

IMPACT OF WOMEN ON THEIR CHILDREN'S PRIESTHOOD AND PROPHETIC MINISTRIES

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ABSTRACT

It takes two to bring children to the world – father and mother. It also takes two to bring them up into adulthood. However, it matters a lot how they are brought up. In the lives of most children who would become great men and women, the importance of the impact of mothers cannot be diminished. And in very few other areas of human endeavours has the impact of motherhood been felt more strongly than in prophetic and priesthood ministries. This does in no way suggest any reason to overlook the impactful contributions of the good daughters of Eve in the entire different spheres of human life on earth. This work has highlighted the enormous, commendable contributions which women have made towards, and the impact which they have recorded on human development generally, and the development of the Christian faith in particular. The aim of the work is to encourage modern women in the Christian faith to emulate them. In contemporary times, women in ministry must not be discouraged in any way from supporting their wards who are called into ministry.

Keywords: Impact, Women, Children, Priesthood, Prophetic & Ministries.

INTRODUCTION

A popular idiomatic expression says: “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”¹ This emphasizes that women have a strong influence on events through their children.² Hardly is there, here on earth, any other human endeavor, where this saying is truer than in the priesthood and prophetic ministries, paradoxically. The paradox being that these exclusive divine vocations where the presence of the strong hands of God are usually most emphatically felt, are also, where what can be seen

as the meddlesome hands of mothers are prevalent. When one considers the hotbed of the constructive roles exerted by Mary, the mother of Jesus in Christ's salvation ministry and priesthood; Jochebed, Moses' mother's role in Moses' life and priesthood; Hannah, Samuel's mother in her son's prophetic ministry; Elizabeth, John the Baptist's mother's hands in her son's ministry as Christ's forerunner; and many more, some of whom will be examined later in this work, then one would realise just how much the hands that rock the cradle really do "roil" the crown . Or, is it in the secular realm? The likes of Barack Obama, former President of the United States of America; his wife Michelle Obama, a magnificent former First Lady of America; Abraham Lincoln, former President of the United States of America; Michael Jordan, American former professional basketball superstar; Martina Hingis, Swiss female former professional tennis superstar; to mention only a few for example, are some of the outstanding people, who were groomed and primed by their mothers for the greatness they achieved. This study is out to thoroughly examine and critically analyze the important, and impactful roles that many mothers have historically had on their children's successful careers, especially as priests and prophets.

In ancient times, women were known to be anchors for childcare, bringing up potential great leaders of the world. In modern days: "Women are the primary caregivers of children and elders in every country of the world."³ International

studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organizations of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges.⁴

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The concepts employed in the title of this piece need being defined and aligned in the way they are meant to convey the meanings they are intended to project. The concepts are: impact, women, children, priest, prophet, and ministries, and are presented as follow:

Impact: The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines impact as “(also called collision), in physics, the sudden, forceful coming together in direct contact of two bodies, such as, for example, two billiard balls, a golf club and a ball, a hammer and a nail head, two railroad cars when being coupled together, or a falling object and a floor.”⁵ In natural and normal circumstances, when there is an impact between two objects, there is always an identifiable mark left on either the one, or both of the impacted objects, thereby registering a significant change of circumstances regarding the objects involved. According to Manala, “The words ‘effect,’ ‘power,’ ‘impression,’ and ‘influence,’ are the essence of the term ‘impact.’ The encounter between Christianity and African traditional cosmologies produced a new situation, a situation with unique characteristics.”⁶ Similarly, the impacts mothers impinge on their growing up children can neither be diminished nor undervalued. Some zealous

mothers usually have some kinds of foresight into what they intend their children to evolve into, and program them appropriately. For example, when Mary enjoined some wedding attendants at Cana in Galilee, where Jesus was a guest, in the following terms: “Whatever he (Jesus) saith unto you, do it,” (John 2:5); she understood exactly what she expected her son Jesus Christ to become, and so she began to prepare the environment ahead of time for him to navigate, and operate smoothly and successfully.

Women: A dictionary’s definition of woman is as follows: “An adult female person.”⁷ In the context of this project, the word is used in plural form, signifying women in plurality as mothers, whose roles in the lives of their children are so impactful that the children most times, do turn out to be what they prepare them to be.

Children: The definition of children may be as follows: “an unborn or recently born person, a young person, especially between infancy and youth, a childlike or childish person, a person not yet of legal age.”⁸ This definition is in respect of a child, however in this piece, children are under consideration, being the plural of child. Children are the future generations of a society, the posterity of a nation. Most mothers are conscious of that fact, that is why many of them incubate strategic plans for their little children to achieve greatness later in their lives. Hannah had not had any child when she entered into a bargain with God while she was yet a barren, that

if God would give her a boy child, she would turn the child over to God to serve God for his entire life. God gave her a boy named Samuel, and Hannah faithfully kept her promise. She took Samuel to Prophet Eli, at the Lord's house at Shiloh, as soon as she weaned him. Samuel grew up there to become God's preferred anointed prophet, a replacement for Eli, and the first kingmaker in Israel, who appointed the first king, Saul, for the nation of Israel (1Samuel 1:9-41), and his replacement King David.

Priest: A priest is "someone who is authorised to perform the sacred rites of a religion especially as a mediatory agent between human and God. Specifically: in Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic clergy person ranking below a bishop and above a deacon."⁹ Priesthood was a highly elevated position in ancient Israel, and is still greatly esteemed in today's world. Among Christians, very few women will be unappreciative of any child of theirs who would love to become a priest, no wonder Hannah placed her stakes high, and was greatly rewarded by God.

Prophet: This is "One who utters divinely inspired revelations: such as the writer of one of the prophetic books of the Bible, one regarded by a group of followers as the final authoritative revealer of God's will, one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight, and one who foretells future events."¹⁰

Ministries: "Ministration; the office, duties, or functions of a minister; the body of ministers of religion; clergy."¹¹ Other words for ministries as used in this project are agencies, agents, instruments, organs, vehicles, and so on. Ministries are means by

which ministers render services, specifically godly services to the public, bringing the public closer to God. And, by their holy ministries, ministers bring divinity from heaven down to humanity on earth: like Christ, Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist and many others did.

3 a. **The Roles of Motherhood in Children's Upbringing**

There is no question that mothers have the greatest quantum of impact on their children over anyone else, and many of them capitalise on that exclusive entitlement to make the best out of it for the children, and for themselves, sometimes under very challenging circumstances. The following are some instances in which mothers had to go to the extents of defying death in order to snatch their children's life from the fangs of death, just to keep them alive, and secure future for them:

At the age of two ... my father had secretly arranged that at the appropriate time I would be circumcised and given the family facial tribal marks, the *Gombo*. Unfortunately for them, my mother overheard the conversation that the elders were having with the old woman who would carry out the circumcision and facial scarification. She would have none of it! She heard the old woman instructing her assistant to prepare hot water and have some lime ready with which she was to wash the child's cheeks by 6.30 am. Instructions were also given for yam to be put on fire in preparation for celebration when the circumcision was over. My mother was alarmed and made up her mind that the event would not take place. I was her sixth child, all the five before me had died after circumcision. She decided that she would protect her sixth child with her own life, if necessary. With me securely strapped to her back, she stealthily left the village at about 2.00 am deciding to walk in the darkness to Lalupon from Fagbemi village. She began the journey ... and (would) pass through five villages ... and through thick forests. She said that having been converted to

Christianity, she prayed to God for protection. At the same time, she called on her five dead children, summoning them to protect their young brother. She informed them that their young brother who she was carrying would be the lucky one – *Olorire ni yio je*. She told me that after imploring them in this manner, little lights like torch beams appeared from nowhere and she found herself walking safely through thick forests with strange creatures, snakes and other animals giving way to her. All these occurred until she reached Lalupon at the break of dawn.¹²

The aforementioned story is an excerpt from Ambassador Olu Sanu's brilliant memoir. It is a very moving rendition. Ambassador Sanu was a very close senior colleague of this author -- to whom he gifted an author-endorsed complimentary copy of the book. The memoir, *Audacity on the Bound: A Diplomatic Odyssey*, was written from the depth of his heart. The excerpted piece shows an extreme extent to which a loving mother under desperation could go to save her baby's life. Did Ambassador Sanu's pearl of a mother foreknow that her little son was going to emerge from an utter underprivileged environment to become an Ambassador, a job that would take him to all parts of the world, and so she rejected a tribal mark on his face with a stake of her own life? Certainly, a tribal mark would have either nipped his life in infancy like his five dead siblings, or possibly blocked his chance of being selected for the job. Who would select a person branded with tribal marks for a job as an Ambassador in modern world? Women are typically, naturally gifted with a rare insight, grit, and courage, when it comes to the life, future, and success of their

children. And women favored by God to bring up anointed great men and women of God are even more so.

Another instance of motherly care at its best was gleaned from Michelle Obama's book *Becoming*, a magnum opus and bestseller.¹³ An outstanding former First Lady of the United States, Michelle revealed one of her best quotes about her mother's impactful roles in her life as follows: "My mom is one of the smartest people with just plain old common sense. The thing she always said that I do remember is what she told me and my brother, "I wasn't raising children. I was raising adults."¹⁴ No wonder, with that at the back of her mind as she grew up, Michelle would work hard to not disappoint her mother's expectation in life. She eventually became the first Black woman married to the first Black President of America to occupy the White House, perch on the most powerful Oval Office in the world, and run the Presidential Villa of her country. She fulfilled her life's fantasy of carrying in her, prodigiously, an adulthood mindset that her mother had engraved in her mind. That mindset drove Michelle to stand out and live her mother's dream.

Similarly, the following interesting excerpt from his own magnum opus, and bestseller book, *Dreams from My Father*, written by Barack Obama, a Kenyan-sired former President of the United States, shows an interesting angle regarding what a determined mother could do to prepare her baby for a successful life and great future:

What tension I noticed had mainly to do with the gradual shift in my mother's attitude toward me. She had always encouraged my

rapid acculturation in Indonesia: It had made me relatively self-sufficient, undemanding on a tight budget, and extremely well-mannered when compared to other American children. She had taught me to disdain the blend of ignorance and arrogance that too often characterized Americans abroad. But she now had learned, just as Lolo had learned, the chasm that separated the life chances of an American from those of an Indonesian. She knew which side of the divide she wanted her child to be on. I was an American, she decided, and my true life lay elsewhere. Her initial efforts centered on education. Without the money to send me to the International School, where most of Djakarta's foreign children went, she had arranged from the moment of our arrival to supplement my Indonesian schooling with lessons from a U.S. correspondence course. Her efforts now redoubled. Five days a week she came into my room at four in the morning, force-fed me breakfast, and proceeded to teach me my English lessons for three hours before I left for school and she went to work. I offered stiff resistance to this regimen, in response to every strategy I concocted, whether unconvincing ("My stomach hurts") or indisputably true (my eyes kept closing every five minutes), she would patiently repeat her most powerful defense: "This is no picnic for me either, buster".¹⁵

That "resistible" regimen would later produce the 44th President of the United States of America. The above narrative took place in Indonesia when Barack was just a little above a toddler's age. His Kenyan father had abandoned him and his mother Stanley Ann Dunham a young white American woman in the United States, after he completed his PhD studies at Harvard University and returned home to Africa. After several years of hopelessness, suffering, and piqued by racism for mingling with black and colored people, Stanley decided to marry an Indonesian man and moved over to Indonesia with Barack. But in Indonesia, life was kind to neither Barack nor his mother, and like an Amazon that she was, she undertook all sorts improvisation

to ensure that Barack did not drop out of life. She stood stoutly toe and nail, to help her son acquire the basic necessities of life that made him competitive enough to later become the 44th President of the United States. Curiously, the question is, did Stanley know or was she apprehensive that she was rearing and tending a future President of the United States? Do not undermine the power of womanhood in childcare, development and destiny fulfilment.

Another President of the United States Abraham Lincoln, was so excited about his mother's love for him and labor in his life that he extolled her in the following terms: "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."¹⁶ And he added, "No man is poor who has a Godly mother."¹⁷ Ali Ibn Abi Talib, in an emotion-filled encomium to motherhood said, "Don't use the sharpness of your tongue on the mother who taught you to speak,"¹⁸

In 2016, Mrs. Hilary Clinton, wife of the former President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton, was delivering her own Democratic Party's Presidential nomination speech, when she recalled the encouragement she had received from her mother while growing up. She said, "I would go out to play and I would get knocked down and pushed around by all the kids. I ran back into the house, crying. And my mother met me at the door. And she said, 'There is no room for coward in this house. You go right back out there and stand up for yourself.'"¹⁹ An encouragement from one's mother is like a tonic to the heart of a thoroughbred in horse race. The tonic

Hilary's mother gave her, encouraged her to grab a nomination from her party to run for the office of the President of the United States, a first attempt by any woman in the history of America that smashed the glass ceiling.

Motherhood is a great gift from God to humanity.

b. Duties of Mothers in Family Development

The contributions to the development of an average family is both a valuable and a considerably outstanding service. Some of the functions that make mothers highly indispensable in a family set-up are as follow:²⁰

- i. **Housekeeping:** Housekeeping is one of the most essential chores in a home. As a mother a woman will have the opportunity to clean all kinds of messy stuff – clothes littered on the floor, cups left in the living room, spilled milk on the dining table, food particles on kitchen floor, dirty diapers, animal droppings on unlikely places, the toilets not properly tidied after use, and so on. However, some day, children may offer helping hands in keeping the dwelling place in tidy and healthy conditions. Though this may be for wishful thinking. But women's role in home keeping cannot be overemphasized.
- ii. **Chef:** A mother is expected to cook two to three meals a day for the family. Sometimes, children prefer more meals prepared by their mother than the ones cooked by other people, other times they do not. Whatever the case,

the mother of the home must have authority and control over her kitchen. The authority and control are divinely ordained by God right from the Garden of Eden. When a woman loses control over her kitchen she has lost all, as Eve did. She surrendered the control of what came out of her kitchen to a foreign hand, and unsavory was the result. Moreover, a mother's joy knows no bounds when she hears the sweet, joyous little "than you" her family members will coo into her ears for feeding them with great meals.

- iii. **Conflict Resolution:** The sociologists believe that conflict is endemic in every social group, wherever there are two and more people being together. Any gathering by children is conflict-prone: including conflict with friends, siblings, and even parents. Mothers have the joy of helping their children learn the skills in listening, co-existence, negotiation, compromise, and problem-solving. These are skills that will benefit them for a lifetime. Some may even grow up to make a career out of them.
- iv. **Event Planner:** This may sound somewhat simplistic. But, no! From simple play dates, to doctor's appointments, to kindergarten Sunday School, to after school activities, to vacation, to any other events, a mother's schedules are often congested. If you did not put your mind on them, you might miss them, and would have a lot in your plates in forms of tantrums, wailings and sulking.

- v. **Teacher:** Mothers teach their children everything. They are the first teachers to teach their babies the first ever action they would learn to undertake in life – suckling, before the long chains of teaching sessions follow in rapid successions. They teach them how to sit, how to eat like decent human beings, how to talk, how to walk, how to cook, how to read and write, solve school mathematics, and the list is never ending. Mothers teach their children how to think, and a lot of other things, sometimes they teach their children without even knowing, sometimes with ease, at other times against a wall of acute resistance – often met with resilience -- like the case of Barack Obama and his mother in Indonesia.
- vi. **Chauffeur:** Mothers take their children to school, the doctor, the dentist, sporting activities, dance, music lessons, gymnastics, to play dates, and to the store. Playing chauffeur can provide very useful opportunity for mother and child to talk together and bond better, learning to trust and confide in each other. Perhaps, the only other opportunity that exists for mother and child to bond so closely, is the period of breast feeding.
- vii. **Laundry:** Mothers find that the responsibility for keeping laundry routines rests with them. Whether doing it at the laundromat or at home, manually or mechanically, mothers do show keen interest in what is ready for washing, what is washed, and what is brought in from the lines.

- viii. **Counsellor.** Mothers are arguably the most easily ready person to turn to for comfort and advice. They kiss bruised knees, mend broken hearts, and wipe cold tears, to assuage pains and disappointments. They heal broken spirits, and teach children how to shape joyous future, and cope with challenges.
- ix. **Finance Manager:** In most cases family finances managed by the mother of the home are finances well-managed. The scariest thing a mother fears most is waking up in the morning to find no groceries in the house with which to prepare the breakfast for the kids. So, she tries to manage the funds in such a way as to avoid sudden disappointments. She also tries to teach the children how to manage funds and not be wasteful.
- x. **Healthcare Provider:** Mothers probably do much more in terms of medical services for the children than an average physician, and for much less pay if any. Being perhaps the closest person to the children, she is more familiar with a child's health issues. The mother keeps check on the children's fever conditions, examines their hygiene situations, keeps follow-up health records, remembers the medication schedules, and any dos and don'ts given by doctors.
- xi. **Activity Director:** When children are bored, mothers come up with ideas. They encourage their children to play. They teach their children nursery

rhymes, games and fun activities, like cooking, knitting, football and basketball, and what have you. Even school home-work assignments are sometimes reduced to fun-making activities. By so doing, they teach their children time-keeping management in productive and effective way.

- xii. **World Changer:** Perhaps the most underrated task a mother fulfils is that of world changer. Society is a mere 20 years, say the experts, from anarchy or continued civilisation. It takes 20 years to raise a child, 20 years to “civilise them” or let them fall into anarchy, 20 years to raise children of character, integrity, and compassion or children of deceit, selfishness, and indifference. Mothers change the world with every child they raise. Mothers are the impactors and world changers of our time and deserve multiple thank-you-greetings.

4. Notable Mothers and Their Impact on Priesthood and Prophetic Ministries

There is a galaxy of remarkable women of God in the Christian faith both ancient and contemporary, whose impact on the development of the faith has been astounding and very rewarding to mankind. A few of the ancient ones are discussed hereunder:

Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ: Mary possessed some uncommon qualities that made God to select her for the most important job in the whole wide world²¹ -- being

the mother of the Lord and Messiah, Jesus Christ. Some of the qualities that endeared her to God included the following:²² being a virgin, moral purity, strong faith, courage, obedience, humility, her trust in God, and extraordinary character. After Angel Gabriel, sent from God to her, appeared to Mary and said to her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overpower her, and she would be pregnant with a holy seed that she should call JESUS, the Son of God, who would be great, and the ruler of the world without end; Mary took to heart the message that was delivered to her (Luke 1:38). Mary then became pregnant and had a virgin birth of a boy child Jesus. From that moment on, Mary ensured that all her behaviours were channeled in the way that would fulfill the plan of God regarding Jesus' ministry on earth. Right from the nondescript manger in Nazareth, Galilee; to Egypt in escape of King Herod's plot to kill baby Jesus; to the temple in Jerusalem in search of the missing Jesus; to Cana at the wedding party; to when Jesus was going around preaching throughout every city and village (Luke 8:1-20); to Caiaphas' house during Jesus' judgement by the Sanhedrin, to the Calvary crucifixion cross site; to the burial tomb site; to the grave side on the glorious resurrection morning; to the site of his ascension to heaven, (John 20:17-38); Mary trailed Jesus with the deep love and care of a dedicated and passionate mother, in order to not let the confidential information the angel had given her about Jesus fail.

Elizabeth, Mother of John the Baptist: The word of God describes Elizabeth as being stricken in years, and barren. Yet she had a good womanly and motherly character that pleased God enough to choose her as the mother of the forerunner of the coming of Jesus Christ to the world (Luke 1:26-47). The miraculous circumstances of her pregnancy and delivery of a notable baby to the world, made her to rededicate herself toward making her election sure. And she did it creditably. She successfully brought up her prophet son, John the Baptist, who fulfilled his mission with his baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan, an exercise that was followed by the great sign and wonder of the opening up of the Heavens, and the descending of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove that settled upon Holy Jesus, crowned by a voice from heaven proclaiming him the anointed one (Matthew 3:16).

Jochebed, Mother of Moses: The first outstanding and impactful mother in Israel at the on-set of post-slavery era, Jochebed, Moses' mother, became a model of motherhood in both Judaism and Christianity, after she raised Moses to become a courageous, great prophet whom God used to set Israel free from bondage in the land of Egypt. When Israel who had arrived in Egypt with as few as seventy family members, enlarged to become about six hundred thousand men on foot, minus women and children, after four hundred and thirty years of slavery, they had been badly treated by the Egyptians and completely helpless. (Exodus 6:6; 2:37, 40). Then God began to prepare an escape route for Israel, by raising a young Hebrew woman,

of courage, Jochebed, to train her little son Moses, for the miraculous and great assignment. When Pharaoh began to kill all Hebrew male children in order to check the rapidly increasing Hebrew population, Jochebed cast Moses into the Red Sea, hoping for his safety, but he was dredged out by Pharaoh's daughter, and nursed unbeknownst to the Egyptians, by Jochebed his mother, in Pharaoh's Palace into an awesome young man. Him would God use to herd Israel out of Egypt with very strong arms of the Lord, through a forty-year journey across the wilderness into the promise land, Canaan, where Israel is today.

There are other great women in faith such as Sarah mother of Isaac, Rebecca mother of Jacob, Beersheba mother of Solomon, Hannah mother of Samuel, Hagar mother Ishmael, and many more, whom space would not allow to be done justice to.

5. Conclusion

There is certainly, no doubt that women have not been found wanting in contributing towards the development of the world, in and out of faith. The impact of women in the growth of prophetic and priesthood ministries have been particularly tremendous, and cannot be easily overlooked, but must be encouraged.

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