

Ordination of Women in the LWF Member Churches

Ordination of women is a policy and a commitment reemphasized in all the LWF Assemblies. However, this is not a binding policy on the LWF member churches rather a commitment that the member churches are encouraged to address at their own pace.

Reasons are either internalized or expressed:

- Biblical literalism reemphasized through evangelical charismatic movements.
- Androcentric theology and practices:
- Arguments: Christ is male and therefore God is male. The disciples were male and therefore the apostolic succession is to be maintained.
- To some Asian and African churches the literal understanding of the scriptures ("Women be silent")
- Women's internalizing of the teaching women brought sin, are like Eve temptress so should be subordinated, or impure because of reproductive function or it could be a usurping of lay women's leadership
- Language of liturgies and the language for God reinforcing a concept of male clergy.
- This is doubly reinforced by Jewish Levite tradition and

Church's action/inaction

- Gender blind policies.
- Understanding of the communion is yet to permeate fully among church leaders who stand as often as gate-keepers.
- Double standard maintained in many churches still both by women and by men.
- Engrossment in the maintenance and running of the churches. We have inherited and banked on a hierarchical structure, which is non-viable in many local contexts. There is no energy left for changing it or a movement towards it globally.
- Easy way to put a glass ceiling on women to claim supremacy and to quell opposition.
- Inherited church tradition found more important in some islands
- To keep up with the expectations of partner churches.
- In others it is just a matter of time, willingness of the leadership, finding of resources, opening up of the discussions or investing in theological education for women
- Personal conviction of Church leadership
- Fear of split
- Some churches, which have ordained has done so either as case of being politically correct in the global setting, or as a tokenism without a strategic way of building consensus among church congregations.

External Influences

- The mission/partnership influence especially from conservative mission boards.
- Political instability in some countries and in some churches

Cultural impositions

- Seen as western imposition and a feminist agenda
- Subordination of women from decision making
- Authority should not be in the hands of women
- Taboos of talking with men, curtailment of women's mobility
- Primary role as caregiver - Pregnancy, menstruation
- Fear if Feminization of Church

WICAS handles the issue in the Following ways;

- Reserving 40% of scholarship for theological education to women. This has created more theologically trained women in the past decades.
- Giving a faith approach: that it is God's call to ministry and not a human rights issue.
- Accompanying the theologically trained women with further learning and exposures.
- Through making available small financial support to churches that need such a resource to bring people together to discuss in congregations or in synod meetings that would lead to a decision making and by making available theological resources.
- By supporting scholarship for Women's theological Education where it is needed.
- By enabling other church leaders to play advocacy roles and by equipping the theologically trained women to be ambassadors.
- By encouraging women for theological studies.
- Organizing theological educators on engendering theological education.
- Accompanying students for feminist research.
- Funding scholarships to women to study D.Min in Feminist Theology.
- Ensuring that in every visit, the seminaries near by are contacted for offering lectures.
- Ensuring that women theologians are included as leaders, bible study and worship leaders in church leadership meeting to give them greater visibility and acceptance.
- By advocating for the concept of the LWF as an inclusive communion of churches.
- By sending theological books and resource materials to the libraries of the seminaries.
- Sending resource materials to the churches that request for such accompaniment
- Ensuring that Women's Bible studies are presented in every issue of "Women" magazine.
- Making women bishops and presidents as role models and ambassadors to speak on women's behalf.
- Using the document on Churches say No to Violence against Women as a document for churches to work with.