

# Teacher Preparation In Light of the United Nations Millenium Development Goals

Rose Uchem

Department of Arts Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, P.O. Box 9677,  
Enugu State, 400001, Nigeria

E-mail of the corresponding author: [rose.uchem@unn.edu.ng](mailto:rose.uchem@unn.edu.ng)

## Abstract

Education is known to be a primary driver of national development. Conversely, gender inequality has been shown to retard the development of nations. Former United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan (2006) had this to say: "there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women." Consequently, gender equality and empowerment of women should be central and not peripheral to universities' education programmes and to teacher preparation programmes, in particular. Therefore, serious thoughts should turn to what needs to be integrated into existing educational programmes in order to contribute to an all-round inclusive national development. In this paper, Teacher Preparation In Light of the United Nations Millenium Development Goals, the gender and religious educational implications of teacher preparation are discussed. The paper includes a case study with a view to generating ideas on how to produce the right crop of teachers that would help bring about a new world order in which girls and boys, men and women, have equal opportunities for social advancement.

**Key words:** Teacher preparation, Millenium Development Goals, religion and gender education

## 1.0 Introduction

With reference to the topic of this paper, two questions come to mind: what have universities got to do with the United Nations (UN)? Again, what have the UN programmes got to do with universities and with teacher preparatory programmes? The responses to these questions will become obvious as the paper progresses. Firstly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), one of the operating arms of the UN, funds governments' educational programmes. Secondly, people in the business of education (such as those in faculties of education) periodically like to ask themselves the sobering question: "Education for what purpose?" (Nwabuisi, 2008). The simplest response to this could be: 'Education is for development;' that is, both for the individual and for the society. In other words, education is ultimately for national development. The development is here understood to be integral and comprehensive, involving all segments of the society, both men and women. A recent insight from the United Nations is that "gender equality and empowerment of women and girls are key to long-term development, economic growth, and social advancement for all." United Nations former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan put it this way: "It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women" (United Nations, 2006). In an opening address at a UN conference, the current Secretary-General, Mr. Ban ki-Moon expressed the following: "gender equality and women's empowerment not only respond to the universal duty of respecting human rights, but also represent major tools for fighting extreme poverty and realizing political, economic and social development for all" (United Nations, 2010a). In other words, any country that is serious about making progress, should take seriously the project of gender equality and the empowering of women.

This paper, 'Teacher Preparation In Light of the United Nations Millenium Development Goals,' shares insights from the Beijing Plus Fifteen conference held early 2010 at the United Nations head quarters in New York with reference to education in general and teacher preparation in particular. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the relevance of teacher preparation to the United Nations millennium development goals (MDGs). The paper includes: an overview of the MDGs, the 'Beijing Plus Fifteen themes,' teacher preparation as well as the gender and religious educational implications.

## 2.0 Overview of the millennium development goals

It will be recalled that in the year 2000, United Nations member states agreed to a set of goals which have come to be known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the overall purpose of reducing poverty in the world and improving the lives of people. In summary, the MDGs read as follows (United Nations, (2000). By 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a

- day and those who suffer from hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education. Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school
  3. Promote gender equality and empower women: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education.
  4. Reduce child mortality: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five
  5. Improve maternal health: Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth
  6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
  7. Ensure environmental sustainability: Halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water. Target for 2020: Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers.
  8. Develop a global partnership for development: Develop further an open trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction -nationally and internationally.

These goals were designed ultimately to eradicate poverty and enhance overall well-being of human beings all over the world at the personal, national and global levels. Each nation had to domesticate the MDGs in their own context to drive their national development.

### **2.1 The MDGs in the Nigerian context**

In Nigeria, the MDGs have been stepped down into the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and into State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS). Currently, there is much talk of the Vision 20-20-20. Since the goal of education is to contribute to national development, it then means that the United Nations goals of gender equality and women's empowerment should be central and not peripheral to the university's education programmes and to considerations of teacher quality as Nigeria turns '50'. Also the Nigerian government should be thinking of what programme to put in place in order to produce the right crop of teachers that would contribute to realizing a new world order in which men and women, girls and boys have equal opportunities for social advancement.

### **3.0 The MDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action**

During the high level meeting of the UN 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women to mark the fifteenth anniversary of Beijing conference, government delegations assessed the progress made so far in the implementation since after the 1995 Beijing conference. A vital link was made between the MDGs and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA). Government representatives identified gaps and challenges where speed-up action would be necessary in the coming years. What follows here is a summary of the outcome of the Beijing Plus Fifteen conference.

From the first to the twelfth of March, 2010, government officials and representatives of civil society from all over the world together with the media and the private sector, senior United Nations officials gathered at the United Nations' Headquarters in New York to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing conference held in Beijing, China in 1995 (CSW54, 2010). The author was privileged to have been in attendance.

During the meetings marking the anniversary, reports from different countries showed that significant progress had been made especially in the areas of women's education, participation in decision-making, maternal health and ending violence against women. The challenge identified was how to expand and apply such practices more systematically, replicate them wherever possible and use them as the basis for better policies and programmes. On the other hand it was, however, noted that in spite of a global effort to assure the respect of the human rights and the strengthening of women's role within our societies, full gender equality has not been achieved yet. On the contrary, women are still discriminated against and their potential remains largely untapped by the human community.

The conference delegates reiterated that the BPFA, in its objectives and actions, was by far the most comprehensive agenda for empowering women. The BPFA has 12 critical areas of concern which are as follows:

Women and poverty  
Education and training of women  
Women and health  
Violence against women  
Women and armed conflict  
Women and the economy  
Women in power and decision-making  
Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women  
Human rights of women  
Women and the media  
Women and the environment and  
The girl-child

In the end, government delegations came out with the view that if the MDGs were to be attained by 2015, then all countries would need to intensify their efforts in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), which was first adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The BPFA called all nations of the world to protect and promote women's rights as human rights and to end all discrimination and violence against women and girls because they are dehumanizing. All are called to the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at national levels so as to make our world a better and more equal world for all women and girls. Speedy action is especially needed in the following key areas: Promoting women's economic empowerment by increasing women's access to economic and financial resources and social protection systems, increasing women's participation in decision-making, repealing and eradicating discriminatory laws, policies and practices. Gender sensitivity must be part of policy-making, budgeting and data collection. All nations are to bolster women's voices in government and village-level decision-making processes, especially in peace-building and peacemaking arenas. There is need to improve access to education, vocational training and health services for women and girls, as part of an overall push to re-energize women's social and economic empowerment.

If these steps are not taken, there will be persistent inequalities between men and women. This could have dire repercussions for societies in both rich and poor countries. The remedy is: to ensure equal employment, equal pay for equal work, and to enable women and men to share responsibilities in the home; and to balance work, family and private life. There is a great need for strong political will to move the agenda for equality forward because empowering women not only means a better life for women but it also means a better life for everyone on the planet earth.

### **3.1 Matters arising for Education in Nigeria**

During the conference, this author gained some insights which are very relevant to universities education programmes and to the project of teacher preparation. Some of the insights include the following:

1. Although there were many delegates from Nigeria, their impact in the general assembly auditorium was not felt as much as that of other smaller African countries, which made a remarkable impact in the general assembly. Some African countries have made the 30% required minimum beyond the stipulations of the 1995 Beijing conference and others have exceeded it. Rwanda, for instance, has 56% of women in parliament, by their 2008 elections, the highest, in the whole world. Uganda 31%, by their 2006 elections, South Africa 50% at the local council level, 45% in the House of Representatives in 2009 (Nwankwo, 2009).

2. From the foregoing account, it would seem then that, in spite of the self-congratulations of Nigerians on account of a few appointive positions for women, Nigeria is still very backward and very much behind other African countries regarding the empowerment of women. According to the Nigeria report submitted for the 2010 Beijing Plus Fifteen conference by the Honourable Minister for Gender Affairs and Social Development, Abuja, Salamatu Hussaini Suleiman, women's participation in government in Nigeria stood at [a paltry] 10%. ... While in 1999 women constituted 3.9 % of elected members of the Parliament at the three tiers of government, the number increased to 5.8% in 2003 and 8.26% in 2007. Currently there are six female deputy governors, nine female senators, six female ministers, any female special

advisers, assistants and members of boards, giving a general female participation at about 10% (Suleiman, 2010).

3. The honourable minister from Namibia made a great impression in the conference, which nobody who heard her would ever forget. Her country was one of those that adopted proportional representation in their electoral system as a means of increasing women's political participation. According to her, when she first became a member of parliament, although they were only two women, they succeeded in getting two bills passed in spite of men's resistance and opposition

From the above citations the following questions arise. Is it possible that Nigerians do not really believe in gender equality? (Gender equality here means not biological sexual sameness but rather equal participation in and enjoyment of social, political, cultural, economic, and other opportunities for and by both men and women, based on personal giftedness and training rather than on sex). Is it possible that even when some people speak or write conference papers about gender equality and about women empowerment that they are only paying lip-service to the fact and do not really want anything to change on the status of women in relation to men? Obviously, there are some conceptual gaps that need to be filled.

### **3.2 A research agenda for universities**

There seems to be a disconnect between the United Nations events and the academic climate in many universities. At various points during the United Nations conference under review; when talks focused on violence against women, for instance, it was lamented that there was no available data in many places. Yet, the collection of evidence-based data on such a subject is a role a university could play. Experience on ground in one university reveals that for some academics, their thinking is that gender studies amounts to pursuing personal interests. Contrary to the global waves of gender equity consciousness sweeping across the world outside the narrow confines of their university and their country, gender issues are rather peripheral to academic considerations in some local settings. The concept of education in this case seems to be equally very narrow. Consequently, those who conduct research in such a climate run the risk of their work being down-graded as of general interest; whereas in line with the goals of the United Nations, especially the MDGs, all learning and educational research should be infused positively with gender equity consciousness as an active contribution toward national and global development.

### **4.0 Gender and religion: implications for teacher preparation**

The foregoing section highlights the challenges the Nigerian nation faces with regard to teacher preparation and its gender implications. Regarding the insights and questions articulated earlier, one would wonder: What is at the root of the intractable resistance to gender equality as found in Nigeria? One possible cause at the root of persistent gender inequality in Nigeria could be ignorance coupled with misguided religious conservatism. By religious is meant that which has to do with religion. The term religion, itself, stems from its Latin root, *religare*, meaning "binding together" the human and the divine. On this basis, one can say that religion is a system within which a community of men and women is linked by a set of beliefs, practices, behaviour patterns and rituals, which establish a connection between the individual and the Holy. It was only much later that definitions of religion referred to a belief in a supreme being as its central characteristic (United Nations Economic and Social Council: 2009, 6). Thus, religion, as a feature of every human society, harbours tendencies toward denigration of women worldwide.

A study conducted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion or belief and the status of women in the light of religion and traditions has the following to say:

The observance and practice of a religion or belief may include "ritual and ceremonial acts giving direct expression to belief" and can also involve "such customs as the observance of dietary regulations, the wearing of distinctive clothing or head coverings [and] participation in rituals associated with certain stages of life" ... Manifestation of religion or belief thus involves all practices relating to women's status that are directly based on religion or stem from customs passed on from generation to generation. ... The entire problem arises from the fact that some harmful practices are perceived by those pursuing them as religious prescriptions or obligations.

The examples are too numerous to be cited ... [but include] female genital mutilation, polygamy, inheritance discrimination, sacred prostitution, male-child preference and general denigration of the image of women, whose deeply rooted basis lies in the fact that women are in most religions perceived as inferior beings. This concerns ... the relationship between religion and the collective imagination and peoples' and nations' ways of being and living in the light of women's status (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2009, 6).

Riley (2007: 122) echoes similar views about religion and women's status when she said:

Religious traditions are a powerful source in shaping patterns of gender relationships in social institutions. They give an aura of moral grounding to social institutions and increase the difficulty of advancing gender equity in the process of development, both from the point of view of the donor agencies and in the receiving countries.

This being the case, it then means that intensive gender education is required to go along with current and future teacher preparatory processes and a retraining of serving teachers at all levels of education: the primary, secondary and tertiary levels as well as life-long learning of gender issues. This will ensure that the right quality of teachers with requisite gender knowledge and attitudes are produced to drive development in the country. In addition, models and good practices are needed. In order to provide a picture of what the quality of a teacher with the requisite gender awareness could look like, it is necessary to clarify some relevant gender concepts and some good practices.

#### **4.2 Gender awareness education: some relevant concepts**

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles that men and women are expected to perform in a given society; in the family, community, church and so on. It includes society's expectations of how men and women should feel, look, or act; what is allowed and what is not permissible for men or for women in a particular society (Uchem, 2005: 44). Sex, on the other hand, refers to the biological attribute of being a male or a female. While sex is natural and fairly constant, gender is social and cultural, human-made, learned and therefore changeable. Gender varies from one culture or society to another and from one era to another. In fact, gender roles are already changing in many societies today. For this reason, what is being advocated is gender equality and not sexual equality.

Gender equality is a situation where men and women play roles they are gifted or trained for without any legal, cultural, political, economic, religious, or social hindrance on the basis of sex.

Gender equality is not about biological sexual sameness but rather about equal participation in and enjoyment of social, political, cultural, economic, and other opportunities for and by both men and women, based on personal giftedness and training rather than sex. Gender equality presupposes that there is a single human nature, which occurs in two forms, namely, the male and female; and not two human natures, male and female (Uchem, 2007). In such a situation, the established (morphological, physiological and psychological) differences between the two sexes are recognized as sources of enrichment for the human community rather than a basis for inferiorization or secondary placement of the female in relation to the male. The male and the female are said to be complementarity to one another. However, many people's idea of complementarity is warped in favour of the male, to the disadvantage of the female.

True complementarity, therefore, is a situation where the male and female work together as a team; genuinely making up the strengths and weakness of each other. The male complements the female just as the female complements the male, as in a two-way traffic. There is no negativity attached to the female in such a case. The male and the female have equal value and equal worth in people's eyes, minds, hearts, attitudes and conduct. The observable differences between the male and the female are not used as a basis for discrimination against the female but rather as the hallmark of respect for the other who brings into the human partnership a unique contribution. We do know that nowhere in the world does such a situation of rapport exist yet and this is a marked aspect of humanity's state of imperfection and a particular manifestation of collective human sinfulness (Uchem, 2007). However, the world is gradually growing in awareness of its error in this regard and is gradually growing in the direction of positive change toward gender equality and genuine complementarity.

Another important development concept is gender balance, which is related to gender equality whereby men and women's presence and participation are equally seen and felt without any party dominating. Gender balance in any society is measured by the extent of women's participation in the highest levels of its internal organisation and decision-making structures (Woodward, 2002).

Far removed from desirable situations of gender equality, gender balance and true complementarity, is a state of affairs known as subordination. Subordination is a situation whereby male human beings ranked as pre-eminent over and above female human beings regardless the age and experience of the latter (Uchem, 2001: 23). Males are taken as "number one" and females as "number two" human beings. This plays out mostly in the cultural and religious realms of everyday life around issues of human identity in the family, in school and in other workplaces and in the market, sometimes leading invariably to co modification of girls and women. It is also called subjugation (Uchem, 2002: 80). The subordination or subjugation (of women to men) can be seen very often in different situations; for example: Irrespective of personal talents, women are usually not called to be heads of committees or chairpersons of social functions. Marginalization on the other hand is the experience of being omitted, rejected and discriminated against in the political, economic and social spheres of life (Uchem, 2002: 20); for example, exclusion of women from the kolanut ritual and from inheritance entitlements. During a recent international conference, the Dean of the Faculty of Education was given the kolanut in the hand. Whereas the men on the high table with her who were professionally below her rank were presented the kolanut to pick from the dish she was given in the hand. Some people might have missed that irony but it did not escape the attention of those who engage in critical thinking because of its gender implications in such an educational context. The gender implications of all this for teacher preparation is that there is need for religious re-orientation and re-education for all in order to unlearn the gender biases people picked up from their respective religious faith traditions, particularly, through their stories of origins. Some people have already started out on the track toward implementing this insight by providing an opportunity for their staff. It is worth sharing that as an example of a good practice in the direction of achieving the desired level of teacher quality with the requisite gender knowledge, skills and attitudes for a better world.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

This paper has been looking at teacher preparation with reference to the United Nations Millenium Development Goals, pointing out the gender and religious educational implications of teacher preparation. In line with this goal, a case study is presented below for the purpose of stimulating ideas on good practices to promote equal opportunities for girls and boys, men and women.

### **5.1.0 Some good practices**

#### **5.1.1 Education for empowerment**

In a workshop report on 'Education for Empowerment' held at Holy Rosary College (HRC), Gwagwalada, Abuja, 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, the aim was described as "equipping participant (teachers) to teach cross-cutting issues reflected in the new basic education curriculum." It was expected that after the workshop "the teachers would use their newly acquired skills and knowledge of gender issues to transmit to their students a quality of education that is truly empowering." During the said workshop participants became sufficiently sensitized to notice how the process of education transmits gender inequalities; and to explore the prospects of transforming it into a more empowering tool for the woman and for the girl-child. Beneficiaries noted the importance of modeling for their students and pupils a new humanity; a new image of what it means to be a man or to be a woman in our present society; as well as for enriching inter-gender relationships. The workshop thus provided an opportunity for teachers to share and learn vital truths about gender and HIV/AIDS issues; all in the context of the MDGs and NEEDS.

#### **5.1.2 An example of a woman's political self-empowerment in Namibia: a case study**

It would be instructive to conclude with a case study on an incident that happened during the interactive expert panel session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-fourth session, New York, 1-12 March 2010. It was about the experience of Senator Margaret Mensah-Williams, MP Vice Chairperson, National Council, Parliament of the Republic of Namibia, which she narrated during her presentation on *'The evolving status and role of national mechanisms for gender equality: Parliamentary mechanisms for gender equality and*

*the empowerment of women, and collaboration with other stakeholders at the national level.* It went like this. When she was first elected into parliament, the very next day she was required to lead the house and to chair the meeting. She had never chaired a meeting before. She thought of what to do. She told herself: "Surely, there must be a rule book; all those men are performers." So she got herself a rule book or the guidelines. She sat up all night and read it through. She stood in front of a mirror and rehearsed her speech until she felt good. She took her vitamins and went off to her meeting in the morning. Everybody marveled at her excellent performance. At the end, some of the men who followed her outside asked her: "Madam you never did this thing before; so how come you were fantastic?" She said to them, "Forget it. Women are born leaders!"

Important lessons are to be derived from the above two examples. One is that institutions and government parastatals that are serious about cooperating with the United Nations goals of effecting gender equality can similarly organize training for their staff. Another point is that beyond training, those that are marginalized, the women themselves, need to take some bold steps and do something to empower themselves. They can borrow a leaf from the lady minister from Namibia to take a risk and step forward to be counted.

## 5.2 Recommendations

To summarize, it bears reiteration to note that gender equality and the empowering of women are the sure road to progress for any country that is serious about its development. Since the goal of education is to contribute to national development, the United Nations goals of gender equality and women's empowerment should be central to the university's education programme and its processes for ensuring teacher quality. Veritable models are of supreme importance; to model for students and pupils a new humanity; a new image of what it means to be a woman or to be man in our present society; also for enriching inter-gender relations at various levels such as family, work place and the market place. Thus the universities have much to do with the United Nations programmes as regards concerns for teacher preparation for purposes of gender equality. There is need to enrich existing programmes to produce the right crop of teachers that would contribute to realizing a new world in which men and women, girls and boys, see each other as equals and have equal opportunities for social advancement.

## References

- Annan, K. (2006). Gender Equality. United Nations. Retrieved from <http://esango.un.org/irene/?page=listByTopic&nr=13&section=8&type=8> (December 3, 2010).
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Source. (1987). Religion in the Curriculum. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 55 (3), 569 -588.
- Ifendu. (2009). Education for empowerment: Workshop report on education for empowerment, held at Holy Rosary College (HRC), Gwagwalada, Abuja, 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October, 2009. Unpublished.
- Nwabuisi, M.E. (2008). *Education for what? An inaugural lecture of the University Of Nigeria, Nsukka*. Nsukka: UNN Press.
- Nwankwo, O. (2009). Electoral Systems: A case for proportional representation as an effective affirmative action strategy for increasing women's participation in politics in Nigeria. A paper presented at the south-east zonal public hearing on constitutional review held at the House of Assembly, Enugu, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2009. (Unpublished).
- Riley, M. (2007). Why do Gender Issues Remain Problematic to Development Agencies? *Trocaire Development Review*.
- Suleiman, S. H. (2010). Nigeria Statement at the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Retrieved 12/3/10 from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html>
- Uchem, R. N. (2001). *Overcoming women's subordination: An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an inclusive theology with reference to women*. Florida: Dissertation.com; and Enugu: SNAAP Press.
- Uchem, R. N. (2002). *Beyond Veiling: A Response to the issues in women's experiences of subjugation in African Christian cultures*. Enugu: SNAAP Press.
- Uchem, R.N, (2005). *Gender Equality From A Christian Perspective*. Enugu: SNAAP Press.

- Uchem, R. N. (2007). Sexuality, gender and priestly formation: Pointers for integrating knowledge of gender issues into the seminary formation programme in Nigeria, A paper presented to the National Seminaries Commission at Pope John Paul II Seminary, Okpuno-Awka, Anambra State, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007.
- United Nations. (2000). Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo>. (February 2, 2010).
- United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2009). Civil and political rights, including the question of religious intolerance. Addendum study on freedom of religion or belief and the status of women in the light of religion and traditions. Commission on Human Rights Fifty-eighth session, Item 11 of the provisional agenda. Retrieved from <http://esango.un.org/irene/?page=listByTopic&nr=13&section=8&type=8> (February 2, 2010).
- Ki-Moon, B. (2010a). United Nations Secretary-General's opening statement for CSW54 Retrieved from <http://esango.un.org/irene/?page=listByTopic&nr=13&section=8&type=8> (December 3, 2010).
- United Nations CSW. (2010b). 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000). Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html> (December 3, 2010).
- Woodward, A. E. (2002). *Going for gender balance: A guide for balancing decision-making: Good practices to achieve gender-balanced representation in political and social decision-making for division of equality between women and men*. Brussels, Belgium: Directorate of Human Rights, Council of Europe.
- Mensah-Williams, M. (2010). 'The evolving status and role of national mechanisms for gender equality: Parliamentary mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and collaboration with other stakeholders at the national level,' presented during an interactive expert panel session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-fourth session New York, 1-12 March 2010. Retrieved 12/3/10 from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html>

The author is a member of the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary and a senior lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where she teaches Christian Religious Education as well as Comparative and International Education. She obtained her Ph.D in theological studies in 2001 from the Graduate Theological Foundation, Indiana, USA, and MA in religious education in 2000 from Fordham University, New York, USA. She became a member of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, and the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS), in 2004. She is a contributing editor of Mission Studies, the academic journal of IAMS, and chief editor of African Journal for Mission in Context (AMC).