

**Women in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi:  
A Historical and Theological Perspective**

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## **Declaration**

As required by University regulations, I hereby declare that this work is my own work and has never been presented for any other purpose at any other University or any other institution of Higher Learning other than the University of the Free State, (Bloemfontein Campus)

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Tabitha Gadama and our children Aaron and Phoebe who allowed me to work on this project without obstructions.

## **Abstract**

This research work is first historical and theological study on the women in charismatic churches since the inception of the charismatic movement in Malawi in 1970's. It is a historical and qualitative empirical research about the critical roles and experiences of women in the Charismatic Movement in Malawi. It therefore uses a feminist narrative method of enquiry.

In order to get a full picture regarding the roles, and experiences of women in the Church, the study used the following research methods besides the historical: in-depth interviews, group discussions and participant observation. A group of twenty-nine pastors' wives from PAWLP are randomly selected and interviewed by the researcher. In addition, several audit focus group discussions are carried out in various Charismatic congregations under study. During these interviews, 150 church members i.e. men, women and the youths are also interviewed in order to determine different congregations' perception on the roles of women in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi.

In a nutshell, the purpose of this study was to investigate the history of the role of women in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. By presenting a synthesis of the various perspectives on the experiences of women participation in the Charismatic Churches, this study has demonstrated that doctrine, ecclesiastic congregation and culture of society influence the participation of women in different positions of the Church. All these are embedded in patriarchal ideologies.

The research hypothesis was that much as it seems that many Churches are now allowing women to take different roles in the church, Charismatic denominations seem to lag behind, as the core roles in the Church are monopolized by men while women take the more traditional roles. The research findings have shown that the charismatic churches allow few women to take leading roles in the church while men still dominates in church positions and in church activities in the charismatic churches.

The critical analysis of the history and experience of women in the charismatic churches in Malawi has necessitated the re-reading of the Bible and critically analyzing it with the lenses of history of the religious revival background that is fortified by feminist theology, human

rights and cultural theoretical frameworks. The historical background is situated within the context of the religious revival movements like the revival movements that developed during the Protestant Reformation up to the three Great Waves of Religious Awakening between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These revival movements reveal that when there is genuine revival in the church of God, women are involved fully in the gospel ministry, even though they encounter religious and cultural discouragement and marginalization.

The study has also revealed that an empowered woman is able to do the work of God with strength and diligence. Moreover, women learn many skills from the Church organizations they belong to. Again, the study has established that a change in the mindset of both female and male in the church will help to deal with the challenge of male domination in church activities once for all.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Hoffie Hofmeyr, for the unfading intellectual, spiritual, emotional and financial support that helped me complete this research.

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Let me also extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the pastors and their wives, deacons and their wives, women leaders and youth leaders from different Charismatic Churches in Malawi who participated in this research. Through this interaction, realities relative to their participation in the churches' positions and activities was unearthed.

Many thanks should also go to Mr Mastone Mbewe, the Head of Theology and Religious Studies Department at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College and all the members of staff, who enormously supported me through the PhD seminars and comments. Thanks should also go to all post-graduate students who attended the Post-Graduate seminars organized by Prof Klaus Fiedler.

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# Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Dedication	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	xiii
Definitions	xv
List of Tables	xvi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Research Issue	1
1.2 My Position as a Researcher	2
1.3 Present State of the Research	2
1.4 Aim and Objectives	12
1.5 Theoretical Framework	13
1.6 Hypothesis	13
1.7 Geographical Areas of the Study	14
1.8 Sampling and Sample Size	15
1.9 Research Methodology	16
1.9.1 Participant Observation	17
1.9.2 Interviews	17
1.9.3 Charismatic Literature	18
1.9.4 Online and Electronic Resources	18
1.9.5 Focus Group Discussion	19
1.9.6 In-depth Interviews	19
1.9.7 Research participants and purposive sampling	19
1.9.8 Key Informant Interviews	20
1.9.9 Secondary Sources	20
1.10 Data analysis	20
1.10.1 Credibility, Dependability, and Reflectivity of the Research	21
1.10.2 Dependability	21
1.10.3 Reflectivity	21
1.10.4 The Prime Theories Guiding the Study	22
1.10.5 Radical Feminism	22
1.10.6 Liberal Feminism	23
1.10.7 Feminist Ecclesiology	23
1.10.8 Feminist Anthropology	24
1.10.9 African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics	24
1.11 Conclusion	26
1.12 Structure of the Study	26
Chapter 2: The Charismatic Movement Worldwide	28
2.1 Definition of Charismatic Churches	28
2.2 Charismatic Theology	29
2.2.1 Baptism with the Holy Spirit	29
2.3 Charismatic Gifts	32

2.3.1 The Gift of Prophecy	32
2.4 Eschatology	33
2.5 Deliverance	34
2.6 Overview of the Charismatic Movement	34
2.7 Charismatic Denominations	36
2.7.1 Interdenominational Stage	36
2.7.2 The Fellowship Stage	37
2.7.3 Interpretations of the Charismatic Movement	37
2.7.4 Formation of Charismatic Churches	38
2.7.5 Social Behaviour Theories on the Rise of Charismatic Movement	40
2.8 Reasons for Joining the Charismatic Movement in the Churches of Malawi	42
2.9 Conclusions	44
Chapter 3: The Beginnings of the Charismatic Movement in Africa	45
3.0 Introduction	45
3.1 The Establishment of the Charismatic Movements in Africa	47
3.2 The Charismatic Missions	50
3.3 The Charismatic Movement in Malawi (1970s)	57
3.4. Importance of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi	57
3.4.1 Encouraging the Church to prayerfulness	57
3.4.2 Dependence on the Holy Spirit	58
3.4.3 Belief in the Healing Power of Jesus	58
3.4.4 Spurring the Church in Giving	58
3.4.5 Development of Ministries	59
3.6 Conclusion	59
Chapter 4: The Charismatic Churches in Malawi	60
4.0 Differences between Charismatics and Pentecostals	60
4.1 The Beginnings of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi	60
4.1.1 The Cornelius Fellowship	61
4.1.2 Barbara Tippet and the Blantyre Christian Centre	62
4.1.3 The Healing Revival	64
4.2 Some of the Early Charismatic Churches	71
4.2.1 Blantyre Christian Centre and City Bible School	71
4.2.2 Agape Church	74
4.2.3 Faith of God Church	76
4.2.4 Living Waters Church	77
4.2.5 Glad Tidings Church	78
4.2.6 Family Calvary Church	79
4.3 Conclusion	81
Chapter 5: Biblical Perspective on Women in Charismatic Churches	82
5.1 Introduction	82
5.2 The Status of Jewish Women in Private Life	83
5.3 Ruth's Exceptional Services in both Marital and Civil Life	85
5.4. A Strong Noble Woman in an Environment of Marital Trust	87
5.5 The Status of Jewish Women in Public Life	88
5.6 Role of Women in Religious Life: Prophetic Ministry	90
5.6.1 Prophetess Huldah	91
5.6.2 Female Role in Civil Life	91

5.6.4 Women of the New Testament	93
5.7 Analysis	95
5.7.1 Jesus' Contrary Theology	96
5.7.2 Sameness and Significance of Personhood	97
5.8 Ordination of Women in the Charismatic Churches	98
5.8.1 Reasons for the Ordination of Women	98
5.9 Reasons against the Ordination of Women	103
5.9.1. Biblical Reasons	103
5.9.2 Cultural Reasons	104
5.9.3 Ethical and Pastoral Reasons	105
5.9.4. Stereotype Reasons	106
5.9.5. Working Conditions	107
5.9.6 Observations	108
5.10 Conclusion	109
Chapter 6: Perspective on African Feminist Theology	111
6.3 Equality and Feminist Theological Perspective	116
6.4. Feminist Theology and the Place of Women	118
6.5. African Feminist Movements	121
6.6 Feminism	122
6.8 Feminist Movements: Reactionary Movements	125
6.9 African Feminist Theology	125
6.10 Feminist Theological Movements' Lived Experiences	128
6.11 Women in Indigenous African Societies	133
6.11 The Three Major Concerns of African Feminist Theology	133
6.11.1 Biblical Reading and Re-interpretation	133
6.11.2 Textual Reinterpretation	135
6.11.3 Culture	137
6.11.4 Two Winged Theology	138
6.11.5 Current Status of African Feminist Theology in Malawi	139
6.11.6 Conclusions	141
Chapter 7: Case Studies on Women in the Charismatic Churches	142
7.0 Introduction	142
7.1 The Role of Women in the World Alive Ministries (WAMI)	142
7.1.1 Historical Background	142
7.1.2 The Aim, Vision and Mission of the LM	143
7.2 Pastoral Internship and Ordination	145
7.3 Property Ownership and Uniform	145
7.4 Growth, Meetings, Membership and General Protocols	146
7.5 The Leadership Structure	147
7.1.6 The Director and the Ladies' Ministry Institutional Leadership	147
7.5.1 The Institutional Ladies' Ministry Executive Committee	148
7.5.2 The LM at the Assembly Level	149
7.5.3 The Assembly LM Executive Committee (ALMEC)	149
7.5.4 The Ladies' Ministry at the Micro Church and Spiritual Centre Levels	150
7.5.5 Reporting Protocol	150
7.5.6 General Operating Guidelines	150
7.5.7 Ministry Shepherds	151

7.6 The Role of Women in the LM	151
7.6.1 Leadership and Administrative Roles	151
7.6.2 Pastoral Roles	153
7.6.3 Support Roles	154
7.7 The Role of Women in WACRAD	156
7.8 Successes and Challenges	157
7.9 Conclusion	157
7.10 Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church	158
7.10.1 History of Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church	158
7.10.2 Membership of the CLC	159
7.10.3 History of the Membership	159
7.10.4 The Role of Women in this Church	160
7.10.5 Cultural Roles of Women	160
7.10.6 Leadership Roles of Women	161
7.10.7 Perception of Women by Society and the Church	161
7.10.8 Differences in Leadership Roles of Men and Women	162
7.10.9 Leadership Structure of Women	162
7.10.9 Women Groups	163
7.10.10 The Growth of Women in the Church	163
7.10.11 Impact of Women Groups and Role Distribution	163
7.10.12 Balancing the Roles of Women in the Church	164
7.10.13 Pastors and Women in the Church	165
7.10.14 Experience of Widows in the Church	165
7.10.15 Sexual Roles of Women in the Family	165
7.10.16 Challenges Women Face during Sex	166
7.10.17 Solutions to Sexual Challenges	167
7.10.18 The Role of Women on Orphans	168
7.10.19 Challenges Women Face as they Perform their Roles	169
7.10.20 Solutions to the Challenges	169
7.10.21 Roles of Women Pastors in the Church	169
7.10.21 The Role of Women in relation to the Youth	169
7.11 Women in Chilipa Living Waters Church	170
7.11.1 History of the Church	170
7.11.2 Membership of the Chilipa LWC	171
7.11.4 The Role of Women in the Church	171
7.11.5 Women Groupings	172
7.11.6 Sexual Roles	172
7.11.7 Challenges Faced by Women	173
7.11.8 Women Relationship with the Pastor	173
7.12 Zomba Calvary Family Church (ZCFC)	174
7.12.1 Introduction	174
7.12.1 Meanings of Uniform Colours	174
7.12.2 Activities of the Amayi Angwiro	175
7.12.3 Weekly meetings	175
7.12.4 The Role of Amayi Angwiro at Funerals	175
7.12.5 Still Born Births (Maliro a Mtayo)	176
7.12.6 Girls' Instructions	176
7.12.7 Instructions to the Newly Weds	178
7.12.8 Kutulutsa Chikuta (Releasing the Baby after its Birth)	179
7.12.9 Income Generating Activities (IGAs)	179

7.13 Women Ministry in the Holy Ghost Evangelism Church	179
7.13.1 Aims of the Women Ministry	180
7.13.2 Membership	180
7.13.3 Uniform	181
7.13.4 Activities of Women Ministry	181
7.13.5 The Role of Women Ministry during Funerals	181
7.13.3 Instructions to New Couples	181
7.13.5 Income Generating Activities (IGAs)	182
7.13.6 Participation with Limitations	182
7.13.7 Conclusion	183
Chapter 8: Women Participation in Charismatic Churches	185
8.0 Introduction	185
8.1 Leadership	185
8.2 Evangelism	186
8.3 Observations	189
8.3 Intercession	189
8.4 Factors Contributing to Low Representation of Women in Leadership Positions	190
8.4.1 Family Obligations	191
8.4.2 Lack of Support	191
8.4.3 Low Esteem	192
8.5 Pastors' Wives in the Charismatic Churches	193
8.5.1 Challenges Pastors' Wives Face	194
8.5.2 Aims of PAWLP	194
8.5.3 Suggested Solutions	195
8.5.4 The Pastor's Family	196
8.5.5 Experiences of Pastors' Wives	197
8.5.6 Better Call me by my First Name, not Pastor's Wife (Mayi Busa)	197
8.6. Challenges Faced by Single Women Pastors	198
8.7 Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church	199
8.7.1 A Brief History of Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church	199
8.7.2 Women Participation in the ZCCRC	199
8.7.3 Pastor Losta Chikuferanji's Pastoral Experience	200
8.7.4 Woman Pastor Works as Secretary	201
8.7.5 Women as Church Administrators	202
8.7.6 Women as Deaconesses	203
8.7.7 Women as Elders	204
8.7.8 People's Perceptions towards Women Pastor	204
8.8 Organizations in the Church	209
8.8.1 Charismatic Redeemed Women (CHAREWO)	209
8.8.2 Aims of CHAREWO	209
8.8.3 Uniform	210
8.8.4 Roles of CHAREWO during Funerals	210
8.8.5 Still Born Births (Maliro a Mtayo)	211
8.8.6 The Coming out of a Child after Birth (Kutulutsa Chikuta)	211
8.8.7 Some Views from Women in ZCCC	211
Role/position	212
Church Elders	212
Church Deacons	212
Ministers	212

Church Administrator	212
8.8.8 Roles of Women compared in the Charismatic Churches	213
8.8.9 Observations	215
8.8.10 Factors Responsible for Subordination of Women in the Charismatic Churches	215
8.8.11 Biblical Portrayal of Women	216
8.8.12 Relevance of Theological Education for Women in the Charismatic Churches	218
8.9.1 Deterrent Factors to Theological Involvement of Women in Charismatic Churches	219
8.9.2 Discrimination in the Remuneration Package for Women Pastors	220
8.9.3 The Impact of Women Theologians on the Church and Society	220
8.10 Women's Role in Initiation	226
8.10.1 Mwambo	226
8.10.2 Women Role at the Bridal Shower	227
8.10.2.1 The Man is the Head of the Family	227
8.10.5 Kudika Practice	228
8.10.6 The Woman Must be Stationed at Home to Entertain the Man	229
8.10.7 Zinyalala Zakuchipinda Zisamatulukire Kunja	229
8.10.8 Bedroom Communication	229
8.11 How Charismatic Women Deal with Witchcraft Accusations	235
8.12 Women and Girl Basic Education In Charismatic Churches	239
8.12.1 Girls' access to quality basic education promotes literacy levels	239
8.12.2 Girls access to quality basic education reduces poverty levels	239
8.12.3 Girl's access to quality education promotes decision making skills.	240
8.12.4 Access to quality basic education promotes girl participation in church activities, the community and National Development.	240
8.13 Conclusion	240
Chapter 9: The Role of Prophetesses in Charismatic Churches	242
9.1 Women Prophets in the Old Testament	242
9.1.1 Miriam	242
9.1.2 Isaiah's wife	243
9.1.3 Noadiah	243
9.2. Prophetesses in the New Testament	243
9.2.1 Anna	243
9.2.2 Mary the Mother of Jesus	243
9.2.4 The Daughters of Phillip	244
9.2.5 Jezebel	244
9.3 Women Prophetic Experience in Charismatic churches	245
9.3.0 Introduction	245
9.3.1 Mrs Carol Chapomba	245
9.3.2.1 Background Information	246
9.3.2.3 Her Early Experiences as a Born Again Christian	246
9.3.2.4 Her Ordination as a Pastor	247
9.3.2.5. Her Call as a Prophetess	247
9.3.2.6 Examples of her Prophecies	247
9.3.2.7 Evidence from Non-church Members	248
9.3.2.8 Her Roles as a Prophetess	248
9.3.2.9 Her Relationship with Fellow Women	248
9.3.2.10 Challenges she Faces as a Prophetess	249
9.3.2.10 Solutions to the Challenges	250
9.4 Ministering Service	250

9.5 Perception of Men towards her Prophetic Ministry	250
9.6 Prophetess Miriam Masonga	251
9.6.1 Her Relationship with her Husband	251
9.6.2 Her Relationship with the community	251
9.7 Comparison of the Biblical Prophetesses with the Prophetesses' Experiences at Chilangoma Charismatic Redeemed Church	252
9.7.1 Mrs Annie Chapola	252
9.7.2 The Gift of Prophecy	253
9.7.3 Healing	254
9.7.4 Prophecy and other Problems	255
9.7.5 Dreams	255
9.7.6 Dream Interpretation	256
9.7.7 Visions	256
9.7.8 The Gift of Prophecy and her Family	256
9.7.9 Prophetic Gift and the Church	257
9.7.10 Prophecy and Culture	257
9.7.11 Challenges	257
9.8 Mrs Alice Namputa	258
9.8.1 The Administering of the 'Anointed' Water and its Effectiveness	259
9.8.2 Curses	260
9.8.3 Deliverance from Witchcraft and Evil Spirits	260
9.8.4 Visions	261
9.8.5 Challenges	261
9.9 Mrs Zamawe	261
9.9.1 Healing	262
9.9.2 Visions and the Spirit of Discernment	262
9.9.3 Dreams	263
9.9.4 Challenges	263
9.10 Role of the Prophetesses at Chilangoma Charismatic Redeemed Church	263
9.11 The False Prophetesses	265
9.12 The Importance of Prophetesses	266
9.13 Conclusion	267
Chapter 10: Women in the Charismatic Movement in Malawi	268
10.0 Introduction	268
10.1 Healing	268
10.4 The Anointing Water	270
10.5 Changing the Church Typology	270
10.6 Renewal in the Church	271
10.7 Prophetesses as Solution Providers	271
10.8 Women in the Charismatic Churches	272
10.9 Final Conclusion	279
Bibliography	279
Archival sources	279
Appendices	

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ALCI	Agape Life Church International
AFCH	African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics
BACOMA	Baptist Convention of Malawi
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
CCM	Charismatic Churches in Malawi
CFC	Calvary Family Church
CHAREWO	Charismatic Redeemed Women
CIRCLE	The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians
CLWC	Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church
CM	Charismatic Movement
CMF	Christian Missionary Foundations
CRC	Charismatic Redeemed Church
CSM	Christian Social Movement
CSSM	Christian Students Social Movement of Nigeria
CTC	Calvary Tabernacle Church
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
EFM	Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi
EHC	Every Home Crusade
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FOCUS	Fellowship Christian Union
HOGEM	Holy Ghost Evangelism Ministries
IVCU	Inter-Varsity Christian Union

LM	Ladies' Ministry
LWCI	Living Waters Church International
NEMI	Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute
NIFES	Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Student
NLFA	New Life for All
NLMI	New life Ministries International
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
PAWLP	Pastors Wives and Lady Pastors
QUECH	Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SM	Social Movement
SADC	Southern African Development Conference
WACRAD	Word Alive Commission for Relief and Development
WAMI	Women in World Alive Ministries International
WCC	World Council of Churches
YBF	Young Believers Fellowship
ZCCRC	Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church
ZCFC	Zomba Calvary Family Church
ZCRC	Zomba Charismatic Redeemed Church
ZEC	Zambezi Evangelical Church

## Definitions

In this thesis some words and phrases have been explained to help the readers to understand them as they appear in this context.

**Patriarchy:** This refers to the rule by a father over his household. As an ideology, it is a way of thinking that has been recognized as the root of all forms of oppression against women. It also refers to legal, economic and political systems of relations that seem to legitimize male dominance in society. In this study, an analysis of women experiences in the Charismatic Churches from a Feminist perspective demonstrates that socio-cultural and ideo-theological factors are enshrined in patriarchal ideologies that subordinate women. Feminist ecclesiology has been used as one of the tools to analyze the Charismatic teachings that promote male leadership in both the Church and the family.

**The Charismatic Movement** is a revival phenomenon that occurs within established denominations. This was intended to bring spiritual renewal to the denominations. The Charismatic Movement also refers to 'New Charismatic Churches, Ministries and Networks,' outside the older denominations and the Pentecostal Movement. Charismatic Movement may also refer to those Churches that emerged in and after the early 1980s from the (overall) Charismatic Movement.

**Revival:** Revival is defined as "the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring the people of God to a more vital spiritual life, witness, and work by prayer and the word after repentance from sin."

**Two Winged Theology:** This is the Theology of men and women balancing each other as they work together in church and society.<sup>1</sup> In African Churches, Charismatic Churches need this type of Theology so that both men and women work together and contribute towards Church development.

**Androcentrism:** This means male centredness. It is the bias of society, culture, and religion towards the assumption that males are naturally superior while females are inferior.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Search for a Two Winged Theology*, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Annie Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001, p. 19.

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Leadership in the Charismatic Churches; Zomba CFC and Area 25 HOGEM

Table 2: Yearly Programme for Ministering 2004-2012

Table 3: Zomba CFC Women Leadership Roles

Table 4: Women and Men Views on Women Roles

Table 5: Comparison of the Roles of Women in the Charismatic Churches.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Over centuries, women have not been taking a leading role in the Church. Thus, many of the roles they have played are generally those all women do in the society. While this was so in the past, even today many churches still give women limited traditional roles rather than leadership ones. Unlike other Churches that are slowly integrating women into leadership positions, the Charismatic Churches have, conversely, remained rigid in their stand, not fully incorporating women into the ruling hierarchy of their Churches. Accordingly, this study attempts to examine the roles and the level of women participation in the Charismatic Movement and especially in Malawi.

## 1.1 Research Issue

The research problem of this thesis is that, despite the fact that women form the largest population of the Church<sup>3</sup> as well as of the whole country, power distribution has been skewed. In many churches women are sidelined in core operations of the Church. From time immemorial, churches have not fully recognized the role of women in the Church.<sup>4</sup> Men often take the core roles of the Church “as determined by the Scriptures” and cultures of the society. Through use of Scriptures and culture, men have pushed women to more traditional roles such as cooking, sweeping, funerals and other non-core functions. Accordingly, this male dominance often perpetrates a systematic persecution and marginalization of women.

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<sup>3</sup> William Kalua, *Women Involvement in the Student Christian Organization of Malawi*, BTh, University of Livingstonia, 2013, p. 6. He cites that women constitute 52% of Malawi’s population; however, women are marginalized in many social, economic and religious spheres. As a result, they are unable to effectively contribute to the development of a country. In Malawi, in almost all churches women outnumber men, and usually women render much of the strength of a local Church.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver Malanga, *Women Participation and Contribution to Pentecostal Movements: A Case Study of Four Congregations in Mzuzu City of Malawi*, BA, Mzuzu University, 2013, p. 18.

## **1.2 My Position as a Researcher**

It is argued that researching and writing from the inside makes it difficult for one to be objective in one's analysis.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, it might equally be argued that writing from within works to the advantage of the researchers as they are fully equipped with relevant knowledge of the issues. As an insider, a true member of a Charismatic Church in Malawi, I am writing from an insider's perspective. My position and that of others will help present a balanced analysis of the findings. The desire to write about women issues goes back to my Bachelors of Arts Theological Studies Degree in 2008, when I did a course in Feminist Theology. Through this course I realized that few men care about women in both Church and society. Moreover, most of the women studies have been carried out by educated women only, whose understanding of gender issues has been too academic and radically Feministic. To this end, this study takes on a male perspective taking into consideration the concerns of both educated and uneducated men and women.

## **1.3 Present State of the Research**

This thesis deals with Women in the Charismatic Churches. It uses the approaches of Feminist Theology. This area has been researched on by many scholars in Africa, and a lot of literature is available. , Chapter six deals with distinguished scholarly findings regarding African Feminist Theology.

Like Feminist Theology, the Charismatic Movement in Africa and elsewhere across the globe has attracted the interest of scholars and researchers. This is because the Charismatic Movement is believed to have helped the development and revolution of modern Christianity across the globe. Despite the proliferation of literature emanating from such studies, not much is available on the role of women in the Charismatic Movement in Malawi and elsewhere. While it is proper to acknowledge that some unpublished works do exist, particularly from undergraduate dissertations, nevertheless such literature does not significantly contribute to new knowledge on the role of women in the Charismatic churches. This study will, therefore, rely mainly on unpublished sources.

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<sup>5</sup> James Schudzohrash, *Introduction to Social Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996, p. 16.

Mathews Ojo, writing on the dynamics of the Indigenous Charismatic missionary enterprise in West Africa, writes that the most significant development in African Christianity is the emergence of the Charismatic Movement.<sup>6</sup> Since the 1970s, there has been a dramatic rise in the activities of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, most of which were named after their Ministries or Fellowships.

Ojo further observed that Nigeria had been going through the Biafra Civil War from 1967-1970. The Biafra War brought instability to the society resulting in massive fear amongst the citizenry. Under such circumstances, the Charismatic Movement emerged as a relieving organization that brought a message of hope and optimism to the people in a dire situation. Thus, such wars instantaneously drove many Nigerians into accepting the Movement and its message.

Ojo further observes that the success of the Charismatic Movement depended on the fact that the Gospel was presented in an acceptable and appealing manner to all Nigerians.<sup>7</sup> Ojo also asserts that political factors alone could not grant Nigeria independence, but rather an array of factors such as economic, social, religious, and health factors together did so. His argument is that both positive and negative factors in the society can enhance the religiosity of the people. He also argues that, when society is really deprived of their material possessions, the end result is that the people will resort to religion and this helps it to thrive.

While some of these arguments seem subjective, the argument on relevance and contextualization of religion calls for more thought. The assumption is that the gospel can only take root if it is deemed contextually relevant and useful by those who follow it (utilitarian view of religion). Ojo's observations are therefore significant as they seem to provide a plausible explanation regarding the birth and growth of the Charismatic Movement in Africa.

Unlike other scholars, Ojo provides a historical reconstruction of the CM by showing that neither the Student Christian Movement nor the Scripture Union initiated the CM in Malawi

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<sup>6</sup> Mathews Ojo, *The Contextualization Significance of the Charismatic Movement in Independent Nigeria in Africa*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988, p. 174..

<sup>7</sup> Matthews Ojo, "The Contextualization Significance of the Charismatic Movement in Independent Nigeria," *Africa*, vol. 58, no. 2, 1988, p. 175.

and Africa. He presents the religious discourse to explain how the radicalized youth first supplanted the SCM and formed the Inter-Varsity Christian Union before the SCM staged a fight against the IVCU. He attends to the Charismatic Movement's doctrines, liturgy, practices, political stance, passion for evangelism, and puritan ethics—including the socio economic backdrop to the rise and development of the Movement.

Furthermore, Ojo observes that in Nigeria the CM initially benefitted from the Evangelical witness which interdenominational Evangelical student organizations had already established in educational institutions starting in the 1950s. In the 1970s, some members of these organizations had contacts with Pentecostal literature and activities outside the campuses of Higher Education institutions. The Charismatic Renewal first emerged in January 1970 among Christian students' organizations in the universities, when a few members of the Christian Union at the University of Ibadan proclaimed to their fellow students that they had been baptized by the Holy Spirit, and were speaking in tongues. Amid opposition from conservative Evangelical students, the Charismatic Renewal spread in Ibadan and to other Universities at a later stage. By the mid-1970s, the CRM had spread beyond the University.

Rhodian Munyenembe in his study of Charismatic contextualization observes that the coming of the Charismatic Movement coincided with the revival that took place in the country in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> He adds that this Movement found fertile ground on which to grow due to the then revival.

Like Ojo, Munyenembe argues that the CM has to be contextualized in order to be relevant to the Malawian context. He observes that such a Movement could not be successful unless it had been inculturated into Malawi's understanding and taste of the Gospel. Munyenembe's work, unlike other works, is significant to the history of the Church in Malawi as it reveals the genesis of the Charismatic Churches which are presumed to be offshoots (descendants) of the Evangelical and Mainline Churches.

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<sup>8</sup> Rhodian G. Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues. The Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2011.

He further observes that the way the Charismatic Movement responds to socio-cultural realities is more appropriate than that of the non-Charismatic Churches. He adds that the Charismatic Movement's Gospel is making the Christian faith indeed relevant to the people of Malawi through inculturation. This inculturation process is realized through prayer and preaching that is done in multiple languages including English.

Klaus Fiedler in his article "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Malawi in Cultural Perspective" points out that the CM in Malawi is part of a worldwide revival whose origin is usually traced to California in 1960.<sup>9</sup> Fiedler observes that the CM came mainly through interdenominational para-church organizations. He further shows that in as much as the CM shares much of its Theology with the Pentecostal Movement, its history and sociology are vastly different. While the Charismatic Movement started at the centre of the Classical Mainline Churches, the Pentecostal Movement started within the poor lower class of California. Moreover, the PM emerged at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with its roots deep in the Holiness Revival. On the other hand, the CM emerged almost half a century later. Klaus Fiedler further adds that the Pentecostal Movement was started predominantly by black Americans of the lower classes while the CM was started by white Americans of middle and upper class background.

Other visible differences between the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement are theological and ecclesiastical in nature. A theological dimension deals with the doctrine concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals subscribe to a work of grace subsequent to the conversion in which Spirit Baptism is evidenced by glossolalia.<sup>10</sup> The Charismatics, conversely, do not accept speaking in tongues as the initial evidence or affirmation of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Some scholars have come up with a three wave time-line in which the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements are featured as the first and second waves, being succeeded by a third wave commonly referred to as the Signs and Wonders Movement (SWM).

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<sup>9</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," *Religion in Malawi* no. 9, November 1999, pp. 33-34.

<sup>10</sup> Stanley M. Burgess, *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2001, p. 15.

Klaus Fiedler, conversely, shares the famous mission historian Kenneth Scott Latourette's view that revival is an interpretative key in that the Holy Spirit moves church history forward by ever growing new revivals which bring about ever new organizations. He views the Charismatic Movement as the work of the Holy Spirit which has resulted in the birth of Charismatic churches and organizations.

Bright Kawamba deals in his Master's thesis intensively with the beginning of the CM in Malawi.<sup>11</sup> He writes that the beginning of the Charismatic Movement is attributed to Episcopalian cleric, Father Dennis Bennett and the Lutheran cleric, Larry Christenson. On April 3, 1960, at St Mark's Episcopal Parish in California, Bennett announced to his congregation that he had received the power of the Holy Spirit, and that this was accompanied by "speaking in tongues." After receiving much opposition, Bennett resigned from his position and accepted an invitation to become Vicar of St Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, Washington DC, which grew to be one of the strongest Charismatic Churches in the Northwest of the USA.<sup>12</sup>

Kawamba's work makes a significant contribution to the state of the present research as it exposes the genesis of the CM in Malawi. This is because the significance of the CM resides in the Pentecostal tongues practice which infiltrated the mainline denominations. This created a new openness to the full range of Spiritual Gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues) that had not been accepted before. Kawamba's work is also important as it demonstrates that the CM has become a significant force in the ecclesiastical landscape as it has managed to attract large numbers of followers from Mainline Churches.

Isabel Apawo Phiri in her book "Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy" indicates how a woman is constructed by patriarchal systems in an African Church and culture. Phiri does not concern herself with the CM in Malawi, even though the book was written in the late 1980s, when the Movement had just emerged in Malawi. Phiri, however, tackles the construction of women by patriarchy as the main concern for Feminist Theologians

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<sup>11</sup> Bright Kawamba, *The Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969-1986. An Antecedent of Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, MA, University of Malawi, 2013, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

worldwide, because it has influenced the way women act and the roles they play in both Church and society.

Isabel Phiri further argues that patriarchy in African churches perpetuates the oppression of women by religion and culture. She adds that this practice hampers the development of women in African Churches and society. In Charismatic Churches, women seem to have been liberated due to their charisma in doing some activities; however, it can be argued that despite the charismatic gifts inherent in such Movements many women are not fully liberated in many activities of the Church.

Molly Longwe in her doctoral thesis<sup>13</sup> writes a critical exploration and analysis of the experiences of women who are married to Pastors of the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA). The purpose of her study was to determine the ideo-theological and socio-cultural factors that contribute to the construction of the identity of a Pastor's wife in BACOMA. Her work is important to Feminist Theology in that it liberates Pastors' wives who, for a long time, had been adhering to the principles of the Church without questioning some of those principles. This work is also relevant to this study as it provides insight into the roles of women and their quest for liberation from the discriminatory and repressive practices prevalent in Charismatic Churches in Malawi.

Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler writes about the history and theology of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.<sup>14</sup> She argues that the Circle is an African child that was born in ecumenical surroundings. This work acts as a voice to African Feminists and is, as such, highly regarded by many academics. The thesis argues that the Circle has made significant contributions towards the liberation of women in academia, the Church and society. If what she writes is anything to go by, the Circle must consider the issues raised in this thesis for it to successfully liberate African women.

Rachel Fiedler, however, cautions that the Circle must not be viewed as something that seeks to create a matriarchy, but rather as an instrument that is primarily concerned with

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<sup>13</sup> Molly Longwe, *A Paradox in a Theology of Freedom and Equality: the Experiences of Pastors' Wives (Amayi Busa) in the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA)*, PhD, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (1989-2007): History and Theology*, University of the Free State, 2010, p. 11.

the creation of balanced relationships of equality between women and men. For this reason, the Circle has branded the Theology of Gender Balances. Rachel Fiedler further indicates that the Circle Theology only offers a partial view of man-woman relationships and that it does not investigate all the factors that influence such relationships. However, her findings do establish that women in Africa are gradually being liberated. This is the reason, that I find this thesis important for my study as it discusses issues that concern women to a greater extent. Since Rachel Fiedler's study does not concern itself with the investigation of all the factors that influence man-woman relationships, thereby leaving some gaps, this study will, accordingly, seek to fill some such gaps.

Another work worth examining is a module written by Joyce Mlenga. In her work, Mlenga focusses on women in the Holy Ministry in the CCAP. Her work aims at uncovering some of the factors that blockade women from applying for the Holy Ministry. The study shows that the battle for women ordination had been there for a long time, and that women were finally winning. Joyce Mlenga, however, observes that, while things seem to be positive for some women, a certain section of women is still not ready to take up the challenge head-on due to colonization of their minds. Besides the significance of this work towards women empowerment in the Church, it has also shown that some women can serve as Vestry Chairpersons given the support of their male and female counterparts, although some charismatic zealots remain skeptical.<sup>15</sup>

Klaus Fiedler, in his booklet "Baptists and the Ordination of Women" argues that there is no sign of any ordination that conveys a special elevated status to any person in the New Testament, as the Baptist Church assumes. If ordination means entering a special state, then there is no evidence for that. He also asserts that if ordination means commissioning someone for service, then there is a good biblical reason to give women all the support. He finally observes that both men and women had significant roles in the Bible. He cites women like Phoebe who was a Deacon of the Church in Cenchrea.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Joyce Dainess Mlenga, *Women in Holy Ministry in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia: A Study of Perceptions*, Zomba: Kachere Document no. 62, 2008, p. 4

<sup>16</sup> Klaus Fiedler, *Baptists and the Ordination of Women*, Zomba: Lydia Print, 2010, p. 11.

Klaus Fielder's work is significant to this study as it exposes the weakness of some beliefs and practices that constrain women participation in Ministry and leadership positions in the Church.

Clement Majawa, in his Bachelor of Arts Dissertation "The Catholic Church's teaching on Charismatic Experiences" describes the nature of Charismatic Spirituality in an attempt to help Catholics in Malawi understand, appreciate and live with it.<sup>17</sup> Majawa attempts to remove misconceptions Catholics have about the Charismatic Movement and its experiences. Majawa's work is significant to this study since the Roman Catholic Church is one of the prominent denominations that have lost a substantial number of its members to the Charismatic Churches. However, this work does not mention anything about the role of women in the Charismatic Churches. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap.

Likewise, Ulf Strohhahn's work "Pentecostalism in Malawi" provides the much needed historical background about the Charismatic Churches and its influences on the global scene.<sup>18</sup> However, this work does not clearly explain the distinction between the Charismatics and the Evangelical Churches. The better presentation for the background to the Pentecostal Movement in Malawi is in Ulf Strohhahn's forthcoming book on the Zionist Churches. Perhaps this is another area that calls for more studies. On the other hand, unlike Ulf Strohhahn, Bright Kawamba has attempted to present the history of the Charismatic Movement across the globe in a much more detailed way. For example, he attributes the genesis of the CM to the Episcopalian Cleric, Father Dennis Bennett and the Lutheran Cleric, Larry Christenson.<sup>19</sup> He points out that Rev Stewart Lane, Resident Minister of Holy Innocent's Anglican Church in Limbe, founded the first Charismatic Group in Blantyre City and called it the Cornelius Fellowship.<sup>20</sup> The Cornelius Fellowship shared similarities with

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<sup>17</sup> Clement Majawa, *The Holy Spirit and Charismatic Renewal in Africa and Beyond*, Nairobi: Creation Enterprise, 2007, p. 21. See also Turner and William, *The Theological and Sociological Nature of the Charismatic Movement*, Kent: Blueprint Press, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Ulf Strohhahn, *Pentecostalism in Malawi: A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, pp. 20-22.

<sup>19</sup> Bright Kawamba, *The Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969-1986, an Antecedent of Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, MA, University of Malawi, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Stewart Lane came to Malawi in 1965 as an English teacher at Malosa Secondary School. He worked as a priest, fellowship leader, university chaplain, author and columnist in a local daily in Malawi.

Charismatic orientations of the Anglican Church and Roman Catholic Church, particularly those from South America, the US and the UK. These probably were the places where the founder of the Cornelius Fellowship got his initial exposure to the Charismatic orientation. Kawamba also identified Barbara Tippet as the one who led the Blantyre Christian Center and Blantyre City Bible School. However, Kawamba's work falls short by not showing the role of women in the major Charismatic Churches. This becomes the interest of this study.

Importantly, Janet Kholowa and Klaus Fiedler have made several contributions to the Theology of women in the Church and their role as supported by Genesis 1 and 2.<sup>21</sup> They argue that even the New Testament shows that Paul closely cooperated with all the women. They further argue that the Bible does not stress particular ordination for a particular grouping of people, but only shows women doing the work of God at all levels, and therefore, there is no reason to deny anybody ordination based on gender or sex.<sup>22</sup>

Although no substantive studies seem to be available on "Women in the Charismatic Movement," there are a number of books and articles on the role of women in the Charismatic Churches. Bosco Bangura points out that until 1989, Sierra Leone's Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches were male dominated. He observes that, as much as a woman Evangelist, Mrs Dora Dumbuya, founded the "Jesus is Lord Ministries" in 1989, this would not have been possible in the period prior to that.<sup>23</sup> She thus became the first woman leader of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches which were once male dominated.

Bangura further observes that the "Jesus is Lord Ministries" made a significant contribution towards the development of Charismatic Christianity in Sierra-Leone. He adds that Dumbuya's ministry captured the interest of the media and the entire country. For example, there was an article that was published by *Awareness Times* in which Dumbuya was highly praised for breaking into an area that was considered a masculine camp. In this article, Sylvia Blyden, a renowned journalist in Sierra Leone wrote.

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<sup>21</sup> Janet Kholowa and Klaus Fiedler, *In the Beginning God Created them Equal*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Janet Kholowa and Klaus Fiedler, *Mtumwi Paulo ndi Udindo wa Amayi mu Mpingo*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2001, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Bosco Bangura, *The Charismatic Movement in Sierra Leone: A Missio-historical Analysis in View of African Culture, Prosperity Gospel and Power Theology*, PhD, Evangelical Theological Faculty Leuven and Free University Amsterdam, 2013, p. 81.

On the religious front, Sierra Leone women have also led brilliant pursuits in the promotion of their individual religions. Who can today talk about the Christian Religion in Sierra Leone and fail to mention the name Dora Dumbuya of the 'Jesus is Lord' Ministries? Mrs Dumbuya virtually singlehandedly converted tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans to the Christian faith in the last century and in this 21st century, where she is still one of the leading beacons of the Christian faith in Sierra Leone.<sup>24</sup>

Bosco Bangura also indicates that some Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches' leadership positions are held by women. He cites the example of "The New Life Ministries International"<sup>25</sup> guided by Bishop Cole and his wife Rev Mrs Irene Cole, who serve as Founders and General Overseers. In this Church, Irene Cole serves as the leader of the Women's Department. She also supervises a team of Pastors who serve in the various districts where *New Life* has been established.

Generally, Bangura's work provides information concerning the Charismatic Movement in Sierra Leone, which is similar in its history to the Charismatic Movement in Malawi. Moreover, the women leadership in the Charismatic Movement is also the hub of this present research.

Importantly, "The Post-Reformation Christian Restoratianism," a survey by Felix Nyika, provided glimpses of Charismatic Churches in Malawi or Neo-charismatic Churches as he calls them.<sup>26</sup> He points out that the first nine Neo-charismatic Churches in Malawi were officially founded between 1982 and 1994, and that at least three of them boast of

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<sup>24</sup> Sylvia Olayinka Blyden, "Sierra Leonean Women in Public Life: A Beacon of Pride, Success and Lessons for an Emerging Generation," *Awareness Times*, June 13, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> See Joseph Bosco Bangura, *The Charismatic Movement in Sierra Leone: A Missio-historical Analysis in View of African Culture, Prosperity Gospel and Power Theology*, PhD, Evangelical Theological Faculty Leuven and Free University Amsterdam, 2013, p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Felix Nyika, *Post-Reformation Christian Restoratianism. A Survey*, PhD Module, Mzuzu University, 2008, p. 1. Cf. Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9 (November 1999), p. 27-38. I prefer to call such churches Neocharismatic as opposed to Charismatic since the Charismatic revival did not result in new churches or denominations, but rather produced renewal movements within existing ecclesiastical structures. Klaus Fiedler (though he prefers to call them Charismatic) notes a common pattern in the formation of Neocharismatic churches that progresses from an interdenominational organization, to a fellowship, to a ministry, to a full-blown church.

Apostles: Apostle Mgala of Agape, Apostle Stanley S. Ndovie of Living Waters, and Apostle Madalitso Mbewe of Calvary Family Church.<sup>27</sup> This work provides background knowledge on the operations of Charismatic Churches, and on how they have thrived in several parts of the world including Malawi.<sup>28</sup> This literature is very important as it provides a true reflection of the beginning of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi.

Likewise, Rachel NyaGondwe Banda [Fiedler] has described the role of women in the Baptist Convention in Southern Malawi. Her contribution is on how the Baptist Convention doctrine and polity has increased the women's chances to define the space they live in.<sup>29</sup> She also points out some notable contributing factors that hinder women's development, not only in the Baptist Convention but also in other Churches and in society. These include cultural practices, which are patriarchal in nature and misinterpretation of some Biblical texts.

## **1.4 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to investigate the Role of Women in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are pursued:

1. To provide an overview of the History of the Charismatic Churches in Malawi.
2. To analyze Feminist Theology and Women in the Charismatic Movement
3. To examine the role of women in the Charismatic Churches
4. To assess women ministry in the Charismatic Churches
5. To examine Charismatic theology for women
6. To analyze women leadership in the Charismatic Churches

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Klaus Fiedler cites the genesis of such churches and their founders/leaders as follows: Blantyre Christian Centre founded by Barbara Tippet (1980), Agape founded by Pastor Mgala (Feb 1982), Faith of God founded by Pastor Matoga (1984), Living Waters founded by Pastor Stanley Ndovi (Jan 1985), Glad Tidings founded by a group (Jan 1986), All for Jesus founded by Pastor Felix Zalimba (Jan 1993), Flames of Victory founded by Pastor Katchire (Sept 1993), Calvary Family Church founded by Pastor Madalitso Mbewe (Mar 1994), and Vineyard founded by Pastor Gama (Nov 1994).

<sup>28</sup> Knowing that the Awakening in Blantyre has historical connections with the efforts of a zealous and resilient faith missionary Jack Selfridge.

<sup>29</sup> Rachel, NyaGondwe Banda. *Women of Bible and Culture: Baptist Convention Women in Southern Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005.

## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study falls within the specific discipline of Church History. The thesis is part of Charismatic studies and African Feminist Theology. The Charismatic Movement is the latest revival in a sequence of worldwide revivals. Here I follow Latourette's hypothesis that the Holy Spirit moves Church History forward by presenting ever new revivals which bring about new organizations.<sup>30</sup> This study positions itself with both Latourette's non-interpretive view of the Church, and Paul Clifford's interpretative view. It also follows Latourette as interpreted by Klaus Fiedler who observes that revivals blur clear distinctions, among clergy, laity and social classes and between women and men, and when revivals decline the blurred distinctions often gain new power.

Klaus Fiedler also observes that the revivals that give women an enhanced position tend to follow more an Arminian than a Calvinistic theology.<sup>31</sup> This study will therefore test his hypotheses on women's position in the case of the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. It will also, through interpretation of women participation in the Charismatic Churches, use Feminist Theology to assess how far these Churches have achieved the re-reading of both Bible and culture appropriate for them today, and how far they have developed a Balanced (Two Winged) Theology.

## 1.6 Hypothesis

The hypothesis being tested is that much as it seems that many Churches are now allowing women to take different roles in the church, Charismatic denominations seem to lag behind, as the core roles in the Church are monopolized by men while women take the more traditional roles. This study assumes that while this has been the practice, it is wrong to sideline women and tie them to the roles that are traditionally believed to be feminine. This study will therefore examine the basis and rationale for such practices.

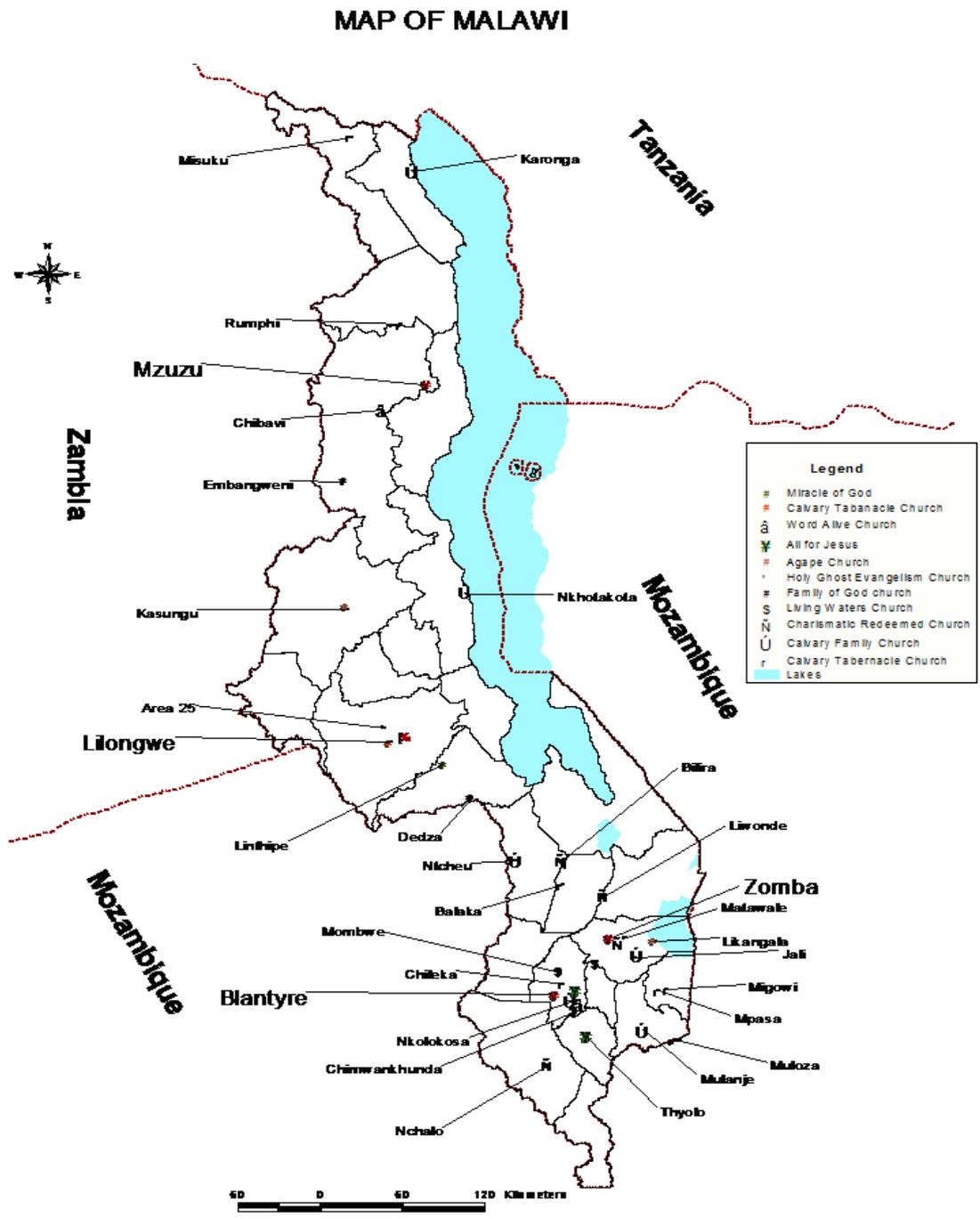
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<sup>30</sup> Kenneth, Scott Latourette, *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols, Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1970 (1937) - Latourette draws attention mainly to missions and charitable and specialized Christian organizations, but obviously revivals also create many new denominations, as Latourette's work shows.

<sup>31</sup> While Calvinism teaches irresistible grace, Arminian theology emphasizes more the human component in the process of salvation even to the point that it teaches that grace can be lost.

## **1.7 Geographical Areas of the Study**

This study deals with women in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. The Charismatic Churches have been chosen because unlike in some Mainline Churches, women in the Charismatic Churches are not fully liberated due to stringent doctrines and practices. Accordingly, an in-depth study of the Charismatic Churches in Malawi will be done to unearth the realities on this issue. Below is the map of Malawi showing the distribution of the Charismatic Churches where the study is carried out.



Map showing some of the Charismatic Churches in Malawi

### 1.8 Sampling and Sample Size

All the Charismatic Churches in Malawi could have formed the population for this study but such an approach would have presented too big a sample to be analyzed. To this end, the

sample was only drawn from ten Charismatic Churches for feasibility purposes. These include Charismatic Redeemed Ministries International, Living Waters, Winners Chapel, Soul Winners, Calvary Family Church, Miracle of God, Calvary Tabernacle Church, Holy Ghost, Word Alive Ministries International and Evangelism Ministries (HOGEM), All to Jesus and Word Alive Ministries International from the three regions of Malawi.

Within the Charismatic Churches, individual members were identified through a sampling method known as the “Dung Beetle Method”. This method involves finding out from members of the local population who have experienced the problem under investigation. The advantage of using this method is that it enables an in-depth investigation of how a problem manifests in specific circumstances and the various ways in which the family, community, the Church and other institutions address it. However, it is difficult to show the extent of a problem or prove that a problem exists because the choice of the number of units is an interactive process and is difficult to be determined.

In this study, use of this method entailed certain activities in each research site. The study started with a general historical set up of the Charismatic Churches in the Northern Region of Malawi followed by the Central and Southern Regions respectively. The aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of women in Charismatic Churches across the country. Ordinary Church members consisting of men and women were involved at different grass root congregations. Records from different congregations and in-depth interviews involving individuals were also used.

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

This section focuses on the data from the fieldwork. The results are then analyzed alongside the Literature Review. In order to fully understand the results from this fieldwork, this chapter discusses and justifies the research design by focusing on the methodology and tools used to obtain and analyze the data.

This study is a qualitative in nature. According to Miles and Huberman, qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a field or life situation which

is reflective of everyday life of individuals, groups, societies and organizations.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in the categories of information that emerge from the data.<sup>33</sup> To this end, at the centre of every qualitative research, are people's perceptions of reality.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, qualitative research is about how people create meaning and construct reality. This is different from quantitative research which uses researcher-controlled answers, normally short, to make generalizations.<sup>35</sup>

The following techniques constituted the main research methods that were used to gather and evaluate data for this study.

### **1.9.1 Participant Observation**

Visits to different Charismatic Churches were done in order to have a feel of the Charismatic Sunday Worship and midweek meetings. From October 2012 to October 2013, ten Charismatic Churches were visited. This also included participation in crusades, camp-meetings, conferences and deliverance services presided over by both male and female leaders of the Churches. The aim was to understand how ordinary members respond to the Women Ministry and the kind of support they get from the Church.

### **1.9.2 Interviews**

Interviews permit deep understanding of the attitudes of respondents. In this regard, interviews and discussions with local leaders, members of the Charismatic Churches, Evangelical leaders, and lecturers in Theology and Religious Studies at Colleges and Universities were conducted. The proceedings with leaders of the ten Charismatic Churches were digitally recorded using a voice recorder. Non-structured questions and qualitative and in-depth interviews were also used. This approach allowed for a deeper questioning that

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<sup>32</sup> Hubert J.M. Hermans, "The Dialogical Self: Toward a Theory of Personal and Cultural Positioning," *Culture and Psychology* 7/3, 2001, pp. 243-281.

<sup>33</sup> Kevin Kelly, K *Calling it a Day: Reaching Conclusions in Qualitative Research*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2006, pp. 370-376.

<sup>34</sup> Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Terre Blanche, Kevin Kelly, and Kevin Durrheim, *Why Qualitative Research?* Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2006, pp. 271-284.

helped reveal facts that would have otherwise not come out. This also helped to clarify theological assumptions and dilemmas conceived through participant involvement, and chart the way forward. Moreover, through this process, possible areas calling for further research were identified. Importantly, use of this approach facilitated an understanding about the experiences of women in the Churches, and the meaning they make out of those experiences. The discussions with Evangelical Church leaders and some College lecturers aimed at assessing the level of impact presented by the Charismatic Movement on the general ministry. Personal stories within the Charismatic Movement that were gathered also provided insights on the impact of this Movement on the ordinary Christians in Malawi.

### ***1.9.3 Charismatic Literature***

Books, pamphlets and reports published by five Charismatic Churches were reviewed for this study. Books published by Apostle Stanley Ndovie,<sup>36</sup> Apostle Madalitso Mbewe,<sup>37</sup> Apostle Akintayo Sam-Jolly and others were reviewed.<sup>38</sup> Also, pamphlets and reports of Pastor Francis Mambu were used.<sup>39</sup> These materials together provided useful insights into the theological position of the Church leadership.

### ***1.9.4 Online and Electronic Resources***

The Charismatic Movement is also making use of modern Information and Communication Technologies. Thus, Charismatic Churches have maintained a consistent presence of the internet. Websites for Calvary Family Church,<sup>40</sup> Living Word of Faith Outreach Ministries International,<sup>41</sup> Living Waters Church and New Life Ministries International<sup>42</sup> show their doctrinal and theological positions. These also provided information about history, leadership and ecclesiastical structures of the churches. Likewise, the social-media,

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<sup>36</sup> Stanley Ndovi, *Getting Saved*, Blantyre: Eagles Press, 2004, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Madalitso Mbewe, *The Morning Star Comes Again*, Nkolokosa: CFC Press, 1998.

<sup>38</sup> Akintayo Sam-Jolly. *Apostolic Passion and Authority*, Freetown: Living Word Publications, 2000, p. 43.

<sup>39</sup> Francis, Mambu, *Prophetic Picture for 2011: Year of Total Restoration, Divine Recovery and Visitation*. Freetown: Faith Healing Bible Church, 2011; p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> <http://mvulasreflections.blogspot.com/2008/04/calvary-family-church.html>.

<sup>41</sup> See <http://livingwordoffaith.lwfomi.co.uk/>.

<sup>42</sup> [http://newlifeint.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=7](http://newlifeint.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=7).

particularly the churches' official Face-book pages, provided rich data. Similarly, CDs, DVDs and tapes produced by the Media Departments of these Churches were collected and analyzed.

### ***1.9.5 Focus Group Discussion***

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with men and women separately and with mixed groups. The purpose was to gain an overview of people's understanding of the role of women in the Charismatic Churches in different congregations. Ten of these sessions were held in different congregations. These helped deepen the understanding of the roles of women in the Charismatic Churches. Moreover, the FGDs revealed many issues that called for further investigation, hence redirecting this study.

### ***1.9.6 In-depth Interviews***

In-depth interviews were used to collect data from both men and women. They were carefully targeted to elicit information from different congregations.

### ***1.9.7 Research participants and purposive sampling***

In designing a research project, the type and number of participants to include are most significant. Sampling is the selection of research participants where a small part of a target population is selected.<sup>43</sup> The process of sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, or events should be investigated.

While there are various types of sampling, this study used Purposive Sampling. According to Sotirios Sarantakos, Purposive Sampling is the technique in which researchers purposely choose participants who, in their opinion, are relevant to the study.<sup>44</sup> Sarantakos further points out that the choice of participants is guided by the researcher's own judgment that the people can offer adequate and useful information that will give a picture of the issue being investigated.

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<sup>43</sup> Kevin Durrheim, *Research Design in Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2006, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> Sotirios Sarantakos, *Introduction to Social Research*, London: Wood Press, 2005, p. 164.

### **1.9.8 Key Informant Interviews**

Key informants are people approached for their views regarding the subjects being studied. In this regard, views and opinions were solicited from diverse individuals such as pastors, founders of Charismatic Churches in Malawi, Prophetesses and Deaconesses. Views were also solicited from diverse individuals such as church elders, deacons, pastors and the laity. This method helped to validate and refine the data collected from the FGDs.

### **1.9.9 Secondary Sources**

The research also used information and statistics available before the research exercise began. It included reports from other countries, books on African Feminist Theology, and journals. These sources were narrowed and analyzed in order to stick to the issue under investigation. These also provided valuable background and comparative (?) information for the study.

## **1.10 Data analysis**

Data was analyzed using a variety of qualitative techniques. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data.<sup>45</sup> Data was therefore analyzed through coding. Meaning is derived not by looking at particular features of many instances of a phenomenon but rather by looking at all aspects of the same phenomenon to see their inter-relationships and establish how they come together to form the whole. Data analysis also involves organization, summarization and interpretation of data. The first step in data processing is separating it into workable units, while looking for similar categories, concepts, topics and themes. Thereafter, codes were created to categorize the data. This included both major and sub-codes depending on the categories. The organized data was then summarized by examining all the entries that had similar codes. The third step looked at the relationships among the categories and patterns that suggested generalizations and the findings were interpreted accordingly.

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<sup>45</sup> Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rostaman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995, p. 111.

### ***1.10.1 Credibility, Dependability, and Reflectivity of the Research***

The study falls under both qualitative and quantitative research. In qualitative research issues of credibility, dependability and reflectivity are as important as validity, reliability, and generalization in quantitative research is.

Credibility refers to the degree by which the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon under study are considered to be reliable.<sup>46</sup> This is established by looking at discrepant evidence to the hypotheses one has developed as a means of producing a rich and credible account. In this study, this aspect has been taken care of by using research methods that have given an accurate and rich picture of the research setting and participants.

### ***1.10.2 Dependability***

According to van der Riet and Durrheim, dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced of the findings reported by the researcher.<sup>47</sup> This has been achieved by providing a rich and detailed explanation of how data production and analysis were done. An empirical qualitative narrative analysis on the experiences of women in the Charismatic Churches, Pastors'wives in the PAWLP is being presented with an extensive explanation of the methods.

### ***1.10.3 Reflectivity***

Reflexivity is a significant feature in Feminist Social Research. Feminist researchers insist on recognizing the shared human attributes of the participants. They are self-conscious of the role their identification or misidentification with participants might play in the research process and therefore in the eliciting of research data.<sup>48</sup> With such awareness, Feminist researchers take the following options: (1) by including in their report, their subjective response to the research process; and (2) by using the counter-convention use of the first

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<sup>46</sup> Kevin Durrheim, *Research Design in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2006, p. 91.

<sup>47</sup> Mary van der Riet and Kevin Durrheim, *Writing and Evaluating Research Proposals in Research Practice*: Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2006, pp. 80-86.

<sup>48</sup> Eagle Gill, Grahame Hayes, and Thabani Sibanda, *Standpoint Methodologies: Marxist, Feminist, and Black Scholarship Perspectives*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2006, p. 50.

person, by referring to that of – I observe that/this or in my analysis, explicitly acknowledge their role in the research process. In this regard I acknowledge my role in the research process by using the first person throughout this thesis.

#### ***1.10.4 The Prime Theories Guiding the Study***

The study is located within the Programme of Gender and Religion. It thus becomes necessary to study Feminist Theories to get a theoretical framework, which are used in the analysis of the findings. The study also uses the Re-constructionist Approach of Feminist Theologies in order to analyze the experiences of women in the Church.

#### ***1.10.5 Radical Feminism***

Radical Feminism believes that the society must be changed at its core in order to dissolve patriarchy. Johnson defines patriarchy as a kind of society that promotes male privileges by being male dominated, male identified, and male centred.<sup>49</sup> Patriarchy is male dominated in that positions of authority at all levels of decision making are generally reserved for men. It is male identified in that core cultural ideas about what is considered good, desirable, preferable, or normal are associated with how we think about men and masculinity. Patriarchy is male centred in that the focus of attention is primarily on men and what they do. An important element of patriarchy, which promotes discrimination, in Johnson's view, is the privilege of control. Johnson asserts that the privilege of control elevates men over women<sup>50</sup> and claims that it is this element of control which makes men to see themselves as subjects who intend and decide what will happen, and women as objects to act upon. Radical feminists view this 'sex gender system' of male domination and female subordination as the source of women's oppression. For them, women's liberation can only be achieved if this system is completely overhauled.<sup>51</sup> Radical Feminism fails to adequately explain causes of gender inequalities as they ignore the behaviour and attitude of the

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<sup>49</sup> K.W. Lee, K.W., K. Cho and S. Lee, S. "Causes of Gender Discrimination in Korean Labour Markets." *AJWS* vol 7 no. 2 2001, p. 738. Retrieved on 20.7.2009. at <http://ewhawoman.or.kr/acws/data/v7n2-1.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> A.G. Johnson, *The Gender Knot - Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005, p. 76.

<sup>51</sup> L.E. Ford, *Women and Politics - The Pursuit of Equality* (2nd ed), Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006, p. 45.

women themselves. Radical Feminists also miss the ball by exclusively focusing on men and what men do to women not otherwise.<sup>52</sup> This aside, Radical Feminism provides explanations on some causes of gender discrimination associated with patriarchal elements. It also emphasizes the importance of individual feelings, experiences and relationships.

#### ***1.10.6 Liberal Feminism***

The study used Liberal Feminism as one of the theories which relate to women's participation in the leadership of the Church. The main view of Liberal Feminists is that all people are created equal by God and deserve equal rights. The Feminists believe that oppression exists because of the way men and women are socialized. This supports patriarchy and keeps men in power positions. Moreover, Liberal Feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts and should be accorded the same opportunities in religion, politics, economics and society. Women should have the right to choose what they want just like anybody else regardless of their sex.

#### ***1.10.7 Feminist Ecclesiology***

In this study, Feminist Ecclesiology will be used to analyze the roles of women in the Church. Even with their numerical strength, women's experience of being in the Church has been severely limited by the patriarchal structures and teachings in the Church. Natalie Watson has cogently argued that Feminist Ecclesiology is one of the ways in which women speak about their being Church and their embodiment of the divine in the world. She further observes that Feminist Theologians have found that those churches which understood themselves as being "Churches of the Word" (e.g. HOGEM), have been a place where women suffer institutional injustices. For Watson, Feminist Ecclesiology is the search for counter-patriarchal and subversive readings of Traditional Ecclesiology so that the Church can be a liberating and a life-giving environment for both women and men. All forms of oppressive language used to describe the Church, including texts that describe institutions which oppress and marginalize women and exclude them from all essential processes of

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<sup>52</sup> A.G. Johnson, *The Gender Knot - Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005, p. 143.

representation and self-definition are critically scrutinized by Feminist Ecclesiology.<sup>53</sup> As noted above, Baptists claim as their distinctive mark the principle of the Priesthood for all believers and the individual freedom to be and to do according to one's own calling. As will be seen, a Feminist analysis of this principle reveals a number of inconsistencies in Charismatic understanding and practice of this principle, especially over the identity and roles of women.

#### ***1.10.8 Feminist Anthropology***

This study also used Feminist Theological Anthropology to analyze the experience of women on the question of humanity.<sup>54</sup> This is important because of the way women have been modeled in society and in the Church. Throughout the ages, society and the Christian religion have denied women full humanity by perceiving them negatively. Feminist Theological Anthropologists critically examine factors that constrain women from attaining full human development. They attempt to restore women's lost glory by making them aware of their potentials so that they develop self-esteem and self-determination.

#### ***1.10.9 African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics***

The study also used African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics (AFCH) as a tool for analyzing participants' perceptions on cultural and religious roles. While African Feminist Cultural Theology would have been the most appropriate tool for this study, its lack of engagement with women's experience makes it not ideal. Whereas African Cultural Theology glorifies African culture, on the other hand, African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics argues that not everything in African culture promotes the well-being of all people. There are aspects of African cultures that are oppressive to women, as observed by Oduyoye and Kanyoro.<sup>55</sup> Oduyoye observes that women have rarely challenged their culture, even when they have judged it to be unjust. Furthermore, because of the way Africans read the Bible, African

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<sup>53</sup> See Letty M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> See Susan Rakoczy, *Living Life to the Full: Reflections on Feminist Spirituality*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000, pp. 69-71.

<sup>55</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro, . *Convoking —The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*, Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar University Press, 1990, pp. 10-15.

Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics promotes the use of a hermeneutic of suspicion when reading the Bible.<sup>56</sup> In as much as the Bible is liberative in nature, it has also been interpreted in such a way that it becomes a tool for the oppression of women.<sup>57</sup> To this end, African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics has been used to critically analyze issues faced by the women in the Charismatic Churches. The AFCH has also been used to highlight the oppressive elements of both African culture and the Biblical cultures. At the same time, liberative elements found in both cultures have been highlighted so that they should be promoted. African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics also enable one to understand that being a Pastor's wife is just a social construct. This is because socially a woman is married to a pastor who can be spiritual. This influences her role and perception of being a wife. That is the reason Kanyoro argues that the roles and mentality of African women are socially and culturally defined. And, within this framework, women have been socialized into a state of submission and humility such that they have not been able to determine their own way of living their lives.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, AFCH has helped people understand that women's submission to men emanates from inculturation which makes them consider exploitation as normal business. Moreover, critical analysis of these issues shows that woman see these things as part of the Ministry, and divinely given, hence there is no need to question something that was predestined by the most powerful God. This study therefore examines these constructs through the lens of Feminist Theologians. By doing so, the study aims to bring women, including Pastors' wives, to their normal senses in order for them to begin challenging these malpractices.<sup>59</sup> By using African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics, Feminist Ecclesiology, and Feminist Anthropology, the study raises awareness amongst the women about their social, economic, cultural and religious rights.

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<sup>56</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro, In *Search of a Round Table: Gender, Theology and Church Leadership*. Genève: WCC 1997, p. 76.

<sup>57</sup> Int. Rev Lazurus Banda, Thondwe, 23.5.2013.

<sup>58</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro, In *Search of a Round Table: Gender, Theology and Church Leadership*. Genève: WCC 1997, p. 76.

<sup>59</sup> Sarojini Nadar, "On Being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions" in *On Being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, edited by Isabel Apawo Phiri and Sarojini Nadar. Genève: World Council of Churches, 2005, pp. 16-28.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a comprehensive map that charts and guides this work. The next chapter presents the Charismatic Movement from a global and generic perspective. Before that I present the overall structure of the thesis.

## **1.12 Structure of the Study**

This study consists of ten chapters. Chapter 1 is the Introduction. It presents the research issue, purpose, hypothesis, objectives, theoretical frame works, present state of the research, methodology and the prime theories guiding it.

Chapter 2 concerns the Charismatic Movement globally. It includes the definition of the Charismatic Churches, overview of the Charismatic Movement, Charismatic Denominations, Charismatic Theology, Social Behaviour Theories, and the History of the Charismatic Movement.

Chapter 3 presents the history of Charismatic Movements in Africa. An overview on the genesis of Christianity and the CMs in Africa is also discussed. The chapter also shows that there were distinct periods in West Africa that characterized the genesis of Charismatic Movements.

Chapter 4 discusses the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. First, the difference between Charismatics and Pentecostals is presented. After that the beginning of the Charismatic Movements in Malawi is also examined in the context of the Blantyre Revival. The first Charismatic Movement in Blantyre was Cornelius Fellowship founded by Rev Stewart Lane, and the chapter also discusses some of the early Charismatic Churches such as the Blantyre Christian Centre, Agape Life Church, Living Waters, and Calvary Family Church.

Chapter 5 presents a Biblical perspective on women in the Charismatic Churches. The chapter concentrates on the status and the role of women in today's Christianity against that of the women in the New Testament.

Chapter 6 reveals the Third Wave Evangelical Feminist Theoretical Framework to show how Evangelical Women have constantly argued against male dominance and monopoly in the Church. It also presents issues relating to the major concerns of African Feminist

Theologians. These issues include reinterpretation of the Bible. It also reflects on textual reinterpretations and literalistic interpretations of the Bible that assume that the Bible is patriarchal due to the androcentric nature of the authors, and that they interpret the scriptures in light of their cultures which glorify men. The Two Winged Theology is an alternative area this chapter highlights. The Two Winged Theology is the theology of men and women balancing each other as they work together in church and society.

Chapter 7 avails several case studies in the Charismatic Churches. It focusses on the role of women in various churches such as Word Alive Ministry, Living Waters, Calvary Family Church, and Calvary Tabernacle Church. Women in these churches are empowered to serve God effectively by creating a conducive atmosphere for fulfilling the will of God as He created everybody equal.

Chapter 8 discusses women participation in Charismatic Churches. It has reflected on the positions held by women in the Charismatic churches. It has been established that leadership positions in the Charismatic Churches remain unequally distributed between men and women. Men still hold the leading position in the church while women become secretaries and treasurers. It also exposes factors that contribute to the low representation of women in leadership position such as family obligations, lack of support and low esteem among others. Furthermore the chapter discusses the roles and experiences of pastors' wives in the Charismatic churches. It has been revealed that pastors' wives face challenges with their husbands (pastors) despite that it seems to be a spiritual family.

Chapter 9 deals with the role of prophetesses in the Charismatic churches. It has focused on the prophetesses in the Old Testament and New Testament. It has also reflected on the current prophetesses in the Charismatic churches comparing with the Old Testament prophetesses. The prophetess provides guidance and counselling to the church and its members.

Chapter 10 exposes the findings of the study on the women in the Charismatic churches in Malawi. The chapter discusses how the Charismatic Movement as a worldwide revival affected women in the Charismatic churches in Malawi.

## Chapter 2: The Charismatic Movement Worldwide

This chapter gives a generic overview of literature on the Charismatic Movement in the world. It begins with definitions and a general overview of the Charismatic Movement and proceeds to its genesis and growth. A discussion on Charismatic interpretations and Socio-Behavioural Theories that influence patterns of thought and behaviour within the Charismatic Movement in Malawi and elsewhere around the globe is also presented.

### 2.1 Definition of Charismatic Churches

As already discussed, two paths are usually followed when attempting to define the Charismatic Movement (CM).<sup>60</sup> Originally the CM was conceived as a revival phenomenon that occurred within the existing denominations. At that material time, the idea was to bring sanity and spiritual renewal to the members of those denominations. Then, the Movement was primarily characterized by the practice of spiritual gifts, such as those outlined in 1 Corinthians 12, like baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.<sup>61</sup> Many of those who experienced this phenomenon remained in their denominations for some time. Given this background, the CM shared common traits with the 'Full Gospel Tradition' of the Pentecostal Movement.<sup>62</sup>

Although the term Charismatic was originally used to describe the work of the Spirit in the traditional denominations, in recent years, due to the emergence of independent organizations and denominations, the term has evolved and acquired another meaning. The CM is now understood to mean 'New Charismatic Churches, Ministries and Networks, outside the older denominations or the Pentecostal Movements.' In this study I use this term to refer to those Churches that emerged in and after the early 1980s from the original CM. These Churches are founded and governed by Africans living within and outside the African continent. These Churches emphasize the use of Spiritual gifts, baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and experience of the totality of a new life founded on Christ.

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<sup>60</sup> See Peter Hocken, *The Challenges of the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Messianic Jewish Movements*, p. 29.

<sup>61</sup> Roger E. Olson, *A – Z of Evangelical Theology*, London: SCM Press, 2005, p. 73.

<sup>62</sup> Steven Pass, *The Faith Moves South, The History of Church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006, p 120.

These churches also emphasize healing, deliverance and miracles and encourage personal industry among their membership. Weekly worship services conducted in these Churches are characterized by lively singing (Praise and Worship), prophecy and a corporate experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit. These Churches are also good at creatively utilizing the electronic and print media to promote their various ministries. These include the Internet, Web , Whats App, Face book, Twitter and other social media. They hold consistent sessions of Bible studies, discipleship training, retreats and conferences for the edification of the Church. Because of the middle and upper social class backgrounds of the founders, these Churches use what may be seen as Western elements and use Western languages such as English, French and Portuguese in their gatherings and services. It is this second meaning of the Charismatic Movement that this study uses.

## **2.2 Charismatic Theology**

There is a close similarity between Charismatic Theology and that of the Pentecostal Revival. For this reason the CM was often referred to as Neo-Pentecostalism during its initial stages. However, there are numerous notable differences that distinguish Charismatic Churches from Pentecostal Churches.

### ***2.2.1 Baptism with the Holy Spirit***

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is very important as it helps believers to experience the true life of being a Christian. They believe that Baptism of the Holy Spirit makes the believers to be filled with special powers from God. It is this experience that ushers the believers into the realm of a life filled with the Spirit. Some people believe that the Holy Spirit comes to people at the time of conversion, while others believe that he may take a long time to come, even if it means weeks, months or years.

They also believe that for people, when they are filled with the Spirit, their ministry is empowered and they feel the presence of God. This makes them feel happy and assured of salvation. Such spiritual experience frees them and promotes fellowshiping with other Christians from all walks of life.

### *2.2.1.1 Speaking in Tongues*

Speaking in tongues is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This means uttering speech that is comprehensible to the speaker only and is understood to be a communication with God. This occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit present in that individual. Charismatic Christians believe that speaking in tongues refers to the speaking of a foreign language by the speaker who has never spoken that language before and it is an automatic occurrence. This is also well depicted in Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6 when the apostles spoke in many different tongues. Those that heard them speak thought they were drunk. That aside, many people who knew them realized that they were all Galileans but they were surprised to hear them speak in different languages that were comprehended by those who knew such languages. For the Charismatics, speaking in tongues entails using nonhuman or Spiritual languages. This means those who understand and interpret tongues do so if they are well aided by the Spirit. With this kind of reasoning, some scholars attempt to reconcile the tongues mentioned in Acts 2 and those mentioned in I Corinthians 12:12-14. They conclude that tongues mentioned in Acts 2 were not foreign languages, while those in I Corinthians were ecstatic utterances from the Holy Spirit heard by people in different ways. However, there are some Charismatic Christians from the mainline Churches who do not emphasize speaking in tongues. They, of course, view tongues as one of the gifts from the Holy Spirit and exceptional for certain individuals. They, however, do not view lack of tongues as a sign of sin or lack of the Spirit.

According to some members of the CM, speaking in tongues is an aide to efficacious prayer. They do so when their human vocabulary is not enough to pray or express themselves in Spiritual matters. The individuals allow the Holy Spirit to pray through them. Moreover, when the Holy Spirit prays through a person, it presents a higher form of prayer than that which is possible by any of the human born. The initial experience in tongues is a dramatic demonstration of the neophyte's commitment to the norms and goals of the Charismatic Movement. This commitment then brings intense rewards, especially when the brethren surround you, hug you, and handshake you as they shout out praises to the Lord.

### *2.2.1.2 Interpretation of tongues*

Leaders of the CM emphasize the gift of tongues to every member of the Church as the scriptures declare. However, those believers who are not intellectually challenged tend to question this assumption. In fact it is true that what is uttered when one speaks in tongues is sometimes emotional, gibberish and unintelligible, and therefore interpretation becomes vital. A message that comes from God in a language that cannot be understood by the believers is valueless because it does not contribute to any knowledge at all unless it is interpreted. The question is, if nobody understands that language, and there is no one at that time who is spiritually activated to interpret it, who then will interpret it? And if indeed it cannot be interpreted, who does benefit from it? Would it not be rational that such meaningless blurs were not uttered at all? This is the weakness and naivety of the tongues.

Ironically, in some Charismatic Churches, there are people who encourage members to speak in tongues. People are manipulated to articulate anything that comes to their mind even if it means uttering some trash. When asked about the interpretation of such utterances, they say it is not for every individual to interpret them but rather the chosen few. They add that it is not for man to interpret tongues but rather the Holy Spirit. The question here is, who is this man? Does this man represent both women and men? Or are men the only people who can interpret tongues? These are some of the questions that beg for more explanations and answers. Be that as it may, the major challenge is how to ascertain the authenticity of the interpretation as to whether it comes from God or not, and if indeed such a meaning reflects the utterances. Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain whether the Spirit is an evil spirit or the Holy Spirit, since both of them have powers to do similar things including commanding mountains to move as noted in Matthew. All in all, although speaking in tongues seems to be fashionable in the Charismatic Churches, it is evident that many people fail to understand such noises. One therefore wonders if indeed these tongues are really from God, man or indeed the devil since each one of these have the capacity to influence them.

## **2.3 Charismatic Gifts**

The CM is much interested in the Spiritual gifts known as Charismata (Gifts of Grace) in Greek. Rhodian Munyenembe defines Spiritual gifts as abilities empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in many ministries of the Church. The CM claims spiritual gifts to be present in their Churches. In other words, the CM believes in the renewal of the gifts of the Spirit. The operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit indicates that the Holy Spirit is in action and encourages the faith of the believers. Spiritual gifts are required by Christians for glorifying Jesus Christ. The ministry is full of manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Some scholars observe that among the Charismatics, women are more possessed by the Spiritual gifts than men. They are also the ones who seem to be more easily possessed by both evil spirits and the Holy Spirit than men. This seems true when you look at the current Charismatic Churches on both the air and the television and even in live services; many of those that are possessed by Spirits of either type are women. Of all those who tend to give evidence or testify in front of the Church, or seek some healing from certain ailments, women are in the majority. This calls for more research to establish the magic behind this. Is it really true that women are more possessed by either spirits than men? Or is it that men are shy and do not really participate in these gatherings more than the women do? Or, is it that the spirits fear men more than women? Or indeed, is it that women tend to fake spirituality or connive with the Prophets so that they testify something they do not really experience?

### ***2.3.1 The Gift of Prophecy***

In the Charismatic Churches, prophecies are an integral part of the meetings. Prophets can prophecy to the individuals or to the church. Anyone may offer a prophetic word. This is consistent with the belief that the 'Spirit speaks where he wills.' However, such an activity is restricted to a select few.

The leadership of the Church stresses the use of prophecy for uplifting the community's spiritual and physical growth. This is another way of affirming the authenticity of the CM if it really comes from God. It also assures the members that their endeavours are inspired and guided by God. It is believed that every prophecy comes from the Holy Spirit, hence cannot be questioned. However, some prophecies today do not come from God but rather from

man or from the devil. Today, many people seek the services of a Prophet in one way or the other. Interestingly, many of the post-modern prophecies are concerned more with prosperity and materialism, rather than with Spiritual welfare, and sometimes what is predicted does not become reality.<sup>63</sup>

## 2.4 Eschatology

The Charismatics believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ. Their eschatological teaching assumes that Jesus Christ will come before the 1000 years that will span the reign of the Messiah. The basis of this doctrine comes from a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:4-6 which reads

I saw the throne on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And, I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the Beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years (NIV).

This is the premillennial view of Eschatology shared by most Charismatics followers. Some Charismatics believe in Postmillennialism, which assumes that there will be a peaceful period of 1000 years after which the Christ will come. They also believe that there will be a Rapture that will take place before the second coming of Jesus.

However, through this study, it was revealed that some Charismatics are not sure if what they are taught will come to pass. Given the different positions regarding Eschatology, held by the different leaders, many believers are in the dilemma when it comes to choosing the truth about this issue. It appears that through reading books written by other people on this subject, many people make their opinions even if they are not supported by the Bible, since, after all, the Bible is too ambiguous and unclear on this issue.

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<sup>63</sup> For example, prophet X prophesied that Malawi's National team will win 2-0 against the Nigeria National team during Africa cap of nations football match. This prophecy was did not took place instead Nigeria won 2-0 against Malawi. This has given a doubt on some of prophecies prophets give to Malawians.

## 2.5 Deliverance

Charismatics strongly believe in spirits and a lot of literature attests to this. Some members dramatically describe how they have physically and emotionally wrestled with Evil Spirits. They give a vivid description of how they fought, wrestled and overcame such diabolic Spirits. They also believe that all their problems are attributed to the devil. Thus the devil brings fear, anxiety, psychological and physical inconveniences and strong temptations which consume self-control. In other words, Satan limits freedom, control, peace, harmony and development among human beings. It is against this background that these people are duty bound to deliver people from all sorts of demonic possessions. In Charismatic Churches there are special deliverance sessions and these are patronized by more women than men. This is done by Prophets and some local Pastors. They intensify fasting and intense prayers so that people can be delivered.

## 2.6 Overview of the Charismatic Movement

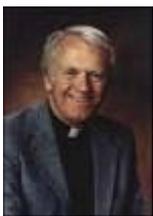
While the Pentecostal Movement was primarily a separate Movement outside the Mainline Churches, the Charismatic Movement was very much a mainstreaming of Pentecostal Theology. Paul Merrit Bassett defines the Charismatic Movement as an informal international and trans-denominational fellowship of Christians who believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit as described in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 are manifested in these times.<sup>64</sup> The history of the Charismatic Movement is usually linked to the global Pentecostal Movement. By emphasizing the Holy Spirit, some observers believe that the Pentecostal Movement led to the birth of the Charismatic Movement. Bangura adds that both movements are believed to have been preceded by a desire to have a deeper spiritual experience with God, which was believed to be absent in the Mainstream Churches.<sup>65</sup> When studying the rise of the Charismatic Movement, one traces two paths: the first path covers the history of the Mainline Churches. Through the visitation of the Holy Spirit, which was already common in

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<sup>64</sup> Paul Merrit Bassett, "The Charismatic Movement" <http://mb-soft.com/believe/text/charisma.htm>, accessed 29.2.13.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Bosco Bangura, *The Charismatic Movement in Sierra Leone: A Missio-historical Analysis in View of African Culture, Prosperity Gospel and Power Theology*, 2013, p. 34.

Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement within the Mainline Churches viewed the events of 1960 at the Episcopal St. Mark's Church in Van Nuys, California where Dennis Bennett announced to his congregation that he had received the Holy Spirit (which resulted in him receiving the gift of speaking in tongues) as the birth of their Movement.<sup>66</sup> Reflecting on the announcement during that Passion Sunday morning, Bennett was convinced that the Holy Spirit was saying to him, 'I'm not asking you to hold the Church together. I'm asking you to tell the people what has happened to you! This isn't your Church anyway, it belongs to Jesus!' In obedience to this calling, Bennett shared his experience with the members of the Church. This announcement sparked controversies at St. Mark's Church and culminated in the resignation of Bennett. Media coverage of this story brought the CM to the full attention of many in the US, and this led to more confessions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some of these testimonies refer to a period that goes back to a much earlier date than Bennett's confession.



Dennis J. Bennett an Episcopalian Priest in California and founder of the Charismatic Movement in 1960

The second path taken by the Charismatic Movement concerns the rise of new Charismatic Churches, ministries and networks, outside of, and unconnected to the older denominations or to the Pentecostal Movement. Although many people consider the CM as a new Church, there has been no agreement on the interpretation of the factors that led to its genesis in Africa.

Paul Gifford prefers a sociological interpretation of the formation of the CM in West Africa. Placing the rise of Charismatic Churches within the broad socio-economic and political context of West Africa, Coleman and Gifford point to the influence of American 'Faith Gospel' prosperity preachers, whose skillful use of the media and distribution of literature impacted the Church and led to the birth and growth of these Charismatic Churches. Even

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<sup>66</sup> William W. Menzies and P. Robert, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, p. 17.

though Coleman and Gifford go to great lengths presenting their sociological thesis to explain the birth of the CM, some of their arguments remain unclear hence calling for more research, as their West African CM account leaves more questions than answers. One wonders how feasible would one factor solely lead to such a significant development as the CM. In a nutshell, the sociological factor falls short of explaining the real issues that triggered the formation of this Movement. This is simply because, even before the deterioration of social-political conditions, Evangelical Churches had already witnessed the birth of massive Student Ministries which resulted in the birth of Revival Christianity across Africa. Moreover, the CM is one of such Revival Movements that occurred within many religious communities. To this end, the factors need to be interpreted in a broader context before any conclusions are drawn. Thus, pointing at incidental causes may undermine the more pertinent factors that triggered the emergence of these Movements.

## **2.7 Charismatic Denominations**

Kenneth Scott Latourette's interpretive key that the Holy Spirit moves Church History forward by revivals which bring about new organizations seems to be the most appropriate assumption.<sup>67</sup> As the Charismatic Revival spread to different areas, it had no primary intention to start new denominations although the pattern it took led to such births. In Malawi, like in countries in West Africa, the Charismatic Movement underwent different stages as follows.

### ***2.7.1 Interdenominational Stage***

Klaus Fiedler observes that the Charismatic Movement was established starting from interdenominational Para-church Organizations.<sup>68</sup> This is similar to Felix Nyika's observation that an alliance of Para-church Organizations and Churches seemed to be the incubator of

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols, Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1970 [1937] - Latourette draws attention mainly to missions and charitable and specialized Christian Organizations. But obviously revivals also create many new denominations.

<sup>68</sup> A parachurch organization is one that assists in some missionary aspect of the church such as evangelism, discipleship, or one that meets social needs. They have no intention to start new denominations or to become one, but nevertheless often claim the primary spiritual allegiance of their members.

the Revival which championed the Revival Message of a personal relationship with Christ by being “born-again” as opposed to the “cold” old religion.<sup>69</sup> Among the Para-church Organizations were Scripture Union, Students Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM), and the Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi (EFM), later called the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM). The Para-church Organizations formed the ground for the rising Charismatic Theology. For instance, there is a strong element of Charismatic Theology in SCOM and Scripture Union.<sup>70</sup>

### ***2.7.2 The Fellowship Stage***

At this stage, the Charismatic denominations emerged by first forming fellowships in the form of prayer meetings, cell-groupings, and house meetings. As the fellowships grew, they began identifying their leaders and later on developed into Ministries. The fellowships had the same Charismatic character and were loosely organized. According to Munyenembe, the activities of the Ministries were either regular or intermittent depending on the ability of the leaders to meet the needs of such Ministries.<sup>71</sup> The Charismatic denominations had a tendency of consolidating themselves into a solid organization after some years.

### ***2.7.3 Interpretations of the Charismatic Movement***

Different scholars give different explanations regarding the history of the Charismatic Movement. For instance, Klaus Fiedler notes that scholars of various ideological backgrounds have advanced sociological, economic and political interpretations of Charismatic Movement explaining that when a people in a society are economically disadvantaged they turn to new Religious Movements.<sup>72</sup> His argument seems to be true in countries where the majority of the people are disadvantaged as they tend to seek solace in

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<sup>69</sup> Felix Nyika, *Apostolic Office in Malawian Neocharismatic Churches: A Contextual, Biblical-Theological, and Historical Appraisal*, PhD Mzuzu University, 2012, p. 23.

<sup>70</sup> Boston Khonje, *A Historical Study of the Establishment and Contribution of SCOM to the Malawian Society 1961-2012*, MA, Mzuzu University, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Rhodian G. Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues and the Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi*, Kachere, Mzuni Press, 2011, p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, p. 33.

religion. For example, it is common to see that every new Movement that comes tends to attract a number of new followers. While it is true to assume that many of the disadvantaged would positively respond to Charismatic movements given the available data, conversely, not all the disadvantaged may go for such Movements if they seem to contradict their knowledge and understanding of an ideal religion and faith. This is evident among those Charismatic Churches which emphasize more human prosperity than Spiritual welfare as they fail to retain the critical masses of their membership. Such Churches may have a large following at the onset just because they preach about riches and prosperity, and everybody wants riches, however, such members may quickly be lost as they begin feeling exploited and think that such a faith is contrary to their knowledge of religion and faith. Thus, there is a remarkable mobility of membership in some of the Charismatic Churches as people easily move from one Church to the other probably because the faith found there has not conformed to what they think constitutes true religion. Ironically, in these Churches, riches, prosperity, and blessings are closely linked to giving. For instance, many Charismatic Churches design special programmes for thanksgiving and much emphasis is put on giving so that one should be blessed and prosperous. Klaus Fiedler asserts that the Charismatic Movement seems to be an expression of a perennial quest for a deeper Christian life which goes beyond the Bible and Church services on Sunday. Nevertheless, an observation of the CM's search for a deeper Christian life over the Centuries has shifted from its original purpose of saving the soul and emphasizes on miracles and tithing for salvation.

Likewise, the coming of the Charismatic Movement amidst the Mainline Churches indicates that most of the old Churches lack revival. It also shows that the Movement has brought revival full of vigour amongst its followers in Africa. The CM has also presented the difference in the typology of the Church. It has, thus far, redefined the Christian faith making it vibrant and relevant for the ever changing social and economic environment.

#### ***2.7.4 Formation of Charismatic Churches***

Formation of the Charismatic Churches in Malawi is different from that of African Independent Churches (AICs), although some similarities do exist.

First, any Charismatic Church is formed first by having a group of people who are spiritually influential in an inter-denominational context. Good examples of such para-churches are New Life for All and Scripture Union. These people form fellowship groups and when the group gets bigger, a charismatic leader is identified by the followers. The fellowship then develops into a full Ministry. The Ministry performs different activities such as healing, evangelism, visitations and orphan care. Only when the Ministry begins to meet on Sunday mornings and to administer the sacraments will it be called a Church.<sup>73</sup>

Another way how Charismatic Churches are formed is when conflicts exist in a traditionally non-charismatic Church. Here the disagreements lead to the breakaway of the church leading to the emergence of other churches.<sup>74</sup> Usually, not all members want to go charismatic and as such two groups will often emerge alongside each other (Charismatic and Non Charismatic). This will go on for some time until things get worse and then they will part ways. Due to such emotions, the Charismatic group may decide to leave the parent Church and start its own Church.

Bright Kawamba also observes that Charismatic Churches may be formed due to foreign influences. For instance, he relates that a charismatic leader may come to establish a Church in a country, as was the case with the Blantyre Christian Centre, which was founded by Barbara Tippet in 1980, which became the first Charismatic Church in Malawi. Here I disagree with Kawamba: Barbara Tippett was indeed a foreigner, but her spirituality was African. She had come to Malawi as an Atheist, received physical healing in a South African (Rhema) context, then she started BCC. Though I don't count BCC as an outside influence, there are such influences, especially from Nigeria.

In some cases, Churches are initiated by Malawian leaders but with external collaboration. A good number of such Churches have contacts with foreign influences either through financial or technical support. It is also common for many Ministries to have foreign contacts as they aspire to grow into full Charismatic Churches. Some are branches of bigger Charismatic Churches across the globe.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Rhodian G. Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues and the Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi*, Kachere, Mzuni Press, 2011, p. 54.

Since the Charismatic Movement is a global phenomenon, Malawi is not spared of this development. As already discussed, Malawi experienced the Charismatic Movement in the 1970s with the revival that rocked Blantyre City. Klaus Fiedler observes that some streams of the 1970s revival went Charismatic.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, Kawamba observes that the CM was spearheaded by Barbara Tippet and her Blantyre Christian Centre.<sup>76</sup> Thereafter, it spread to different cities and districts of this country. This study therefore focuses on the women from the Living Waters Church, Calvary Family Church, Agape Church, Holy Ghost Evangelism Ministries, Living Word Church, Winners Chapel, Christ Citadel, New Enlightenment Church, Soul Winners and Miracle of God Church.

## ***2.7.5 Social Behaviour Theories on the Rise of Charismatic Movement***

### *2.7.5.1 Collective Behavioural Theory*

Clement Majawa proposed the Theory of Collective Behaviourism to explain the rise of Social Movements. The theory stresses the importance of various social factors such as marginalization, oppression, isolation and deprivation in cognition and emotions which make people get involved in a Social Movement. Such a Movement promises to provide people with a renewed sense of identity, pride, meaning and the tools for fighting those in power. Conversely, Corrective Behaviour Approaches tend to emphasize the social and psychological states of individuals in the Church. It pictures people as primarily emotional creatures who are perpetually searching for socio- and psychosomatic balance.<sup>77</sup>

The proponents of the Resource Mobilization Approach to the formation of a Social Movement (SM) like the CM differ from the Collective Behaviourists. Resource Mobilization proponents advocate for the availability of organizational resources such as leadership, control of information networks and the ability to manipulate society as key to successful

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<sup>75</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> Bright Kawamba, *Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969 to 1986: an Antecedent of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, University of Malawi, 2013, p. 37.

<sup>77</sup> Clement Majawa, *The Holy Spirit and Charismatic Renewal in Africa and Beyond*, Nairobi: Creation Enterprise, 2007, p. 21. See also Turner and William, *The Theological and Sociological Nature of Charismatic Movement*, Kent: Blueprint Press, 1996, p. 64.

Social Movement development. From this perspective, successful Social Movement Cultivation (SMC) is largely a rational process deliberately engaged in to achieve victory in the arena of conflict over scarce and valued social resources. The Resource Mobilization Approach therefore focusses on social structural conditions that favour formation of a Movement.<sup>78</sup>

Socio-religious Scientists (SSs) generally seem to view religious behaviour as emotional in nature, hence they do not invest much of their resource mobilization in the movement. However, it can also be argued that what appears to be primarily emotion driven behaviour can have some rational and goal directed purposes. It is for this reason that Board and Faulkner in their research tried to demonstrate the applicability of RMT to the CM and other modern religious Movements.<sup>79</sup>

#### *2.7.5.2 Psychological Theory*

The Charismatic members in many of their testimonies point out the fact that they belong to this movement; it helps them to solve many challenges. It is common to hear of persons who were lame or physically challenged but now are healed. Others believe that the Lord delivered them from abject immorality. Some had financial problems once but strongly believe that they got riches through the CM. This concurs with Falvo's observations that, right from the initial stages of the CM, its proponents believed that they were lacking something in their lives and that they got it soon after joining the Movement.<sup>80</sup>

Historically, it is a known fact that the 1960s were a time of social instability and political change. In fact, strain and stress were and are naturally inherent and common amongst all human beings. Psychoanalysts like Sigmund Freud state that strains can lead to apathy, depression and other forms of withdrawal, or they can lead to search for behaviour which makes life feasible again in new situations.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> R. Bord et al, *The Catholic Charismatics*, London: University New York, 1983, p. 71.

<sup>80</sup> S. Falvo, *The Hour of the Holy Spirit: The Dawn of a Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church*, Anthlone: St Paul's Publications, 1975, p. 73.

<sup>81</sup> Richard Beckert, *Determinants of Psychotherapy Today*, Pick Rosemary Press, 1993, p. 18.

Moreover, Klaus Fiedler adds that the Charismatic Movement came to Malawi in the 1970s after it had emerged in the United States of America in the early Sixties.<sup>82</sup> Some scholars observed that this Movement spread very fast from its birth place to many places across the world, at first largely within the Mainline Churches.

Rhodian Munyenembe observes that Church historians have attributed the rise of the Charismatic Movement to the reaction against secular Christianity that reached its climax in the 1960s.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise, Kawamba notes that the CM and Pentecostalism share many similarities when it comes to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. They believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second work of grace that brings power in the life of the believer and that the evidence of such baptism is speaking in tongues. However, other than these two similarities, the CM and the Pentecostal Churches are substantially different. For example, the CM has a Catholic branch and does transcend denominational lines. Thus members of the CM with a Catholic descent believe in a sacramental form of salvation, Lutheran Charismatics believe in infant baptism as redemptive, while Baptist Charismatics believe in salvation that comes from faith alone. Although the three types of Charismatics differ in their views regarding some fundamentals of their faith, they all believe in tongues and other gifts.<sup>84</sup>

## **2.8 Reasons for Joining the Charismatic Movement in the Churches of Malawi**

In order to solicit the reasons why Christians are attracted to the Charismatic Movement, members of different denominations that belong to the Charismatic churches were interviewed why they joined the movement. The following were the reasons:

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<sup>82</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, pp. 27-38.

<sup>83</sup> Rhodian G. Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues and the Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi*, Kachere, Mzuni Press, 2011, p. 54.

<sup>84</sup> Gary E. Gilley, "Doctrinal Distinctives of the Charismatic Movement" in *Think on These Things* (a monthly Contemporary Theological Issues Publication) Springfield, Illinois: March 1999, pp. 4-10.

1. Rebirth of their faith: Interviews with 140 out of the 250 respondents indicate that many people joined the movement because they saw the need to renew their faith.
2. Dissatisfied with life as Christians: Other respondents explained that they were not satisfied with their life as Christians and so felt the need to be in the Holy Spirit in their lives.
3. Love, concern, reconciliation and unity: 50% of the respondents said that they were attracted by the love, concern, reconciliation and unity that exist among the members of the movement. They said that they were impressed by the way the members interrelate and interact. For instance, hugging, happiness, calling each other 'brother' and 'sister', and assisting one another are some of the manifestations of their communal existence.
4. Knowledge about God: 40% of the respondents said that they joined because they wanted to have more knowledge about God, especially about the role of the Holy Spirit. They said they wanted to know the Word of God in depth and to witness it in their lives.
5. Lively faith: A lesser percentage of 20% of the respondents said that they were attracted by the lively faith the Charismatic members seem to have here and the liturgy was pointed out as being very interesting and involving. They were attracted by the singing, clapping, dancing and openness.
6. A living example: 30% of the respondents said that they were encouraged by good examples given by the Charismatic members. These people seemed to live a genuine Christian life when contrasted with the majority of Christians
7. Friends: 60% of the respondents said that they joined because they were encouraged by their friends and relatives to join the movement.
8. Good and sound Biblical teachings: Some joined the movement because of its good biblical teachings and the preaching of the Charismatics, Bible sharing, and the need to be involved in the work of evangelisation and the involvement in prayer
9. Some joined the Charismatic Movement in order to solve a specific problem. Some of the problems include: sickness that they wanted to be relieved of, psychological and mental challenges, social and economic problems solved once they were prayed over.

10. Miracles and Prophecies: 10% of the respondents said that they were looking for miracles and prophecies. Miracles really show God's hand at work in our society
11. Searching for the truth: They said that they were searching for the truth. They wanted forgiveness for their sins while others were looking for salvation.

## **2.9 Conclusions**

The discussion in this chapter centred on the Charismatic Movement worldwide. Two paths, through which the Charismatic Movement was conceived during its genesis, were examined. Thus, it emerged as a Revival Phenomenon that occurred within established denominations. It also emerged as completely new Charismatic Churches, Ministries and Networks, outside of and unconnected to the older denominations or to the Pentecostal Movement. Charismatic Churches emphasize the use of spiritual gifts, baptism in the Holy Spirit, tongues and experience of the totality of a new life inherent in Christ. The next chapter shall deal with the beginnings of the CM in Africa.

## **Chapter 3: The Beginnings of the Charismatic Movement in Africa**

### **3.0 Introduction**

It is difficult to understand how the CM spread across Africa without tracing how Africa received Christianity. This section, therefore, gives a brief overview of how Christianity was introduced and the genesis of the CM in Africa.

Early attempts to introduce Christianity into West Africa date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Portuguese traders brought Roman Catholic Missionaries to the West African Coast. The Portuguese made various attempts to convert the rulers of their trading partners in Benin, Warri, São Tome and Elmina to Christianity. The purpose of this was to establish permanent trade links. By early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, little traces of these attempts survived, except some ruins of the Churches and some crucifixes in some African palaces, a Catholic community in Sayo, and archival records in Lisbon and Rome. Sustained evangelization of West Africa, sponsored by missionary entrepreneurs from Europe and North America, began in the early Nineteenth Century. The Great Awakening in Europe, the abolition of the slave trade, the search for legitimate trade to replace slave trade, missionary commitment, the settlement of freed slaves in Liberia and Freetown, and the subsequent founding of European colonies on the West Africa Coast, together worked well to plant the Gospel in West Africa. Sierra Leone became a Colony in 1791. It served as a haven for freed slaves and eventually became the base for the Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Missions to the West African Coast.

Colonization brought new impetus to Christian Missions. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Christianity was firmly established with its own indigenous leadership, who were mostly trained in mission schools or were interpreters for foreign missionaries. The work was greatly sustained by the involvement of Africans themselves. The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century brought in the Inter-denominational Faith Missions, and their work eventually resulted in the establishment of new denominations. Roman Catholicism spread more in the French-

speaking colonies in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century because the French administrators preferred them to counter the growing influence of the British and their Protestant Missions.

Christianity is a literacy religion, and that power of literacy produced many Bibles in African Languages. The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), founded in London in 1804, helped greatly in the translation and publication of the Bible or portions of it in many African languages. By the early Twentieth Century, many translations were available through the BFBS.<sup>85</sup> The cumulative effect of this literacy development was to stimulate indigenous assimilation.

Indigenous African Churches date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when agitation for more African leadership in the Churches, and the quest to make the Church more indigenous resulted in secessions from the Mission Churches. In Nigeria, they were called the African Churches; while in other countries they were called Ethiopian Churches. The first of these African Churches was the Native Baptist Church founded in March 1888 after a succession from Lagos Baptist Church. The African Churches had the goal of promoting indigenous leadership, evangelization of African by African, and making Christianity culturally relevant to Africans.

In the second decade, the African Independent Churches emerged and were known as the Aladura Churches in Nigeria, Spiritual Churches in Ghana, and Harrist Churches in Côte d'Ivoire. The rise of the Aladura Churches brought tremendous growth as they emphasized healing and prophecy. These developments took the Christian faith back to its grassroots for its African adherents. These Churches also caught many converts in their net. They also managed to establish many Independent Churches within a short period in the history of Christianity in Africa. From South-western Nigeria, the Movement soon spread by means of missionary efforts to other West African countries. The missionary efforts of the Aladura Churches in West Africa constituted the first of the Indigenous Missions, and H.W. Turner (1967) has documented these achievements. The Foreign Pentecostal Churches were introduced in the region in the 1940s. Although Christianity has grown exponentially since

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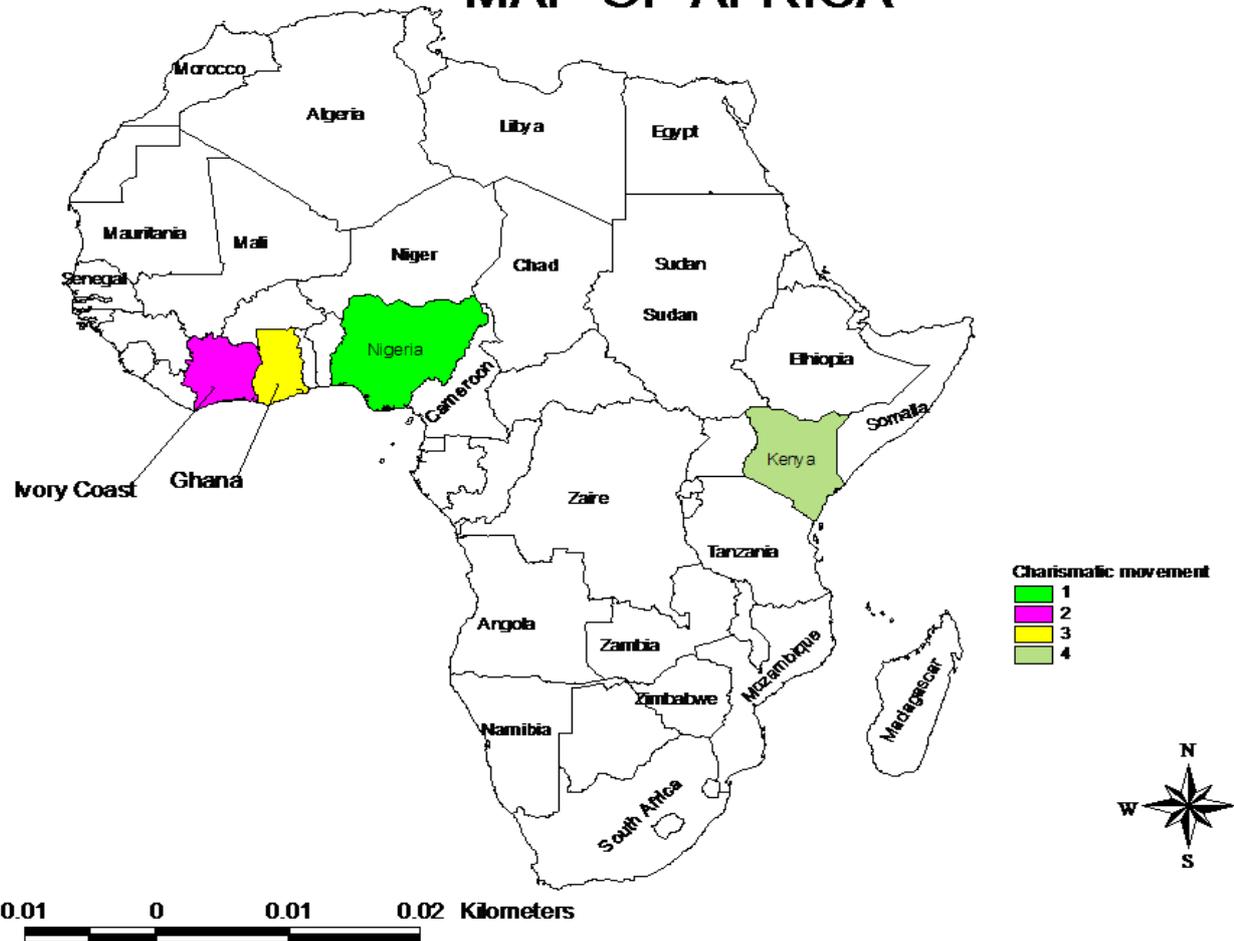
<sup>85</sup> See Akintayo Sam-Jolly, *Apostolic Passion and Authority*, Freetown: Living Word of Faith Outreach Ministries International, 2007, p. 111.

the Nineteenth Century, the advent of the Charismatic Movement represents a new dimension in the history of African Christianity.

### **3.1 The Establishment of the Charismatic Movements in Africa**

The most significant development in African Christianity is the emergence of the Charismatic Movement. Since the 1970s, there has been a dramatic rise in the activities of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, most of which took the name of Ministries, Fellowships or Evangelistic Associations. This trend was promoted by literature, crusades, fire or Holy Ghost and or Power Conferences. The members were and still are mostly young educated elites who are fluent in English, French or Portuguese. This religious phenomenon became a milestone in African Christianity since the Movements were trans-cultural and international in scope. Below is a map of Africa showing the spread of the Charismatic Movement.

# MAP OF AFRICA



## Description of Key symbols on the Map

1. Green –This shows Nigeria where the Charismatic movement first started in Africa
2. Purple – Represents Ivory Coast the first place where Charismatic movement spread in Africa.
3. Yellow — Ghana where the Charismatic Movement spread
4. Dark green – Kenya is one of the countries in East Africa where the Charismatic Movement spread.

The CM first emerged in Africa in the 1970s, and the Nigerian Movements were then the most active, the largest and the fastest growing.<sup>86</sup> In East Africa, the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS), which linked a number of national Christian Unions, facilitated the spread of the Charismatic Renewal across the borders. Kenyans played major roles in disseminating the Renewal in this region. A training course with an emphasis on evangelism and Bible study was held in Kenya in June 1974 and was attended by many students from other countries, and this led to the emergence of a new religious expression. By the late 1970s, the Renewal had penetrated onto the campuses of Kenyan Universities and Colleges. Likewise, in Tanzania, High School students had their first Pentecostal experiences during the same period. It later spread to the Universities where it caused divisions among the Christian Union groups.

In Ghana, the Renewal began around the late 1970s when some members of the Scripture Union came into contact with Pentecostal literature. In addition, they had contacts with members of Pentecostal Churches such as the Church of Pentecost, the Apostolic Church, and a number of Pentecostal prayer groups. Francophone West Africa experienced the Charismatic Renewal from the early 1980s. The beginnings of this Movement may be traced to the efforts of some Nigerian students who had done one-year Language courses in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and alike. By the mid-1980s, the growth of the Charismatic Renewal across Africa had begun. This was greatly initiated by Nigerian students who had interacted with other Africans during national and international activities of the Student Christian Movement, Christian Union and Scripture Union.

On the other hand in Nigeria, the Charismatic Movement greatly benefited from the evangelical witness that had been orchestrated by the Interdenominational Evangelical Student Organization in educational institutions since the 1950s. In the early 1970s, some members of these organizations had contacts with Pentecostal Literature and with Pentecostal activities outside the campuses of their universities. The Charismatic Renewal first emerged in January 1970 among Christian Students' organizations in the universities, when a few members of the Christian Union at the University of Ibadan proclaimed to their

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<sup>86</sup> Mathews Ojo, "Charismatic Movements in Africa" in *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, edited by A.F. Walls & C. Fyfe. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1996, pp. 92-96.

fellow students that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and were speaking in tongues.<sup>87</sup> Amid opposition from fellow students of a conservative Evangelical orientation, the Charismatic Renewal spread in Ibadan, and later to other universities. By the mid-1970s, the Charismatic Revival had diffused beyond the University campuses into the society.

Charismatic Movements have caused a substantial Christian revolution in Africa, and have influenced millions of young people. Evangelistic and Pentecostal activities characterized the Charismatic Movement in its early years. Since the Movement arose within existing Churches, it sought membership through its evangelistic activities primarily from the Christian fold. Later, their evangelistic activities extended beyond existing Churches when Charismatics became aware of the state of Christianity among the people in other countries. Thereafter, they were determined to make evangelism unlimited by geographical and or cultural factors. Later, the need for consistent missionary effort dawned on some Charismatics, who then either focused on their existing Charismatic organizations, or established new Charismatic organizations with cross-cultural missions as their goal.

### **3.2 The Charismatic Missions**

The growth of Indigenous Charismatic Missions in West Africa has passed through three distinct phases. The first phase (1970 -1980) was the era when the foundation for Missions was laid by evangelistic activity. The second phase witnessed the growth of Mission consciousness, its sustenance, multiplication through the formation of Indigenous Mission Agencies, and advancement of the efforts that were made in 1974. The year 1980 marked the beginning of Foreign Missions by Indigenous Mission Agencies. The third phase (1989) was an era of rapid advances, commencement of international engagements by the Indigenous Missions and establishment of networks amongst Indigenous Missions within West Africa. The third phase coincided with the inauguration of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement in many West African countries. The publication of the National Church Surveys in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire further promoted evangelization of the unreached people in these countries.

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<sup>87</sup> Mathews Ojo, "Charismatic Movements in Africa" in *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, edited by A.F. Walls & C. Fyfe. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1996, pp. 114-118.

Unlike existing Protestant Churches, Charismatic Movements have made significant strides in indigenous African Missions. It was the evangelical willingness of the Charismatics that stimulated their missionary activities amongst the non-Christians in Africa.

The first Charismatic Organization in West Africa to adopt a Mission orientation was Calvary Ministries (CAPRO),<sup>88</sup> which was established in 1975 with its headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. The founders were graduates of the Universities of Southern Nigeria, who were then undergoing a compulsory one-year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme. The leaders were Emeka Onukaogu and Niyi Beecroft, who were graduates of the University of Ile-Ife; Gbola Durojaiye, a graduate of the University of Ibadan; Peter Ozodo, a graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and Bayo Famonure, graduate of the University of Nigeria. All of these had been exposed to the Charismatic Renewal while in their campuses. They came together and organized an Open-air Evangelistic Programme for Muslims in the old city of Zaria on 25 December 1974. The event ended as a failure because Muslims stoned them and drove them out of the city.<sup>89</sup>

Despite this experience, the five did not give up and were convinced that serious efforts had to be made to reach Muslims. Consequently, Bayo Famonure called a meeting at Soba near Zaria on 25 April 1975 to consider establishing an organization to evangelize Muslims in Northern Nigeria. From this meeting, which was attended by eight people, emerged Calvary Ministries, popularly called CAPRO, initially as an Evangelistic Association targeting Muslims. It later became grounded as an Indigenous Missionary Organization advancing Cross-cultural Missions with a focus on Muslims in Northern Nigeria and in the neighbouring Sahel countries.<sup>90</sup> In recent years, CAPRO has decided to target other unreached groups apart from Muslims.

The initial crusade team had reduced considerably by mid-1975 because most had left Zaria after the completion of their NYSC assignment. After completing NYSC, Bayo Famonure was employed in August 1975 as Travelling Secretary of the Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical

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<sup>88</sup> This abbreviation comes from an earlier name, Calvary Productions.

<sup>89</sup> Musa A.B. Gaiya, "The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria," *Occasional Paper* (Copenhagen: Centre for African Studies, University of Copenhagen), 2002, pp 29-30.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

Students (NIFES) which was the National Evangelical Students' Organization. He was responsible for organizing, visiting and caring for Evangelical students' groups in Northern Nigeria. It was at this point that Amos Aderonmu, a young man who had attended the School of Evangelism by T.L. Osborn in Benin City, and was planning to begin evangelistic work in Northern Nigeria, met Bayo Famonure. Amos offered to become a full-time Evangelist under CAPRO, and was accepted.<sup>91</sup> Both Famonure and Aderonmu went to live in Zaria where they rented a building which eventually served both as CAPRO and NIFES offices. It was in this position as Travelling Secretary visiting the campuses of Universities that he was able to share his vision of an Evangelistic or Mission Organization with many Christian students.

Soon Aderonmu launched Christian Camps and Outreaches in the North. Most of these Outreaches were done in towns, but in 1976, Aderonmu decided to find out about the Maguzawa people who were living in rural areas of Kaduna State.<sup>92</sup> An Evangelistic Outreach event for the people was found to be necessary, and eventually the Maguzawa became the first Mission field of CAPRO. In 1980, the Ministry moved from Zaria to a village near Kafachan, and as a result of communication problems, it moved to Jos in January 1985. By this time, CAPRO had been fully established with many full time workers.<sup>93</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, a number of Charismatic organizations embarked on evangelistic activities. One that deserves attention was the Christian Students Social Movement of Nigeria (CSSM), an organization that endorsed social action as a means to spiritual regeneration. It was established as a result of Evangelical opposition to the Cultural Renewal of the mid 1970s, opposition that climaxed with the World Festival of Black Arts and Culture in Lagos in February 1977.<sup>94</sup> CSSM sought to incorporate socio-political concerns with evangelistic outreaches. This approach was based on the ideological conviction that Nigeria

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<sup>91</sup> Matthews Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006, p. 191.

<sup>92</sup> The Maguzawa are those among the Hausa speakers who "had run away" from Islam, not joining when the large majority of the Hausa converted to Islam.

<sup>93</sup> Ogbu Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story*, Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2007, p. 65.

<sup>94</sup> Gordon Hewitt, *The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society, 1910-1942*, London: SCM Press, 1971, pp. 1-3.

and Africa will become a better place for all when the Christian Faith and its ideals completely penetrate all the countries. In pursuance of this objective, CSSM had undertaken agricultural, medical and educational work in rural areas.

As part of CSSM's plans to reach out to the rural areas with its social gospel, Idere, a village in the Ibarapa division of Oyo State, was chosen for a Village Outreach following reports of widespread guinea-worm infection there. Subsequently, from 15 to 17 May 1981, a Crusade and a Medical Mission were organized to Idere with some Christian doctors and medical and nursing students from the University College Hospital.<sup>95</sup> Shortly after the mission, Reuben Ezemadu, one of the leaders of CSSM, sent out a proposal for the formation of an organization to be called Nigerian Christian Missionary Foundation, which would prepare Nigerian Christians for missionary work.<sup>96</sup> On 12 and 13 September 1981, the inaugural meeting of CMF was held at Idere. The meeting discussed and agreed that a unique Missionary Organization, to be called Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), was to be established to carry out the work in Idere with medical, agricultural and industrial work, since it was felt that a purely evangelistic work would yield little results. It was also decided to inaugurate similar work in other areas.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, CMF was established solely as the missionary arm of CSSM with the aims of identifying areas in Nigeria and abroad where there were needs for preaching the gospel, and stimulating and mobilizing Christians for missionary assignments in various fields in such areas.<sup>98</sup> CMF operated mainly in villages and in the urban slums, but it used such means as Medical Missions and agricultural projects to achieve its goals. Although it could not be sustained for long because of a lack of workers, the initial establishment seemed promising.

Before the end of the year, a graduate volunteered to work as a missionary in Idere, and she was posted there as a teacher to a Secondary School in the village;<sup>99</sup> three other graduates

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<sup>95</sup> Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, London: C. Hurst, 1998, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*. Oregon, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003, p. 56.

<sup>97</sup> See Charismatic Movement in Nigeria, *Newsletter* 1982, vol. 1(3) September, 1982, pp. 1-4.

<sup>98</sup> The Constitution of the Christian Missionary Foundation (Nigeria), typescript, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> See *Mission in Focus*, 1982:7; also Charismatic Movement in Nigeria, *Newsletter*, September, 1982, pp. 8-9.

also volunteered and went to Idere.<sup>100</sup> The speed with which this happened could partly be attributed to the publicity given to the Missionary Project and to the fact that CMF was publicly launched with pomp on 15 May 1982 at the University of Ibadan.<sup>101</sup>

The popular support which CMF enjoyed in its first year might be attributed to a number of factors. First, CMF's mission to Idere was not a conventional type of missionary work because the work was diversified. Evangelism was kept in the background, and the volunteers went as teachers, doctors, social-workers, and so on. Second, the missionary work was allowed to be performed part-time, and this afforded many people the opportunity to volunteer their services. No definite commitment or any administrative screening processes were imposed on the volunteers. The urgency of the work generated such enthusiasm that it carried the work of CMF forward on a wave. Moreover, though some of the volunteers were graduates, CMF was presented as a Student Movement, and this aroused the interest of the students. Many students took part in the mission to Idere. Third, the people of Idere gave the mission a good response because the agricultural, medical and industrial services provided by the missionaries were done for free. For example, an Open Clinic was provided every Wednesday at the Medical Centre at no cost to those attending the services. Furthermore, the dedication and courage shown by the missionaries who came as graduate teachers into a village while better opportunities were waiting for them in the cities, won the admiration of the villagers. The effectiveness of CMF's mission in Idere demonstrated clearly that the best approach to missions in recent times is to use non-professional Missionaries.

Idere was the first mission field for CMF, and the lasting influence of this Mission was due to the success of its Medical Mission. The Evangelistic Mission to Idere was predicated on the work of the Medical Mission, and this has continued until today. The Medical Mission of CMF is unique in that it is not only composed of medical doctors, nurses, midwives, and paramedics but also of Christians from other disciplines that minister to the sick. There are five main areas in which the Medical Mission operates, and these are: 1) the Medical Mission itself, which is the nerve centre, 2) the Divine Healing Clinics, 3) Spiritual Medicine,

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<sup>100</sup> See *Charismatic Movement in Nigeria, Newsletter*, 1982, vol. 1, September, 1982, pp. 1-3.

<sup>101</sup> See *Mission in Focus* 1982:14-15; *CMF (Nigeria) Newsletter* 1983, p. 1.

Research and Training Unit 4) Spiritual Medicine Consulting Services, and 5) Ministry to the Aladura Churches.

Equally important for CMF are its Foreign Missions, the genesis of which can be traced back to student initiatives. Some of the students of the University of Ife, who were studying French and had participated in the activities of CSSM, went to Ivory Coast and Benin during 1981 and 1982 academic session for a one year language course. These students soon established contacts with other Christians in these countries, and put their contacts through to the CSSM. When CMF was established, these contacts were referred to the Missionary Organization (Modern European languages Christians). One such contact was Paul Zinsou, a Pastor in Cotonou. After some negotiations, he agreed to be the CMF representative in Benin. He subsequently organized an Evangelistic Tour to Cotonou between 1st and 4th October 1982, with fifty-seven volunteers, mostly students from Nigeria.<sup>102</sup> The Missionary Tour managed to convert a lot of believers and was hence considered most successful. Following this success, another Missionary Tour was organized to Porto Novo in October 1983. CMF has thus far managed to maintain a permanent presence in the Benin Republic.<sup>103</sup> The Foreign Missions of the CMF grew rapidly and, by June 1984, it was working in eight countries through nationals or Nigerians.<sup>104</sup>

Many more mission agencies have been formed since the early 1980s. Some of the major ones include His Grace Evangelical Movement based in Ibadan (which has sent a Missionary couple to Brazil), the Soul Harvesters Ministries based in Warri with mission work in the Riverine areas, and Children Evangelism Ministry Inc., which focuses on training Children Evangelists. Others are Ethnos Christian Mission, which is based in Ibadan, and Grace Evangelical Mission in Lagos. Both are working among unreached people in Nigeria.<sup>105</sup> NEMA has tried to promote sound relationships and co-operation among various Mission groups. NEMA has also managed to create a forum for sharing new ideas on Missions to encourage and improve the outreach work of each member body. In 1987, NEMA

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<sup>102</sup> See Charismatic Movement in Nigeria, *Newsletter* 1982. vol. 1, September 3. 1982, pp. 1-3.

<sup>103</sup> See Charismatic Movement in Nigeria, *Newsletter*, vol. 1, September 3, 1983, pp. 4-6.

<sup>104</sup> See Indigenous Charismatic Missionary in the West

<sup>105</sup> See the *Directory of the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association* 1993, Ibadan: NEMA.

established a Joint Missionary Training Institute in Cross-cultural ministries. The growth of the institution has been slow because some Mission Agencies have established their own Schools of Missions, and these have diminished the resources available to the Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute (NEMI).

The Missions of the Charismatic Movements were determined and aided by the country's healthy economy of the 1970s. Many Charismatics hold the conviction that Nigeria has been especially blessed by God because God wants Nigerians to use the resources of the country to Evangelize Africa. Thus, for example, at the official launching ceremony of CMF in 1982, the co-ordinating secretary of CSSM said, "God intends to use Nigeria as the base for the Gospel to West Africa and indeed to the whole of Africa." CSSM further adds that "God has had occasions recently to reiterate by words of prophecy and through revelations ... that Nigeria should be the beacon of the Gospel in Africa... It is for this reason we are a little bit prosperous. Looking through the West African belt, Nigeria is surrounded by many poverty-stricken and grossly under-developed nations. It is an act of Divine Providence that Nigeria stands out different as the richest nation in terms of human and material resources in this belt. This is for no other purpose than to enable the Church to champion God's ultimate will for Africa."

In addition, the expansion of Nigeria's foreign relations, particularly the country's contribution to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa in the 1970s, created in the Charismatics a vision of what their possible influence in other African countries might be. Lastly, Nigeria's hosting of the World Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), which was aimed at promoting traditional African Culture, provoked antagonism from Evangelical Christians who considered the Festival as a means to spread Spiritual Darkness over the country. Because of this belief, some Charismatics felt challenged to undertake Evangelism as a way of countering the Spiritual Darkness in the country. It was through mobilization of students and the youths during this era that the initial phase of the Charismatic Missions began.

### **3.3 The Charismatic Movement in Malawi (1970s)**

The roots of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi date back to the 1970s when Malawi experienced revivals. This meant that the Movement found fertile soil on which to grow when it came to Malawi. Kawamba notes that there were already Para-church Organizations whose roots could be traced back to the Holiness Revival of 1859.<sup>106</sup> Organizations such as Students Christian Organizations of Malawi (SCOM), and New Life for All and Scripture Union among others were already in operation.<sup>107</sup> Klaus Fiedler concurs with Kawamba by describing these organizations as neither Pentecostal nor Charismatic in their origin, though they aided the growth of the new Movement.<sup>108</sup> The organizations were in the forefront organizing meetings and many other activities by making use of Christians from established denominations. Out of these came ministries and fellowships, which by the 1980s, were identified as Charismatic denominations.<sup>109</sup> This then marked the birth of the (Neo-) Charismatic denominations in Malawi.

### **3.4. Importance of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi**

The Charismatic Movement has made a significant contribution in Africa and Malawi. Below are some of the contributions.

#### ***3.4.1 Encouraging the Church to prayerfulness***

The CM has encouraged Christians to pray. For any true Christian, the importance of prayer need not be overemphasized. Despite the significance of prayer, many non-charismatic Churches relegate prayer to the end-line of their duty and it is of secondary importance so much so that some Christians cannot manage to pray in public.

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<sup>106</sup> The Holiness Revival (sometimes called the Second Evangelical Awakening) is credited with the formation of the interdenominational faith missions as well as interdenominational agencies of various kinds. See Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions*, Oxford: Regnum, 1994, p. 112.

<sup>107</sup> Rhodian G. Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-cultural Issues and the Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi*, Kachere, Mzuni Press, 2011, p. 56.

<sup>108</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, p. 33.

<sup>109</sup> Felix Nyika, *Apostleship in Neocharismatic Churches in Malawi*, PhD Module, Mzuzu University, 2008, p. 49.

Again, the CM promotes prayer among Christians be it at individual or group levels. They organize nights of prayers which were uncommon with Mainline Churches. The Charismatics have also introduced the idea of prayer groups that are incorporated in small Christian communities. They argue that such groups are more helpful to the people as they help them participate in prayer and other activities. Moreover, through such gatherings, individuals share their spiritual and social talents.

### ***3.4.2 Dependence on the Holy Spirit***

The CM has helped Christians to solely depend on the Holy Spirit. Theologically, the Charismatics believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They also believe that the Holy Spirit leads and guides the Church. This is different from the view of some Christians who view the Church as an organization that is run by human wisdom and planning.<sup>110</sup> Such Christians also regard the Church as secondary, social and something to give them company when they die. CM's dependence on the Holy Spirit makes them re-discover and use different Spiritual gifts instead of just reading about them in the Bible

### ***3.4.3 Belief in the Healing Power of Jesus***

The CM is commended for giving confidence to the people affected by different diseases through the healing power of Jesus Christ. This was something that was not recognized by the Mainline Churches then, but today, Christians acknowledge this power.

In addition, the Movement also carries out physical, psychological and spiritual healing.

### ***3.4.4 Spurring the Church in Giving***

The CM encourages people to support the Church materially and spiritually. Today, many people are ready to support each other so much so that dependence on foreign aid is significantly dropping. Moreover, they achieve this through the principle of giving one-tenth of their income to the church. This is a good notion both spiritually and socially, and can be

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<sup>110</sup> It can be argued that the Holy Spirit endows certain individuals with the gifts of administration and organization, however the propensity is to downplay the role of the Holy Spirit in the contexts where there is less teaching on the practicalities of his guidance of the Church.

replicated by many developing countries that heavily depend on Western aid thus of weaning themselves out. Moreover, aid or donations do not liberate individuals or countries as they come with strings attached.

### ***3.4.5 Development of Ministries***

The CM has influenced the formation of Fellowships which often turned into full-blown Ministries. This goes back to the history of the Charismatic Churches' formation. Also such gatherings have led to the spiritual growth of some Christians who significantly contribute to their denominations. Also Charismatic churches have changed Church politics and operations by attracting and utilizing young peoples' leadership skills which were not recognized by the Mainline Churches. These Churches also promote bible sharing and networking in many denominations. They encourage Bible reading, interpreting and sharing among Christians at both family and community levels.

## **3.6 Conclusion**

From this discussion, it shows that Christianity was first introduced to Africa before the spread of the charismatic movement. Christianity was first introduced by Portuguese traders who brought Roman Catholic missionaries to the West African Coast. By 19<sup>th</sup> century Christianity was established with its indigenous leadership who were well trained personnel.

The chapter also discusses about the emergency of the charismatic movement in the 1970 in Africa. This was evidenced by the risen activities of charismatic and Pentecostal movements which at first were known as ministries or fellowships. It is said that the charismatic movement was first emerged in 1970 in Nigeria. It then spread to Ivory Coast, Ghana and Ivory Coast. In Malawi, the CM dates back to the same 1970's when Malawi experienced revivals. The chapter also finally discusses on the importance of charismatic movements in Malawi which include: encouraging the church into prayerfulness, depending on the Holy Spirit and healing power of Jesus among others.

## **Chapter 4: The Charismatic Churches in Malawi**

This Chapter discusses the early Charismatic Churches in Malawi. It first focuses on the differences between the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches. Later, it examines some of the early Charismatic Churches in Malawi.

### **4.0 Differences between Charismatics and Pentecostals**

Pentecostals and Charismatics can be distinguished using a theological and or an ecclesiastical approach. A theological approach concerns doctrinal issues such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In this approach:

1. The Pentecostals subscribe to a second work of grace that comes soon after conversion. Here, the Spirit baptism is evidenced by glossolalia (speaking in tongues). For some, this baptism must also follow another act of sanctification.
2. The Charismatics, nevertheless, do not always advocate the necessity of the second work of grace or evidence of glossolalia as affirmation of spirit baptism.
3. The ecclesiastical approach is based on denominational affiliation. Pentecostals consider those people participating in classical Pentecostal denominations such as Assemblies of God, Church of God and others as being genuine members worth the categorization.

### **4.1 The Beginnings of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi**

As early as 1977, the City of Blantyre experienced huge amounts of Pentecostal and Charismatic Literature and audio cassettes from America. Some of these came from renowned names such as Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, Derek Prince, and Kenneth Hagin Sr. <sup>111</sup> Later in the mid-eighties, other Tele-Evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggart, <sup>112</sup> Evangelist T.L. Osborn, <sup>113</sup> David Nunn, <sup>114</sup> Morris Cerullo, <sup>115</sup> R.W. Shambach<sup>116</sup>, and C.M.

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<sup>111</sup> Kenneth Hagin was introduced by authors who printed his books as the pioneer in the teaching of faith through his Rhema Ministries.

<sup>112</sup> Jimmy Swaggart Ministries in South Africa opened an office in Limbe at the Hard elect House where they distributed for free a Swaggart Magazine titled *'The Evangelist'* and sold cassettes and booklets for the Evangelist.

<sup>113</sup> Known for his miracles in his international crusades in India, Indonesia as in African and Far Eastern countries.

Ward<sup>117</sup> greatly impacted the Born Again Movement in Blantyre. Although some of these may not be described as Charismatics in the strict sense, their influence combined to tilt their disposition to sympathise with Pentecostalism, and to the acceptance of ensuing Charismatic influences which came on the scene through the ministry of Rev Stewart Lane who established probably the first Charismatic Mission entity in Blantyre.<sup>118</sup>

#### ***4.1.1 The Cornelius Fellowship***

The first Charismatic institution was the Cornelius Fellowship which was founded by Rev Stewart Lane, then the resident Parish Minister of Holy Innocents Anglican Church in Limbe.<sup>119</sup> The Cornelius Fellowship was important to the Anglican and Roman Catholic Charismatics from South America, the US and the UK. These probably were the places where Rev Stewart got his initial Charismatic orientation.

The Cornelius Fellowship won the hearts of many Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The group was also popular amongst the white expatriates, many of whom drove from Mulanje and Thyolo to Limbe where it met.<sup>120</sup> The Fellowship opened an option for a number of elite Born-again who wanted to try out free-worship and tongues. Besides, the Fellowship arranged a good reception for its members as they were treated to snacks and refreshments, and sometimes were served alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks. Unlike other Born again Fellowships, Cornelius never barred the smoking of cigarettes.

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<sup>114</sup> David Nunn was reputed for his evangelistic messages and healing ministry where he urged listeners to touch the radio set as he prayed his prayer of healing leading to the major healing experience of John Sapulani in 1978.

<sup>115</sup> Known for his schools of healing and faith conducted all over Africa and the world.

<sup>116</sup> His sermons and services were perhaps the most emotional services and people claimed various miracles in Malawi including salvation experiences.

<sup>117</sup> He was mostly loved by the Reformed theological stream of Born Agains and they loved his in-depth exposition of scripture with moving oratory.

<sup>118</sup> His Charismatic Fellowship named Cornelius Fellowship however did not last longer than two years 1979-1980 but it served to nurture the initial Charismatic orientation in Blantyre's spirituality.

<sup>119</sup> Stewart Lane came to Malawi in 1965 as an English teacher at Malosa Secondary School, a priest, fellowship leader, university chaplain, author and columnist in the local daily in Malawi.

<sup>120</sup> The elitist nature of this fellowship earned it the name 'Fellowship ya Azungu' [Fellowship for White Men] but admittance was for all Christians. It was because of this fellowship that elite personalities like Isaac Mkukupha and a few others came to their conversion.

While many elite liked this approach, extremists condemned it as a bunch of carnal Christians who still had a melancholy for worldliness. Although a number of Born-again stayed on with this Fellowship, many left for the Scripture Union Fellowship, Young Believers' Fellowship, the Gospel for All Fellowship, Fellowship of the Youth, Pentecostal Revival Crusade Fellowship and the Chimango Revival Fellowship which appeared to be normal and familiar to them.

#### ***4.1.2 Barbara Tippet and the Blantyre Christian Centre***

Barbara Tippet came to the scene in the Eighties, when she founded the Blantyre Christian Center following a sensational conversion to the Christian faith. Tippet was the twenty eight year old wife to Mr Brian Tippet, a company executive. Mrs Tippet was an agnostic when she was being bothered by backache problems. Her situation could not be treated in Malawi and she was referred to South Africa. There the experts recommended three major spinal operations which she underwent at different times. She was for some time in a plaster-cast, and was on a walking stick. She lived on black coffee, analgesia and alcohol to relieve the pain.

The doctors, it appeared, recommended a fourth operation on her spine. While she was waiting for this surgery, a friend took her to Pastor Ray McCauley of Rhema Bible Church in Johannesburg. The Pastor shared the word of God with her and prayed for her, and she was immediately healed. Apparently, this healing touched her heart, and changed her view of God. She then accepted Christ as her Lord and Saviour. From then, she dedicated her life to serve the Lord. For four years she served the Lord as a lay person until 1986 when she was officially ordained by Ron Kussmaul as the first clergy-woman in the ecclesiastical history of Blantyre.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile she started a Fellowship called Mustard Seed. There was, however, confusion from the beginning because Willie Chavonda claimed having started a band and a ministry by the very same name a year earlier than Tippet's Mustard Seed Fellowship. Her passion seemed to have been influenced by Magnus Udd, a veteran missionary whose ministry Faith

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<sup>121</sup> Narration by Henry Malili alumnus of Rhema Bible Training Center who worked closely with Barbara Tippet until later when he started his own Healing Hope Ministry.

Christian Services worked with a pool of different rural independent churches in Mulanje, Thyolo and Chikwawa.

Barbara Tippet's Mustard Seed Fellowship started like a miniature Faith Christian Services that operated like a town-fellowship in the elite area of Limbe. As it grew, she transferred it to the Polytechnic where Rev Stewart Lane had been working as Chaplain for a number of years. Although Stewart was Anglican, he had one thing in common with Tippet that is their Charismatic background.

Among the youth that associated with her were Willie Chaponda who claimed to have a Ministry at that time, Zacheus Kawalala, Henry Malili, Bright Wanyemba and others. Because of the apparent confusion and misunderstandings that developed between Tippet and Chapomba's Ministries, Tippet changed the name to Blantyre Christian Centre and relocated right at the City Centre near Victoria Avenue in Blantyre. Because of the strategic location, and the quality of the literature she was selling in her bookshop, she became a strong competitor to the old bookshops such as the Scripture Union, New Life for All, CLAIM 'Mabuku' and Good News Bookroom. Besides, their worship was in English, and that alone attracted the elite residents in Blantyre. The Blantyre Born-again had now several bookstores that sold books and other literature.

When Willie Chaponda partnered with Gordon Decker, a South African Bible teacher, to open the Mustard Seed Centre on the first floor of the building that housed Commercial Bank of Malawi in Limbe, the Blantyre elite had a fourth option for book-shopping.<sup>122</sup>

Rev Stewart Lane played a special role as Chaplain at Malawi Polytechnic particularly in the counselling and teaching of young Born-again who lived amidst secular and post-modern philosophies.<sup>123</sup> Apart from helping the students overcome university elitism, he also founded the Inter-denominational Cornelius Fellowship in Limbe which served the expatriates and the students alike. The Fellowship was probably the first Charismatic establishment in Blantyre. This is off the heading, put it where it belongs and avoid repetitions.

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<sup>122</sup> Recorded audio interview with Willie Chaponda 2012.

<sup>123</sup> A Polytechnic student testified how Stewart Lane helped them counter anti Christian Western secular ideas through his talks and writings.

### **4.1.3 The Healing Revival**

Felix Nyika defines Revival as the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring the people of God to a more vital spiritual life, witness, and work by prayer and the word after repentance for their spiritual decline.<sup>124</sup> According to Timothy Bougher, revivals are of divine origin, affect believers, and those prayers and Scriptures are vital, as they result in the renewal of spiritual life.<sup>125</sup> Over a decade, the revival renewed both the Catholic and Protestant Churches and produced among others, the Neo-Charismatic Churches.<sup>126</sup>

As already indicated, the 1970s and early 1980s were a season of revival in Malawi's urban centres, and this led to the formation of Charismatic Churches. Fiedler notes that the Healing Revival passed through the Interdenominational phase, Fellowship phase, and the Ministry phase.<sup>127</sup>

Initially, an alliance of Para-church Organizations<sup>128</sup> with Churches appears to have been the incubator of the Revival Movements. These, in turn, championed the revival message of a personal relationship with Christ by being Born-again as opposed to the 'cold' religion of the

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<sup>124</sup> Felix Nyika, *Apostolic Office in Malawian Neocharismatic Churches: A Contextual, Biblical-Theological, and Historical Appraisal*, PhD, Mzuzu University, 2015.

<sup>125</sup> See Timothy K. Bougher, "Revival," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Movements*, A. Scott Moreau, General Editor, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000, pp. 830-833.

<sup>126</sup> C. Peter Wagner calls them New Apostolic Reformation in his *Church quake! How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking the Church as we Know it*, Ventura, California: Regal, 1999. Allan Anderson first called them Independent Pentecostal Churches in *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992 but later changed to New Pentecostal Churches (NPC) in *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001. Klaus Fiedler calls them Charismatic in his "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, pp. 27-38. I prefer to call such churches Neocharismatic as opposed to Charismatic, since the Charismatic Revival did not result in new churches or denominations but rather renewal movements within existing ecclesiastical structures.

<sup>127</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, pp. 27-38. I use his paradigm for the genesis of Neocharismatic churches which he prefers to call Charismatic. He also draws parallels with the Nigerian student movement that gave birth to the Charismatic movement there. The revival also produced Charismatic groups within the mainstream churches so that today traditionally Charismatic-Pentecostal phenomena such as praise teams, practice of the charismata, and all-night prayer meetings are common occurrences in many congregations.

<sup>128</sup> A parachurch organization is one that assists in some missionary aspect of the church such as evangelism, discipleship, or one that meets social needs.

traditional Churches. Among the Para-church Organizations were Scripture Union, Students Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM), and the Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi (EFM), later called the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM). It was SCOM that proactively led to the formation of the Revivals. This is therefore necessary for the understanding of the Neo-charismatic Churches. This Organization was formed by the Evangelical missionaries and denominational leaders from the three synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Zambezi Evangelical Church (ZEC), Nyasa Mission, Southern Baptist Convention, Africa Evangelical Church, Churches of Christ, and the Assemblies of God after being concerned about Liberal Theology, which was sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) through their overseas theology scholarships which were given to many Malawians. In the 1950s, Liberal Theology was making inroads into Malawi's Christianity.<sup>129</sup> Following these developments, a group of believers was formed in 1961 with its headquarters in Kenya. This group met regularly for prayer and discussions. It then got affiliated to the Association of Evangelicals in Madagascar.<sup>130</sup>

The group believed that the remedy to Liberal Theology (LT) was aggressive evangelism which would change people through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>131</sup> Thus the annual week-long Blantyre Keswick Convention began in 1962 with Jack Selfridge as its first speaker. From 1963 to 1968, subsequent Conventions featuring different speakers like the Nigerian Theologian Byang Kato were held. Kawamba adds that 1967 changed the face of these Conventions as they then became a national event by drawing delegates from across the nation. They also invited members from other denominations making them

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<sup>129</sup> The first Organizing Secretary for the Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi, Scottish Presbyterian faith missionary Jack Selfridge, chronicled his and his wife's 40 years of ministry in Africa, most of which were spent in Malawi in his *Jack of All Trades Mastered by One Ross*: Evanton: Christian Focus Publications, 1996). This and the ensuing information in this section is taken from that source pp. 185-202, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>130</sup> See Bright Kawamba, *Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969 to 1986: an Antecedent of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, University of Malawi: MA, 2013, p. 3. Kawamba, a participant in the revival, conducted 48 interviews with leaders and other participants of the movement and, as the more scholarly work than Selfridge's popular autobiography, pays more attention to the dates. For example, Kawamba asserts that the first meeting of the group was at Nkhoma Synod offices in April 1960, p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> Jack Selfridge, *Jack of All Trades Mastered by One*, Evanton, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1996.

Interdenominational Conventions and probably the largest Fellowship.<sup>132</sup> Typically, the days would be filled with seminars for Church leaders, the youth, women, men, and children while the main speaker ministered during the evenings. Different ministers would highlight not only other ministries within EFM but also other Para-church Organizations such as the Bible Society of Malawi, Student Christian Organization of Malawi, and Scripture Union. The Convention was held at Chichiri High School Hall in Blantyre. Moreover, the sermon was covered by the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation during the Sunday Morning Worship Service from 5:45 am to 6:00 am.

EFM adapted an evangelism programme developed in Latin America by a Rev Strachan called *Evangelism in Depth* whose philosophy was to mobilize every Church member for evangelism. The group deliberately avoided the word “Evangelism” so as not to alienate Muslims. They thus used the term *New Life for All* (NLFA) in order to sound inclusive. They launched the programme in the third week of August 1969 at the ex-Kwacha National Cultural Centre, now MBC TV premises near what is now Njamba Freedom Park.<sup>133</sup> Two consultants from Nigeria, a Nigerian pastor and a foreign missionary, who had been trained in Latin America, conducted the training for EFM in Malawi.<sup>134</sup> Almost every Protestant leader was invited to a sensitization retreat in 1969 for the programme, where many of them agreed to implement it in their Churches.<sup>135</sup> Jack Selfridge was asked to be the EFM’s Organizing Secretary in 1969 and was also entrusted with initiating the NLFA programme that it was designed to progress in the local Churches over a twelve-month period. Congregational leaders spent a month in prayer seeking God’s guidance on how to do evangelism. Then another month was spent on how to sensitize the congregations and their

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<sup>132</sup> Bright Kawamba, *Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969 to 1986: an Antecedent of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, University of Malawi, MA Thesis, 2013, pp. 5-6. He notes that though members of the Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist churches attended, their leaders did not

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. Kawamba cites an interview with Willy Musopole, an early NLFA leader and co-worker with Selfridge. Selfridge does not name them but Kawamba notes that the consultants were Pastor Yakubu Yako and Reverend Belamy.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, Kawamba notes that the period between the training and the launching was eight months in which NLFA training materials and leaflets were translated from English into Chichewa, printed both in Nigeria and Malawi, and several cartons were distributed to each member church at the launch.

prayer-houses on the evangelistic programme. Then there were three months of weekly Bible studies and Scripture memorization to ensure that members became 'Born-again' and that they had adequate knowledge of the Scriptures in order to witness to others properly. These weeks also made sure that the members were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to be effective in witnessing to the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit as recorded in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. Lastly, there were five months of house-to-house, open-air, and NLFA Gospel-tract distribution outreaches, then a month of follow-ups on interested contacts and converts to link them up with the existing believers. Finally, there was another month of evaluation by the leaders to review the programme and plan for the next twelve months cycle.<sup>136</sup>

During the Revival, there were also two Churches that cooperated to spark the fires of Revival in Blantyre. The first was St. Columba CCAP that opened its doors in 1962 under Rev Mkunga, who started out as an itinerant Evangelist in Chigumula and was trained at the Synod's school in Mulanje.<sup>137</sup> The Church was built by the mission initiative of Irish Presbyterians who envisioned Blantyre expanding southwards and handed it over to the CCAP Blantyre Synod. Reverend Mkunga went evangelizing door-to-door in the surrounding areas of Chitawira, Naperi, Kamba, Nkolokosa, and in the villages around Zingwangwa. Other CCAP members transferred from St. Michael's and All Angels to join the Church. The Church experienced a steady growth due to Mkunga's reconciliatory ministry. He initiated a Tumbuka choir, a gesture which improved relations in the Church and later led to inter-tribal marriages. He was also open to other Pastors ministering at the Church so much so that it had a steady flow of Evangelists from Dorothea Mission, the main speakers at the Keswick Conventions, and other visiting preachers. It was at St. Columba that World Vision Malawi, the Scripture Union and Shadrack Wame's Ministry were launched. The Church also had ministries to the prison and the hospital, and was frequented by those that needed help.

Perhaps the most strategic church cooperation for the Revival in Blantyre, at that time, was the one between St. Columba and Kanjedza Assemblies of God led by Reverend Gideon

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<sup>136</sup> See Jack Selfridge, pp. 194-195.

<sup>137</sup> Int. Mrs Flossie, Mzandu, Rev Mkunga's daughter, Lilongwe, 11.3.2013. All information in this paragraph is from her. She became born-again at her father's church when an evangelist from Dorothea Mission preached there.

Bomba. Bomba was elected the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Malawi in 1962.<sup>138</sup> He was a great evangelist in his own right who crisscrossed Malawi preaching in tents and managed to help many people get healed and baptized with the Holy Spirit. Mkunga would invite Bomba to preach at St. Columba and vice-versa. Each Church would invite the other to its conferences or revival meetings.<sup>139</sup> One notable associate of Bomba who ministered regularly at St. Columba was Reverend Lazalo from Tanzania.<sup>140</sup> It was during such Revival Meetings that Pentecostal phenomena such as speaking in tongues started within St. Columba Church. When summoned by Blantyre Synod to explain such things, Mkunga simply said that the Church and these things were from God and that he summons people to help with the things he was not able to do.<sup>141</sup>

At the climax of the Revival, the NLFA started initiating open-air outreaches in strategic locations such as Blantyre Market, Limbe Market, and Ndirande Market at Chinseu. The city-wide outreaches were so successful that by April 1971, the Secretariat required a full-time person to counsel new converts at their Livingstone Avenue Office in Blantyre. Kawamba notes that the final meeting between NLFA and the EFM member-churches on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1972 resulted in NLFA prioritizing street Evangelism as opposed to the gradualist approach of the Churches who feared being mistaken by the police for the then-banned Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>142</sup> According to Kawamba, open-air outreaches were intensified in Blantyre so much so that the revival reached its climax in 1978.<sup>143</sup> The preaching of the Gospel was

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<sup>138</sup> Gregory Chawanangwa Mvula and Enson Mbilikile Lwesya, *Flames of Fire: The History of the Assemblies of God and Pentecostalism in Malawi*, Blantyre: Assemblies of God Literature Centre, 2005, p. 168.

<sup>138</sup> Bright, Kawamba, *Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969 to 1986: an Antecedent of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2013, p. 5.

<sup>139</sup> Felix Nyika, *Apostolic Office in Malawian Neocharismatic Churches: A Contextual, Biblical-Theological, and Historical Appraisal*, PhD, Mzuzu University, 2015.

<sup>141</sup> In Chichewa: "Awa ndi anthu a Mulungu. Ndiye ndimangoitana anthu oti awathandize ndi zina zimene ine *sindingathe*," Int. Mrs Flossie, Mzandu.

<sup>142</sup> See Bright Kawamba, *Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969 to 1986: an Antecedent of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2011, p. 22. Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted by the one-party state of the Malawi Congress Party (1964-1994) for refusing to buy party cards.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

characterized by a call to immediate response, miracles, power encounters, and deep conviction of sin which overall emphasized at one being Born-again.<sup>144</sup>

NLFA evangelistic groups set up preaching points in various parts of the city which further developed to be lunch-hour fellowships in the commercial centre and in the townships. Lunch-hour fellowships proliferated in the city from around 1974 in sites such as the NLFA offices along Livingstone Road, Malawi Railways Training Centre in Limbe, and the Red Cross Hall at Ginnery Corner, in addition to other market locations.<sup>145</sup> In the townships, teachers, vendors, and others who could not access the lunch-hour meetings, began to meet as fellowships. Initially, these groups were formed to provide the prayer backing up for the NLFA's evangelistic efforts in the city-centre. They however evolved into Evangelistic teams that proclaimed the Gospel in their neighbourhoods and also met for prayers. Such was the case with the Zingwangwa-Chilobwe-Chimwankhunda fellowship which nurtured other fellowships in Ndirande, Bangwe, Naotcha, Mpingwe, Chileka, and Chilomoni.<sup>146</sup> It was common practice amongst the members that when a member died or was bereaved, the other sister fellowship groups would join them and assist accordingly.<sup>147</sup>

Another group that contributed to the proliferation of fellowships country-wide was Every Home Crusade (EHC), an affiliate of World Literature Centre in the USA. Malawi's Baptist Convention Reverend J.B. Nyirenda founded the ministry in 1973 for Malawi which distributed Gospel tracts from house to house and began prayer groups in homes.<sup>148</sup> After

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid. Kawamba cites cases of a deeply convicted marijuana-smoker interrupting a meeting to surrender his contraband, people turning in their charms and other magic/witchcraft wares, and a thief destroying a wristwatch which he obtained with stolen money.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, Kawamba cites that the Limbe fellowship Emmanuel Chinkwita, Mary Ntaba, and Kamzati Chombo among its leaders whereas Wilson Chisambiro and a Mr Mataya were foundational to the establishment of the Red Cross Hall fellowship. Selfridge also notes the genesis of prayer groups in commercial and industrial areas in Blantyre as beginning with two believers praying together during their lunch-break and the idea spreading out so that there were as many as 450 involved in such prayer around the city, pp. 192.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. Kawamba further notes that there was such a brotherly spirit amongst the fellowships that they would aid each other's evangelistic efforts and would suspend all programmes during the Keswick Convention, p. 10.

<sup>147</sup> Int. Wambali Mkandawire, revival participant, Lilongwe, 26.4.2013.

<sup>148</sup> Int. Enoch Phiri, country director, Africa Enterprise, Lilongwe, 26.2.2010. He became born-again under the ministry of Andrew Gabriel while a primary school student at St. Pius Primary School in Blantyre. He worked as

tract distribution, a seekers' meeting would be hosted by the ministry at the Community Centre Ground, District Community Hall, or Local Soccer Ground. Such meetings were followed by the formation of prayer partner groups in particular districts. It is from these prayer groups that the idea of home-cells developed in Blantyre Synod.<sup>149</sup> Every Home Crusade Outreach extended from Mzuzu to Nsanje reaching out almost everywhere and everyone.<sup>150</sup>

Lastly, there were also ministries that emerged from the fellowships and the evangelistic movements of those years. Typically, such ministries would begin as follower cluster centres around a strong leader with a specialized ministry call and together they could minister to the people every day except Sunday mornings to ensure that the people attended their usual Churches.<sup>151</sup> Andrew Gabriel's Ministry was known for miracles from its very beginning in 1973 and it really attracted the masses from Soche East, Zingwangwa, Chimwankhunda, Chilobwe, and Naotcha townships. Gabriel had a vision from God telling him to go and tell the people to be Born-again. Before, he was a nominal Christian at Malembo CCAP in Monkey Bay, his own home area.<sup>152</sup> He caught the attention of Reverend Mkunga while visiting a relative in Blantyre who was a member of St. Columba where he was asked to share his testimony in the Church. He went around different homes in Zingwangwa and Naotcha. Since he had no place to stay, he moved into the vestry at St. Columba and many people came to consult him while there as they thought he had special and supernatural powers.

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an assistant follow-up officer, distribution officer, and follow-up officer for Every Home Crusade from 1977 to 1982.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. These are known as *milaga* in Chichewa. He notes that before these prayer groups, the mainline churches did not have *milaga*.

<sup>150</sup> See the bulletin *Pray*, vol. 6 no. 1 (January 1978). Here 28 people displayed the complexity of the operation.

<sup>151</sup> See Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, 1999, p. 34.

<sup>152</sup> Int. Enoch, Phiri, Country Director, Africa Enterprise, Lilongwe, 26.2.2010. Kawamba notes that Gabriel was given to visions of heaven and angels and sometimes took his group to pray and fast on Soche Mountain, at times for days, p. 20.

Gabriel's message was one of regeneration, coupled with his power of prayer for the sick and the poor and the prophetic magnetism. Bishop Jeremiah Chikhwaza's chronically sick mother was healed through the ministry of Pastor Mponda, one of Gabriel's associates.<sup>153</sup> The Chikhwazas, who were formerly Catholics, got exposed to Charismatic Christianity through Gabriel's ministry who, though not highly educated, managed to penetrate the elite society within Blantyre City through his Charismatic ministry. Chikhwaza's father, Lois, went on to establish the Bible Faith Church after graduation from Rhema Training Center in Randburg, RSA. In another development, a family who had their baby stolen came to enquire from him.<sup>154</sup> He gave them specific information that the baby was not dead but was beside the Mudi River near the Blantyre Market. The family, coincidentally and indeed, found the baby just as he had said. His fame grew, and many people with all sorts of problems started flocking to him. However, controversy followed him when he started insisting on an extreme form of separation from the world, and advising his youthful followers to stop schooling because Jesus would be coming anytime.<sup>155</sup> He was asked to leave St. Columba when some female students from Blantyre Nursing College stopped attending classes on his instructions, and were having overnight prayers with him in the vestry.<sup>156</sup> Gabriel later fell out of public grace<sup>156</sup> when speaking of himself as an Angel, and at some point engaged in sexual misconduct.<sup>157</sup>

## **4.2 Some of the Early Charismatic Churches**

### ***4.2.1 Blantyre Christian Centre and City Bible School***

By late 1981, when Cornelius Fellowship was winding up, another Charismatic Fellowship led by Mrs Barbara Tippet was born.<sup>158</sup> This was named the Mustard Seed Fellowship. It

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<sup>153</sup> Int. Bishop Jeremiah, Chikhwaza, Lilongwe, 17.1.2013.

<sup>154</sup> Int. Mrs Flossie, Mzandu, Reverend Mkunga's daughter, Lilongwe, 17.3.2013.

<sup>155</sup> Int. Enoch Phiri, Country Director, Africa Enterprise, Lilongwe, 23.3.2013.

<sup>155</sup> Int. Joseph Chikhwaza, Nyambadwe, 24.3.2013.

<sup>157</sup> Int. Bishop Jeremiah, Chikhwaza, Lilongwe, 17.1.2013.

<sup>158</sup> Barbara Tippet was a British national who was in her earlier life an open-minded agnostic, but her life and intellectual orientation drastically changed after undergoing a serious health crisis which threatened her life in 1978. She later founded the Blantyre Christian Center in 1986.

later changed its name to Christian Fellowship following some remarks and names wrangle with one of the colleagues. For over two years, it was meeting at the Polytechnic, possibly with the blessings of Stewart Lane who was then the Chaplain there. In 1984, she moved the fellowship to Downs House in Hardeleq Building.

The Blantyre Christian Centre was then joined by a white South African Charismatic Bible Teacher, Gordon Decker, who founded the City Bible School, a school under the Ministry of Blantyre Christian Centre. This was probably the first school with Charismatic orientation in the country. Among the school's first students were Henry Malili, Stanley Ndovie, Willie Chaponda and a few others. The total number of students was between eight and ten. The school also operated as a Fellowship because they allotted a good time to prayer, praise and worship.

The relationship between Tippet and Decker hit the deadlock because their administrative and operational styles differed within the Ministry. Decker therefore decided to move out and asked the Church of Christ at Ginnery Corner to rent him a space and there he established his City Bible School.<sup>159</sup> Decker was later joined by another Bible teacher, Mr Ormond from New Zealand,<sup>160</sup> and the two became teachers at the City Bible School. At the end of 1985, Gordon Decker needed to go back home for furlough, and he identified Willie Chaponda, who was recognized as the brightest student, to teach his fellows and assist Mr Ormond.

The teachers decided to fast-track his graduation to enable him to do this but Chaponda courteously declined because he foresaw that some of his classmates would be offended by this move. As a result, he waited the last three months of their course and graduated with his peers. He then started full-time teaching at the City Bible School. Almost all the students that graduated at the City Bible School ended up as propagators of the Charismatic Movement in Blantyre and Zomba. Others went out to beef up the already existing Charismatic establishments as did Malili who actively supported Tippet in her ministry,

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<sup>159</sup> Willie Chaponda's audio recorded history of both his own Mustard Seed Ministries and Blantyre Christian Center 2001.

<sup>160</sup> Mr Ormond was a young missionary from New Zealand to South Africa, and while there he learned of Gordon Decker's ministry in Malawi, a country with apparently more needs than South Africa. While there he was invited to come over to Malawi and partner with him in the ministry of the Gospel.

although he later parted ways with her and started his own Charismatic Ministry, called the 'Healing Hope'. Others went outright to start their own Ministries in Blantyre and other parts of Malawi.<sup>161</sup>

Likewise, Living Waters Church, Calvary Family Church, Blantyre Christian Centre, Healing Hope Ministry, Glad Tidings of Evans Chingana, Soul Harvest Ministries, and The Faith of God Church enormously benefited from the City Bible School. The City Bible School became the third Charismatic expression after Cornelius Fellowship and the Mustard Seed Fellowship which later became Blantyre Christian Centre and was later renamed World Alive Church.

Willie Chaponda initially interfaced with Barbara Tippet briefly when he came to her Centre between 1984 and 1985. Apart from the initial Christian relationship as fellow Ministers, they shared the same burden of reaching the City with the Gospel. Chaponda offered to assist her in developing music at her worship Centre. At that time, Tippet had an organ which was not being used because of lack of expertise and Chaponda had such skills. He offered to play it and also arranged a worship and praise team. He also led the vocals while playing the organ and or the keyboard.<sup>162</sup>

The Blantyre Christian Centre meanwhile began to grow and sizeable crowds began to attend its lunch hour fellowship meetings, and later its specially designated Weekend Meetings. Its location at Victoria Avenue was very strategic particularly for Blantyre elites. This marked a sudden turn-around in its fortunes as a Ministry which stood alone, unaffiliated to any other Evangelical Association or group apart from Charismatic Ministries in America and South Africa. The messages, the music and worship were in English. The Church also boasted of a very rich bookstore which sold many of the published works in the Charismatic world. They also sold some of the Bible versions which were not available at Bible Society and or CLAIM.

Chaponda was instrumental in assisting Blantyre Christian Centre develop high standards of modern worship and praise. While he was doing this, he was always conscious of his calling to nurture and grow his own Mustard Seed Ministries. His dream was to build a big Mustard

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<sup>161</sup> Audio recorded interview with Apostle W. Chaponda 2013.

<sup>162</sup> Int. Pastor Apostle Willey, Chaponda, Nkolokoti, 12.5.2013.

Seed Ministries Worship Centre in the town. Thus he made it known that he would not stay at Blantyre Christian Centre for good amidst the calls asking him to stay there. To this end, he demanded that he mentors someone talented who would play the organ after his departure. He finally got a young man named Bright Wanyemba whom he mentored and who later became one of the most prolific leaders of the Worship and Praise Team. Chaponda then concentrated on growing his Mustard Seed Ministries.<sup>163</sup>

Henry Malili began to work with Barbara Tippet from the early days of Tippet's Mustard Seed Fellowship in Limbe long before it changed its name to the Christian Fellowship Centre at the Polytechnic and later to Blantyre Christian Centre. Later it was through Barbara Tippet that Malili got a scholarship to study at the Rhema Training Centre in Johannesburg joining others from Zambia and Zimbabwe for a nine-month long Pastoral Training.<sup>164</sup>

However, after Malili was trained and at the time when he thought he could be a possible successor to Tippet, Malili fell out of favour with Tippet and this development led him to exit the Ministry. He then started Healing Hope Ministry in 1987 as another Charismatic Ministry. This was perhaps the fifth Charismatic entity in Blantyre after Cornelius Fellowship, Tippet's Blantyre Christian Centre, Gordon Decker's City Bible School and the Living Waters Ministries. Tippet then replaced Malili with another bright young man named Zacheus Kawalala to whom she left the Ministry. But before Kawalala took over, a missionary and friend of Tippet, Jim Lapka, filled the gap to prepare for a permanent reign of Kawalala as Senior Pastor of the Church in Malawi.

#### ***4.2.2 Agape Church***

The word "Agape" is a Greek term which means the "God-kind of love" or "God's unconditional love" and the church is based on what Jesus Christ declared in Mathew 16:18 that He was going to build His Church. The word 'Church' is derived from a Greek term 'Ekklesia' which means the called out ones into the assembly.

The Agape Life Church International (ALCI) is duly registered in Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa, with its headquarters in Blantyre, Malawi. The ALCI started on 8th February

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<sup>163</sup> Int. Willey Chaponda Nkolokoti, 5.5.2013.

<sup>164</sup> Int. Henry Malili, Ndirande, 7.3.2013.

1982, with its first Church service held in a house belonging to the late Mrs Alice Ngwira, one of the first elders of the Church. Apostle Augustine D. Mgala was the first Pastor and was assisted by his wife Pastor Priscilla L. Mgala. The church started with 15 members. Prior to its establishment, Apostle Mgala and his wife had a successful inter-denominational teaching ministry that used to meet every Saturday afternoon at Red Cross Hall in Blantyre. Lives were transformed as a result of their effective teaching.<sup>165</sup> It was in 1986 that Apostle A.D. Mgala had a vision to start a Church which would become a teaching centre of the uncompromised word of God. The Lord showed him that from the teaching centre, he would have to go out to other places to spread the word of God. This would set free many people who would be spiritually, physically and emotionally bound.

The vision of the Agape Life Church International is 'to make every man a disciple of Christ.' They believe that they were called not only to make converts for the Lord, but also to teach the converts the truth about the word of God, and teach them to obey God by applying His words in every area of their lives through faith. This ultimately produces disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mission of the Agape Life Church International is 'to bring deliverance, discipleship, development and destiny to the people of all nations'.<sup>166</sup>

#### *4.2.2.1 Church Ministry*

The Church Ministry is responsible for the effective running and proper functioning of every establishment of the ALCI. The church ministry ensures that vision, mission and doctrine of the ALCI are properly adhered to. It is responsible for the setting up of the leadership structure at each local Church. In Malawi, where the church is well established, it is headed by men while women are mere subordinates. For example, the Church Ministry is headed by

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<sup>165</sup> Int. Apostle D. Ngala, Zingwangwa, 12.4.13.

<sup>166</sup> Agape Life Church International Constitution, 2009, Revised, p. 14. The mission statement also contains the following "We believe it is our duty to help the people who have been delivered from the power of bondage and sin, by taking them through a discipleship process in order to get them grounded in Christ and become responsible Christians. After discipleship, we believe we need to empower the people by educating their minds and training them to acquire work skills. We believe in developing the total man – spirit, soul and body. We are also committed to providing relief to affected people during natural or man-made disasters regardless of ethnic, political, religious or grounds. We are committed to helping people discover their purpose for living. This will ultimately lead them into God-given destiny."

a National Director, Pastor C.O. Kasito. The country is divided into four 'Field Zones' for proper administration. There is the Northern Field Zone, Central Field Zone, Eastern Field Zone and Southern Field Zone. Currently, Pastor M. Sawali is the Field Zone Representative for the North and is based in Mzuzu. Pastor Isaiah P. is the Field Zone Representative for the Eastern Zone and is based in Balaka, whereas Pastor P. Kasito is the Field Zone Representative for the Southern Zone and is based in Mulanje. Each Zone has its own committee, which sits to discuss zonal plans in line with the general vision, policies and procedures of ALCI. Each Zone is under the leadership of a Field Zone Representative who oversees all the activities of all the local branches within his Zone. The Zone Representative reports to the National Director who is based in Blantyre at the National headquarters of the ALCI. Each branch is then headed by a qualified Pastor who is responsible for the spiritual and moral care of the members of the Church. The Pastor reports to the Zone Representative of his field. Every branch of the ALCI has a Church Board which consists of elected Elders with the Pastor as its Chairperson. The Church Board sits regularly to monitor the progress of the activities of their local Church if they are in line with the vision of the ALCI and if they are accomplishing their branch goals. They discuss issues which include plans for their branches. The Church Board is responsible for the establishment of departments that assist the branches in attaining their goals and expectations.

#### ***4.2.3 Faith of God Church***

Faith of God Church is another Charismatic expression that emerged from the disintegrating Andrew Gabriel's Born-again Evangelistic Association as Holy Cross Fellowship. It was founded by Bishop Geoffrey Matoga. As Gabriel and his movement were plagued with leadership crises and moral problems, the Holy-Cross fellowship came out of it as a splinter group like the Bible Faith Ministries and other smaller groups. The Holy-Cross fellowship continued with a level of success, but it was the emerging leader Geoffrey Matoga who changed its fortunes when he decided not only to change its name to 'Faith of God Church'

but also to change its outlook and operations into a modern and fast growing Charismatic entity in Blantyre.<sup>167</sup>

#### ***4.2.4 Living Waters Church***

The Living Waters Church was founded by Apostle Stanley Madalitso Ndovie in the year 1985.



Apostle Dr Stanley Ndovie Founder of the Living Waters Church

At that time, he was a Pastor at the Apostolic Faith Mission in Blantyre. The Lord showed him a vision to start the Living Waters Church. Initially five families were involved. Ndovie was probably the most successful leader to emerge from the Charismatic fold in Blantyre in the latter part of the Eighties and Nineties. Unlike a number of Born-again of his era, Ndovie had a strong ecclesiastical foundation and Church orientation from his training and Ministry with the Apostolic Faith Mission.<sup>168</sup> However, he also caught much of the evangelistic zeal and fire from his peers through his regular association with them at the Zingwangwa-Chilobwe-Chimwankhunda Prayer Group in the latter part of the seventies.

As a young minister he was revered by many as an emerging leader and powerful force commanding great respect within his own Church (AFM) and also outside the Church. The young man was noted for his humility and sociability. He mixed well with people and

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<sup>167</sup> Appreciated from long discussions with now Apostle Dr Charles Tsukuluza with whom I spent almost a year together as students at the Gbagada based International Bible Training Center in Lagos Nigeria (Tsukuluza was also an associate of Bishop Matoga).

<sup>168</sup> Ulf Strohhahn, *Pentecostalism in Malawi, A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, pp. 138 -139.

intelligently engaged them. When things went awry at the AFM, it was apparent that he would fall back on his fellows he had befriended, prayed with and served with in the Born-again movement. He spoke with confidence and his testimony on how he came to know the Lord as Saviour moved many people.<sup>169</sup>

Here is a brief synopsis on Ndovie:

Stanley Ndovie was only eighteen years old when he was admitted to Apostolic Faith Mission Bible College. That was the college's first generation of students studying in the classrooms at the AFM Naperi Campus. Ndovie rose to prominence while at the Bible College through his intellect, and preaching ability. After graduation, he was asked to assist Pastor Jim Phiri as co-pastor in Naperi and to teach at the College. He worked closely with E. Wendland. Ndovie became a successful Pastor at Naperi. At the time, the Naperi congregation proved to be the strongest urban Church for AFM. Ndovie's pragmatism led him to introduce a band in the Church called Living Waters Praise Team.<sup>170</sup>

Although he was not considered a prominent figure at the prayer group's meetings, he was nevertheless considered a very necessary person to the Fellowship. When it was time to start his Living Waters Ministries, he quietly retreated from Zingwangwa-Chilobwe-Chimwankhunda Prayer Group to his small house in Nkolokosa where he started a Fellowship which met in his house. He commanded a following both from his AFM Church and from other Born-again Fellowships including Zingwangwa-Chilobwe-Chimwankhunda Prayer Group. These initially became the founding members of Living Waters Ministries.

#### ***4.2.5 Glad Tidings Church***

The founder of Glad Tidings Church in Blantyre is Evans Chingana.<sup>171</sup> He founded this Church with some of his colleagues he had earlier associated with at the Zomba Air Field where he flew planes as a Malawi Young Pioneers Government sponsored Trainee Pilot. The Awakening that took place in Blantyre also affected parts of Zomba town and he, along with a couple of his friends, became Born-again through the Ministry of NLFA.

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<sup>169</sup> Int. Mcford Nkhwimba, 3.4.2013.

<sup>170</sup> Ulf Strohhahn, *Pentecostalism in Malawi. A History of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, p. 139.

<sup>171</sup> The soft spoken resilient Born Again and charismatic leader of this church is a former trained pilot under the defunct Malawi Young Pioneers.

When the Malawi Government experienced a funding crisis for this programme, the young pilots that included Chingana were transferred to Blantyre and when it was clear that Malawi Young Pioneers could not financially sustain its Air Wing, these young men ended up being discharged from their jobs. But as this door closed, another one opened. The three young men won scholarships to train at Rhema Bible Training Center in Zimbabwe for a year and after their training, they came back and founded the Glad Tidings Church which first opened its doors at Kudya Entertainment Centre in 1990.<sup>172</sup>

#### ***4.2.6 Calvary Family Church***

The Calvary Family Church started as a Ministry in the late 1970. This was a period when a lot of Charismatic Movements appeared in Malawi. As is the case with most CMs, the primary aim was not to start a Church. It started as a Fellowship where people from different denominations used to meet to share the Bible. The Fellowship was known as the Young Believers Fellowship (YBF), led by Madalitso P. Mbewe.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Int. Evan Chigana Chitawira, 12.5.13

<sup>173</sup> The Reverend D.P.H. Mbewe founded Pentecostal Revival Crusade in Ndirande in the early sixties. He came to Malawi as a returning *Matchona*, of course, he still has his roots in Zimbabwe [probably Gweru], where he first planted this ministry and continued to run the two strands of his ministry in both countries. However, the ministry in Malawi tended to weaken when he went away for long periods to Zimbabwe and then he would resuscitate it when he came back. While this was taking place the young Mbewe who was successful in his profession as a banker heroically run a very powerful young people's ministry, the YBF, as early as 1975 through to 1979. At that time he decided [obviously with the father's approval] to fuse his powerful YBF into the rather ailing PRC which at the time was largely unknown to people in Blantyre outside Ndirande. His coming rejuvenated this latent and ailing ministry taking it from the doldrums of Ndirande to the limelight of the elitist centers of Polytechnic College Hall and then later to the Chichiri Trade Fair Grounds before he remodeled it further into a dynamic Charismatic church, the Calvary Family Church, in 1987. Madalitso Mbewe, as a prolific preacher, was highly heralded for his charismatic prosperity gospel teaching titled 'The Joseph Anointing.'<sup>173</sup>



Apostle Madalitso Mbewe.

This fellowship started in Blantyre and meetings were held in the offices of the Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi (EFM) in Mpemba Building. The name of the Fellowship changed to Pentecostal Revival Crusade Ministries in 1980. This was done to embrace all age groups and not only Young Bible believers as the former name suggested.<sup>174</sup> This could be seen as an advanced stage towards the formation of the Church. Since Churches of this nature are usually led by an individual who is seen as a Charismatic leader, consequently the Church is built around him.<sup>175</sup> This too was exactly what happened with the Pentecostal Revival Crusade Ministries. During this period, some members of this Fellowship which included Mrs and Mr. Thipa, Mr Mangondo, Mr and Mrs Jiya, Mrs G. Simanti and Sister Kamwendo, met every Sunday afternoon as a Fellowship and shared their experiences concerning their spiritual life.

During the period 1980-1990, a number of Pentecostal Revival Crusade Ministries were opened in the country. Such centres included Lilongwe Pentecostal Revival Crusade which was opened in 1982, the Mangochi Centre opened in 1984, Blantyre Centre opened in 1980 and later on the Ebenezer Centre in Ntcheu. Members met at all the Centres on Sunday afternoons only where they shared the word of God and prayed but there was no administration of sacraments such as Baptism, Holy Communion and officiation of Marriage.

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<sup>174</sup> Int. Pastor Thipa, Nkolokosa, 24.3.13.

<sup>175</sup> Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," in Religion in Malawi, no. 9, 1999, p. 34.

Members demanded this to take place as they gathered. This gave pressure to the ministry to officially launch itself as a Church. It was on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1992 when Apostle Madalitso Mbewe officially launched the Calvary Family Church and its first morning service was held in the offices of the Evangelical Fellowship of Malawi. In 1992, all Pentecostal Revival Crusade Branches were converted to Calvary Family Churches. Currently, Calvary Family Church has branches in all the districts of Malawi. It has also branches abroad including in the United Kingdom in Leicester



The CFC building in Nottingham

### **4.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated the differences between the Charismatic and the Pentecostal Churches. For instance, Pentecostals subscribe to the work of grace subsequent to conversion in which Spirit baptism is evidenced by glossolalia. For some, this baptism must also follow another act of sanctification. The Charismatics, on the other hand, do not always advocate either the necessity of a second-work of grace or evidence of glossolalia as affirmation of spirit Baptism.

The chapter has also reflected on the early foundation of the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. Tippet's Blantyre Christian Centre, was the early Charismatic Church in Malawi followed by Living Waters Church, Calvary Family Church, and AGAPE Church among others. The Charismatic Churches, in addition to increasing the number of Churches in Malawi, have greatly assisted in spiritual growth and in the physical welfare of the Christians. The Revival that brought the formation of the Charismatic Churches continues to grow within and without Malawi such that the numbers of these Churches will possibly keep on growing.

## Chapter 5: Biblical Perspective on Women in Charismatic Churches

### 5.1 Introduction

The issue of women's liberation in church and society continues to gain wider public attention leading to endless debates among the faithful. This is probably because of the existing differences in the theological positions and doctrines held by different groups. These debates, however, are influenced by social status, gender biases, traditions and different biblical teachings. This aside, a close examination of the scriptures on this subject reveals that the Bible has been highly used and abused in the course of this debate. At the center of it is the issue of hermeneutics, that is, how the Bible is interpreted. For some interpreters, the Bible promotes the oppression of women particularly in the Jewish and the ancient Greco-Roman world.<sup>176</sup> Common examples are those biblical books and chapters where it is understood to mean that women should remain silent in the Church since men are in authority (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11-14). This interpretation also extends to three

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<sup>176</sup> By comparison, Greek women were accorded a higher degree of respect than women of other pagan societies. Nevertheless, it is true that they were placed almost at the same level with the slaves and were under the authority and control of their husbands both by custom and by law. Under Roman Law women enjoyed a degree of better standing than in Greece. Legally, however, the wife was still regarded as a piece of property completely under the control of the husband. Yet in practice, the law was interpreted otherwise. Thus the women enjoyed considerable freedom. Further, the wife was not kept in seclusion as it was the case in the Greek household. She rather shared her husband's life and set a standard of wifely or motherly virtues envied at a later age. Conversely, in Jewish Society, a woman's position seems to be a paradox. There is a well-known saying of the Jewish prayer, "Blessed art thou, O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a woman." There are also the lofty words concerning womanhood in the Proverbs (31:10, 25-28). The paradox can only be solved with the right understanding of woman's sphere of service, for according to Jewish ideas; the special and supreme sphere of woman is the home. There, her position has always been one of unchallenged dignity. Public affairs and public activities lie outside the home and therefore outside the woman's special sphere. Even the prayer of the synagogue cited above supports this idea for it is offered by both men and women who say, "Blessed art thou, O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has made me according to thy will [According to J.H. Hertz's Commentary, i.e. who has made me a woman, to win hearts for thee by motherly heart or wifely devotion; and to lead souls to thee, by daughter's care or sisterly tenderness and loyalty]." It is true, however, that Judaism did share the universal conception of the inferiority of women. Nevertheless, unlike Islam, for instance, it did not sanction the total subjection of women to men, but rather sought to elevate women in their proper places. Neither was there in Judaism the separation of sexes so common among other peoples. Thus Hebrew women mixed more freely with men and often took a positive and influential part in both public and private affairs. Cf. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1978, pp. 2-8.

aspects: (1) the creation act of God where Adam is created before Eve (Gen. 2:18) and, (2) the sin which penetrated humanity through a woman and brought death on human beings (3) and the cultural traditions reinforced in pagan societies. This kind of interpretation has been used to place women under the men.<sup>177</sup> These interpretations deliberately ignore the aim of liberation in the biblical texts. With a close look at these interpretations one easily sees that the woman is portrayed as second class and junior to man (born later after man), is seen as evil and dishonest (forced Adam into sin and invited the wrath of God) and also pagan cultures limits the woman to the kitchen, cannot propose a partner for marriage, cannot marry two men, and is often considered good for procreation only. Interpretations and perceptions of this nature often deliberately ignore the existence of biblical books and chapters that talk of women in terms of liberation and equality.

This Chapter therefore aims at providing both an Old Testament and New Testament perspective of those passages that present women liberation when they worked alone or alongside their male counterparts despite the fact that such society was staunchly male dominated.

## **5.2 The Status of Jewish Women in Private Life**

Women in the Jewish society led both private and public lives. The distinctiveness and dignity of women's life in Israel is well illustrated and questionable. For example, amongst the Jews, there were so many outstanding women that lived and contributed significantly to the religious, economic and political landscape of Israel. Women such as Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel who were commonly referred to as the "four mothers" by the Rabbis are some of such influential women. Likewise, Manoah's wife, Hannah, Ruth, Naomi, and Esther, are some of the Jewish women whose private lives played an important part in the history of Israel.<sup>178</sup> While this was the case then, inferiority complex and deliberate

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<sup>177</sup> Traditionally, religious institutions do not seem to be good for women. They have tended to side with a status quo which keeps women in their so called places: dutiful, domestic and dependent; yet many of the pioneers who have risen to the challenge, who excelled in the male world, have done so because of their faith. See: Michele Guinness, *Is God Good for Women?* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997 [comment from the back cover of the book].

<sup>178</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1978, pp. 7-8.

withdrawal from public events by the majority of women due to some traditional requirements including birth of a girl child were observable. For instance, when a woman gave birth to a girl child, she was required to undergo a double period of purification (Lev. 12:2, 5). Moreover, when time came for the girl child to go to school, the Rabbis did not allow her to get the same amount and quality of instruction as did the boys. In fact certain branches of learning, such as Law, were forbidden to women because the Rabbis felt that a woman's mind was incapable of grappling with such tough subjects.<sup>179</sup>

In addition, the issue of subordination and dignity is further illustrated in matrimonial matters. Women were supposed to be subordinate to men and this was enshrined in the Jewish laws. Legally, the position of women was naturally very low. Above this, they were supposed to occupy and take charge of the kitchen, the home and the children. The description of the virtuous woman in the Proverbs presupposes monogamy. In the home of the Jews, a woman's position was one of dignity and responsibility but this was mostly limited by geography. She was her husband's conscience, charged with the task of encouraging him in all matters of holiness.<sup>180</sup> In this regard, the Jewish mother fulfilled her responsibilities in her home and she received equal honour. Conversely, subordination, dignity and responsibility correctly describe the various aspects of the private life of a Hebrew woman only at home. In other words, the home was where her life and roles were very significant.<sup>181</sup> While this was common practice and would be misunderstood by modern Christians to mean that women had limited or no rights in public events including politics or the Church, a close examination of other related texts will reveal the opposite, as it will be observed in the coming sections. At this point therefore, it would be incorrect to conclude that Jewish women were overly persecuted, oppressed or discriminated against as some modern theologians think.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> In the case of the ruler of the synagogue, it was deemed best that he be married especially if he offered up prayer in the congregation, because his wife would preserve him from sin. Footnote pp. 9-10 quoted in: Joshua L. Bernard, *The Synagogue and the Church*, London: B. Fellows, 1842, p. 148.

<sup>181</sup> Joshua L. Bernard, *The Synagogue and the Church*, London: B. Fellows, 1842, p. 149.

### 5.3 Ruth's Exceptional Services in both Marital and Civil Life

Ruth is treated in the book that bears her name as the major character.<sup>182</sup> Ruth is a gentile woman who is consistently commended for her actions. She enters the community of Israel and becomes an important woman. Her narrative provides a good reminder that even in the darkest times God was at work in the hearts of His faithful remnants. She stood strong against the dark background of her own Moabite ancestry.<sup>183</sup> Ruth broke the tradition of her idolatrous people and her irresponsible ancestor, Lot's elder daughter. As a result, she became a believer in God. She sought her fulfillment as a mother through the righteous requirements of the Mosaic Law. She proved herself to be worthy of being named the finest woman of Israel.

Importantly, this story is set in the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1), a time characterized in the Book of Judges as a period of religious and moral degeneration, national disunity and frequent foreign invasion, the time Israel had no king and everyone did as they wished (Judges 21:25). Against this background, Ruth emerged as a bright example of faithfulness. She acted more responsibly, with faith in God's sovereign and supreme control.<sup>184</sup> She displayed her unswerving and selfless devotion to the desolate Naomi, her widowed

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<sup>182</sup> The Book of Ruth records the circumstances that led to the marriage of Ruth, a Moabite, to Boaz, an Israelite. A famine had forced Naomi and her husband to move to Moab, where her sons married Moabite women; one of whom was Ruth. Naomi and her daughter in law became widows, and Ruth and Naomi settled in Bethlehem. In the course of providing food for herself and her mother-in law, Ruth met Boaz, a prosperous farmer and a relative of Naomi. With Naomi's encouragement, Ruth tenderly reminded Boaz of a Levirate obligation (Ruth 3:1-9). However, Boaz was not the nearest kin. When the closest relative learned that there was a levirate obligation attached to Naomi's land, he rejected the offer (Ruth 4:1-6), and Boaz was free to marry Ruth. When the elders at the gate of Bethlehem witnessed the levirate transition between Boaz and Ruth, they blessed their union with mention of Perez, who Tamar bore to Judah (Ruth 4:9-12). That's how a Gentile became part of the Davidic ancestry (Ruth 4: 17-21); thus Ruth is cited in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:5. Consequently, the story in the Book of Ruth demonstrates the providence of God at work in the life of an individual, and it exalts family loyalty.

<sup>183</sup> Moses detailed the somber story of the nation of Moab's origin (Genesis 19:30-38). Lot's two daughters despaired of any future after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In faithless irresponsibility they got their father drunk enough that he would have sex with them in the cave where they lived. The fruits of their incest were Moab and Ben Amin. These sons became the founders of the Moabites and the Ammonites, respectively, nations that often warred against Israel.

<sup>184</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, "Commentary on Ruth" in: *African Bible Commentary*, Zondervan: Word-Alive Publications, 2006, pp. 322-323.

mother-in-law (1:16-17; 2:11-12; 3:10; 4:15). Interestingly, it is surprising to note that the one who reflects God's love so dearly is a foreigner, a Moabite. Her loyalty to the Israelite family into which she had been received by marriage, and her devotion to her desolate mother-in-law, mark her as a true daughter of Israel and a true ancestress of David. Ruth's love and care for her aging mother-in-law stands as a model for all generations.<sup>185</sup> Naomi is transformed from despair to happiness through the selfless, God-blessed acts of Ruth and Boaz. She moves from emptiness to fullness (1:21; 3:17), from destitution (1:1-5) to security and hope (4:13-17). Ruth strikingly exemplifies the truth that participation in the coming kingdom of God is decided, not by blood and birth, but by the conformity of one's life to the will of God through the obedience that comes from faith (Rom. 1:5). Her place in the ancestry of David signifies that all nations will be represented in the Kingdom of David's greatest son - Jesus Christ (Mt. 1:1).<sup>186</sup>

Most importantly, the story of Ruth and Naomi pictures women's initiative and active roles in a male-dominated society. After the death of their husbands, life would have been very hard for Ruth and Naomi. However, they did not sit back but rather found ways to survive. Thus, they formed an alliance that was solid and necessary for their survival. Naomi carefully hatched a plan and Ruth skillfully executed it, using the male-centred tradition of levirate marriage to their advantage.<sup>187</sup> With the help of God, the plan worked well for them.

Here, we find that the Book of Ruth provides an example of a strong woman who played a major redemptive role to her mother-in-law and Israel. Likewise, Naomi equally played a significant role in serving both Ruth and the nation of Israel. Here, Naomi emerges as a gracious and sympathetic mother. The bitterness of Naomi in 1:13 is not self-pity, but arises out of consideration for her daughters-in-law because the Lord had brought calamity on her. The persistence of Naomi in trying to dissuade Ruth from accompanying her emphasizes her

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<sup>185</sup> The Interpreters' Bible vol. II, *Ruth: Text, Exegesis, and Exposition*, Nashville, Tennessee: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953, pp. 833-834.

<sup>186</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, Dallas Seminary Faculty: SP Publications, 1986, p. 423.

<sup>187</sup> The Levirate obligation is a Deuteronomic law that required a man to marry his brother's widow if she was childless, the purpose being that the dead man should have an heir (Deut. 25:5-10). Mae Alice Reggy-Mamo, "Ruth: Widow Inheritance" in: *African Bible Commentary*, Zondervan: Word-Alive Publication, 2006, p. 323.

concern for Ruth's welfare. Naomi would have loved to see Ruth return like Orpah, to her people and god(s). Naomi does not chide Orpah for returning to her own people and god(s), rather her interest is in her daughters-in-law, not in making proselytes. Moreover, Naomi was interested in Ruth's welfare in that she had a shrewd understanding of her husband's kinsman in her plan to benefit Ruth. In this regard, the motive was not only about a home for Ruth but also for her security.<sup>188</sup>

#### **5.4. A Strong Noble Woman in an Environment of Marital Trust**

Proverbs 31:10-31 describes the roles held by a capable woman in an environment of marital trust and harmony. Appreciation of such a wife is comparable to the desirability of the "wisdom" that cannot be purchased by the treasures of the world (Job 28:12-19). Her husband had confidence in her. He respected her judgment and her independent decisions since she had proved herself to be competent and beneficial to the household. She was a good businesswoman, whose range of activities extended beyond her house. She kept her house well supplied with materials and food. She was diligent and competent in the management of resources, personnel and all the responsibilities of her house. She had funds available so that she could deal in real estate and invest in productive ventures (v. 16). She also got ready for action and fully flexed her muscle (v. 17).

She was sufficiently influential to extend herself to the poor and thus fulfill a major concern of Old Testament spirituality. She provided well for her household and protected it against adversity. She took good care of herself, dressing in dignity and refinement (vv. 20-22). Ironically, only Verse 23 makes reference to the activities of the husband. The implication, though, is that he was well respected in the community because of his wife's industriousness and competence (vv. 11-12). She was a working wife as she combined career and housekeeping (v. 24). Gilbert Bilezikian comments that the woman was her own salesperson who dealt directly with the merchants from whom she took her goods. Her home was the base for her business operations. In that economy there were cottage industries, there were no shops, no factories, no offices and no hospitals in the modern

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<sup>188</sup> John F. Woord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, Dallas Seminary Faculty, SP Publications, 1986, pp. 423-424.

sense of those terms. However, her professional activities occasionally took her away from her home. She rejoiced at the confidence and security that she derived from her labour and her independent achievements (v. 25). She was gifted with wisdom, so much so that she could dispense faithful instruction (v. 26, NIV). The businesswoman and housewife could also be an able teacher. She was also a vigilant supervisor of her household (v. 27).<sup>189</sup>

These accomplishments indicate that she was the one responsible for making the managerial decisions affecting the life of her home. She had good relationships with her own family and the other members of the family (v. 28). Her husband affirms the superior qualities of his wife, and he acknowledges that there were many other women like her. Although she was the best among them, it is possible that other women were equally as industrious, decisive and creative as she was and hence deserve recognition by the male folk (v. 29). The secret of her success was not external beauty but the fact that she was a godly person and creative enough (v. 30). Proverbs 31:31 (RSV) says:

Give her the rights that belong to her! She should enjoy the benefits of her labours and receive credit for her achievements. She has the right to receive the same respect as her husband does. She is to be praised in the gates.

This text anticipates the restoration of the original pattern of husband and wife relationships that prevailed at the creation of humanity prior to the fall. It also accomplishes a verse by verse demolition of a male-headship system that originated from the fall by showing God's ideals for women, which is to share the responsibilities in the governance of the community and the family alike. From these verses it is clear that women do have the same capabilities and benefits as men and should be allowed to take charge of public events including the Church. Why the modern Church continues to side-line women, is another issue that calls for more research.

## **5.5 The Status of Jewish Women in Public Life**

For a Jewish woman, public life is practically synonymous with religious life, and her role was neither passive nor one of leadership. The religious feeling which she possessed in

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<sup>189</sup> Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman's Place in Church and Family*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993, pp. 73-74.

common with others was bound to assert itself, as it did in various ways. Basic to all these, is the fact that "all the people" including women, were part of God's covenant relationship which He introduced through Moses. Women were part of this relationship as clearly demonstrated by the special commandments that seek to protect them as written in Exod. 22:22-24 and Deut. 22:13-30. Very few people notice this point, as Caldwell Ryrie observed that "what distinguishes the God of Israel from other gods is his condescension to the humble. He lowers himself by establishing his Covenant with the children, the women, the weak, and the slaves."<sup>190</sup> Since we believe that Judaism was supernaturally given to the Jews by God, this point therefore guarantees women the freedom and power that was not available in heathen religions.

While it can be concluded that God provided both men and women equal opportunities, given the cited texts, the situation on the ground was different in some quarters. The reality is that most women entirely depended on men in religious matters. They were some sort of appendices to their husbands, who by their good actions also ensured their salvation.<sup>191</sup> This suggests that women made use of their privilege as co-heirs of the Covenant not as prime or outright heirs. Nevertheless, this did not mean complete denial of women participation in public and private events. For instance, the Mosaic Law expected the presence of women at the Sanctuary during the Festival Season. Thus, the daughters and maidservants were to join the sons and menservants at the Sanctuary (Deut 12:12, 18; 14:26; 16:1-14). Women were present in the congregation when the Law was read in the time of Nehemiah. Likewise, they were present at the Feast which David made in honour of the recovery of the Ark (2 Samuel 6:19) and the daughters of Shiloh could be counted on to be present at the Annual Feast (Judges 21:6-25). Hannah and Peninnah who went yearly to the gathering in Shiloh are also examples of women participating in public prayer. Furthermore, women took part in the sacrifices since they were forbidden to eat the flesh of the sin offering. This indicates that they were permitted to share in other offerings (Lev. 6: 29; 10:14) and there is no question that they offered sacrifices for purification. Women and men were permitted to separate themselves unto Jehovah by taking the vow of a Nazirite

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<sup>190</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1978, p. 11.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

(Numbers 6:2). Theophanies were not the experience of men only, but rather of women as well. There are records that indicate that Theophanies were experienced by Eve, Hagar, Sarah and the mother of Samson (Gen. 3:13; 16:8; 21:17ff; 18:9, 15; Judges 13:3).

In addition, rites of mourning were performed by both men and women, and for men and women alike. Although the majority of the prophets were male, several outstanding Prophetesses appeared in Israel, for example, Miriam, Huldah and Deborah. Moreover, the earliest example of women participation in public worship is the one that presents women serving at the door of the Tabernacle (Exod. 38:8). Conversely, the Hebrew word *Sabbath* suggests a sort of guard of honour which should have been attended by only those who were counted in society, in this case men only. But the fact that during this day, everyone including women who had something to say were invited to speak for the edification of the people, shows that both men and women were equal and needed to be treated equally in matters of public life. Although there is no record of any woman addressing the synagogue (Luke 4:16, 20; Acts 13:14), still titles of honour such as "Mistress of the Synagogue," "Mother of the Synagogue" and even the "Ruler of the Synagogue" were conferred on women.<sup>192</sup> While it is clear that the teachings of modern Christianity on women significantly resemble that of Judaism, to some extent they do not. Modern Christianity has perhaps gone to extremes and exaggerated some of the biblical implications regarding women. Below are additional details on the examples of the roles of women's status and public life in Israel which exactly show the level of departure by the modern Church.

## **5.6 Role of Women in Religious Life: Prophetic Ministry**

The Prophetic Ministry was one of the highest religious functions in the Old Covenant. The Priest entered the presence of God on behalf of the people, while the Prophet went forth from the presence of God to the people. The people spoke to God through the Priest, but God spoke to the people through the Prophet. The mantle of divine authority was worn by the Prophet more than by the Priest. Interestingly, while the Old Covenant legislation made no provision for the appointment of female Priests, conversely, several female Prophets emerged during that period.

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<sup>192</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1978, p. 11.

The Priesthood had originally been appointed through the legislation laid down by Moses, who was himself a Prophet (Deut. 18:15-19; 34:10). Later, it became the duty of Prophets to act as correctors to the Priests and to stand in judgment against them and their Temple practices in times of spiritual and cultic decline (Isaiah 1:10-17; Jer. 7; Amos 5:21-27).<sup>193</sup> Prophets had authority to appoint Kings, to denounce their wrongdoings, and to pronounce their demise (cf. Saul and David). A major segment of the biblical record consists of the authoritative message of the Prophets. They did not act or speak on their own authority. Only a Prophet could stand and declare, "Thus saith the LORD..." or "This is the word of the LORD."

Although the majority of the Old Covenant Prophets were male, the Bible refers to several Prophetesses and describes them as exercising the same kind of authority in the religious sphere as their male counterparts did. The story of Huldah will suffice to illustrate this point.

### ***5.6.1 Prophetess Huldah***

Desiring to know the fate of his nation, the reformist King Josiah commanded the High Priest and several of his notables to inquire of the Lord on his behalf. They could have gone to either Jeremiah or Zephaniah, both of them contemporaries of King Josiah. Instead, they went to the Prophetess Huldah, the wife of a second-rank Temple Officer. She delivered to them a scathing denunciation of the religious corruption of the nation, and a powerful prediction of doom that motivated the King to effect profound changes in the religious life of the people (2 Kings 22:11-23:25). Thus, the spiritual leadership of a woman was used by God to teach the King, the High Priest, and her contemporaries. This use of a woman Prophet significantly affected the history of the whole nation of Israel.

### ***5.6.2 Female Role in Civil Life***

Several women in the Old Testament played a great role in the history of religion. Such women include Deborah, Ruth, Esther, Rahab, Athaliah and many others.

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<sup>193</sup> Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman's Place in Church and Family*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993, p. 69.

### 5.3.3 Deborah: A Deliverer and "Mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7)

The story of Deborah is recorded in the Book of Judges (ch. 4-5). It begins during one of the down phases of the apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance cycles, when the people were crying to the Lord for help (Judges 4:3). They cried because their enemies had been oppressing the Northern part of their country for twenty years, and they were doing it with an armoured cavalry of nine hundred chariots of iron. The people were also facing three kinds of difficulty: religious disintegration, military defeat and lack of competent political leadership to resolve the troubles of the nation. God's solution and answer to this plight was Deborah, a woman, not a man. As a Prophet, she assumed spiritual leadership, and as a Judge, she exercised judicial and political powers. She eventually became involved in directing the army in the battle field which ended in several victories against the enemy.<sup>194</sup>

Since she was a spokesperson for God, Deborah served also as a political advisor and as Supreme Court Judge (Judges 4:4-5). As a strong leader, she became concerned with the invasion by the enemy and took them into her own hands by leading the men to a war. The Commander in Chief of the Israel Army was a powerful fellow by the name of Barak. But he was too afraid to consider any military action against the enemy. Deborah summoned Barak to come and he complied. She told the General that he should go and fight the battle at a specific location. She promised him that God would grant him victory. Ironically, the General and the self-acclaimed masters refused to budge unless a woman, Deborah accompanied them, which she readily accepted.<sup>195</sup>

On the day of the battle, Deborah gave a final talk to the timid Barak and signaled the moment to begin the attack (Judges 4:14). Not only did the battle end in favour of Deborah and Barak, but also the defeated Army Commander was killed by a woman named Jael. The

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<sup>194</sup> Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman's Place in Church and Family*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993, pp. 70-71. Cf. Tokunboh, Adeyemo, "Commentary on Judges Deborah" in: *African Bible Commentary*, Nairobi: World Alive Publication, 2006, pp. 300-301.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

story was commemorated in a very beautiful poem (Judg. 5: 6-7, 12-15, 24-27). The land was finally at peace for forty years.<sup>196</sup>

#### ***5.6.4 Women of the New Testament***

The New Testament identifies many devoted women such as Susannah, Jesus' follower and disciple (Luke 8:3); Priscilla, a teacher (Acts 18:26); the unmarried daughters of Philip, who prophesied (Acts 21:9); Phoebe, the Deacon (Romans 16:1); and Mary Magdalene, the first to announce the resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 20:18).

Though the history is generally silent about the specific roles of women in the Early Church, there is no doubt that women played a significant role. Structure, hierarchy and Canon Law were fluid, and the New Testament says little about the Church Government, ordination or specific duties of official leaders. Lorry Lutz remarks that women were able to participate in the private domain, to which culture relegated them, as long as the Church met in homes. However, she asserts that after the Third Century, when the Church became 'public,' women's roles became more restricted through progressive Church Councils.<sup>197</sup>

Conversely, the virginity of a woman became quite important to the Fathers of the Early Church. They taught that the virgin life reduced the special penalties of the fall of humanity in women and was therefore holy. Their concept of 'the image of the virgin body' was the supreme image of wholeness, and wholeness was equated with holiness.<sup>198</sup> According to Warner, the fact that the mother of Jesus should be a virgin was a matter of such importance to the men of the Early Church that it overrode all other considerations, including the evidence of revelation itself.<sup>199</sup> This presented the idea that sexuality represented to them the gravest danger and fatal flaw. They viewed virginity as its opposite

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<sup>196</sup> Another woman prophet mentioned by name in the Old Testament is not a good example, because the Prophetess "Noadiah and the rest of the prophets" had tried to intimidate Nehemiah (Nehemiah 6:14). Nehemiah wants God to remember her together with Tobiah and Sanballat, but he does not complain that she was a woman.

<sup>197</sup> Lorry Lutz, *Women as Risk Takers for God: Finding your Role in the Neighborhood, Church and World*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998, pp. 29-30.

<sup>198</sup> Marina Warner, *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London: Pan Books, 1985, p. 50.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

and conqueror.<sup>200</sup> Thus, the Virgin Mary in the Gospels (Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2) sets a good example of a holy living: her maidenly fears (Luke 1:26-27), her humble submission to the will of God (Lk. 1:38), and her hymn of praise to God for the favour helped her to be the mother of the Messiah (Lk. 1:39-55). Mary shows herself to be a woman with a quiet spirit, humble piety, self-control and knowledge of the Old Testament. She was not given to talking with others about the mysteries of her experience, but kept all these things hidden in her heart (Luke 2:21). Matthew in his Gospel also writes of Joseph describing his reaction when he found she was pregnant, his determination to protect her from shame and insult as much as possible, and his obedience to God's command made him marry Mary (Mat. 1-2). Mary Douglas suggests that when early Christians threw over the old taboos, the Old Covenant and proclaimed an egalitarian society, with freedom and equality for its female members, virginity symbolized a pure and new world. She also argues that the image of the body reflects the image of the society, and that the virgin body symbolized the whole impermeable body of the Church in a hostile world.<sup>201</sup> The importance of virginity also hinged on the mental image the Fathers of the Early Church had of the female body. Virginity was created by God, and was, therefore, holy.<sup>202</sup>

It is, however, indispensable to note that in Christianity, the strict Judaic tradition was softened. For instance, the purification ritual for women as required by the Mosaic Law after the birth of a child, and obeyed by the Virgin Mary in the New Testament, changed its emphasis. Women were not required to be cleansed after child-birth, but a visit to the Church to give thanks to God for the child was encouraged. This ceremony, the churching of women, still continues in the Anglican Church and other Protestant Communities.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: 1966, pp. 186-187.

<sup>202</sup> Ambrose wrote that for a girl to lose her maidenhood was to "deface the work of the creator." Jerome wrote: "To show that virginity is natural while wedlock only follows guilt, what is born of wedlock is virgin flesh." He added that marriage is tolerable at all only because more virgins were born as a result. Cf. Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, pp. 43-44, quoting St. Jerome, *Commentary in Epistles ad Ephes. III, 5*. Daly also quotes St. Ambrose from *Expository Evangelical Secundum Lucam*, bk. x. n. 161.

<sup>203</sup> Marina Warner, *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, London: Pan Books, 1985, p. 73.

These aside, women were involved in the work of the Early Church. Paul refers to no less than ten women in Romans 16, referring to some of them as "fellow workers", a term which he uses to describe male workers in the Church as well. Those whom Paul greeted include Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis, all of whom are described as hard-working women and faithful in the Ministry of the Church. In these cases, the word used for "working hard" in the Lord is equally used for women and men just as the word "fellow workers" is used. However, Paul greets Junias and a sister to Nereus without qualifying them (v. 15). Nevertheless, Paul sends greetings to Junias, commenting that she is "outstanding among the Apostles." Lorry Lutz mentions John Chrysostom, the eloquent 4<sup>th</sup> Century Bishop of Constantinople, who wrote of Junias, "Oh how great the devotion of this woman that she should even be counted worthy of the appellation of the Apostles." And Eusebius, one of the earliest church historians, praised the daughters of Philip, who were Prophetesses. Moreover, as Paul travelled through Greece, he often preached to the educated and powerful, as at the Areopagus in Athens, where people gathered to discuss philosophy endlessly (Acts 17:1ff). On several occasions, the New Testament reports that "prominent women" accepted Paul's message (Acts 16 & Romans 16).

## **5.7 Analysis**

It is now crucial to remember that, in spite of the apparent misogyny that underpins the Christian religion, it offered women a revolution, as long as they subscribe to its precepts. St. Paul wrote, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ' (Galatians 3:28). The Early Church offered brotherhood to all men and women, in a manner unknown to the antiquity world. Although it considered women socially subject to the male, it granted them an identical status. Women were therefore equal in religion as long as the Christian code was accepted, and that entailed accepting its view of sex and child-birth.

Central to the Christian attitude towards women, is that it attempted to reinstate women by removing the conditions that made them inferior and kept them captive. A review of the New Testament Tradition and the Talmud Commentaries on the Law and other rabbinical writers indicate that any public life for a woman was frowned upon by religious leaders. In the Temple and the Synagogue, women were to be absolutely silent. They could not

participate in the worship in order to preserve the dignity of the congregation. Women were allowed only in the Upper Court of the Temple. They were also forbidden to enter any area of the Temple while menstruating or within 40 days of giving birth (80 days for a female child).<sup>204</sup> Jewish men in Paul's days were warned not to sit among women because evil comes from them like a moth emerging from clothes.<sup>205</sup> Although this was the situation, Jewish women in Palestine had greater freedom to go out of the house to the market places or to work in local shops than Greek women had. The New Testament tells of women who followed Jesus, drew water at the public well, were healed on the street, sat at his feet to learn, and were generally visible.

### ***5.7.1 Jesus' Contrary Theology***

Jesus was not a man bound by tradition. In his life and ministry, we find him consistently framing his actions by his own Theology rather than by that of his contemporaries. This is overwhelmingly true in his approach to women. The most surprising aspect of his dealing with women is that they were allowed to be part of his gatherings. The crowds which followed him included women and men. Jesus cared for women and elevated their status by providing their social needs. He resisted patriarchal structures and traditional assumptions and clearly demonstrated his support for women.

In Luke 7:36-50, Jesus' concern for women is very evident in his handling of the case of the sinful woman. He is very kind to her, accepts her signs of love and gratitude and compares her behaviour very favourably to the rudeness of Simon. Jesus does not consider her an outcast as did the Pharisees (v. 39). Finally, he praises the woman's faith and assures her that salvation and peace have come to her. Also Luke 8 mentions that Jesus had men and women disciples. At the crucifixion, Luke describes them as the ones who had followed Jesus from the beginning of his Ministry in Galilee (23:49).

At that time, this practice must have been very unusual for Jewish Rabbis and hence invoked their hatred against him. These are just a few examples in Luke's Gospel which show that

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<sup>204</sup> Lorry Lutz, *Women as Risk Takers for God: Finding your Role in the Neighborhood, Church and World*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

Jesus treated men and women equally in all matters of life. Of course, Jesus only chose men to be his twelve Apostles; maybe because, he had to yield to the customs of his days as a woman would not have been accepted. It can also be assumed that he did so because this was the initial stage of his ministry and he did not want to antagonize the Jews at this crucial moment. It is also possible that He would not have done the same if He had lived in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century AD.

### ***5.7.2 Sameness and Significance of Personhood***

The fact that both men and women are created in the "image of God" should exclude all feelings of pride or inferiority and any idea that one sex is better than the other. Wayne Grudem, with reference to Galatians 3:27-28, emphasizes that equality among God's people must not be forgotten. He argues that men should not think they are greater than women or are superior before God; nor should women think themselves inferior in the Church. Rather, both of them are equal in importance and value before God and equally so in the Church.<sup>206</sup>

Practically, this means that no one should think that there are any second-class citizens in the Church. If we are equal in God's image, then certainly men and women are equal and valuable before God.<sup>207</sup> Equality before God is further emphasized in the New Covenant Church in the ceremony of baptism. At Pentecost, both men and women who believed were baptized: "those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). This is significant because in the Old Covenant, the sign of membership of God's people was circumcision, which was given only to men. The new sign of membership of God's people today, the sign of baptism which is given to both men and women, is evidence that all are equal before God.

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<sup>206</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1994, pp. 458-459.

<sup>207</sup> This equality is an amazing and wonderful element of the Christian faith and sets Christianity apart from almost all religions and societies and cultures. The true dignity of godly manhood and womanhood can be fully realized only in obedience to God's redeeming wisdom as found in scripture. Cf. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1994, p. 459.

## **5.8 Ordination of Women in the Charismatic Churches**

The question about whether women in the charismatic churches can be ordained as Pastor , Bishop, Apostle or Deacon is received with different perceptions. Some allow ordaining women in the said positions while others reject it. The study went in depth to find out reasons why some are against the ordination of women and some allow it.

### ***5.8.1 Reasons for the Ordination of Women***

Interviews held with different Charismatic denominations indicate that they allow women to be ordained to different positions in the church based on the following reasons:

#### ***5.8.1.1 Biblical Reasons***

In interviews with twenty women of Karonga Living Waters International Church, one of them said the church allows women to be ordained as apostles for biblical reasons.<sup>208</sup> One of the women argued that the Bible says that Eve was created to help Adam.<sup>209</sup> It was not specified in which duties, but in everything, so why should women not help men in the Apostleship? The idea was taken further by four women who argued that since both men and women were created in the image of God, they can equally serve God in the priesthood ministry. The other remaining women pointed out that both in the Old and New Testament we hear of women who took some active roles in the history of Israel. Deborah was a prophetess<sup>210</sup> and one of the judges, and Anna was another prophetess<sup>211</sup> at the time of Jesus. This indicates that women have been active in God's service in the Old and New Israel. It was further pointed out that although Jesus initially called the twelve male disciples, some women also accompanied him during his ministry and he did not send them back, because he saw that they could take part in the ministry. Although it is not recorded that Jesus called the women who followed him, it is possible that he called them too. But whatever the case was, their services were appreciated as they were not sent away.

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<sup>208</sup> Int. Mercy Mkandawire, Karonga, 4.6.14

<sup>209</sup> See Gen. 2:18-22.

<sup>210</sup> See Judges 4:4.

<sup>211</sup> See Luke 2:36.

Again, interviews with twenty women from Zomba Calvary Family Church also supported the argument that women can be ordained as pastors basing it on the Scriptures. For instance, one woman argued that the Bible says that Jesus came for everyone and not for men alone.<sup>212</sup> Consequently all can serve him according to the gifts that they have received. The Holy Spirit does not give gifts to men alone, but to all, including women. One woman cited an example of Peter's address on the Day of Pentecost, when he quoted Joel<sup>213</sup> who said:

This is what I will do in the last days: I will pour out my Spirit on every one, your sons and daughters will proclaim my message, your young men will see visions and your old men will have dreams, yes even on my servants both men and women I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they shall proclaim the message. (Good News Bible).

This shows that even women can become pastors or Bishops because the Holy Spirit does not exclude women.

Five respondents pointed out that when Jesus rose from the dead he first appeared to Mary Magdalene and told her to go and tell his disciples that he had risen from the dead.<sup>214</sup> This was in a way sending her into the ministry, to preach about the risen Jesus. Why should women in the church in Malawi not take the message of salvation to all through the priestly ministry? If women were intended to be ordained as priests, why has it taken the church almost two thousand years to start debating on the subject while women had been active in Israel's history since the time of Jesus?

#### *5.8.1.2. Cultural Reasons*

The cultures of Malawi and that of the Jews also allow women to take a leadership role in the Church. One of the respondents argued that Jewish culture did not permit human rights for women. "Women were not regarded as real human beings. But in some Malawian cultures women are treated differently. Therefore, when discussing women's ordination, we

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<sup>212</sup> See John 3:16.

<sup>213</sup> See Acts 2:17-18: Joel 2:28-29. (Good News Bible)

<sup>214</sup> John 20:14-18.

must also take Malawian cultures into consideration."<sup>215</sup> Another respondent pointed out that in most of the Charismatic Churches and almost in all churches, the majority of members are women. The women are more committed to the church than men and as a result the church belongs more to them than to men.<sup>216</sup> Men just supervise. So there is no proper reason why women should be hindered from being a pastor, a Bishop or an Apostle.

The other five women said that those who object to women's ordination on account of biological reasons are not broad-minded.<sup>217</sup> God created women to be how they are in respect to their sexuality. The Church should no longer exclude women from participating in certain activities because of their gender. "It should be noted that society evolved and what was true in the past cannot be true today."<sup>218</sup> Every tradition is changing with time. For example, today many families don't observe old traditions of employing young children to apply salt when cooking food during the wife's menstruation and yet nothing happens. Church traditions also need to be changed.

#### *5.8.1.3. Ethical reasons*

Interviews with ten women from Zomba Charismatic Redeemed Church International argued that a female pastor would understand women's pastoral problems better than a male pastor and would therefore be in a position to assist them better. Some women hide their problems from male pastors which they would gladly share with a fellow female pastor. During preaching some male pastors don't rebuke when some women go wrong if their own wives do such wrong things. A female pastor would be free to talk against such behaviour and in so doing she would assist many women.

The five women and three men pointed out that naturally women have a role of caring for people. In many places women are more active than men in pastoral duties such as visiting

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<sup>215</sup> Int. Mr E.L. Kumakanga, Church Warden at Namiwawa 4.11.14.

<sup>216</sup> Women have CHAREWO while men have no similar groups.

<sup>217</sup> This was during focus group discussion with five women at Calvary Tabernacle Church, 12.8.14.

<sup>218</sup> Int. Dr. C. Machinjiri, Chinamwali Charismatic Redeemed Church, 23.2.14.

the sick, the aged, the needy and the bereaved. "Priesthood calls for good works which people can see, which women do while men fail to do."<sup>219</sup>

The six respondents pointed out that those who object to women's ordination have fears for the unknown. Those women to be ordained will be called by God and be screened by their congregations. The issue of women's ordination should not involve personalities but should be open for those who will be called to serve. If wrong women would go for priesthood it would equally apply to men.

One Pastor proposed that it would be good to see women in the Calvary Tabernacle Church in Malawi proving to the world that they are capable of doing what was reserved for men alone, since they have been trying for a long time but their plea has been falling on deaf ears.<sup>220</sup>

The argument that female priests would understand women's pastoral problems better than male priests is true. However pastoral duties such as counselling do not involve priests alone, as indicated in Canon 18:2. Lay women can help other women. But if some male priests don't rebuke some wrongs perpetuated by women, because their wives are involved, it is a failure in their duty. The fact that women have a duty of caring for people which is shown through their pastoral activities cannot be disputed. But in itself, it does not warrant ordination, because it can be fully utilized in the lay ministry, which is vast compared to the priestly one. Limiting such a person to a rectory would reduce their degree of activity. However the statement that priesthood calls for good works which women would do while men fail to do is a sweeping statement. Not all women do good works and not all men do bad works. This observation may have been influenced by having particular individuals in mind.

#### *5.8.1.4. Theological Reasons*

Interviews with ten women of Calvary Tabernacle Church indicate that biblically, there is no objection for women to be ordained into any leadership position as there are many women who had led men in the Bible. Seven respondents argued that there is no deep theological

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<sup>219</sup> Int. Aaron Kapitikusha, Likwenu 18.10.14.

<sup>220</sup> The Very Bishop Connex Kaduma, Zomba, 3.12.14.

objection against women's ordination to the priesthood. For them the reasons given in objection are not really convincing. They pointed out that some women have gifts which they should be given a chance to exercise in the church in the priesthood, such as leadership. To ordain women would make more women more active in the church because they have a duty to fulfill in the church as good as men and the church belongs to them as well. One of the respondents pointed out that salvation came to humankind because Jesus was born through a woman. Why should women be prevented from saving more people today through the priestly ministry? Those women who wish to serve in the priesthood should be allowed to do so because it is God's wish that they should do so.<sup>221</sup> Below is a woman who was ordained as a pastor in one of the Charismatic Churches.



Mrs Elizabeth Kalua being ordained as a pastor<sup>222</sup>

By looking at qualities of a good leader one cannot doubt that some women have qualities which would make them good leaders or good priests. But the statement that ordaining women would make more women more active in the church is not true. I have never come across a woman who stopped participating in church activities or going to church because there are no female priests. However the opposite would be true, that if female Pastors were ordained some people, both male and female would become less active in church activities or even leave the Calvary Tabernacle Church and join other churches, which would

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<sup>221</sup> Int. Mrs B. Chisala, Likwenu, 24.2.13.

<sup>222</sup> Elizabeth B. Kalua was first a chairlady of the Women's organization. Her husband is a Church elder of Karonga Calvary Family Church.

not ordain women, as it has happened in some parts of the Miracle of God church. This would arise because of dissenting views over the ordination of women.

#### *5.8.1.5. Working Conditions*

Interviews with ten women during focus group discussions showed that women can work as well as men. Women have demonstrated this in some secular jobs, which were previously regarded as being for men alone that they can perform more than men. They can travel long distances on a bicycle and would therefore travel to outstations just as male priests do. During the discussion one of the respondents pointed out that women could do better work than some male pastors because a woman is usually more cautious when doing things and would refrain from doing some bad things which some male pastors would do such as the misuse of money.<sup>223</sup>

## **5.9 Reasons against the Ordination of Women**

### ***5.9.1. Biblical Reasons***

Throughout the study the respondents gave various reasons against the ordination of women in the Charismatic Churches. The arguments given were based on people's understanding of the Bible as opposed to Biblical exegesis. For instance, five respondents argued that the Bible states that Adam was the first to be created and then came Eve.<sup>224</sup> Furthermore Eve was created to help Adam and not to lead him. In this way women were given a lower role from creation and are not to be at the same level as men or go beyond them. If they are ordained to the priesthood they will be at the same level with men and sometimes lead men which will contradict with the Bible.<sup>225</sup> However, this is not true because in the same Bible women led men. For example, Deborah was the judge who led the Israelites. Where were the men when Deborah was leading them? Did God made a mistake to allow Deborah to lead men?

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<sup>223</sup> Int. Mr L. Kaduma, Blantyre, 11.1.13.

<sup>224</sup> Genesis 2:21-22.

<sup>225</sup> Int. Mr G.E. Nkata and Mr AB Msusa, Domasi. 12.12.14.

### **5.9.2 Cultural reasons**

Seven women and five men in an interview pointed out that when a woman is expectant and even when she is experiencing monthly periods she is not expected to conduct religious duties even in African traditional religions. This would render her ineffective for long periods and very often right during her service. Some people may argue that this element of tradition may not be valid today because expectant women perform other duties up to when they are due, when they go on maternity leave. The tradition that when a woman is experiencing her monthly periods she may not carry out certain functions such as cooking is no longer valid in many homes. But some traditionalists still emphasize on that, although its significance is doubted by many people today.

Furthermore, interviews with ten men in the Miracle of God Church indicate that women cannot be ordained as pastors or hold any leading position in the society because of culture. The cultural structure of the society has it that the man should be a leader and a woman is a follower. With this in mind, it becomes difficult for a woman to be given a leading role in such a society. A pastor for the Miracle of God Church had to say this during interviews “even our culture tells that a woman cannot be a leader but only man.”<sup>226</sup> Our culture teaches us that a man should be a leader not a woman because a woman is a weak weapon. He even related to the speech of the former president of Malawi Bakili Muluzi who is to have said that “a female cow cannot pull an ox-cart.” This idiomatically meant that the woman cannot lead the man.<sup>227</sup> The culture of the society regards man as a leader, not a woman. The society has it that when it comes to leadership, men should be in front. This culture has also influenced the Church. However, some women were interviewed if given the opportunity to be chosen as a leader. One of them had this to say “I cannot lead the group while men are there, what is the role of men”? This entails that some women underrate themselves to take up the leadership roles. On the other hand one can note that

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<sup>226</sup> Int. Pastor Hastings, Kachinga, Miracle of God Church, Songani, 24.6.14.

<sup>227</sup> The former president Dr Bakili Muluzi was referring to President Joyce Banda, who was the president of Malawi by then that she cannot make it as the president during the tripartite elections that were held on 20 May, 2014. Even the fall of Joyce Banda as the president of Malawi during the election was greatly attributed to the culture of the society who are rooted in the culture that a woman cannot rule but a man.

some women cannot take up the leading roles because of the preconceived mind that leadership is for men.

### ***5.9.3 Ethical and Pastoral Reasons***

Interviews with five pastors indicated that women cannot be ordained as pastors as men are not ready to be led by women but want to be led by men. One of them said this, “I feel that it is too early for Malawian women to become pastors because many people have not yet been enlightened on the advantages of having female pastors, especially in rural areas where the majority of the Christians live and where the rejection is most”. Even in urban areas those who reject appeared to be more than those who support the idea. Priesthood is a calling from God but in order for one to become a priest one has to be accepted by the community that one will serve. In all places where women's ordination started, it was after a series of debates within the church. For example in the Anglican Church in England, there have been heated debates on the ordination of women and finally they have recently ordained even a female bishop. If the issue is not fully discussed and people enlightened on the advantages of the new system, then there will be a problem in accepting the move. Those who aspire or favour the idea have the task of educating people of the new system. If after the people have been convinced of its advantages they will vote in majority in favour of ordaining women priests at synod level.<sup>228</sup>

Again, interviews with ten women at Zaone Miracle of God Church indicate that although women form the majority of the church members, most of them are presently against the ordination of women because they feel that the change will not be for the better but for the worse. They claimed that a good change could bring positive results in the church. If women are ordained priests, instead of bringing positive changes, things would deteriorate.<sup>229</sup> This fear arises probably due to lack of knowledge of advantages and disadvantages of the new system hence the need for enlightenment on both the good and bad aspects of the system.

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<sup>228</sup> A majority vote of two-thirds of the votes is needed for the motion to pass.

<sup>229</sup> Int. Mr Moses, Malungo, Zomba Theological College, 23.10.14.

#### ***5.9.4. Stereotype Reasons***

The following are some of the responses in arguing that the characteristics of women cannot make them eligible for ordination to any position in the Church.

Firstly, five respondents said that women are generally emotional and get easily disappointed. They also find it very difficult to forgive others such that after arguments or quarrels, many women resort to resigning their duties instead of settling their disputes amicably. After some quarrels even within their families, they usually project their feelings on other people who are not concerned and they would not perform their duties well for that day. They would not work under stress, under which some Pastors. It these characteristics which can cause them not to be suitable for work.

Secondly ten men pointed out that by nature, women don't keep secrets and they forget easily. "This is one of their gifts," someone remarked.<sup>230</sup> They would reveal what is confidential to someone and realize it after the news returns to them. The element of confidentiality is very important in the priesthood in the Calvary Church because a pastor is expected to hear people's confessions which are not supposed to go beyond the vestry. But would all women be liable to these characteristics? Are there no men who fall into this category? There are some professions where confidentiality is demanded where women also work, such as medical doctors. Do women doctors not observe that code of ethics? This is not true.

Thirdly, two clergy and one woman pointed out that women are fond of back-biting and underrating each other. This, they said, was why the CHAREWO groups in many congregations are not strong. These characteristics, frankly speaking, are also found among men. If they are common among women then they can be debatable.

Fourthly, ten respondents during an interview said that women are not independent in their decision making. They usually depend on men's decisions such as their husbands or brothers. Pastorhood sometimes demands instant decisions, where they would fail to decide on their own. Decision making is a sign of maturity and one is not always asked to make decisions about what one doesn't know. Would this apply to all women or a certain

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<sup>230</sup> Int. Mr Maringa, Joseph Zomba 10.12.15.

group of women? How do they make decisions in other places of work where they head men? I don't think they go to their homes or their juniors to ask for what to say.

All the reasons listed above are human weaknesses and not gender based characteristics. While they may be frequent in women as the interviewees pointed out, they are not applicable to women alone. Men are equally liable to such weaknesses, even if it should be to a lesser extent.

#### ***5.9.5. Working Conditions***

The arguments here involved the capability of women to carry out some tasks that are connected with the priesthood in the Charismatic Redeemed Church International, under the existing working conditions.

Ten respondents said that women cannot work as much as men. Owing to the poverty of the diocese, they would be expected to work in some poor parishes where travelling would be mainly by bicycle. A priest sometimes goes to visit substations and may be away for a few days before returning to his station. Some parishes have more than ten outstations. For a female priest to be subjected to such conditions would cause a lot of hardships especially for married women. If women priests would be given preference for easy transport, they would be stationed in urban parishes only, which would create a division between urban and rural clergy. This would not be ideal for the ministry. When a priest is ordained, he is liable to be sent anywhere without being given a chance to choose. This concern was expressed mostly in rural parishes where the problem would be experienced most. For those who came from urban parishes, it came from two clergy wives, a theological student in the final year of his training and one woman who was a housewife.

Three women and one man doubted if married women would be allowed by their husbands to be posted anywhere as it is done with male priests. Women usually follow their husbands when transferred and the female priests would insist on their right to be stationed near to wherever their husbands would be working. There may not be a suitable parish to serve if they would be transferred to certain places. In other cases it would end up with many women priests being found in urban parishes while rural parishes would be lacking priests as it is happening with primary school teachers.

### **5.9.6 Observations**

The debate appeared to have strengths and weaknesses on each side. Each side used the Bible for reference to justify their claims. Taking the Bible as a means of judging which side is right and which is wrong would not give a right answer. It depends on one's interpretation of the scriptures and one's conviction.

On cultural and traditional reasons it also depended on how one looked at things. It is not easy to determine which traditions can be integrated into the Malawi church today and which can be left out. A lot of changes have taken place in the Malawian church over the years in such areas as hymns, liturgy, as well as practices. The claim to maintain an unchanging church tradition is far fetched. When it comes to Malawian customs in relation to working, the practice of excluding women from participating in worship services while in their "unclean" state is now a matter of choice on the individual concerned and not a rule. Depending on people's upbringing, some still regard such customs as effective while others do not. It would therefore be unrealistic to exclude women participation on traditional grounds because they do not make sense equally to everyone. Women are no longer excluded from those jobs which were thought of as meant for men alone.

Considering the ethical and pastoral reasons, it may be true that it may be too early to take a sudden step to start ordaining women. As the research as well as previous debates revealed, many people have not come to appreciate the need for having women pastors. The first step should have been for those who favour the idea, to enlighten many people on what the advantages of the new system would be. So far people have heard mainly about the disadvantages of the system, such as the defection of both clergy and laity to the R.C. Church and divisions taking place elsewhere in the Charismatic Church, where women have been ordained priests.<sup>231</sup> Let the people assess the good and the bad points and come up with their decisions.

The "stereotype reasons" are not really convincing because the characteristics mentioned are not meant for women alone. All human beings are sinful and no sins have been associated with one sex alone. No theological reasons put forward in objection have been

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<sup>231</sup> *Church Times*, Number 6904, London, 9 June 1995, p. 2 and Number 6920, London, 21 July 1995, p. 1.

convincing enough. The greater weight of the debate appeared to rest on the ability of a woman pastor to be able to function properly, given the condition of the congregations in Malawi regarding lack of good transport, location of congregation and their outstations, considering the strength of women in general. Some could manage but those who have experienced the tough life involved, doubt to what extent they would succeed. They think that things would not work as expected. However, other people think that women would succeed in spite of the fears for them.

## **5.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a biblical account of the role of women in Church and society based on biblical texts. It has been seen that some texts of the Bible seem to degrade the position of women while others seem to elevate and recognize the contribution of women. This is normal considering that the Bible was written by different authors who lived at different times and places and had different cultures and opinions. This means that certain factors that are historical and cultural have contributed to the biblical approach to handling issues affecting women. For instance, the Old Testament was specifically written for the Jews who had a specific culture, while the New Testament was written not only for a particular people and culture but rather for diverse peoples and cultures. The New Testament deliberately incorporated peoples of the world including Jews and Gentiles, making Christianity the religion of the world.

These cultures had their own view of women regarding their status, roles in religion and society. These considerations affected the status and the role of women in the biblical times, directly or indirectly. Although the Jewish culture seems not to have regarded women highly, evidence is there that many women were significant and recognized. This is also true with the New Testament women and men.

Generally, the role of women in the Bible began to be appreciated right at the genesis of God's creation of mankind when a woman was given to a man as his *suitable* companion (Gen. 2:18b). This is seen in many books of the Bible where women performed more than men in both religion and politics.

This chapter, therefore, has established that women in the Bible had been seeking liberation from the male dominated cultures that oppressed them. Even though patriarchy cultures, in both the Jewish and Graeco-Roman world, oppressed women, they still managed to fight for their rights and took leadership roles head on. In view of this evidence, modern women must emulate the women of the Bible if their fight for emancipation from both physical and mental slavery is to be realized.

Again, the chapter has shown that in the places where ordination of women has been approved, it took a lot of debating and civic education before people were convinced and voted in favour. Many congregations have not accepted the proposal. Doing things because others have done them is not a good thing because ways of solving the problem which may arise would be the responsibility of the local church. Considering the trend the debate has been going on, it will take some years of discussions before women may be accepted into the priestly ministry in the Living Waters Church in Malawi. My appeal to both sides is to have a spirit of discussing freely, as opposed to imposing views on others if it is the wish of God that women be ordained in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi and also other churches.

## Chapter 6: Perspective on African Feminist Theology

### 6.1 Introduction

In recent years, feminist consciousness has become popular in the theological and ecclesiastic world and of course in the secular world. It is an undeniable fact that it has become one of the most energetic and enthusiastic forms of theology that ever emerged during the later half of the Twentieth Century.<sup>232</sup> It is also interesting to note that this form of theology has become one of the prominent ways in which women have found a theological voice and have allowed wisdom of faith to be part of their lives.

The organization of Feminist Theology in Africa was not an easy task. Unlike other Feminist Theologies in Europe, America and Asia, by 1986, Feminist Theology in Africa was still unorganized. Interestingly, just like other Feminist Theologies, Feminist Theology in Africa is concerned with cultural, political and religious tendencies that marginalize women.<sup>233</sup> However, Rosemary Ruether is of the view that Feminist Theology remains positioned within the promotion of "the rights of women, of the dignity and values of women's lives, of the urgency for their economic and social liberation and of the prospect for human fulfillment within creation."<sup>234</sup> Rosemary Ruether's argument is that women's freedom is a birthright. To this end, Feminist Theologians contend that "men and women should work together as one family and one body for mutual enrichment and service where the weaker ones are protected and empowered by those who are stronger."<sup>235</sup> Relative to birthright, Mwanjaka urges women "to be prepared to pay a price for their rights through what he calls 'perpetual vigilance,'" so that they don't lose it again."<sup>236</sup> Feminist Theology in Africa has also been one of the primary means of both communication between men and women

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<sup>232</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *The Emergence of Christian Feminist Theology*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* Edited by Susan Frank Parsons, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 4

<sup>233</sup> Bishop Patrick A. Kalilombe, "African Women's Theologizing" in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 13, 2006, p. 6

<sup>234</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Emergence of Christian Feminist Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* Edited by Susan Frank Parsons, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 4-5

<sup>235</sup> Patrick A. Kalilombe, "African Women's Theologizing" in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 13, 2006, p. 4

<sup>236</sup> Damazio Mwanjaka "On being a male feminist in Chancellor College" *Perspective* Issue no 1, September 2006, p. 26.

and assertion of their status in the church. Therefore, from women's perspective and from all feminist advocates, Feminist Theology remains a positive development.

Feminist consciousness did not only lead to the establishment of Feminist Theology but also to other various Feminist Movements. According to Professor Amina Mama, Feminism is about challenging the ways in which the contemporary patriarchies in Africa constrain women and prevent them from realizing their potential beyond the traditional roles as hard working and income generating wives and mothers.<sup>237</sup> Her opinion is that most African women are trapped in the daily business of ensuring their own survival and that of their families and their communities. This is true for it encourages women to be economical despite of solely depending on the men. On the other hand the women are supposed to help men for the survival of both.

## **6.2 Emergency of Feminism and Feminist movements**

Legenhausen observes that "the development of feminism may be divided into three waves; each type is associated with a characteristic type of political demand."<sup>238</sup> The first wave is said to include the emancipation of women and some feminist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It emerged together with the abolitionist movement<sup>239</sup> and continued through the struggle for women's suffrage. Similarly, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others collectively produced *The Woman's Bible* with scathing anti-sexist commentary in 1895.<sup>240</sup> The goals of the First Wave had mainly to do with opening up the man's world to women's participation. Therefore, feminist in the first wave called for an end to legal discriminations against women so that there would be no legal difference between the status of men and women.

Feminism between the 1960 and 70s is called the second wave feminism. It is radicalization of women. The feminists in this wave viewed the concept of male and female social roles to

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<sup>237</sup> Elaine Salo and Amina Mama, "Talking about Feminism in Africa," *Agenda*, no. 50, Agenda Feminist Media, 2001. pp. 58-63. See also <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4066405>.

<sup>238</sup> Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, *Islam vs Feminism*. <http://www.imamreza.net/imamreza.php>

<sup>239</sup> It is a movement that spearheaded the abolition of slavery in America

<sup>240</sup> Ruth Page, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible*" in Ann Loades, (ed.) *Feminist Theology a Reader*, London: SPCK, 1993, p. 19.

be bound up with patriarchy and called for elimination of both. It sprang from the civil rights movement, women's discussions around abortion and contraception and the emerging gay and lesbian movement. While equality was still a goal especially women's enfranchisement in the white-collar workforce, feminist thinkers, including feminist theologians, began to question more loudly the social structures that classify women as second-class citizens. There emerged Liberal Feminism advocating full equality of a woman with man in all facets of social life. In addition, Cultural Feminism also emerged and was aimed at advocating moral superiority of women over men. According to Legenhausen, in this wave, Radical Feminism advocated the importance of a women centred culture and the elimination of patriarchy in order to liberate women from the control of men. Later, Socialist Feminism advocating elimination of white male dominance in the economic sphere also emerged. It is believed that this dominance is responsible for the genderized division of labour, racism and devaluation of women's work in the families.<sup>241</sup>

Feminism in the 1970s and 1980s is called the third wave of feminism. Feminists in this wave promoted a vision of liberation in which there is a wide range of plurality.<sup>242</sup> According to Legenhausen liberation is seen as a wide diversity in the options available for sexual relations and gender roles. The academia was forced to recognize that white North American women cannot speak for all women everywhere.<sup>243</sup> Legenhausen also contends that Alice Walker sparked intense conversations between women of different races, cultural backgrounds, and sexualities in the United States that have transformed feminist theology. Certain new terms were proposed by feminists of different backgrounds and womanists, by women focused on African-American women's experiences, is one of them.

In the secular world, economic changes, nationalism movements agitating for independence in many countries after 1945 and many changes brought by the formation of the United Nations created pressure for change all over the world. The impulse for change brought enlightenment to many social groups. The social groups took advantage of the climate of change that dawned in many countries to plan for advocacy and activism programmes.

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<sup>241</sup> Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, *Islam vs Feminism*. <http://www.imamreza.net/imamreza.php>

<sup>242</sup> Peter Kalilombe, "African Women Theologizing" in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 13, 2006, p. 4

<sup>243</sup> Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, *Islam vs Feminism*. <http://www.imamreza.net/imamreza.php>

Enlightened women, not to be outdone by the social movements, joined the band wagon of activism. Activism renewed women's dreams for independence because they were treated as second class citizens. Any slight movement towards independence of women met resistance because in western countries patriarchal stereotype behaviours controlled the social fabric. The wars of resistance were nourished by the activities of politicians and religious groups. Mill portrays a world where the law of the strongest seems to be entirely the regulating principle of world affairs. He elaborates that men have put everything into practice to enslave women's minds and turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal character is the very opposite to that of men.<sup>244</sup>

The unwarranted attacks on women activities and women's unemployment determined the emergence of women's activism. These two activities have also led to women shaping the themes in the discussion forums such as women's legal and political rights, violence against women, reproductive rights, abortion rights, sexual liberty, employment and discrimination, political participation and representation. Just as equal rights for women were demanded in terms of education, employment and the law, equal rights were also sought in the Church.

Feminist theology cannot be well understood without mentioning feminist movements. Feminist theology starts with women's experiences, rejection of patriarchy and re-looking at the structures of society whereby men rule women. It is believed by some feminist theologians that the Bible portrays a patriarchal image through the Trinity, the language of the bible and the symbols therein.<sup>245</sup> While some feminists argue that there is a core of helpful teachings that can be retrieved to provide some hope for women, the former maintain that there is mutual subordination within the Trinity. They reject any hierarchical order in the relationships between men and women. They also reject continuous use of masculine gendered language of God because it is seen to perpetrate a world view in which the male gender is superior.

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<sup>244</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Extracts: On Liberty and the Subjection of Women*, New York: Henry Holt , 1979, in *Ideas for a Free Society*, CD , 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. International Policy Press, 2009.

<sup>245</sup> Phyllis Trible, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Bible Studies" in Loades, *Feminist Theology. A Reader*, London: SPCK. 1990. p. 5.

Some thinkers argue that the Judeo-Christian God is the architect of patriarchal society, such that Farley argues that “the Christian tradition has too frequently, predominantly and insistently offered women a particular disabling gender construction.”<sup>246</sup> The constructions include: the failure to find femininity in God, woman is derivative from man, therefore she is secondary to man, the assumption that a woman is characterized by passivity and the tendency to interpret a woman’s body as impure and exclude them from some aspects of the church. And finally Page claims that the word theology is a gender related term translated from the Greek word for God - male. Therefore, it may be argued that the dominant gender construction of Christian culture for male is active, independent, brave, good or god-like. Hence feminist theologians are concerned with the way traditions work, shape and reshape social assumptions, the symbolism they use and the way society relates God to gender.

There is a range of feminist theologians and these are: The Revolutionary Feminists who advocate a woman centred culture and end up becoming non Christians. The Reformist Feminists look at changes taking place within the church structures. The Reconstruction Feminists, who seek a liberation theology for women within the Christian tradition and reinterpret the scriptures, without abandoning God revealed in Christ.<sup>247</sup> Generally, the Christian feminists believe that the gender divide between male and female is itself an artificial social construct and must be challenged.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the beginnings of the feminist theology movement because women faced a lot of problems in using the Bible to guide their life in Stanton’s time. Secondly, Page writes that the chief obstacle is the degrading position assigned to a woman in the Bible and in religion, as an afterthought of creation, the origin of sin, cursed by God to be unfit to minister and in some churches even to sing in a choir.<sup>248</sup> Religious denominations also taught that the woman was made after man, of man, and for man. This teaching enhanced the preference of a male child in American families (and equally in Africa). For instance, in

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<sup>246</sup> Ruth Page, “Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s The Woman’s Bible” in Loades, *Feminist theology a reader*. London: SPCK. 1990. p. 5.

<sup>247</sup> Patrick Kalilombe. *African women Theologizing*, in *Religion in Malawi* no 13 November, 2006 p. 5

<sup>248</sup> Ruth Page, “Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s The Woman’s Bible” in Loades, *Feminist theology: A reader*. London: SPCK, 1990, p. 18.

American women were not allowed to access education. Elizabeth Stanton cites her experience that she struggled to access education in order to compensate her father for a male child death robbed him. Therefore, Elizabeth Cady Stanton reacted by revising only texts directly referring to women in the bible. The basic point of publishing a woman's bible was to attack all those who used the bible to condemn women to secondary status. The *Woman's Bible* made a clear argument: to show that the Christian religion devalued rather than uplifted the female sex. This rebellion was seen to be against the Presbyterianism and revivalism teachings of John Calvin. This also led the Anti – slavery Abolition Movement. The subsequent scholarly works from the United States of America feminists crossed the border of United States of America and were read in other continents. These scholarly works awakened critical consciousness of Christian women in other continents.

It has become clear that as a result of religious discrimination, women of all religions continue to be marginalized at the societal level. And societal prejudices in turn influence religion in a cyclic fashion. Women are trying to transform the world religions for the sake of their own salvation. Women also have an obligation to empower each other by sharing what lies beyond patriarchy on their own. In conclusion feminist theologians of all colours continue to articulate the voice of the oppressed, to integrate theory with practice, and to be more sympathetic to women's needs in different faith communities, therefore for feminist theology might have a bright future.

### **6.3 Equality and Feminist Theological Perspective**

The world is full of inequalities and inequalities are a basic principle of the world. These artificial inequalities are not created by rules of nature but men. In most countries, the teachings of religious men overturned the establishment of inequalities. Bankimchandra points out that the world witnessed three amazing events in three different countries. Three great men spread a great message for the benefit of the world. The essential substance of this message was 'All men are equal.'<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, 2002. *Equality*. In *Ideas for a Free Society CD*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. International Policy Press, 2009 p. 15.

Buddha who preached against the evil caste system in India was the first person. The caste system was used against humanity for undesirable purposes. For example in India granddaughter Malti (19) who was planning to elope and marry a neighbour belonging to another caste, was killed by her uncle, 65 year old Babulal Kashyap, the police said.<sup>250</sup> This is a patriarchal crime committed by men against young women who do not honour the traditional culture of forced marriages, known as "honour killing."<sup>251</sup> As a result people became miserable, disturbed and frightened.

According to Bankimchandra, the second proponent of equality was Jesus Christ. When Christianity began to spread, Europe and Western Asia were under the Roman Empire. The great words spoken by Jesus Christ began to enter people's hearts. He said, all men are brothers and are equal before God. In fact, he who is oppressed, miserable and sad is the one more beloved of God. This great message deflated the egotism of inequality. On the second occasion, Jesus the Hebrew descendant stood on the mountains of Jerusalem and said, "Do for others just you want them to do for you."<sup>252</sup> There is indeed doubt whether the earth has ever witnessed words as great as these. And these words form the basis of equality. These teachings began to be accepted as the basis of religion.

The third person, according to Bankimchandra, is the French philosopher Rousseau. His book is entitled *Le Contract Social*. The book stressed equality at a time in France when there were inequities between upper classes and lower classes. The message eventually led to the great French Revolution. Education and the advent of printing propagated the messages from these three people. Consequently the old Europe started crumbling at different stages and times. A new civilization was slowly being established in Europe. The

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<sup>250</sup> "Honour Killing: Girl Hacked to Death by Grandfather in Kanpur" in *Indian Express*, February 16, 2011. <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/> accessed in 8.8.13.

<sup>251</sup> The phenomenon of honour killings is a crime as complex as it is horrible, interplaying as it does between culture, religion, and law. Killings continue despite the stand India's Supreme Court took. It took an aggressive stance against honour killing, describing the practice as nothing but barbaric and shameful murder and threatening to prosecute senior officials who fail to take action against offenders. Many victims of honour killing are young couples who refuse forced or arranged marriages and, instead, marry outside of their caste or within their sub-caste. The judges denounced village caste councils that decree or encourage honour killings of boys and girls of different castes and religions who wish to marry or have married one another. This is the strength of culture of devaluing women rights.

<sup>252</sup> See Luke 6:31, Mathews 7:12 (NIV)

goal of human welfare was also being established. This sage of preaching of equality also affected women too. Ruether summarizes that this development increased feminist activism. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century England, religious movements reaffirmed the equality of women with men in Christ and demanded to be given an equal role in the ministry. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century French women also struggled to include women in the rights of man and the citizen.<sup>253</sup>

These movements like abolition and Civil Rights not only shaped the struggle of women, but also generated a lot of subsequent liberation movements. These sages led to the birth of feminist theology as a response to women's claim of their new role, in other places it was named liberation theology, black theology and some women coined terms like womanism for their theological reflection in the context of their female ethnic histories. African women, not impressed by gains they achieved in their liberation struggles, demanded for regional meetings and global meetings in order to contextualize their feminist theologies in their regional context. The World Council of Churches funded such meetings and Asia, Africa and Latin America have worked out their networks within their regions, developed publications and conferences for their regions.

#### **6.4. Feminist Theology and the Place of Women**

Many Christian traditions imagine God to be male. Christian theologies and rules grant men a fuller participation than women in the life of the church, restricting women to a lesser role. Feminist theology intentionally works against the sexism of these traditions. Therefore, feminism is a critical attitude that challenges the patriarchal gender concepts that define males as superior and dominant and females as inferior and auxiliary. It represents a radical challenge to Christianity with an ethical belief that women should be treated as equals. The ethical challenges include priesthood and ordination of women, language, imagery and theology. Most feminists reconstruct the patriarchal gender concepts in order to include women in full, and equal to humanity.

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<sup>253</sup> Ruether, Radford Rosemary, *The Development of Feminist Theology: Becoming increasingly Global and Interfaith*. 2011, p. 1. <http://www.svenskakyrkans.se/default.aspx>

Those feminists who take the critique and reconstruction of patriarchal gender concepts into theological realm are feminist theologians. They question defences used by some quarters, especially theological justification, which justify male dominance and female subordination. In the secular World, Mills also groans that in every country, women are the slaves of men. Although this tradition has been prevalent in every country and from time immemorial, now there is a class of sociologists in America and England who oppose it. They believe that there should be complete equality between men and women. He wonders, if a woman is a man's wife, why should she be his slave?"<sup>254</sup> The participation and place of women is not only an important ingredient to the theological world but it is also a sign that theologies are slaves to the dominant cultural and Christian traditional values.

Anti-woman use of Christology reached its peak in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Lloyd argues that the Augustine claims that Paul's injunction (1 Corinthians 11:7) that man as the image of God ought not to cover his head whereas the woman as glory of man ought to cover her head,"<sup>255</sup> reinforces the image of woman as man's helpmate. Rosemary Ruether laments that in the opinion of man, the woman shares the image of God together with her husband and not on her own.<sup>256</sup> This space carved by a man's world is rejected by the feminist movements today, they have a contrary belief. Jessie Kabwila-Kapasula encapsulates the 21<sup>st</sup> century belief that "I am a feminist because I believe that women, white, black, yellow or whatever colour have you, are complete human entities who are not compliments or appendages of another sex or gender."<sup>257</sup> She believes that behind the woman's oppression, there is a question of power and global societies create and vehicalize power in the form of patriarchy of the human body, Euro-western colonization and its products for example religion.

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<sup>254</sup> Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, "Equality". In *Ideas for a Free Society* CD, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. International Policy Press, 2009, p. 55.

<sup>255</sup> Genevieve Lloyd, "Augustine and Aquinas" in Loades, *Feminist Theology. A Reader*, London: SPCK, 1990. p. 92.

<sup>256</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Liberation of Christology from Patriarchy" in Loades, *Feminist Theology. A Reader*, London: SPCK, 1990, p. 139.

<sup>257</sup> Nyangulu, Deborah, *Watt takes to be feminist in Malawi*. Malawi News, 2nd July, 2011, p. 6.

In her subordinate position Rosemary Ruether also groans that “it is the Christian doctrine that has been frequently used to exclude women from full participation in the Christian church.”<sup>258</sup> This assumption means women lack capacity for intelligence and leadership and should be ruled by male rationality. The impact of such teachings may be seen in women's lived experiences. For example according to Loades in the USA no college admitted women until 1834. And in 1840 in London during the Anti-slavery struggle Elizabeth Stanton and her women delegation were tucked away from men in curtained off space as a concession to attend the convention.<sup>259</sup> And in 1981 according to Pemberton, Jacquelyn Grant, an African-American woman during the opening prayers at the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) conference in New Delhi called on a Mother/Father God as a liberator. Male participants objected, calling her audacity untheological and unbiblical.<sup>260</sup>

The prophetic message of Christ came to overturn these patriarchal hierarchies and create a new community. This understanding of the messianic message brought a split in the Christian community. The celibacy community that promoted participation of women in its teachings emerged. However, it should be noted that these women are deprived of pastoral ministry. And the second group retained the patriarchal family structure and those with modified versions. The married male Pastors headed the congregation. They both operated on the assumption that patriarchy is the order of the creation between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America.”<sup>261</sup> The Vatican Declaration against the ordination of women in 1976 is of great importance. Ruether reveals that its importance is “revealing the extent of the construction between the message of Jesus as a redeemer of all humanity in which there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3.28) and the construction of Christology through symbols that make it the instrument of patriarchal domination.”<sup>262</sup> Pui

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<sup>258</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Liberation of Christology from Patriarchy" in Loades, *Feminist Theology. A Reader*, London: SPCK, 1990, p. 139.

<sup>259</sup> Annie Loades, *Annie, Feminist Theology. A Reader*, London: SPCK, 1990.

<sup>260</sup> Carrie Pemberton, *Circle Thinking. African Woman Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, p. 50.

<sup>261</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Liberation of Christology from Patriarchy" in Loades, *Feminist Theology. A Reader*, London: SPCK, 1990, p. 146.

<sup>262</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *The Development of Feminist Theology: Becoming Increasingly Global and Interfaith*. 2011. <http://www.svenskakyrkans.se/default.aspx> p. 2

Lan adds succinctly that “Many missionaries both male and female accused African, Asian and Latin American indigenous traditions of being oppressive to women without the slightest recognition of the sexist ideology of Christianity.”<sup>263</sup>

Muslim feminists have been rereading the Qu'ranic text to find out the anthropology of gender in the Qu'ran. Ruether says some feminists think that Islam took over a subordinationist reading of women's place in the creation story from Christianity.<sup>264</sup> Some feminists seek to oppose the reading of Muslim tradition which wants to restore what they see as the original pure tradition in which women were subordinated and confined to the home. In Islam it puts the emphasis on marriage institutions where the primary role of a woman is that of wife and mother. Some men have taken advantage of this relationship as an instrument of oppressing women by denying them an opportunity to be active socially and politically. Buddhist feminism in Thailand, Korea, Taiwan and other Buddhist communities also had its share of problems of the sexual abuse of women novices by male teachers and the struggle for full ordination and recognition of women teachers.

Finally I want to agree with Legenhausen's observation that “women have been oppressed ever since the invention of human sin and for nearly as long as they have been engaged in the attempt to free themselves from oppression.”<sup>265</sup>

## **6.5. African Feminist Movements**

In Africa, many of the influences on women's organizations have emerged from global forums and global movements and the adoption of international treaties, conventions and UN Plans of Action have been essential in laying the basis for further changes at the regional and national levels.<sup>266</sup> There are international linkages between different bodies within the continent. For example, one of the six organizations involved in drafting the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2004 was the

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<sup>263</sup> Pui-Lan, Kwok, *The future of feminist theology: An Asian perspective in Ursula King Feminist Theology from the Third World A Reader*, New York: Orbis Books. 1994. p. 68.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>265</sup> Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, Islam vs Feminism. <http://www.imamreza.net/imamreza.php>.

<sup>266</sup> Aili Mari Tripp, Regional Networking as Transnational Feminism: African Experiences <http://www.feminist africa.org/index.php/regional-networking>.

All African Women's Conference, which was the only regional organization involved.<sup>267</sup> CEDAW and other international treaties and conventions have been essential in shaping the norms driving the women's movements in Africa. Hence women activists have taken quite varying stances towards sexuality.

Their contributions to transnational activism include stands on abortion, women's seclusion, polygamy and homosexuality violence against women, women and conflict, the girl child, financing women's entrepreneurship, resistance against female genital mutilation, the role of government versus NGOs in service provision and, increasingly, in discussions about women and political decision-making. These issues have been the subject of considerable debate and discussion within Africa. According to Amina these topics were conceived in the 1970s at a time when African women subjected western feminism to anti racist scrutiny. This approach has led to some changes in the way westerners look at feminism from African perspective. Since then many westerners have not only listened to the critiques of African and other so called third world feminists, they have also reconsidered their earlier simplistic paradigms and have come up with more complex theories. Postcolonial feminism also owes much to African, Asian and Latin American thinkers.

Amina elaborates that Western feminists have agreed with much of what we have told them about different women being oppressed differently and the importance of class and race and culture in configuring gender relations. Having won that battle why would we want to abandon the struggle, leave the semantic territory to others and find ourselves a new word?<sup>268</sup>

## 6.6 Feminism

Although feminism started much earlier, it appears that the 1995 Beijing conference spurred considerable activity in women's mobilization. For example, some of these processes show that it was not always the actual event that influenced national policies, but rather the processes surrounding the conference that gave impetus to various policy changes. In

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Elaine Salo and Amina Mama, "Talking about Feminism in Africa," *Agenda*, no. 50, Agenda Feminist Media, 2001. pp. 58-63. See also <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4066405>.

addition to the national and sub-regional networks, there has been an explosion of Africa-wide advocacy and networking. Most of the new organizations are largely based in individual countries in Africa and are founded and run by African women. The Africa-wide networks generally focus on issues such as women's education, development, information communications technologies, media, peace, political participation and leadership, reproductive rights and women's health.

Women's organizations and networks have also sought to realize a better gender balance within African sub-regional intergovernmental organizations such as East African Community, Southern African Development Conference and ECOWAS.<sup>269</sup> Women activists often encounter fierce resistance to their efforts to advance women politically, economically, socially, and in a variety of other arenas. However, the fact that varied regional influences, from the African Union and the sub-regional SADC to African women's networks, are putting pressure on governments to advance women's rights has created greater openness to change on the part of governments. Governments responded by putting quotas for women representation in parliaments, promoting women to higher positions, appointing women to head local and international organizations.

### **6.7 Lived Experiences of African Women**

In many quarters the word feminism is a dirty word, in theological circles it is relegated to liberation theology whereas in the secular world it denotes struggles promoted by women who have no men in their lives to take power from men. Jessie Kabwila-Kapasula from the University of Malawi elaborates that "...after all when I speak, one of the first questions I hear people ask is, is she married? I wonder how the husband stands her, controls her? In other words, my identity is always premised on whose child I am, whose wife etc, never on my own terms as an individual."<sup>270</sup> These comments are expected and are a manifest of the patriarchy that is prevalent in not only Malawi but also in many African societies. Unfortunately, some women support this view because of the patriarchal structure most of the people have grown within and some have benefited from such structures.

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<sup>269</sup> Chidi Anselm Odinkalu, 2000. "Regional Mechanisms for Influencing Policies Affecting Women in Africa, Interights 2000.<http://www.interights.org/pubs/papersdefault.asp>.

<sup>270</sup> Deborah Nyangulu, "What takes it to be a feminist in Malawi?" *Malawi News*, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2011, p. 4.

According to Mwale “The conceptual framework of feminism, as a reactionary ideology, basically consists of power, woman rights, and equality”.<sup>271</sup> The ideology advances the core belief that women, too, belong to the human race and therefore women should have the same rights as men. Therefore, it generates political movements in the form of women’s movements in order to gain enough power and influence to effect the changes it advocates. It also mobilizes its followers and adherents to preserve what they value. Feminism views society as a society which is male-dominated, a society in which these structures are arranged so as to embrace and promote inequality between men and women.

The major weakness with feminism movements is the definition of African feminist theology and Western feminist theology because of different experiences in their settings. As a result concepts like womanism that embrace radicalism and hermeneutics that embraces culture have emerged as part of the definition of feminism. Despite these problems, the framework of feminism ideology is based on the liberation of women. I contend that this problem of definition does not deny the existence of African feminist theology but shows the complexities of being an African woman and a feminist at once. African feminism may not have a clear cut definition, but it is important to African women with regards to their identities and their roles in the feminist movements. The problem of definition may stem from overzealous foreign sisters who mourn more loudly than the African woman and end up fighting the African wars badly. These western feminists have dominated the discourse on feminism and on the women’s agenda in Africa.

In recent years, feminist consciousness has gained some strength in the theological and ecclesiastical world. It is one of the energetic and enthusiastic forms of theology that emerged during the later half of the twentieth century.<sup>272</sup> It is agreeable that feminist theology gives women increased chances to define the space they live in as well as finding a theological voice and allowing the wisdom of faith to be part of their lives. According to Bridget Gilfillan Upton, Feminist theology has also become one of the primary means of both communication between women and men to claim of their status in the church and

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<sup>271</sup> Pascal Mwale, "Where is the Foundation of African Gender? The Case of Malawi," *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2002, 11(1), pp. 114-137.

<sup>272</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Emergence of Christian Feminist Theology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, edited by Susan Frank Parsons, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 4.

even in politics.<sup>273</sup> Therefore African feminist theology is important for the empowerment of African women.

## **6.8 Feminist Movements: Reactionary Movements**

Feminist movements have a history of their own in Africa. Africa has experienced all sorts of mobilizations. The most common type of mobilization of women is in the political front. Political leaders mobilize the women to support them. They make all efforts to mobilize more women to support African regimes. These women dance in the streets within their roles as wives and mothers. These are examples of women being mobilized or taking to the streets themselves to support agendas that have nothing to do with feminism. It is apparent that such movements of women that do not direct their energies to redressing gender injustice or transformation of oppressive gender relation do exist. For example, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2011 Aljazeera TV beamed a sea of Libyan women over a million gathered at freedom square in Tripoli singing, dancing and chanting political slogans in support of the National Transition Council while men were in the battle front fighting a bloody war against Muamar Gaddafi's supporters who held on to the last two towns. On the ground there were no changes at micro and macro levels. They had shortages of food supplies, medical supplies, water and basic necessities. In August 2009 the Libyan state controlled TV beamed the same women gathered in their thousands on the same venue singing, dancing and chanting slogans in support of the Gaddafi dictatorial regime. Therefore, it is imperative for a scholar to clearly understand and separate reactionary movements and feminism in African context because most undemocratic regimes do not hesitate to involve women. Histories from different countries are full of such demonstrations.

## **6.9 African Feminist Theology**

African theology established itself in the 1960s. It is closely linked to liberation theology. It draws its theories from the reinterpretation of Christianity. Christianity is interpreted in such a way that one of its functions is seen as liberation of the poor in liberation theology

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<sup>273</sup> Bridget Gilfillan Upton, "Feminist Theology as Hermeneutics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, edited by Susan Frank Parsons, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 98.

and liberation of women in feminist theology. Liberation theology started in the West and transcended down to Africa through networking. Pui-Lan explains that "These efforts were chiefly made by women theologians of European and American descent and focused primarily on the white women's experience. It is only fairly recently that the daring and breathtaking voices of women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are being heard. These newcomers challenge the established order of things and raise the significant issue of cultural and racial diversity in feminist theological discourse."<sup>274</sup> Phiri also succinctly argues that "Feminist theology has its origins in the secular movement of women in the 1960s, which was aimed at the liberation of women from all forms of sexism and argued that patriarchy is the root cause of oppression of women in all spheres of life."<sup>275</sup> She adds that feminist theology has its origins in the work of middle-class white American and European women.

African feminist theology is a kind of protest theology because the white man's religion condemned African beliefs, Gods, and culture as paganism. On African cultural anthropology, Phiri groans that "Unfortunately, all African cultures have viewed women as less important than men, thereby making it difficult for women to have valid relationships with self, others (both women and men), creation and God."<sup>276</sup> She calls on Africans that "therefore, African women theologians are calling men and women in the religions of Africa and society to examine their cultures again from a gender perspective. On the one hand, cultural practices that promote fullness of life for both women and men should be encouraged, while cultural practices that are hurtful to any group should be stopped or changed"<sup>277</sup>

Elizabeth Amoah in Kasomo and Meseno has described African feminist theology as "genuine theologizing by women, involves reflections on the conceptions of God in their daily lives

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<sup>274</sup> Kwok Pui-Lan, "The Future of Feminist Theology: An Asian Perspective" in Ursula King, *Feminist Theology from the Third World. A Reader*. New York: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 63.

<sup>275</sup> Isabel Phiri, I (2004) African Women's Theologies in the New Millennium. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4066593>. Accessed 12.10.14.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Isabel Phiri, I (2004) African Women's Theologies in the New Millennium. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4066593>. Accessed 12.10.14.

and needs in the church. Therefore, theology is done by those women who are not formally educated, who express theology through spontaneous poetic lyrics, songs and prayers.”<sup>278</sup> She adds that African feminist theologies originated from development within African theology and expansion from doing theology based on women experiences of classism, sexism and racism anchored in religion and cultural perceptions. As for characteristics, African culture is community oriented and African theology follows the same roots, needs and well being of the community as a whole, thus a theology of interrelationship. They also make alliances with men to secure an African future. This is a sign that African women do not see African men as their enemies but as their companions although African women traditionally believe in the worth of sacrifice for the community.

The tools they use are feminist interpretation of the Bible, gender as an analytical tool, women experiences, western feminist movement, and rejection of the cultural socialization of women and men’s roles as fixed. Some of the major themes are empowerment of women, liberation and community. As for community Pemberton points to “the affinity between womanist theology and African women’s theology being that both involve the labouring of women to create a community that hinders women’s contributions”<sup>279</sup> Emphasis on the community is taken from Mbiti “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am”<sup>280</sup> This statement helps feminist theologians not to ignore the community. It is the community that makes the church.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Daniel Kasomo and Loreen Imenza Maseno, “A Critical Appraisal of African Feminist Theology,” *International Journal of Current Research*, 2011. vol. 2, Issue 1, p. 156.

<sup>279</sup> Carrie Pemberton, *Circle Thinking. African Woman Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, p. 55.

<sup>280</sup> John Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann, 1969, pp. 108-199.

<sup>281</sup> African women theologians do show us that through the rites of passage, people are incorporated into their communities and further that a person’s individuality is best fulfilled in relation to the good of others in the kin group. The theologian Nasimiyu Wasike posits that community participation is a very prominent value among African people. To her, it permeates all life. It is the matrix upon which all the human and social values, attitudes, expectations and beliefs are based and it is the foundation of an African theology (Nasimiyu Wasike cf Stinton 2004:129). African women theologians present community deriving from biblical and African traditions. As they do so, they challenge individualism that seems rampant in Western Christianity (Kasomo and K:2011, p. 159).

Some of the problems that led to African feminism failing to realize growth are illiteracy; hence Africa failed to produce literature on African feminist theology. Africans are oral people; therefore it was difficult to network with others in addition to the language barrier. Lack of cohesion because there is division amongst the women, there is intellectual African feminism meant for western educated feminists and popular feminism that includes illiterate women. However, women made it known that women feel oppressed in the communities and churches, there was colonialism encroaching on the African continent and apartheid in South Africa, a few churches ordained women, and a lack of professional female theologians. It should be observed that African women's theologies take women's experiences as the starting point, focusing on the oppressive areas of life caused by injustices such as patriarchy, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, capitalism, sexism and globalization. It is committed to exposing the ideological base of Christianity that maintains and justifies the oppression of women. And African women's theologies study the church women organizations, and note the important positions held by the pastor's wives and the importance of church uniforms, just to mention a few.

## **6.10 Feminist Theological Movements' Lived Experiences**

Feminist theology in South Africa has had a share of its problems because of the apartheid system. At one of the feminist conferences in 1984, black feminists found themselves to be a minority. Although the women were put at lower status by the patriarchal system, the white female theologians were busy fighting for equality with their white male theologians. This process left black female feminists in the cold. Landman describes the situation as "While white women were concerned with becoming part of the white male-dominated structures of the churches, black women were creating their own space within black theology."<sup>282</sup>

Black women relied on their black male counterparts to fight for them but they remained quiet. Some feminists observe that "neither the church, nor black male theologians, nor

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<sup>282</sup> Christina Landman, "Ten Years of Feminist Theology in South", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 1995, vol. 11, no. 1. pp. 143-148.

white women can be expected to be sensitive to the human needs of black women."<sup>283</sup> Consequently some feminists launched the struggle to *change* ecclesiastical structures rather than what was the case with the white church feminists. These feminist activists introduced a womanist movement in South Africa. Aniagoluin elaborates that "black women have known and demonstrated that their oppressions are different from white women's and so must the process of their liberation be. Pui Lan clearly shows what led to the birth of the womanist movement. She puts it that "African-American women, for example, have been told by white women that their struggles can be taken care of if they participate in the feminist movement. On the other hand, they are told by black men that their oppression can be overcome only if they join the black men to fight against racism. Over and over again, African-American women feel that they are not really included because they have to struggle against sexism, racism, and classism."<sup>284</sup> It should be noted that white feminism failed to recognize and incorporate this difference in the liberation movements of the 60s and 70s, alienating many women of colour in the process."<sup>285</sup> Therefore, Black feminists both from Africa and the African diaspora have strived to give a voice to their unique experiences of slavery, colonialism, male oppression and poverty. They felt that adding black women to existing feminist ontology shall not capture black women's experience adequately, they needed their own movement, hence the birth of the womanist movement. The womanist movement originated from the United States. Hinga says "Thus in the United States the context that is probably diverse, feminist theologies include womanist theology developed by women of African descent in response to what they have referred as their double jeopardy at living in the intersection of racism and sexism."<sup>286</sup>

The Womanist Movement was supported because of Nigerian women experience. The hard experiences of women in Nigeria were as a result of the existence of three legal systems, statutory, customary and Islamic, contradictions are created that result in discrimination

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Kwok Pui-Lan, "The Future of Feminist Theology: An Asian Perspective" in Ursula King, *Feminist Theology from the Third World. A Reader*. New York: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 69

<sup>285</sup> Chichi Aniagoluin, *The First African Womanist Workshop Agenda*, 1998, no. 37, *The New Man?* pp. 96-100 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4066183>. Accessed: 12.10.14.

<sup>286</sup> Teresia Hinga, "African Feminist Theologies The Global Village and the Imperative of Solidarity across Borders" in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2002 vol. 18 no. 1 pp. 89-90

against women, especially in divorce, inheritance and succession rights.”<sup>287</sup> The introduction of capitalist and individualistic ownership ethos by colonialism resulted in the demise of women's right to land and their productivity. The common enemy black women face is African governments that have not been as quick to return land to women as they have to men in the post-colonial period. Since women are the primary producers of food in many African countries, their lack of access to land and resources is at the heart of Africa's poverty. The second enemy is their restriction to unskilled, low paid jobs due to lack of education and their predominance in the informal sector of the economy. The third enemy is the limitations to feminist interpretations of women problems and solutions from a western perspective do not reflect the position of third world feminists in most cases. Those who opposed womanist movement claimed that it was not representative.

In fact womanist theology was responsible for opposing white feminist hegemony: “Other women of color, Asian women have challenged white women to stop using a 'universal' language as if they could represent us.”<sup>288</sup> It left out African Traditional Religion and its practices that sanctified and inscribed the position of women as priests in the African family structures. The Circle of Concerned Women Theologians is the most powerful driving force for theoretical feminist theology and publishing in South Africa. Christina Landman adds that white women academics stand accused of using black women as objects of research in order to acquire international recognition. Feminist theology was not introduced to South Africa by feminists. Neither was the ordination movement led by feminists. At present, men with political goals in the new South Africa are taking up the feminist cause in order to improve their public image and to keep watch over the political side of feminism.<sup>289</sup>

The Circle of Concerned Women Theologians, as women around the world, has come to realize that women experiences are diverse. The diversity of women experiences has given rise to several feminist theologies as women struggle with ways in which sexism impacts on them in their social, political, and historical locations. It became imperative for the African

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid

<sup>288</sup> Kwok Pui-Lan, "The Future of Feminist Theology: An Asian Perspective" in Ursula King, *Feminist Theology from the Third World. A Reader*, New York: Orbis Books, 1994, p. 67.

<sup>289</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa African Women and Patriarchy*, New York: Orbis Books Mary Knoll, 1995.

region to respond theologically to issues of injustices in their location. Hence the Circle of Concerned Women Theologians was founded by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, now based at the University of Ghana, together with seven other women. Previously African theology was a male affair and was ineffective. Metaphorically, Oduyoye described this scenario as a bird flying with one wing. She asserts "No bird flies only with one wing, therefore African men theologians cannot alone make African theology fly. Men in theology must realize that it is only as women are empowered to provide the second wing that theology will fly."<sup>290</sup> Thus the Circle highlights that the social welfare of Africa lies in the cooperation of both men and women to work together as a team.

When Oduyoye became the Deputy Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, she established circles for theological inquiry all over Africa in order to bring women theologians together and inspire them to do advocacy effected through writing, research and publishing their research findings in order to reconstruct African theology from women's terms. As a central concern of women Oduyoye laments "men could not speak for women, as a cultural theology constructed by men would leave women as no beings."<sup>291</sup> Thus silence was imposed on women and women responded by behaving as dead persons. Teresia Hinga elaborates "women had been discussed, analyzed, spoken about by men and outsiders as if they are no subjects capable of self-naming and analysis of their own experiences."<sup>292</sup> Women regarded this analysis of their situation as a summons, in their response they vowed to rise and make their own contributions. The specific concerns for women include rituals in their lives in relation to those of the bible, identify scriptures that will shape their experiences and destinies as African women, transformation of women power in the house of God and on the political landscape, identify complex and interlocking issues on violence against women in the contemporary African context - patriarchy, witchcraft accusations, domestic violence, female circumcision, poverty, racism and sexism, just to mention a few. The Circle is made up of regional representatives of Southern Africa, Eastern Africa, Western

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<sup>290</sup> Carrie Pemberton, *Circle Thinking. African Woman Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, p. 160.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Teresia Hinga, "African Feminist Theologies, the Global Village and the Imperative of Solidarity across Borders," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2002, vol. 18, no. 1., pp. 66-67.

Africa, Francophone and Lusophone Africa.<sup>293</sup> The call was to develop strategies for the self and social transformation from the local context within the subchapters. The reasons are appropriately put by Elisabeth Fiorenza in Hinga “for many African women gender oppression is multiplied by racist dehumanization, multiplied by exploitation, multiplied by colonization, multiplied by religious demonization.”<sup>294</sup>

The circle identified four areas as potential areas for violence against women and alienation. These are Cultural and Biblical Hermeneutics, Women in Culture and Religion, History of Women and Ministries, and Theological Education and Formation.<sup>295</sup> The refusal of missionaries to recognize and value African culture led to the collapse of women’s place within the social order. The Circle also identified the need to reconstruct structures and systems to enhance the *ubuntu* spirit and the need to networking. The same sentiments were echoed by Pui Lan in Canberra in 1991 at the World Council of Churches Assembly. “The racial and cultural diversity in feminist theology should not separate women from one another, but challenge us to be accountable not just to our own community but other communities as well.”<sup>296</sup> This call is necessitated by advanced technology, mass media, intercultural exchange and market economy that have brought all cultures closer to each other than before. The challenges identified are funding, to keep pace with technology, cost of publishing and that the cost of published materials is prohibitive for most Africans.

From some literature, I may argue that Christianity may be moving African women towards equality more rapidly. Christianity has had a significant role in opening up new roles for women, in giving them more freedom as individuals and considering them as equals to men. Both in individual life histories and in the history of the churches, the initial stages offered new social patterns of integration and assimilation.

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<sup>293</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro in , *Beads and Strands in African Women, Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye*, Isabel Phiri and Sarojini Nadar (eds). New York: Orbis Books, 2006,. p. 31

<sup>294</sup> Teresia Hinga, "African Feminist Theologies, the Global Village and the Imperative of Solidarity across Borders," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2002, vol. 18, no. 1.

<sup>295</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro in , *Beads and Strands in African Women, Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye*, Isabel Phiri and Sarojini Nadar (eds). New York: Orbis Books, 2006, p. 33.

<sup>296</sup> Nyambura J Njoroge and Musa W. Dube, *Talitha Cum! Theologies of African Women*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster publications, 2001.

## **6.11 Women in Indigenous African Societies**

The social, economic, and political status of African women varies from one ethnic group to another. Among the patriarchal communities women are evidently subordinate in their social relationships with men. In contrast, women in the matrilineal societies enjoy relatively higher social status. Overall, however, women occupy a subordinate social status vis-à-vis their male counterparts in virtually every domain of social life. There is a general cultural expectation that women demonstrate respect, passivity, obedience, submissiveness, and compliance towards men, especially with respect to husbands' wishes and demands. In many societies, gender role socialization commences at birth and continues through the lifecycle. The gendered division of labour is strong and women's activities revolve around the domestic realm: bearing and raising children, preparing meals, laundering clothes, and performing other household chores. Men assume primary responsibility for economic support of the family and for duties outside the home, such as hunting and fishing. The educational systems mould females to pursue petty trading, sewing, hairdressing, nursing, teaching, and secretarial work. Females who attempt to enter non-traditional professions may be frowned at. Although attitudes are changing, the culturally idealized view of feminine beauty differs from the West.

Currently, the predominance of the women informal sector and low-wage occupations, coupled with high female unemployment rates, contribute to the economic marginalization of women, many of whom must rely on husbands, common-law partners, boyfriends, or male relatives for material support or financial supplementation. Other enduring cultural practices that degrade females in the society include puberty rites, child marriage, and widowhood rites.

## **6.11 The Three Major Concerns of African Feminist Theology**

### ***6.11.1 Biblical Reading and Re-interpretation***

The need for interpretation of scripture is clear. Without interpretation, we are not able to believe the witness that is presented. This is not only because some scriptures are not clear but also because, without interpretation, we are not able to get what was said one time and

understand its meaning today. In this, Contemporary Feminism is not unique. Interpretation of sacred scriptures from within the tradition for which they are sacred is precisely the bringing together of the horizon of a far-reaching tradition and the present situation. This section focuses on the Biblical reading and re-interpretation by women in the Charismatic Churches.

Molly Longwe points out that many churches in Africa still maintain the traditional, male-oriented interpretations of the Bible that serve to justify and maintain that women are subordinate to men in the order of creation, as well as stereotyping such roles and images in church and society.<sup>297</sup> For a long time, women in churches read and interpreted the scriptures in the light of the understanding of the missionaries. This is based on the interpretation of the Genesis creation stories and the interpretation of Paul's words regarding the position of women in the Bible. It has been observed that their reading of biblical texts differs from the Westerners. Dube points out that the connection of biblical texts to Western imperialism has had several implications towards the reading of biblical texts such as on the issues of land, race, power and gender.<sup>298</sup> She therefore calls for a new model of reading that takes into consideration the presence of both imperialism and patriarchy, and seeks a liberating interdependence between genders, races, nations, economies, cultures, and political structures. However, Teresa Okure argues that the creation account in the book of Genesis together with Apostle Paul's writings have been misinterpreted and have been misunderstood as placing women under the rule of men in both the church and society.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Molly, Longwe, *A Paradox in a Theology of Freedom and Equality: The Experiences of Pastors' Wives (Mayi Busa) in the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA)*, PhD (Gender and Religion), University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2012, p. 130.

<sup>298</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, "Stand up and be Counted. Identity, Spirituality and Theological Education in my Faith Journey," in Denise M. Ackermann et al (eds), *Claiming Our Footprints. South African Women Reflect on Context, Identity and Spirituality*, Matieland: EFSA Institute of Theological and Interdisciplinary Research, 2000, p. 149.

<sup>299</sup> Teresa Okure, in *Women in the Bible in Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology*, (eds) Virginia Fabella, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Mary Kollny, 1988, p. 52. – For Malawi the same is expressed by Janet Kholowa and Klaus Fiedler, *In the Beginning God Created them Equal*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000 and Janet Kholowa and Klaus Fiedler, *Mtumwi Paulo ndi Udindo wa Amayi mu Mpingo*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2001.

Likewise, Musimbi Kanyoro argues that it is the culture of the reader in Africa that has more influence on the way biblical texts are understood and used in communities than the historical culture of the texts.<sup>300</sup> She further notes that many people read the Bible through the lens of their cultures. At other times, the Bible helps them read their cultures. This means that both culture and the Bible are significant issues for African Christian women.

Musimbi Kanyoro suggests that African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics should be an appropriate tool for feminist study because of its emphasis on both African Culture and the Bible. The argument of the African Women Theologians is that, although culture forms their identity and the Bible is liberative for the African Christians, one should approach both Bible and culture with great caution.<sup>301</sup> This is due to the fact that not everything in African Culture and the Bible promotes the life of women. Accordingly, African Women Theologians have consistently shown that the Bible and culture often contain aspects which are oppressive to them. Therefore African Women Theologians promote an "Hermeneutic of suspicion" when dealing with the Bible and African Culture.<sup>302</sup>

Again, Isabel Phiri gives an analysis of the interaction between African Culture and Christianity and its impact on African women. She points out that the Bible is read through the eyes of African Women Cultures meaning that the Bible is read in the context of African cultures.<sup>303</sup>

### **6.11.2 Textual Reinterpretation**

Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler observes that the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians works against a literalistic interpretation of the Bible. They argue that the Bible is patriarchal due to the androcentric nature of the authors. This agrees with Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's observation that the majority of the Circle Women subscribe to the

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<sup>300</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro, *Introductions in Feminist Theology: Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics. An African Perspective*, Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, pp. 55-56.

<sup>301</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics: An African Perspective*, Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002, p. 11.

<sup>302</sup> See Musimbi Kanyoro, *In Search of a Round Table: Gender, Theology and Church Leadership*. Genève: WCC, 2001, pp. 55-56, also see Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, p. 30-31

<sup>303</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, November, 1997, pp. 68-76.

position that the Bible is "thus says the Lord" all the time, but they fail to find meaning for themselves from the Bible.<sup>304</sup> In African Churches it is difficult for women to stand in the church and interpret the scriptures. This is also contributed to by the African Culture where men are always superior over women.

The biblical interpretation in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi has also become diverse. In common with other Evangelicals, some share the view that the Bible is teaching that men should lead the woman as proclaimed by God. The other group, equally Evangelical, argues that the Bible does not teach that men should be above women. They argue that those who claim that the Bible is androcentric read the scriptures wrongly. The major challenge that women in churches face is that they interpret the scriptures in light of their cultures which glorify men more than women.

The seemingly androcentric nature of the Bible and of the interpreters is another challenge that affects women when interpreting the Bible. The Bible is seen as androcentric because "women are not recognized" in the Bible. According to Amba Oduyoye, the world of the First Century in which the church was born was "predominantly hierarchical-patriarchal in nature."<sup>305</sup> This influenced the production of an androcentric Bible text. The argument is that the culture influenced the writers to write the way they presented the issues but that does not guarantee the position of God on these issues.

Second, the androcentric nature of the Bible is seen as responsible for the inclusion of wrong models of women in the Bible. Moreover, early interpreters, who were mainly men, constructed theologies based on such wrong models of women. A common example is how the story of Eve is presented against women empowerment. The story was used by such early androcentric biblical interpreters to argue that because Eve is the one who gave the forbidden fruit to Adam, she made him sin. This biblical (mis-)interpretation is taken as a reason women should not be ordained as pastors. The other story is that of a woman caught in adultery, where Jesus asks those around her to stone her if they never sinned. Here the

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<sup>304</sup> Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, p. 45.

<sup>305</sup> See Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Women Theologians and the Early Church. An Examination of Historiography," in *Voices from the Third World Women*, Colombo: EATWOT, vol. viii, no. 3, p. 70.

biblical writer exposes the sin of the woman and hides that of the man that is later exposed by Jesus. For example, why not reflect on the reason this woman committed adultery? Was it due to a lack of economic empowerment? There is also a failure to appreciate the wisdom from the wrong women models to promote the dignity of women.

Third, misinterpreting passages or words in the Bible to oppress women is another landmark of the androcentric nature of the Bible as well as of that of early male interpreters. Circle women argue that certain male interpreters have wrongly interpreted words or phrases in the Bible to undermine women. Okeyere-Manu presents an example of this model. She argues that the words "woman as helper" to the husband have been used wrongly to imply woman's subordination to men.<sup>306</sup> Also texts like Ephesians 5 about women submitting to their husbands; man as head of the woman; woman as created from man's rib; God creating man first before the woman and Paul's teaching on head covering have been used to promote patriarchal leadership in church and society and undermine women.

### **6.11.3 Culture**

The Church in Africa exists within different cultures. Molly Longwe observes that not all aspects of African cultures are liberative and life affirming for women and men.<sup>307</sup> She asserts that by using African Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics, African women approach the Bible with similar caution, especially when the Bible becomes part of their life.<sup>308</sup> Moreover, as Justin Ukpong observes, the Bible itself is steeped through and through in the culture and life experiences of those communities that produced them.<sup>309</sup> Hence, as with culture, the Bible is a double-edged sword, and it should be used with a degree of suspicion. For Amba Oduyoye, the biblical narratives are embedded in multicultural layers, and cultural

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<sup>306</sup> See Beatrice Okeyere-Manu, "Sacrificing Health for Well Being: Sex Work as a Livelihood Option for the Poor Women in Pietermaritzburg," *Malaka-le Theologies*, 2005, p. 4.

<sup>307</sup> Molly Longwe, *A Paradox in a Theology of Freedom and Equality: The Experiences of Pastors Wives (Mayi Busa) in the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA)*, PhD, (Gender and Religion), University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2012, p. 130.

<sup>308</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds), *Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians 1989*, Accra-North: Sam-Woode, 2001, p. 11.

<sup>309</sup> Justin Ukpong, "The Emergence of African Theologies," *Theological Studies*, 1995, p. 6.

hermeneutics should enable women to view the Bible through African women's eyes and to distinguish and extract from it what is liberating and life giving.<sup>310</sup>

Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler observes that culture is viewed as imposing multiple patriarchal forces on the women, thus necessitating reinterpretation.<sup>311</sup> Some of the patriarchal oppression in culture that women deal with is related to one's identity, marriage stability and religious misconceptions about women. It requires multiple interpretative tools to unsettle these cultural patriarchal oppressions. When women are involved in reinterpreting the culture, they face the challenge of not being able to either remain in their culture or to be liberated from their cultures. Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler argues that this happens just because of conflictual realities in the life of African women which present a challenge in making choices on what is liberating and what is not.<sup>312</sup>

#### ***6.11.4 Two Winged Theology***

The Two Wing Theology is the theology of women and men balancing each other as they work together in church and society.<sup>313</sup> African churches, Charismatic Churches in particular, need this type of theology so that both men and women work together in the church and contribute towards church growth and development.

Oduyoye in her article "The Search for the Two Winged Theology" points out that African women have to know their culture; their own minds challenge and appropriate knowledge of what is of value and upholds their humanity.<sup>314</sup>

It has been observed that the Church in Africa has preached about the equality of all the people, yet in practice it is often still excluding women from the Eucharistic Ministry. This

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<sup>310</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds), *Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians 1989*, Accra-North: Sam-Woode, 2001, pp. 11-12.

<sup>311</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *The Circle of the Concerned African Women Theologians 1989-2007: History and Theology*, PhD, University of the Free State, 2011.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Search for a Two Winged Theology," p. 29.

<sup>314</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "'When to Say No' The Concern of African Women Theologians for a critical Review of African Religious Traditions," in Musimbi Kanyoro (ed) *Our Advent. African Women's Experiences in the Lutheran Tradition*, Proceedings of African Lutheran Women Theologians Meeting, Addis Ababa, December 2-7, 1990, Addis Ababa: LWF, 1991, p. 18.

makes some scholars to argue that the church is hypocritical. The churches have to a large extent ignored the religious roles that women play in the church. It only accepts the traditional roles that women play in the society and selects elements from African Culture that confirm its exclusion of women from authority where men are present. Here, women demand that the church should return to Jesus' understanding of authority and ministry so that both become partners in authority. The central point in the Two Winged Theology is that there should be a balance in authority and roles between men and women in the church.<sup>315</sup>

#### *6.11.5 Current Status of African Feminist Theology in Malawi*

Malawi is proud to be among the few states in Africa to have endured the teething challenges of democracy and to have achieved a level of democratic maturity that only a handful of African countries have managed to gain. Malawi adheres to all democratic principles including respect for women's rights. This does not only concern constitutional provisions but also concerns translation of the ideals in the Constitution into clearly demonstrable actions. For the past 48 years, progress has been made in the area of women's inclusion in leadership position. The country now boasts of women occupying key positions in government such as Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Attorney General and a hoard of Ministers and even at one time the President herself. While the presence of women in key political positions does not generally translate into a guarantee of change for women, this has made it possible for women to demonstrate sound political leadership. There is a growing awareness of gender equality and women's needs.

Women's political participation entails a lot more than merely a few tokens in political positions. It entails a wide range of actions and strategies, which include voting and voter education, candidacy, support of candidates on gender sensitive issues and advocacy. The strategies and actions may be in the form of quotas, gender mainstreaming, gender budgets and party-list systems which allow women to vie for seats in the legislature and other friendly programmes that enhance women's opportunity for representation. The quest for

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<sup>315</sup> Annie Mercert, "Liberation" in, Letty M. Russell and Shannon Clarkson, *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*,+++ Louisville Westminster: John Knox Press, 1996.

affirmative action is not a new subject in Malawi's gender, democratic and governance discourses. There have been instances where affirmative actions have been applied and are producing positive results, such as increased admission into tertiary institutions and also the pro poor programmes. For example, the University of Malawi selected 445 female and 463 male students representing 49% female and 51% male students respectively.

While there is no deliberate attempt to keep women out of politics, there is also no clear programme to ensure that they participate, given the disadvantaged position women find themselves in, and the conditions surrounding their effective participation. Despite having undergone four multiparty elections, the number of women holding political positions during the tenure of the government has often been inconsistent and declining.<sup>316</sup> The low number of women in political positions is a concern shared by gender governance activists.<sup>317</sup>

Chancellor College students and staff stoned the house of Dr Isabel Phiri at Chancellor College because she presented a paper titled "Violence Against Women in Educational Institutions: The Case of Sexual Harassment and Rape on Chancellor College Campus" at the annual conference of the University Research and Development Committee, held at Sun and Sand Holiday Resort in Mangochi. The paper aimed at determining the level of sexual harassment and incidences of rape on female students of Chancellor College campus. The findings were that a higher percentage of students were sexually harassed on campus and were not reported to the police or College administration.<sup>318</sup> This was broadcasted on MBC radio. The paper angered Chancellor College students who were worried about their reputation to the parents and the community at large. However, the news circulating in the

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<sup>316</sup> See 2015 Parliamentary seat, out of 195 members of Parliament, 56 are females and 139 are male. However the leadership positions still remain in men hands as women still deputize in the Parliament. For example Richard Msowoya is the speaker of national Assembly while Mcheka Chilenje is her vice and has been a vice since 2009. Likewise in some charismatic churches women become a vice. For example, in the Charismatic Redeemed Church, Bishop is Mark Kambalazaza while Losta Chikuferanji is her Secretary.

<sup>317</sup> Manford Nyirongo, *Examine problems, Trends, and Prospects of Women's numerical participation in politically appointed positions in the Malawi Public Service*, MA, University of Malawi, Zomba: 2009, p. 26.

<sup>318</sup> Kenneth R. Ross, *God, People and Power in Malawi, Democratization in Theological Perspective in Isabel Apawo Phiri's article Marching, Suspended and Stoned: Christian Women in Malawi*: Blantyre: Christian Literature Association in Malawi (CLAIM) 1996, pp. 89-90

rural areas then was different. The speculation was that these women also attempted to translate the Bible to replace GOD with GODDESS, a HE with a SHE. This was not the case. It was also reported that most of the attendees of that gender conference were singles. From this case one can note that women face challenges when they rebuke inequality or oppression they experience in an organization and a church cannot be spared.

### **6.11.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has demonstrated that Feminism developed in three phases, each having special political characteristics. Feminism is about challenging ways in which the contemporary patriarchies in Africa constrain women and prevent them from realizing their potential beyond their traditional roles as hard workers. The first phase/wave developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. This aimed at equal women participation. The second phase developed in the 1960s and 1970s and the third phase of Feminism developed between 1970 and the 1980s. This time, Feminists promoted a vision of liberation in which there is a wide range of pluralism.<sup>319</sup> Here the Feminists viewed the concept of male and female social roles as being bounded by patriarchy. It has also shown that Feminist Theology started with women experiences, reflection of patriarchy and relooking at the structure of the society whereby men rule them.

Furthermore, it has also shown that through African Feminist Theology women have found a theological voice and have allowed wisdom of faith to be part of their lives. In Africa, Feminist Theology is concerned with cultural, political and religious tendencies that marginalize women. It is the core role of Feminist Theology to promote the rights, dignity and values of women. Finally, this chapter has also highlighted the three major concerns of African Feminist Theology that include Biblical re-interpretation, and cultural re-interpretation. Finally, it has been observed that for the church in Africa and the world over to work with women without bias, it should practice a Two Winged Theology. That is a theology of men and women balancing each other as they work together in church and society.

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<sup>319</sup> Patrick Kalilombe, "African Women Theologizing" in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 13, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Chancellor College, UNIMA, 2006, p. 4.

# **Chapter 7: Case Studies on Women in the Charismatic Churches**

## **7.0 Introduction**

The issue of women and their roles in church and society continues to be at the centre of attraction. The issue is whether women should be ordained as Elders, Pastors, Bishops, Apostles and or Priests in the churches.<sup>320</sup> While there seems to be no reason for barring women from participating in leadership positions, men and women do realize that formidable social and religious forces that subordinate women do exist. This, therefore, forms the basis for this discussion. There are quite some differences in attitude to women's position in church among the Charismatic churches in Malawi, and there are too many to discuss them all; so I have selected a number of Charismatic churches which represent the overall spectrum on this issue. This Chapter focusses therefore on the role of women in World Alive Ministries (WAMI), Chimwankhunda Living Waters, Zomba Redeemed Charismatic Church, All for Jesus, Zomba Calvary Family, and Calvary Tabernacle Church.

## **7.1 The Role of Women in the World Alive Ministries (WAMI)**

### ***7.1.1 Historical Background***

The role of women in WAMI can be traced back to the founding Pastor who was a woman. The history of the Ladies' Ministry (LM) goes back to early 1978, when Rev. Barbara Tippett pioneered a Fellowship in her house which later became a Church. She encouraged women to take part in business, health, politics, missions and Church growth. She laid a good foundation for future women leaders of the Ministry.

The LM started when women began meeting for Bible Studies held on Tuesdays in Blantyre. At first, women only organized bridal and baby showers, but as the Ministry grew, other

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<sup>320</sup> See Wilbur O'Donovan, *Women in Modern Africa and In the Church*, Paternoster Press, 2000, p. 183.

activities were incorporated.<sup>321</sup> In 2007, the Ministry celebrated its Twentieth Anniversary together with the Church.

Mrs Norma Ironside was the first Minister in 1978 who was later succeeded by Mrs Sakyi in 2003. Later in 2003 Mrs Kamthuzi took over the Ministry and was succeeded by Pastor Mrs Hanna Mijoya, who currently leads the Ministry. Pastor Mijoya also serves as a Church Elder. She has been a member of WAMI for over twenty years. She ran the Ministry as a caretaker Shepherd the time the Church was undergoing a restructuring process.

The Ministry organized its First Annual Convention in May 2004, and Mrs Ironside was the main speaker. Since then they conducted conferences annually except in 2007, when Malawi's First Lady Ethel Mutharika died.<sup>322</sup> However, other sources indicate that such conferences are organized when it is necessary.

### ***7.1.2 The Aim, Vision and Mission of the LM***

The aim of the LM is to empower women so that they should serve God effectively. The LM creates a conducive environment for all women to function effectively within and without the Church. Its vision is "to help every woman become a servant of Christ, and fulfill their roles in the Church and society."<sup>323</sup> The LM operates within the general vision of WAMI. The vision of the LM is built on the following six key blocks:<sup>324</sup>

1. Equip: to provide one another with what is necessary for doing something.
2. Every woman: every woman is useful all the times in God's Kingdom.
3. An able servant: God has invested abilities in every human being.
4. The Lord Jesus: a woman has been called to become a servant in God's vineyard and she respects the authority God has put in man.
5. Fulfill their roles: God has set roles for a woman and the need to function according to the roles.

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<sup>321</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Hanna Mijoya, Living Waters Blantyre Assembly, 31.1.2011.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Word Alive Magazine, *Along Memory Lane: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*, p. 15.

<sup>324</sup> Word Alive Ministries International, *Understanding Word Alive Ministries*, July 10, 2010, p. 7.

6. Catchment area: the woman's scope of work includes the Church, the family and the community as she carries a single identity.

The LM carries the identity of *Women of Chayil*, which means virtue, excellence, strength and uniqueness.<sup>325</sup> Their identity was apparently taken from Proverbs 31:10-31.<sup>326</sup> The Ministry is generally organized like other women organizations of other Churches in Malawi, although it is unique in its own ways as will be discussed later. It is founded on integrity, excellence, and power usually demonstrated both at the Church and the family level.

The Ministry uses a parallel Biblical reference criterion when it comes to the roles and place of women in the Church and society.<sup>327</sup> The assumption is that the woman was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and therefore shares equal responsibilities with man (Gen. 1:26, 28-30). She is the man's companion not his follower (Gen. 2:18-20), though created soon after man (Gen. 2:21-22 and 1 Co. 11:3, 7-8, 12). The "Law of being created first" does not really help settle questions about the role of a woman in the Church and society. The LM believes that God created a woman not as a puppet for man, but rather as an equal companion meant to complement him (Gen. 2:18-20), even though sin brought confusion.

The LM believes that God deposited the following great virtues<sup>328</sup> in the woman, which the devil misused to bring about sin.<sup>329</sup>

1. Sight: an ability to see beyond the physical (Gen. 3:6).
2. Openness: ability to make friends. She easily associated with the serpent (Gen. 3:1-4).
3. Receptivity: the woman easily accepted the offer (Gen. 3:6).
4. Appreciation: the fruit was pleasing to her eyes (Gen. 3:6).
5. Influence: she convinced the husband to eat the fruit (Gen. 3:6).

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<sup>325</sup> Int. Mayibusa Gertrude, Sichinga, Blantyre, 20.1.2013.

<sup>326</sup> The passage describes a virtuous woman.

<sup>327</sup> Word Alive Ministries International, *Understanding Word Alive Ministries*, July 10, 2010, pp. 7-8.

<sup>328</sup> However, the ministry believes that these blessings can be used in the right manner to glorify God and accomplish his purposes.

<sup>329</sup> Word Alive Ministries International, *Understanding Word Alive Ministries*, July 10, 2010, p. 8.

## 7.2 Pastoral Internship and Ordination

Mrs Aida Kawalala, Mrs Hanna Mijoya, Mrs Margaret Chombo, Towera Masiku<sup>330</sup> and Sellina Musongole are the five female Pastors. Mrs Hanna Mijoya and Towera Masiku were ordained during the 2012 Silver Jubilee Celebrations and Church Ablaze Conference, during the WAMI's Annual Conference, while the other three are still on Pastoral internship.

An internship is not a promotion from the position of Elder to Pastor, but a training process spanning three years.<sup>331</sup> An intern is given some Pastoral tasks<sup>332</sup> and is later appraised by qualified people. Two of the interns completed their training in 2011 and were accordingly ordained as Pastors. Unlike many Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches, but like most Mainline Churches, WAMI is not in a hurry to ordain all its Pastors.

## 7.3 Property Ownership and Uniform

The LM does not own any property because; to them everything belongs to the church.<sup>333</sup> However, members of the LM are identified by their sky-blue long sleeved blouses with matching black skirts. Sky-blue is an institutional colour, while black skirts were just chosen to match with the sky-blue blouses.<sup>334</sup> The LM uniforms were introduced by Rev. Dr. Zacc Kawalala. However, the blue institutional colour had been introduced earlier by Rev. Barbara Tippett.

While colour symbolism is taken seriously by every community, be it religious or secular,<sup>335</sup> the WAMI women I interviewed did not know the meaning of the colours of their

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<sup>330</sup> She writes a column in the *Nation on Sunday* titled *The Virtuous Woman*. The title of her column also happens to be the identity of the Ladies' Ministry of WAMI whether by design or coincidence. A couple of years ago she also used to feature in Malawi Broadcasting Corporation's drama titled *Theatre of the Air*.

<sup>331</sup> Int. Pastor Hanna, Mijoya, Blantyre Assembly, 31.1.2013.

<sup>332</sup> The pastoral roles include counselling and praying for people with special needs after office hours.

<sup>333</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Hanna, Mijoya, Blantyre Assembly, 31.1.2013.

<sup>334</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Aida, Kawalala, Mrs Lilly, Tembo, *Mayibusa* Gertrude Sickinga, Blantyre Assembly, 17.9.2012.

<sup>335</sup> For example, in the Bimbi Cult the black colour symbolizes a dark cloud which brings rain and this is crucial for agriculture which sustains human life. Additionally, the black uniform could be a sign of superior dignity in spiritual matters to cut the Bimbis off from the community as a whole. Hence the black colour symbolizes goodness and "coolness" conditions that avert drought. This is contrary to the popular view that black

uniforms.<sup>336</sup> Six women from Ndirande Assembly interviewed did not know the theological significance of the colours of their uniforms.<sup>337</sup> One of them wrongly suggested that the colours symbolized the glory of God. The same responses were obtained from the three senior members of the LM at the Blantyre Assembly.<sup>338</sup>

Colour symbolism is a common phenomenon among Christian women organizations. In most Churches, the chosen colours have some special theological interpretations.<sup>339</sup> The uniform helps unite women as they come from different socio-economic backgrounds. The WAMI ladies put on their uniforms during Holy Communion, conferences, funerals and other Church events.<sup>340</sup>

## 7.4 Growth, Meetings, Membership and General Protocols

The restructuring exercise the Church undertook in 2002 benefited this Ministry. The decision to expand the Church beyond Blantyre also helped the LM expand its activities to other Assemblies. Following this process, the LM has also expanded to Lilongwe, Ndirande<sup>341</sup> and other parts of Malawi. Nationally, the LM has 500 registered members.<sup>342</sup> However, some WAMI branches like Mzuzu Spiritual Centre have not yet established the LM.<sup>343</sup> Women in WAMI assemblies meet every Tuesday<sup>344</sup> and Saturday. The LMs holds

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symbolizes evil or darkness and that it negates all that is good or pure which is symbolised by the white colour (see James Amanze, *African Traditional Religion: The Case of the Bimbi Cult*, Kachere Monograph no. 17, Zomba, 2002, pp. 27-28).

<sup>336</sup> It is important, therefore, that the church civic educates women and all church members on this development and other critical issues. If Rev. Barbara Tippett herself were around, perhaps she would have told us why she chose sky blue for her institution. It could be that the church does not prioritise colour symbolism.

<sup>337</sup> Group discussions, Ndirande Living Waters church, 26.2.2013.

<sup>338</sup> Int. Nelson, Phiri. Blantyre City Assembly, 17. 9. 2013.

<sup>339</sup> For instance, the Baptist Convention women in Malawi have purple and white colours in their uniform. The purple colour shows that the women belong to the kingly rule of God. The white colour shows that these women are holy (see Rachel, NyaGondwe Banda, *Women of Bible and Culture: Baptist Convention Women in Southern Malawi*, Kachere Theses no. 3, Kachere Series, Zomba, 2005, p. 114).

<sup>340</sup> Focus group discussions (FGDs), Ndirande Assembly, 26.2.2013.

<sup>341</sup> Ndirande is in Blantyre.

<sup>342</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Aida, Kawalala, Blantyre Assembly, 12.9.2013.

<sup>343</sup> Telephone int. Pastor Rueben, Matundu, 22.2.2013.

<sup>344</sup> Tuesday meetings take place in the morning.

periodical meetings in all the Assemblies to devise and review strategic plans. Additionally, they conduct Monthly and Bi-annual Meetings.

There are also special meetings that prepare Pastors' wives for their roles. One of such meetings was held in 2006 in the Lower Shire. In the same year, the women organized the first Camp Meeting at Likhubula in Mulanje. Moreover, during conferences, girls are separated from women to allow each group to discuss issues freely. This also promotes participation, openness and security on the issues being examined; otherwise some members would feel intimidated, and or out of place due to age differences.

Membership in the LM does not require any qualification. Virtually everybody, old, young, single, polygamous and what have you, can become a member so long as they go through Pastoral counselling.<sup>345</sup> The most appropriate members are those married, single and widowed, though girls are also accepted.

The Ministry also welcomes women from other faiths during their Women's Conferences and other events. Importantly, a woman becomes a member of the LM once she becomes born-again.<sup>346</sup> The LM encourages decent dressing to maintain and strengthen its reputation. In the event that any of its members breach the code of conduct, the leadership of the Church disciplines that member.

## **7.5 The Leadership Structure**

The LM was led by a Chairperson prior to its restructuring process in 2002. Now the leadership comprises of pastors' wives as the in charge of Ladies Ministry. This is indicated in the constitution of the church.<sup>347</sup> The LM is governed by by-laws which guide and define leadership structures.<sup>309</sup>

### ***7.1.6 The Director and the Ladies' Ministry Institutional Leadership***

The Director heads the Ministry. The wife of the General Overseer (GO) ideally occupies this position. However, any other competent woman is appointed to this position in the event

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<sup>345</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Hanna, Mijoya, Blantyre Assembly, 31.1.2013.

<sup>346</sup> See Romans. 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death" (NIV).

<sup>347</sup> Word Alive ministry International 2009 revised constitution, p. 9.

that the GO's wife is gifted in other areas other than the LM. Pastor Mrs Aida Kawalala, by virtue of being the GO's wife, and by the fact that she is well gifted in this area, occupies this position. Among others, the Director is responsible for the encouragement and training of leaders in the church.

Thus, she gives support to Resident Pastors' wives or LM Shepherds in the Assemblies. She steers LM business meetings, and is an Ex-officio member of all Ministry Committees at Assembly level. She is the spiritual overseer of all matters regarding the LM, and works under the supervision of the GO. She is thus accountable to the GO on the progress of the LM. She is assisted by two Personal Assistants and receives reports and recommendations from Assembly Ministry Committees. However, the Missions and Ministers Board<sup>348</sup> handles all disciplinary matters. Other senior sources, however, said that there is a National Committee which performs its duties under the leadership of the Director. The National Committee has seven members who are senior women and Pastors.

### ***7.5.1 The Institutional Ladies' Ministry Executive Committee***

The ILMEC works under the general supervision of the GO and the Executive Council. It meets at least once a year to strategize on how best they can run the LM. The Director recommends members to serve in various sub-committees to the GO, and the GO ratifies them through the Executive Council. The Director is the Presiding Elder of the Committee. One of the Personal Assistants to the Director serves as a Secretary. The Committee has at least five functional members.<sup>349</sup>

The ILMEC members serve as long as they are able to do so. However, they are encouraged to take a Sabbatical Leave after serving for seven years, and thereafter, may be recalled. The Committee members can resign, or can be dismissed upon misconduct or gross indiscipline.

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<sup>348</sup> The boards have been restructured as I have already discussed in chapter 4. It is not clear if the Missions and Ministers Board has been replaced by the Assemblies and Missions Board. It is also not clear if the latter is responsible for disciplinary issues.

<sup>349</sup> Close to 14 names of those who will serve as functional members have just been proposed by the management, hence I will not name them for ethical reasons since some of them will be dropped. It appears that the number of functional members will be more than five.

### **7.5.2 The LM at the Assembly Level**

The LM's Shepherds provide leadership to the women at the Assembly level. They have a strong link with the Executive Committee through which other sub-committees are reached. They are appointed by the appointing authority<sup>350</sup> or any Minister with delegated authority. Wives of Resident Pastors ideally occupy such leadership positions.

Like at the institutional level, any other competent women can be appointed to these positions in the event that the Resident Pastor's wife is gifted in other areas. If Resident Pastors' wives do not qualify as Ministry Shepherds for the above reason, they still serve as Ex-officio members or Advisors. To qualify for these positions, candidates should have been WAMI members for a period of not less than a year. Additionally, they should also complete the Shepherds' course or any other Pastoral Training. Like the institutional leadership, the Ministry Shepherds do not handle any disciplinary matters because such cases are managed by the Assemblies' Councils of Elders.

### ***7.5.3 The Assembly LM Executive Committee (ALMEC)***

Generally, the leadership structure of the ALMEC is similar to that of the ILMEC, although there are some differences. The Director is the Presiding Elder in the latter, while the Ministry Shepherd is the Presiding Elder in the former. The ALMEC meets once a month while the ILMEC meets once a year.

Unlike the Institutional Committee Members, each Assembly Committee Member is responsible for a particular sub-committee which may include visitations, condolences, social events, decorations and resource mobilization. Additional responsibilities of each Assembly Committee Member may also include organizing special events, mentoring, evangelism, prayer and intercession.

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<sup>350</sup> This primarily refers to the General Overseer or any delegated minister or person and this may include Senior Pastors or Resident Pastors.

#### ***7.5.4 The Ladies' Ministry at the Micro Church and Spiritual Centre Levels***

The leadership structure at the Micro Church and Spiritual Centre levels is similar to the one at the Assembly level already discussed. The Ministry Shepherds in these congregations are responsible for compiling monthly reports and send them to the LMA Shepherds or to the Director of the LM. The leadership of the Micro Churches and Spiritual Centres recommends members to serve in the leadership of the sub-committees for the approval and ratification of the appointing authority or delegated person in the Assembly.

#### ***7.5.5 Reporting Protocol***

The Assembly Executive Committee plans and reviews its plans during its monthly meetings. Minutes of each meeting are copied and circulated to the Resident Pastors. The Ministry Shepherds compile ministry reports and submit them to the resident pastors and the Council of Elders. Additionally, the Ministry Shepherds compile Quarterly Reports and submit them to the Director of the LM who in turn compile Periodic Reports and submit them to the GO and the Missions Ministers Board.

#### ***7.5.6 General Operating Guidelines***

The ILMEC hatches strategic plans which are developed in line with the Institutional Vision and Mission. The Committee also co-opts other LMs in their plans. The Assemblies draw up their activities from the strategic plans in relation to their local needs and forward them to the Councils of Elders who links them with other Assembly activities. Executive Committees in Assemblies are responsible for raising resources to finance their activities. However, some events are funded by the institutions through the existing structures besides being assisted by the Assembly Executive Committees.

All disciplinary matters relating to the Ministry Shepherds are firstly dealt with at the Assembly level, and they are forwarded to the Missions and Ministers Board if necessary. All matters regarding discipline of the Assembly Executive Committee members are managed by the Resident Pastors and the Councils of Elders, while those concerning sub-Committees are handled by the Executive Committee under the direction of the Ministry Shepherds. Such disciplinary cases can be referred to the Resident Pastors or Assembly Councils of

Elders if there is a need for further guidance. All finances of the Ministry are kept in the Assembly accounts, and the Ministry leadership has access to the books of accounts.

### ***7.5.7 Ministry Shepherds***

Ministry Shepherds are mostly competent women in the Assemblies, who provide leadership to the branches on women issues. The Pastors' wives also jointly work with various Committees in the Assemblies. The Ministry Shepherds undergo a Pastoral Training to empower them with leadership skills. They are appointed by the GO on recommendations from the Resident Pastors.

## **7.6 The Role of Women in the LM**

The LM plays crucial roles in the development of WAMI in the pursuit of its inclusive ministry. This has been categorized into leadership, administrative, pastoral and support roles. Some of these roles are executed by the LM, while others are done by the WACRAD.

### ***7.6.1 Leadership and Administrative Roles***

Besides the provision of good leadership to fellow women, competent and gifted women have played influential roles in the history of the Church. Rev Barbara Tippett worked hard in the 1980s to have the Mustard Seed Centre Fellowship develop into Blantyre Christian Centre. The BCC was later registered as a Church in 1987. Besides, she was supported by Pastor Mrs Helen Singh, Pastor Mrs Margaret Chombo, Janet Karim, Heather Boys and other women leaders. Likewise, Mrs Ironside, Mrs Sakyi and Mrs Kamthuzi also played leading roles when the Church was being restructured in 2002.

Some women have been appointed to the Executive Council of WAMI and it is this ECW that governs the Church. For example, Pastor Mrs Hanna Mijoya, now Director of Finance and Administration, Mrs Phoebe Nyasulu, head of WACRAD, and Mrs Rosemary Kanyuka, an Elder in the Lilongwe Assembly, are some of the leading figures in the Executive Council. Moreover, Mrs Hanna Mijoya, Mrs Phoebe Nyasulu and Mrs Patricia Semphere also served as Senior Staff of the BCC.

Although there are no ladies on the Pastoral staff at the moment, things may soon change due to the ordination of two Lady Pastors as Mrs Aida Kawalala and Mrs Dorothy Ngwira. They were inducted into the Board of Elders at the Blantyre Assembly on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 thereby increasing the number of women Elders to fifteen.<sup>351</sup> The fact that two of the three inductees were women under WAMI signifies that this organization is slowly gaining traction, and realizing its goal, the inclusion of many women in the Ministry.

The Women's Annual Conference is one of the most important activities for the LM. Pastor Towera Masiku is the Special Events Co-coordinator<sup>352</sup> and she ably organized the 2010 Women's Conference.<sup>353</sup> The Conference was organized under the theme '*Opening the Floodgates of Heaven*,' however; they specifically dubbed it '*Women of Chayil Conference*,' to maintain their identity.<sup>354</sup>

This was the sixth Conference to be organized.<sup>355</sup> The three keynote speakers during the Conference were Dr. Queen Dube of the Assemblies of God - Nkolokosa Dream Centre, Pastor Marie Carteledge from Australia and Rev. Dr. Zacc Kawalala. Dr. Dube was invited because of her desire to see women achieve God's purpose. Pastor Carteledge was invited because her Ministry has significantly empowered large numbers of women who are now leaders. Rev. Dr. Zacc Kawalala, the only notable male speaker, titled his keynote address '*Woman Cherish Your Man*,' which was geared at changing women's attitudes and perceptions towards their husbands.

Another keynote speaker at that Conference was Mrs Patricia Semphere, who spoke on '*Church Etiquette*.' on Gospel musicians, such as the Favoured Sisters, the Blantyre Assembly

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<sup>351</sup> *Ministry Update*, First Quarter, 2010.

<sup>352</sup> See 2010 *Women of CHAREWO* Conference invitation letter.

<sup>353</sup> The 2013 Ladies' Conference took place from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April.

<sup>354</sup> It was held from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2010. On the opening day, Thursday, the meeting started mid-day and finished at 7:30 pm. On Friday it started in the morning and finished at 7:30 pm. On the last day, Friday, the meeting started in the morning and finished around mid-day to allow delegates to return to their homes in good time. Just before the closure of the conference, Pastor Mrs Aida Kawalala thanked women from all the branches in Malawi by asking them to stand up in groups for the audience to see and appreciate them. Of course, there were breaks in between sessions.

<sup>355</sup> See 2010 *Women of Chayil* Conference invitation letter.

Praise Team and Frank Chimpanzi performed at this Conference. Importantly, people from all walks of life came and attended this Conference.

Like at the previous conferences, women experienced the Holy Spirit, commissioning, prophecies, transformation and healings. Mrs Thokozani Mwapasa testified that she got healed of her breathing difficulties as Marie Cartledge prayed for her. She said:

I have had difficulties in breathing for almost four years. I have been to good hospitals but things could not work because they couldn't diagnose me with any problem. It was not asthma or any other related disease. But when Pastor Cartledge prayed for me, the Lord touched me. In fact not only me got healed, but also many other women did.<sup>356</sup>

Additionally, the LM holds periodical leaders' meetings on strategic planning. For example, in 2006, the women organized the first Likhubula Meeting as already discussed in the previous sections. Besides, they organize outreaches and visit small Churches for evangelization.

The LM in the Assemblies also administers the core Ministries of WAMI. They have formed Committees based on the Church's core values. The Ministry has taken on board the key Ministries of the Church, which have already been discussed above. WAMI ladies also take part in Ecumenical Meetings to enhance partnerships. This way they promote and administer the Church's vision as they lead by example.

### **7.6.2 Pastoral Roles**

WAMI women administer some pastoral tasks. This is the preaching and the teaching of the Gospel. <sup>357</sup> As a result of an evangelistic ministry organized by the Blantyre Assembly LM, Mbayani Spiritual Centre was opened in Blantyre. Pastor Sellina Musongole presides over

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<sup>356</sup> *Ministry Update*, First Quarter, 2013.

<sup>357</sup> The debate about whether or not women should be ordained as pastors refuses to die. Bible Scholars like Dennis J. Mock believes that there is no biblical evidence for ordaining women as pastors, elders or deacons (Dennis J. Mock, see *Church Ministry, Administration and Education*, Course Manual no. 7, Atlanta, GA. 1989, p. 99). Nevertheless feminist theologians like Rachel NyaGondwe Banda advocate for the pastoral ordination of women who feel called to such a ministry (see Rachel NyaGondwe Banda, *Women of Bible and Culture: Baptist Convention Women in Southern Malawi*, Kachere Theses no. 3, Kachere Series, Zomba, 2005, p. 194).

the Spiritual Centre, which is located just a few kilometers away from the City of Blantyre.<sup>358</sup> The Spiritual Centre is now growing rapidly. Lady Pastors like Mrs Margaret Chombo, Mrs Hanna Mijoya, Sellina Musongole and Towera Masiku offer prayers and general biblical counselling to needy people at the Blantyre Assembly. This is the same at other Assemblies and Churches. At some point, out of seven counsellors assigned to this task, four were women.<sup>359</sup> From this figure it is clear that WAMI women enjoy the freedom of preaching the word of God almost the same way men do.

The second task is general and patients' visitations. For example, they visit, cheer and pray for the sick in hospitals where healing testimonies are observed. Women also feed and dress the needy. For example, in 2007, the Blantyre Assembly resumed their visits to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital targeting the Oncology Ward.

In an attempt to improve efficiency in pastoral care, Pastor Towera Masiku and *Mayi-busa* Gertrude Sichinga went to Word Alive Bible College, where they graduated in 2011. Towera Masiku was the best student at the Certificate level, while Gertrude Sichinga was the best at the Diploma level.<sup>360</sup>

### **7.6.3 Support Roles**

The LM in each Assembly, Micro Church and Spiritual Centre also administers support roles. Besides conducting Bible studies, women organize intercessory prayers.<sup>361</sup> Here, women and male leaders work together to drive the Assemblies.<sup>362</sup>

Additionally, women mentor young girls on adolescence psychology, and prepare them to become responsible mothers.<sup>363</sup> Though there is no special class organized for the initiates,

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<sup>358</sup> It held its first Sunday morning service on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013. The service was presided over by Pastor Noel Malemia and it attracted 30 congregants. A week before this occasion, the church organized a crusade as one way of preparing for the said service. Pastor Mapunda Ngwira preached during the crusade and over 20 people made decisions for Jesus Christ. The church started in 2006.

<sup>359</sup> Church programme, 06. 2. 2013.

<sup>360</sup> Agness Mizere, *Team Impact Bible College Graduates 25*, Sunday Times, 06.3.2011, p. 1.

<sup>361</sup> After I organized a group discussion with some women of Ndirande Ladies' Ministry on 26.2.2011, they planned to hold intercessory prayers.

<sup>362</sup> Of course, they also intercede for the general welfare of WAMI. Additionally, they also pray for the whole body of Christ.

the Ministry organizes an orientation programme for them. The content of the orientation covers topics such as home visitations, role of women and the values of WAMI.

They also provide pre-marital, pre-birth and post-birth counselling. The rationale here is to promote and ensure Godly counsel. The ladies also organize Baby Showers for the same reason. For instance, when a couple is blessed with a baby, women present gifts to such a family and offer protectionist prayers. The mother receives some biblical counseling which can also be extended to single women.<sup>364</sup>

They also provide support for the organization of Bridal Showers. These programmes include prayer, music, dancing, gift presentations and money exchanges. Representatives from both the boy and girl's side give marital instructions.<sup>365</sup> Topics on financial management, home management, Church etiquette and others are covered at Bridal Showers.

Women also teach children at the Church and in society. For example, in 2011 most of the Sunday school teachers at the Blantyre Assembly were women. Similarly, at the Ndirande Assembly, the six teachers who taught the Children's Ministry were all women.<sup>366</sup> Women are also responsible for resource mobilization. They fundraise for the LM and the Churches.<sup>367</sup> For example, the Ministry at the Blantyre Assembly organized a Big Walk on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2010 from Limbe to Blantyre.<sup>368</sup> The Ndirande Assembly LM also auctions clothes, shoes, and food items such as doughnuts,<sup>369</sup> *nsima*,<sup>370</sup> rice, tea, cakes, sobo, and *thobwa*,<sup>371</sup> just to make sure that they raise money for the LM and the Church.

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<sup>363</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Hanna, Mijoya, Blantyre Assembly, 31.1.2013.

<sup>364</sup> The husband is usually away to work.

<sup>365</sup> A common practice these days is that a boy joins the girl at some stage during a bridal shower. Sometimes a send off is organized with both the boy and the girl attending and they are instructed at the same time, among other activities.

<sup>366</sup> Focus group discussions (FGDs), Ndirande Assembly, 26. 2. 2013.

<sup>367</sup> The event also served the purpose of physical fitness.

<sup>368</sup> *Ministry Update*, First Quarter, 2010.

<sup>369</sup> Local cakes.

<sup>370</sup> The common staple food in Malawi which is made from maize flour.

<sup>371</sup> Traditional drink made from millet or maize flour.

The money sourced is used to purchase Church furniture, musical equipment, gifts for the sick, to pay utility bills and to organize conferences. Some women serve as interpreters during Sunday Services while others serve as conveners.

WAMI women sing, preach, cook, fetch water, prepare wreaths, and clean dishes during funerals. They are also responsible for decorating the Church and for cleaning the surroundings.

## **7.7 The Role of Women in WACRAD**

Some roles are professional in nature and directly linked to the rural communities and cannot be done by any lay woman. To this end, the WACRAD takes charge of such developmental programmes. Out of the 93 staff WACRAD has employed, 67 are males and 26 are females (28%).

Mrs Phoebe Nyasulu is the Director of the WACRAD Programmes. There is a cross-section of staff who work in the health and social sectors. Staffing includes nurses, counsellors, field officers, supervisors, administrators, the clergy and other social workers.

More so, women play leading roles in the Community Based Organizations operating within the jurisdiction of WACRAD across the country. Here, women constitute about 80% and do provide social care.<sup>372</sup> Women are also involved in the provision of HIV and Aids awareness and prevention messages. They also provide lessons on Positive Living, Antiretroviral Drugs, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (of HIV), HIV Testing and Counselling, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Nutrition. Some women teach and manage Nursery Schools.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> When I visited Nguluwe Support Group at Bvumbwe in Thyolo, I found that the support group has 25 members in total and out of this there were 22 women and three men. Among the participants that attended a WACRAD training on *Good Nutrition* at Bvumbwe Roman Catholic Church, there were 25 participants in total and out of this 18 were women. Only seven men attended the training.

<sup>373</sup> Brenda Ndau, Trinity Kanduma and Eneless Nyalugwe teach 31 children at Litta Nursery School at Bvumbwe in Thyolo district.

They also strengthen partnerships between men and women in all community activities at project level.<sup>374</sup> Women contribution in WACRAD enhances female involvement in development work and this has significantly reduced male dominance.<sup>375</sup>

## 7.8 Successes and Challenges

The LM has registered some successes which include its national and international growth. It has also administered Pastoral and support care towards many people who were suffering in a great many ways.<sup>376</sup> The Ministry also networks with other Ministries through different activities. It has contributed to the general development of WAMI from its birth. One cannot talk about the achievements of WAMI without mentioning LM's contribution. As one of the earliest Ministries, it has seen and survived the three dispensations of the Church.

Like any Ministry, the LM and its sister Ministries face challenges. For example, women's diverse religious backgrounds negatively affect the ministry because some bring with them doctrines from their religions.<sup>377</sup> Additionally, the ministries in many WAMI branches are not organized; a case in point is the Blantyre LM.<sup>378</sup> Due to inadequate resources it fails to achieve some of its objectives.<sup>379</sup> Although they try hard to raise funds through multiple channels, they still do not meet the set targets.

## 7.9 Conclusion

The role of women in WAMI is very important in the Church's pursuit of its inclusive Ministry. Women can build or destroy it because of their influence in society and in the Church. The freedom WAMI women enjoy is a result of the Church's flexible policy and beliefs.<sup>380</sup> The WAMI policy frees women to exercise their pastoral leadership and decision making skills in the Church, the LM and WACRAD. It is not surprising therefore that two of

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<sup>374</sup> Report, *Help a Child Africa OVC Project*, 10.1.2011, pp. 3-4.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>376</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Aida, Kawalala, Blantyre Assembly, 12.10.2013.

<sup>377</sup> Int. Pastor Mrs Hanna, Mijoya, Blantyre WAMI, 31. 1. 2013.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*

the five Lady Pastors have been ordained to be full Ministers. Moreover, many women serve as Elders, and this introduces women onto the leadership ladder. The Church leadership terrain, however, should help the LM build on its successes to solve the challenges it faces. Moreover, the future of the LM hinges on the support it gets from the male leaders and that of the women themselves. Effective management of these will principally motivate women to contribute towards the mission and vision of WAMI.

## **7.10 Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church**

Living Waters is one the many Charismatic Churches that are new to Malawi and are not all that popular. This section deals with the role of women in Chimwankhunda Living Waters.

### ***7.10.1 History of Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church***

This Charismatic Church has its headquarters in Chimwankhunda Township. The founder of this Church is Apostle Dr. S. Stanley Ndovie.



Living Waters Worship Centre Chimwankhunda

Apostle Stanley Ndovie is not ministering in this Church anymore, as he lives in South Africa. The Church is being led by Bishop Kachikuni and Bishop Kazima, who are resident Pastors. The Church also anointed a female bishop Mary Mkosi to lead Lilongwe Living Waters Church and the central region of Malawi. Nationally, the church has over 1000 Branches. It has also branches in Mozambique, United States of America, Tanzania, South Africa and Kenya among others.

There are also some junior Pastors working under the Bishops. Of late the Church has also appointed another apostle by the name of Jean Ndovie.



#### Apostle Jean Ndovie

She is the wife of Apostle Stanley Ndovie, the founder of the Living Waters Church International. She is responsible for women affairs in the church. Apostle Stanley Ndovie is the administrator of the church. Apostle Jean Ndovie assists him where necessary.<sup>381</sup> She is an Apostle because she started the ministry together with her husband.<sup>382</sup>

#### ***7.10.2 Membership of the CLC***

Living Waters has grown tremendously from 1985 to date. Initially, only four families were gathering in one of their houses. Now the Church has a lot of members. The membership at Chimwankhunda now stands at 1,856. This figure includes 524 women, 466 men, 785 youths and 81 children. While members of other Churches have been decreasing due to defections, Living Waters has seen a sharp increase in its membership. This is due to the powerful messages Ndovie and associates have preached. They hold open air evangelism where they ask people to repent their sins and receive Jesus. A lot of people have been coming to these gatherings to confess their sins and accept Jesus. Due to increased numbers, space to accommodate all the believers has now become an issue. Accordingly, they have introduced the English Service, and the Bilingual Service which uses English and Chichewa.

#### ***7.10.3 History of the Membership***

The Church consists of both the educated and non-educated. For example, about 400 are graduates from universities and colleges while others are ordinary men and women. One of the respondents reported that many people are attracted to this Church due to the miracles. Others said that the Church is full of educated members because most of them come from within the urban area.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Int. Distone Chiweza, church administrator, Chimwankhunda Living Waters church, 23. 5. 15.

<sup>382</sup> Int. Pastor Joseph Yakiti, Ntaja Living Waters Church, 25.8.15. He reports that she is also called an Apostle just because she is married to an Apostle Stanly Ndovie.

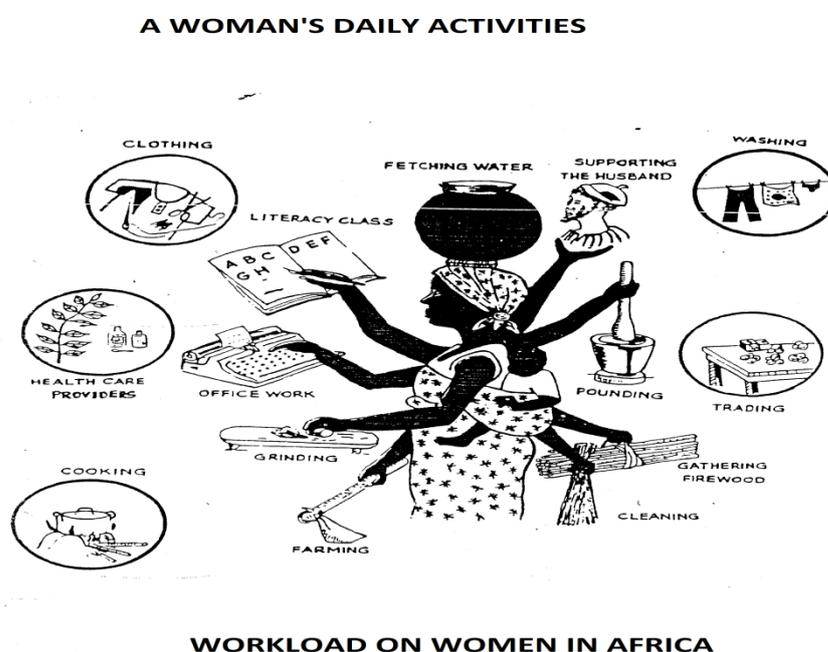
<sup>383</sup> Int. Margret, Kaduma, Chimwankhunda, 23.5.13

#### 7.10.4 The Role of Women in this Church

Despite undergoing many troubles, the Church has steadily developed and increased its Ministries. In the 1990s, the Church developed the Youth Ministry, Women's Guild and Outreach Ministries. This was happening when they had a Worship Centre at Chimwankhunda. Although each Ministry has its own role, they all function cordially. In all these Ministries, women provide services. The primary responsibility of the Youth Ministry is, through the Praise Team, to lead the Church into praise and worship. It also ushers people onto their seats. The youths are also involved in Outreach Ministry and do go to different places to preach the word of God. The Youth also perform choirs, Pastoral care, diaconal work and decoration ministry. In all these activities and Ministries, women are taking leading roles.

#### 7.10.5 Cultural Roles of Women

Naturally, women perform a lot of important responsibilities men cannot do. Below is an illustration of some cultural roles woman perform at home and in the Church.



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Figure 6: Some Activities Women do

Women also act as counsellors for the girls. The Church chooses older women to counsel the youth and adults. Culturally, women mop the houses and sweep around the houses. Some older women teach the boys and girls good manners. Men counselors look after boys while women counselors look after the girls.

Another role for women is during funerals. If one of the members of the Church has passed away, women take charge of the funeral arrangements. They sleep there till morning while others sing choruses, hymns and songs. When the morning comes, women prepare wreaths. Before they come to the grave, they gather around the coffin. This time, people make speeches, and the preacher takes over.

#### ***7.10.6 Leadership Roles of Women***

Women in this Church perform different roles. For example, some are Deaconesses, Church Elders, Chairladies, Sunday school teachers, and leaders at Bridal-showers.

Deaconess: According to Grace Makoza, they look after women in the Church. They are also responsible for running home-cell prayers.

Chairlady of Women Ministry: Women are responsible for running Women Organizations. They look after the welfare of other women in the organizations. They visit the sick and condole the bereaved.

#### ***7.10.7 Perception of Women by Society and the Church***

Interviews revealed that society and women themselves have different perceptions towards their own roles in the Church. Out of ten women interviewed, four said that they are happy with their leadership roles in the Church. They said that “the Holy Spirit gives power to any person to lead the Church regardless of sex”.<sup>384</sup> They emphasized that even the Scriptures say “Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>385</sup> This was not only to men but also to women. The remainder said that leadership roles should be given to men because they are

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<sup>384</sup> Int. Memory Masamaba, Annie Kaloti, Jenifer Matoga, and Moreen Moses, 12.8.13

<sup>385</sup> See Mathew 28:19 (Good News Bible ).

courageous, and that they are born to be leaders. This implies that some women are still of the view that a woman cannot lead. Based on these interviews it can be concluded that some women, because of cultural influences, do not know that they can lead, while some understand that women can equally lead.

#### ***7.10.8 Differences in Leadership Roles of Men and Women***

According to Bishop Tchapo, there exist some differences between men and women in leadership roles. In this Church men take the core roles such as preaching and administering the sacraments. Women are rarely allowed to administer sacraments. Even though both males and females can be Church Elders, males dominate. It seems while the Church accepts gender balance, this study has established that there are great imbalances between men and women. According to Mrs Moreen Manga, there is no chance for a woman to become an Apostle or Bishop in this Church. They argue that such positions are reserved for men. Factually, in Living Waters, there are no differences in leadership roles between men and women. Nevertheless, this equality is only in theory.

#### ***7.10.9 Leadership Structure of Women***

While, theoretically, there are no differences in leadership roles between genders, women are allowed to do anything that is within the Biblical framework. Women have since chosen women leaders to lead women groups. They formed the Women's Guild of which the leaders are women. They have a Chairlady, Vice Chairlady, Secretary, Treasure and Committee Members. The Chairlady is the leader of the whole Committee and of the women of the Church. She is the overseer of every work done by the Committees. She chairs all meetings, visitations, prayers and any Church work. She also appoints women to preach at the meetings. She mediates when there is a conflict among women and the Church at large. She acts as a counsellor for all the women. She advises and solves problems whenever they come out. If she cannot manage, she refers them back to the Church Council. She reports to the Church Council.

The Vice Chairlady acts on behalf of the Chairlady and she takes her responsibilities in her absence. She is also delegated by the Chairlady and reports to her. The Secretary is responsible for preparing and keeping minutes of meetings. She collects all the data and

compiles it so that information of any kind regarding the Church is kept safe. She works hand in hand with the Treasurer to record every Kwacha that women contribute, and hands it over to the Treasurer. She reports to the Chairlady. The Treasurer keeps all things that belong to the Women's Ministry including money. She makes sure that all the payments which women are supposed to make are done. She works hand in hand with the Secretary to make sure that all records are clean and safe. The Committee Members work together with the whole Committee. They are part of the decision-making unit.

### ***7.10.9 Women Groups***

Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church has different groups. These are Chimwankhunda Women's Guild, Women's Choir, Women's Decoration Ministry, Women's Pastoral Care Group and Counsellors' Group. The Chimwankhunda Women's Guild is the umbrella of all women groups in the Church. The Choir makes sure that women take part in singing in the Church. The Decorations Group decorates the Church with different materials every week. The Women's Pastoral Care Group looks into the welfare of the Bishops and their families. The Counsellors are responsible for all counselling and guidance work. This includes counselling girls when they have reached puberty, counselling newly married couples and other married couples when they are in conflicts and or need any form of guidance regarding marital problems.

### ***7.10.10 The Growth of Women in the Church***

The number of women in Chimwankhunda Living Waters has grown very fast. The study established that there are more women than men in this Church. In the early 1990s, there were approximately 20 to 30 women, but now there are 524 registered women. Possibly the number will grow since the youths are getting older.

### ***7.10.11 Impact of Women Groups and Role Distribution***

The increased number of women has also made the Church to allocate more positions to women. Women now do not just sit idle as many of them look forward to new positions. They now help in the social, economic and spiritual growth of the Church. Each of the women groups now makes sure that its mandate is will serviced and executed above the

standards. Although it looks like the groups are competing amongst themselves, the truth of the matter is that the Church is significantly benefiting from this competition in all the spheres of its operations. This is a healthy competition as it helps to destroy the 'Blue Oceans' which often lead to laxity, unproductiveness and monotony in service delivery when competition is absent. Moreover, negative competition is often considered as a healthy competition in agile business models as it promotes competing organizations to explore possible avenues and remain competitive. Through such competition the Church has developed within a short period of time.

#### ***7.10.12 Balancing the Roles of Women in the Church***

There are a number of ways that can help women balance their roles with those of men. The first way is by using the Bible as the standard measure for conducting and transacting businesses. If the Bible is indeed used this way, the roles of women and men can be balanced with little or minimum friction.

Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband, as it is fit in the Lord." Here, it does not matter whether God uses men more forcefully than women. The fact is that the use of the word 'submit' does not mean to enslave or lord it over someone. Ironically, in many Churches, including this one, some women regard themselves as superior to men due to their social and economic advantages. This is wrong and not condonable when we consider the Bible and its teachings on equality and humanity.

Another way of balancing the roles of women and men is by way of working together. If everybody can join hands and understand each other regardless of their capabilities and gender, there can be no misunderstandings and frictions. The issue here is that the Bible does not promote oppression of one sex. It simply promotes understanding and cooperation between both sexes. The problem therefore is not the Bible itself, but rather the fallible way of interpreting the Bible by those who simply stick to isolated verses and disregard other equally important texts on the same subject. In a nutshell, women and men are equal and must respect each other in order to complement each other's work.

### ***7.10.13 Pastors and Women in the Church***

Chimwankhunda Living Waters encourages women's visitations to the Pastors' houses. The Women's Pastoral Care Group is in charge of the welfare of the Pastors, the Bishops, the Prophets and the Prophetesses. This group visits Pastors regularly so that there is a good relationship between Pastors and the women. Women give the Pastors rice, cooking oil, sugar, washing soap, milk, flour, margarine and many items. The Women Groups give these items to the Pastors so that they should share among themselves.

### ***7.10.14 Experience of Widows in the Church***

When any group is growing, challenges emerge. One of the challenges in Chimwankhunda Living Waters is that of widows. There are two types of widows. The first is those that have food and clothes and who are employed or have a steady income. The Church has got nothing to care for this group and they will help the Church financially and materially. The Church simply strengthens this group spiritually and gives hope. The second group are the poor widows. This is the group the Church is very much concerned with. The Church has got a special fund called Diaconal Treasury. It uses this fund to help them. Mrs Martha Kumbatira, one of the beneficiaries of the Diaconal Treasury, testified:

My husband died in 2006 at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital. He was aged 64 when he died. During that time, he was the Church Elder. He was poor and worse still; people from his village came to share with me the little we had. I was already 56 years old at that time. We had 5 children but 4 died. The remnant child is a drunkard and does not assist me. I stay with my 6 grandchildren. I came to the Elders of this Church with my problem in 2008. They told me to wait for a few months. After 3 months, they included me on the list of beneficiaries of the DT. I am so happy because of what I get from this Church. May God continue blessing the church.<sup>386</sup>

### ***7.10.15 Sexual Roles of Women in the Family***

Women in CLC have to satisfy their husbands in bed. Most of the women are taught to be naked whenever in the bedroom so that the husbands should appreciate their bodies. This motivates the man sexually and he cannot look for other women. Some believed that sexual

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<sup>386</sup> Int. Martha Kumbatira Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church, Blantyre. 12.8.2013.

intercourse must entail several techniques to satisfy the man. Women are taught to wear beads to be more appetizing and attractive to their husbands. One woman explained that a man should play with the beads prior and during sex.<sup>387</sup> She explained that when a woman wears green beads it means the woman is longing for sex. Red beads mean that the woman is menstruating and therefore needs a break. Other techniques are called *lichero* (style of sexual intercourse where a woman moves her waist sideways as if she is winnowing) and *ndege* (sexual style where the woman stretches her legs wide open like wings of an aircraft). These styles make the man feel invigorated, aroused and stimulated so that he craves for more and more sex.

#### ***7.10.16 Challenges Women Face during Sex***

Though the counsellors emphasize that love in families should surpass everything, sometimes husbands use this as an advantage to abuse women. Many women complained that their husbands demand sex even if the woman is sick. Some men want to have sex with the wife even if they have just quarreled and the woman does not enjoy such play. Mrs Senath Milala explained that many women complain to her about the offensive behaviour of their husbands and she adds:

We give our women pieces of advice as counsellors. We organize seminars for married couples where we tell them the reality about marriage. We actually confirm to them that sex is what builds the family. One of our members ... complained to me that her husband likes sex too much, and that he does not even allow her to rest. When she is sick, her husband forces her to still have it. When she refuses, he nearly fights her. But if he is given a chance to have sex, he is a very loving and cheering husband.”<sup>388</sup>

Of course sex binds families together. But if sex becomes abusive, it can disintegrate the couple. In the family just referred to, sex is a curse not a blessing. It hurts the wife and enslaves her. Definitely, she does not love the nights as she anticipates another night full of hassles.

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<sup>387</sup> The Weekend Nation, 14 November, 2009, p. 3.

<sup>388</sup> Int. Senath Milala, Chimwankhunda Living Waters, Blantyre. 12.8.2013.

Some women complained that they simply do not feel like having sex with their husbands as they do not get satisfied. Some husbands do not have the desire to have sex with their wives maybe because they are used to having different meals. Other respondents said that most men do not know how to do sex and usually rush into ejaculation before the woman reaches the peak.

### ***7.10.17 Solutions to Sexual Challenges***

The problem with many Christian families is that they do not dwell on the Word of God when it comes to sex. The Bible say: "Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time," so that you devote yourself in prayer. Then come together so that Satan will not tempt you because of lack of self-control." 1 Corinthians 7:5 (NIV). Husband and wife should mutually agree that they should have sex. They should understand that if sex is being done without consent, the one not consenting will not enjoy it. Many Christians forget that God first joined a husband and a wife in the spiritual realm, before joining them physically. Counsellors should therefore make sure that husbands understand their wives and the Bible.

Counsellors should also stress sex games before the actual sex. This is important because couples arouse each other before the actual game. Many couples rush into sex without any foreplay so that they do not enjoy the sex or indeed harm their private parts as they are dry. Couples need to know some things about one another's body. A man's body is simple. He has only one very sensitive area, the penis. When his wife fondles it, he gets excited quickly. A woman's body is not so simple. In fact, women easily understand a man's body, but men do not understand easily a woman's body. A woman has two sensitive areas: her vagina and her clitoris. The clitoris is outside the vagina about four cm away from the vagina. Unfortunately, many men think that the only way to fondle a woman is to put their fingers inside the vagina almost anywhere. It is said that " a woman will become excited if fingers fondle outside the vagina where the clitoris and the ears"<sup>389</sup> Women will be excited and become more willing to sleep with their husbands frequently if these pieces of advice are

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<sup>389</sup> Carol Britten, *Answers for your Marriage*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Florida: Worldwide Books, Box 190, Florida, 1710, South Africa. 2001, pp. 49-50.

followed. Wives may even want more and more sex even if they are sick given this sex treatment.

Moreover, sex is food for marriage just like rice and meat is to the human body. Without food for a couple of days, one gets sick, and without sex, marriage gradually dies.<sup>390</sup>

### **7.10.18 The Role of Women on Orphans**

Chimwankhunda Church owns an orphan-care project called Chisomo Children's Clubs. It is the responsibility of every Ministry in the Church to take part in helping these orphans. Women Ministry and other Ministries visit the Club at specific times. They bring groceries, money, clothes and food to the Club. Sometimes, they go to other branches of the Church and organize Paper Sundays to raise funds that support the Pastoral care Ministry and the Chisomo Children's Club. A picture below shows women who organized a Big Sunday at Mombo Living Waters Church in Chileka.



Mombo Women Choir in Action Service



Members of Mombo LC Singing at the Big Sunday

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<sup>390</sup> Pat Harrison, *Woman, Wife, Mother*, Oklahoma: Harrison House p. O. Box 35035 Tulsa, Oklahoma 74153. 1984, p 55.

### ***7.10.19 Challenges Women Face as they Perform their Roles***

Women at CLC face challenges when performing charity works. They are underrated by men who think that women cannot competently manage an orphanage. Some women underrate their fellows thinking that they are intellectually, socially, physically and economically better positioned to do that job than those now doing it. This has been a common problem among women who, instead of supporting each other, do the opposite. It can be concluded that the problems women face from men sometimes begin with themselves as they engage in internal battles, and this will cost them a fortune in the battle for gender equality.

### ***7.10.20 Solutions to the Challenges***

In order for CLC to have adequate funds, they need to explore more avenues for raising funds that can support their Ministries. The Church should widen its customer base by opening more Churches in urban centres where the majority has good sources of income. These people have the muscle to sponsor, and have disposable incomes that can be used to finance the activities of the Church. The Church should also have investments like businesses or buy land where they can grow crops and keep animals for commercial purposes. Likewise, when making budgets, they should not include the pledges to avoid building castles in the air and face unforeseen embarrassment. Moreover, women and men should learn to work together and avoid the spirit of the 'pull-down syndrome.'

### ***7.10.21 Roles of Women Pastors in the Church***

Mrs Carlo Chapomba is both a Pastor and Prophetess at CLC. As a Pastor, her role is to preach just the same as men do. She and other women Pastors are also responsible for outreach programmes across the country. Once they get to a branch, they are given the pulpit to preach. Women Pastors serve also as advisors for individual families.

### ***7.10.21 The Role of Women in relation to the Youth***

It is the responsibility of women in CLC to train the youth in matters of the Spirit. Parents are encouraged to instruct their children to be morally upright from the homes. Women are the ones that mostly counsel daughters while young. When they reach puberty, the

responsibility is handed over to the Counsellors. Here, Church Counsellors delve on guidance and counselling.

In summary, women in the Living Waters Church have similar roles as that of their male counterparts. This is so because women are allowed to exercise their freedom so long as that freedom does not contradict the Bible. The Church recognizes that men and women were born equal and should have equal opportunities as the Bible records. To this end, women have different groups that perform various roles within and without the Church. The LWC has within a few years grown so fast because women have significantly contributed towards its growth. Women have also helped in preaching and other Ministries. Moreover, the emergence of Prophetesses has also significantly helped it grow as many people are joining it to benefit from the Prophetic gifts and experience a new form of 'Live worshipping'. Likewise, men's authority over women within and without the Church is gradually losing traction.

## **7.11 Women in Chilipa Living Waters Church**

### ***7.11.1 History of the Church***

Chilipa Living Waters is one of the Churches situated in the remotest area of Mangochi. It was started in 2006 by Pastor John Mkosa with six members only. It started when Pastor Mkosa's wife was transferred from Zomba to Chilipa as a police officer. Chilipa had had no Living Waters Church and so they met in their house. Later, four people joined them. They continued meeting in this house for home-cell prayers despite resistance from the Muslim community. After a short period of time, Mrs Mkosa was transferred to Mangochi Police Station and this affected the Church at Chilipa. The people at Chilipa forwarded their concerns to Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church through Pastor Mkosa. Chimwankhunda then sent Pastor Enoch Mangani in 2011 to preside over Chilipa Church. Chimwankhunda also helped the Church by buying a piece of land where the Church was built.



### ***7.11.2 Membership of the Chilipa LWC***

The Church has 140 members, consisting of 65 women, 40 men and 35 youths. It was indicated that most of the members had attempted Secondary School education. This helps ease the work of the Pastor since educated people understand things much easier than the illiterate. These people assist the Pastor in evangelism and in records management. Chilipa has no Apostles, Prophets, Prophetesses, and Bishops, but Chilipa has an Administrator, Vice Administrator, Secretary, Vice Secretary, Treasurer, and two Deacons

### ***7.11.4 The Role of Women in the Church***

Here, women teach Sunday school children, counsel children and adults and preach to the Church. They also serve as deaconesses and take part in any developmental work. As deaconesses, they assist orphans, the aged, prisoners, and the sick by providing them with basic needs such as clothes, food, and shelter. Women also teach children spiritual, moral and cultural lessons right from the homes. Women also help in funerals by sleeping at the funeral house singing the whole night to give the bereaved some company. They also organize food, wreaths and any other necessary materials required at the funeral procession. In areas like Chilipa, where water is a problem, they travel long distances to fetch water for cooking as well as washing the dead body. Moreover, women serve as counsellors for married couples and for girls during initiation ceremonies. Although the Church recognizes the significant roles women play, it seems women are not altogether free to preach before men. According to the people interviewed, women are not supposed to preach in the Church when men are there, as the Bible forbids them. When pressed for a verse that says so, they cited the book of Corinthians in which Paul writes: "Women should keep quiet in the meetings hence they are not allowed to speak as they are forbidden by the Jewish Law."<sup>391</sup> This seems to be the same argument other CCS used as an excuse for

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<sup>391</sup> 1 Cor. 14:34, King James Version.

barring women from participating in the leadership position; an argument, this study has already faulted as it fails to take into account many other books, chapters and verses that allow women to stand and preach before men.

### ***7.11.5 Women Groupings***

At Chilipa, women groups perform different roles. For example, Amayi a Sarah members wear a white blouse and a blue skirt. They also cover their heads with a white piece of clothing or a white hat as directed by Scripture in 1 Corinthians 11:5 which says that “Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head - it is just as though her head were shaved (NIV). According to them, “the white colour” means righteousness; the “blue skirt” represents grace.<sup>392</sup> They also help each other on spiritual and moral issues. They sing in the Church choirs. See figure below.



Amayi a Sarah singing

### ***7.11.6 Sexual Roles***

According to those that were interviewed, women are naturally shy when it comes to sex. One of the respondents added that women understand that sex is the hub of family life, and that without it marriage cannot survive.<sup>393</sup> They also believe that women must fully submit themselves to their spouses when it comes to sexual love. The question, however, is: is it really true that women alone should submit to their husbands, not otherwise? On what basis should women alone submit to their husbands? Why not men submitting to their wives in terms of sex considering that everybody enjoys sex? This is perhaps one of the

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<sup>392</sup> Int. Mphatso Msowoya, deaconess, Chilipa Living Waters Church, 17.5.14.

<sup>393</sup> Int. Mercy Kamwiyo, Golomotj, 12.6.13.

attitudes that makes men take advantage of women and perpetrates the gender gap. There is indeed valid reason to challenge this kind of thinking beginning with women themselves who seem to simply accept these issues.

#### *7.11.6.2 Social Roles*

At Chilipa women are involved in home economics where they teach each other how to cook and take care of their families. They are also involved in the selling of second-hand clothes, fritters, and managing salons as a means of raising funds for their families and the Church.

#### ***7.11.7 Challenges Faced by Women***

Women are marginalized by men as they are considered incapable of doing many things. This promotes an inferiority complex and makes them withdraw from active life. Likewise, lack of resources affects women when doing some church activities. This makes them depend on men consequently leaving them more vulnerable. In Chilipa Church, women cannot visit prisons, hospitals, the sick and orphanages because resources are controlled by powerful men. Factually, women need to be economically empowered so that they can run their own affairs without depending on men. Other respondents said that their husbands are jealous of their wives when they are doing church work during odd hours. Some women observed that it was normal of husbands to be jealous under such circumstances, and that the women should simply balance Church activities with their family life to avoid these. They should also know that they are needed at home by the husband just like the Church needs them.

#### ***7.11.8 Women Relationship with the Pastor***

According to some respondents, there are some hidden relationships between the Pastor and unmarried women. For example, one of the respondents indicated that her friend was caught pants down with the Pastor in a Rest-house.<sup>394</sup> Another respondent added that the

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<sup>394</sup> Int. X (Name withheld) Chopi Village, 23.9.13.

Pastor was caught in the very act with a married woman.<sup>395</sup> Although the Pastor was transferred, these acts have already dented the image of the Church so much so that both husbands and society at large fear it. The issue is, should believers trust the so called men of God when they preach against adultery? Should these people be called holy anymore or dirty? This would be another interesting area that requires more research.

These aside, the study has revealed that women play a significant role in the Church despite the many challenges that they face when executing their roles. Findings in this section also indicate that women are substantially instrumental for the development of the Church.

## **7.12 Zomba Calvary Family Church (ZCFC)**

### ***7.12.1 Introduction***

Zomba Calvary Family Church is one of the churches in the Charismatic Redeemed Church. It is situated along the M1 Road opposite Zomba Islamic High School. The Church was established in 2003 by Pastor Kaduma.

### ***7.12.1 Meanings of Uniform Colours***

The Virtuous Women (Amayi Angwiro) uniform has more meaning than meets the eye. It is a visible expression and identification that women function as one unit.<sup>396</sup>



Zomba Virtuous women worshipping

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<sup>395</sup> Int. Joyce Mussa, Naming'omba, 14.8.13.

<sup>396</sup> Int. Jane Kuntenga, church elder, Zomba Calvary Family Church, 12.8.13

The picture above shows that the Virtuous Women wear a gold skirt which signifies a perfect woman, and the black shoes signify the old life without Christ, the white shirt and headband signify the new life in Christ.<sup>397</sup> This uniform is perceived as most sacred.

There are also additional uniforms. CFC Centenary and Millennium clothes are used as uniforms. The group can have as many uniforms as it pleases them. They wear these uniforms during Holy Communion, funeral services, weekly meetings and other official meetings. When an Amayi Angwiro member dies, she is dressed in the primary uniform.

### ***7.12.2 Activities of the Amayi Angwiro***

The group participates in funerals through singing, cooking and laying wreaths. It also gives company to the bereaved family by sleeping at the funeral for a number of days. Members of the group preach before the mourners. The women conduct evangelism meetings, adult literacy courses, home management courses, singing, visitations, and charity towards the sick and the poor. Currently, such activities have contributed towards the growth of the Church. Through these groups, women are able to share their concerns, ideas, hopes and fears.

### ***7.12.3 Weekly meetings***

The group generally meets on Thursdays though it can sometimes be flexible. Meetings start at 2 p.m. with a hymn, followed by a prayer, then a song. They later read 1 John 1:7 and then interpret the reading. The first part ends with a prayer. The second part is devoted to planning and organization of charity and visitation trips.

### ***7.12.4 The Role of Amayi Angwiro at Funerals***

From the day of death they mobilize each other and go to console the bereaved family. If the deceased is a female, they perform the rite of *Kusambisa Maliro (Cleansing the dead*

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<sup>397</sup> Int. Mrs M. Chambe, Mpondabwino, 20.2. 2013.

body). They go to the house of the deceased in order to sleep, sing, pray and preach until the deceased is laid to rest.<sup>398</sup>

During the burial, they prepare wreaths. They march in lines led by their Deacons and Church Elders. On the journey to the grave, they process while carrying a cross. They and the coffin form a circle and behind them, are the others. They place the wreaths on the coffin before offering a prayer. After laying the wreaths, they march around the grave while singing Chitsisimutso song no. 111. The leader of the procession marches a  $\frac{3}{4}$  circle around the grave. Three wreaths will be laid on the coffin after which a prayer follows. They then read Psalm 23 before the Pastor says the final benediction.

#### ***7.12.5 Still Born Births (Maliro a Mtayo)***

In Calvary Family Church, a full funeral service is conducted 'only' for a 3 month old child and above.<sup>399</sup> Women give a modest burial to stillborn births and children below the age of three months.<sup>400</sup> Despite this, such a funeral is given a Christian touch. The child is buried on the day of death. At home, a prayer is said, and a woman will deliver a homily at the graveyard soon after burial. A prayer concludes the occasion. This ritual does not imply that such children are perceived as sub-human. Amayi Angwiro believe that children are full human beings. This is expressed in the way they celebrate a child's birth. .

#### ***7.12.6 Girls' Instructions***

Traditional customs are one of the challenges bothering the Christian faith. Amayi Angwiro believe that some traditional customs conflict with the Christian faith.<sup>401</sup> Girls' initiation is one of those customs. To deal with this, women have designed a Christian initiation rite that seeks to train girls using the Christian way. In 2004, the National Executive Committee resolved to adopt a Christian Instruction Ritual. The resolutions made recognized the Bible

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<sup>398</sup> Women are not allowed to preach at the main funeral function.

<sup>399</sup> Minutes, Amayi Angwiro Conference, 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> August, 2012.

<sup>400</sup> These children are not in any way perceived as sub-human, the practice is but a cultural innovation (Re-Invention of culture).

<sup>401</sup> See Aims of Amayi Angwiro no 5.

as the standard measure for educating the girls considering that most of the secular customs are un-Christian.<sup>402</sup> The following year, this resolution was approved.

The Card outlines the procedures to be followed when initiating girls. When a girl starts her first menstruation, her female relatives must inform the Deaconess in the area. The Counsellors are then informed who come and instruct on how best she can take care of her menses. A full ritual is conducted soon after the menses have stopped. On this day, the initiate is confined indoors also known as 'Mbindikizo.' She sits on the mat besides her sponsor (*Phungu*) with her legs outstretched. A prayer opens the rite, followed by hymn no. 248 v 3. Instructions follow as outlined in the Card. Initiates are instructed on the realities of sex and sexuality. They are told that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit hence should not be abused sexually. Issues of reproductive health, proper dressing, good manners and respect for parents are tackled. The Alangizi makes sure that only clean language is used.<sup>403</sup> The ritual closes with a prayer, and then food is distributed and eaten.

Some Church members and non-members have sometimes opposed this Christianized ritual. Christian women are accused of disrespecting traditions by initiating girls their own way which is considered dull and shallow by the traditionalists. Christian initiates are regarded as weak, ignorant and unfit for adult life and marriage as the instructors skip some important topics.<sup>404</sup> In 2000, there was a dispute at Dzinthenga CFC in Chikwawa when Church women insisted that their children be initiated in the traditional way. When this news reached Nkolokosa Calvary Church, two Pastors were sent to resolve the issue. The concerned members argued that the Christian way of initiating girls was not effective and usually breeds problems for their children once they grow up.<sup>405</sup> Given these problems, there is need for the Church to incorporate the traditional elements into the Christian initiation rite so that it reflects some of the critical elements of the old system. Otherwise, change is usually hard to accept in any system, and any change that does not reflect or does

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<sup>402</sup> The executive minutes, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2012.

<sup>403</sup> Lesson by Rose Moreen Mbewe at women's conference held at Zomba Calvary Family Church from 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2013.

<sup>404</sup> Int. Mrs R. Masala, 25. 9. 13.

<sup>405</sup> Amayi Angwiro NEC minutes 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2013. The church's position on this is that those found sending their girls to traditional rites are to be disciplined. The pastor did not discipline the concerned women.

not take into account some elements of the past will always present problems like these. There is also need for sensitization and civic education to let members of the church know why certain elements must be removed. The issue, however, is on balancing two different elements and marrying them in a way that does not produce conflicts. This is possible considering that not all practices are bad. Moreover, girls' initiation is just a step within other steps that lead to full maturity of women. Nonetheless, any attempt by the CFC to discourage this rite will yield serious results that can negatively affect the whole Church and its ability to gain traction in this society. While it is true that women are learning to develop a theology that can free them from the evils of the society and its cultures thus developing an African Christian Faith, it will be delicate for them if they take the hard line stance by swiftly compressing and or overhauling some of the elements without giving them a second thought. Understandably, these women are women of both the Bible and culture and must be treated as such. Writing from a Charismatic perspective, Gehman exhorts that “wherever an African Tradition can be modified, let it be retained for the glory of God. This is instrumental for the growth of an African Christianity, so that it maintains the African brand.”<sup>406</sup>

### ***7.12.7 Instructions to the Newly Weds***

Amayi Angwiro are also involved in instructing girls for marriage. These instructions include a physical check-up to see if they are pregnant. Once pregnant, the marriage can be cancelled, and the boy will be severely punished by the Church.<sup>407</sup> After officiation, the new couple is given proper instructions.

Women instruct the girl while the male elders will instruct the boy. The instructions include on bedroom politics, home management, marital faithfulness, hard work and courage.<sup>408</sup> If the girl is not a member of the Amayi Angwiro, she is asked to join it.

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<sup>406</sup> Brian Keith Jennings, *Christian Virtue in A west African Context: A study of the interaction and synthesis of Methodist and Fanti moral traditions as a short model for the Contextualization of Christian Ethics*, A PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2009.

<sup>407</sup> Int. Grace Kamaliza, 23.9.13.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

### **7.12.8 Kutulutsa Chikuta (Releasing the Baby after its Birth)**

Amayi Angwiro are involved in instructing women from the time of pregnancy to birth.<sup>409</sup> One week after birth, *Kutulutsa Chikuta* is done. The function starts with preaching, prayers, bathing the child, then clothing it in new clothes. Amayi Angwiro present gifts while singing and ululating. Before leaving, the women summon the parents and advise them on how to care for the child as stated in Leviticus 12:1-8.<sup>410</sup> The couple is discouraged from using traditional medicines as a means of preventing witchcraft.

### **7.12.9 Income Generating Activities (IGAs)**

Amayi Angwiro are involved in activities that may make them economically more independent. The group realizes that women are vulnerable to poverty which makes them subject to exploitation. They teach women in the church to be economically empowered.<sup>411</sup> Skills such as knitting, weaving, sewing, baking and home management are all used to achieve this goal. The activities were modelled on the concept of '*Mkazi wa Ngwiro*' (a noble woman) from Proverbs 31:10-31. Through this approach, women believe that they can be self-reliant economically and in turn free themselves from male dependency and bondage. This is the building block on which the Calvary Family Church Women Organization is founded.

## **7.13 Women Ministry in the Holy Ghost Evangelism Church**

The Holy Ghost Evangelism Church has a Women Ministry just like any other Church. The Women Ministry is led by Pastor Madalitso Samathe. It started in 2004 soon after the Church was founded.

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<sup>409</sup> This is more emphasized if it is a woman's first pregnancy.

<sup>410</sup> Leviticus 12:1-8 (NIV) talks more on the rite a woman should follow after child birth. Women also in this church follow this rite. In the ceremony, the scripture that emphasizes children are God's gift to the family is read; for instance Ruth 4:12. They also sing songs ululating for the birth of the child.

<sup>411</sup> Int. Grace Kamaliza, 23.9.13.

### ***7.13.1 Aims of the Women Ministry***

The Women Ministry is founded on the principle of unity. Through this principle it aims at the following:

- i. To unite and develop women in the Church.
- ii. To teach women how to read and write, study the Bible; commit the word of God to memory and to preach in their communities.
- iii. To teach women home management including how to teach children the word of God and how to pray.
- iv. To encourage women to help each other in their respective communities and provide care to the needy, the orphans, the widows and the aged.
- v. To help women understand that they can be delivered from evil customs and beliefs.
- vi. To provide a contextualized girls' instruction according to the aims of the Girls Brigade.
- vii. To teach women how to cheer the sick and work together as a team.

A snapshot of these reveals that, prior to the establishment of this ministry; women had no freedom in their faith. However, through these developments, women gradually started to find their identity in the Church.

### ***7.13.2 Membership***

There are 30 members in the Ministry. Their regulations stipulate that whatever the Prophet says should be followed. If indeed, a Prophet mustn't be questioned, what about the corrupt Prophets who seek to abuse women? Should women succumb to their needs? Isn't this subjecting women to sexual abuse and other forms of violence? Moreover, this kind of thinking is in itself indoctrination and it survives on the suspension of reason, reasoning that must not be tolerated in this democratic era. This is not only repressive to women but also to men as they can be exploited in great many ways by such prophets.

### **7.13.3 Uniform**

Holy Ghost Evangelism believes that as much as uniform provides unity among members of the Church, it is not needed in this Church. Interviews with women leaders of the Church revealed that they cannot put on uniforms because they are identified by the Holy Spirit, not by uniforms. Some said that they do not use uniforms in order to be unique. Some said that since they are not allowed to preach in this Church, they cannot wear uniforms too.

### **7.13.4 Activities of Women Ministry**

The Women Ministry participates in funeral activities by way of singing, laying wreaths, cooking and occasional preaching. Through funeral occasions, the Church, through the Women Ministry, is able to evangelize and probably convert new people. Also, the presence and activities of Women Ministers comfort the bereaved as they stay with them at least for a couple of days.

Women also conduct evangelistic meetings, adult literacy courses, home management courses, singing, visitation of the sick, the elderly, the orphans and widows and organize camp meetings.<sup>412</sup> These activities have contributed to the growth of both the WM and the whole Church.

### **7.13.5 The Role of Women Ministry during Funerals**

The WM mobilize each other and go to console the bereaved family. If the deceased is a woman, they perform the rite of *Kusambisa Maliro*. They visit the deceased the night before the burial and sing all night.<sup>413</sup> They prepare wreaths and food for the occasion. During the service, they march in lines as already explained in the previous sections. The rest of the events are done in the same way just like other WMs do in sisters Charismatic Churches

### **7.13.3 Instructions to New Couples**

The WM also instructs girls on marriage issues. They also carry physical checks on girls to see if they are pregnant. If the result is positive, the marriage is cancelled and disciplinary

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<sup>412</sup> Int. Pastor Kaduma, 5.4.2013.

<sup>413</sup> Women are not allowed to preach at the main funeral function.

action will be taken.<sup>414</sup> Normally, the couple will be instructed soon after the wedding is done. Women instruct the girl, male elders instruct the boy. Lessons on bedroom politics, good manners, home management, love, and fidelity are presented.<sup>415</sup> The girl may be asked to join the WM, if she is not a member yet.

### ***7.13.5 Income Generating Activities (IGAs)***

The WM is involved in many activities that seek to make them financially independent. It realizes that women are vulnerable to poverty which makes them depend on men thus perpetrating male dominance. Women thus learn knitting, weaving, sewing, baking and other home management skills to be self-reliant. The Holy Ghost Evangelism Women Organization was nurtured as a means for empowering the women. There are some observations, though.

### ***7.13.6 Participation with Limitations***

Although it appears that women in this Church do participate in leadership roles, they do so with limitations. For example, one of the female Pastors complained that she fails to execute her duties well because the Pastor always directs what to do or say.<sup>416</sup> It was observed that female Pastors are only asked to pray for Collections and offerings but not to do the main preaching. If they do preach, then the male Pastors follow them on what to preach and how they preach. Likewise, decisions for running the Church are made by the male authorities. One of the female Pastors also reported that she cannot act on any serious matters concerning the Church unless she consults the men. Of course, consultations are not wrong in any organization, but sometimes good leaders must make their own decisions. The issue here is that women leaders are not allowed to make their own decisions just because of their sex, not because they cannot. This is an area that calls for urgent revision. Why should the Church bar women from making decisions and or from leading the Church?

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<sup>414</sup> Int. Pastor H. Shawa, 5.4. 2013.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.

<sup>416</sup> Int. pastor (x) her name withheld.

Is it an offense to be born a woman?. Male chauvinism seems to refuse to die within the walls of some Charismatic Churches. While many people would expect such Churches to be the champions of change and role models in embracing modern trends of transacting business that calls for human equality, the opposite is true. Yet these Churches do pretend that they are modified, reformed, agile and do embrace gender equality. One wonders then what sort of gender equality they preach when they themselves cannot fully liberate their women leaders.

### ***7.13.7 Conclusion***

From this discussion it is clear that women play significant roles in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi. It has been shown that women have been, and continue to be founders of the Church and its organizations. For example, Barbara Tippet pioneered a fellowship in her house which later became the WAMI Church. The case-studies so far discussed indicate that LMs empower women to serve God effectively alongside the men.

Likewise, women in the Charismatic Churches have contributed a lot towards social, spiritual, political, and economic justices. They have also contributed towards the growth of the Church. Through evangelism and developmental activities, many people seem to be more attracted and tilted to the CCs members than to the Mainline Churches. Moreover, women in the CCs have proved to be more industrious and self-reliant than those of the Mainline Churches.

In addition, women in the CCs are very proactive and perform various roles such as Church Elders, Deaconesses, and Chair-ladies, Sunday school teachers and social-workers. However, some of these are mostly cultural and feminine roles in nature. For example, Sunday school teaching is generally believed to be the work for women not men as is looking after children.

Finally, although women are allowed to participate in select leadership positions, their participation is not balanced as opposed to men. There are fewer women in the leadership positions despite them being the majority of the church. This signals that women in the CCs are not fully liberated when it comes to assuming leadership positions of the Church.

Accordingly, there is need to empower them socially, economically and educationally so that they should fully participate in the core positions of the Church.

# Chapter 8: Women Participation in Charismatic Churches

## 8.0 Introduction

Statistically, women constitute the larger percentage of the world population.<sup>417</sup> Likewise, in Malawi women are more than half the population.<sup>418</sup> To this end, in many churches, including the Charismatic Churches (CCs), women are in the majority.<sup>419</sup> Despite their numerical strength, very few assume leadership positions both in the Church and in society as a whole. The research has shown that in many parts of the world at large and Malawi in particular, women do not enjoy equal status with men.<sup>381</sup> Of course in the Charismatic Churches there is a slight change in which it seems that women are treated equally to men in terms of leadership positions. But even then, these positions are often significantly small or they come with limitations when it comes to final authority. It is reported that women leaders in the CCs are primarily figureheads when compared to their male counterparts. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on the roles that women perform in CCs. These include leadership, evangelism, intercession, and hospitality among others.

## 8.1 Leadership

According to the Charismatic Redeemed Church Constitution, leadership is the heart of every institution. It is the hub of progress, transformation and foundation for influence. It controls the operations of any organization. The Charismatic Redeemed Constitution also indicates that both men and women should equally participate in leadership.

Table 1 below shows the composition of leadership in selected CCs such as Zomba Calvary and Area 25 Holy Ghost Evangelism Church.

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<sup>417</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/demographicsoftheworld>.

<sup>418</sup> See Demographic Population Statistics of Malawi, National Statistics Office (NSO), 2012, p. 45.

<sup>419</sup> See Stephanie Y. Mitchen, *Introducing Womanist Theology*, Maryknoll: Orbis books, 2002, p. 127. However, that women are the majority in almost all churches is not due to them being the majority of the population. In the population the women are about 52%, but in church they are usually 60%, as men are less interested.

Year	Zomba Calvary Church		Area 25 HOGEM	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
2011	10	5	15	3
2010	12	6	10	2
2009	9	4	12	3
2008	10	3	10	4
2007	10	3	11	2
2006	8	3	8	2
2005	11	6	10	4
2004	10	4	13	3
2003	12	7	12	7
2002	9	5	10	4
2001	11	4	9	3

Table 1: Leadership in the CCs; Zomba CFC, Area 25 HOGEM

*Sources: Zomba CFC Administrators Files and HOGEM Church Secretary Files*

The above table shows that the number of women in leadership positions in the two Churches is smaller than that of men. One of the women in leadership position said that women are just leaders by name but do not make decisions as men do. She added that women are only allowed to lead exhortation of giving, and praying for the offerings. She added that once in a year a woman is chosen to preach in the Church.<sup>420</sup>

## 8.2 Evangelism

According to the respondents, evangelism is one area women participate in. In the Living Waters Constitution, evangelism is one of the core-functions of the Church.<sup>421</sup> It is based on the scriptural stipulation “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. Mathews 28:19 (NIV).

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<sup>420</sup> Int. Emily Ngulube, Zomba Charismatic Redeemed International Church, 23. 4. 2013.

<sup>421</sup> The Living Waters International Constitution, 2004.

Generally, evangelism involves preaching the Gospel to those that have not received Jesus yet. The preaching is done on a one to one basis or to a gathering of some size. Based on these responses, it is clear that women are not allowed to preach in the Church during the main Sunday Services. Here, we either see them preaching once a Sunday in a year or regularly during evangelism which is done outside the Church and to new converts. We also see them active during other support services such as intercession, overnight prayers and outreaches.<sup>422</sup>

Similarly, no woman at HOGEM and Zomba Calvary Family Church has ever been given a chance to preach during any of the main services usually held on Sundays or Wednesdays. Although they claimed to have given women a chance to preach, the 2013 Wednesday preaching roster showed that no woman was included on the preaching roster. For example, only male elders were supposed to preach on the 9th, 16th 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30th of January 2013.<sup>423</sup> They also preached on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2013.<sup>424</sup> Given the absence of any evidence that women are allowed to preach at main services, it is hard to believe some of the earlier claims. Moreover, it was reported that women mostly declined to preach when given a chance.<sup>425</sup> This then tells a story. It is possible that women were not asked to preach at all hence could not preach. How do you expect them to preach when you have not asked them to do so? It is also possible that women saw that they were not included in the preaching roster hence felt side-lined and when asked to do so, thought there was lack of some concern hence the declining. The printed roster did not contain any woman preacher, and this was enough evidence that women are not given any chance to lead the Church activities. However, some respondents said that there was change in that more women were able to share the word of God during intercessions, overnight prayers, fasting programmes and outreach functions. According to them, this stands in great contrast to what used to happen some years ago when women were not at all allowed to lead any Church service. To them, this is a positive development as it shows that men are slowly willing to delegate some of their powers to women. This will in future give the women

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<sup>422</sup> Int. Esnat Phiri, chairlady Nankhunda Calvary Tabernacle church 12. 6. 2013.

<sup>423</sup> Int. Pastor x ( name withheld)

<sup>424</sup> Int. Church elder Y (name withheld)

<sup>425</sup> Int. Mercy, Graciano, 12. 2. 2013.

courage to stand before men and preach the word of God, but that will depend on how much the men are willing to forgo and how soon that would be.<sup>426</sup>

Moreover, some Evangelism activities such as outreaches are organized by the Executive Committee.<sup>427</sup> For example, at Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church an Evangelism Committee organizes and spearheads Outreach Programmes. This Committee is responsible for drawing up programmes for intercessions, overnight prayers, identifying the topics and the responsible persons. After the selection, a copy of that programme is sent to the Pastor and the Executive for approval.

Year	Females	Males
2012	4	6
2011	3	7
2010	3	8
2009	4	6
2008	2	8
2007	3	7
2006	4	6
2005	3	7
2004	3	8

Table 2: Programme on responsible personnel for preaching 2004-2012

*Source: Living Water's Secretary files*

The above table indicates that women are not involved much in the preaching of the word. Men dominate. It has been revealed that in some churches women preach once in a year when the women day is allocated to them on the church programme for the year.

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<sup>426</sup> Reports from the respondents of the following churches: Family Cavalry Church, Charismatic Redeemed Church, Holy Ghost Evangelism Ministries, Living Waters Church, Winners Chapel and Miracle of God Church. Also records from previous programmes in the secretaries' files and my observation from, 2004 to 2014 concur with the respondents.

<sup>427</sup> Int. Mervin Khasu, Chairperson Winners Chapel 7. 5. 2013.

### 8.3 Observations

The results from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with several members of the Evangelism Committee indicated that although women are appointed to be members of the Committee by the Pastor, some are not willing to become members. For instance, out of ten women respondents, four said that they are willing to be members while six said that they were not interested in joining the Committee because they cannot evangelize as required. Women added that, as members, they were supposed to be given a chance to preach within and without the Church, surprisingly though, they were not.<sup>428</sup> Again, members of HOGEM indicated that women are not free to exercise their roles in the Evangelism Committees because the Pastors dominate. They added that, mostly, members follow the views of the Pastors.<sup>429</sup> Another person added that if a woman is given a chance to preach, sometimes the Pastor closely scrutinizes the sermon and sometimes accuses the preacher if he identified some errors within the preaching.<sup>430</sup> This may be an indication that the leader of that particular church is lacking leadership skill. This therefore may be one of the many reasons that constrain women from participating in the main activities of the Church.

### 8.3 Intercession

According to the Charismatic Redeemed Church Constitution, prayer and intercession are very vital elements and are imperative for every Christian.<sup>431</sup> Intercessions are holy, believing, and persevering prayer where someone pleads with God on behalf of others who need God's intervention.<sup>432</sup> The churches have special intercession meetings. This is in line with one of the objectives of their Constitution which is promoting a life and spirit of prayer and intercession among others. Relative to this, one of the respondents observed that each member of the Church needs to grow in prayer.<sup>433</sup> She added that, besides personal time for

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<sup>428</sup> Int. Rebecca Chagwa, Memory Saidi, Gladys Makuta Mautanga, Rose Majorette Paulo Mayaka, 12. 4. 2013.

<sup>429</sup> Int. Blessings, Moyo, 30. 3. 2013.

<sup>430</sup> Int. Madalitso, Samathe, 27.1. 2013. She pointed out that the idea of involving women in evangelism is good but they must be given freedom to perform their duties without interferences from men in the church.

<sup>431</sup> The Charismatic Redeemed Church Constitution 2010.

<sup>432</sup> Int. Margret Chiwalo, Matawale, 23. 3. 2013.

<sup>433</sup> Int. Magret Musasa, Liwonde, 18.2. 2013. She is an elder at Liwonde Calvary Family Church.

prayer, they are also obliged to participate in praying for the Church and the country (Luke 18:1, I Thessalonians 5:25, Hebrews 13:13).

Chitawira Charismatic Redeemed Church conducts intercessions on Mondays from 5:30-6:00 pm and Fridays from 5:30-6:00 pm. Interestingly, 60% of the respondents indicated that they regularly attend the intercession prayers, while 40% said that they do not, due to other commitments. Others observed that the number of the attendees usually varies. However, she observed that the minimum number of ladies per intercession is usually not less than fifteen as of 2012. She also confirmed that women participation over the years has significantly increased.<sup>434</sup> This improvement was attributed to the influence of different teachings on women. She also noted that individual women also played a substantial role in mobilizing women to attend these prayers.

Likewise, Winners Chapel conducts intercessions every Monday and Wednesday from 8:00-9:00 pm. Sometimes, these prayers are conducted on the mountains for the whole night. Women were asked if they all participate in these activities. At least 20% of the women attend overnight prayers, 15% attend intercessions and 10% patronize mountain prayers.<sup>435</sup>

#### **8.4 Factors Contributing to Low Representation of Women in Leadership Positions**

The study wanted to find out factors that contribute to low representation of women in decision-making positions. The responses obtained revealed that many women feel that women themselves are the problem. They added that many women are not bold enough to assume leadership roles. Others observed that most of the women fear their fellow women as there seems to be a pull-down syndrome. Some women are not willing to take risks and challenging positions hence choose to stay back. There were also other reasons apart from those listed below.

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<sup>434</sup> Int. Ruth Jiya, Matawale, 27.6. 2013.

<sup>435</sup> Statistics from secretary attendance files, 2011-2014.

### **8.4.1 Family Obligations**

Some respondents observed that many women are challenged by family obligations hence cannot find time for active Church positions. This was also agreed by 40% of the officials who pointed out that women are afraid of taking up responsibilities because of family obligations. Conversely, 60% of the officials from the Miracle Church of God said that most of the women underestimate their potential hence opt not to vie for leadership positions in their churches.<sup>436</sup> By underestimating themselves, women create the space for men to proceed with their agenda. To this end, women themselves, coupled with social and cultural issues, are a prime reason for their underrepresentation.<sup>437</sup>

In many African countries and elsewhere around the globe, lack of training and education has been identified as critical reasons behind women's low representation in leadership positions.<sup>438</sup> This is particularly true when we consider that higher education is positively correlated with higher participation in leadership and management roles for both women and men. However, in many African societies, boys education is preferred to girl child education.<sup>439</sup>

Here it means that the society should change its mindset on girl child education both in the church and the community. Women should be empowered to influence girl child education in the church and in the society. However, for this to happen, there is need for a radical shift in the way African societies do business. This can be achieved by prioritizing girl child education.

### **8.4.2 Lack of Support**

The interviews and the Focus Group Discussions conducted with women revealed that most of the women are not fully supported by society, workmates and even their spouses when

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<sup>436</sup> Brinkerhoff, D. and Crosby, *Managing Policy Reform: Concepts and tools for decision-makers in developing and transitioning countries*. USA: Kumarian Press, 2000, p. 145.

<sup>437</sup> B. Dzimbiri. *Culture and Gender: A Socio-Cultural Interpretation of Women in Top Management Portfolio in the Public Service Context*. Unpublished. Zomba: University of Malawi, 1995, p. 30. See also G.N. Powel, G.N. *Women and Men in Management*. London: Sage Publication Inc., 1993, p. 130

<sup>438</sup> See <http://www.unicef.org/education>.

<sup>439</sup> Bingham Young, Credit-UNICEF Essays on Education Of a Girl Child Is a Burden, 2014.

they want to vie for leadership positions. However, both the officials and other members of the Church who were interviewed at HOGEM were of the view that what affects women representation is not only lack of support but also women themselves as they seem to underestimate their potential. The respondents added that because women do not believe in themselves, they often give up and do not even go for the existing positions available in the Church. By simply looking at the current trends - that of women representation, it would be also concluded that the Church is not gender friendly, more especially when we look at the low numbers of women that do take up key positions in the churches. This is mostly attributed to Church teachings. These findings do agree with what Ouston observed that women mostly lack support from their husbands and colleagues when they vie for leadership roles. Yet these women must be present in order to provide a gendered perspective in Education and Development.<sup>440</sup> Moreover, a study done in Uganda conducted by Kagoda and Sperandio observed that leadership of the Church is severely affected due to under representation of women.<sup>441</sup> Like the Ugandan case, this research observed that out of twenty Church Elders in the HSEC, only four Church Elders were women. According to the respondents, this number was the result of inadequate support for women leaders. This is also similar to what Chinguwo established. He observed that women are not fully supported and hence less integrated in their offices than men. He also observed that women lack networking skills when it comes to campaigning for leadership positions and this affects their chances of being elected into such positions.<sup>442</sup>

### **8.4.3 Low Esteem**

Some of the Pastors that were interviewed at Liwonde Pastors' Fraternal claimed that women have a low self-esteem which affects their chances of getting into leadership positions. They observed that many women do not show any interest in any leadership position as they think that they cannot do well or cannot perform at all. The issue, however,

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<sup>440</sup> J. Ouston. *Women in Education Management*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Harlow: Longman, 1993. p. 56.

<sup>441</sup> A.M. Kagoda. Determinants of the career professional development of female teachers in Uganda unpublished Kampala, Uganda: paper, 2000, p. 51.

<sup>442</sup> E. Chinguwo, L. Mwali, K. Bwalya, L. Mphande, M. Malele, S. Pitso, , Nsibande, N. *Low Participation of Women in Educational Leadership: Consultancy Paper for Leadership in Education for Africa Development*. Zomba: MIE, 2007. p. 23.

is that women need to understand that for any organization to develop there is need for both men and women to work together and complement each other.<sup>443</sup> These groups must work symbiotically in order to supplement each other. Based on this assumption, it is imperative that none of these people overvalue or undervalue themselves since this can negatively impact development as observed by Corner. Corner further observed that society has negative perceptions against women and their abilities to lead.<sup>444</sup> He concluded that such a negative view, amongst many other factors, constrains women from taking up leadership positions within and without the Church.

## **8.5 Pastors' Wives in the Charismatic Churches**

In the Charismatic churches, just like in other Churches, the concept of Pastor's wives has been rooted in sexism and clericalism prescribed by patriarchy. Mostly, Pastors' wives are called 'Mayi Busa.' This is not their real name as they acquire this name after getting married to a Pastor. Surprisingly, only women change their names to that of a male Pastor once they get married, but when a layman marries a female Pastor or Prophetess in many other charismatic churches, the man does not change his name to that of the woman Pastor. This has an implied meaning which shows the mentality of society as it assumes that men are naturally born leaders. Moreover, the name "Pastor's wife" implies women involvement in Christian Pastoral care especially in the "re-appropriation of scriptural and ethical norms." Following this meaning, Pastor's wives in the CCs perform the following roles:

- look after their husbands socially, morally and spiritually
- head Women groups
- Counsel and advise in social, moral and marriage problems
- lead women in the funeral procession
- teach women how to prepare funeral wreaths and songs
- lead all economic and developmental activities

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<sup>443</sup> United Nations, *The World's Women: trends and statistics*. New York: United Nations, 2005, p 45.

<sup>444</sup> Corner, L. *Women's Participation in Decision and Leadership Perspective*. New York: UNIFERM. (1997, pp. 45-46

- undertake pastoral care ministry
- hospital visitation
- visit the aged, the weak, the orphans and strengthen them
- Sometimes do more than their husbands.

### ***8.5.1 Challenges Pastors' Wives Face***

Pastor's wives are not spared from common challenges that every woman faces. For example, they are underrated by Church members. People gossip about them and their families. They are sometimes divorced by their husbands and become the centre of ridicule. In order to deal with these challenges, they formed the Pastors' Wives and Lady Pastors (PAWLP) Organization in 2011 in Lilongwe. PAWLP has members from all Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches.

### ***8.5.2 Aims of PAWLP***

PAWLP aims at:

- strengthening the relationship between the Pastor's wives and Lady Pastors in the Church
- dealing with conflicts that may arise between the Church and Pastors
- ensuring that there is a cordial relationship between Pastors and their wives
- discussing challenges Pastors' wives and Lady pastors face within the Church
- finding solutions to the challenges faced by Pastors' wives and Lady Pastors
- strengthening the vision Pastors' wives and Lady Pastors have
- ensuring economic empowerment of Pastors' wives and Lady Pastors.

Through PAWLP, many challenges facing Pastors' wives and Lady Pastors have been unearthed. One of the respondents indicated that Pastors dominate in decision-making positions in the Church and in the family.<sup>445</sup> She said that most Pastors take their authority from the Church to their families and this often breeds conflicts in their families.

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<sup>445</sup> Int X (Name withheld) Chinsapo Charismatic Redeemed Church, 22.4.14

Likewise, Pastors' wives are sometimes ill-treated by their husbands. For example, one of the respondents said that some Pastors consider their wives inferior hence disregard them. She cited the example of a Pastor who respected the Chairlady for his Church more than his own wife. When such are the cases, according to this respondent, conflicts often come about as the wife thinks that the Pastor is involved in shady dealings with this particular woman. Moreover, envy was reported as a significant challenge by many of the respondents. Mostly, the Pastor seems to be in close contact with many other women including the Chairladies and this may become a bone of contention and jealousy. Events like these; if not well handled, often spread all over the Church, especially if the concerned women are also married. In addition, role conflict is another major challenge Pastors' wives face. For example, some Pastors' wives double as house wives and employees of certain organizations and this puts them in a dilemma when it comes to setting priorities. Moreover, Pastor's wives from rural areas usually face economic challenges to the extent that they are mocked, scorned and laughed at by the laity of their societies. During an interview with Mercy Makiyi she said members of their church give very little money that cannot suffice them their living. She continued saying that at other times the society has been scorning them saying that they should stop ministering to the church because the church is failing to assist them financially.<sup>446</sup>

### ***8.5.3 Suggested Solutions***

Interviews carried out with some wives revealed the following solutions:

- Pastors should change their attitude and perception about women by accommodating them since they are equals.
- Pastors should work together with their wives when doing church work or indeed household chores.
- Pastors should be free with their wives and share their problems than rather confiding in outsiders.
- Pastor's wives should treat all women equally.
- Pastors' wives should be humble.

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<sup>446</sup> Int. p (name withheld, Migowi Holly Ghost Evangelism Ministries, 8.9.14.

- Pastors' wives should be confidential in all matters regarding individuals and the Church.

#### ***8.5.4 The Pastor's Family***

In the CCs, Pastors marry and live as husband and wife. Men take the role of a husband and women that of a wife. While there is some kind of division of labour based on gender in these families, there are problems that arise. These problems are, however, hidden because of the Pastor's position.

According to PAWLP, pastors' wives face sexual harassment problems as some Pastors sleep with them even when they feel tired.<sup>447</sup> Moreover, some Pastors do indulge in extramarital affairs and hence deny their real wives conjugal rights. When infidelity and ill-treatment have gone beyond the limit, some women ask for divorce.

Likewise, some Pastors do not have time to spend with their families as the nature of their work keeps them away from home. They move from one place to another preaching to different congregations and churches as visiting Pastors and this comes on top of the work in their usual congregation. Because of this, some wives feel neglected and go wild and wayward hence engage in extramarital affairs. For example, one Pastor's wife reported that she was sick with her husband's behaviour of being on the road all the times. She added that she was not married to the Church, not even to a Spirit, but rather to a Pastor who is a human being and must respond to the needs of the human body.<sup>448</sup> What she implied here is that Pastors have dual functions: men of God who must have time to serve the Lord; and human beings who must serve the person in them, their human feelings and those of their acquaintances.

Moreover, the Church expects Pastors' wives to be holy and exemplary in all matters. The Church assumes that both the Pastor and his wife ought to be paragons of virtue, yet these are mere human beings capable of erring. This is expecting too much of them as they are just human beings like everybody else. The fact that they are married to Pastors does not necessarily mean they have shock absorbers against sin. Of course, the Churches have the

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<sup>447</sup> Int. Pastor Annie Maseya, Namilongo Calvary Tabernacle Congregation, 25.6.2014.

<sup>448</sup> Int. Dorothy Mungomo, Phalombe, 12.5.14.

right to remind them about the need for righteousness and morality, but they must do so not in a harsh manner bearing in mind that these people do have emotions, concerns and feelings. This does not, in any way, grant them a license for breaking the existing moral and ethical codes that guide the Pastoral office.

### ***8.5.5 Experiences of Pastors' Wives***

Results from this study revealed that some Pastors' wives have vast experience both within and without the Church. For example, some wives indicated that although they are not recognized by the Church, they still work hard to meet the demands of the Church besides being Pastors' wives. They look after the activities of all the women in the Church. They also chair Women Committees without any pay. Surprisingly, while Pastors mainly work on Sundays and get paid for doing that, their wives get nothing. This concurs with Molly Longwe's observations that Pastor's wives have no official recognition.<sup>449</sup> Longwe further observed that Pastors' wives are involved in pastoral work just like their husbands, although they do not get any compensation. This is an area that calls for some form of redress as it really undermines the role of women and indirectly promotes their marginalization. Some Pastors' wives also complained that despite receiving their calling from God, they are not allowed to lead the Church. This is in sharp contrast to the men, whom, upon receiving such a calling, the Church quickly sends to Theological Training Schools, before or after their ordination as a sign of acceptance and recognition.

### ***8.5.6 Better Call me by my First Name, not Pastor's Wife (Mayi Busa)***

The FGD held in Lilongwe among Pastors' wives revealed that many women would prefer to be called by their first names rather than being identified as somebody's wife. Some women even argued that to be married to a Pastor does not mean that you are also part of the Pastoral Ministry. They gave an example of a woman who is married to a watchman, and wondered if such a woman automatically becomes a watchman.

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<sup>449</sup> Molly Longwe, *A Paradox in a Theology of Freedom and equality: The experiences of pastors' wives (Amayi Busa) in the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA)*, PhD, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2012, p. 34.

Another group of women, however, said that they would rather be called Pastors' wives since their husband are Pastors and they are proud to be identified as such. This is similar to what Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler observes that names of women are lost soon after getting married. She also observed that some women even assume the roles and responsibilities of their husbands.

## **8.6. Challenges Faced by Single Women Pastors**

Single women Pastors face both spiritual and physical challenges. For example, some women Pastors indicated that they are sometimes underrated by men in the Church. Others said that when they are ministering, some men openly argue that such Pastors are influenced by gender activism and not by the calling from God. One of the pastors complained that they are not included in the decision making crew whenever there are meetings.<sup>450</sup> She observes that at the meeting where they want to choose leaders of the church like bishops or overseers, only two or three female pastors are involved and the majority are men. Since the majority are men who already look at a woman as an inferior creature they cannot even be nominated to the position hence the leaders of the church remain in the hands of men.

Moreover, women Pastors who are single are faced with sexual problems. One of the Pastors reported that just like any human being, they too experience sexual impulse. Bearing children is another challenge these women face. They need children just like any mother would, but because of their marital status and Church position, they cannot get any baby outside wedlock as that would constitute adultery. Worse still, these women Pastors cannot comfortably counsel every woman including married women as demanded by their position. This is because married women consider them as children, inexperienced and ignorant in matters of marriage and sex. Some women even rebuke them for being unmarried and assign to them arrogant and satirical names which are usually given to people who are not married or are impotent.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> Int. Pastor Mercy Kalimba, Muloza Charismatic Redeemed Church, 12.8.14.

<sup>451</sup> Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse, *Women in Ministry, Four views*, Downers Grove: IVP Academic intervarsity Press, 1989.

Likewise, some members of the Church want to be good before the Pastors hence resort to backbiting and gossips. In addition, some women are very apprehensive against these unmarried women Pastors as they think they can snatch their husbands from them.

## **8.7 Zomba Charismatic Redeemed Church**

### ***8.7.1 A Brief History of Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church***

Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church is one of the churches in the five Dioceses of the Charismatic Redeemed Church in the Southern Region of Malawi. It was founded by Bishop Mark Kambalazaza while he was in the initial stage of founding the Charismatic Redeemed Ministries. The ZCCC developed from a fellowship which was chaired by Pastor Mbewe.<sup>452</sup> The Church is estimated to have over a thousand members with a total number of 500 women and 400 men.<sup>453</sup>

### ***8.7.2 Women Participation in the ZCCC***

Women participate in different positions in this Church. They serve as Pastors, Deacons, Church Elders, Secretaries, Chairladies and others. The Church accepts women in leadership positions as it believes that both men and women are equal before God. The Church believes that men and women share the same anointing, values and gifts of the Holy Spirit; that is the reason Pierrah Chilimtsidya was ordained in 2007.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Int. Bishop John Chilimtsidya, 12.6. 2013. According to Bishop Chilimtsidya pastor Songola was the first Pastor in 2004 and was later succeeded by Pastor Chigwirampeni before Bishop John Chilimtsidya took over in 2007.

<sup>453</sup> Church membership file, 2013.

<sup>454</sup> Int. Gresham Songola, Mpondabwino, 24. 6. 2013.



Pastor Pierrah Chilimtsidya

In 2007 Pastor Pierrah Chilimtsidya was ordained as auxiliary Pastor of the Church.<sup>455</sup> The word auxiliary implies that, by that time, she was just an assisting Pastor. She was later succeeded by Pastor Losta Chikufenji, who is now the Bishop's Pastoral Secretary in Blantyre. In this Church, women Pastors are usually dressed in Rosaria<sup>456</sup> with the cross of Jesus Christ. This is a symbol for an ordained Church Minister just like some Churches prefer a white neck-tie besides the usual Roman Collar.

### ***8.7.3 Pastor Losta Chikuferanji's Pastoral Experience***

An in-depth interview conducted with this woman Pastor to find out about her education and pastoral work showed that she was an educated woman. Although she did not go to a formal Theological Training School, she received an in-house training. It was further revealed that she is usually underrated by men when preaching just because she is a woman and did not undergo formal training. She, however, believes that God uses her as an instrument for reaching out to people with salvation. Her husband also advises her on what to do on some Church administration issues. She cited an example where one of the church elders committed adultery and she was told to hear the case. She consulted her husband who guided her regarding the right judgment. From these findings, we can easily think of the following: one, by passing the verdict after seeking guidance from her husband, it simply shows that women still feel incapable of doing things on their own and consider men wiser than them. Two, by seeking guidance from the man before her giving it the try herself, shows that women still want men to be on the driving seat hence granting them an edge for underrating them. While these assumptions might be true, they can be challenged on other grounds. For example, who does not seek advice on this earth? Is it a crime to ask for advice from somebody? After all, even the most competent judges of this world do seek advice

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<sup>455</sup> Int. Suzan, Chirwa, 17.5 2013. There are also other female pastors apart from Pierrah Chilimtsidya at Zomba church. These include Irene Kambalazaza, Agape Mpama and Everesia Phukaphuka.

<sup>456</sup> Rosaria is a special cross which the Bishop puts on. The ordained pastors also put on this cross.

from their lawyers and the jury that is composed of both men and women. In fact, this would be construed as a sign of wisdom on the woman's side. There is nothing that is out of order for every person to seek for guidance from those you trust.

As a woman Pastor, she has the role to lead the Church, but when she goes home, she is a wife and must be under her husband's rule. According to her, this brings some kind of role conflict. According to her, she is a woman born in Africa and must therefore respect the culture and values that hold society together.<sup>457</sup> Again, some women reported that many husbands feel uncomfortable with women who have senior positions at their work places as they think that such women tend to be assertive, adamant and defiant. This breeds hatred against the woman as many men resort to reprimands, physical assault and or harassment to force the woman into submission. Nevertheless, men should learn that everybody was given the same authority by God.<sup>458</sup> Nevertheless, women who have good jobs or are elected to higher offices must execute their roles with caution so that they do not negatively affect the image of other capable women and their families alike.

#### ***8.7.4 Woman Pastor Works as Secretary***

In the Charismatic Redeemed Ministry, some women Pastors do secretarial work. For instance, Pastor Losta Chikufenji is among the Senior Pastors in the Southern Diocese. She is the Bishop's Secretary and directly reports to the Bishop. She also monitors the activities of all Women Committees.

Pastor Losta Chikuferanji indicated that the Bishop uses her as a Communications Specialist for all the Five Dioceses. However, she observed that most of the time, she is just directed on what to do without allowing her to exercise her own opinions.<sup>459</sup> Many people felt that the job of a Secretary is too demanding and involving. For example, out of ten Pastors who were interviewed, eight said that once one has been appointed as the Bishop's Secretary, he/she has no time for the Church and cannot even minister effectively. The other two

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<sup>457</sup> Int. Pierrah Chilimtsidya, 26.2.2013.

<sup>458</sup> See Genesis 1:26. "Let them have dominion over the fish and the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle." The dominion was given to both man and woman not only to the man.

<sup>459</sup> Int. Losta Chikuferanji, 15.3. 2013.

observed that it was wrong for someone to stop ministering just because of secretarial roles. Many people felt that such appointments kill the work of God and the Church alike.<sup>460</sup> It is evident from these findings that many people feel that Secretarial duties negatively affect Pastors' primary duties such as ministering. Again, one can also observe that women pastors have been deliberately pushed to secretarial duties instead of ministering which is done by the male Bishops.

### ***8.7.5 Women as Church Administrators***

Women in the CRC also perform administrative roles. For example, ZCCC has three administrators, one of whom is a woman, Miss Ruth Saka. An interview with one of the administrators indicated that women work as supervisory directors of different Church Committees. For example, Saka's duty is to preside over wedding committees, to supervise the Church treasury and managing the Pastor's welfare.<sup>461</sup> She, however, revealed that most of the administrative work is done by men, and that she only supports them. According to her, she is the administrator in theory but not in practice as most of the planning work is done by men. She also lamented that her contributions towards her own work are essentially undermined by men just because of her sex.<sup>462</sup>

Evangelism is another role women play in the ZCCC. The Church allows women to take an active role in this area. A woman evangelist organizes and conducts crusades in different branches of the Church.<sup>463</sup> Some of the evangelists indicated that not all women execute their roles as evangelists since most of the core work is also done by men. To this, one of the respondents pointed out that she organized five crusades in 2012, to her surprise, male evangelists monopolized the preaching. Mostly, women assist in the organization of Crusades and conferences, and thereafter they become spectators.

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<sup>460</sup> I conducted a focus group discussion with ten female pastors at pastors' fraternal meeting, Zomba Church, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.

<sup>461</sup> Int. Ruth Saka, 30. 5. 2013. She is an elder of Chikanda church.

<sup>462</sup> She gave an example where she asked the senior pastor to increase the number of church elders and deaconesses in the church but the two rejected the decisions.

<sup>463</sup> Some of women evangelists include: Mrs Samute, Mrs Dzowa, Mrs Likweya and Sister Chikondi Samson.

### ***8.7.6 Women as Deaconesses***

While some women serve as Church Elders together with men, a good number of women serve as Deaconesses. There are more Deaconesses than Deacons in the ZCCC. This is the case because people generally believe that the duties of a Deacon are feminine in nature. For example, the job involves general cleaning and decorating of the Church, which is considered not manly. Moreover, women are generally perceived as honest people hence they are charged with the administration and collection of Church offerings and this is the job of Deaconesses. In a nutshell, the Charismatic Redeemed Church Constitution defines a Deaconesses' job description as follows:

1. Deaconesses must look after the sick, the needy and the unfortunate, cooperating with the Deacons in this work.
2. Deaconesses must ensure that the table linen and towels used in the celebration of ordinances are laundered and carefully set aside.
3. Deaconesses must prepare the bread for the Lord's Supper. They must also neatly arrange the Ordinance Table, pour the wine, place the plates of unleavened bread, and cover the table with the linen.
4. Deaconesses must assist during Baptism by giving counsel, garments, bowls and any other materials for the baptism. Where robes are used, the Deaconesses must see that they are laundered and carefully put aside for future use.<sup>464</sup>
5. Deaconesses must also be responsible for running Home-cells, counselling women and youths.<sup>465</sup>

They are also members of the Women's Organization known as Charismatic Redeemed Women (CHAREWO). In this Church, Deacons and Deaconesses undergo training before they are ordained. The training is meant to equip them with pastoral-work skills as well as proper doctrines. Trained and ordained Deaconesses put on uniforms, while the untrained ones do not and these set them apart.

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<sup>464</sup> Charismatic Redeemed church book for church leaders, 2012. p. 14.

<sup>465</sup> Home cells are prayer meetings organized by the church and usually take place at individual church members' houses during mid-week.

### ***8.7.7 Women as Elders***

Women have been serving as Church Elders since the birth of the ZCCC. The Church allows women into the position of eldership. Elders form the largest part of the administrative structure which is the governing body of the Church. ZCCC follows a Congregationalist type of Church Government. Some Church Elders indicated that women attend and participate in Church Administrative Meetings although their participation is minimal. Women rarely speak during the Administrative Meetings due to timidity. Another respondent said that even though women have been entrusted with leadership positions, they do not make maximum use of this opportunity. When they are required to say something on an issue, they usually just endorse what has been suggested by men. This confirms my previous observations that many women indicated that men must not be challenged in any way.<sup>466</sup> There are very few women who are bold enough to speak before men. Of course, there are some women who can and do speak before men but such women are a rare brand. If they happen to exist, they are often labelled irresponsible, noisy and arrogant. Eventually, many women chose to remain silent at meetings or indeed simply expect the 'Noisy Neighbours' speak for them all the time. Since most of those that speak are either naturally bold or are old women elders, it becomes a problem when such people vanish by way of death, transfers, illness or they are caught up with an impairment of some kind.

### ***8.7.8 People's Perceptions towards Women Pastor***

Usually, people receive women Pastors with hesitation as to whether they will make it or not. Many people observed that men are more easily accepted in pastoral positions than women even if they may be non-performers. For a woman, she has to prove beyond reasonable doubt that she can perform before she can be accepted. Culturally women are not supposed to occupy positions of authority before men. In agreement with this, Stephen Pass writes "The perceptions against women that African Christians have are influenced by both Western and African Cultures".<sup>467</sup> For example, NyaNyirenda, a woman, was slapped

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<sup>466</sup> Joyce Dainess Mlenga, *Women in Holy Ministry in the CCAP OF Livingstonia: A Study of Perceptions*. Zomba: Kachere Document no. 62, 2008, p. 3

<sup>467</sup> Steven Pass, *The faith Moves South, A History of the church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006. p. 236

for preaching against beer drinking and witchcraft in Mzimba. Mzimba is an Ngoni dominated society where male chauvinism and beer drinking alike are the order of the day. Accordingly, men found it out of order for a woman to rebuke them in public and speak ill of beer drinking. She nearly quit the pastoral job had it not been for her father who encouraged her to go on.

#### *8.7.8.1 Equal Value but Different Tasks*

Paul says that there is no difference between men and women before God. Following this, men and women at ZCCC hold similar positions. For example, Bishop John Chilimtsidya and Pastor Pierrah Chilimtsidya are different despite holding similar positions. This is noticed through the way the two Pastors serve the Church. While the former is concerned with the Administration of the sacraments, the last is mostly concerned with secretarial duties. She is the Pastoral Secretary to the Resident Pastor. In addition, she also looks after all Women's Committees in the Church. Similarly, Pastor Losta Chikufenji who once served as a Pastor for ZCCC now serves as a Senior Pastor in the Diocese of Southern Malawi. She is the Bishop's Pastoral Secretary and reports directly to the Bishop. She is also second to the Bishop and handles some issues on his behalf.

#### *8.7.8.2 Male Leadership*

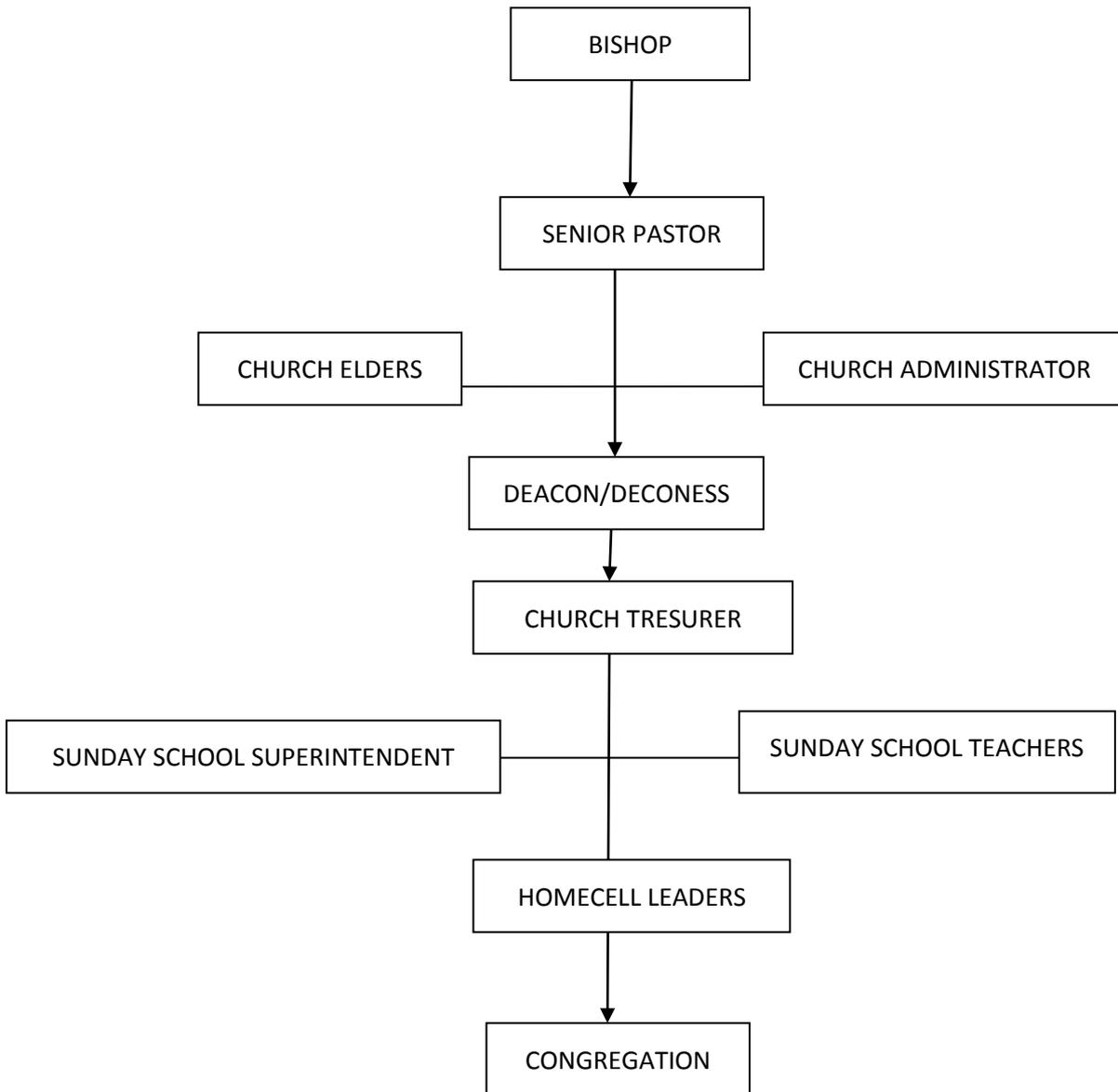
Firstly, the Ministry has the position of the Bishop. This position is held by Bishop Mark Kambalazaza. He is the Overseer of the whole Charismatic Redeemed Ministry. He ordains Pastors. Bishop Kambalazaza indicated that the position of the Bishop is for men.<sup>468</sup> To him, this is the biggest post which requires strong and mature people, not riff-raffs. It also requires one who can manage multiple responsibilities at once. The CRC also has Diocesan Pastors. Such Pastors are responsible for Churches in the districts that make up a particular Diocese. The Ministry has five Diocesan Pastors for the North and Central Regions. Some of these Dioceses are led by women Pastors. A good example is Chikwawa, South and East respectively. Furthermore, there are also women district Pastors who look after local Churches.

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<sup>468</sup> Mark Kambalazaza, Personal Interview, 19 March 2013.

### *8.7.8.3 Leadership Structure at Zomba City Charismatic Redeemed Church*

### The Church Administrative Structure



The Church has the following leadership structure. The Bishop, John Chirimtsidya, Senior pastors, Church Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses.

At this Church, Bishop John Chilimtsidya, is responsible for administering holy sacraments, caring for the sick and presiding over funeral ceremonies. After this, there are Church Elders who are chosen by the Pastor. There are also Deacons and Deaconesses who look after Home-cells and Redeemed Youth Groups. Lastly, the Church also has male Evangelists who conduct crusades, pray for the sick and help the Pastors.

#### *8.7.8.4 Male Leadership in the Family*

Men are regarded as heads of the family as Christ is the head of the Church. It seems that being the head of the family, all Church activities are also led by men. Ten women who were interviewed revealed that men in this Church take the headship issue literally. While the headship concept demands that one shepherds the people, some men lord it over the women. Four women interviewed said that men want to be respected from their homes to the Church. Others also said that some men behave like lions except during sex where their anger fades off within the woman's magic. Six other women observed that men simply want to show off their powers. From the Biblical point of view, men seem to be regarded as heads of the families. Moreover, the leadership positions women hold do not have any impact on the Church and the families. As husbands, men fulfill their duties as fathers and do provide all resources for the house. To this end, women are advised that men are leaders at the Church and home and that they should adhere to these assumptions by being submissive and loyal. The issue, however, is: Is it really true that men must herald and brutalize women just because of culture and some misguided scripture interpretations? Is it true that only men are the heads of the families and or the Church? What about those capable women Pastors; what about those women who either manage their own families without any of the so-called husbands, and or indeed, do equally contribute towards the welfare of the family? Should such influential women not be considered as equals when their presence is greatly felt by all and sundry in the home? These questions call for more investigations before any meaningful responses can be provided.

#### *8.7.8.5-Hierarchical Roles of Women*

Just like other Charismatic Redeemed Churches, the ZCCC is not exception. The Church has an Administrative wing particularly designed for women. At the top is Pastor Pierrah Chilimtsidya. She, like other Pastors, administers holy sacraments, is caring for the sick, praying for the sick and does exorcism. She also looks into issues concerning women in the Church. Below her are the Deaconesses who steer CHAREWO and the Redeemed Kids. Women Evangelists are the last in the list of leadership and they are concerned with preaching and organizing crusades.

## **8.8 Organizations in the Church**

The Church has a number of organizations which include: Charismatic Redeemed Women (CHAREWO), the Youth Ministry and Evangelism (YME) and the Redeemed Kids. In each organization, women play an important role.

### ***8.8.1 Charismatic Redeemed Women (CHAREWO)***

CHAREWO is the largest organization in this Church. It is a group of women who are redeemed and have a mutual relationship with the Lord. This organization started in 2000 at the inception of the Church. From then, a number of women have joined it. Currently the organization has a total of 500 members.<sup>469</sup>

### ***8.8.2 Aims of CHAREWO***

It is founded on the principle of Unity. Through this principle, it aims:

- To serve our Lord Jesus Christ as stated in Colossians 3:24.
- To serve one another in love as stated in Galatians 5:13.
- To unite and develop women in the Church.
- To teach women home management including how to teach children the word of God and how to pray.
- To encourage women to help each other in their communities and provide care for the needy.
- To provide a contextualized girl-child instructions according to Church doctrines.
- To teach women how to cheer the sick and work together with Church Elders during funerals.

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<sup>469</sup> The Executive minutes for CHAREWO. 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2013.

### **8.8.3 Uniform**



Zomba Charismatic Redeemed Women (CHAREWO) Singing

CHAREWO uniform has more meanings than meets the eye. It is a visible expression that women are joined together. CHAREWO uniform consists of a white blouse and green skirt. The white colour signifies righteousness while the green colour represents love. However, not all women put on the uniforms as some wear local attire. According to them, the uniform is a sign of training. Mostly, women who are trained to preach put on the uniform.

### **8.8.4 Roles of CHAREWO during Funerals**

They have their own important roles during funerals. At trainings and special seminars, women are taught how to conduct funerals. They learn how to prepare wreaths, how to march orderly and how to sing funeral songs from the hymnbook.

From the date of death to burial, CHAREWO mobilizes its membership to go and console the bereaved family. If the deceased is a female, they perform the rite of *Kusambisa maliro*. They visit the home of the deceased the night before burial along with other members of the Church. The night is spent in vigil, singing and preaching.<sup>470</sup>

On the day of burial, they assemble at the house as early as possible to start preparing wreaths. During the service, the women march in two lines led by either two Deacons or two Church Elders. In another procession, a woman carries the cross and the men follow. The women including the coffin and the bereaved family form a circle behind the men. The wreaths are then placed on top of the coffin and the leader says a prayer and the Funeral

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<sup>470</sup> Women are not allowed to preach at the main funeral function.

Service begins. At the graveyard, men take a leading role but women are given a certain time when they lay their wreaths and flowers. The flowers and wreaths signify joy and hope for life thereafter. Women march around the graveyard while singing a chorus. After this, a prayer is said and the wreaths are laid. After the flowers are laid, Psalm 23 is recited, led by the woman who carries the head wreath. The Pastor or the Church Elder joins the circle to say a concluding Benediction.

#### ***8.8.5 Still Born Births (Maliro a Mtayo)***

Just like in other Charismatic Churches, women in the Charismatic Redeemed Church, conduct a full Funeral Service for only 3 months old babies signifying that the deceased is not dead for good. CHAREWO gives a modest burial for still-born births. These children are buried on the same day. A prayer by a woman concludes the Service.

#### ***8.8.6 The Coming out of a Child after Birth (Kutulutsa Chikuta)***

Women of CHAREWO are involved in this cultural issue. They instruct women from the time of pregnancy up to giving birth. After birth, the *Kutulutsa Chikuta Ritual* is conducted. This is done one week after birth. The function starts with preaching and then a prayer follows. The couple is advised to bring up their child in a Christian way. However, not all Christians adhere to this, as some perform traditional rituals.

ZCCC has one Women's Group. The group is just a branch of the whole Women's Wing in the Church known as CHAREWO. Membership in CHAREWO is not discriminatory, but one notable difference is the attire. Some put on a uniform while others use local attires. This is so because the uniform is a sign of training. Charismatic Redeemed Women have the responsibility of cheering the sick, and of preaching during women's Special Sundays. They also have a duty of making various occasions colourful. For instance, women carry flowers and wreaths during funeral processions.

#### ***8.8.7 Some Views from Women in ZCCC***

In-depth interviews with key members of ZCCC to establish leadership roles of women revealed the following. See table 3 below showing roles distributed according to sex as of 2013.

Role/position	Female	Male
Church Elders	4	15
Church Deacons	3	12
Ministers	1	5
Church Administrator	0	1
Director of Youth	0	1
Church Treasurer	1	0
Chairlady of Women Ministry	1	0
Teacher for Youth Ministry	1	0

Table 3: Zomba CFC, 2013 Women leadership roles

In general, the number of men in the leadership ladder is almost double that of women. However, men on the position of Church Elders are more than double the number of women. Although this Church is in the City, where more women are likely to be empowered to take up leadership roles, the number of women leaders is still low. These findings also concur with Isabel Phiri's observations that the majority in the Church are usually led by the powerful minority.<sup>471</sup>

Many people indicated that for one to become a Deaconess, the Pastor looks at a number of criteria. According to Pastor Chilimtsidya, women should be of the following qualities:

- Should be committed to the work of the Lord.
- Should give tithe regularly.
- Should be rooted in the Church doctrine.
- Should be an older member with vast experience in the things of the Lord.

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<sup>471</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women in Presbyterianism, Patriarchy, Religious experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi Zomba*: CLAIM, Kachere, 1997, p. 20.

- Should be married and established.
- Should be full of the Holy Spirit.

However, it has been noted that not all women can have all the above qualifications hence limiting them. This again brings a challenge to Pastors when it comes to choosing Deaconesses. On this, one of the Pastors said that most people elected as Deaconesses have other commitments and are often faced with conflict of interest.<sup>472</sup> Others added that one of the criteria for identifying a Church Elder or Deaconess is to look for those who were officially married in the Church. However, many women are either not married or were married outside the Church. These present challenges to the Pastor when it comes to selecting the ideal candidates.

Women's views	Men's views
Preaching in the Church on special days organized for them Encourage and strengthen the bereaved, the sick and the poor Teaching Sundays school Initiation for girls Assisting orphans Singing in the Church Preaching in Home-cells during midweek prayers Providing basic needs to the Ministers, for example food Organizing Revival Meetings for women	Preaching in the Church on special days organized for them Encourage and strengthen the bereaved, the sick Teaching Sunday School Visiting backsliders to encourage them

*Table 4: Shows Women and Men views on women roles*

### **8.8.8 Roles of Women compared in the Charismatic Churches**

Roles of Women in the CCs are not the same. They differ from one Church to the other. See table 1 below.

Table 5: Comparison of Roles of Women in the CCs

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<sup>472</sup> Int. Allan Jiya, Prophet, Matawale, 14.5. 2013.

<b>Name of Congregation</b>	<b>Women are allowed to</b>	<b>Women are not allowed to</b>
<b>Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church</b>	Preach Take up leadership roles in the Church Conduct Funeral Services Go for Theological Training. Participate in Holy Communion	Become Apostle or Bishop Lead Holy communion Hold unchristian initiation rituals for their Children
<b>Chinamwali Calvary Tabernacle</b>	Take leadership positions Conduct Funeral Services of the Church	Become Bishop but Assistant Bishop
<b>Ndirande All for Jesus</b>	Take leadership positions in the Church Preach to the women group and on women day. Clean the toilets	Administer Holy Communion Officiate weddings Conduct funeral services
<b>Chilipa Living Waters</b>	Take up leadership roles in the church Lead women groups	Lead Holy Communion Conduct funeral service
<b>Matawale Holy Ghost Evangelism Church</b>	Participate in leadership positions Teach Sunday schools Clean in the Church Cook for the visitors for the Church	Officiate church weddings Administer Holy Communion Conduct funeral services Have uniform for women groups
<b>Namadzi Living Waters Church</b>	Participate in leadership Teach on only Sundays Cook for visitors	Lead service at the funerals Have uniform for women group
<b>Nanjiri Miracle of God Church</b>	Lead in singing at the funeral Teach only Sunday school Clean the Church Cook for visitors Initiations for girls	Preach in the Church. Lead in the Holy Communion Become Pastor for the Church Participate in decision-making processes
<b>Area 25 Holy Ghost Evangelism</b>	Participate in leadership	Officiate church weddings

<b>Church</b>	positions Teach Sunday schools Clean in the Church Cook for the visitors	Administer Holy Communion Conduct funeral services Wear uniform for women groups
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### **8.8.9 Observations**

From the above table, it appears that in some Charismatic Churches women are not fully liberated, while in others they are with minimal limitations. For example, in the Holy Ghost and Evangelism Ministries, women can form Women Ministries, yet cannot wear uniforms. They believe that uniform is an earthly practice. Again, the table has shown that the roles women play are culturally influenced. Thus, most of the accepted roles are those women commonly play in their families.

### **8.8.10 Factors Responsible for Subordination of Women in the Charismatic Churches**

The respondents indicated that there is subordination of women in some of the Charismatic Churches surveyed. For instance, out of twenty women interviewed sixteen said that they cannot take up leadership positions because their intellectual capacity is lower than that of men.<sup>473</sup> This agrees with what Isabel Apawo Phiri recorded as a widespread opinion that women’s intellectual capacity cannot be equated to that of men, hence they cannot be Ministers.<sup>474</sup> The other four respondents said that women cannot be Ministers because of menstruation periods which act as a hindrance to purity. Contrary to this, Klaus Fiedler argues that while reference is made in the Old Testament that a woman during her monthly period is in a state of impurity (Leviticus 15:19), the preceding verses also talk of the ritual impurity of men (Leviticus 15:17-18). Going by this observation, no one in the modern day and even in those days should consider themselves unsuitable for the Ministry.<sup>475</sup> He further argues that even in the Old Testament, women who menstruated could well be

<sup>473</sup> I conducted focus group discussion with 20 women in Miracle of God Church. 24.5.13

<sup>474</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri and Sarojini Nadar, *On Being Church: African Women’s voices and visions*, World Council of Churches, 2005, p. 82.

<sup>475</sup> Klaus Fiedler, *Baptists and the Ordination of Women*, Zomba: Lydia Print, 2010, p. 15.

Prophetesses.<sup>476</sup> Owanikin Modupe observes that Africans view women as ritually unclean, and it is this same view that the Church has taken on board as a means for eliminating women from participating in leading Church positions.<sup>477</sup> Olajubu Oyeronke underscores this view by arguing that contemporary Churches discriminate against women by underutilizing their services.<sup>478</sup> Similarly, Muthe points out that most of the Charismatic Churches in Africa are hierarchically constructed pyramids mostly ruled by men.<sup>479</sup> This is similar to Isabel Phiri's observation that many African Churches are constructed on the basis of patriarchy which is male dominated.<sup>480</sup> She further notes that men dominate in administrative posts and decision-making committees with the belief that women cannot reason logically.

### **8.8.11 Biblical Portrayal of Women**

Many elite respondents have pointed out that the Bible is the source of women oppression. They base their assumption on the creation story which portrays women as inferior and dependent of men. Other respondents added that the Biblical references to women as "weaker vessels" have contributed to their oppression. Others argue that Apostle Paul's instruction poses a problem to women who are committed to obeying the word of God, yet they feel called to the Public Ministry. Look at the following instructions:

"The head of a woman is the man" (Ephesians 5:22 NIV)

"Women should remain silent in the Churches" (1 Corinthians 14:34 NIV)

"I do not permit a woman to teach" (I Timothy 2:12 NIV)

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<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> Owanikin Modupe, "The Priesthood of church women in Nigerian Context." In *the Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the church in Africa*. Oduyoye, Mercy Amba and Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro (eds), Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995, pp. 206-208

<sup>478</sup> Olajubu Oyeronke, *Women in the Yoruba Religious sphere*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993, p. 69.

<sup>479</sup> Ruth Muthei J. "The Church in Africa and Violence Against Women" *Violence Against Women*. Wamue, Grace and Mary Getui, (eds), Nairobi: Action Publishers, 1996. p. 45

<sup>480</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy Religious Experience of Chewa in Central Malawi*. CLAIM, Blantyre: Kachere monographs 4) 1997, p. 12

What do we make of these? How do we expect the woman to preach before men in the Church when the Bible reprimands them to be quiet before men?

Some respondents observed that Jesus' no inclusion of women among the Twelve Disciples was a significant symbol of exclusion. Others cited Biblical references confirming subordination of women such as the feeding of five thousand men which excluded women and children, and the exclusion of women attending the synagogue.

Despite these biases, this study has shown that there are a number of biblical references that recognize women. For example, Deborah was both a leader and a Prophet. She was the head of the state, just as Samuel and other Prophets were. The unique role of Deborah in the annihilation of the enemy forces attests to un-biased attitude towards women empowerment during biblical times (Judges 4). Her unique gift could not be overshadowed by male dominance despite the fact that the society then was male dominated. She was the Commander in Chief and proved her army commander Barak wrong when she ably led the army and succeeded against the enemy. Moreover, her female army commander. I see no female commander there was the one that struck the enemy last, marking the end of the war in their favour.<sup>481</sup> Moreover, many years before Deborah, there was another great woman leader when Israel was being born. During the 40 year period in the Wilderness, Moses, Aaron and Miriam were the leaders. God said "I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam".<sup>482</sup> It should be noted that one third of Israel's leadership was female. Not only was this the case during their critical reformatory years, but also when they were in hardship as they trekked down the uncharted territory. Miriam, like her two brothers, played significant roles.

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<sup>481</sup> " then Jael Herbers wife took a nail of a tent and took a hammer in her hand and went swiftly to him and smote the nail into his temples and fastened into the ground for he was fast asleep and weary, so he died" Judges4:21 (NIV) also see Plutarch, "Advice to the bride and Groom" in Plutarch Molalia Volume 11 Trans Frank Cole Babbit (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library Harvard University press, 1928, p. 145.

<sup>482</sup> Perneroy G. Goddess and slaves, Harvard University Press, 1986, pp. 79-80

### ***8.8.12 Relevance of Theological Education for Women in the Charismatic Churches***

In the modern society, women have made a considerable impact on the various fields of human endeavours. It is no longer a rare phenomenon to learn of the contributions of women Pastors, Educationalists, Judges, Medical Practitioners, Professors and others. These aside, many women are far from attending any professional training that would empower them socially, economically and publically. Likewise, in Religious and Theological Studies, the number of women is still low even though this is a significant field for their liberation. Accordingly, the coming section examines the relevance of Theological Education to women. Factors that deter women involvement in Theology and the impact of Women Theologians on the Church and society are examined.

### **8.9 Theological Education for Women Empowerment**

Theological Education improves the intellectual and moral faculties of people. Theologians have deeper understanding of God's revelations and of the ultimate questions of human existence. There is a lot of evidence suggesting that many women are assisted by undergoing Theological Training.

For example, during this survey, some women indicated that through Theological Training they were able to understand the revelations of God in the book of Revelation.<sup>483</sup> Before the training, it was not easy for them to interpret this Book, yet this is a book many Pastors interpret in their own ways. Some even use this Book to threaten believers. Others use the same Book to castigate other religions and religious figures. Yet through Theological Training, the women said, they were able to understand the true meaning of the texts, and managed to interpret the Apocalyptic Writings objectively. This means that Theological Education has some impact on people's life as it gives them courage and confidence and removes the fears perpetrated by some unscrupulous Pastors who abuse Bible texts. Another woman noted that lack of Theological Education for spiritually gifted women leaves the potential that is in them unharnessed.

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<sup>483</sup> Int. Milliam Masonga, Eagles Living Waters Bible College, 23.6.2014.

Moreover, ten women Pastors of Charismatic Redeemed Church who were interviewed revealed that Theological Education activated their faith by exposing God's knowledge and love. This knowledge is necessary for the development of their critical thinking and analysis skills.

Realizing the value inherent in this form of education, the Calvary Tabernacle Church sends its members to Theological Training Schools to enhance their competences, skills and qualifications so that they should positively contribute towards the growth of the Church.

Likewise, women in Living Waters and in Calvary Family Church are encouraged to undergo Theological Training for them to be able to compete with men favourably. Simply put, Theological Training is relevant to women as it enables them to interpret Biblical texts correctly (exegesis and hermeneutics). Wrong interpretation of the Bible is dangerous as it promotes wars (Jihads/Crusades), violence against women (male-chauvinism), enmity between denominations, and misunderstanding of Apocalyptic Writings which causes anxiety among the believers. People may also follow the Bible without exercising some degree of caution regarding culture and context of such texts if they are not well trained. Likewise, Theological Education empowers women and makes them economically and socially viable individuals, hence able to compete with men favourably. Finally, Theological Education enables women to think analytically and critically so that they become good leaders for both the Church and the nation.

### ***8.9.1 Deterrent Factors to Theological Involvement of Women in Charismatic Churches***

The interviews carried out in various Charismatic Churches indicated that there are some factors that bar women from joining Theological institutions.

1. Men's attitude and perception towards women as second-class citizens prevents them from undergoing Theological Education. This problem is a by-product of both social and Biblical factors.
2. In many societies, a woman is identified as an evil that lures men into sin.

3. Negative attitudes of some Church authorities and Theologians towards women have led women not to go for Theological Education. In this, some Theologians' remarks and comments discourage women as not ideal people for Theological works.
4. Economic marginalization. Women may have interest to study Theology but their financial dependency on men bars them
5. The function of women in procreation has led them not to take Theological Education at heart. Some people have looked at women as people who do not think critically. Women are associated with passivity and good for nothing but procreation.

The qualifications for entry to Theological Training Institutions also sometimes bar women from attending Theological Education. For example, in Theological Institutions, they look for higher-grades at MSCE, often six credits including English for one to be enrolled. This bars some students called by God to the Ministry on the basis of poorer grades. One of the women added that she felt called by God to go for Theological Training, but because her MSCE was bad, she was rejected.<sup>484</sup> Here, it can be argued that everybody is barred from joining Theological Training based on bad grades, not women alone. Contrary to this assumption, it appears only women are admitted based on their good MSCE results not men. This granted, it follows that the system is discriminatory as it assumes and accords women a different entry criterion. This also assumes that women are incompetent and cannot afford Theological Education if their MSCE is bad.

### ***8.9.2 Discrimination in the Remuneration Package for Women Pastors***

Some women indicated that there are discriminated in the remuneration offered for similar services rendered by their male counterparts, as men sometimes get better pay than women even if they both do the same amount and type of jobs. These are also seen in promotions, leave grants, allowances and salary adjustments ('notches').

### ***8.9.3 The Impact of Women Theologians on Church and Society***

Across the globe, women theologians exercise a high level of professionalism demonstrating their talents and abilities. For example, women Theologians hold positions such as lecturers;

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<sup>484</sup> Int. Grace Moyo, AGAPE Church, Balaka, 19.5.14

some are renowned scholars, editors, professors, and ministers. Basically, women Theologians, like their male counterparts are not limited to Ministry, work alone but are also proactive in the social, economic, educational and publishing professions among many others. The women selected below do not belong to some of the charismatic churches under study but their academic writings relate favourably to the study. True to this are the examples below.

#### *8.9.3.1 Isabel Apawo Phiri*

Professor Isabel Apawo Phiri is one of the female lecturers who has taught in many institutions of Higher Education such as the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, at the University of Namibia, and Universities in South Africa, especially the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She is now Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, based in Geneva. She wrote a book entitled “Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi”.<sup>485</sup> This book and others have contributed much information about women theological studies, so that a historical and theological perspective cannot be spared.

#### *8.9.1.3 Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler*

Dr Rachel Fiedler is a Senior Lecturer at Mzuzu University; before that she was a part-time lecturer at Chancellor College of the University of Malawi. She teaches Church History and African Feminist Theology. She received her PhD from Free State University in Bloemfontein.<sup>486</sup> Her PhD Thesis has provided relevant information to this study and her books assisted as well.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi* Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000.

<sup>486</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler. *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (1989-2007): History and Theology*, PhD, Free State University, 2012. She received her MA from University of Malawi, She has published books such as: Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *Coming of Age. A Christianized Initiation among Women in Southern Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005.

<sup>487</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Banda, *Women of the Bible and Culture, Baptist Convention Women in Southern Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005; Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *Coming of Age. A Christianized Initiation among Women in Southern Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005.

#### 8.9.1.4 Molly Longwe

She taught for 14 years at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Lilongwe and is currently Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies at Livingstonia University. She has written a PhD thesis entitled "A Paradox in a Theology of Freedom and Equality: Experiences of Pastors' wives Amayi Busa) in the Baptist convention of Malawi (BACOMA)."<sup>488</sup> This is related to the study of women in the Charismatic churches in that some of the patriarchal tendencies women experiences in the Baptist Convention of Malawi appear to be similar to the women in Charismatic churches of Malawi. She also published a book on girls' education<sup>489</sup> This contains some instructions both girls and boys receive during Christian counselling. It is important to the study in that during Christian initiation some of the charismatic churches use the instructions from the book. This is evidenced when interviewed one of the instructors for girls at Zomba Calvary Family Church. She showed me the book written by Molly Longwe. It is used during Christian counselling, initiation and girl child seminars in the churches.<sup>490</sup>

#### 8.9.1.5 Joyce Dainess Mlenga

She received the first PhD awarded by Mzuzu University<sup>491</sup> and has been a Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies since 2005 at the University of Livingstonia and is the current Dean of Education. She was also a lecturer at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology teaching undergraduate programmes from 2003-2005. She has written a book entitled "Women in Holy Ministry in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia: A Study of Perceptions", Zomba: Kachere Series, 2008.<sup>492</sup> The contents of this book is important to the study of women in the charismatic churches in that the experiences women face in the Livingstonia Synod are similar to that of the Charismatics women. For instance, the male

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<sup>488</sup> Molly Longwe, *A Paradox in a Theology of Freedom and Equality: the Experiences of Pastors' Wives (Amayi Busa) in the Baptist Convention of Malawi (BACOMA)*, PhD, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2012.

<sup>489</sup> Molly Longwe, *Growing Up. A Chewa Girls' Initiation*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006

<sup>490</sup> Int. Rose Bukani, Church elder, Zomba Calvary Family Church, 18.6.15.

<sup>491</sup> Joyce Mlenga, *An Investigation of Dual Religiosity between Christianity and African Traditional Religion among the Ngonde in Karonga District in Northern Malawi*, PhD, Mzuzu University, 2013.

<sup>492</sup> Joyce Mlenga, *Women in Holy Ministry in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia: A Study of Perceptions*, Zomba: Kachere Documents, 2008.

dominance over women which is in the Livingstonia synod is similar to that of the Charismatics.

#### *8.9.1.6 Mercy Amba Oduyoye.*

Mercy Amba Oduyoye was a Methodist theologian known for her work in African women's theology. Oduyoye earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Ghana in 1963, a second Bachelor's degree from Cambridge University in 1965 and a Masters Degree from Cambridge University in 1965. She has taught at Harvard University, Union Theological Seminary and the University of Ibadan.

Oduyoye has written four books and more than eighty articles focusing on Christian theology from a Feminist African perspective. One of her central subjects is how African religion and culture influence the experiences of African women. In particular, she has addressed the effects of economic oppression on African women. She developed the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Other books written include: "Mercy Amba Oduyoye and African Women's Theology."<sup>493</sup> "Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa" (1986), "Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy" (1995), "Introducing African Women's Theology" (2001) and "Beads and Strands: Reflections of an African Woman on Christianity in Africa" (2004) among others. These books are important to the study of women in the Charismatic Churches in that they provide relevant information about women roles in the church.

#### *8.9.1.7 Nyambura Njoroge*

Nyambura J. Njoroge is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in Kenya and the global secretary of the Ecumenical Theological Education Programme of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. She is another theologian who has written books on theology. For example, she wrote about the *Missing Voice and African Women Doing Theology Kiama kia Ngo: an African Christian Feminist Ethic of Resistance and*

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<sup>493</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye , *Mercy Amba Oduyoye and African Women's Theology*, *JOURNAL OF Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol 20, no 1, Indiana University press on behalf of FSR Inc, 2004. The book shows that It is theology which is driven to serve the ordinary woman and to make a difference in her life

*Transformation*,<sup>494</sup> Women and men in partnership programme, in World Alliance of the Reformed Churches in Geneva. She is also one of the Editors in African Theologies. She has edited several of the Circle books. For instance, she edited books entitled “Talitha Qumi! Theologies of African Women,”<sup>495</sup> “Women Looking from Afar”<sup>496</sup> and “Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God.”<sup>497</sup> However, “Women Looking from Afar,” is not a Circle book, although it is addressing women's issues.

#### 8.9.1.8 Musimbi Kanyoro

Musimbi Kanyoro is a Kenyan human rights advocate. She has been the CEO and President of the Global Fund for Women since August 2011. Kanyoro serves on the UNFPA/IPPF High-Level task force for Reproductive Health 2015 and on the Global Philanthropy Committee of the Council of Foundations.

Musimbi Kanyoro has edited a number of books including “Grant Me Justice. HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible,”<sup>498</sup> “Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God,”<sup>499</sup> “The Will to Arise,”<sup>500</sup> and “Talitha Qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians.” Generally, editing is defined as a process of vetting a text of a publication against all perceived errors. Most of the editors have a background in Languages, Publishing Studies and or Creative Writing. Moreover, editorial work is mostly male dominated as observed.<sup>501</sup> Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that out of the few

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<sup>494</sup> Nyambura Njoroge, *Kiama kia ngo: an African Christian feminist ethic of resistance and transformation*, Legon: Legon Theological Studies Series, 2000.

<sup>495</sup> Nyambura Njoroge and Musa Dube, *Talitha Qumi! Theologies of African Women*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001, p. 88.

<sup>496</sup> Nyambura Njoroge and Irja Askola (eds), *There were also Women Looking from Afar*, Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1998, p. 56.

<sup>497</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro and Nyambura Njoroge (eds), *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, Nairobi: Acton, 1996, pp. 23-30.

<sup>498</sup> Musa W. Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds), *Grant Me Justice. HIV/AIDS and Gender Re-readings of the Bible*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2004, p. 34.

<sup>499</sup> Musimbi Kanyoro and Nyambura Njoroge (eds), *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, Nairobi: Acton, 1996, p. 23.

<sup>500</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds), *The Will to Arise*: Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992.

<sup>501</sup> Watts and David, *Women Theologians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*, Nairobi: Action, 2004.

women editors, a good number of women Theologians have made inroads into this male-dominated profession and have significantly contributed towards the religious and national development. This is also a clear sign that theologians are not only Church Ministers, as perceived by many outsiders, but are also multifaceted and multi-skilled individuals who can equally contribute towards the Church and society.

Women Theologians have also promoted social transformation in the society. They have transformed women in their theologizing through Feminist Theology as discussed in the early Chapters. Women Theologians have also oriented society through Theological Studies on how to balance the desire to remain subordinate to men while liberating themselves.

In addition, women Theologians have significantly contributed towards the production of Literature for the Church and society. Over the years, Circle women have published Theological books or articles that have transformed the lives of people both within and without the Church. The availability of such Women Literature has helped Theological Institutions introduce Gender Studies in their colleges. Mzuzu University has developed a full course on African Feminist Theology.<sup>502</sup> Likewise, Mercy Amba Oduyoye is one of the earliest women that wrote Theology books that are being used in Universities for different courses. These books were written even before the inception of the Circle. More so, Chief Ogundipe, a woman, wrote some books on the ordination of women in the Methodist Church in 1977. In the same year, Mercy Amba Oduyoye wrote “And Women, Where do they come in?”<sup>503</sup> This tells us that the Circle might not be the first Women Liberation Movement as some individual Gender Activists did exist before and wrote a number of books on similar subjects. Thus the production and publishing of such literature that aimed at freeing women. These activists met at major forums such as Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and the World Council of Churches.

Similarly, Mercy Amba Oduyoye's contribution towards the writing of theological books and papers has inspired young women to begin writing books meant to liberate the modern

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<sup>502</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (1989-2007): History and Theology*, PhD, Free State University, 2012.

<sup>503</sup> The full titles of the books are: Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *And Women, where do they Come in?* Lagos: Methodist Church Nigeria Literature Bureau, 1977; Chief (Mrs) G.T. Ogundipe, *The Ordination of Women*, Lagos: Methodist Church Nigeria Literature Bureau, 1977.

woman from male oppression. Moreover, good writers are often those that emulate their models and this is also true when we come to realize that at the Special Circle conference “Malakale Theologies: Women, Religion and Health in Africa,”<sup>504</sup> held in Johannesburg at Kempton Park from 12th to 15th July 2005, Mercy’s’ writings significantly moved and impacted the lives of both men and women who attended that Conference. `

## **8.10 Women’s Role in Initiation**

At ZCCC women initiate girls according to the Church’s tradition. The Church ensures that the instructors are of high integrity, prayerful, humble, well-disciplined, sober, cheerful, faithful, hard-working, peaceful, unbiased and frank. The Church also makes sure that women initiators have a good family, are able to raise their children, motivate their children to go to school, can read and write, and are inclusive in their behaviour and use of language.

The choice of instructors lies in the hands of the Pastor’s wife. Women who are developed and young are usually preferred. The Church sets other rules and regulations to be used by the instructors. These include instructors working in groups, instructions not to be given at night, not to mix Christian with non-Christian initiates, noncertified instructors must not be allowed, preparedness before giving instructions, giving quarterly reports of their work to the Pastor's wife and not to ask for money in exchange for their services.

### **8.10.1 Mwambo**

This is done to newly-wedded couple. The *Mwambo* session may take place at different times. Some do it soon after the reception, while others do it the night before the wedding. #deleted as the BBs can hardly be termed Charismatic. The Mwambo aims at preparing the couple for a good relationship both within and without the family. Only the Pastor and his wife, two elderly women and three elderly Deacons are allowed to take part in instructing the couple. They argue that outsiders bring unchristian instructions. The counselling group is

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<sup>504</sup> At the conference Mercy told the story that one day she had problems opening a drawer and decided to break it open. Her housemaid told her: "Malaka-le," use a gentle approach. And she opened the drawer without breaking anything.

interestingly gender sensitive and balanced as equal numbers of men and women are included.

### ***8.10.2 Women Role at the Bridal Shower***

In the CCs, women prepare the venue where the Bridal-shower takes place. Usually, the couple, men and women are invited to attend this ceremony. The following are some of the instructions given to the couple. The bedroom instructions are the specific ones.

#### ***8.10.2.1 The Man is the Head of the Family***

Women Counsellors teach the couple that the husband is the head of the family. This is according to Ephesians which states: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body of which he is the Saviour" Through this, the woman is taught to be submissive to the husband, though this is not in the biblical text.<sup>505</sup>

Thus, CCS teach women to be totally submissive to their husband's authority as demanded by the Scriptures.<sup>506</sup> Ironically, the men are taught not to accommodate ideas from their wives because they have weak minds which may make them sin. These teachings are probably some of the issues that discourage women from participating in decision-making roles in the Church, family and society alike.

#### ***8.10.2.2 Banja ndi Kupilira (Marriage Means Perseverance)***

Living in a society where the "Banja ndi kupilira" syndrome is common, Charismatic Churches have also been influenced in their thinking and practices. For example, the woman is told to persevere even if she faces formidable problems within her marriage. The marriage vows they take are sometimes used to justify their suffering. For instance, a wife

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<sup>505</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler observes that this interpretation is wrong as it emphasize women submission to husbands and ignores the opening phrase (Ephesians 5:22-23 NIV).which demands submission of the husband to his partner. The verse reads "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (1989-2007) History and Theology*, PhD, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 2010, p. 171.

<sup>506</sup> I attended one Mwambo ceremony's at Namadzi Calvary Family Church.

to a teacher at Nsondole Community Day Secondary School realized that her husband had lots of girlfriends. He also used to beat her. This woman was then told to leave the house by her relatives and friends; however, she refused because of the *banja ndi kupilira* instructions. It is worrisome that through this syndrome, men have the license to do all sorts of evils towards their wives well knowing that the woman is under the unbreakable yoke. Nevertheless, in some Charismatic churches this syndrome is wearing out gradually as the members believe in a new syndrome called *Banja ndi Kunjoya* (Marriage is all about enjoyment). These churches now shout this slogan during Bridal showers as means of reminding the couple that oppression is not accepted and that any form of such oppressions may grant termination of their social contract. This slogan also grants the woman an equal platform for practicing her freedom unlike *Banja ndi Kupilira* syndromes.

### **8.10.5 Kudika Practice**

This is the belief that after the wife has given birth; the two must abstain from sexual intercourse.<sup>507</sup> Some Charismatic churches begin Kudika immediately after the woman has given birth. Other charismatic churches teach that a couple should abstain from sex for six months.<sup>508</sup> During the *Kudika*, the wife is advised to help the husband to deal with his emotions. To deal with this, wives are taught to be folding one leg so that the husband can discharge through the fold. During this period, the woman is encouraged not to be naked to prevent him from getting excited. She must always cover the vagina with a clean cloth throughout this period. However, some women said that husbands do not wait for such a long period. Many said that most men wait for two weeks only while others never follow this. They argue that abstinence is not being Christian because even non-Christians do the same. Some Charismatic Churches which follow medical instructions said that they are

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<sup>507</sup> See Leviticus 12:1-8.

<sup>508</sup> This is similar to Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler's observations that some women are taught to abstain for six months (Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (1989-2007)*. History and Theology, PhD, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, May 2010, pp. 174-175.)

advised to resume sex soon after six weeks. The assumption is that after six weeks the woman's labour wounds should have been healed.<sup>509</sup>

#### ***8.10.6 The Woman Must be stationed at Home to Entertain the Man***

In HOGEM, instructors tell the married woman to be ever at home. The woman must entertain, bathe, clothe and lift the husband up to the bedroom. She must also provide tea and or sweet beer to him. The woman should also let her husband's head rest between her breasts as it is written in Song of Songs 1:13.<sup>510</sup> Also the couple is told to kiss each other as said in the Song of Songs 1:1: "Let him kiss me with kisses of his mouth for our love is more delightful than wine." The *Alangizi* said that it is Christianity for the couple to do this in the family.

#### ***8.10.7 Zinyalala Zakuchipinda Zisamatulukire Kunja***

This is an idiomatic expression meaning that things swept up in the bedroom should not come outside. It means, whatever the couple has discussed in the bedroom, should not come out. While this maintains integrity and privacy of the couple, it also promotes oppression when the relationship is offensive as one is supposed not to complain to anybody else.

#### ***8.10.8 Bedroom Communication***

It is the general belief that most Churches do not teach sex issues very well because they believe that such subjects are taboo and unchristian. Conversely, some leaders in the Charismatic Churches consider these instructions as pillars of marriage. They are commonly known as "*Zakumphasa*" (of the mat) . These instructions are not public.

The bedroom is an area where men and women receive marriage instructions. Many marriages break up just because of lack of bedroom instructions. An observation of ten weddings in different Charismatic Congregations showed that bedroom instructions vary. In

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<sup>509</sup> Chimwemwe Kalalo, "Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Context of HIV/AIDS: The Involvement of the Anglican Church in the Upper Shire Diocese," MA, University of Malawi, 2006.

<sup>510</sup> Put here the text from NIV.

all these, the Pastor, his wife and the Head Deacons were the ones who gave bedroom instructions. The following are some of the instructions:

#### *8.10.8.1 Verbal and Non Verbal Communication*

In many marriages communication is a problem. Communication plays a crucial role in the day to day life of the couple. Lack of communication ruins relationships. One of the Pastors commented that in marriage, sex without communication leads to sexual dissatisfaction. And if there is no sexual satisfaction, conflicts will arise. Couples are advised to discuss sexual issues freely. Partners should be free to choose the sex style they want. Another instructor added that mutual agreement in having sex is also paramount. This makes both partners enjoy the love scene.

#### *8.10.8.2 Nakedness in the Bedroom*

Couples are taught to be nude while in bedroom. They refer to the creation of Adam and Eve: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). Couples are also told to touch each other's sensitive body parts without limitations. This is according to 1 Corinthians 7:4-5. "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband body. In the same way, the husbands' body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not be deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time," so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. The woman's nakedness in the bedroom is meant to arouse the man sexually and allow him to perform the task well prepared.

#### *8.10.8.3. Operation Phwetsa*

The woman should ensure that the man has had sexual intercourse and is satisfied every morning before going to work. This helps those who may need sex frequently to lose the desire for sex completely. It also helps those who work in offices not to desire women or men for sex. One of the respondents said that Operation Phwetsa has been very effective to both men and women in offices and even those who have other businesses where they interact with members of the opposite sex.

#### 8.10.8.4 Variety of Sex Styles

The instructors were quick to point out that one of the reasons for marriage breakdown among Christians is lack of sexual satisfaction due to poor styles. Charismatic Churches teach sex styles because they believe that they play a vital role in building the family. The new couples are advised to be prepared for a sexual encounter through a candid romance and steamy compliments such "You are indeed honey, you satisfy me, you are sweet, don't give me another baby, etc". These comments prepare both of you psychologically. Romance triggers ovulation of fluids for proper penetration. If the vagina is dry, the penis can damage it or the penis can be hurt. Some Pastors added that the man should be allowed to pull *zokoka* (the lengthened labia minora) of the woman while the woman is gently playing with the foreskin of the penis and the scrotum.

Couples are also told not to do sex in a hurry to allow each other reach the climax and enjoy it. The man is advised not to ejaculate too soon before the wife reaches orgasm (*paindeinde pa sex*). At ejaculation, the woman can scream or hold the man tight or can say words like: *thira* (ejaculate) while bumping and grinding gradually and quickly.

Back style (dog-style), the woman holds the table tight and bends a bit while the man comes from behind. Sometimes the man sits on the chair and the wife sits on the man's legs leaning on him. He then inserts the penis into the vagina.

#### 8.10.8.5 Kufolera (Thatching) Chala/Tailoring Njigo

In one of the *Mwambo* sessions, one of the Pastors instructed the couple to use a variety of sex styles.<sup>511</sup> *Kufolera* is one of the sex styles where the man lies on top of the woman during sexual intercourse. It is referred to as the traditional way of doing sex.<sup>512</sup> It is symbolically named roofing (*kufolera*) because it looks like the man is roofing the house as

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<sup>511</sup> I attended a *mwambo* session at Namadzi Living Waters Church International 3.9.13 Mrs Chingoli, Mrs Mwanza were in attendance.

<sup>512</sup> I attended one *mwambo* session led by pastor Mrs Chigayo In Zomba. One of the instructors condemned the regular way of having sex saying that some penis do not reach the cervix if the man is fat. Its better to use the behind position which is direct to the cervix. Another woman told the couple that sometimes the man can be heavy to lift him up and down using the regular way. In such a situation, the couple can use a chair where the woman holds the chair bending while the man comes from behind.

he climbs on top of the woman. "Tailoring" is named so because of its similarity to what the tailor does as he makes clothes with his machine. The way the machine operates is similar to what happens in this style. If the cervical position for the woman is abnormal (not centred), this style will not be effective for the woman to be impregnated. Therefore, there is a need to check styles otherwise one can be blamed for barrenness.

#### 8.10.8.6 *Lichero/Ndege*

Another sex technique is *lichero*.<sup>513</sup> It is *lichero* because it involves the agility of a woman to move her waist during sexual intercourse. It is also called *ndege*,<sup>514</sup> because during sexual intercourse the woman opens her legs wide like the wings of an aeroplane.

#### 8.10.8.7 *Makutu/Mapilikaniro (Ears) - Lengthening of the Labia Minora*

One Pastors' wife instructed the woman that a woman has two pairs of labia, also known as *mapilikaniro* (ears), which the man has to play with before sex.<sup>515</sup> The labia are in the form of ears. Ears are hearing sense organs. If the man plays with the women's labia, her sexual desire will be aroused. If the woman is expectant, she must also continue to lengthen the labia minora because during child birth, the labia become shorter.

One Pastor's wife said that she was advised to lengthen her labia minora and she was able to impress her husband in bed. However, other women argue that lengthening the labia is unchristian as it is mostly practiced amongst African Traditional Religions and non-Christian cultures. This practice is also common among the Lomwe of the Southern Malawi who are also known for their active sexual life. However, Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler suggests that Churches should encourage women to lengthen their labia *minora* because there are testimonies that this contributes greatly to the stability of marriages.<sup>516</sup> Chimwemwe Kalalo

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<sup>513</sup> "*Lichero*" is a method where the woman moves her waist or winnows the man like the way she winnows maize.

<sup>514</sup> "*Ndege*" is a method where the woman throws the man up repetitively before orgasm.

<sup>515</sup> I attended a *mwambo* session at Likuni Charismatic Redeemed Church on 25 February 2013. Present were the couple; John Malembanje and Catherine his wife, Andrew Matemba, Moses Saidi and Pastor Chitsonga and her wife.

<sup>516</sup> Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, *Coming of Age, A Christian Initiation for Women in Southern Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere Series, pp. 36-37.

also observed that *Zokoka* strengthens the sexual life of the couple and binds the marriage together.<sup>517</sup> Ironically, young women today ignore the practice and consider it primitive. Moreover, some men are not interested in them either. Likewise, long labia are sometimes said to be not effective as they block the free entry of the penis. In some women, too long labia become the source of discomfort and are unhygienic as they stain their underpants through vaginal fluids.

#### *8.10.8.8 Cleaning the Genitals*

The Head Deacon advised the man to clean the penis daily. He said that if the penis is not circumcised, the foreskin contains *madeya*. This *madeya* accumulates and causes germs to grow and produce bad smell. Likewise, the woman should clean the vagina every morning and after each sexual intercourse. However, the Deacon observed that if cleaning is tiresome, men should just go for circumcision. He also said that circumcision makes the man have a clean penis all the time.

#### *8.10.8.9 Love Play*

One of the instructors told the couple to begin love play by fondling each other. After some minutes, the wife will show him that she has reached the point where she is hot. During the fondling, he should ask where the woman wants to be fondled. Let her know each time you do something so that her excitement should grow.

Another pastor's wife instructed the couple not to be surprised when the wife experiences bleeding during the first sex. She said that a girl normally bleeds when her hymen breaks. The "hymen" is a small piece of skin that has a round hole in it.<sup>518</sup> Most girls have a thin hymen with a hole of about 2 cm in diameter. A man's penis is 3 or 4 cm in diameter and so the hymen will stretch or break during the first sex.<sup>519</sup> However, she also pointed out that not all girls are born with thin hymen while others have no hymen.

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<sup>517</sup> Chimwemwe Kalalo, "Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Context of HIV/AIDS: The Involvement of the Anglican Church in the Upper Shire Diocese," MA, University of Malawi, 2006, p. 34.

<sup>518</sup> Bruce and Carol Bitten, *Answers for your Marriage*, Florida: Word of Life Publishers, 2001, p. 66.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

#### *8.10.8.10 Sex Materials in the Bedroom*

Pastors' wives stressed the need for a table, two chairs, razorblade, teapot, a bottle of Vaseline, a large bed sheet, towels and two pails to be available in the room. There must be a table in the bedroom to be used for a variety of sexual techniques.

Both the Pastors' wives and NyaGondwe Fiedler observed that the couple should keep a razorblade in their bedroom for shaving. The woman is instructed to have tea in a teapot or flask. She is taught to give the husband some tea after sexual intercourse. This is because the husband loses a lot of energy during sex. However, the woman is not considered to have lost energy since culturally she is deemed to serve the man.

The couple is given hand towels for wiping off the fluids from each other's sexual organs. The couple is given five towels: two for the woman, two for the man and one to collect pubic hair when shaving one another. The used towels should be put in a pail with soap and warm water for washing. The towels are of different colours. When the red towels are spread on the bed, it signifies that the woman is menstruating. When the white one has been put on the bed it signifies that she has just finished her menses so they may resume sex.

Again, another elderly woman instructed the couple to spread a large bed sheet whenever they want to have sex in order to prevent sperms from spilling over the beddings. She also instructed them to use four safety pins to hold the sheet on top of the beddings so that the sheets are not displaced during the game.

#### *8.10.8.11 Sexual Language Used during Love Making*

Couples use different languages when making love. The following are the common languages used. The man says *ndidye* (let me eat), *njala* (hunger), *tichindane* (let's have sex), *ndigunde* (have sex with me), *tiogolane* (let us straighten each other), *tikhalire pamodzi* (lets be together,) *phoso* (snack), *tikwatane* (let's have a union) or *mankhwala a tulo* (medicine for sleep). These languages are commonly used by many people including nonbelievers. The woman stretches her legs in the man's presence in a special way indicating that she wants sex. Some women do say words like "*mundipange*" (do it to me) while others say they just suddenly see the man on top of them.

#### 8.10.8.12 Barriers to Communication

In a family, barriers to communication include fear, lack of time and poor listening skills. The Head Deacon at Chisitu advised the husband not to make his wife fear him.<sup>520</sup> He said that a wife cannot communicate well to her husband if she fears him. God says a wife must *submit* to her husband, but not *fear* him. The Scriptures declare that wives should submit to their husbands (Col 3:18), but 1 John 4:18 says that there is no fear in love.

Lack of time is also a barrier to communication. The couples were instructed to communicate irrespective of how busy they may be. Communicating even when you have little time makes one feel loved and counted. Failure to listen to each other is a great barrier to communication.<sup>521</sup>

### 8.11 How Charismatic Women Deal with Witchcraft Accusations

Witchcraft is perceived differently by different people depending on the culture. Evans-Pritchard defines witchcraft as the belief that humans are capable of invoking, practicing and exercising a psychic force for the purpose of hurting or killing other humans, and engaging in other malevolent activities.<sup>522</sup> John Mbiti writes that "witchcraft is a manifestation of mystical forces which may be inborn in a person, inherited or acquired in various ways."<sup>523</sup> Witchcraft practices are actually taking place in the society and the Church is no exception. The section discusses how the Charismatic women deal with witchcraft accusations.

In the first place, when one is accused of witchcraft, the Deacons investigate the matter. They call the accused to hear their side. In most cases the accused refuse being a witch.<sup>524</sup> After investigations the issue is reported to the Pastor. For example, at Jali Charismatic

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<sup>521</sup> John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1990.

<sup>522</sup> Evans Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracle and Magic among the Azande*, London: Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 347.

<sup>523</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann, 1975, p. 1 65.

<sup>524</sup> Int. Armon Kamoto, Matawale, 15.12.13

Redeemed Church, young children revealed to their parents that they were trained in witchcraft by Mrs. X. The accused was a Church Elder. Parents lodged their complaints to the village headman. The village headman called the woman who declined having trained the children in witchcraft. Having known that the Elder was a Chairlady, the village headman called the Pastor who, together with the head Deacons of Zomba Charismatic Redeemed Church, the children, parents and the accused came for a hearing. Everything was presented, but the accused refused having done that and asked the children to prove it. The children failed to do so.

The Pastor prayed for the children for deliverance from witchcraft spirits. He also prayed for protection against this demonic practice. He laid hands on them to receive the power of the Holy Spirit to protect them. He also prayed for the accused. He then called the accused for pastoral counselling. She was counselled in the presence of the head Deacons. The accused was also encouraged to be reading the Bible daily. The Pastor explained the dangers of such practices to a believer and to the message. He also explained the effects of witchcraft on his reputation and the Church. He warned the Church Elder to be disciplined if she would not change.

Another incidence took place at group village Mtogolo on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Many people went to the scene. It was early in the morning that the owner of the house, Mrs X, saw a crashed witchcraft plane. A herbalist was invited who, upon performing his medicine, made about 32 people get out of the plane. It was shameful to see that 24 of them were women who belonged to CHAREWO at Domasi,<sup>525</sup> and eight of them were members and leaders from the Mainline Churches.

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<sup>525</sup> I attended to the place of the scene and I saw the Herbalist performing his medicines and people getting out of the plane. One of the are XYZ (Names are withheld)



Fig 1. Crashed witchcraft plane

An interview held with K, her name withheld, indicated that the above plane crashed because the owner of the house protected his house with magic. The survivors of the crashed plane reported that they boarded a round basket as shown in the figure above. The Pastors from the CCs called them and interrogated them. After telling the truth, the believers cum victims of the crash were prayed for. He then called them individually for counselling. This incident revealed that, much as some people may claim to be Christians, they are weapons of darkness. This also confirms the possibility for believers to practice dual religiosity.<sup>526</sup>

In another incidence, Chiefs said that some children reveal that some women teach them witchcraft. There were about 400 trainees, 45 of these testified before the Chiefs as well as at the Court of Law that they were being taught witchcraft. One of the Deaconesses reported the case to the Pastor. The Pastor and Deaconess called the woman to find out the truth about the allegations but she denied it. The Pastor and five Deaconesses prayed for her. They also counselled her just like they had done with the earlier cases.

One pastor,<sup>527</sup> name withheld for anonymity, narrated that so far, he had dealt with children who claimed were taught witchcraft. Of this group, 10 were girls and 10 were boys. The pastor noted with great concern that 15 of the trained children were orphans. These children were mostly 6 to 13 years old while one girl was 19 years old. The Pastor

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<sup>526</sup> Int. Mercy Magwira, Mdumu, 12.2. 2013.

interviewed each child on separate occasions but all the children seemed to be talking of the same thing. They claimed that one female teacher came to their homes at midnight, woke them up and took them out through magic. Then they were taken on a winnowing basket to Sambakusi graveyard where they drank blood of dead bodies. The pastor prayed for each child and counselled them.

Ironically, in other Churches, like Seventh Day Adventist, there is no room for witchcraft discussions. The Church takes prayer as an instrument to dealing with witchcraft. However, Stanley Chipeta observed that with regard to children who are accused of practicing witchcraft in the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Pastor only prays for them.<sup>528</sup>

Here, the accusations are treated as facts, and the Pastors regard them as true, and consider the accused wrong even when they have not been heard. This is similar to what happens in the non-Christianized world where witches are either persecuted by the society by being thrown out of the village or being set on fire. The SDA takes a pre-judgmental position, and seems to agree with those magicians who believe that witchcraft is real and can be cleansed through Mwabvi or juju. Conversely, Secular Humanists argue that witchcraft does not exist. They believe that old people are usually victims of the false accusations just because of their age.

The Humanists' position is that witchcraft cannot be proved beyond reasonable doubt, hence are mere speculations. And since it cannot be proved, it follows that it does not exist. Given these realities, Charismatic Churches have tried various means in dealing with witchcraft accusation amongst its faithfuls. Some consult Prophets and Pastors for prayers and counselling.<sup>529</sup> Moreover, both the accused and the victims confirmed that after being prayed for, their problems completely ended. This means that prayers are very effective. Even though the Counsellors were not trained, their contributions helped reduce marginalization and hatred between the accused and the victimized families. However, for this to be effective there is need for them to undergo proper counselling training. Counselling is indeed a field that calls for a more serious academic training so that it achieves its goals and brings the desired results.

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid p. 3.

<sup>529</sup> Int. X and Y, their names were withheld for anonymity reasons, Chikala, 12.7.2013.

## 8.12 Women and Girl Basic Education In Charismatic Churches

Girls' education has a significant impact on girls as individuals, and church and society at large.<sup>530</sup> Women must take a leading role in encouraging the girl child both at family level and in churches. It should be known that when girl child education is encouraged at family, church and in the society, it may result in having a community which is independent at all levels. This is because when there is access to child basic education, the following will be its benefits:

### *8.12.1 Girls' access to quality basic education promotes literacy levels*

Interviews with the female church elders of the five charismatic churches indicate that girls' basic education is important to the church. One participant during a focus group discussion said that the access to basic education will help to read, write and count. She can be able to read the bible and even counting Sunday collections.<sup>531</sup> When a girl is encouraged to access basic quality education, the development of the church and society will be vividly seen by the majority of the society.

### *8.12.2 Girls access to quality basic education reduces poverty levels*

During interviews, 80% of the 250 indicated that the girls' access to quality basic education is likely to reduce the poverty levels of the girl child. The correlation is evident in the sense that education helps in the provision of semi-skilled and skilled labour that is needed in the production of goods and services. On quality grounds, a quality primary education provides every child with an equal start in life. One of the respondents at Zomba Charismatic Redeemed Church International said that education is a key that leads to higher wages thereby increasing the economic status of individuals.<sup>532</sup> She added that it is unfortunate that women do not encourage them to complete a full cycle of education but instead they encourage them to get married quickly. This has led so many girls in the church getting

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<sup>530</sup> Bridget Kadole Manda, *A critical investigation to the Realisation of the Right to Access Basic Education of the Girl Child: The case of Chintheche Area in Nkhatabay District*, MA Thesis, Mzuzu University, Mzuni Press, 2015, p. 36

<sup>531</sup> Int. Mercy Mlenga, deaconess, Njolomole Living Waters Church, 16.7.15

<sup>532</sup> During focus group discussion held with CHAREWO at Zomba Redeemed church 5. 4. 15

married without completing their cycle of education resulting in breeding poverty both in the church and the society.

### *8.12.3 Girl's access to quality education promotes decision making skills.*

Interviews that were conducted in one of the Charismatic Churches in rural areas indicate that 80% of the girls are illiterate. This has been so due to lack of role models in the rural set up. These girls are unable to make informed decisions in matters of education because among other thing is that their mothers don't encourage them to pursue with education because they themselves are not educated. However, it is important to note that full basic education enables the girl to make informed decision about her body, her future as well as number of children she is likely to have.<sup>533</sup> It is through education that girls can inform society with sound judgment and reasoning skills.

### *8.12.4 Access to quality basic education promotes girl participation in church activities, the community and National Development.*

Without basic education even an intelligent girl would not be able to develop her full potential. It is therefore necessary for women in the church in Malawi to take part in preaching and that education one of the tools in which one can identify false teachings in the church. It helps people to find out the right teachings according the Bible.

## **8.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has observed that despite the fact that women form the largest group of society and the Church, very few hold positions. It has also shown that men take the lion's share when it comes to leadership positions. Women leadership in the Charismatic Churches is just ceremonial since the final authority still remains with the men. It has also shown that some women in the Church may be leaders but they still consult men more often and this underestimates their capabilities and authority. The chapter has also shown that women in the CCs are given responsibilities like Church Administrators, Church Elders, Pastors, Secretaries, and Deaconesses among others. It has also shown that women are given

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<sup>533</sup> Int. Rose Balasani , Calvary Family Church, 14.9.13

responsibilities to look after cultural, moral and social issues. For example, they are responsible for the initiation of the children in the Church, child birth, funeral ceremonies, wedding counselling and receiving visitors at weddings.

The chapter has also examined the factors that contribute to low representation of women in leadership positions. These include family obligations, lack of support from men, low self-esteem and jealousy among others. Further, it has also examined the relevance of Theological Education as a tool for women emancipation from mental and physical slavery. Theological Education has also helped women understand and interpret the Scriptures correctly.

## Chapter 9: The Role of Prophetesses in Charismatic Churches

In the previous chapter we looked at women participation in the area of leadership education and initiation among others. This chapter deals with the prophetesses' role. The prophetic work that is all over the world today is a new phenomenon. It has been there even in the Old Testament times. This chapter discusses first the prophets from the Old Testament and the New Testament. These will later provide the basis for comparison with the modern Women's Prophetic Ministries in Charismatic Churches.

### 9.1 Women Prophets in the Old Testament

#### 9.1.1 Miriam

She was a daughter of Amram and Jochebed and the sister of Aaron and Moses (Numbers 26: 59). Miriam was the one who watched the baby Moses in the water and suggested that her mother be the nurse. Later, she served with Moses and Aaron as leader during the Exodus with special responsibility for the women (Exod. 15:20). In the wilderness, she became unhappy with her role and that of Moses (Num. 12). She was rebuked by God and stricken with leprosy for seven days.

Miriam died at Kadesh and was buried there. There is no record of her marriage in the Bible, but Rabbinical Tradition makes her the wife of Caleb and mother of Hur.<sup>534</sup> The story of Miriam shows that spiritual leadership is not reserved only for men. Miriam also illustrates the danger of not being satisfied with our roles and talents before God.<sup>535</sup> Though she was a leader, she was jealous of Moses. Each one of us can find fulfillment in the spiritual role God has given us.<sup>536</sup> Miriam's experience indicates that it is suicidal to yearn for a role God has given to someone else.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> J.D. Douglas (ed.), *Bible Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Intervarsity press: Tyndale , 1962, p. 784.

<sup>535</sup> Lawrence O. Richards (ed.), *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, New York: WYN Wood Press, 1990, p. 701.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

### ***9.1.2 Isaiah's wife***

Not much is known about Isaiah's wife with regard to her role as a Prophet. However, she is mentioned by Isaiah the Prophet that she was a Prophetess. Isaiah writes: 'then I went to the Prophetess and she conceived and gave birth to a son' (Isaiah 8:3) NIV.

### ***9.1.3 Noadiah***

Biblical evidence shows that besides true Prophets, there were also false Prophets and Prophetesses. Noadiah is an example of a false Prophetess. Not much is known about Noadiah except that she, together with the rest of the Prophets, sought to intimidate Nehemiah when he was attempting to surround Jerusalem with a wall (Nehemiah 6:14). This was after the return from the Babylonian exile.

## **9.2. Prophetesses in the New Testament**

### ***9.2.1 Anna***

She was a widow aged 84, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was widowed after seven years of marriage (Luke 2:36-38).<sup>538</sup> Rather than remarry, Anna committed herself to a life of prayer, worship and fasting at the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>539</sup> Like Simeon, she waited for the consolation of Israel. She had prophetic insight and she recognized the infant Jesus as the Messiah when he was presented at the Temple. She then proclaimed Jesus as the Redeemer publicly.<sup>540</sup>

### ***9.2.2 Mary the Mother of Jesus***

Mary lived at Nazareth in Galilee. She was engaged to a carpenter named Joseph (Lk. 1:26).<sup>541</sup> Like Joseph, she was a descendant of David (Lk. 3). When the Angel of the Lord visited her concerning the birth of Jesus, she was courageous enough and willing to bear the 'son of God', even though her pregnancy would surely be misunderstood and would put her

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<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> J. D. Douglas (ed.), *Bible Dictionary*, Intervarsity Press: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, p. 49.

<sup>541</sup> The Gideon's, *Holy Bible*, Thomas Nelson Inc, 1979, p. 992.

future at risk (Lk. 1:38).<sup>542</sup> The Angel from God told Mary that her son was not an ordinary one but the Saviour. She was also told the news about her cousin Elizabeth that she too would conceive and have a son at her old age (Lk. 1:31-38).<sup>543</sup> We find an example of a prophetic utterance in Luke 1:48 where she states "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

Luke also records Mary's song of praise (the Magnificat, Lk. 1:46-55).<sup>544</sup> The remaining references to Mary in the Gospels are few.<sup>545</sup> It seems she did not accompany Jesus on his missionary journeys although she was with him at the wedding in Cana.<sup>546</sup> We meet Mary again at the foot of the Cross. Mary is one of the examples of pure and uncontaminated women. She risked her personal shame, the anger of Joseph and her own family.<sup>547</sup> Her words, 'I am the Lord's servant' (Lk. 1:38) remind us that true faith in God is expressed by submission to His will.

#### ***9.2.4 The Daughters of Phillip***

Very little is known about the daughters of Phillip. Probably, they were the daughters of Phillip the Evangelist who was one of the first Deacons of the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:5). Phillip led the Ethiopian Eunuch to Christ (Acts 8:26-38). No further details are given except the fact that these daughters were virgins and that they prophesied (Acts 21:9).

#### ***9.2.5 Jezebel***

In the Book of Revelation, she is a false 'Prophetess' who led the Church of Thyatira to idolatry and immorality (Rev. 2:20). She was given time to repent but she did not. Therefore, Jesus said that he would punish her together with her clients unless they all repent (Rev. 2:22). According to Jesus, those that despise and kill prophets are under the influence of the

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>545</sup> J. D. (ed.), *Bible Dictionary*, InterVarsity Press, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1962, p. 746.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid.

<sup>547</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, New York: Wynwood Press, 1990

Spirit of Jezebel.<sup>548</sup> They may not have necessarily killed the Prophets but by not allowing God's free operation to speak through his Ministers, they kill the Spirit that speaks through them and introduces false teaching in the process.

From the discussion above, one notices that Prophetesses in the Old Testament acted as 'watchdogs'. God spoke to the rulers and their people through them. They served as the contemporary voice of God to many generations. That is the reason why Deborah who was the Prophetess, brought the word of God to Barak. Prophets and Prophetesses were oftentimes consulted to seek God's opinion on behalf of the rulers and the people. This could be during wars, hunger or any form of calamities. A good example of this is Huldah, the Prophetess who pronounced divine judgment to King Josiah and the entire nation.

Prophetesses continued to exist in the New Testament. However, this time Prophets and Prophetesses never counselled Kings any more. They were a source of revelation to individuals.

In the New Testament, the Scriptures teach that Christians are to get their guidance from the Holy Spirit. The question, therefore, is, 'does this mean that Prophetesses have no place amongst Christians today? If they do, in what ways is their Ministry similar to that of their male counterparts of the Bible Tradition? To answer this question, I examine four Prophetesses from Charismatic Churches.

## **9.3 Women Prophetic Experience in Charismatic churches**

### ***9.3.0 Introduction***

Mrs Chapomba, Mrs Chapola, Gogo Namputa and Mrs Kawalewale have the gifts of prophecy, healing and visions. Although they do not make a representative sample, they do give a picture of what is happening in Prophetic circles today. Their prophetic mission will therefore be compared to that of their Biblical counterparts. Readers, however, should make their own valued judgment regarding these Prophets and their positions.

### ***9.3.1 Mrs Carol Chapomba***

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<sup>548</sup> Jay Atkinson, 'Jezebel', [later-rain.com/eschae/jezebel.html](http://later-rain.com/eschae/jezebel.html).

Recently, a lot of Prophets and Prophetesses have come to the scene both within and outside Malawi. Carol Chapomba is based in Blantyre and ministers at the Living Waters International Church.

### ***9.3.2.1 Background Information***

Carol Chapomba was born as Carol Kasamu on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1959. She hails from Livalo Village, Traditional Authority Makwangwala, in Ntcheu District. She got married to Hamilton Chapomba in 1977. The couple is blessed with 3 boys and 3 girls. Previously, she worked as a saleslady for Exchange and Market Development. She was a member of the Church of Christ then.

### ***9.3.2.2 The Turning Point***

Apostle Stanly S. Ndovie used to preach at the Red Cross Ground in Blantyre. Carol Chapomba attended one of the sermons. After listening to the preaching she decided to accept Christ and later joined the Living Waters Church.<sup>549</sup>

### ***9.3.2.3 Her Early Experiences as a Born Again Christian***

In 1989, she developed breast cancer. Medical practitioners declared that she would not be healed. Signs of improvement started to be noticed in the course of prayers that were conducted by Apostle Ndovie. She later had a vision in which Angels operated on her breast. The Angels then gave her twins who breast-fed on the same infected area but never got infected. As a fulfillment of this vision, she gave birth to twins, Zebron and Jane, in 1991. These twins indeed fed on the same breast.



The morning after the dream, the breast burst open and she was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital. It was here where one doctor suggested that the breast should be removed whereas another one suggested that it just be dressed. After being discharged from the hospital,

<sup>549</sup> Bright Kawamba, *Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969-1986 An antecedent of the Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, A Thesis, University of Malawi 2013, p. 34.

the cancer vanished. Thereafter, around early 1990, she started praying and fasting intensively for almost 40 days. This fasting and praying helped her develop spiritually, and she later started experiencing God's power.

#### ***9.3.2.4 Her Ordination as a Pastor***

Carol Chapomba was ordained in 1992 by Apostle Stanley Ndovie. Her ordination was in line with the doctrine of the Church which allows the ordination of women as Pastors.<sup>550</sup> Following Chapomba's ordination, Apostle Ndovie started sending her to different places within and outside Malawi on preaching missions. For instance, she went to the USA in 2002, and to Norway, Sweden, Zimbabwe and Mozambique in 2003. While preaching, Pastor Chapomba experienced the presence of God, such that she could prophesy and convert many people.

#### ***9.3.2.5. Her Call as a Prophetess***

Initially, she had a vision that showed her the place where Living Waters Headquarters would be built. Whatever she prophesied, sooner or later it came to pass. Testimonies about her prophesy reached Apostle Ndovie who later declared her the Prophetess at Chimwankhunda Living Waters Church in 2004.

#### ***9.3.2.6 Examples of her Prophecies***

She prophesied to a certain lady who worked for the Immigration Department in Blantyre that she would lose all her property because she was practicing Satanism. Upon hearing this, the lady got furious and walked away in anger. A year later, the lady went back to the Prophetess to confess her sins and that what she prophesied had really happened.

Pastor Chapomba also foretold another lady who always dreamed sleeping with unknown men. Chapomba told her that she had a Spirit husband who would soon kill her. She added that there was need to free her as soon as possible. Regrettably, the woman ignored this,

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<sup>550</sup> Revised Living waters Constitution 2015, p. 19. It says women should be ordained to any position in the church regardless of tribe culture race...

and soon she died. She also prophesied to many members of the Church about getting healed from diseases, securing employment, and child bearing, all of which came to pass.

#### ***9.3.2.7 Evidence from Non-church Members***

Mr Gabriel testified that he was healed from mental illness after being prayed for by the Prophetess. Presently, he attends fellowships although he is a member of the CCAP. Likewise, another member said that she saw Mrs Chapomba preaching on MBC TV and was moved by the Holy Spirit so much so that she sought her advice.

#### ***9.3.2.8 Her Roles as a Prophetess***

Mrs Chapomba plays a number of roles within Living Waters Church, some of which are as follow:

- Preaching
- Counseling Church members and families
- Chairperson of the Evangelism Committee
- Prophesying to different people
- Praying for people
- Decision making
- Chair of the Living Waters Church Executive Committee
- Sensitizing women on issues of fasting and praying.

#### ***9.3.2.9 Her Relationship with Fellow Women***

She freely associates with all the women and recognizes those who have gifts. For example, she takes her time sitting and learning from ordinary women. There are several women that work with her in the Church and they do respect her. For instance, Mrs Apostle Jean Ndovie, Prophetess Ching'ang'a, Prophetess Kaluwa, Pastor Mwenelupembe, Pastor Sitima and others are some of her contemporaries. She mobilizes all women in the Church to go to the mountain for prayers when need arises.

### ***9.3.2.10 Challenges she Faces as a Prophetess***

- Not all people regard her as a true Prophetess.
- Some people create false stories due to jealousy. For example, rumours were rife that she was practicing Satanism. Nonetheless, four people came and confessed that they were bent at damaging her reputation.
- She also faces financial problems.
- Family life versus religious Ministry.
- She has to balance three responsibilities: taking care of her six children, her husband and her Ministry.
- She encounters strong men who overpower her in the course of praying for them.
- She faces resistance from men. Before she became popular, men resisted her prophecies.

### **9.3.2.10 Solutions to the Challenges**

- She prophesies only when she has conviction that the prophecy is indeed from God. She is also not worried when people have some reservations about her prophecy. She is not worried because she knows that one day they will know the truth.
- Carol Chapomba believes in patience such that when people rise against her, she fasts, prays and calms down. In this regard, Biblical verses that provide comfort to her are Exodus 14:13-14 “Do not be afraid, stand still and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you.”(NIV).
- The Prophetess prays to God, and people from different places come to assist her financially. Because she believes that Jesus is the one who sent her to minister, she does not beg for money.
- She properly divides her time by waking up early in the morning to do household chores so that when she embarks on God’s work, none in the family complains about her.

## **9.4 Ministering Service**

Prophetess Chapomba makes sure that ushers and usherettes are strategically positioned before praying for people commences. In addition, her husband helps in praying for people, particularly men, since he is also a Pastor.

## **9.5 Perception of Men towards her Prophetic Ministry**

The Prophetess says that men who are in Christ do recognize her as a Prophetess. When she prays and prophesies to them, they take her seriously. For instance, she has been invited by men to preach at public functions. The Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) has been inviting her to preach at Government functions. She recalls the time she was asked to preach at the funeral of the former First Lady, Madame Ethel Zvauya Mutharika who died in 2007, and the time Professor Bingu wa Mutharika died in 2012. By and large, the churches

that previously resisted her are now welcoming. From the findings, it is clear that Chapomba has really been called to prophesy to people by the Living God.

## **9.6 Prophetess Miriam Masonga**

This is another Prophetess in the Charismatic Churches. She is the founder of Jesus is the Way Ministry. Born in 1972, married and divorced, Miriam has two children. Currently, she has just completed her training at Eagles Theological School in Blantyre. She narrates that she was called to be a Prophetess in 1984. One day when she was praying, she saw the heaven open and Angels putting on glittering white clothes telling her that “I have chosen you to be a Prophetess of this generation, be courageous.” She received it with resistance. She informed her husband who was not a believer. The husband refused saying that she was mad because that could not happen to her.

### ***9.6.1 Her Relationship with her Husband***

While God was still using her, the relationship between her and her husband became strained and sour. She added that one day the Lord revealed to her that her husband had a second wife in Ndola. This revelation brought disagreements that ended in separation. The husband went to the second wife leaving her and the children in the cold. Although it had been difficult for her to prophesy before her husband, she stills tries her best to preach before men and women alike.

### ***9.6.2 Her Relationship with the community***

Prophetess Miriam Masonga is well loved by the people in and around Songani Township.<sup>551</sup> She leads women in caring for the sick, the aged and the bereaved. Below is her picture showing her charity works at Mbero Village.

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551



Prophetess Miriam Masonga looking after the aged

In her ministry she has included programmes where members go to the surrounding villages to assist the widows, the orphans and the aged. Despite the charity works Masonga is doing within and outside the surroundings areas, she still faces some challenges with her ministry. For instance, some women and men ridicule her for being single. Since one of the roles of the Prophetess is to counsel married people, some couples cast their doubt on her ingenuity and authority over marriage issues. They assume that since she lost her marriage to someone through separation, it is impossible for her to be competent in rebuilding and strengthening other peoples' marriages. Some men simply do not want to be led by a woman in the Church since the Bible seems to say so.

## **9.7 Comparison of the Biblical Prophetesses with the Prophetesses' Experiences at Charismatic Churches**

The issue here is to compare and contrast modern Prophets against those of the Bible. To do this, one must carefully think of the environment, society, cultures within which these people lived. We also need to look at the roles these Prophets were required to do.

### **9.7.1 Mrs Annie Chapola**

She comes from Matindi, Traditional Authority Kunthembwe in Blantyre District. Annie Chapola currently teaches at Chilangoma Primary School in Lunzu. Her husband teaches at Mawila Private Secondary School. She was a member of CCAP before she became born again in 1992 while a student at Lunzu Secondary School. Then, she was a member of the

SCOM. The Lord visited her when she was in form three. In that dream she was advised to read Luke 13:4.<sup>552</sup> In the morning, she realized that Jesus was talking about cutting down the tree that did not bear fruits. Her friend who was a born again interpreted the verse and urged her to accept the Lord Jesus. She then committed her life to Christ.

### ***9.7.2 The Gift of Prophecy***

In 2001, together with other believers, Annie went to Kamatole Hill for prayers and while there, she received the gift of prophecy, vision and tongues. While praying, her body suddenly became dazed, then soon she heard someone urging her to read Jeremiah Chapter 1, Isaiah Chapters 6:1-5; 41, 42 and 43. Most of these chapters and verses deal with one's calling by God to be a Prophet.

While in a trance, she saw many skeletons lying in a room which later started developing flesh before they started walking (?). She also saw coffins in that room. Suddenly, each of the coffins came to her, opened and then the dead people came out. She also saw a person dressed in white robes speaking to her, but she could not recall what was exactly said.

She also heard God telling her to pray for her school's football team that had a game that day. When she got home, she was told that there had been an accident during the game. One student got injured and was admitted to the hospital. As they were coming down the hill, she also heard a voice telling her to start praying. She then started praying with Gogo Namputa and Alice Kawalewale. Others then joined them later.

Annie Chapola is blessed with the discernment spirit. This enables her to 'know' about other people's problems and secrets. Before a person knocks at her door, she knows who the person is, what the person is like and what he/she wants. To support her claims, she added that she accepted this interview because she already knew that it was peaceful and that I had no malicious intentions.

She pointed out that prophecy, discernment and visions go together and that they are God given gifts. She nevertheless added that these do complement each other when it comes to healing.

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<sup>552</sup> #Quote the text in this footnote.

### ***9.7.3 Healing***

In 2002, she realized that God wanted to use her in the Healing Ministry. One day, visitors from Chilaweni brought a one-year-old dead baby. As a novice, she was not sure what to do. She, however, heard God instructing her to command the spirit of death out of the child. She did so and immediately the baby resurrected. She prepared porridge for it, and it took the porridge even though it had stayed for days on an empty stomach. The news spread further and more people started coming to her. Below are some examples of healings that happened through her.

In 2004, they were praying in a certain house. God told her to go to the house of a woman whose blood pressure was getting higher and higher. Annie was afraid and hesitant to do so thinking that she missed the point. Suddenly, she started walking in 'spirit' and eventually found herself at the woman's house. When the woman saw her, she told her that it was good that she had come since she needed prayers urgently. She prayed for the woman and soon the blood pressure stabilized.

In 2005, a six-month pregnant woman came with the problem of bleeding. The doctors at Mlambe hospital had tried to assist her but failed. The doctors told her to go home and wait for the fateful day. However, after Annie Chapola prayed for her, the problem immediately stopped. She later gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

In 2007, she received an insane girl from Chaweza. Surprisingly, the girl got cured after she was prayed for and this girl is now married. From these experiences, Annie believed that in some cases the patients would have died and become dry bones like the bones in the trance, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, they were healed. She however cautioned that not everyone is healed. According to her, healing depends on the will of God. She cited an example of the time when she was called to pray for a patient at the hospital during which God revealed the pending death. However, instead of healing him, God told her to pray for him to receive Christ. Eventually, the man died within three days after receiving Christ just as God had wanted.

She said that it is very important to listen to what God is saying in any situation. She also stated that she is careful not to be used by the devil as he sometimes pretends to be God and speaks just like God. Thus, when she hears a calling, she first verifies it with God. She

does not lay hands on people unless led by the Holy Spirit. When praying for men, a witness has to be present for her own safety.

#### ***9.7.4 Prophecy and other Problems***

Sometimes people bring problems other than physical illnesses. These can be personal or marriage related problems. For example, one day, a woman came and asked for prayers which would set her husband free who was bound by the devil and became the source of evil in that family. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit revealed to her that the woman was actually the source of that evil.

Likewise, a woman deported from the USA came for prayers to enable her return to the USA. Annie Chapola told her to believe and just bring her passport and transport money. One week down the line, the woman was back to the USA.

There are many testimonies regarding her mystery healings and prophecies that came to pass. When praying for people, Annie first teaches the person about Jesus and his powers. Then she reads Luke 18:27, Mathew 7:7 and Jeremiah 33:3. These verses tell people to call on God for anything they need. This is done to help people know God and find salvation in Christ. Importantly, patience, caution, perseverance, and faith are important for her success over demons.

#### ***9.7.5 Dreams***

We read from both the OT and the NT that God sometimes spoke to people through dreams. This is true even today. Annie Chapola said that her dreams sometimes are for encouragement. For instance, she used to dream that she was surrounded by a large army but each time she could defeat it. She interpreted the dream as alluding to the fact that God was with her. Sometimes dreams may warn about a coming danger and sometimes they simply offer guidance. For instance, one time, she dreamt of a poor woman whom she was told to help. The next morning, a woman came to her asking for assistance just like in that dream. The issue of dreams and their interpretation has indeed a historical and religious background. For instance, in the OT, Joseph was capable of interpreting dreams for Pharaoh

and they just would really come to pass. Accordingly, her claims on dreams might be equally true and justified.

### ***9.7.6 Dream Interpretation***

Alice Nkhata pointed out that different things have different meanings in the spiritual realm. She however does not claim that these are 'absolute' truths. For instance, if a person dreams that she is surrounded by a cloud, it symbolizes the presence of God. Conversely, while many would interpret water falling from heaven like waterfalls as heavy rains or likely floods, others would see blessings or long life for that person. Moreover, flowers could mean peace and or love. Snakes may symbolize evil, lies or craftiness and even the devil himself. A dog bite may mean that the person is attacked by a demon of prostitution or by enemies. Pigs may mean that the person is not selective, and picks up anything. They may also mean demons and or gluttony. Cats or owls may signify arrogance, disobedience, death and sickness of an important person.

### ***9.7.7 Visions***

Apart from dreams, Annie Chapola sees visions. Sometimes the vision (trance) may concern the problem an individual is experiencing. For instance, if a person is a prostitute, she may see a vision of a person having sex. If something is wrong in the person's body, she may have a vision for such an affected area. Annie added that she sees these visions like the way one watches television. Sometimes, instead of a prophecy, vision or dream, God may choose to give a verse and such a verse addresses a specific situation.

### ***9.7.8 The Gift of Prophecy and her Family***

Spiritual gifts are meant to build both the Church and the individual that receives them from God. Annie Chapola claims that before any incident occurs, be it death or some kind of luck likely to fall upon their family, she is the first one to know. In case of death, she sees a vision of someone carrying a cross or a coffin with words inscribed on it signaling that someone will die. This helps her find solutions to the problem. However, not all death is bad as it sometimes comes from God and if that is the case, she asks the individual to be prepared for it by receiving God in advance. Sometimes the Holy Spirit speaks to her concerning

personal issues. She, for example, talked about the time the Holy Spirit informed her about the coming of her relative who was then abroad. She also cited many instances her family had benefited from her gifts.

### ***9.7.9 Prophetic Gift and the Church***

Annie Chapola belongs to the Evangelism team of the Church. She is free to exercise her gifts both inside and outside the Church. Those in need of her assistance do consult her. These gifts are very important for the Church considering that often the Mainline Churches are losing their membership due to what is called 'dry worship' or 'dead worship'.

### ***9.7.10 Prophecy and Culture***

Annie Chapola mentioned that she attends to more than 18 people per day and these are mostly women. A follow up question as to why more women than men attend her prayers revealed that men culturally and naturally look down on women. Those men that come for her prayers are naturally those that are weak, sick or poor. This too suggests that men who are weak, sick, and poor are generally considered vulnerable just like women are and as such they are categorized as women or not man enough.

### ***9.7.11 Challenges***

Sometimes people run away from her for fear that she may know what they do. Others just spread false rumours that she has predicted something and this causes panic on believers. Sometimes, when people forge stories about her prophecy and if nothing happens, she is labeled a liar or a false Prophet or a Satanist and this drives away possible converts.

Likewise, some people resist the message of God since they "philosophize" everything.<sup>553</sup> This is the case especially if the message calls them to repent, fast or pray for a situation. Some people simply want to test the waters and put her into disrepute. For example, in 2003, a certain girl from Balaka came to Chilangoma to visit her relatives. She asked for prayers so that she should get a husband. Annie, through God, knew that the girl was a liar

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<sup>553</sup> This means that people critically investigate issues at hand before an action is taken

as she already had a husband. She confronted the girl, and she confessed having one and later she received Christ.

She gave another example regarding one day she was walking. This day, a car stopped and the driver offered her a lift. However, the Holy Spirit pushed her away from the car and it sped off. Another day, while praying, she saw an egg approaching her. She rebuked it in Jesus name and it likewise disappeared. At first, these experiences used to terrify her, but now she overcomes them in the name of Jesus.

When asked if she regards herself a Prophetess, she answered that she does not really think she is one. Neither does she deny it if called so by people. Her reason for her position was that God has not told her that she is a Prophet. In terms of approaching believers, her work has changed radically. For example, unlike at the initial stage, today she does not directly tell people what God has told her about the problems as this disappointed the people. She added that in those days she used to ask concerned individuals to participate in prayers and or fasting, but today she intercedes on their behalf. Recently she has formed a network of believers and Prophets who have gifts like hers.

## **9.8 Mrs Alice Namputa**

She comes from Gwede village in Traditional Authority Sosola in Balaka District. God started using her at the age of 12. That time she used to have dreams that came to pass but many people took her for a mere dreamer. On Sundays, she used to move from house to house collecting fellow children for Sunday school.

In 2008, while in Zambia, she negatively commented on the Women of Excellence (Amayi Angwiro). She observed that Amayi Angwiro were not taking care of their families as they were busy loitering in the streets. But that very same night, she heard God call her three times, asking her to serve Him. The following morning was the Women's Day of Prayer. The prayers were held at the Salvation Army Church. She went there though it was a long distance. That same day, she was nominated the Secretary for Christian Service responsible for organizing monthly women prayers. She served in that position for seven years.

In 1994, while in Zambia, she was, in a dream, told that she would return to Malawi safely though there would be trouble while in Malawi. She was then told that she would leave

Malawi for another country where she would later die. In October, the same year, she came to Malawi without any problems. However, in 2006, while praying, she had another vision. She saw Angels moving up and down the ladder as she was in the middle. The Angels were singing 'glory to the Lord' and she too joined them. Her son who was then sleeping heard her singing and just wondered at what was happening. When the singing was over, she saw something like a road. On it were laid three things and the Bible was at the center. She asked God about these things and He told her that she should serve Him.

God told her that she will be healing those people who will believe her. God later told her that the people will come from elsewhere even though she is new in the Ministry. Later six pregnant women came to her house from Mlambe Hospital to seek prayers. One of them had been told by the doctors that she would undergo a third operation which was not health for her life. While in desperation, she heard God telling her to add salt to water and give it to the women to drink. She was referred to 2 Kings 2:20 where Elisha also made the bitter water sweet by simply adding salt.

The women carried some of the water and sprinkled it on their beds. The one who was expecting an operation delivered normally just like the others. From that time, whenever she prayed for people, she also used the mixture of salt and water and does so even today.

### ***9.8.1 The Administering of the 'Anointed' Water and its Effectiveness***

Alice Nkhata stated that the water she administers is very powerful and effective; however, it cannot be replicated by anybody. She observes that the water does not replace prayer. Just as Moses used a stick, and Elijah a cloak, so does Alice use water. The water is also used in healing, and delivering people from curses and other ailments. Whichever is the case, the water and prayers are done after introducing the people to Christ.

Alice believes that the water is effective considering that many people with various problems got assisted. Testifying to this was a woman who said that her husband who used to beat her changed after using this water. Another woman added that her baby was born through prayers and water, and that each time the baby gets ill, she came to Alice.

### **9.8.2 Curses**

She mentioned that some problems people face are due to curses inherited from their ancestors. Some people are cursed by other persons who wish them bad. Common curses include bareness, singleness or divorces and separations etc. Some curses are inherited from their parents and can be passed down from one generation to the next. When individuals are unaware of curses, it takes Alice through prayers to reveal the curses. Given these cases, she first teaches the person the truth and the genesis of the curses before introducing them to Jesus and then offers deliverance.

### **9.8.3 Deliverance from Witchcraft and Evil Spirits**

Alice Nkhata also assists people possessed with demons. Sometimes she is invited to go to villages and deliver people who are possessed or are bewitched. For example at Lunzu, a father in-law bewitched his own daughter in-law. He set a trap so that the daughter should die once she stepped on it. Fortunately she just fell down and managed to walk to her house where she got paralyzed later. The relatives called Alice and friends to go and pray for her. When they arrived, many people had already gathered just to see if the woman could walk again. They prayed and applied the water on her and soon she was on her feet. Some water was also sprinkled in the woman's house for protection.

When the other daughter in-law saw this, she requested for some water to be sprinkled on her. That very same night, they left some pails outside in order to catch rain water. During the night, they heard a bang on their roof. The next morning, they found a big frog in the pail. When they poured the water together with the frog on the ground, it suddenly started turning into a person who turned out to be the father in-law. Embarrassed, the father in-law asked the daughter in-law if she had visited a witchdoctor. When the father was told to be prayed for, he got furious and said that he was ready to die. After two weeks, he indeed died.

There are many situations Alice has assisted people to recover from various ailments through prayer and water.

#### **9.8.4 Visions**

Alice Nkhata sometimes sees visions with regard to a situation or problem at hand. In cases where people are affected by demons but are not aware of them, Alice foretells the situation and provides solutions. She cited an example of a man who was caught having sex with a table and was referred to her. Through a vision, Alice observed that the man had a spiritual wife and the man was delivered through prayers.

Apart from deliverance, she also prays for those wanting blessings or children. She first teaches them the importance of tithe, prayer and faith in Christ.

Alice also uses the anointed water on herself as on her clients.

#### **9.8.5 Challenges**

Some people come to test her just like they do to her colleagues. Thus she does not rush to pray for a person until God tells her to do so. Since 2006, Alice observes that her faith has matured and that God responds to her prayers favourably. Some people are also jealous and aim at tarnishing her image by creating malicious stories.

In terms of clients, Alice receives well over 20 people per day. She adds that her house is full of people just like a hospital on a normal day. At the Church, she is active and belongs to the Evangelism Team. Moreover, she assists people from all denominations although she does not aim at converting them to her Ministry.

### **9.9 Mrs Zamawe**

Born again in 2006, Mrs Zamawe comes from Muloza, Mulanje. This was after she heard the preaching from Evangelist Aiwani at Bondo School Ground. She later joined the prayer-cell at the Charismatic Redeemed Church<sup>554</sup> before joining the God's Conquerors Fellowship.

In 2009, while attending God's Conquerors, she received a calling from God. She noticed that when she looked at a person, the nature of the person would be revealed to her. As they were praying, she would hear the voice saying 'let us do this.' At first, she was

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<sup>554</sup> This prayer cell is a group of individuals who meet together for intercessory prayers and bible sharing.

confused, but later consulted others on these issues. They told her that when God tells her something, she just should not question Him.

Apart from the gifts of Prophecy and discernment, God started communicating with her through visions. She also observed that one has to be careful when listening to God, otherwise the devil infiltrates.

### ***9.9.1 Healing***

Zamawe stated that she does not follow a fixed programme when praying for a sick person but first teaches, then introduces the person to Christ. She also mentioned that only God gives true prophecy, vision or revelation regarding a situation and this depends on God's volition.

Sometimes, the nature of the problem is revealed to her when she is praying. In the event that the person is not aware of what he/she is suffering from, God gives her the hints.

### ***9.9.2 Visions and the Spirit of Discernment***

Sometimes she can see visions even when she is not praying. Sometimes she may just see a person either familiar or not. In this case, she asks God what He wants her to do. God may also show her what is happening in the life of that person. Sometimes God requires her just to intercede for the person in question. When she has a vision about something that is likely to happen to somebody, she tells the concerned individual about the vision and then they pray together for the problem.

Regarding discernment, she observed that it is the Spirit who reveals what a particular person is like. She gave an example that, as she walks in town, she may know that the person is a witch, a prostitute or talkative etc. If someone is a witch, she sees him having twisted physical features such as an elongated mouth or nose. For a prostitute, she may see her changing in appearances. She may look very beautiful at the moment, then her appearance or clothes fade. For a talkative person, she may see her lips moving up and down rapidly. However, the person does not know these. Like with prophecy and visions, the devil may also take advantage of this.

### ***9.9.3 Dreams***

This is another way through which God speak to her. She mentioned that dreams are in two categories: Spiritual and physical dreams. Spiritual dreams address the Spiritual life of an individual. For example, she one day dreamed that she was swinging in a tree. Then there came three men who asked her why she was so proud of herself. They asked her, 'Do you take yourself as if you know how to pray?' According to her, the dream revealed that the devil was not pleased with her prayers and hence needed to pray more and more.

Conversely, physical dreams address challenges an individual experiences in life. Sometimes, the dream may be personal for the dreamer and sometimes may concern someone else. She cited an example of a dream where she was running very fast and had run out of breath. As she was running, she was repenting. When she woke up temporarily and fell asleep again, the dream came again. After some days, her mother visited her from Livingstonia and informed her that her sister was very ill and could not breathe properly. She then realized that this dream concerned her sister's usual problem and that it came to her because she was thinking about this. She then prayed for her sister and asked her mother to encourage her sister to go to prayers.

### ***9.9.4 Challenges***

Sometimes people do not accept her as a woman of God though she prays for them. On average, she can attend to up to three people a day. She is a member of the Evangelism Team at the Church. When I asked her if she regards herself as a Prophetess, she accepted and added that she believes in her God and that she is a link between the people and God as were the Prophets of the Bible. She is inspired by Esther who loved others and was obedient. She also desires to love people unconditionally so that they too might be saved.

## **9.10 Role of the Prophetesses at Chilangoma Charismatic Redeemed Church**

The gift of Prophecy is treated like any other gift in the church. However, they are to exercise the gift without bringing any confusion to the church. Women in the mainline churches have joined the evangelism team in the church so that they freely exercise their

gifts. Usually, members of the evangelism team are more flexible in their worship and lean towards 'Pentecostal tendencies of worship'.

Since the Evangelism Team is usually involved in Outreach Programmes, it means that the Ministry of these women is appreciated more by the outsiders than the insiders. It also means that there are some in the church who do not know about the ministry of these women. So far, these women have never been called to any disciplinary action by the church with regard to their Ministry.

In relation to their roles, Chapola and her friends are sent by the Holy Spirit to speak to an individual or a group to give guidance. In most cases, the individual or the group may not have been seeking God for a particular issue.<sup>555</sup> The Prophet is either sent as an answer to prayer or as a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit to address a particular issue.<sup>556</sup> These women also do point out religious and social sins and call people to repentance. Another example is that in which Chapola was sent by the Holy Spirit to deliver a message to a certain Pentecostal Church.

Apart from the above roles, one notices that modern Prophetesses are involved in roles that were not there in the New or Old Testament. For example, to deal with physical healing, deliverance from demons and other general problems was not part of the Biblical Prophets. They also often take up the role of an intercessor on behalf of the people. Also these Prophetesses speak through dreams, visions, insight and audible voice. If they have a vision concerning someone, they can just tell the vision to the concerned person as it is. But most of the times, they deliver the message by proclamation. Their Ministry is largely to the common man and the Church. But this does not mean that it is limited since God is not limited.

However, another important task of these Prophetesses today would be to judge any Prophecy uttered and to discern any attempts by Satan to infiltrate the Church. They would then bring this to the attention of the Pastor and the Elders.<sup>557</sup> From this discussion, it is evident that despite some differences among old and modern Prophets, they all share some

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<sup>555</sup> Int. Allan Chakholoma , Chilangoma Charismatic Redeemed Church International, 23.6.14.

<sup>556</sup> Int. Bishop Jackson Tchapo, Matawale Living Waters Church, 17. 8.13.

<sup>557</sup> Int. Bishop Godfrey Matoga, Word Alive Ministries International 24.4.14.

commonalities. All the Prophets lead people to salvation in Christ. All the Prophets were and are concerned with the preaching of faithfulness, justice, righteousness, judgment and hope.<sup>558</sup>

These commonalities aside, modern Prophets, unlike their counterparts, do believe that there is no new revelation about Christ, the way of salvation, the principles of the Christian life and alike.<sup>559</sup> If anything, the gifts are used to give particular local guidance or encouragement by way of prediction according to the Scripture.<sup>560</sup>

## 9.11 The False Prophetesses

We have seen that alongside the true Prophets, there were others who were imposters.<sup>561</sup> Noadiah and Jezebel were some of the false Prophets. Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility of false Prophetesses in the contemporary Church. However, it is the duty of the true Prophets to judge any prophecy and discern whether it is true or not. The three women at Lunzu mentioned that whenever they receive a prophecy, they do not rush into prophesying but rather wait for confirmation from God.

Having looked at all the three of Prophetesses, I wanted to find out how the people perceive modern Prophets. Twenty two students at Our Ladies of Wisdom School were interviewed to find out whether they were familiar with any of the biblical Prophetesses and their understanding of a Prophet in relation to modern Prophets. Some defined a Prophet as a person who speaks on behalf of God.<sup>562</sup> Others said that a Prophet is a person who reveals the truth about God. Others said that a Prophet is a person who predicts the future.<sup>563</sup> Almost everyone had an idea of who a Prophet was.

These students were asked if they were familiar with any Prophetesses of the Bible and if so what it strikes them about these Prophetesses. This question was mainly given to the

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<sup>558</sup> Lawrence. O. Richards (ed.), *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, New York: Wynwood Press, 1990, p. 825.

<sup>559</sup> J.D. Douglas (ed.), *Bible Dictionary*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963, p. 984.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> J.D. Douglas (ed.), *Bible Dictionary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963, p. 825

<sup>562</sup> Int. Modesta Monadi, participant, Bangwe Living-Waters Church, 9.5.2013

<sup>563</sup> Int. Alice Matchado, Bible Study Participant, Malosa Calvary Family Church, 09.5.2013.

students who took Bible Knowledge. They identified Deborah and Huldah from the OT as Prophetesses. Deborah was the most familiar one due to her record of events. From the NT account, one student identified Anna as a Prophetess. From these responses, it was clear that these students could not have identified these as Prophets had it not been for their Bible Knowledge (BK) courses.

Granted this, it would also be true to assume that most of the women who did not go to school may have problems in identifying these as Prophets. Since only few students studying BK managed to define Prophets, it is impossible to make reliable conclusions out of this data. However, if adequate numbers were drawn from the BK students, it would have helped make reliable conclusions. Moreover, most of the students surveyed in that BK class added that they had never heard a Prophetess preaching in their Churches, and did not recognize any of them as Prophets either. They also said that Mary and Elizabeth were not Prophets at all.

The question one should ask is: "Is it because these women do not preach in their Churches hence they are not recognized as Prophets? Or is it because the Bible does not clearly identify some of these women as Prophets? Whichever is the case, there is need for more investigation into the causes of this perceived ignorance. However, in a society where women are still struggling to find their place, it is not surprising that these students fail to recognize women as Prophets. Moreover, both the Bible and our society and culture do not recognize women as pastors. There is therefore need for Prophetesses to intensify preaching so that they become visible and break the perception. After all, if God used both men and women for his purposes in both the OT and NT, why can't women become instruments of change?

## **9.12 The Importance of Prophetesses**

Despite the negative attitudes and perception towards women in the Church, Prophetesses play crucial roles including praying and healing and general deliverance. Women encourage people to trust God whenever they encounter challenges. They also encourage prayer life in the families and the Church alike.

## 9.13 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed Prophetesses of the Old and New Testament and of the Modern Church. Modern Prophetesses deliver the Gospel, and deliver people from various ailments through the Holy Spirit.<sup>564</sup> However, it is difficult to categorize prophetesses from the OT, NT and modern day prophets since society did not, and does not believe in female Prophets. The unanswered questions today border on whether people like Mary, Elizabeth and Chapola and the group should be regarded as Prophets or merely as pious people? However, what should not be forgotten is what the Prophet Joel foretold that in the last days God will give his Spirit to everyone capable of prophesying (Joel 2:28). It is true that anyone who counsels is a counsellor, one who sings is a singer and that one who leads is a leader, therefore anyone who prophesies is a Prophet, so long as their words come to pass and is not in contradiction with the prophetic yardstick. Conversely, people must be cautious of modern Prophets since not all Prophets today, just like in the past, are true. Moreover, Jesus Christ himself brought the full revelation of God (Heb. 1:1-3). 'Whatever a modern Prophet may say, it should not contradict the full written revelation of the Bible.'<sup>565</sup>

The chapter has also discussed the Prophetic experiences of the three Prophetesses from Chilangoma, namely: Mrs Chapola, Mrs Zamawe and Alice Namputa. They all have the Prophetic gifts and pray for the sick and their Prophecies mostly came to pass. Their calling and actions prove that God used and still uses both men and women to communicate to the people. The issue, however, concerns the degree of the reliability and roles of modern Prophets when compared with the Bible Prophets. We noted that in the Old Testament, many Prophetesses lived during the period of the Judges and Kings. Prophecy was then an established office. The Prophets used to work with the King and the Priests to provide counsel and or rebuke the people or pronounce judgment. No wonder they were concerned more with national issues than individual issues.

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<sup>564</sup> J.D. Douglas, *Bible Dictionary*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Michigan, 1963, p. 984.

<sup>565</sup> L.O. Richards, *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, New York: Wynwood Press, 1973, p. 822.

# **Chapter 10: Women in the Charismatic Movement in Malawi**

## **10.0 Introduction**

The Charismatic Movement is a worldwide Revival that has affected many traditional denominations within and outside Malawi. As a Revival, the Movement has experienced a number of challenges. This chapter evaluates first in general the CM as a phenomenon by looking at what happened to it in Malawi, before some more specific remarks are made about the role of women within this context.

The study has so far revealed that the Revival has taken this shape because of the work of the Holy Spirit. It has restored the people of God to a more vital spiritual life, witness, and work by prayer. As observed by Felix Nyika, the 1970s and 1980s were seasons of Revival in Malawi's urban centres.<sup>566</sup> This Revival was ignited by Evangelical and Pentecostal cross-pollination through the cooperation of the Church and Para Church Organs. It was from these occurrences that Neo-charismatic Churches emerged. The Charismatics were incubators of the Revivals who championed the Revival Message of a personal relationship with Christ by being "born-again" as opposed to the "cold" religion mainly observed in the Mainline Churches. However, with the passage of time, the CM seems to have changed its direction. It was once seen as an urban phenomenon, but it later spread to the rural areas.

## **10.1 Healing**

The Charismatic teaching on healing and tongues seems to have changed. For instance, the healing gift which God gives freely has now become a source of money within and without the Charismatic Churches. In this study, one of the respondents commented that the Charismatic Mission has completely lost direction by selling its gifts to the desperate poor. Today Prophets are exchanging their Prophecy or healing with cash. The more you pay, the quicker the healings you get. Although people continue being milked, they do so out of desperation not conviction. This, however, is against the Bible Tradition.

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<sup>566</sup> Felix, Nyika, *The Neo-Charismatic Movement in Malawi*, Mzuzu University, PhD Thesis. Mzuni Press, 2012, p. 28.

## 10.2 Biblical Teachings

Of course, some CCs have maintained the biblical teachings while others have departed from it. For example, the Living Waters Church, the Charismatic Redeemed Church and others are Bible oriented. Their teachings are based on the Bible. On the other hand, other CCs depart from the Bible Tradition. For example, some teach that if you do not tithe, you will not enter heaven.<sup>567</sup> Some reject the Bible and claim that they are better than what the Bible says. Some Prophets even preach without using the Bible and the followers ignorantly follow such teachings.

## 10.3 Prophets and Prophetesses

The issue of prophecy has not spared the Charismatic Churches given the current proliferation of the Prophetic Movement. A good number of Prophets have risen proclaiming the word of God and delivering people from various problems. The immediate response of God through the Prophets has caused some people to solely depend on the Prophets and not on God.<sup>568</sup> Some even prophesy for money.

Through their prophecies, Christian families have been affected in one way or the other. For example, one of the Prophets prophesied to a certain couple that the man is married to a wrong wife and must divorce her. The couple soon divorced having spent 15 years together in marriage and left innocent children in trouble. It is still questionable if some of these Prophets really come from God.<sup>569</sup> If the role of a Prophet is to speak on behalf of God then it is surprising that the same God should inflict pain on his people. To this end, care should be taken when dealing with modern Prophets because some of them are false just like the OT and the NT records.

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<sup>567</sup> I listened to the giving exhortation service of these churches, Holy Ghost Evangelism Ministries International Church, Calvary Tabernacle Church, Miracle Church of God, All To Jesus, 11.1.15, 19.4.15, 17.5.15, 19.6.15. One of the pastors in these churches preached that without tithing you cannot be saved and you are going to hell.

<sup>568</sup> I observed in church x where whenever, the prophets enter in the church should kneel and as he/she passersby people should lineup and clap hands.

<sup>569</sup> See Mathews 19:

## **10.4 The Anointing Water**

Indeed God uses any media to perform his works. Water is one medium that He uses. The Prophets use water to heal people. However, the use of the anointing water is sometimes questionable. The anointing water which is being sold by the Prophets seems to have caused some commotion among Christians. For example, a certain Prophet sells three kinds of anointing water: green, red, and blue including anointed oil, soap and lotion. The red water is for protection, green for favour and breakthrough and blue is for God's grace.<sup>570</sup> One wonders whether these are truly holy or are indeed money traps.

Much as they can use anything for miracles, but selling anointed water and having it carrying their images, becomes questionable. Moreover, the diversity of the products and the prohibitive prices tell a story. If indeed these are Spiritual waters, there is no justification for selling them since they received them for free from God.

In some CCs, members just carry water from home and the Prophet blesses it, and worse still, some Christians have lost faith in God as they trust the water more than God.

## **10.5 Changing the Church Typology**

The CM has managed to change the landscape of many Churches. Some Christians feel liberated when they belong to the CCs. Rhodian Munyenembe points out that the CCs emphasise emotions. For many years, to be a Christian in the Mainline Churches meant to give a mental assent to a body of propositions without actually experiencing any powers from God. Consequently, Church life was dull and could only excite the rare minds that were inquisitive in the things of divinity. The coming of the CM has checked this by igniting the fires after the embers had gone off. Christians are now able to confidently rise up and explain their experiences.

The CM has penetrated into the Mainline Churches to the extent that the olderly way of worshipping has significantly changed. For example, most of the Churches now use praise and worship songs, clapping hands and musical instruments. This has even penetrated into the Catholic, SDA and the CCAP churches that were once rigid.

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<sup>570</sup> I observed the prophet lining up the bottles of anointing water at Chancellor College, great hall in Zomba.

Evangelization through popular missions like personal witnessing to the Gospel message, seminars, crusades and rallies has become the order of the day due to the influence of the Charismatic Movement. The issue, however, is whether Mainline Churches will completely get wiped off or will simply evolve and or will indeed retain most of their traditions. From the way events are unfolding, it is likely that old Churches will reposition themselves and begin doing their business using agile and novel business models as the CCs are doing, otherwise change will change them.

## **10.6 Renewal in the Church**

The CM by its nature is a Renewal which negates separation. 60% of the respondents said that the Movement has contributed to the Renewal aspect for the Church. The other 40% said that the Movement encourages people to support the Church materially and spiritually. In many Mainline Churches, not that many people are willing to support the Church and they often depend on foreign aid. However, in the CCs, the membership is invigorated to contribute materially and financially towards the Church. Many Charismatic' Pastors have managed to buy good cars for transporting them during Evangelization. The Charismatic Churches are the antithesis of the Dependency Theory that is prevalent in the Traditional Churches.

Another contribution the Movement has made is that of Bible sharing. The respondents said that the Charismatic Churches promote sharing, reading and interpretation of the Scripture among different Christian communities more than the Mainline Churches do.

## **10.7 Prophetesses as Solution Providers**

The CCs believes in the Renewal of the Spiritual soul. Prophetesses are there to bring the Revival to the membership so that their souls are changed before God. They help turn the lost sheep to God. Lately, it has been observed that the zeal to rely on God is diminishing as members opt for Prophets. While it is true that Prophets provide guidance to the people, they must also do this with God's limits. This is contrary to what modern Prophets are doing. Moreover, the solutions that people get from these Prophets are sometimes not in line with the Scripture. Contrary to the Scriptures, some Prophetesses emphasize tithe in exchange

for blessings.<sup>571</sup> This is against the Bible Tradition as stated in Mathew 8. People should realize that no Prophet is a solution provider on his own save with God's consent. Likewise, there are also some doubts regarding the originality of the messages most Prophets advocate. For example, a certain family in Malosa had no child and was told that it would soon have a baby. The Prophet told the family to buy anointed water and wash the child every day for the whole life. The woman became pregnant and got the baby. She then began following the instructions. One day, when the housemaid was bathing the baby, she saw a snake coming to the basin where the baby was bathing, and it did drink the water. She ran for her life and reported to the mother, but the mother doubted this. Later, the same happened to the mother and she too fled from the scene. When she returned, she discovered that the baby had turned into a snake. This has since made the believers doubt if indeed this man is a true Prophet. Although some Prophets do prophesy the truth, many do not and followers doubt their authenticity.

## **10.8 Women in the Charismatic Churches**

While many studies reveal that the role of women in the Charismatic Churches has been limited by cultures, this study has observed that women are leaving no stone unturned to reclaim their lost glory. The study does acknowledge the challenges women meet in the course of their pursuit for total freedom. The study notes that where a woman becomes a Bishop, she is still controlled by male Bishops.

The study has also established that Women in the CCs contribute largely to the development of the Church as most of the development work is done by them.

It also revealed that subordination of women is due to the culture of the society that has infiltrated into the Church walls. The study has also revealed that much as it may appear that women are liberated in modern Churches, they still struggle for full emancipation from both mental and physical slavery perpetrated by the Church, often in the name of the Bible and by society. It has also established that the Church mostly utilizes patriarchal cultures

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<sup>571</sup> Int. X. He went to the prophetess Z for healing prayers. X was told to put MK10,000 in an envelope before she prayed for him. She said that without giving to the prophet healing blessings cannot come to him because this opens doors for blessings and healing which is one of the blessings from God.

which tend to enslave women. This is similar to what Mercy Oduyoye observed when she asserted that “the pyramids of power that exist in African cultures have found companions in Christianity.”<sup>572</sup> Moreover, Helen van Koevering made similar observations when she argued that the Church often dis-empowers women by undermining them with the teachings and structures that exclude, denounce, devalue, ignore or belittle them.<sup>573</sup> It is against this background that this study intended to examine and gauge the level of women participation in the Charismatic Churches.

The study has also established that women play cultural roles and are dependable on the Church and society. They are the ones who develop the Church economically and spiritually. They have served as Evangelists, Church Secretaries and Treasurers, and presided over Church Council Meetings, and even as Pastors. Women are leaders among fellow women in different departments. Women are also engaged in activities that concern the welfare of the Church like fundraising activities, self-help projects and humanitarian services. In a nutshell, women are struggling to construct their own way through the thick forest of oppression.

This study specifically focused on the CHAREWO, Virtuous Women (*Amayi Angwiro*), *Otumikira Mwachikondi* (OMC) and Women of Excellence as some of the Organizations. From these organizations it is clear that women have been effective leaders. However, their participation in these organizations has not had a significant impact in making them real forces to reckon with. Importantly, Women Organizations have been the breeding grounds for leadership skills and talent development.

This is also evident with Virtuous Women of Zomba Calvary Family Church where it has influenced women to utilize their opportunity for becoming leaders of the Church. Challenges aside, Women Organizations have given women a chance to climb the ladder of Church leadership. It is also through these Organizations that women have been able to work out their traditional understanding of Christianity and society.

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<sup>572</sup> Mercy, Amba Oduyoye, "Calling the Church to Account: African Women and Liberation" in *Ecumenical Review*, 1995, p. 172 and 182.

<sup>573</sup> Helen van Koevering, *Dancing their Dreams: the Lakeshore Nyanja Women of the Anglican Diocese of Niassa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, p. 112.

The study has also shown that Women Organizations serve as avenues where their voices are heard in the Church.<sup>574</sup> In these groups, women associate freely and share their dreams and concerns. The study has also established that women groups work as safety valves for them to showcase their talents. Women have also made remarkable contributions towards various social projects, leading to social and economic stability of the Church and society. This reflects Mercy Amba Oduyoye's observation that "sisterhoods (whether market women, churchwomen, or professional women) have been the backbone for women's economic and social empowerment."<sup>575</sup> Although Oduyoye's observation concerns women on women, the story in the Women Ministry is rather different as both men and women have benefited from Women Ministry.

Besides, major developments have been done in the Diocese through the work of the Guilds. Thus, Women Guilds have helped towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals on education, health, poverty alleviation, food security, and HIV and AIDS awareness, prevention and care. Through their groups, women have also provided help with construction projects, agricultural projects and providing Pastoral and palliative care projects.

CHAREWO realizes that providing care and development are not the work of the Pastors and Priests alone, but rather of the whole Church. This is exactly what Lynn Japinga observed when she insinuated that Feminist Theologians are deeply concerned about the welfare of total humanity. She points out that Feminist Theologians want to see the world become a wholesome and healthy place, not for selfish reasons, but because they believe that the heart of the Gospel is justice and peace for all.<sup>576</sup>

The study has also revealed that Women Organizations have become the nests where women are empowered to become leaders of the Churches. Women have also been empowered to preach and teach in the Church during Sunday Services, a practice which

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<sup>574</sup> Refer to Appendix two, which gives an analysis of the Mothers' Union's letter which argued in favour of ordaining women as priests.

<sup>575</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Calling the Church to Account: African Women and Liberation: the Ecumenical Review*, 1995, p. 186. In a related development, Oduyoye presents her dream for African women as a plea for solidarity and a cry to be free of imposed solidarity.

<sup>576</sup> Lynn Japinga, in: *Feminism and Christianity: An Essential Guide*, Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1999, p. 33.

showed a public display of authority contrary to the thinking of many conservatives. They also evangelized and started their own Churches and branches within their areas.<sup>577</sup>

This study has noted that the existence of patriarchal structures in the Jewish Society and other parts of the Graeco-Roman world did not really hinder women participation in leadership roles. The Bible shows that women realized the need for women emancipation and they did just that. They did not just sit back and let somebody fight for them. It is this kind of spirit, mentality and approach women in the CCs must emulate.

However, this study has also established that women in the CCs lack critical consciousness of their roles and status. It was observed that women let men go with all the authority, and if women do get any, they get it at the mercy of the men. True to this, when a Pastor asks a woman to preach, she publicly says, "Thank you Pastor for giving me an opportunity to preach, it is a rare chance." Why thank the Pastor? This expression shows lack of knowledge that they are supposed to be sharing the pulpit with men. Although it is culturally normal to thank those that give us something, it is unusual for somebody to thank a Pastor just because he has allowed you to preach. After all, it is not his Church but the body of Christ. So why not thank Christ?.

The study has further shown that some of the Charismatic Churches keep women in subordinate positions through their doctrine and culture. This has been observed in Holy Ghost Evangelism Church. In this Church, when a woman preaches, she does so under the supervision of the Resident Pastor who is male. Monitoring the woman while preaching simply shows that men take women as ignorant who do not think and therefore require close supervision to avoid them going astray.

The study also found that the existence of class conflicts among the women in the Charismatic Churches is critical. Interviews held at Namadzi Living Waters Church indicated that women who are less educated perceive themselves as inferior to those that are educated. Those who are uneducated are also more problematic when it comes to understanding issues and the message alike. Some Pastor's wives complained that they get

fierce criticism and resistance when preaching to the very educated women. Other women complained that positions in the Church are given only to the educated and the rich.

This study has also established that some of the decisions made by women are not respected by male leaders. This scenario makes female leaders feel that their contributions are not valued by men. However, some male Pastors observed that women leaders have constructive ideas that can help the Church grow. It was also revealed that some women are economically independent. For example, at ZCFC, women have opened a bank account to save money. Women contribute shares to the bank and at the end of the month; members borrow the money at an interest of 10% and non-members at 25%. They also hold kitchen-top-ups, which bring additional incomes to their homes.

Despite some challenges women face, much of the work in the CCs is done by them. In fact, women are the most powerful instruments for spiritual, social, and economic change. There is strong evidence suggesting that women are the ones who are strong when it comes to praying and fasting. They are the backbone in-terms of numerical figures, prayer, fasting and Evangelism. Moreover, women are the ones who encourage men to go to Church to participate in Church activities. If women could decide to boycott the Church in revenge for their oppression, one wonders what sort of drama would occur in the Churches. Perhaps, there would be no tenor singing, no sacrament preparations and no mopping of the Church precincts and eventually the Church would crumble.

The study has established that there are still disparities between men and women roles in the Charismatic churches despite the picture people have that the church treats both men and women equally in the church. This has been there and will continue due to the culture of the society. It is only when the mindset is changed in the church and society at large that both men and women will beg to realize that both of them are equal and can perform in the same capacity in the church and the society.

It is possible to conclude that women bind the Church together and that without them, it can fall apart. This calls for both men and women to work together in order to support each other, hence the need for a Two Winged Theology.

## 10.9 Final Conclusion

To wind up the discussion on the topic “Women in the Charismatic Churches in Malawi: A Historical and Theological Perspective”, the study has established that the Charismatic Churches arrived in Malawi around the 1970s when Malawi experienced revivals. In fact there were already parachurches organizations that acted as a fertile soil for the Charismatic Churches to flourish before they came to Malawi.

Throughout the study, it has been revealed that women in the Charismatic Churches are still under male domination. There are only a few women who advocate the concept of femininity. The positions in the churches are mainly given to men and there is no feminine mobilisation in the church. If any the mobilisation was done during the Malawi’s tripartite elections where political leaders mobilised women to support them, but in the Charismatic Churches there is not such a thing. The church still views women as less important than men. On the other hand women don’t see that they are being sidelined because of their cultural background.

There is no balance between male and female in terms of work in the Charismatic Churches. These churches still are like a bird that tries flying with one wing. This has led these churches to have given the lion’s share of roles to men, with women only having feminine roles in the church. The church lacks a two winged theology so that both men and women can work together.

Again the study has revealed that women do play a number of roles in the Church. Women are encouraged to take part in business by starting a women’s church bank. This has boosted the economic status of the Charismatic Churches. Women also take a leading role in bridal and baby showers. They partake also in praise and worship songs in the church but the core roles are still dominated by men.

The reading of scriptures among women is done through a cultural lens which always supports the patriarchy in the society. Women in the Charismatic Churches have also played an influential role in developing these churches. For instance, Barbara Tippet founded the Blantyre Christian Centre.

Furthermore, women act as counsellors for girls.

Furthermore, the study has established that there is a low representation of women in leadership positions in the church. Some of the outstanding reasons include: family obligations, lack of support

and a low self-esteem. It has been revealed that women have low self-esteem which affect their chances of getting into leadership positions.

The study has also revealed that women in the Charismatic ministries actively participate in church activities even more than men. It even seems the life of the church depends on women. However, I have observed in this study that some charismatic church leadership give an opportunity for women to preach once in a year. This however still kills the spiritual gifts of women in the church.

Besides this, the study has established that women in the Charismatic Churches are not fully liberated. Women still depend on men both in society and the Church. In fact many women in the Charismatic Churches still hold the belief that men should take a leading role despite having heard about the two winged theology, whereby they are empowered to seek a balance in the roles of men and women working in church and society. Finally, the study establishes that unless there is mindset in men the oppression and marginalization of women in the society and the church will never end.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix One: General Guiding Questions**

#### **(A) A Questionnaire for Women**

1. What role do you play in the church?
2. Which roles are you not allowed to fully perform in your church?
3. How do you perceive your fellow women leading in the church?
3. Are there any challenges you face when discharging your duties? Explain.
4. Which areas do you think you need to improve in the services you offer to your denomination?
5. Is there anything you do not do or are not allowed to do in your denomination which women do in other denominations?
6. Does your denomination have women pastoring a church? If yes, who are they? If not, state why?
7. How would you welcome the idea of women becoming pastors/ bishops or an apostle in your denomination?
8. How important are women's organizations (i.e., CHAREWO, Women of Excellency
9. In what ways do you think the women organizations support the spiritual, moral and social needs of the people?
10. Has there been anything leading to women's complaints or dissatisfaction in relation to church work?
11. How would you assess your denomination's teaching on women participation in the church leadership?
12. Why are women not appointed as bishops /Apostles in your church?

1. What role do women play in your denomination?
2. Do you have women pastors in your denomination? If yes, who are they? If not, state why?
3. Are women given any opportunity to contest with men in the position of leadership in the church? If yes, which positions?
4. How do you welcome the idea of having women priests to pastor a church in your denomination? Explain.
6. Up to what leadership level are women allowed perform their roles of leadership in your denomination?
7. How would you assess your denomination's teaching on women participation in the church leadership?
8. Does your denomination send women to attending theological training at a Bible College?
9. How important are the women's organization in your denomination? Explain.

## Appendix Two

### Research questions for Pastors' wives

Name ..... Date .....

Age ..... No. of years in ministry .....

Educational qualifications .....

Theological training (Seminary/Bible School) .....

Name of church.....

1. What is the origin of charismatic churches?
2. What are the teachings of charismatic churches?
3. Are women in your church charged with leadership roles?
4. What do you think is the role of a pastor's wife in your church?
5. What are the activities in which the pastor's wife is involved?
6. What are the conditions of service for your pastor? what are the conditions of service for the pastor's wife?
7. Do you think the pastor's wife deserves to be remunerated for her services?
8. What are the reasons for your answer to question 7 above?