

The Lucan Jesus as the Model for Transformative Masculinity: A Lesson for Nigerian Conservative Churches on Gender Equity

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Abstract

Gender inequality has become one of the challenges that the continent of Africa is facing due to how men and women socialized through culture, social norms, and religious interpretations influenced the religious sphere. This has led to toxic masculinity that begins from childhood socialization and how women/ladies are the victims of such abuse and is reflected in conservative Nigerian churches. This paper employs contextualization on the model of Christ Jesus as presented in Luke's gospel as a model of transformative masculinity towards gender equity. It sheds light on how Jesus relates to women offers ways to deconstruct toxic masculinity within the Nigerian conservative churches. This paper employed African women's Christology to address gender inequality challenges in the Nigerian church. It sheds light on how to transform toxic masculinity for gender equity. This paper thus provides the model of Jesus as a transformed man towards gender equity in Nigerian conservative churches that have a gender imbalance in the religious space and secular including the home.

Keywords: *African Women Theologians, Conservative, Equity, Gender, Transformative Masculinity, Redemptive*

Introduction

The Bible, often viewed as a product of gender construction, shapes the Christian reality through patriarchal interpretations of its passages. Patriarchy was a cultural norm among both Jews and Graeco-Romans during the biblical era. Gender inequality is evident in numerous passages throughout the Old and New Testaments, reflecting the context of Jesus' birth and upbringing. Despite this, Jesus remains highly revered and valued within both Christianity and Islam, where he is considered a prophet. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA, 2022:2) Bible Study Manual for the book of Luke states that

Luke seeks to present Jesus' attitude towards social issues. This is seen through his commitment to reach those at the margins such as women, vulnerable in society such as widows, orphans, elderly citizens, children and the physically impaired. Luke shows how Jesus affirmed the value of those denied their full acceptance in the society of his time, including women, children, Samaritans, Gentiles, tax collectors and sinners."

The Gospel of Luke showcases Jesus' life within a patriarchal and religious Jewish society, demonstrating how he approached gender equity. This paper argues that the Bible's portrayal of societal structures reveals much about the intended relationship between men and women. As Taiye Aluko (2006:233) observes, an unequal relationship between men and

women has existed from the beginning and has been perpetuated through generations. Such patriarchal systems of oppression are evident in the African context, particularly in religious-cultural, socio-political, and economic realities. The relationship between men and women is often characterized as superior and inferior. This paper examines Jesus in the Gospel of Luke as a model for gender equity, which can serve as an example for conservative churches in Nigeria.

The paper employs African women's Christology to contextualize Jesus' attitude towards women in the Gospel of Luke for conservative churches in Nigeria. Contextualization in theology involves making the gospel relevant within a specific context and political reality. Byang Kato (1975:23) notes that contextualization involves translating concepts or ideas into actionable insights in any given situation. Similarly, Nicholls (1975:647) observes that contextualization seeks to bridge the gap between the gospel's universal truth and local understanding, making it accessible and meaningful to people from diverse backgrounds.

Oduyoye (2001:59) asserts that for women theologians in Africa, Christ is more realistic as the story of Christ who saves and liberates those marginalized and subordinated by society based on culture and religious patriarchal interpretation. This paper examines Jesus' model through the Christology of African women theologians as a means to deconstruct patriarchal ideology within Graeco-Roman society, challenging and reconstructing gender inequalities within conservative churches in Nigeria. This work considers Jesus and gender relations in the New Testament, gender construction within Africa concerning masculinity, and the Lukan Jesus as a model for gender equity. This is for conservative churches in Nigeria through African women's Christology.

Understanding Gender Relations in the Time of Jesus

To comprehend the gender relations prevalent during Jesus' time, it is imperative to examine the cultural, religious, and social environment in which he lived. The cultural expectations of that era, deeply rooted in male dominance, significantly shaped gender interactions. This inquiry is pivotal for understanding the New Testament world, profoundly influenced by the ideology of male supremacy within the Roman patriarchal sphere.

As Musa Dube (2018:85) notes, Jesus, being a Jew, lived within the cultural, religious, and social institutions of Israel, a people who considered themselves God's chosen (Exodus 19:4-6). Moreover, his life was embedded in Roman society, where maintaining the status quo was paramount. Research indicates that male-dominated society was deeply ingrained in Greek

philosophy through the household codes (management) of the polis, which have influenced the modern world. The Roman Empire modified these codes, further impacting the relationship between genders in Roman society.

The Roman Empire, where Jesus was born, was influenced by Greek culture and religion, structured along class and patriarchal lines. Power was primarily vested in the hands of elite men who used their wealth to maintain peace within the empire (Dube, 2018:86). Consequently, New Testament patriarchy was embedded in the concept of household codes, which guided social and religious life. These codes have shaped contemporary theological perspectives on the patriarchal society that determines the relationship between men and women. David Balch (1981) observed that the rules on patriarchal ideology resonate with household codes and were prevalent during Aristotle's time, as evidenced in his work "Politics." Aristotle's theory of harmony in the city-state supported a male-dominated society (patriarchy) led by the father, who ruled over the household. This household management, which formed the basis of family units in the city-state, sustained and maintained the hegemonic status quo in terms of gender roles. However, in Aristotle's politics, this harmony was achieved at the cost of slavery and women's subjugation to male rule.

During Jesus' time, society was patriarchal and political, with men occupying public roles and women confined to the domestic (private) sphere. Women were associated with uncleanness, temptation, and seduction, and were denied the opportunity to exercise their gifts in public. The Old Testament's portrayal of women as unclean led to their segregation and devaluation in both secular and religious contexts. For instance, during worship, women were prohibited from entering certain sections of the Temple and were required to remain in the outer court of the synagogue. Leviticus 12:2-5 exemplifies this, portraying women as the source of sin. Even among the Pharisees, a religious group during Jesus' time, women were not represented. Togarasei (2013) notes that women were not counted in the required minimum of ten people for a synagogue service. Although the Bible records women in leadership positions, such as Deborah in Judges 5, these instances are rare compared to the numerous men who held leadership roles religiously or politically as documented in the Bible since is the product of patriarchal culture. This reinforced the gender hierarchy, with women considered inferior to men in both societal and religious contexts.

Luke, one of the synoptic gospels, offers a distinct perspective within the New Testament. His account of Jesus' life, as recorded in Luke 1:3, indicates that he researched to write a history of Jesus. Thomas Hale (1996:287) notes that Luke was a doctor and a close companion of the Apostle Paul, participating in Paul's second and third missionary journeys to

Greece and Turkey (Acts 16:10; 20:6). Luke's orderly account of Jesus suggests that he investigated eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life on earth. This supports the reliability of the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus as a historical figure, despite some scholarly skepticism. However, this paper does not focus on all of Jesus' actions but rather on how he, as a Jewish man, challenged traditional norms to promote gender equity in a patriarchal Graeco-Roman society (Dube, 2018:86). It specifically focuses on the analysis of Christology by African women theologians as a model for transformative masculinity and gender equity among conservative churches in Nigeria.

The Roman government was structured along class and patriarchal lines, with power concentrated in the hands of wealthy men in the political and religious spheres. These men used their positions to maintain the power and status quo of patriarchal ideology, which dictated that men should control women and children. Jesus lived in such a patriarchal society, both sacred and secular. His perspective on gender construction can be inferred from the stories in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). The gender roles depicted in the New Testament reflect the traditional roles informed by the polis "household management" in the NT world. Women are portrayed as serving men, being seduced or tempted, nurturing, fearing, and widowed. In contrast, men are identified as leaders, religious or political leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees), priests, and high priests (Ogidis, 2021).

Luke presents Jesus' relationship with women in a distinct manner, even though he was a Jew and grew up in a society that promoted male dominance. For instance, Luke 7:36-50 records the incident of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet, referred to as a "sinner." From a gender perspective, this passage highlights the devotion of an unnamed woman, characterized as a sinner and presumably a prostitute, who expressed her devotion through anointing Jesus' feet, as noted by Hale (1996:303). Luke's inclusion of the host's name underscores the patriarchal societal view of women as sinners, particularly prostitutes. However, it is important to consider that prostitution often involves male patronage. In such a society, male dominance tends to focus solely on blaming women's moral standards rather than adopting an objective and fair approach. Furthermore, Thomas (1996:303) argues that Simon the Pharisee doubted Jesus' prophetic status when he saw the sinful woman touch him, believing that a genuine prophet would have recognized her impurity and avoided physical contact.

Through the lens of African women theologians, it becomes evident that women were discriminated against and oppressed due to societal, political, and religious norms and expectations. The Pharisees' labelling of the woman as a sinner exemplifies this negative naming as if she lacked a personal identity. Robertson (1977:154) observed that Luke's

worldview and writings were shaped by the cultural influences of his time. By highlighting the culture and politics of the era, Luke reveals the treatment of women by men during Jesus' time. Although Jesus' attitude was not expected to be lenient towards women, Luke's gospel demonstrates a breaking of cultural and religious barriers that oppressed women.

The reality of patriarchy during Jesus' time is evident, but his attitude differed in many ways, as discussed in this paper. His approach can serve as a model for deconstructing toxic masculinity and promoting gender equity among conservative churches in Nigeria through the perspective of African women. Gender issues are prominent in the gospel, depicting the dominance of men over women, which is similar to African culture and perspectives on gender roles. While Jesus challenged such gender stereotypes, as discussed below, his model can be adopted by conservative churches in Nigeria to foster gender equity and improve relationships between men and women.

Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria

Nigeria, a country with diverse cultures and traditional beliefs, is deeply influenced by patriarchal systems. Taiye (2006:233) contends that patriarchy not only preserves oppressive traditions but also nurtures their growth, making them normative for interpersonal relationships between men and women. Patriarchy, rooted in gendered social roles, assigns unequal positions to men and women, with men holding superior status. Similarly, Bwire (2016:181) postulates that patriarchal ideology is a social system that socializes and promotes male dominance and power control, conferring authority on men over women and children. Gendered social construction deals with the power and privileges bestowed upon men over women, often resulting in women being treated as subordinates.

Nigerian cultures significantly influence the socialization of individuals regarding patriarchy and gender inequality. Bwire (2016:182) argues that inequality begins early in life, as boys are trained to be boys, impacting their future relationships with women and girls. Boys undergo traditional physical and mental rituals or rites of passage to toughen them and prepare them to become men, warriors, fighters, overcomers, dominators, and even despisers of women. Gender construction and socialization focus on who controls and has access to power, which is used to oppress, exploit, and subordinate women, particularly within religious contexts in Nigeria where children are also raised with such socialization. Safinatu (2014:264) argues that Nigerian society socializes children from birth into traditional gender roles, shaping their understanding of expected behaviors and opportunities based on their biological sex.

Gbarale (1999) and Abia (2002) address the social construction of gender roles within many African and Nigerian cultures. These scholars highlight how this construction manifests in Nigerian homes, where young boys are often encouraged to act cruelly, wilfully, rudely, and aggressively towards young girls within the home or school settings. Culturally and socially, within the Nigerian context, boys are expected to be courageous, protect and provide for girls and women, and avoid crying or exhibiting fear (Stroud, 2019). Boys are discouraged from displaying feminine qualities as they are growing up to be men. Conversely, girl children are expected to take care of the household and be gentle, quiet, and obedient, embodying the ideal version of the boy child (Oduyoye, 1998).

Gender construction places women in subordinate roles, assigning them domestic duties and relegating men to leadership positions in both public and private spaces. Such patriarchal privileges have led many youths to adopt a flawed ideology of masculinity from a young age. Traditionally, women are expected to fetch water, collect and break firewood, cook, and perform all domestic chores, while men are not expected to assume leadership roles, particularly in political settings (Eunice, 1998). This is further complicated in some cultural settings where the payment of bride price requires total obedience and submission from the woman without questioning. In many cases, the payment of bride price by men objectifies their wives as commodities they can use as they wish. Some African cultures disturbingly tolerate domestic violence, with individuals believing that physical punishment is justified when a wife is perceived as disobedient or submissive enough to her husband (Dube 2016:2). Such beatings are seen as a display of masculinity and control over women. As noted above, in some cultures, the payment of bride price is seen as a transfer of power from the father to the man, which can be abused by treating the wife as a slave. All of these practices can be traced back to the socialization process of boys and girls within the home and society, which perpetuates gender inequalities.

Another way in which youths are socialized with oppressive patriarchy is through the interpretation of religious sacred books within the Nigerian context and their application in the political sphere to deny women equality. Patriarchal interpretations of religious books like the Holy Bible and the Qur'an often place women in subordinate roles, reinforcing traditional cultural oppression of women. Otutubikey (2004:13) argues that certain interpretations of these holy texts have been used to perpetuate a belief system that privileges male dominance and reinforces gender-based hierarchies, silencing women's voices and stifling oppositional views.

Patriarchal interpretations of religious texts, particularly the Bible, tend to grant men more privileges than women even in the political context of Nigeria, reinforcing

marginalization and subordination in both church and society. This is due to patriarchal interpretations of certain biblical passages related to gender, which place women in an inferior state and deny them equal leadership rights compared to men (Ogidis 2021:97-108). Bwire (2016:185) also postulates that while Christian leaders (men) in Nigeria have biblical texts that can support and strengthen women's involvement in leadership positions in the church and society, the majority of decision-makers in the church still use these Pauline passages to marginalize and subordinate women.

The negative effects of patriarchy can be seen in the changing roles of women and men, who are increasingly challenging the oppressive patriarchal structures of the family and society. With more women becoming educated and owning property, they are alleviating some of the burdens associated with providing for the family. However, as Bwire (2016:183) postulates, some men feel threatened by these empowered women. The rise of women in religious and political spaces has also brought different perspectives to biblical interpretation, challenging one-sided patriarchal readings. For instance, 33 national constitutions in Africa make provisions for the freedom of women and men's involvement in politics as their fundamental human rights in religious, political, and social spaces. These constitutions view discrimination based on biological, religious, and traditional differences between women and men as leading to marginalization and subordination in religious and political spaces, as noted by Rumbidzai (2013:33).

Countries like Namibia developed a manifesto on the inclusion of women in political participation in 1999. Liberia elected a female president, while Sao Tome, Senegal, and Mozambique have also demonstrated women's participation in political processes through the election of female Prime Ministers (Frank 1999:43; Tripp, 2001:68). It is noteworthy that African women's theologians have long been marginalized within traditional theological discourse. However, they have emerged as essential voices in the conversation about women's experiences in the church. Their unique perspective, grounded in their cultural and societal context, provides a more comprehensive and relevant understanding of women's struggles and challenges within conservative churches in Nigeria. Moreover, African women's theologians emphasize the communal aspect of Christology, viewing Jesus not only as an individual savior but also as a community builder. This understanding is crucial for addressing the experiences of women within conservative churches in Nigeria, where community and relationships play a significant role. By seeing Jesus as a community builder, African women's theologians emphasize the importance of inclusivity and equality within the church, creating space for women to have a voice and be valued as equal members of the community.

To address gender inequalities in conservative churches in Nigeria, adopting an appropriate approach based on Jesus' approach to women through African women's Christology is vital for gender equity and the transformation of men's relationships with women within and beyond the church. The framework of African women's theologians can be employed to engage with oppressive cultural aspects through cultural hermeneutics, as exemplified by Musimbi Kanyoro and Musa Dube's book "Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible." This approach can help deconstruct and reconstruct patriarchal structures, giving voice to women within the Bible and highlighting Jesus Christ's role in transforming gender stereotypes in the first century and its applicability to conservative churches in Nigeria. One of the central themes in African women's theologians' Christology is the concept of Jesus as a liberator. For centuries, the church has been seen as a patriarchal institution, often marginalizing, overlooking, and oppressing women. However, African women's theologians view Jesus as a liberating figure who challenged societal norms and empowered women. They draw parallels between Jesus' interactions with women in the Bible and the struggles that women face in their everyday lives.

Jesus' Challenge to Patriarchy and His Model for Gender Equity for Nigerian Churches

Robertson (1977:155, 163) asserts that Luke's narrative demonstrates how Jesus, a Jew, did not marginalize women during his earthly ministry. Jesus actively combated gender marginalization, particularly challenging the patriarchal privileges afforded to men over women in the religious spaces of the first century. His seemingly radical attitude reflects his compassion, which led him to challenge traditions, political practices, and religious customs that suppressed and disregarded women in society. Jesus exemplified the inclusive principles and core values of God's Kingdom, demonstrating its transformative power to reform any system. The Kingdom's core value of inclusive ministry through the Christian community aimed to transform and reform by empowering the disregarded, marginalized, and oppressed within any given community, including women in the African church. African women's Christology often emphasizes the inclusive and egalitarian aspects of Jesus' teachings, which are central to this study. By highlighting Jesus' interactions with women and his challenge to patriarchal norms, he offers a leadership model not based on dominance or exclusion but on service and equity, providing a valuable example for conservative churches in Nigeria.

As a Jew, Jesus' worldview was influenced by the hegemonic masculinity prevalent in the first century. However, he challenged and drew attention to the roles and contributions of

women in the early Christian communities and African contexts (Nigeria). This helped to counteract traditional gender roles reinforced by patriarchal interpretations of scripture and supported the push for equal rights and opportunities for women. African women's approaches to Christology which challenge oppressive and suppressive patriarchal ideologies, can serve as a valuable guide for African youths today, inspiring them to transform and reform hegemonic masculinities in the 21st-century Nigerian religious and political systems that exclude and marginalize women. African women theologians' ideas of Jesus Christ resonate with a transformed and redeemed man, as noted by Anne (2005:105).

In light of these perspectives, African women's theologians' Christology offers a more nuanced and empowering approach to the experiences of women in conservative churches in Nigeria. Their understanding of Jesus as a liberator, the embodiment of divinity and humanity, and a community builder challenges the status quo and empowers women to reclaim their rightful place in the church. By emphasizing the relational, compassionate, and nurturing aspects of Christ's teachings, they encourage a rethinking of masculinity, promoting a vision of masculinity that is supportive and respectful of women's rights, thus helping to dismantle toxic stereotypes. As Oduyoye (1988:32) affirms, Jesus exhibited liberating love and compassion, identifying with the struggles of the marginalized and oppressed. By incarnating into their experiences, he offered tender care, hope, and empowerment, mirroring the selfless love and devotion of a liberator.

The Gospel of Luke, among other gospels, showcases Jesus' interactions with women, demonstrating his efforts to empower them within a patriarchal community. African women theologians, along with other women theologians, have considered Jesus' actions as liberating, challenging the cultural and traditional roles that subordinate women to the margins of society, as noted by Oduyoye (2008:82). These acts serve as lessons for transformative masculinity, deconstructing conservative members' ideologies on gender roles within the church and promoting equitable treatment of women. Furthermore, Sandra (1986:58-9) notes that Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospel of Luke, challenged oppressive patriarchal norms through His interactions with women, contrary to the practices of men in His day. By empowering women's voices and valuing their contributions, Jesus advocated for an inclusive society of both genders and fair treatment. African women critique and challenge practices and interpretations that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination, encouraging the rejection of harmful patriarchal norms through questioning and offering alternative interpretations of religious texts and traditions.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' ministry is marked by a pervasive atmosphere of tender sympathy, as he consistently shows compassion and love to those he encounters, revealing a heart of deep kindness and empathy towards people considered sinners, women, children, and others. Luke's gospel portrays Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44; 22:44), challenging the ideology that men should not cry to demonstrate bravery (Robertson, 1977:162). Luke's gospel presents Christ as failing to uphold and sustain the patriarchal privileges associated with being a "real" man within the first-century religious, political, and socio-cultural worldview. Hegemonic masculinity greatly influenced by patriarchy in most aspects of life, subordinated and downgraded women to second-class citizens. However, Luke presents a Jesus who paid special attention to women and empowered them.

This Christology often highlights the strength and resilience of women, providing a theological basis for women's empowerment. It promotes the idea that women have the right and ability to lead, teach, and make decisions within both the church and wider society. Jesus' Kingdom was more inclusive, aiming to transform and reform the world for everyone to be treated with justice, fairness, and equity, regardless of gender, as long as they are qualified for positions and not discriminated against based on societal and gender roles. The transformation and reformation should differ from what Luke 22:25 says about foreign kings who order their people around. Jesus' statement, "I have been with you as a servant" (Luke 22:27), serves as a model of Kingdom principles that can be used to reform society, particularly religious and political spaces. Serving others as Jesus did aims to restore people's dignity and allow them to fully contribute to societal growth in all aspects, without denying them their rights based on gender roles or societal expectations. Being a man and serving the interests of the less privileged and marginalized has the power to transform cultural, political, and religious organizational injustices, contradicting the Graeco-Roman ideas of what a man should be.

Jesus challenges the gender stereotype of unfaithfulness when practised by women but not by men. He refuses to subscribe to a gender-discriminative worldview and the interpretation of the Sabbath day in Luke 13:10-17 regarding the healing of the crippled woman in the temple. This demonstrates Jesus' friendliness and accommodation towards those discriminated against in society based on cultural norms, traditions, and political or religious obligations that are oppressive, non-inclusive, and non-liberating. Oduyoye's (1988:32) ideas about Jesus resonate with the Lukan gospel, emphasizing the deconstruction of toxic masculinities. Through Christ, women are liberated from the assumptions of patriarchal societies, and their lives are honoured, accepted, and sanctified, regardless of marital status or parenthood. The Christ of African women upholds not just motherhood attributes but everyone who, like Jesus of Nazareth,

performs "mothering" roles in bringing out the best in others. Christ is the high priest, advocate, and just judge for whose kingdom we pray.

Jesus came to a patriarchal world where men played public roles (secular and religious) and women played private (home) roles. Women were associated with uncleanness, temptation, and seduction, and denied the opportunity to exercise their gifts in public spaces. Nevertheless, Jesus challenged gender stereotypes and empowered women to move beyond domestic roles, even into religious and secular spaces. Jesus worked for a transformative society, as postulated by Anne (2005:108), challenging the Jewish cultural norms that did not permit or reward relationships between unmarried men and women, as noted in John 4:1-42, the story of the Samaritan woman. African women can identify with Jesus, who acts as a mother, nurturing all life and showing compassion to oppressed individuals through cultural, religious, and political practices. This serves as a model for creating gender equity, treating women as human beings rather than objects, and deconstructing toxic masculinity within conservative churches in Nigeria.

Oduyoye's (1988:32) mother-like Jesus aimed to reconstruct toxic manliness using the framework of African women's theology within the context of Africa and their experiences, providing a model for conservative churches in Nigeria for gender equity, political reform, and transformation. One can observe elements of Jesus' mother-like attributes in Luke's gospel, which deconstructs patriarchal ideologies that marginalize and disregard women, calling for alternative and transformative images of what it means to be a reformed man based on compassion, care, and love that dignifies and affirms the human life of all. Patriarchal dogmas replicated through religious interpretation and mythological narratives within African cosmology, as discussed above, and the biblical interpretation influenced by culture, found orthodoxy to cement the oppression of women by men, evident in the religious system.

Therefore, African youths need to model these attributes of Jesus for gender equity and political reform on the continent, starting with the socialization of children from childhood. Functional Christology, in the view of African women theologians, cannot be conveyed without considering women's experiences and their place in church and society, particularly for deconstructing toxic masculinity and promoting political reform through the youths. Christology should consider the saving act of Jesus Christ for humanity and the hope of liberation from any form of oppression.

Oduyoye (2011:55) states that through his suffering, Christ the liberator paved the way for humanity to experience the abundant life God originally intended. Christ is also seen as freeing women from the oppressive forces of illness and restrictive cultural norms, enabling

their full participation in community activities. In Luke's gospel, Christ set people, especially women, free from the problems of racism, poverty, and the downgrading of women, which African youths are to model in empowering women of all ages. Christ liberates from oppressive cultures and counters these triple burdens, challenging the oppressive nature of culture, religion, and the political system that does not treat genders equitably. This can only

Conclusion

The gospel of Luke presented a Jesus that was transformed and reformed through the Christology upheld by African women theologians as a model that the conservative Nigerian church can emulate to achieve transformative masculinity for religious reform. This paper shows how Jesus lived in a patriarchal society where He had all the privileges to enjoy, but decided to be a Jewish man with a difference when it comes to His treatment of women and empowering them. Understanding Jesus through African women theologians presented to the society transformative and reformatory ways that men and women can partner in leadership within the conservative church and society that enhance gender equity as a model for youths to address and reform the church system in Nigeria. Jesus championed the cause of women and fair treatment, the Nigerian church should fully support women's empowerment for gender equity and should challenge subordination, segregation, and marginalization found within the family structures. The church should challenge the discriminative laws and openly advocate for the empowerment of women to join and participate in the church through a balanced interpretation of the Bible. Jesus championed transformative and reformatory masculinity in the new faith community the inclusive church and promoted fairness, justice, equity and egalitarian values on how women need to be treated and be involved in church. If conservative churches empower women and men to jointly participate in church and society, they are preaching the transformative and liberating teachings of Jesus Christ and are working towards achieving gender equity.

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