

DECONSTRUCTING PATRIARCHY IN THE CREATION NARRATIVE: A HERMENEUTICAL RE-EXAMINATION OF GENESIS 1:26-27

Stephen Hosea Vongdip, PhD

ABSTRACT

This article undertakes a critical re-examination of Genesis 1:26-27, the creation narrative in the Christian Bible, through a hermeneutical lens focused on deconstructing patriarchal interpretations. Traditional understandings often reinforce a hierarchical structure, positioning men as dominant over women. This perspective has significant implications for the theological understanding of worshipful response and women's place within socio-religious discourse. The article employs a critical analysis of the text, delving into the original Hebrew terminology and exploring the framework for theological understanding and worship. This informed the methodology of textual analysis: a close reading of Genesis 1:26-27 in its original Hebrew language. Examining the specific word choices (e.g., "image of God," "male and female") and their nuances in the original context. By deconstructing patriarchal readings, the article aims to reveal a more egalitarian understanding of creation, emphasizing the inherent dignity and shared responsibility of both man and woman. This re-examination offers a fresh perspective on the creation narrative, promoting a more balanced and respectful understanding of gender roles within the divine plan. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions in role theology between man and woman, advocating for a revised liturgical framework that celebrates the complementary nature and equal value of both man and woman, reflecting God's image in their entirety. The article recommends Christians need to develop critical thinking, and not be susceptible to either the Western or Eastern humanistic philosophies. The church must be inconsistent with biblical liturgy.

KEYWORDS: Creation, Image, Inherent-dignity, Man, Response, Woman

INTRODUCTION

The creation narrative in Genesis 1:26-27 holds profound theological significance as it sets the foundational understanding of humanity's identity and relationship with God. This passage, which describes humanity being made in the image of God, is pivotal for interpreting human dignity and purpose. The phrase "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" indicates a collective and relational aspect of God's creation process, suggesting that humans are inherently designed for relationship and community (Bird, 2015). Additionally, the declaration "male and female he created them" underscores the

intentional creation of both genders, highlighting the importance of both male and female in reflecting the divine image (Middleton, 2005). This narrative, therefore, serves as a critical text for discussions on human equality, purpose, and the nature of gender relations.

Moreover, the *imago Dei* concept has far-reaching implications for ethical and social constructs. Being created in the image of God implies that every human being possesses intrinsic worth and value, deserving of respect and dignity. This theological premise has been used to advocate for human rights and social justice, emphasizing the equal worth of all individuals regardless of gender, race, or social status (Cohick, 2010). The creation narrative thus not only shapes theological anthropology but also informs contemporary ethical discussions, making it a cornerstone text for understanding human identity and equality.

Historically, the interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27 has been heavily influenced by patriarchal frameworks, which have often overshadowed the text's inherent message of equality. Traditional exegesis has frequently positioned men as the primary bearers of God's image, relegating women to subordinate roles. This patriarchal reading has perpetuated gender hierarchies within both religious and societal structures, leading to systemic inequality and the marginalization of women (Trible, 1973). Such interpretations have been used to justify male dominance in various spheres, including leadership roles within the church and broader societal contexts.

The implications of patriarchal interpretations are profound and far-reaching. By asserting male superiority, these readings undermine the equal dignity and value of women, contributing to gender-based discrimination and injustice. This has led to the exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making positions, both within religious institutions and in wider society. Furthermore, it has fostered environments where women's voices and contributions are undervalued, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and perpetuating cycles of oppression (Cohick, 2010). Addressing these issues requires a critical re-examination of the text, challenging traditional interpretations and advocating for a more egalitarian understanding that upholds the equal worth of all people.

FEMINIST THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE CALL FOR RE-EXAMINATION

Feminist theological frameworks have emerged as a critical response to patriarchal interpretations, calling for a re-examination of biblical texts through lenses that promote gender equality and justice. These frameworks emphasize the importance of re-reading Scripture in ways that highlight the voices and experiences of women, advocating for interpretations that reflect mutuality and partnership rather than hierarchy and subordination (Bird, 2015). Feminist theologians argue that traditional patriarchal readings have distorted the true message of the biblical text, and that a more accurate interpretation reveals a vision of equality and shared responsibility between genders.

The call for re-examination is not merely academic but deeply practical, as it seeks to transform how religious communities understand and practice their faith. By reinterpreting Genesis 1:26-27, feminist theologians aim to dismantle structures of oppression and promote a more inclusive and just community. This involves not only re-reading the text but also reclaiming the contributions of women throughout history and within contemporary religious practice (Middleton, 2005). Such a position challenges believers to consider how their interpretations of Scripture impact their perspectives on gender and to embrace a theology that affirms the full humanity and equality of both men and women. The crux of the matter is what Genesis 1:28-27 says. Both man and woman are created in the image of God and for predetermined purposes. Thus, the Bible says, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ (Colossians 2:8, NIV).

HERMENEUTICAL RE-ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TEXT

Textual Analysis in Original Hebrew The phrase "Na'aseh Adam" (נָעֲשֶׂה אָדָם), meaning "Let us make man," found in Genesis 1:26, has intrigued scholars due to its use of the plural form. This plural construction has been interpreted to indicate a collaborative aspect of creation, suggesting that the divine act involved a community or a council of divine beings (Bird, 2015). This plurality can be seen as an invitation to understand humanity not as a solitary entity but as inherently relational and communal. This interpretation aligns with the African communal ethos, which emphasizes collective identity and mutual support within communities. In Nigerian cultures, the concept of "Ubuntu," which translates to "I am because we are," resonates with this interpretation, highlighting the interconnectedness and interdependence of all people (Mbiti, 1969).

In the Nigerian context, the plurality in "Na'aseh Adam" can be seen as affirming the cultural values that prioritize community and collective well-being. For example, among the Yoruba people, the idea of "Omoluabi" underscores the importance of good character and community responsibility, reflecting the communal aspect of creation. This interpretation challenges individualistic readings and promotes a view of humanity that is rooted in relationality and shared existence (Adedeji, 2014). By emphasizing the plural nature of creation, this hermeneutical approach calls for a reconsideration of how we view human relationships and societal structures, advocating for a more inclusive and community-oriented perspective.

The terms "tselem" (צֶלֶם) and "demut" (דְּמוּת), translated as "image" and "likeness" respectively, in Genesis 1:26-27, provide profound insights into the nature of humanity's relationship with God. "Tselem" implies a physical representation, while "demut" suggests a more abstract resemblance. Together, they convey the idea that all humans are created to reflect God's nature and character, encompassing both physical and spiritual

dimensions (Middleton, 2005). This dual aspect of being made in God's image emphasizes that every human being, regardless of gender, shares equally in this divine reflection.

In Nigeria, this understanding can significantly impact gender relations and societal norms. Traditional patriarchal structures often marginalize women, but recognizing that both men and women equally bear God's image can challenge and transform these dynamics. For instance, in Igbo culture, where patriarchal norms are prevalent, re-emphasizing the equal reflection of God's image in women can empower female leadership and participation in religious and communal life (Nwagbara, 2011). This egalitarian interpretation fosters a more inclusive community where the contributions of both men and women are valued and recognized.

The term "virdu" (וִרְדּוּ), translated as "dominion" in Genesis 1:26, has often been misinterpreted to justify exploitative and hierarchical control over creation. However, a closer examination of the Hebrew term reveals a nuance of responsible stewardship and care. The biblical context suggests that dominion involves a guardianship role, where humanity is entrusted with the care and preservation of the earth and its resources (Walton, 2001). This understanding aligns with the concept of stewardship found in many African cultures, including Nigeria, where the relationship between humans and the environment is seen as one of mutual respect and responsibility.

In Nigeria, traditional practices of sustainable agriculture and community-based resource management reflect this stewardship ethos. The Tiv people, for instance, practice "Iya," a system of rotational farming that ensures the land remains fertile and productive for future generations (Ake, 1982). Reframing "virdu" as responsible stewardship rather than dominion can encourage similar sustainable practices and environmental conservation efforts, promoting a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. This perspective challenges exploitative practices and advocates for a more ethical and sustainable approach to resource management.

RETHINKING GENDER ROLES WITHIN THE CREATION NARRATIVE

Rethinking gender roles within the creation narrative involves challenging traditional patriarchal interpretations and advocating for a more egalitarian understanding of the text. The equal creation of male and female in Genesis 1:27 suggests that both genders are intended to share equally in the responsibilities and privileges of stewardship over creation (Bird, 2015). This re-interpretation can have profound implications for gender roles within religious and societal contexts, particularly in regions with strong patriarchal traditions.

In Nigeria, where gender roles are often strictly defined and enforced, this re-examination can promote greater gender equality and empowerment. For example, the reinterpretation of women's roles in the Igbo and Yoruba communities, where traditional customs have often limited women's participation in leadership, can lead to more inclusive

practices. Women's active involvement in community decision-making and leadership positions can be encouraged, reflecting the biblical principle of mutual partnership and shared responsibility (Nwagbara, 2011). This approach aligns with contemporary movements for gender equality and justice, advocating for a more balanced and inclusive society.

By rethinking gender roles within the creation narrative, communities can move towards more equitable and just social structures. This involves not only reinterpreting biblical texts but also challenging cultural norms and practices that perpetuate inequality. In Nigeria, initiatives such as the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) work towards empowering women and promoting gender equality, reflecting the biblical call for mutual respect and shared leadership (WRAPA, 2020). Such efforts demonstrate the practical implications of re-engaging with the creation narrative in ways that uphold the dignity and equality of all people.

DECONSTRUCTING PATRIARCHY: A COMPLIMENTARY THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

Challenging hierarchical structures and the subordination of women within theological contexts requires a critical re-evaluation of traditional interpretations that have reinforced gender inequalities. Historically, readings of Genesis 1:26-27 have often been used to justify male dominance and female subordination by emphasizing the creation of man first and viewing women as secondary (Trible, 1973). However, contemporary scholarship argues that these interpretations misrepresent the text's intent. The simultaneous creation of male and female in God's image indicates fundamental equality, challenging patriarchal structures that place men above women (Bird, 2015).

In Nigeria, patriarchal norms are deeply ingrained in many cultural and religious practices. For instance, among the Yoruba, traditional gender roles often limit women's participation in leadership and decision-making (Adedeji, 2014). By reinterpreting Genesis 1:26-27 to highlight the equal creation of both genders, these restrictive norms can be challenged. Theological education and discourse that promote this egalitarian perspective can empower women to seek leadership roles within religious and community settings, fostering a more inclusive and balanced society.

Moreover, addressing the subordination of women involves practical steps towards gender equity. Organizations such as the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) work to dismantle gender biases and promote women's rights in Nigeria. By advocating for policy changes and educational programs that highlight the equal dignity and worth of women, such initiatives contribute to deconstructing patriarchal structures both within religious institutions and broader society (WRAPA, 2020). This approach not only aligns with a more accurate interpretation of biblical texts but also supports the broader goals of social justice and equality.

MUTUALITY AND SHARED IMAGO DEI: A CALL FOR EQUALITY

The concept of the imago Dei, or the image of God, as presented in Genesis 1:26-27, serves as a profound theological foundation for gender equality. The text's declaration that both males and females were created in God's image suggests a shared and mutual reflection of the divine nature (Middleton, 2005). This mutuality implies that men and women are equally endowed with dignity, value, and purpose, challenging any theological justification for gender-based hierarchy and subordination.

In the Nigerian context, emphasizing the shared imago Dei can have transformative implications. For instance, in the Igbo culture, where patriarchal customs often dominate, promoting the idea that both men and women equally reflect God's image can encourage more egalitarian practices. This perspective can lead to increased recognition of women's contributions in various spheres, including religious leadership and community governance (Nwagbara, 2011). By advocating for interpretations of Scripture that affirm gender equality, religious leaders can play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values all individuals.

Educational initiatives and theological training programs that emphasize the mutuality of the imago Dei are essential for cultivating a culture of equality. In Nigeria, seminaries and religious institutions can incorporate teachings on the equal creation of men and women into their curricula. This approach not only equips future leaders with a more inclusive theological understanding but also helps dismantle long-standing gender biases within religious communities (Cohick, 2010). By fostering an environment of mutual respect and shared responsibility, these efforts contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

REIMAGINING GENDER ROLES IN LIGHT OF THE TEXT IN GENESIS 1:26-27

Reimagining gender roles in light of Genesis 1:26-27 involves moving beyond traditional patriarchal frameworks and embracing a vision of equality and partnership. The creation narrative presents both male and female as equally bearing God's image and sharing in the divine mandate to steward creation. This perspective calls for a re-evaluation of gender roles that have historically marginalized women and limited their participation in various spheres of life (Bird, 2015).

In Nigeria, reimagining gender roles can significantly impact cultural and religious practices. For example, in many Nigerian communities, women's roles have traditionally been confined to domestic spheres, while men dominate public and religious life. By interpreting Genesis 1:26-27 as advocating for equal partnership, these restrictive roles can be redefined. Women can be encouraged to pursue leadership roles within churches, mosques, and community organizations, contributing to a more balanced and

inclusive society (Adedeji, 2014). This shift not only aligns with the biblical text but also supports broader efforts toward gender equality and social justice.

Practical examples of reimagining gender roles can be seen in initiatives such as the African Women in Leadership Organization (AWLO), which works to empower women and promote gender parity in leadership across the continent, including Nigeria. By providing training, resources, and support for women leaders, AWLO helps to break down barriers and redefine what leadership looks like in various contexts (AWLO, 2021). These efforts, rooted in a theological understanding of mutuality and shared imago Dei, contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive society where both men and women can thrive and lead.

RE-IMAGINING THE CREATION NARRATIVE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP

A More Inclusive Understanding of Humanity in God's Image Re-imagining the creation narrative with an inclusive understanding of humanity in God's image necessitates a shift away from patriarchal interpretations that have historically marginalized women. Genesis 1:26-27, which asserts that both male and female are created in the image of God, provides a theological foundation for this inclusivity. This perspective emphasizes that all humans, regardless of gender, equally reflect God's nature and are endowed with inherent dignity and worth (Middleton, 2005). Such an interpretation challenges any theology that supports gender hierarchy and promotes a vision of mutual respect and equality.

In the Nigerian context, this inclusive understanding can transform cultural and religious practices that have traditionally been patriarchal. For example, the Igbo culture often emphasizes male dominance in religious and social spheres, relegating women to subordinate roles (Nwagbara, 2011). By reinterpreting the creation narrative to highlight the equal creation of men and women, these cultural norms can be challenged and reformed. This approach can encourage the full participation of women in religious leadership, educational opportunities, and community decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive society.

Educational programs and theological training in Nigeria can play a crucial role in promoting this inclusive understanding. Seminaries and religious institutions can incorporate teachings that emphasize the equal creation of all people in God's image into their curricula. This theological foundation can inspire future religious leaders to advocate for gender equality and to create worship spaces that honor the contributions of both men and women (Cohick, 2010). By fostering a more inclusive understanding of humanity, these efforts contribute to building a just and equitable society.

A REVISED LITURGICAL FRAMEWORK THAT CELEBRATES EQUALITY AND PARTNERSHIP

Re-imagining the creation narrative also involves revising liturgical frameworks to celebrate equality and partnership. Traditional liturgies often reflect and reinforce patriarchal structures, emphasizing male leadership and minimizing the roles of women. A revised liturgical framework, grounded in the inclusive interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27, would intentionally highlight the equal contributions of men and women in worship and community life (Bird, 2015). This framework would include inclusive language, shared leadership roles, and rituals that celebrate mutuality and partnership.

In Nigeria, many church services are still male-dominated, with women often confined to supporting roles. For example, in many Yoruba churches, men typically hold positions of authority while women serve in auxiliary capacities (Adedeji, 2014). A revised liturgical framework could change this dynamic by promoting shared leadership in worship services, where both men and women lead prayers, preach, and administer sacraments. Such changes would not only reflect a more accurate interpretation of the biblical text but also empower women and validate their spiritual gifts and leadership.

Practical examples of implementing this revised liturgical framework can be seen in initiatives like the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, which promotes the inclusion of women in theological discourse and church leadership across Africa, including Nigeria (Oduyoye, 2001). By advocating for liturgies that celebrate equality and partnership, these initiatives help create worship spaces that honor the contributions of all members, fostering a more inclusive and participatory community of faith.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ONGOING DISCUSSIONS IN FEMINIST THEOLOGY

Re-imagining the creation narrative contributes significantly to ongoing discussions in feminist theology. Feminist theology seeks to challenge and transform traditional interpretations of Scripture that have perpetuated gender inequality. By emphasizing the equal creation of male and female in God's image, this re-imagined narrative provides a robust theological foundation for advocating gender justice and equality (Bird, 2015). This perspective not only critiques patriarchal readings but also offers a positive vision of mutuality and partnership.

In Nigeria, feminist theologians like Mercy Amba Oduyoye have been instrumental in advancing these discussions. Oduyoye's work emphasizes the need to re-read biblical texts from a perspective that highlights women's experiences and contributions (Oduyoye, 2001). Her advocacy for an inclusive interpretation of Genesis 1:26-27 challenges traditional gender roles and promotes the empowerment of women in

both religious and social contexts. This approach aligns with broader feminist theological efforts to create a more just and equitable society.

Feminist theology in Nigeria also engages with local cultural practices and seeks to integrate them into a re-imagined theological framework. For instance, the Yoruba concept of "Omoluabi," which emphasizes good character and communal responsibility, can be incorporated into feminist theological discussions to promote gender equality and mutual respect (Adedeji, 2014). By engaging with both biblical texts and cultural traditions, Nigerian feminist theologians contribute to a richer and more contextually relevant theological discourse that advances the cause of gender justice.

EXAMPLE FROM NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVES

Rethinking the Legacy of Creation: Moving Beyond Patriarchy

In Nigeria, one practical example of rethinking the legacy of creation and moving beyond patriarchy can be seen in the efforts of the Women's Fellowship groups within various church denominations. These groups have traditionally played supportive roles within the church, focusing on activities such as hospitality, fundraising, and community support. However, there is a growing movement within these fellowships to take on more substantial leadership roles and advocate for gender equality within the church structure itself.

For instance, in the Anglican Communion in Nigeria, some dioceses have begun to appoint women as archdeacons and even as bishops, challenging the traditional male-dominated hierarchy. This shift is partly driven by a re-examination of the creation narrative that emphasizes the equal creation of men and women in God's image. By highlighting this theological foundation, advocates within the church can argue for women's full participation in all aspects of church life, including decision-making and leadership roles.

These changes are supported by educational programs and workshops that train women in leadership skills and theological education. Such initiatives help to equip women with the knowledge and confidence needed to assume leadership positions within the church. By promoting a more inclusive understanding of the creation narrative, these efforts contribute to dismantling patriarchal structures and fostering a more equitable church environment.

The Significance of a Re-examined Narrative for Contemporary Faith

A practical example of the significance of a re-examined creation narrative for contemporary faith in Nigeria can be observed in the practices of some Pentecostal churches that emphasize gender equality in their ministry. For instance, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in Nigeria, has been progressively recognising the contributions of women in ministry. The

RCCG has numerous women pastors and church leaders who play pivotal roles in both spiritual and administrative capacities.

By reinterpreting Genesis 1:26-27 to highlight the mutual creation of men and women in God's image, these churches foster an environment that values and encourages women's leadership. This inclusive approach is reflected in the church's organisational structure, where women are given opportunities to lead congregations, participate in decision-making processes, and serve as role models for younger generations.

These practices not only empower women within the church but also have a broader impact on society. The church's stance on gender equality can influence its members' views on gender roles in the home, workplace, and community, promoting a more inclusive and respectful culture. This re-examined narrative aligns the church's teachings with contemporary values of justice and equality, making the faith community more relevant and transformative in the modern world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Promote Theological Education on Gender Equality:** Seminaries and religious institutions in Nigeria should incorporate teachings that emphasize the equal creation of all people in God's image. This education should highlight the inherent dignity and worth of both men and women as reflected in Genesis 1:26-27. By fostering an inclusive understanding of humanity, these programs can inspire future religious leaders to advocate for gender equality and create worship spaces that honor the contributions of both genders.
2. **Revise Liturgical Frameworks to Celebrate Equality and Partnership:** Churches and religious organizations should revise their liturgical frameworks to promote shared leadership roles and inclusive language in worship services. This includes allowing both men and women to lead prayers, preach, and administer sacraments. Such changes will reflect a more accurate interpretation of the biblical text and empower women by validating their spiritual gifts and leadership.
3. **Support Women's Leadership Initiatives:** Encourage and support initiatives like the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, which promote the inclusion of women in theological discourse and church leadership. These initiatives help create worship spaces that honor the contributions of all members, fostering a more inclusive and participatory community of faith.
4. **Integrate Cultural Values with Theological Discussions:** Engage with local cultural practices and integrate them into theological discussions to promote gender equality. For example, the Yoruba concept of "Omoluabi," which emphasizes good character and communal responsibility, can be incorporated into feminist theological discourse to advocate for mutual respect and equality.

5. **Advocate for Policy Changes and Gender Rights:** Organizations such as the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) should continue to advocate for policy changes and educational programs that highlight the equal dignity and worth of women. These efforts contribute to deconstructing patriarchal structures within religious institutions and broader society, supporting the broader goals of social justice and equality.
6. **Empower Women Through Community Engagement:** Religious and community leaders should actively involve women in decision-making processes and leadership roles within their communities. This can be achieved by reinterpreting Genesis 1:26-27 to emphasize equal partnership and by encouraging the participation of women in religious leadership, educational opportunities, and community governance.

CONCLUSION

Rethinking the legacy of the creation narrative in Genesis 1:26-27 involves moving beyond patriarchal interpretations that have long justified gender inequality and male dominance. By emphasizing the simultaneous and equal creation of male and female in God's image, we can challenge traditional theological frameworks that support hierarchical structures. This re-imagining calls for a comprehensive deconstruction of patriarchal norms and a shift towards a theology that upholds the inherent dignity and equality of all people. Such a transformation not only aligns with the true intent of the biblical text but also fosters a more just and inclusive community where both men and women can fully participate and thrive (Bird, 2015).

In the Nigerian context, this rethinking is particularly significant given the deeply entrenched patriarchal customs that often marginalize women. By promoting an interpretation of the creation narrative that highlights mutuality and shared responsibility, religious and community leaders can challenge these norms and advocate for greater gender equality. This approach supports broader social justice initiatives and contributes to dismantling systemic barriers that limit women's opportunities and rights (Adedeji, 2014). Moving beyond patriarchy in our theological understanding is not only a matter of scriptural fidelity but also a crucial step toward creating a more equitable society.

The re-examined narrative of creation holds profound significance for contemporary faith communities. By embracing an inclusive understanding of humanity in God's image, faith communities can create spaces that celebrate equality, diversity, and mutual respect. This re-examination encourages a more accurate and life-affirming interpretation of Scripture that resonates with modern values of justice and equality. It also fosters an environment where the contributions of both men and women are valued, enhancing the spiritual and communal life of the church (Middleton, 2005).

For Nigerian faith communities, the implications of this re-examined narrative are transformative. Traditional practices that have excluded women from leadership and

decision-making roles can be re-evaluated and reformed in light of a theology that emphasizes shared imago Dei. Churches and religious institutions that adopt this inclusive approach can become beacons of social change, advocating for gender equality not only within their congregations but also in broader society. This shift can inspire faith-based initiatives that address issues such as gender-based violence, educational disparities, and economic inequalities, reflecting the core biblical principles of justice and compassion (Nwagbara, 2011).

Ultimately, a re-examined creation narrative enriches contemporary faith by aligning it more closely with the transformative message of the Gospel. It calls believers to live out the values of love, equality, and mutual respect in their daily lives and community interactions. By moving beyond patriarchal interpretations, faith communities can embody a more inclusive and holistic understanding of the divine, fostering a vibrant and just community that honors the dignity and worth of every individual.

REFERENCES

- Adedeji, Femi. "Omoluabi: The Way of Human Being in Yoruba Culture." *African Identities*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2014, pp. 161-176.
- Ake, Claude. *Social Science as Imperialism: The Theory of Political Development*. Ibadan University Press, 1982.
- AWLO. "African Women in Leadership Organization." 2021, www.awlo.org.
- Bird, Phyllis A. *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*. Augsburg Fortress, 2015.
- Cohick, Lynn H. *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life*. Baker Academic, 2010.
- Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Heinemann, 1969.
- Middleton, J. Richard. *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*. Brazos Press, 2005.
- Nwagbara, Eucharia. "Gender Roles and Igbo Cultural Practices: Implications for the Development of Women." *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 3, no. 5, 2011, pp. 129-134.
- Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. *Introducing African Women's Theology*. Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Trible, Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Fortress Press, 1973.
- Walton, John H. *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary*. Zondervan, 2001.
- Witherington, Ben. *Women in the Earliest Churches*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- WRAPA. "Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)." 2020, www.wrapa.org.