the Pastorate and the Office of Elder in Zambia Baptist Association is conclusively clarified?

The position on women ordination in the ZBA is in practice a clearly settled issue; the general trend is not to ordain women to the office of pastor or elder. The male and female students complete the same courses majoring in pastoral theology, but women are not ordained. With this background, with which many of the respondents are familiar, the question sought to compel the respondents' to think through some of the reasons why the ZBA does not practise the ordination of women to the office of Elders and Pastors.

The respondents felt that the ZBA does not ordain women as pastors and elders because of applying the teaching that, just as men are the heads of household they are also the heads of the church and the teaching that women must be quiet in church meetings especially on Sunday. "According to the Bible men should be the leaders of the church and elders and pastors are the leaders of the church and this because the Bible forbids women from occupying these two offices". The observation of the respondents was that Baptist doctrine or belief and Baptist tradition, forbids women from becoming elders or deacons.

Some respondents said the reason this was so, was because the Zambia Baptist Association constitution does not allow women to become pastors and elders. Some would prefer to change the status quo but the ZBA constitution prevents them from doing so.

8. What Cultural or Tribal Practices in Your Opinion Affect the Role Women Play in the Zambia Baptist Church Affiliated Churches?

This question's focus was to understand how culture has influenced the roles women play in the ZBA.

The evidence of the role of culture in influencing practices and the roles women have played in the ZBA and affiliated churches was clear. The influences were positive in certain instances and unfortunately negative in some instances. Roles such as domestic chores being relegated to women was one negative influence. While the Bible has roles for women and men that are obviously clear as Paul would state in Titus 2:3-5, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled" (ESV), churches have tended to stretch such passages to accommodate views not expressed by the biblical authors; ZBA churches in some instances, have fallen into this unhealthy practice. Women generally are responsible for beautifying worship places and many do so delightedly, but this well-meaning gesture has been abused by the men intentionally or unintentionally by relegating this role to primarily being a role for the women. "In some Zambian cultures and traditions" one woman observed, "women are treated as less than men in dignity and worth" and the church including the ZBA churches unfortunately has, to some degree relegated women to the inferior position in the church.

The following follow up question asked was: Are women and men equal? Of the 53 people present 47 said that women were not equal to men. 85% of women of present and 78.8% of the men present said that women are not equal to men. Other respondents said that men and women are equal in some areas but not in

others, for example, physical strength, intelligence in fields like mathematics, emotions women cry more easily than men.

The tribal and cultural practice that was pointed out as influencing the roles women played in the ZBA was funeral participation. Traditionally, women are generally the ones who sleep at funeral houses and even in church life, women sleep at funerals more than men. (In Zambia when a person dies, from the day the person dies to the burial day all that period is referred to as a funeral period. Burial normally takes place on the third day after the person dies and during the nights before burial people traditionally, sleep at the funeral house and the women are in the majority.) Women generally sleep in the funeral house while men sleep outside or in some provided tents and the majority return to their respective homes.

Cultural practices such as the role of the woman in the home have been practised in church life as well.

An interesting response in my view, was the observation that Missionary influence and orientation is a culture that has affected the role women play in the ZBA. The missionaries, who came among the Baptists in Zambia, BUZ in particular, modelled a pattern that showed that women were primarily to be at home. Many leaders and women in the Baptist churches emulated this practice concluding that it was the biblical practice. Even today missionary wives are not really involved in what can help model the woman's role in the local church, what is sad is that most missionaries are not even members of local churches, so their ministry is not quite impactful at local church level.

9. In your judgment what should be practically and specifically done to enhance or improve the role women play in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches?

The focus of this question was to have the respondents give their practical and specific suggestions on what they thought are some of the ways the role women play in the ZBA can be enhanced. The assumption of the question was that in Christian life and practice, there is always room to improve.

Teaching was identified as one practical thing that should be done to improve the role women play in the ZBA. Women must be taught. They should be taught all that

the Bible teaches. There is a tendency in churches including the ZBA churches to treat women like they are not capable of grasping the deep theological and doctrinal things. Part of the confusion we have is because women are not taught. As it is often said that if you educate a woman, you will educate the whole family; the same principle must inspire us to teach women the Bible.

The respondents further elaborated that teachings specifically to address the roles of women in the local church must be embarked on. They also stated that in the ZBA and leaderships in the ZBA churches should provide relevant materials for instruction.

It was indicated that women need Encouragement through and from the scriptures. “Some women are discouraged; they need encouragement,” it was observed. When a follow up question was asked as to what things discourage women, the answer was that it was a feeling of inferiority, when they feel like they are not important, and that their role is not clear, it can be quite discouraging. Encourage women to serve God in the areas that clearly the Bible does not forbid them to serve in. The ZBA like many churches emphasized what women should not do, instead of emphasizing what women can and should do in the local churches.

The respondents unanimously and emphatically stated that women needed financial empowerment. Women at individual level and local church need to be empowered financially and materially to liberate themselves from unhealthy tradition suppressions which have also crept in the church. “Unless women are empowered, their roles may not be emphasized, because men, even Christian men, unfortunately will continue to dictate what they feel is suitable for them not necessarily what the Bible teaches,” several respondents observed.

10. What teachings have been presented on the roles of women in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches?

The aim here was to establish whether teachings have been done on the roles of women in the association and local churches, and if teachings have been conducted and whether gaps between the present reality and the preferred praxis to which the respondents aspired was due to dubious teachings or doubtful implementation.

The respondents from Chindwin Baptist Church indicated that there have been such pulpit messages or teachings, but it was observed that the role of women was a subject that has not been handled seriously in the ZBA.

A number of the respondents indicated that, while there have preaching on Sundays dealing with the roles of women and the fact there have been many seminars for men at all levels and many seminars for the youth, teachings to do with women and their role in churches, is not done to the degree that it should . Some teachings on the meaning of the women's uniform, even though it is difficult to trace its biblical basis, have been presented every time there is what is called blousing, but not much teaching has been presented on the more important issue of the role of women in the church.

The respondents stated that the most emphasized teachings in ZBA churches tend to be those inclined to women being busy at home as opposed to how they fit in local church life. The Teachings in the ZBA churches, observed by a number of respondents, tend to be focused on what women should not do into local church life as opposed to what they should do. The general observation from the respondents was that the teachings tend to be general not necessarily focused on women roles.

8.11. What effect do you think a female pastor or elder have on church attendance (e.g. on the main services; in the women's meetings, in the youth meetings)?

The purpose of the question was to understand whether having a female pastor or elder will have a positive or negative effect on the church. The question's focus was to help establish whether a shared leadership at the pastoral and eldership level would impact attendance at different levels of church meetings.

The respondents felt generally that there would be a negative impact. It would impact the church attendance and church life negatively because many men would stop coming and some women who do not believe that woman should be an elder would also stop attending that particular local church or change the denomination altogether. Many men would stop coming

Others, the majority being women, said that the Number of women would grow in attendance, because they would finally identify with one of their own. She would be an inspiration to them in that they would also be aiming high if there was such a thing as women pastors.

A sizable number of respondents were of the view that the number of youths may grow or decrease depending on what convictions they have. This was agreed by some who indicated that the effect would depend on the faith of the individual Christian; if the majority of individual Christians feel it was permissible the impact would be negligible, but if the majority think it is wrong, the impact would be negative.

Open observations and Comments

This was a time when the respondents were asked to make comments or observations on the role of women in the ZBA. The following five comments were made.

Firstly, some observed that the Zambia Baptist Association must develop a curriculum on the roles of women in the association. This curriculum should be taught even in our Bible colleges so that the pastors who graduate are knowledgeable about the roles of women in the local church in a uniform manner.

The second observation made was that the roles that women should play in the local churches and the ZBA must be emphasized as opposed to emphasizing the negative aspects of the issue. The men are more preoccupied with protecting their positions and status instead of promoting service among the women.

Thirdly, it was observed that women should be encouraged, as much as possible, to go to Bible colleges within the Baptist Union of Zambia (BUZ) not necessarily to become pastors but to be equipped for effective ministry in the local church.

Fourthly, it was stated that the Association must have a clear position on the role of women, so as to guard against confusion in the churches and to prevent women from moving to other churches because of a lack of clear instruction.

Fifthly and finally, the respondents observed that the district leadership in the association must be qualified leaders who should handle doctrinal issues based on the Bible not traditions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter was primarily a compilation of the responses given to the interview questions. It has sought to document as close as possible the actual wording of the responses, however in cases where answers were given by many people in the focus group or groups, a summary response was given, remaining as close as possible to the answers. Its design was to give the reader an understanding of what the respondents said or observed. The next chapter will be interpretative in design.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and interpret the importance of the role of women in the ZBA, and “explain the significance of the findings in light of what was already known about the research problem and any new understanding or fresh insights about the problem.” (Libguides 2016) This research, as already stated in chapter 1, is a descriptive-interpretive study of the operative theology of the ministry of women in the ZBA. It seeks to understand the present realities in the ZBA.

The chapter will discuss the results in the sequence they have been described in the results section. As Smith states, it will seek to “offer an analysis of the data collected and discuss the trends, patterns, conflicts, inconsistencies, reasons, cultural and theological forces that influence beliefs and practices of the role of women in the ZBA” (Smith2016).

Summary Discussions of the Research

The Roles Women Have Played in the ZBA Local Churches

The role of women in the ZBA local churches is not uniform or standardised even though these churches belong to the same association. The study groups that were interviewed demonstrated that the roles women play in the ZBA local churches is wide-ranging. While in some churches women play significant leadership roles, like deacons/deaconess and engage in activities like preaching regularly, in other churches the practice is the opposite; women do not serve as church officers and they do not preach regularly in the context of regular church meetings, except in their respective departments of the local churches. It was

further observed that the reason for this was due to churches and in particular women, not being adequately educated on what roles they should play and why they should play those roles.

While women play influential roles, members wondered how women could play more significant influential roles when the roles are not clearly and biblically stipulated and are not uniform and standardized. What was observed was the fact that, in most cases the roles that women played was necessitated by needs-pragmatism and the traditional perceptions of the roles of women in a local church, such as simply being responsible for sweeping the church, decorating the church, cooking during conferences and ensuring that hospitality issues are taken care of. One of the critical and essential questions the Association leadership and the ZBA local church leaderships must address and continue to wrestle with is, “what does the Bible teach about the roles of women in the church of Christ?”

The research showed that while women in general and in many churches are not chosen to serve in positions of significant influence such as elders and pastors in the ZBA, they do play quite significant roles in the functioning and ministries of local churches, such as in Children’s ministries, youth fellowships, fundraising committees, evangelism groups, and discipleship classes.

The challenge that confronts the Associational and the local church leaderships is to biblically straighten out the broad range discrepancies of the roles of women in the association and the local churches. It must promote and educate the churches regarding the many valuable ministries of women in the local church. Schreiner (1991:209) gives three reasons why this must be done. Firstly, men have mistreated women in relation to ministry and gender roles. He stated that:

“Men have often hurt women. They have treated them as lesser citizens of the Kingdom, and some men have denigrated or overlooked their contribution in ministry. An examination of the scriptures will show that women have played a vital role in the ministry. One reason for the current feminist movement, although not the only one, is that some women are responding to men who have oppressed them and treated them badly.”

Secondly, Schreiner (1991:209) observes that women should be encouraged by women in the scriptures who have contributed to the spread of God's kingdom message. Schreiner is stating that women in their service to God should derive encouragement in their service by observing women in the Bible who served God and learn from them.

Thirdly, Schreiner (1991:209) further observes that some contemporary evangelical writers appeal to the ministries of women in the scriptures to support the notion that there should be no limits on women roles in the ministry today."

In light of the above reasons, churches in the ZBA should deliberately promote biblically centred ministries in the local churches and underscore the fact that the God-prescribed roles women play in the local churches are valuable. The scriptures must be the guide on this matter. This is particularly important because, as the research has shown, the roles women play, are inspired by custom or culture not biblical deduction and application.

How the roles women have played in the ZBA have changed and why the roles have changed

The changes in the roles women have played in the Association and the affiliate churches, which this study has shown, are not because of purposeful or intentional planning but as a result of expediency or pragmatism. The trend is partly due to the mix of beliefs regarding what the roles of women in the Association structure and the local churches should be. The focus groups agreed in the main that the changes that have taken place in the Association have come about, because of responses to practical conveniences. The changes in women's roles in the ZBA were not generally because of responding to intentional assessments that were done, but were unplanned or *ad hoc*.

The study also showed as a pattern that changes are stifled by the ZBA executive. For example, the results showed that one change that would have impacted the ZBA, not necessarily that the change was right or wrong biblically, was when a woman who went to study at a Baptist Union of Zambia College, started calling herself a pastor; this went on for some time and according to some respondents, it was thought that this was a good change that had taken place in

the association, but this was stopped by the executive. The stifling of this development, according to some focus group participants, was not sufficiently explained, based on the scriptures but was simply silenced. Due to these actions by the executive many churches are not ready and some are scared to make or attempt any big changes in relation to the role of women in the ZBA. According to some participants, the way the issue was stopped did and does not help to deal with the question of the roles of women play in the Association from a biblical perspective or otherwise; it was more of a directive issued to bring the practice to a halt without a concrete biblical reason given.

The results further showed that there is very little change of significant proportion, relating to the role of women due to the fear of the executive, that is, fear of the fact that whatever major decision that would be made at the local church level, would be overturned by the executive if they felt like it, without necessarily giving progressive reasons on the matter or proposed change. This fear has been exacerbated especially for those who depend on the association for funding. This has also exposed some level of contradictory practices in terms of women's roles in the ZBA Churches. Those who have some understanding of the doctrine of local church autonomy have proceeded to develop roles of women, without consultation with the associational leadership, which is not helpful in fostering harmony of practices in the association. The decisions that are sometimes made are in line with the teaching of the scriptures and Baptist Distinctives.

Another pattern that emerged in the study was that the changes that take or do not take place in the churches and the Association are not necessarily the result of wrestling with the scriptures; they are rather cultural and traditional. The study highlighted the fact that the general membership is wrestling with the question of why is there so little change in the ZBA churches and the Association; this question about change is as result of a comparison with other churches in the country and the world which members feel should be taking place in the ZBA churches. The leadership will need to respond to this question, because discontented and dissatisfaction is creeping into the church and can be a disaster for unhealthy fragmentations and dissensions. In the words of Loren Cunningham (2000:27) "It has been two thousand years since Jesus came to proclaim liberty to the captives. It is time to set the women free. It's high time." The executive and

the local church leaderships should seriously investigate the scriptures and provide guidance on which roles women should play according to the Bible and which ones they biblically should not play.

The forces that have been behind the changes, according to the results of the study have been, internal and external. Of these forces of change, the external forces have generally played a major role. External forces refer to copying practices from other churches, from within and outside the association, political, social, cultural and economic influences from both within the country and beyond our borders. The study revealed that there was very little introspection done in the ZBA churches.

The other significant observation derived from this study was the importance of literacy. An illiterate congregation is rarely critical of its practices. In the churches whose literacy levels are meaningfully high, literacy has played quite a positive and significant role in the few changes that have taken place. The ZBA executive should be planning and investing in programmes that are tuned to promote literacy levels especially among the women where illiteracy is comparatively high.

The roles women should play in the Zambia Baptist Association and the ZBA local churches.

This research question was investigating, whether the respondents wished to reinforce the past and present traditions (roles women played in the ZBA in the past) or wished to see changes in the roles that women play in the ZBA.

Generally, the study revealed that women wanted to reinforce some of the past and present traditions while on the other hand they wanted some changes in the roles that women play in the Association and the local churches. The study showed that women were more inclined by the design of the system, to be elected to the office of deacon than the office of elder or pastor. While not all were of this position, many indicated readiness to have deaconesses, and in fact many in several of local churches, from the focus groups were deaconesses. It was also evident from the study that women recommended that their service for the most part be diaconal, serving tables as opposed to oversight of a spiritual nature. This was pointed out in the answers that were given to the research question. The

respondents suggested roles such as Treasurers, Secretaries and committee members as positions they could serve in. "The Bible does not say anything about who specifically should keep the money for the church or be secretary or committee member at the association level or local church", one lady stated. Others said, "At associational and district levels they should be voted in the offices of Secretary, committee members, treasurers, vice chair-persons; they should be exempted only from the offices of Chairman and Executive Director"

The majority stated that women should be secretaries, not only of the church records, that is, just writing letters but also be involved in the making of the announcements in Church and being financial secretaries and any other office or position at the local church level. The changes in my view that were being proposed were changes leaning between complementarian and egalitarian. The study highlighted a mixture of these two positions generally due to some level of uncertainty about what the roles of women in the church should be. In one breath, the respondents showed that the roles women should play should somehow be limited while in another breath the study showed that women and men have equal rights and their roles should be distributed equally.

The study also showed significant contradictions on women playing oversight roles like elders, pastors, chairman and executive director of the association. The contradiction was seen in the fact that while some said that women should not participate in oversight roles, others indicated that women must be elected to the positions of secretaries, treasuries and committee members at the associational and local church levels. This is contradictory because secretary and treasurer are executive positions at the association level and therefore they are oversight positions.

The other areas of contradiction that the research brought to light were those to do with whether women should preach on the Lord's days or not; should women preach when men are present or not, should women pray in church on Sunday and in conferences. The answers fell into two categories: those who saw nothing wrong with women preaching on Sunday and in conferences where men would be present in sizable numbers and those who said they should not. There were also those who felt that women should pray even on Sunday and in conferences

even when men are there. This finding is not only true in the ZBA; it is a contradiction among the conservative Christian community generally. “Carefully sorting out what conservatives believe can often be confusing, especially if one compares what is verbally said with what is promoted” (Sumner 2003:50). This statement indicates that contradictions are evident among conservatives who say one thing and do the other.

The study showed that the arguments espoused for a particular role or roles were not necessarily derived from the scriptures. For example, “women must be allowed to preach on the Lord's Day and during funerals and even other church meetings or conferences. Even though I can't prove my answer from the Bible for now,” one respondent said; also “women should be allowed to become pastors and elders on equal basis with men.” In fact, he argued, “some women are better preachers than men.” The ZBA leadership should decisively develop a curriculum that addresses the role of women in the ZBA from a biblical perspective. The reasons provided by the respondents' perspective, were based on what other denominations are doing or what is happening in the political world rather what the Bible says.

How the Baptist belief in local church autonomy and religious liberty has affected the role women have played in the Zambia Baptist Association and the ZBA affiliated churches

The research revealed that many people were not aware of this particular model of church government, even though this is in the preamble of the ZBA Constitution; “The Association recognizes the traditional autonomy and independence of the churches” (2009:3). Those who answered generally did not think it is a good church government style. The study showed that while church autonomy and religious liberty are historically some of the basic Baptist Distinctives, the participants in the focus groups did not quite understand what church autonomy and liberty of worship is all about. It was evident from this study that Baptist Distinctives are in fact frowned upon; ironically in some of the ZBA local churches from the focus groups contributions. From this research, the evidence indicated that, while these churches are called Baptist churches, the understanding of what defines a Baptist church is still not clearly understood by

many. In discussing the research question which was simply exploring how the belief has affected the roles women play in local churches, a question that was emphasizing the “how” the two Baptist Distinctives has influenced and shaped the understanding of the roles of women in the Association, the answers given, clearly demonstrated a lack of biblical understanding of the question. Even after clarifications on what the question was seeking to probe, the study showed that, these two Distinctives are viewed negatively and the mood was that of hostility to the two biblical Distinctives.

A pattern that emerged and clearly evidenced in the responses to the research questions on church autonomy and liberty of worship, was that while there is a verbal and even a creedal assent to the absolute authority, inspiration, infallibility and sufficiency of the scriptures in faith and practice, “We believe in the Holy Scriptures...divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct” (ZBA Constitution 2009:8), there is a contradiction between the statement of faith and practice not only to do with the roles of women in the ZBA but also in other areas of church life such as governance.

The ZBA leadership should, on behalf of the general membership, ask the right questions that will help the association and the local churches in the association to be consistent in what they believe and what they practise. Questions such as; why do we do what we do, why do we do what we do the way we do, how are we different from other denominations, what areas of church life may not be based on the Bible in our practice, how can we think biblically in seeking a transformation that is God honouring? These are important questions to be addressed, if the situation of the roles that women play in the ZBA Churches is to be clarified biblically.

The failure to appreciate the above-mentioned two biblical doctrines has affected the practices in the ZBA in that, issues that are primarily the business of the local, church are expected to be addressed by the ZBA executive. Also, a lack of understanding of religious liberty has at times led the executive and the local church leaders to deal with matters indifference as they should be dealt with – matters indifference-according to Romans 14:1-21.

The ordination of women to the pastorate and to the eldership in the Zambia Baptist Association

The position on women ordination in the ZBA is varied, but the general trend is not to ordain women to the office of pastor or elder. The research question focused on what the respondents thought were the reasons, why there was no clarity on the issue. The reasons given were diverse. The first reason that was observed was that theory and practice is not congruous in the ZBA. The evidence showed that the training for women particularly in the Bible College run by the mother body, the Baptist Union of Zambia (BUZ) to which the ZBA belongs, offers the theological courses which are mainly pastoral in design and women are encouraged to attend the college; in fact, student wives are required to attend the college and generally do the same courses, and yet after graduation women are not officially ordained as pastors; they are actually told that they cannot serve as elders or pastors. While the ordination of women to the pastorate and office of elder in the ZBA is unequivocally clarified, the practice in the BUZ is not, in that on the one hand, they train the women pastorally and give them the impression that they can serve as pastors and yet after graduation they are told they cannot. The convictions of the executive members of the BUZ also contribute towards this contradictory opinion, in that their theological position is different, and while some advocate women elders and pastors, others do not.

This thought echoed by Cunningham (2000:21), speaking to the USA context, under the sub-heading of a secret holocaust, “the degradation of women isn’t a problem just of faraway countries with little Christian heritage. The problem is everywhere” was one of the reasons why participants put forward why women are not ordained to the pastorate or eldership. The study showed that this is the view of some in the ZBA churches. Tradition both in terms of culture and the interpretation of passages like 1Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:26-40; 1Timothy 2:1-15 and 1Timothy 3:1-13 is partly responsible for the present state of affairs. The views and interpretations of these passages have historically been at the heart of understanding the roles of women in church and in the ZBA the situation is no different.

Cultural or tribal practices that have affected the role women play in the Zambia Baptist church affiliated churches

The evidence from the respondents showed that tribal and cultural practices have undeniably played a role in the ZBA and affiliated churches in relation to the roles women play in the ZBA. The perception in some tribes and Cultures of women as inferior beings has negatively influenced the role women play in the ZBA. Sadly, this perception is not only being perpetuated by the men, but several women in the ZBA also are convinced that women are inferior to men both in value and service. For example, this study showed that out the people interviewed 85% of women and 78.8% of the men said women are by nature and by function not equal to men. Other respondents said that men and women are by nature equal in some qualities and the same is true in terms of their being equal, in function; for example, in physical strength, intelligence in fields like mathematics, emotions-women cry more easily than men. "In most Zambian cultures and traditions" one woman observed, "women are treated as less than men in dignity and worth and the church unfortunately has to some degree relegated women to the inferior position in the structure of leadership and service." O'Donovan (2000:188) rightly observes that most women in Africa are very much aware that there is still a strong cultural pattern of male dominance in most of Africa.

"In some of these cultures, women are considered to be of much less importance and value than men. In some African cultures women are regarded as of being less value than certain forms of property, such as cattle. In other cultures women are treated by men in the same way as children are treated. In still others, women are regarded as the slaves of men" (2000:190).

In the Lamba tribe, which is the major tribe in the vernacular Baptist churches, the word for women is 'AbanaKashi'. Some men and women have oddly provided a false etymology of the word "AbanaKashi" stating that the word for children is 'Abana' and men refer to women in a derogatory or belittling manner by underlining the *Abana* in **Abana**Kashi to show that women after all are just like children. There is also a saying in the Lamba tribe that says, '*Umwalalume tachepa*' meaning *a male person is never small or young*, and a perception that a

male is more valuable and useful than a female, irrespective of age. These deep-rooted perceptions directly or indirectly have influenced the roles women play in the ZBA. The study has shown that the reasoning, in regard to what roles women should play in the ZBA is not primarily motivated by interacting and wrestling with the scriptures, but from expediency, tribal and cultural practices. The position, that need to be arrived at, namely the traditional or feministic, complementarian or egalitarian must be grounded in the scriptures, as opposed to letting culture and other practices determine the contours of ministry of women in the ZBA. The only tribal and cultural practices that should be allowed to be practised in the local churches are those that do not contradict the Bible, explicitly or implicitly. A contextual theology must be critically thought through, but only as it conforms to Biblical principles and norms.

Missionary culture or the world of the western missionary, in the ZBA churches did not and still does not provide a helpful biblical model for the roles of women in the ZBA. Picking a paragraph from the results section, the study showed that Missionary influence and orientation is a culture that has affected the role women play in the ZBA. The missionaries, who came among the Baptists in Zambia, BUZ in particular, modelled a pattern that showed that women were primarily to be at home. Many leaders and women in the Baptist churches emulated this practice concluding that it was the biblical practice. Even today missionary wives are not really involved in what can help model what the proper woman's role in the local church is; what is sad is that most missionaries are not even members of local churches, so their ministry is not quite impactful at local church level.

It is critically important for the churches in the ZBA to address the role of women not only from the perspective of human rights but more importantly from the biblically perspective. The churches must underline the principle that, role differences in the church if there are any, are not based on inequality or the worth of one sex over the other but on biblical principles. Male domination regrettably is a culture that must be dealt with head-on. The ethic that is behind these perceptions must be explored and brought under the standards of the scriptures.

The cultural practices that influence the role women play in the ZBA are not only influenced by local factors, but like in the whole of Africa, cultural changes in the

West have also affected the role of women in the church and society as a whole. “It is almost certain that the ...changes in western culture concerning attitudes towards women are affecting Africa in an important way” (O’Donovan 2000:188).

Proposed practical and specific recommendations from the respondents that would enhance or improve the role women play in the Zambia Baptist Association affiliated churches

The focus of the question here was to have the respondents give their practical and specific suggestions on what they thought are some of the ways the role that women play in the ZBA can be enhanced.

Respondents proposed three major specific ways that should be taken to improve the role of women in the ZBA Churches. The first and the most emphatic way suggested was the need to educate and to train women generally in Bible or theological knowledge. What was deduced from this proposal was that, it is an acknowledged reality that in the ZBA, the training of women not only in terms of the roles they should play but in biblical knowledge and basic theology, is a much-neglected area. But training in theology, in the basic meaning of the word theology, the study of God or about God, as Armstrong (2002:7), observed regarding the general trend of neglecting to study theology that-theology is absolutely necessary, “Make no mistake, theology does matter. It is matter of life and death” The respondent’s observation was certainly a biblical argument and expectation. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians states that one of the functions of the leaders in the church is to prepare, to train God’s people for works of service (Eph4:12). God’s people includes women not just men.

Two biblical examples demonstrate the need for educating women in the ZBA churches and indeed in any church, the first is in Acts18:24-26. In this passage we are told that Apollos, though mighty in the scriptures needed instruction on the Way of God more accurately. Luke reports that “When Priscilla and Aquila heard him; they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately (NIV). Both Priscilla (a woman) and Aquila explained or taught Apollos, implying that both were themselves well instructed in the scriptures. If women are involved in teaching children, youth and in some churches even in

conferences, they surely must be taught. Commenting on this text Carlsen (2000:400) writes;

“Some texts place Priscilla before Aquila and it is believed that this together with other references where Priscilla is named before her husband Acts.18:18;Rom.16:3 and 2Tim.4:19 show that she was more gifted in teaching than he was....It cannot be avoided that Priscilla taught doctrine to Apollos and him to understand the way of more exactly.”

The observation from the study that the ZBA should train women is critical. The outcome of the study on this particular issue was not necessarily that women become local elders or pastors or associational leaders but simply underscores, the need for them to be instructed irrespective of the roles they played in the churches and the association.

The study showed that teachings specifically to address the roles of women in the local church must be embarked on as well. O'Donovan (2000:196), commenting in a similar way and in a sense agreeing with respondents in this study, writes “Paul wrote ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man’ (1Tim.2:12). Does this mean that a woman can never teach, since we read of Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, who together with her husband was teaching a man named Apollos”. O'Donovan's argument is that Paul does not forbid women but is qualifying their teaching scope. If women are to play their God-given roles in the ZBA, in whatever capacity with whatever gifts of service God has given them, training for as it is for men, is crucial.

The teachings in the gaps between the current reality and the preferred praxis are due not to some necessarily doubtful teachings, but doubtful implementation.

While the trend cannot be reduced to one single issue, teaching is certainly one. It was observed from this research that where teaching on the subject is done, it has not been systematic. The teachings have tended to be occasional practice in some congregations, pulpit messages or teaching. It was clear from one participant's response that one could remedy the current practice through teaching. The lack of emphasis on the importance of teaching women is seen in the number of women that training institutions are inclined to enrol in comparison

to that of men. More men than women are in our Bible College. The evidence also showed that when teachings are presented in relation to the role of women, less important subjects or issues tend to be focused on more than essential issues. For example, teachings on the meaning of the women's uniform even though it is difficult to trace its biblical basis, have been carried out every time there is what is called blousing. Blousing is the ceremony conducted when a woman is welcomed into the group of women permitted to wear the Baptist Union of Zambia uniform for women. The most emphasized teachings in the ZBA churches tend to be those inclined to women being busy at home as opposed to how they fit into local church life. There is a tendency in the ZBA and ZBA affiliated churches to focus on what women should not do in local church life as opposed to what they should do. But these teachings tend to be general not necessarily specifically focused on women roles.

The second example of the importance of teaching women is seen in the Lord Jesus' commending Mary more than Martha for the choice Mary made of being instructed at the feet of the Lord Jesus in Luke 10:38-42. Milne (2005:173) commenting on the text writes, "There are many activities Jesus' followers can engage in but among them all one is essential. Mary's example serves to show that whatever work we do for Christ the primary need is for time to be spent with him hearing his word". The education of women however should not end with theological training but should include the improvement of literacy level among them. Currently the literacy level among women in the ZBA is quite low.

Secondly, the study brought out the fact that women need to be empowered in the ZBA if they are to play their roles effectively in the church. The study plainly stated that women needed financial empowerment. Women at individual level and local church level need to be empowered financially and materially to liberate them from unhealthy traditional suppressions which have also crept into the church. "Unless women are empowered their roles may not be emphasized because men even Christian men, unfortunately will continue to dictate what they feel is suitable for them not necessarily what the Bible teaches," several of the respondents observed. What one deduces from this outcome of the research is that poverty does play a major role in the ZBA churches regarding what roles women should play. The ZBA should develop a robust and efficient response to

the economy situation of women in the association. This, as has been demonstrated in the past, will not only benefit the women but also the Association. Frey (2009:255) makes the following observation in line with the women's league of the ZBA. "It is not an understatement that women at ZBA were giving an example to all church members what it means to assist the association financially". Unfortunately the status today is different, and if the women are to play this role today, empowerment of women is one practical way ZBA can enhance the roles women play in the Association.

The role of women supporting the ministry of the gospel is demonstrated in the scriptures, for example in Luke 8:1-3 we read,

After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ²and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; ³ Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means (NIV).

Commenting on this passage Milne (2006:106) writes:

These women explain how Jesus managed to live as a travelling teacher without a regular income. Some of them were sufficiently well off to provide from their private means for Jesus and his disciples. The material support these women gave to Jesus illustrates the practical ministry that women can excel at-services that are indispensable to the work of the kingdom of God. Feminist writers often accuse the bible of neglecting women but Luke makes them visible in the life and work of Jesus and the early churches.

Thirdly, the study showed that women are not being supported morally and practically in the roles that they are currently performing. The study showed that several of them were despondent, because even when they do their best, their service is not appreciated. What one deduces from this outcome of the study is that issues, as already alluded to, of perspectives on women's value are quite

prevalent in the Association. Women do need moral encouragement and appreciation in the ZBA if their roles are to be enhanced. As part of the biblical reasons, we have several records of women serving in noticeable ways, such as Priscilla, Deborah, Esther, Ruth, Naomi and Sara is to show that women can and have since ancient times played significant roles in religion. The Bible records them for our encouragement, emulation and instruction.

The impact of having Female Pastors

In probing whether having a female pastor or elder will have a positive or negative effect in local churches and in the ZBA, generally the study showed that, not all the respondents thought it would impact attendance, the majority thought that, that it would impact the attendance on Sunday negatively. The negative attendance was mostly envisaged by the older men and women as opposed to the younger men and women. One deduces from this trend, that stereotyping is at play traditionalism causing this age group to be less comfortable being pastored by a woman. The reason why this was thought to be so, particularly for women, was that they would feel that one of their own was leading them. Kasomo (2010) in his paper on the role of women in Africa, in reference to a Nomiya Luo Church, reveals one of the reasons why men would not attend such an arrangement, “This is caused by men's attitude towards women who are looked at as inferior, incapable and are in perpetual pollution due to their nature of being biologically females”. The other possible outcome that was thought likely was the increase of young women and young-women.

Principle Summary

The results of the interviews indicate several aspects and implications on the role of women in the ZBA. The study showed that while women are generally not involved in leadership roles such as Pastors and Elders, they are in very significant ways involved in the life of the association and in the local churches. They do play important roles both at Associational level and at the local church level. The vibrancy and growth that the Association has experienced in the

previous years has been achieved with the critical and important contributions from the women in the ZBA.

Even though women's roles have not been clearly stipulated from the biblical perspective, the women do play important roles in the ZBA. The implication has been that, without a clear biblical anchor not only for the role of women, but for some other church practices, local churches tend to copy what other denominations are doing; they tend to practice whatever they feel is workable and convenient for them; they tend to focus on what is bringing results irrespective of what the Bible says about such practice, they tend to go with what makes them feel good as opposed to what pleases God.

Women in the ZBA feel that their subservient role is due to male shrewdness, at the very worst suppression. Where the churches are, as reflected in the study, is quite dangerous, in that members are prone to be misled by a false teacher or a well-meaning person but with wrong theology. A solid biblical anchorage should be provided by the associational leaders and the local church leadership.

Having endeavoured to interpret and describe the importance of the findings relating to the research problem, the role of women in the ZBA, including an analysis of the data, a reflection on what should be done to enhance the role of the ZBA is important. Below is a summary of the recommendations that can be drawn from the results and the analysis sections.

Recommendations

It must be stated at the outset that women like men are made in the image of God and as such are equal to them in value and dignity. On that premise and in view of the above findings the following recommendations are made. Firstly, the relevant biblical principle and their implications should be taught in the churches.

This is important because in the results it was repeatedly observed that women not only in the ZBA and but universally, not only in church life but also the secular world, are treated as less human, not as valuable as men, as second-class citizens of countries, and as a result in the ZBA the role they play generally is tied to the view of women that is held due to culture and tribal practices. This is well

attested to by several writers, for example, Chittister writes, "Theologians from the time of Augustine, interpreted scripture as saying that men, males were the crown of creation" (1998:22). Chittister further observes in this general view of women that, patriarchy argues unconvincingly and illogically that men are higher human beings than women (1998:26).

The first practical step that the ZBA should take is to teach its churches what it means for women and men to be created in the image of God and what the implications of this biblical truth are. "Society suffers from three major ills in connection with the sexes: discrimination, indistinction and alienation. Without a conviction that sexes are truly equal, one can neither do justice to their differences nor achieve true partnership" (Winston & Winston 2003:175).

The teaching that men and women are created equal must be uncompromisingly and clearly taught. However, the recommendation does not imply that there may not be differences in the roles men and women play in the ZBA; the recommendation's focus is that it must be clearly stated that the differences of roles have nothing to do with not being equal or one sex being inferior to the other. This teaching should be taught in the ZBA Churches and the associational level. The necessity of this teaching is emphasized by many scholars such as Piper and Grudem in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and womanhood*; Summers in *Men and Women in the Church*; O'Donovan in *Biblical Christianity in an African Perspective and in Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*; Cook and Lee in *Man and Woman, Gender Roles, identity and Intimacy in a changing world* etcetera. The reason for giving these scholarly emphases is to emphasize that the teaching of the correct biblical understanding of the equality of men and women is imperative, if the role of women in the ZBA is to be biblically enhanced.

The second recommendation in light of the results of this study and interaction with women and men in the ZBA and particularly in the Kabwe district is the need for the men and women to be taught the principles of interpreting the Bible. The levels of Biblical Knowledge among the believers in the ZBA, if the sampled group is anything to go by, are quite low. Fernando (2002:104) observes that, "one of the challenges we face today is that of helping our people to lose the fear of the Bible. Some people fear to study the Bible simply because they do not have basic

tools to do so.” Sheehan (1998:17) also states that for theology to be possible three things must be true. “Firstly there must be a God about whom there can be facts. Secondly, this God must have made himself known to man. Thirdly, man must have the ability to receive this revelation, understand it and use it.” He concludes his discussion by stating and rightly so, that Theology is the study of the Bible as an infallible record of God’s revelation. If the ZBA objectives include, “to teach the people according to the New Testament and to promote missionary enterprise and teach Biblical principles” (ZBA Constitution 2009:5); instructing our members on how to study the scriptures is imperative. Sheehan’s (1998:22) recommendations on how this should be done are very helpful and practical. “God’s revelation must be studied exegetically, chronologically and thematically and applied to the modern situations” The emphasis in the above is clear, which emphasis I recommend if the role of women in the ZBA is to be enhanced. Women must be empowered with tools and skills to study the scripture and apply them to the modern situations, such as the debate that rages on, the role of women in the church.

There is need for a structured and systematic biblical teaching to address issues of cultural and traditional influences not only on the subject of the role of women in the ZBA but on also many other subjects, such worship, youths, marriage, giving and leadership. The results and the implications that are brought to light demand that specific steps be taken to address the challenges the association is facing particularly in this process of developing a biblical understanding of the role or roles of women in the ZBA. Some of the books that the ZBA can invest in and probably distribute to all districts as tools for this task may include: *Understanding the Bible*, by John Stott; *How to read the Bible for all its worth* by Gordon G Fee and Douglas Stuart; *Observe, Interpret Apply-How to study the Bible Inductively* by Hans Finzel and *Preach the Word* by Denis Lane.

The third recommendation I would like to make to the ZBA Executive and the Pastors and elders of the ZBA affiliated churches is the need for women to be encouraged as much as possible to go to Bible Colleges within the Baptist Union of Zambia (BUZ) not necessarily to become pastors but to be equipped for effective ministry in the local church. Young on his 20 September 2016 post

([leadershiphttp://trainingleadersinternational.org/blog](http://trainingleadersinternational.org/blog)) gives the following reasons why women must have the best theological education:

First, according to Genesis 1:26-28, man as male and female is created in the image of God. This means that man and woman are equal before God in the sense that both bear the image of God. Both were given the command to rule over creation, and if it is important for men to be educated to rule, so too it is for women.

Second, the Great Commission is for men as well as women. The commission is to “make disciples of all nations” and the means to making disciples is by baptizing and teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded. Carrying out of the Great Commission necessarily includes teaching people to obey the things that Jesus commanded. If then women are to teach in obedience to the Great Commission and the content of their teaching is what Jesus had commanded (as we find in the Bible), it would be foolish to argue that women should not get the best theological education possible to prepare them for such an honourable task.

Third, we will look in vain for information on Jesus excluding women in his teaching ministry. From the account in Luke 8:1-3, we cannot say that each time Jesus was teaching the twelve, women were excluded. The evidence seems to suggest that even though the 12 are mentioned in particular, women were also present when Jesus was travelling and teaching.

A curriculum on the roles of women in the association should be developed. This curriculum should be taught even in our Bible Colleges so that the pastors who graduate from the BUZ colleges are knowledgeable about the roles of women in the local church in a uniform manner.

The roles women should play in the local churches and the ZBA must be emphasized as opposed to emphasizing the negative. The Association must have a clear position on the role of women. This will help to guard against confusion in the churches.

Part of this leadership situations that should be addressed, according to the findings of this study is the need to put men and women in the district leadership who are qualified. Men and women who are able and who should handle doctrinal issues based on the Bible not traditions and culture. The ZBA executive must endeavour to put qualified men and women in positions of leadership at all structures of the Association. This is important because the type of leadership the association has, has implications on the effectiveness of the association.

A detailed treatment of passages such Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 16:7; 1Timothy 2:11-15; 1Corinthians 14:34-36; 11:2-16, should be done; a position or positions should be made clear depending on the exegesis of these passages. As Rebuli has observed in her paper on the role of Pastors' wives, "The biblical perspective on the role of pastor's wife will require an in depth look at various scriptures (Gen. 1:27; 2:18; Prov. 31; 1 Tim. 3:11; Ti 2), together with a brief overview of early church history with regard to woman's involvement in the church."

The Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is its scope. This being a mini-thesis the scope of the study is not as extensive, though intensity was pursued. In light of the present size of the association, about 250 churches, the churches that were interviewed represent less than 5% of the churches. While the respondents are representative of the views collected, the conclusion, if for example the research was expanded to a larger scope, may be different. The results on a larger scale may not be a general reflection. So, the scope of the study is in this sense a limitation. The limitation in the scope however is not necessarily a limitation of its representativeness because; the focus area of research is typically representative of the situation in the association, as a whole.

The second limitation of this study is what I would call the low levels of biblical literacy of the constitution that was focused on. While the degree of this limitation cannot scientifically be ascertained, what was evidence from the participants is that the biblical literacy levels were quite low. The paltry reference to the Bible in many responses by the participants, acknowledgement from the participants that some of the issues discussed in the research were new to them, they had not

read about it in the scriptures, some admitted to not even owning a Bible, throughout their Christian life. The levels of being unaware of biblical basic facts and inability of some to read and also the lack of knowledge of the Zambia Baptist Association are some of the indicators of the low levels of literacy. This was true across the board, among the leaders, the men and women and the young and the old.

The third limitation is the fact that the researcher may have been an authority figure having served as the immediate past General Secretary of the association but also as the only pastor in the district. While all steps were taken to ensure that this would not be the case, the likelihood of this being a limitation is quite strong.

Proposed Further Research

Domeris (2014) has rightly observed that among the things that divide evangelicals is leadership. “Evangelicals have differing views on leadership in the church usually in accordance with their different denominations”. In the ZBA the role of women is a subject on which research should continue. There must be continued biblical reflection and answering of the challenges of the day that crop up on the issue of the role of women. If the current moral and social trends, such as; gay/homosexual marriages, gender issues which are no longer simply issues of male and female and confrontations with national laws or human rights- understood to be women rights, has forced 50% equality representations of women in leadership by not only sovereign countries but regional bodies, it calls for the ZBA leadership and the church as whole to again and again reaffirm the biblical convictions, in light of new challenges to the Christian faith.

The second area of research that should be carried out in the ZBA, is the area of culture and traditions that influence the practices in the churches. These cultural and tribal practices should be itemized, explained and the aspects of these cultures that contradict the scriptures exposed and addressed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to consider and interpret the research results of the research question, the role of women in the Zambia Baptist Association (ZBA)

From this research, it was clear that the roles of women in both the ZBA as an association and the local church are not uniform and are not standardised. There is need to work at standardising the roles of women in the ZBA and in the local churches as much as possible in line with the scriptures. The objective of this chapter was to consider the results of the operative theology of the Zambia Baptist Association (ZBA) with respect to women in ministry. The focus was to describe the practices and beliefs that influence the ministry of women in the association. The goal of the chapter was to draw conclusions, patterns, contradicting principles of the beliefs that are in operation, the functioning theology that gives rise to the practices in the ZBA. The study attempted to describe what is happening and why it is happening. The study attempted to paint an accurate portrait of the present practices of the ZBA, drawn from the results.

The lay out of this chapter was patterned after Azar's recommendations, discussion of results in accordance with the responses to the research questions, recommendations based on the results of the study, report on the limitations of the study and possible suggested areas of further research.

The problem of whether women should be ordained to the ministry, in particular to the positions of elder, pastor and senior leadership positions in the Church, is a problem the church has grappled with for some time. It is a problem that all denominations have been confronted with. The exclusive dominance of male church leadership, particularly in relation to the ordination of women as pastors and elders and any other senior church office, has been challenged historically. The ZBA like any other association, must reflect on it biblically, culturally, theologically and practically. This discussion has endeavoured to lay out what the findings mean regarding the role of women in the ZBA, and hopes that relevant and helpful steps will be taken in seeking to enhance the biblical role of women in the ZBA.

Chapter 5

Thesis Conclusion

Review of Research

This study was an effort to reflect on the roles of women in the Zambia Baptist Association. It was an effort to investigate what the roles of women in the ZBA is and should be. My aim was to investigate the current praxis in the ZBA in the context mainly of our country's political, social and religious conditions. My assumption was that there was some confusion in the local churches and the ZBA in relation to the roles women biblically should play in the association and the local church, especially leadership roles. The research was based on the IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) Model.

Objective of the Research

The objective of this study was to describe the operative theology of the Zambia Baptist Association (ZBA) with respect to women in ministry. The major thrust of the study was to describe the practices and beliefs that influence the ministry of women in the association. My conviction in this study was that practice is influenced by a belief system intentionally or unintentionally. There is a theology that is at the heart of practice. With this conviction the study set out to seek an understanding of the beliefs that are in operation, which gave rise to the practices in the ZBA and the affiliated local churches. My aim was to describe what is happening and why it is happening in the ZBA in regard to the roles women play in our association. I sought to paint an accurate picture of present roles of women in the ZBA as accurately as the research showed. The rationale was that this would help the leadership of the association and the local churches to evaluate these practices in the association and develop biblical roles for women if there are any or reaffirm the already existing practices if found to be based on the bible.

Methodology of the Research

This study employed qualitative research on the role of women in the Zambia Baptist Association. The study was a semi-structured qualitative focus group. The study employed a series of 11 questions in total with follow up questions in some instances, as tool of research.

The research is a semi structured qualitative structure focus group. The method of focus group was chosen because of a number advantages among them are the following:

1. It is a well-established method of gathering data.
2. It provides high response/participation rate from the focus group members, in that all those present in the meeting participate.
3. It permits a deeper and fuller understanding of the attitudes of the respondents and provides information not available through surveys.
4. The presence of the participants also provided an opportunity for follow up questions where there was a need, to seek detailed responses to the research questions, so that as much information as possible was gathered.
5. It is a cost-effective method and time serving.

This is simply a summary of some of the reasons as detailed in the methodology section.

Research findings and their implications

It was clear from the study that the roles of women in the ZBA and the ZBA affiliated local churches are not standardized or harmonized. One of the main reasons for this state of affairs is the absence of biblical theologizing. The associational leadership and the local church according to the respondents in the research do not appear to pay much attention to what the Bible says on the roles of women in the local church which also has a bearing on their role in the association.

The absence of harmony or consistency in roles of women, especially leadership ones, in the local churches belonging to the ZBA has caused confusion not only in worship but the very identity of what a Baptist Church should be. When people do not know who they are, any practice may pass. The study further

demonstrated a comparison and imitation of other denominations such as: Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Anglicans and many other denominations as a major influence on the roles of women in the ZBA. It was evident from the study that the leadership of the ZBA needs to go back to the basic teachings of the Bible on what a local church is; on what different church governments are there, on what the Baptist Distinctives are and other aspects of worship and leadership. These issues will be essential not only in helping to address the biblical roles of women but also in helping to address other church disharmonious practices. The leadership roles women should play in the ZBA is a matter of urgency.

The respondents proposed several courses of action which I thought were quite important for the association to consider working on. These included the training of women. The indication from the study was that the training of women is absolutely crucial for both biblical and practical reasons. Milne (2005:173) commenting on Luke 10:38-42 writes, "There are many activities Jesus' followers can engage in but among them all one is essential. Mary's example serves to show that whatever work we do for Christ the primary need is for time to be spent with him hearing his word".

The roles of women in the ZBA must be addressed because like in other the evangelicals churches, it has potential to divide the association. I agree with Rebuli (2008) in general when she writes in relation to the pastor's wife that, I am convinced that a clear understanding of the role of the pastor's wife," in my case of the role of women in the ZBA, "will both help and improve the influence of the pastor's wife," in my case women in the ZBA "in the local church and will develop a clear understanding of the...with realistic expectations and defined goals in the church. Clearly defined roles of women both at leadership and other levels in the ZBA will enhance their service to their God and consolidate the work of the association.

Education and clear definition of the roles of women must be addressed together with the need to empower women in the ZBA, if women are to play their roles effectively in the association and the local churches. It is evident from this study that women need financial empowerment. "Unless women are empowered their roles may not be emphasized because men even Christian men, unfortunately

will continue to dictate what they feel is suitable for them not necessarily what the bible teaches,” several respondents observed. The women’s department is a critical vehicle to achieve this need. Women need not only monetary support but also moral and spiritual support.

While women are generally not involved in leadership roles such as Pastors and Elders, their role in the life of the association and the local churches is significant. The study clearly showed that women do play important roles however; most of the roles they play are influenced by politics, culture or external social or religious influences rather than a deliberate reflection on what the Bible teaches. Pragmatism also was shown to be a major influence in the roles women play in the ZBA. The vibrancy and growth the Association has experienced in the previous years has been achieved with the critical and important contributions from the women in the ZBA and if the association is to be even more vibrant tomorrow, the need to define the roles of women in the ZBA can never be overemphasized. The role of women in the ZBA should be clarified not only in relation to the general functioning of women in the ZBA and local churches but also in relation to leadership roles in the association and churches.

It is my sincere conviction that the roles women should play in the local churches and the ZBA must be biblical defined and emphasized as opposed to emphasizing the negative. The Association must have a clear biblical position on the role of women. This will help to guard against confusion in the churches. Qualified men and women should be put in positions of leadership at all structures of the Association. This is important because the type of leadership that the association has, has implications for the effectiveness of the association.

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