GENDER AND CHANGE
ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF ORDAINED WOMEN MINISTERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA

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TO
My beloved parents, Nicholas Yaw Sintim-Ofosuhene (of blessed memory) and Grace Yaa Dufie Sintim-Ofosuhene, my husband William Yaw Adasi and my three daughters, Samuella, Ernestine and Solace Adasi for helping me attain the education I yearned for.
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PREFACE

This book is based primarily on my doctoral thesis entitled: "Ordained Women Ministers in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana: Roles and Challenges" submitted to the University of Ghana in December 2012.

In this work we observe that ordained women ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) encounter many challenges in the performance of their functions as ministers of the Gospel. The main objective is to examine the post-ordination activities of the women ministers in the PCG and determine the extent to which their roles have been marginalized by the Church’s hierarchy and the congregation at large.

In doing this, we conducted field survey on some 500 respondents including ordained female ministers, ordained male ministers, church elders—presbyters, catechists and group leaders, some congregational members and the PCG who are now deceased.

We also relied extensively on documentary evidence from the PCG archives and libraries to enable us to examine the structure and organization of the PCG which also assisted us in putting women issues in perspective. In this work we have used gender discourse theory of the Russel (1993) and Morgan (2004) tradition as point of departure in putting women issues in theoretical and conceptual perspectives. Our contention is that although females outnumber the males in our congregations, ordained women ministers of the PCG have been marginalized in the performance of their roles.

The book is organized in six chapters. Chapter one provides introduction to the study and looks at conceptual and theoretical perspectives of women issues in the Christian church.

Chapter two focuses on women in the mission of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The mission of the PCG is stated and the history of women in the PCG is traced. The ministry of these women is examined in the context of the PCG’s Mission Statement. The chapter also examines the earlier leadership positions in the PCG of these women some of whom were presbyters, deaconesses and catechists.

Chapter three examines the emergence of women’s ordination in the PCG. It starts off with the historical background of the PCG, the tradition of total exclusion of women from the ordained ministry, until it was questioned. The debate and struggle for women’s ordination in the PCG is highlighted and a discussion of the reasons why women were kept out of the ordained
ministry and their acceptance now are discussed within the theological, socio-cultural and psychological context.

The fourth chapter examines the work of the ordained women ministers on the field. Here the kinds of leadership positions they have held or are holding in the church are examined to ascertain their recognition. The positions include chaplaincy, district ministers, presbytery chairpersons/clerks, administrators, and service as missionaries outside Ghana.

Chapter five presents the problems and challenges of the ordained female ministers in the performance of their ministerial duties. The pioneers have broken the barriers and they are overcomers. It is observed that the ordained ministry is a full time employment which is very demanding even though some ordained women ministers are into “tent ministry” thus a minister is in a regular secular employment and also working as an ordained minister.

Finally the sixth chapter summarises the issues raised and the findings of the research. Recommendations are made as to how the role of the ordained women can be acknowledged and how they can overcome their problems and challenges as ministers and a concluding remark.

Finally, with over 50 percent of the Christian faithful being women, the book is expected to throw an important light on the need to ordain more women into the clergy of the PCG to provide the needed leadership for women in the church. It will also serve as a guide for men and women on the need to shift their traditional outlook that restricted women to certain roles. It is expected that this book will elicit other studies into the gender dimensions in leadership.

Students and social workers in gender mainstreaming, Church leaders (including clergy), students and researchers in theological colleges and students and faculty of the study of Religion will find this work extremely useful.

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