

# WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

in the Baptist  
Convention of  
South Africa

Nelson  
Hayashida



# **WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP**

**The Baptist Convention of South Africa**

**REVISED EDITION**



# **WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP**

**The Baptist Convention of South Africa**

**REVISED EDITION**

**Nelson Hayashida**



**WILLIAM  
CAREY  
PUBLISHING**

Available at [missionbooks.org](http://missionbooks.org)



*Women and Leadership in the Baptist Convention in South Africa*  
Copyright © 2005 by Nelson Hayashida

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or other—without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Cover design by Mike Riester  
Front cover photo by Oladimeji Odunsi, unsplash.com.

Published by William Carey Publishing  
10 W Dry Creek Cir  
Littleton, CO 80120  
[www.missionbooks.org](http://www.missionbooks.org)

William Carey Publishing is a Ministry of Frontier Ventures, Pasadena,  
California [www.frontierventures.org](http://www.frontierventures.org)  
ISBN: 978-1-64508-307-8

23 22 21 20 Printed for Worldwide Distribution

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	vii
<b>PREFACE</b>	xi
<b>INTRODUCTION: Purpose, Relevance and Method</b>	1
Purpose	1
Relevance	2
Method	5
Notes on Introduction	16
<b>CHAPTER ONE: The Views of Feminist, African-American Womanist and African Womanist Theologians in the African and Non-African Milieu</b>	21
Introduction	21
Feminist Theology – A Definition	23
Feminist Theology – A Description	36
The Challenges to the Social and Ecclesiastical Emancipation of Women	53
Notes on Chapter One	65
<b>CHAPTER TWO: Views and Experiences of Women and Men in the Baptist Union of South Africa</b>	71
Introductory Remarks	73
Technique	74
Methodology	75
Sampling	76
Questionnaires, Interviews and the Respondents	77
A Descriptive Analysis	81
Concluding Remarks	114
Notes on Chapter Two	118

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

<b>CHAPTER THREE: Views and Experiences of Women and Men in the Baptist Convention of South Africa</b>	<b>125</b>
Introductory Remarks	127
Technique	127
Methodology	129
Sampling	130
Questionnaires, Interviews and the Respondents	131
A Descriptive Analysis	140
Concluding Remarks	187
Notes on Chapter Three	192
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: Summation, Comparison, Evaluation and Liberating Praxis</b>	<b>201</b>
Review of Previous Chapters	202
The Aims of this Chapter	204
Conclusion	243
Notes on Chapter Four	248
<b>WORKS CONSULTED</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</b>	<b>289</b>

## FOREWORD

The content of this book can best be understood by the prevailing context at the time of writing. My wife and I met Nelson and Sandra while they were serving as missionaries to South Africa in the early 1990s. I was the General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, their receiving agency at that time. The Hayashidas were appointed as theological educators to the Baptist Convention College in Soweto. This theological seminary was established to educate future South African Baptist church leaders to face the challenges and maximize the opportunities of the dynamic and growing African church. When they concluded their term, they were endeared and loved for their respectful approach and liberating values.

While the Hayashidas served in South Africa the country was undergoing tumultuous and seismic changes of monumental proportions. The country had just successfully begun the long transformation process from an Apartheid to a Democratic order. Nelson Mandela was elected the first democratic president and the entire social order was undergoing fundamental changes. The extent of the changes was tempered by the reality of limited financial and human resources. The society was coming to terms with the challenge of dealing with the debilitating and demonic actions perpetrated by the Apartheid State and its pervasive organs.

The church could not escape the effects of these changes. Two key questions relating to this book were discussed amongst

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

the many issues debated. The first was understanding and redefining the missionary relationship with agencies that had resources. The second was the definition of the extent of what it meant to be liberated. More specifically, what did liberation mean for women who formed the overwhelming majority of this denomination?

The Baptist Convention of South Africa was a “mission church.” This branch of indigenous Black African churches was started as a distinct and separate yet dependent entity, under girded by a very paternal relationship in 1927. In 1987, after failing to create structure that would represent a relationship of equality, the Baptist Convention declared its independence from its white self-appointed “custodians” to pursue a journey of discovery and development. This was a courageous decision based on faith in God. This church had little financial resources at that time.

The Convention’s critique of this paternalistic missionary model was devastating. At one stage there was a debate within the Convention whether to use the term “missionary” because it was deemed irredeemable. This relationship was characterized by painful, oppressive and dehumanizing experiences, often motivated by political ideals of subservience. Notwithstanding this, much good work was done and many precious personal relationships were formed between missionaries and receiving partners. The Hayashidas represented such a positive experience.

The fact that African women cooperated to have a male American missionary document their stories speaks volumes of the capacity for grace, tolerance and forgiveness on their part. It also speaks to the regard that they had for the Hayashidas. While this book is invaluable in contributing to a burning issue within the Af-

## ***FOREWORD***

rican church, it can never become the substitute for African women writing and reflecting their own story, using their own idioms. Nelson Hayashida demonstrated how skilled people can facilitate the liberation process for others.

The pressing issue that faced the Convention in 1987 was institutional and individual racism. In 1990, at a conference called to examine the effects of this horrible nightmare, a new vision for holistic proclamation of good news emerged. One of the key elements of this vision was the emancipation of women to exercise their giftedness and calling at the highest level. These sentiments were later developed to reinforce this ideal. I was justifiably proud in 1999 when women were amongst the first students who graduated from the Baptist Convention College.

This book exposes the gap between carefully crafted statements affirming women and the reality of reluctant submission to women in leadership. We hear the voices of women themselves. This book is academically sound and characterized by excellence based on sound methodology. I therefore believe that the questions raised, the voices heard, and the potential corrective measures, are a vital contribution to an important conversation within the church community. While this book is mainly focused on the Baptist church in South Africa, it presents many possibilities for stimulating debates and policy and experiential changes in other faith communities.

I receive this book first as an African. The African church is the fastest growing sector of the Christian church. There are exciting examples of churches that are rediscovering what it means to be an African Christian. This exercise does not mean the uncritical

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

baptism of everything African with the Christian message. The gospel has a critical component to all cultures. Sexism manifested in silencing and subjugating the voices of women cannot be tolerated no matter the sources of justification. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse that undermines the intrinsic value of women should not be tolerated in the African church.

I receive this book as a man. I was raised in a society that re-inforced the superiority of men systemically. I am therefore a “recovering sexist.” This does not mean that I should inflict such guilt that I deny my manhood. On the contrary, it means that I should redefine my manhood in the light of the advantages that I had in society. It also means that I need to listen and work to design policies that would relate to liberating practices.

I am presently directing the Global Prophetic Network. The aim of the center is to intentionally mentor the next generation of prophetic leaders. The challenge is to shine a light on the many prophets who are addressing those issues that cause us to critically examine the inconsistencies. One of the major prophetic issues facing the global church is the inclusivity of all God’s children without regard to race, age, nationality, ability, sexual orientation or gender.

Desmond Hoffmeister  
Executive Director  
Global Prophetic Network  
American Baptist Seminary of the West  
Berkeley, California, USA

## PREFACE

The book describes the emergence of the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) as a distinct denomination since 1987 and its developing sense of self-identity. The aims of this study are to establish the *nature and extent* to which South African Baptists have suppressed the abilities and roles of women in church leadership; secondly, to uncover through the stories and experiences of women and men in the Baptist Union of South Africa (BUSA) and in the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) the attitudes and practices of local Baptist churches toward women in leadership; thirdly, to propose the *value* of women in leadership by describing the significance of the full embrace of women in church leadership for the BCSA; fourthly, to seek to propose a strategy for the BCSA to bring to reality women's liberation and church transformation.

Concern for the social, historical and theological contexts of South African Baptist experience and thought shape my methodological starting points. Research in books, journals, Baptist magazines, newspapers, handbooks, reports, commemorative documents, other Baptist publications and unpublished doctoral theses form the basis for social, historical and theological information



## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

pertinent to this work. The range of literature being studied requires analysis and interpretation.

In addition to the literary, socio-historical methodology and theological analysis described above, oral and written narratives form a substantial part of this study. These testimonies or stories are presented through questionnaires and oral interviews. Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research are used. While large sample size and statistical significance can in some measure be gained from the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach provides an in-depth research method, seeking to get underneath raw data, to find reasons and meanings, hopes and feelings, perceptions and aspirations of individuals and groups.

The methodology of women's research being proposed should lead to action plans, praxis and change. The narrative, in the intimate sharing of women's stories, proves to be the essential foundation in discovering pragmatic approaches to emancipate women and the church (women and men), in South Africa as well as the ecclesia diaspora, for wholeness, healing and service.

I must acknowledge my debt to two colleagues who both inspired me and provided keen observations and evaluations along the way. Willem Saayman and Christina Landman, both professors at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa, offered careful, incisive and constructive comments. Their broad awareness of women's issues in the culturally diverse churches of South Africa proved to be invaluable.

Likewise, I am indebted to UNISA (University of South Africa) for providing the framework for my research.

## ***PREFACE***

I want to acknowledge Dr. Moriyoshi Hiratani and the First Baptist Church of Pearl City, Hawaii, for their loving support over the years of my ministry. The depth of their belief in me and acceptance of my endeavors, notwithstanding huge geographical and time separations, are testimonies to the faithfulness of God.

Most affectionate acknowledgement goes to Sandra, my wife, who became my able assistant, on yet another occasion, and enduring conversant thinker at all points down the lengthy road.



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE, RELEVANCE AND METHOD**

#### **PURPOSE**

Greg Cuthbertson, in a paper under the subheading “Women without history; history without women: history with a mission,” claims that history in South Africa remains predominantly androcentric. This is inclusive, he claims, of ecclesiastical history. Books on South African mission Christianity and church history omit ‘gender’ and ‘women’ from their indexes but list page references for ‘sorcerers’ and ‘witches.’ Scant space and attention is given to gender and women issues and their historical, social and religious significance. This historiographical condition has led feminist theologians and historians to become actively engaged in regular critique and dialogue with established scholarship, which ignores women and female oppression (Cuthbertson 1997:11-12).

What Cuthbertson describes as the state of affairs for South African historiography in general is true in the particular case of South African Baptist historical books, handbooks, and other reports and publications of the South African Baptist Historical Society. That is, as obvious as is the androcentric orientation of the Baptist mindset, equally obvious then is the lack of prominence of Baptist women in the trail of Baptist history in South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

This study is concerned with the emergence of the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) as a distinct denomination since 1987 and its developing sense of self-identity<sup>2</sup>, with particular focus on the role of women in church leadership as a distinguishing mark of self-identity. The aims of this study are to establish the *nature and extent* to which South African Baptists have suppressed the abilities and roles of women in church leadership; secondly, to uncover through the stories and experiences of women<sup>3</sup> and men in the Baptist Union of South Africa (BUSA) and in the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) the attitudes and practices of local Baptist churches toward women in leadership; thirdly, to propose the *value* of women in leadership by describing the significance of the full embrace of women in church leadership for the BCSA; fourthly, this study will seek to propose a strategy for the BCSA to bring to reality women's liberation and church transformation.

## **RELEVANCE**

James Ian Harris, in his 1996 doctoral study submitted to the University of Cape Town entitled Baptist Identity in Ecumenical Perspective: A Critical Exposition of the 1987 Statement on Baptist Principles of the Baptist Union of South Africa, claims that in spite of the Baptist Union of South Africa's (BUSA) 19th century origins it has yet to articulate and establish "its particular vision of Baptist identity to date" (1996:7). The Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA), though birthed in 1987 as a separate denomination after long years under the white controlled BUSA, is actively engaged in discovering its sense of purpose and identity. After twelve years of existence, the BCSA is undergoing an evolutionary process, shaping its dreams and aspirations as an Afro-centric denomination.

## *INTRODUCTION*

It was in 1994 at the BCSA Assembly in George that the idea of a Winter School of Theology was enthusiastically received. Its purpose is to theologically educate ministers and their spouses, laypersons within and without the Convention who are involved in various forms of Christian ministry, ministerial students studying at other (non-Convention) theological colleges, and ministerial students as well as prospective ministerial students within the Convention (a BCSA theological college opened in Johannesburg in late 1995, transferring to Orlando East in January 1996) “as to the present aims and mission statement of the Convention.” In 1995, the first Winter School commenced, with 65 persons participating, women and men. The consensus of the participants was that the Theological Education Committee (TEC) of the BCSA should make this week-long effort an annual Winter School of Theology (Kretzschmar 1995:1).

It is my contention that while the struggles to discover the fledgling denomination’s purpose and identity necessarily is hammered out in part at the grassroots among rural and urban churches, the Winter School has evolved to be a strategic center-point at which denominational leaders, experienced pastors, laypersons and ministerial candidates are learning to theologically articulate its growing sense of self-identity as a denomination.

The annual BCSA Assemblies are business oriented. The annual Winter Schools are theologically oriented. While one should not minimize the role the annual Assemblies play in conscientizing the BCSA churches to their mission and identity in the discussions and decisions made, it is in the Winter Schools that doctrinal and theological papers are presented, workshops and seminars are provided, and intellectual dialogue instigated that give rational expression to

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

the role and destiny of the new Convention.

The theme of the 1995 Winter School was: “How can we achieve the creation of a Holistic, Afro-centric and Participatory form of Christianity for the Baptist Convention of South Africa?” This theme was inspired by the Convention’s Mission Statement adopted at the 1994 BCSA Assembly. The full statement follows:

The Baptist Convention of South Africa is a Fellowship of member churches whose mission is to develop and proclaim a holistic, Afro-centric, and participatory understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thereby equip its constituencies to facilitate the dynamic transformation of societies. (Kretzschmar 1995:1)

This study seeks to demonstrate that within this Mission Statement lies the theological roots and justification for the upliftment of women in leadership roles in the churches of the Baptist Convention of South Africa. Additionally, it *assumes* that as this statement is debated and defined in the Winter Schools, local churches, national Assemblies, regional conferences, and at the Baptist Convention College, the acceptance of women in the Christian ministry and in leadership roles in the churches and denominational offices, in national and regional committees, is gaining in approval and contributes to the self-identity of the denomination.<sup>4</sup>

It is the contention of this study that Baptist Convention views on women and women in church leadership must be informed by the wider Christian community. Ecumenical dialogue and awareness broadens the scope of biblical hermeneutics on the issue of women, and this broadening gives shape and form to a view of women in ecclesiastical leadership.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### **METHOD**

#### **Terminology**

In this study the phrase the “South African Baptists” refers to the Baptist Union of South Africa. Formerly established as a denomination in 1877, the South African Baptists’ early heritage stems from the 1820 British settlers and their followers. Over the course of time, the phrase incorporated the Indian, African and Afrikaans Baptists who were “in association” with the Baptist Union. The phrase also can mean those Baptists who separated themselves from the Union in 1986, forming in 1987 the independent Baptist Convention of South Africa. In this study, particular stress will be given to the African (Baptist Convention) and the largely white (Baptist Union) components of the South “African Baptists,” ignoring the other components for reasons of space and focus.

The title of the study is “Women and Leadership in the Bap-tist Convention of South Africa.”

The term “women” in the title of the study means African (black) women. The Baptist Convention is currently overwhelmingly black. African women, who have been systematically victimized by the political, economic and social institutions of South African society, have also been, to add insult to injury, victimized by the church as well. Male dominance in leadership, especially at pastoral and deaconship levels, has subjugated a powerful resource in Christ’s church. These are the “women” I mean.



## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

The term “leadership” in this study is taken to mean church leadership. In his own study, Harris seems to almost equate the term “leadership” with the term “discipleship,” for he argues that church leadership from top to bottom must be undergirded by discipleship. Discipleship is defined as the self-giving of one’s life in other lives in order to witness Christ being obeyed in life’s total reality, physical and spiritual. Following the example of Jesus, authentic Christian leadership is courageous, sacrificial, and loving (1996:223). If this is the kernel of “leadership” (discipleship/leadership, disciplined leadership, disciplined leadership) in Christ’s church, then women and men are potential candidates for leadership as they are both candidates for discipleship. The argument I make then, is that neither one ought to be in any way marginalized or uprooted from their privilege and responsibility to be equal and full participants in Christ’s church and the leadership thereof. Tantamount to being a follower of Christ, for women and men, is to be “disciplined and disciplined leaders.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Methodological Starting Points and Parameters**

Concern for the social, historical and theological contexts of South African Baptist experience and thought shape my methodological starting points.<sup>6</sup> Research in books, journals, Baptist magazines, newspapers, handbooks, reports, commemorative documents, other Baptist publications and unpublished doctoral theses form the basis for social, historical and theological information pertinent to this study. The range of literature to be studied requires analysis and interpretation.

In addition to the literary, socio-historical methodology and theological analysis described above, oral and written narratives form

## *INTRODUCTION*

a substantial part of this study. These testimonies or stories will be gathered by both questionnaires and oral interviews. I will therefore use both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research. The disadvantage of the quantitative research approach (questionnaire) is that it tends to reduce human beings to scores on socio-economic charts. To counter that, I will incorporate open-ended questions throughout the questionnaire so that comments can be made to explain or qualify objective responses to questions. The advantage to the qualitative research approach (sometimes understood as “Participatory Research Approach”) is that it tends to study human beings multi-dimensionally. Thus, while large sample size and statistical significance can in some measure be gained from the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach gives us in-depth research method, seeking to get underneath raw data, to find reasons and meanings, hopes and feelings, perceptions and aspirations of individuals and groups.<sup>7</sup>

I will use the questionnaire, in many cases, as a springboard for depth interviews/oral histories of women<sup>8</sup> and men in the church. In other situations I will utilize the interview only. Both urban (township) and rural Baptist church members will be given questionnaires and some of these will be subjects for interviews.<sup>9</sup>

The method of “participant observation” will be used as I circulate among the Baptist churches of the BCSA in particular, with less involvement in BUSA churches. “Participant observation” is a qualitative social research technique in that it provides checks on collected data as well as providing the occasional novel data not otherwise collectable. This approach, then, allows for verifiable processes to take place.

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

Interpretation of the questionnaires and oral interviews is critical. In the questionnaires, each question offers an opportunity for the respondent to write a comment if an explanation or qualification is necessary. These blank spaces were used frequently. This helped me immensely in interpreting the meaning behind the “yes” or “no” response. In the oral interviews, I consistently asked questions to validate my understanding of what was said. Because the interviews were dialogical in nature, this was easy to do. It is not to say that misinterpretation did not occur. But I feel they were limited in extent by the questions I frequently posed for clarification. In Joyce M. Nielson’s Feminist Research Methods (1990), a chapter is devoted to feminist methodological concerns in oral history that have implications for interpretation of women’s experiences. The affirmation of womanhood appears to be a fundamental precondition for oral feminist methodology. Another fundamental insight seems to revolve around women’s cognition, i.e., what women think may not necessarily match their behavior, or vice-versa. They are often captives to their psychosocial arena. This too has implications for how data is interpreted. I have sought to keep these factors in mind in my data collection and interpretation.

In Christina Landman’s The Piety of South African Women (1999a), she has a section entitled “How To Tell a Sacred Story” (1-6). Here she explores how an ordinary story can be transformed into a sacred story of liberation. By using Lady Duff Gordon’s story of a slave woman named “Rosina,” Landman demonstrates how method itself can become a story, i.e., take on the form of a sacred story. It becomes sacred when, in retelling Rosina’s story, the theme of freedom from oppression becomes the key point of her life. It is a move away from Lady Gordon’s interpretation of Rosina’s story to hearing Rosina’s voice by reconstructing for Rosina her story with the knowledge we have of the social plight of slave women and their dreams of

## INTRODUCTION

a better existence in the Cape Colony. In this case, when a white woman of privilege tells the story for another woman of underprivilege, the methodological approach is to retell the story in a more compassionate, subjective, and meaningful way.<sup>10</sup> We do not let Lady Gordon's interpretation "speak" for Rosina. The muted voice of Rosina needs to be heard through compassionate reconstruction. In the context of oral interviews with South African Baptist women of BUSA and BCSA, we will *allow* these women to "speak for themselves" as they should. No one is speaking for them. I have sought to give *evaluation* to the data, however. That is, I have taken what was said or communicated and placed it in its particular cultural, socio-economic, and ecclesiastical context. Sometimes women spoke, not with their heart, but with the baggage of the church's indoctrination, preconceptions and expectations. They told their stories, sometimes with the heavy burden and backdrop of oppressive "church law" and "social law" that confines them to stereotype and subservience. Church and social laws have fostered confusion and anxiety in women. It is here that interpretation of the data must move beyond itself to evaluation of the data. By taking women's stories and spirituality seriously, their desire to be near to God and serve him, their stories become sacred stories. This I have sought to do in this study.<sup>11</sup> Landman I think is correct: God's true voice must be retrieved from women's sacred stories. The historical church did not represent God's voice and God's will in terms of women's oppression.

The outcome of the research will be used to construct a strategy for a way forward for women in the BCSA as well as the denomination as a whole. How can the data from the questionnaires and oral interviews be used to liberate women and the church to serve Christ in a more participatory and holistic manner? What have we

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

learned through analysis and interpretation that can assist in drawing firm conclusions on steps to be taken to bring about women's liberation and church transformation? In summary, the methodology of women's research I am proposing should lead to action plans, praxis and change. The narrative, in the intimate sharing of women's stories, will prove to be the essential foundation in discovering pragmatic approaches to emancipate women and the church (women and men) for wholeness, healing and service.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Limitations and Scope of the Research**

Arguably, African women see their lives as holistic -- mind, body, spirit -- in a much more profound sense than white women. This intrinsic, holistic orientation carries over into their "social consciousness." They are, in mind, body and spirit, wedded to their social framework -- family, church and community -- again, in a deeper sense than white women.<sup>13</sup> Their need for greater affirmation of themselves as equal partners in the Lord's church and his Kingdom (in all the earthly institutions and projections of this Kingdom) is to be seen in this light. This study primarily focuses upon African women in the Baptist Convention of South Africa and their increasing consciousness and desire for access to church leadership at all levels. Implications, then, beyond the BCSA is a secondary focus and interest.

In addition, this study is focused on *church feminism*. Its aim is to address women's concerns from within the framework of the church and not from outside of it (e.g. *religion feminism*). Secondly, while the study seeks the contributions of white feminist and African-American womanist theologians to the overall debate on women's

## INTRODUCTION

oppression within the church, it gives particular stress and value to what African womanist theologians are saying in the context of their own history and experiences. Finally, this study centers on the women of the BCSA. “Women’s theology” is pertinent only so far as it finds its contextual relevancy among South African Baptists.

### Structure

*Chapter One* concerns itself with the views of women theologians in Africa and the Western world. What are they saying about the biblical and theological justifications for women in leadership in the church, women and dignity, women and the Christian ministry? What are their cries and hopes? What do they perceive to be the challenges and obstacles to the ecclesiastical emancipation of women?

*Chapter Two* focuses upon the women of the Baptist Union. The task is to discover in what ways women experienced their faith and their struggles for self-realization and fulfillment in leadership. Do we detect gender oppression, subversion and unequal discipleship? Do we detect a suppressed female spirituality? Some women’s stories and experiences from the dominant white cultural group will be investigated.

*Chapter Three* focuses upon the black women (and to a lesser degree the men) of the Baptist Convention. It seeks to discover their stories and experiences as women in general and women in leadership roles in the church in particular. Is there an emerging “theology of women” within the new denomination? Do these grassroots

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

“women theologians” from South Africa’s “third world” possess something to contribute to the larger effort of women’s empowerment in the Church of Jesus Christ in Africa? Along with patriarchal resistance, are there voices of resistance from black women themselves to black women’s growing desire for leadership?

*Chapter Four* serves as the summation of the study and proposes a prescription for the future of the BCSA. A summary and comparative analysis of the attitudes and experiences of BUSA and BCSA women and men, a comparison of BCSA women with women of South Africa from non-BUSA, non-BCSA churches, a comparison of BCSA women and their attitudes and experiences with a woman of Zambia, with a woman of Hong Kong, and with women of the United States will be made. An evaluation of the findings through the use of theological analysis and a prescription for the future will be given. The aim is to bring the study to a pragmatic conclusion.

### **The Value of this Study**

There are reasons and assumptions for this study. These reasons indicate the value of this analysis of women in leadership among the Baptists of the BCSA.

*Firstly*, men must join women in the fight for justice in the church. My involvement as a male writer of this study is a single contribution to a much broader, strategic goal -- the full emancipation of women in church leadership. The church is to be seen in need of reconciliation with women, without whom the church would be devastated. Men must uphold women, with their attitudes and their actions.

## INTRODUCTION

A *second* reason for this study is to make another contribution to the biblical and theological justification for the full rights of women in the ministries of the church. This writer supports the view that the Scriptures do not negate women in their uniqueness or in their equality with men in spiritual gifts, dedication or versatility. The emergence of a “theology of women” within the Baptist Convention is of immense significance.

*Thirdly*, the South African Baptists face several critical issues to their survival and vitality in the new South Africa. The issue of women is one of them. One of the distinguishing marks of the Baptist Convention is its increasing affirmation of women in the ranks of church and denominational leadership. The BCSA can be seen as the flagship or model by which other Baptist groups can find inspiration, for the organization that liberates women liberates itself.

A *fourth* reason for writing this study is to record the voices of Baptist women in urban and rural settings. It is important for women to give their voices for a change, to speak out, analyze, critique and allow their feelings and attitudes to be heard. Traditionally, women have been the “silent-researched.” Others spoke for them and about them, shaping perceptions about them and establishing their destiny. Here they are given the opportunity to speak for themselves, about matters they care about deeply, for church women are concerned about their faith and expressions of their full feminine humanity in that faith.

A *fifth* reason for this study is the need for church renewal. The BCSA and other South African denominations must be en route to transformation through re-evangelization. This study seeks to present the notion that as women are liberated to full partnership with



## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

men in the church, men and women will be re-evangelized and renewed in their commitment and service.

### **A Personal Note**

There are glaring and obvious handicaps in being a male, a non-African, and non-South African male at that. I could be accused, as men have been, of writing androcentrically about women and their affairs. However, I would like to bring reasons to justify myself as the researcher and author of this study.

My maleness. Personally, to attempt to see the struggles in being obedient to God and his church from the female point of view by seeking understanding, if not empathy, with feminine advocates of the faith is an exercise in spiritual growth and enrichment. As a man, it is somehow “constructive” to my humanity to feel connected to the challenges of women in being liberated to serve God both inside and outside the structures of the church. It is constructive and wholesome to feel unthreatened by the ambitions of women who seek to find freedom to exercise their call and talent in the Kingdom of God. This is what I have discovered. In addition, my maleness can provide opportunities for “emotional distance” when highly charge sentiments are being dealt with. One hesitates to say “objectivity,” for to be human is to be subjective. Yet there may be, at times, the lean toward “objectivity” that emotional distance may bring.

My non-African maleness. Could it be that, in the course of interviews and discussions, the knowledge that I am *not* an African may cause some African women to share more freely and frankly about themselves or their hurts, fears and disappointments than they

## INTRODUCTION

would to an African male?

My non-South African maleness. Could the fact that I am not only non-African, but a non-South African as well, contribute to more openness in dialogue with some women? Could some women, black or white, feel more free or comfortable in sharing about the disappointments felt in their local church or about their denomination if the sharing was to someone outside their church and outside the history of their struggles? Is the psychological and cultural distance of the investigator an advantage in some ways?

Perhaps the drawbacks and disabilities in being a male, a non-African male, and a non-South African male are more numerous and substantial than being an African male, or a South African male who is black or white. Perhaps the advantages to being a female African researcher are the most suitable of all possibilities. The case I am making, though, is that, at times and in some circumstances, and with some women, the reality of my own gender and non-African, non-South African identity *may* provide opportunities equal to or greater than what may be possible otherwise.

I rest my case on one other point. As an “ethnic minority” in my own country, the United States of America, and having a racial heritage that experienced its own sufferings in discrimination and marginalization in political, economic, and social spheres and in ecclesiastical institutions, I can, perhaps more than many, understand and empathize a little easier with the plight of those in an upward struggle. I do know that my own intrinsic experience of being a part of a “psychic heritage of victimization due to racial prejudice” has played no small part in my interest and selection of the topic of this research.

## ***WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP***

### **NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION**

1. The Western church's paternal, patriarchal and imperial extension around the world clearly portray what Russell (1984:77) calls a "paradigm of domination." The history and expansion of the Baptist faith in South Africa is no exception, as we shall see in succeeding chapters. Landman (1992:134) cites C.J.M. Halkes' anthropological insights that the men of the Dutch Reformed Church have historically viewed women as equal to men in principle but different from men in practice. This aberrant attitude constitutes a dual anthropology. It is evident Russell's "paradigm of domination" can take various shapes.

2. The term "self-identity" in the study means a sense of self-awareness primarily. But it incorporates the ideas of self-acceptance and self-practice as well -- self-acceptance as a matter of conviction and self-practice as a matter of consequence. Therefore, the way I am using the term "self-identity" is stronger than the way it is normally used. It is used in the sense that the denomination's self-identity is not only an "ideological identity" but a *developing* "practised identity" as well.

3. Schussler-Fiorenza (1982:xix) has noted that in the mainstream of theological research which tended to be traditionally male-dominated (note the date in which Schussler-Fiorenza writes), women as research objects are not taken seriously. Significant changes have taken place since 1982 in the theological research circles, and women's issues and experiences are taken much more seriously today. Yet Meyer-Wilmes (1995:152-164) indicates the need still is to take women's stories and their struggles from the marginal or peripheral to the centre of research. I tried to make this research on BCSA women do just that. See Annalet van Schalkwyk's (1997:607-632) article "Women's Research from the Periphery." She interacts with Schussler-Fiorenza, Meyer-Wilmes, Elizabetha Donini, Musimbi Kanyoro, Essy Letsoalo and others in a search for an appropriate feminist research methodology for contemporary South African women.

4. Kretschmar (1990:25) contends that thousands of white women within BUSA are systematically ignored. The yearly Union Handbook only refers in passing to women, their numerous contributions to the church either taken for granted or ig-