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ABSTRACT

The preaching and theologizing of ideas of justice, equality, freedom and grace in the Catholic Institutional Church has been caught up in systematic behavioural patterns, which have developed around the concept of women being subordinate. This is clearly seen in the church's ideology on women and the apparatus used to perpetuate this ideology.

This research paper will try to analyse the root of women's subordinate position in the church and how the Bible has been translated to suit the patriarchal, hierarchal and rigid state of the Catholic Institutional Church.

Women in the church are acknowledged as the backbone and are central to the upkeep of the church in Africa. But they are always behind the scenes or left out. Women theologizing is a move of women in the church working to reject all patriarchal crusts, that have denied women's full participation in the church. W.I.N.D.O.W. (Women in National Development of Women) a training programme for women leaders in Kenya, is one example of women trying to theologize.

This paper focusses on the question: to what extent has W.I.N.D.O.W. empowered women to look critically at their situation and take critical actions?

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INTRODUCTION

In February 1985 the Bishop of Nairobi Cardinal Maurice Otunga, appealed to men to respect women. Cardinal Otunga was officially closing the W.I.N.D.O.W. leadership training programme for women, which was started in 1976 to train women leaders from different dioceses of the Kenya Catholic church. It had as its major goal the empowerment of women leaders with skills, to look critically at their situation and to take action for change, by denouncing all aspects of culture, religion and education which reinforce the subordination of women. This denouncing and the announcing of a new image of women has not been easy because women are interested in the church, but the church is not concerned about women. Women in Africa are acknowledged as the backbone of the church's finance and upkeep, yet they do not serve on the church boards. Their involvement is behind the scenes.

Cardinal Otunga clarifies the attitude, the view and the practice the institutional church has on women and why women's role in the church is to pay, pray and obey. A common belief is that because of women's power to attract and influence, they have destroyed the souls of men. Women are seen as the door of the devil (Aquinas), dirty and evil. This is the justification for their exclusion from holy rituals.

In this paper, I am going to evaluate W.I.N.D.O.W. (Women in National Development of Women) to find out how much since its inception it has helped women to analyse critically the root cause of their subordination in Kenyan society. W.I.N.D.O.W. is part of the Development Education Programme in Kenya (DEP), which was started in 1974 as a response firstly to the social teachings of the Catholic Institutional Church. Pope Paul's VI wrote "the stress on justice and the rights of the poor, brings us to see that the rights of women

become a priority issue. Women's rights are closely linked to the rights of the poor...because it is the poor women who especially bear the overwhelming burdens of providing for the survival of the family...." (in Hope & Timmel 1984:130).

Secondly the programme was a response to the prophetic challenge for which the church is struggling. The church especially in the Third World has become aware of oppression and domination by superior world powers. It has comprehended not only the historicity of oppression, but also mechanisms by which the oppression is perpetuated. This has resulted in a move of Third World Christians to rethink their theology in the light of the reality of which they are part. Today there are groups within the Institutional Catholic Church that have proposed Liberation Theology, where the gospel Message is put in the context of people's reality. Women's theology is also being developed to start looking at the Gospel and translating it to challenge all the aspects of religion that have been used to subordinate women. W.I.N.D.O.W. was initiated to facilitate a process of empowering women within the Kenyan Catholic Church to start writing their own theology a theology that is based on the Kenyan rural women's situation, their symbols and rituals, and to reject and critique that part of religion that shares in cultural sexism and patriarchalism.

Why should this study be based on women in the church in Kenya? One major factor is that in Africa there will be more than 350 000 000 baptized Christians by the year 2000. Africa in this case will have the largest Christian group in the world (Donders 1985:31). Kenya has a Catholic population of 20%. 60% of the whole of Kenya's population are however Christians and approximately 70% of these are women and children who fill the churches every Sunday. Donders (ibid:9) notes that in 1980 there were 203 million Christians in Africa. The number is growing at a rate of 4% per year. According to statistics published in Time Magazine (in Donders, ibid:9) the

average number of Africans baptized each day in 1980 was 16 500 and of course women account for 75% of that figure.

To analyse the impact of religion on women's position becomes legitimate when these figures are considered. In this research paper I intend to analyse the ideology of the church towards women over time and to see how this ideology has established a patriarchal, hierarchical, institutional church, where women have no place despite their being in the majority.

Women in Africa are breaking out of the old patterns of the woman's place as mothers and wives confined to the home. For example they are realizing and discovering that Mary of Nazareth while completely devoted to the will of God, was far from being a timid, submissive woman. Mary shows herself to be a young woman of great independence. She goes to visit Elizabeth alone, and does not call Joseph to go with her. She was a leader but was still portrayed as naive. Mary was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim God's concern of the oppressed (Luke 1:46-55). Looking at the impact of the church's ideology and the role the church has played in reinforcing this subordinate image, is not all that African women are doing. To stop there means to dismiss the scriptures and perhaps also give up Christianity. This would mean denying some of these women's historical roots. What the women in Africa, and particularly in Kenya are doing and saying through W.I.N.D.O.W., is that the Bible has been interpreted to reinforce a given ideology of how women should be viewed. Christian women are turning their energies to an investigation of what the Bible actually says about the equality of women and men. In the process they are writing and rediscovering their own theology, and working from within the church structures with a clear vision of coming up with new structures in which every human person participates in co-creating with God.

The root of women's theology, liberation, is derived from change in the church from a traditionalist stance to a dynamic church that moves with the times. The Second Vatican council documents, and Pope Paul VI encyclicals especially Development of Peoples (1967) have been the bases for this move. The fact that the poverty and misery of three-quarters of humanity is growing challenges the church to face reality. Pope Paul challenges the present situation and sees a great need for courage as people fight against injustices. The prophetic stand of the Catholic Institutional Church has changed the church's orientation on development work from charity welfare projects to projects that challenge the exploitative structures, where conscientization becomes central to empower people to empower their lives. It is within this ideology of the prophetic church that W.I.N.D.O.W. found space to start theologizing, basing its theology on the current women issues that rural women face today in Kenya.

Methodology

To write this paper I will depend on information that has been gathered from secondary sources:

- i) Workshop reports on W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme;
- ii) The major Evaluation Report of Development Education Programme and other evaluation documents from development funding agencies;
- iii) Documents published on D.E.P.;

and primary sources:

- i) my own experience as a trainer in W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme and a participant in the training course of 1976; and
- ii) in the process of writing this paper I was given an opportunity to visit a group of women here in Holland who are involved in women's theology and its links with women's issues. I will include this experience in the paper.

In trying to analyse W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme in relation to its vision, methodology, outcomes and survival strategies, I hope to

come up with practical recommendations that will shape W.I.N.D.O.W. future training.

Structure of the Paper

The Introduction introduces the subject of the research paper, reasons why this paper is based on women's need to theologize and why women must analyse the root of women's subordinate position in the church and how the male dominated church has translated the Bible to suit and perpetuate patriarchal structures that leave out women.

1. In Chapter One, patriarchy will be briefly defined after which patriarchy and its practice in the Catholic Institutional Church will be traced. How the church has translated its practice into an ideology that gives women a subordinate position will be discussed.

2. In Chapter Two the history of the church in Kenya with direct reference to Kenyan women will be analysed briefly. Current women's issues in Kenya will surface as well in this chapter.

3. In Chapter Three the church's role in development, its goals and responses to developmental issues will be examined with reference to three streams of Catholic Institutional Church operating in Kenya. This discussion will lay a basis of how and why Development Education Programme in Kenya was started, by what stream of church. W.I.N.D.O.W. which is being analysed in this research paper will be discussed at length in relation to its methodology and survival.

4. Chapter Four is the conclusion of this paper. Women's theology, its characteristics and methodology, as a tool to strengthen W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme will be given as a suggestion.

CHAPTER ONE

1. What is Patriarchy?

Patriarchy is the rule of the father in charge of women and junior children. Radical feminism traces patriarchy back to the dawn of society. In religion patriarchy goes back to Abraham, Moses and in the New Testament patriarchy is established through the Twelve Apostles, Peter's authority as a rock and on the rock Christ's church will be built (Matthew 16:18-20).

Patriarchy is a system of men's power over women particularly over women's sexual functions. It is a system that reproduces itself in society. Millet's definition encompasses use of the term as:

our society...is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if we recall that military industry technology universities, science political offices, finance, in short every avenue of power within society including the coercive force of police is in male hands (1970:25).

Radical feminists say this system of male dominance is universal throughout the world. All women are oppressed by men, they continue to say women's oppression is the root of all other forms of oppression. Socialist feminism sees a material base for patriarchy as a social system that creates interdependence and solidarity among men (Hartmann 1981). All men according to socialist feminism are bought off in patriarchy and capitalism by their power to control women. Therefore patriarchy has material base of control of women's labour power and excluding women from access to essential reproductive resources.

In the Catholic Institutional Church the hierarchical male dominated structures demonstrate this male dominance in its ideology as well as its organisation and functioning. Patriarchal oppression is not just a sexist ideology or androcentric world construction in language, but

a social, political system and social structures of graded subjugation and oppression (Fiorenza 1985). Though patriarchal systems have undergone significant changes throughout history it has especially in the church prevailed as the dominant sociopolitical structure for years.

Patriarchy defines not just women as the other but also subjugated people it defines women, moreover not just as the other of men but also as subordinate to men. Women especially the poor, are doubly oppressed in such a patriarchal social system.

2. Patriarchy in practice in the catholic church

In a patriarchal ordering of society man (male) is assumed to have the ultimate authority in the family. He is the Lord and owner of his wife and his children. His freedom is at the expense of theirs'. He has all rights and highest authority, because he owns the children and his wife. The father of a country represents the patriarchal type of family relationship. On a religious plane the same family relationship represents the pastoral rulers and spiritual Fathers. The ecclesiastical structures from the children of the parish to the priests, to the bishops and finally to the holy Father (Moltmann, 1981:2). Authority and right come from above, obedience, dependence and reliance operate below.

In the end these family, political and religious pyramids all point to the highest power in heaven, to the Lord - God the Father of all from whom they receive that authority. As the Lord, the owner of the earth (world) possesses power and grants authority to every other power in the earth. Therefore he must be loved. The patriarchal ordering of the God the Father, Holy Father, father of the country and father of the family is a monotheistic ordering, not a

trinitarian one. Halkes, a feminist theologian, says the image of God as Patriarchal Father has established itself so firmly in men's imagination that it has not only confirmed the status quo on the patriarchal society, but has also become the cause of legitimation and even sacralisation of the domination over women in accordance with God's plan (Halkes, 1981:103-104). The pattern of men as powerful and women as subject, symbolizing the image of God the Father, is so deeply rooted in our thinking and imagination, that we assume it is unchangeable. It therefore explains why women are deprived of the opportunity to give meaning to themselves, personally, physically and sexually and why they cannot have any official or sacramental responsibility in the church or Liturgy.

Rosemary Redford Ruether suggests the problem of the male image of God is not an accidental question of linguistics. It is an ideological bias that reflects the sociology of patriarchal societies (1981:60), that is these societies dominated by male property-holding heads of families. Although not all societies that are patriarchal have monotheistic religions, in those societies where God is perceived as male, patriarchal rule is reinforced.

Women are regarded as relating to God only secondarily and through inclusion in the male as their "head". This is stated very specifically by St Augustine in his treatise: God addresses directly only the patriarchal ruling class. All other groups, women, children, slaves are addressed by God only indirectly and through the mediation of patriarchal class. Ruether (ibid:64) also says the feminine, in patriarchal theology is basically allowed to act only within the same limited subordinate or mediating roles that women are allowed to act in patriarchal society.

It is interesting to analyse the theology of slavery in feudal society of the middle ages, when it was accepted. In fact,

Wijngaards points out Bishops and Superiors of monasteries possessed thousands of female slaves. It is interesting to read how the theology of the time justified the practice with arguments taken from the scriptures and traditions. In the seventeenth century some moralists went as far as teaching that the right of slave ownership was part of the catholic doctrine, although there were courageous theologians like Bartholomew de las Casas who opposed the trend of thought of his days: "No one may be deprived of his liberty nor may any person be enslaved" (Wijngaards 1978:18-19).

The acceptance of slavery and discrimination against women, including their exclusion from the ministry, are closely related (Wijngaards *ibid*). His view which is shared by other scripture scholars and theologians, is that the theological reason given to support the exclusion of women from participating fully in the catholic church is basically an attempt to justify the status quo and rests on a mistaken interpretation of the New Testament message (21-21). It is not a norm that Christ himself set, it is a clear prejudiced attitude towards the female sex.

The Catholic Church has continued to reproduce the patriarchal system through its teaching and theologizing. It is important to discuss the church's ideology of women and the basis of the ideology in order to see clearly how male dominance in the church is perpetuated and why it is important for women to theologize to challenge this narrow perspective. The Bible and its message today, specifically when it comes to the question of women and their role in the church, is proof of this narrow perspective.

3. The Church's Ideology on Women

In the Christian church in Africa, women constitute well over 80 percent of the churchgoers (Ukachukwu 1984:184). Yet there are few

studies by African theologians on the question of female participation in the churches apostolate, nor are there any which deal exhaustively with the problem of meaning of St Paul's attitude towards women. St Paul is only one of many church's theologians whose writings have continuously been used to give women a subordinate position in the church.

Women face what may be the greatest challenge in the church: the problem of finding their place. The underlying tenor is one of real pain and great suffering, which is felt acutely because discriminatory cultural and authoritative practices are the basis of women's subordinate position. These practices have led to the majority of African women accepting and internalizing these attitudes of submission and passivity as the will of God and the norm in the church.

What then is the church's ideology and teaching towards women? How has the church translated Christ's message so that the majority of women in the church have accepted their subordinate position and their role of paying, praying and obeying? In this chapter, the church's ideology towards women, and its practice even after the Vatican II, will be discussed. This will lay a basis for understanding why women are given the place they are and why today's view on women takes the trend it does. It will also show how Christ's message has been taken literally to suit the interests of those in power.

4. The Basis of Ideology

It is a well established fact that the writers of the Holy Bible, scholars, theologians until the 20th century, and makers of Canon Laws have all been men. It is also true that the church is a patriarchal institution, which by its nature assumes the marginalisation of women. It places the male in the centre of reality and makes

masculine normative. In such an institution women cannot be anything but inferior. Patriarchy as a world view in the catholic church operates symbols, rituals, relationships, structures and laws which perpetuate mental inequalities. Thus one can see that sexist bias has its roots in the very thing called religion. The Bible should not be seen as a static document holding the truth, but as a specific historical document, written at a certain time, mainly by men. As such it reflects the ideology and prevailing power structures of that time.

We see that the concept of religious authority on the status of women is laid down in the creation story. In Genesis, woman is portrayed as both inferior and secondary to man. Harries in her book Sex Ideology notes that Adam's rib means woman was created out of man and therefore belongs to him: "bone of my bone flesh of my flesh..." and woman like all other creatures was named by man (1984:40). There is enough in the creation story to place woman in an inferior state to man. In the New Testament, St Paul addresses the question of the position and place of women "...and the head of the woman is man" (1st Corinthians 11:3-9), that women should keep silence in the church (1st Corinthians 11:17), and that they should cover their heads while in church. Furthermore, in his Epistle to Titus (2:4-5), Paul writes that the apostles should teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands and their children and to be obedient to their husbands so that the Word of God may not be blemished.

St Paul lays down a mandate for women to be in absolute subjection, when in Timothy (1:19-15), he dictates that women adorn themselves in modesty not with braided hair, or gold or pearls or costly array. Their decoration should be good works. Women must learn in silence with subjection, and may not teach or assume authority over men, because Adam was formed before Eve. The subjection of women to their husbands is taught in all marriage ceremonies. Ephesians (5:21-28)

is a common reference "Wives should be subject to their husbands as the Lord, since, as Christ is the head of the church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife. And as the church is subject to Christ so should wives be to their husbands in everything...".

The hierarchy set up in Christian marriage makes it difficult for women to participate in the church as equals. Women do service jobs like cleaning the church, washing priest's clothes, cooking during church's big ceremonies, serving and decorating the church, so their role in the church is an extension of their unpaid, unrecognised, domestic labour.

From the beginning the church has had difficulties in treating women as equals and not as assistants, helpmates or housekeepers. Karl Barth, regarded as the most important theologian in Christendom next to Schleiermacher in his discussion of the creation story, said the woman "in her being and existence belongs to man", and that she would not be a woman if a single alternative existed, apart from being man's helpmate. Karl Barth despite being a courageous defender of human rights during the Nazi oppression of the Jews, could not break loose from the traditional concept of the roles of women and men. Similarly Aquinas travelling on the same road says that a woman is a doer of the devil, suggests they are evil, dirty and the source of man's temptation to sin, and that they can only achieve salvation if they deny their femaleness. He goes on to describe women as defective males. St Augustine believes any woman who acts as if she cannot give birth to as many children as she is capable of, makes herself guilty of that many murders. The same attitude appears in Martin Luther's writings: "women should remain at home, sit still, keep house and bear and bring up children...If a woman grows weary and at last dies from childbearing, it matters not let her die from bearing she was created to do it." In 1968 Episcopal Bishop James

said it seemed to him nearly every woman he knew wanted a man who knew how to love with authority. Women are simple souls who like simple things. (Quotes from Good News and Field to Proclaim it by Zenaida P. Lumba, Indian Witness volume cxiv April 1 1987,M7).

5. Women's position after the Vatican II

Vatican Council is a meeting of Bishops of the world, together with the Pope. In the history of the Catholic Church only two councils have occurred. The documents resulting from Vatican Council form the basis for the church's future direction. For this paper the second Vatican Council is important for among the many issues discussed in the Council was the participation of lay people in the church and women's place and role. This was raised as a concern when during the council that was totally male Cardinal Sverenis of Belgium asked his fellow Bishops:

Why are we discussing the reality of the church when half of the church is not even represented here? (Luke TMSL. Women in the church Vatican II and After 1985:295).

The following statement from a document of Vatican II leaves no doubt that the church has been aware of the sin of sexism in the church for a long time: "With respect to the fundamental rights of the person all types of discrimination whether social or cultural whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language, or religion is to be overcome". Today the same situation prevails, for example, in the exclusion and or negation of women in liturgy and worship, one of the most demoralizing experiences in the church:

- symbols and language of liturgy are more often than not sexist;
- women may not preside,
women though qualified may not preach;
- concentration of women in stereotypical ministry roles opposes the full range of services;
- opportunities for ministerial preparation for women are virtually non-existent. Women are excluded from participating

as students and faculty members in theological programmes in seminaries. The formation/education of seminaries is male oriented, the use of male spiritual directors and isolation from the real world of men and women makes it hard for clergy to accept women and relate to them as women;

- exclusion from structures and process of church polity
- Jurisdiction in the catholic church is reserved for the ordained. The exercise of power is by policy in the hands of men alone. This situation is of its nature unjust. It breeds disdain for women and their gifts, and reinforces their invisibility.

Thanks to Vatican II, women today in the church can be rectors, and can distribute Holy Communion, (Declaration in Liturgy No. 28,29), but are not supposed to serve at the altar. An eight year old boy is considered suitable for this role, but not girls or women. Sigrid Voggeel has expressed this idea in a striking way:

Do you remember that strange practice at the time of benediction when no altar boy was present and an iron stand was considered better than a woman to hold the censer?
(Awake : Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice 1985:56)

Without hesitation we can say the church is male dominated. The hierarchy of the church consists of the Pope, the Bishops and the priests. All decisions are made by them and women have no place in the process. Even the decisions pertaining to the most feminine things like menstruation, conception, pregnancy and childbirth are made by the male leaders of the church: women have only to accept them.

A dilemma arises from the injustices in the church as far as women's position is concerned. Why do so many women go to church? Why can women not withdraw their support and leave? These questions are not easy to answer. It is possible however that women could be using

this same church to conscientize women and to empower them, to start demanding their rights. Through women theologizing, much has happened in the development of women using the space they can get and creating an awareness in others. Throughout the history of the church, many development projects have been channelled through the church. Women are the target group of many of these projects. With leadership methodology and skills, and of course a clear vision of what type of education should be given to women, much can be achieved. The DEP programme in Kenya discussed in Chapter Three, is one such example. In Chapter Two the history of the Kenyan church will be discussed in connection with women's reality and current women's issues.

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter I will discuss the history of the Kenyan church in general and how this history has affected women in Kenya. I do this because later I want to argue that included in the limitations of W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme are a lack of understanding and analysis of:

- i) this history; and
- ii) W.I.N.D.O.W.'s connection with the church.

In situating women's position in Kenya I am beginning to explore the root of women's oppression and the issues that W.I.N.D.O.W. should be addressing if it is to be a tool for transformation.

1. History of the Church in Kenya

Once a major alienating force in Africa as a colonial instrument for "civilizing" education, and a perpetuator of a theology that disintegrated the community, the church is today on the verge of being co-opted by the post-colonial institutions administered and operated by a small Kenyan elite. The churches are not abstract entities, they are institutions involved in history which therefore find themselves caught up in the historical, economic and political forces, not all of which are of their own choosing. Some such as the close association and collaboration of mission churches with western imperialism have been encouraged. The church cannot be politically neutral.

More recently, the church has become entrapped in acting as a complementary agent to the actions of the government and has failed to recognise the opportunities to challenge the premises on which existing development is based. What then has been women's position in the process of the church's development in Kenya. I mentioned in the introduction that women are in the majority in all christian

churches. They are the backbone and the upkeep of the Kenyan church and yet they are in the minority in church's boards. In Chapter One the church's ideology of women is discussed. It is important to analyse briefly how this ideology affected the women's position in Kenyan society, through missionaries work.

2. The Impact of the Church on Women

The impacts of the church on women are many. I will consider only four interrelated aspects: the sexual division of labour, marriage and marriage patterns including women's right of ownership and access to land, and education.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Kenya was declared a British protectorate, with a railway line from Kenya to Uganda between 1896 and 1903 made Kenya a very possible colonial home. From 1897 onwards land alienation took place with colonial settlers taking up the most fertile places and restricting the indigenous people to reserves.

It was during this time of colonialism that Kenya developed an agricultural export economy based on African wage labour. In 1900 colonial administrators initiated hut taxes, forcing many Kenyan men into wage labour. Europeans provided housing only for male workers and discouraged men from bringing their families to the estates or towns. This process of labour migration drew men from the rural subsistence economy leaving women with the real burden of coping with this nearly impossible situation in the rural areas.

What was the role of the missionaries in this process. Among many tribes of Kenya they say "there was no difference between colonial administrator and a missionary". They all had the same goal. Alison Smith explains the relationship between settler and a missionary:

They were bound together by their fewness, in strange land in their common subjection to the discomforts and

hazards of tropical Africa, by their participation in a common enterprise, the furtherance of economic development and European civilization in primitive continent (1982:113).

Missionaries work was in one way to reinforce colonial administration policies but their first priority was to gain converts. This was done through structures that they created like schools, hospitals, seminaries and convents. The missionaries were prepared and equipped to extend influence and conquer all cultures to accept and see Victorian patterns and Roman organization and civilization as best and superior. Missionaries did not question racism, exploitation and other injustices. Indeed they extended colonization further by colonizing the African spiritual life, alienating the Africans from their God, the God of their ancestors, of their land, of their mountains and above all the God with whom they had free and open communication, everywhere, under trees and on mountains, and who they perceived to exist in pregnant women and children. It was not the God of the missionaries who was only remembered in the morning, evening and who was worshipped on Sundays. It was not a God who needed a big Western building. It was a Free God, a God who walked, spoke and listened to everybody not only a God of the powerful men and white people.

How did missionaries view women? In the eyes of the missionaries the women's role was in the family and her place was the home. The ideology of the church on women was influenced by the Darwinist anthropology view of women and especially by what they wrote about man-woman relationships. For example Darwinist anthropologists saw the family and society as universally and necessary separate places (cf Malinowski in Sacks 1979). Thus women had to stay at home and become mothers of the fittest. Darwinist anthropologists saw cultures sharing the same basic patterns of organization with reference

to men and women. These patterns they said, must be natural, inherent in human conditions and therefore universal. The content of the patterns was:

- i) women were exclusively wives and mothers;
 - ii) families were property, monogamous and nuclear and women were always the personal property of individual men; and
 - iii) men were rulers and decision makers of society and family.
- In summary women made babies and men made culture and society.

2.1 Sexual Division of Labour before and after colonialism and the Christian influence

A sexual division of labour exists in all societies; there are tasks which are allocated exclusively to women and others to men. These tasks are not universal, natural or fixed. In Kenya the sexual division of labour varies from tribe to tribe. In some tribes women can construct houses, eg. the Masai Samburu and Gabbra, while among the Wakamba, Kikuyus and Wameru it is still taboo for women to build houses. Other examples include the rearing of domestic animals, slaughtering and also milking. In some tribes women milk animals while in others like the Gabbras, women may not milk.

Therefore there is a clear distinction between men and women, and their roles are also different. These roles can be traced by looking at what type of traditional education boys and girls receive. For girls domestic duties were and are emphasised, for boys skills like hunting and herding etc. But this relationship and these roles did not mean women were given no opportunity to participate in community affairs though very little research has been done on this field. Achola Pala in her study of women in Nyanza Province notes that there is evidence that women have been primary decision makers in matters of crop production (in Mbula, Risseeuw and Fowler, 1986).

Mutiso (in Mbula, Risseeuw and Fowler 1986) notes that women had significant places in rituals connected with settling in new areas. Women were linked with the earth through fertility and directly related to the "mother earth God" and God of rain. Therefore women were the ones to appease the Gods and to seek their favour for the fruitfulness of the land.

Colonialism and missionary involvement in Kenyan societies changed this balance of power. When men were drawn into towns women found themselves forced to take up activities formerly reserved for men such as ploughing the land herding cattle. Some writers like Mutiso (ibid) claim this position led to an increase of power for women while other like Pala (ibid) claim that while workload for responsibilities increased this was not accompanied by additional powers in decision making.

2.2 Marriage Structure and Impact of Position of women in Kenya before and after colonialism and missionary influence

In different parts of Kenya, there existed different structures of marriage some common patterns were monogamous marriage, polygamous, women marrying women to continue a husband's name who is dead, or have son's, if a couple has only daughters. Bridewealth in a form of animals was given to the bride's people. In exchange the women's sexual and reproductive powers, were surrendered to the man and his lineage. Under this system, the children belonged to the husband's lineage. Divorce was rare but separation was common, since marriage involved the community and the whole clan. The elders, usually worked hard to reconcile the separate couple and discouraged divorce. Upon marriage the wife lived and became identified closely with her husband's lineage group and her links with the group into which she was born weakened. Widows were inherited, by a brother or a relative

of the deceased husband. A woman owned no property since women were outsiders of their husbands descent and did not belong to their father's descent, they were excluded from ownership of land and property. Previous automatic right of access to land was denied with the colonial insistence on land being owned individually and the missionaries insistence on Christian marriage.

2.3 Marriage patterns and Christianity

The missionaries institutionalized marriage of only one state, monogamous as ordained by God. From the beginning of creation God created male and female..."Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh" (Mark 10:6-9). All other marriage patterns were not valid. The colonial government agreed, supported and recognised church marriage to be "civilized". The church marriage coincided with the colonial administrators believed to be universal family structure. The justification for marriage rested in the Christian tradition of safeguarding the interests of the woman as well as granting privileges to man.

Marriage whether customary, christian or civil is a tools to reinforce patriarchy and to give woman a subordinate position. In customary marriage a woman is exchanged for bridewealth as a commodity, but nevertheless in customary marriage, the clan and community are involved. Therefore the marriage is community based and the woman has protection and room to appeal if she wants seperation. The missionaries and colonial administrators with their fixed notions of marriage patterns were not able to see other marriage systems that existed. In fact all the people not married in the church, were regarded as living in sin, even when the marriage was monogamous and stable and were automatically excommunicated. The

women so married were referred to as Malayas (prostitutes). Marriage divorce laws did not cover customary laws.

In polygamy the church specified that any man, who wished to be baptized or married had to abandon all his wives but one. One woman who was married to an important man said "it is better to be married to a man with many wives because it gives each woman more control and autonomy since the man cannot control them all" (Obbo 1980:39). In monogamous marriage the women only had their own labour, she did not have co-wives to share the work, so many women were attracted to customary marriage because of its flexibility.

Christianity was a tool to support the colonial administration. As far as women's situation is concerned the position of the Kenyan woman deteriorated by colonialist interference in these aspects of their lives. Under the new land tenure system, land was no longer communal but was registered under individual men who were the head of the household. Therefore women's access to credit is not possible since land is used as collateral. These changes have diminished or eliminated women's traditional access to resources and power, leaving the rural illiterate woman in an impossible situation and making her believe that her situation is the way it is because women were created to suffer and persevere for the Kingdom of God.

Similarly, changes introduced by the missionaries led to the clan having no say in either marriage nor the resources of a given family. Women lost whatever rights they had had and men's control over women became more rooted by having marriage transferred from clan and community to individuals.

Despite the level of impact on relationships, education was in fact the sharpest weapon colonial administrators and missionaries had to

gain converts, which was their stated objective. They claimed education would save the Africans from "savagery and primitivity" (Dubel, 1981:13).

2.4 Colonial Missionary Education and its influence on the Kenyan Woman

Education is either designed to maintain the existing situation, imposing on the people the values and culture of the dominant class ie domesticating people as one tames an animal to obey its master's will, or education is designed to liberate people helping them to become critical, creative free active and responsible members of society (Hope & Timmel, 1984:8)

To gain more converts missionaries had to train converts who could preach and teach Africans. Dubel in her paper Women and Colonization: Ideology and Education among the Kikuyus (1981) notes that Christian religion and education were bound up with each other and were believed to be the best weapon to saving Africans from their 'backward primitive' traditions. Most missionary headquarters in Kenya were centres of institutions like schools, hospitals, catchetrical training seminaries and convents all tools to evangelize.

For colonial administrator's education was a tool to train loyal citizens and through technical education to create a class of African labourers to work in the European controlled economy. For missionaries education was to gain converts but with similar goals of creating loyal citizens who were God-fearing, and who would support a status quo, based on an ideology of European supremacy.

The missionary education for women, was without doubt a move to reinforce the unquestionable authority of patriarchal systems in tribal ideology which are in line with church's teaching on women's position. Nevertheless missionaries should be given a credit as far as women's formal education is concerned in Kenya. The Kenyan

woman's education would not have been possible without the efforts of the early missionaries. Up to the early 1950's in Kenya, there was not a single government secondary school for girls. They were all missionary run. Though subjects taught were based on rationalizing educational opportunities for future career, which for women was to become mothers of the fittest. So the subject emphasised in missionary education was home science, domestic management and religious teaching to reinforce, the role of women as good submissive wife hard working mother. To summarize the church has been and still opening up opportunities for women through formal and non-formal education to create work opportunities, especially for rural illiterate women, who are involved in income generating activities, but the church's ideology on women's position has a long way to go.

The non-formal education programmes were based on teaching women skills that reinforce the existing sexual division of labour.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Three Streams of Church

At present, three streams of church in Kenya can be identified according to their ideologies and development activities. These include The Missionary Colonial Church, the Modernizing Church and the Prophetic Church. To understand the church in Kenya and its involvement for example in tackling women's issues, I would like to discuss these streams to help clarify the conflicts, limitations of W.I.N.D.O.W. and what stream of church DEP was initiated.

1.1 The Traditional Missionary Church

This stream of church is conservative. Its mission, winning souls for the life to come, is reflected in its promotion of the mesochristic emphasis on sin, hell-fire and eternal damnation. Its theology is that the more people suffer, the more they purify themselves, finally reaching heaven by this act. Their work is not transforming and recreating the world, but is simply the price they have to pay for being human. This traditionalist view is what the Swiss sociologist Christian Lalive calls the haven of the masses. Since it is not questioning and is comfortable, it reinforces the subordinate position of the poor and the women in the church (Freire 1985).

This stream of the church accepts development as long as it does not alter the state of dependence or question the patriarchal structures that perpetuate women's subordinate position. The goals and their response to social problems are charity oriented.

1.2 The Modernizing Church

In this church, the bureaucracy has been improved so that it can be more efficient in its social activities. Its former charity centres directed by lay persons (Daughters of Mary) become known as community centre and are directed by social workers. The political stand is not commitment to the liberation of the poor and oppressed. So its structures are not seen to perpetuate or reinforce the denial of women's participation in its activities. Instead this church speaks of humanization of capitalism, rather than its total suppression, and responds to social problems by encouraging liberal activities such as community development, income producing activities etc.

1.3 The Prophetic Church

This is the church where both clergy and lay people travel together on a hard route of experience from an idealistic vision towards a dialectical vision of reality. They derive their praxis from their interaction with people. This prophetic position demands a critical analysis of social structures in which conflicts take place. This requires of its followers, a knowledge of social and political science, and since this science cannot be neutral, an ideological choice. They denounce the present reality and announce its radical transformation into another reality, capable of giving birth to new men and women. The prophetic church recognises that Christ was not conservative and therefore the church like him, must accept a dynamic stand, responding to the signs of the time. The existence of dramatic tension between past, present and future must be analysed and understood in the context of today. Its goals on development issues include making structures work more fairly questioning the patriarchal structures within the church that are very much linked with the word capitalist system. It is the church that sees participation of all as very important if change has to come.

2. The Development Education Programme In Kenya Catholic Diocese

2.1 The emergence of the programme

The Development Education Programme (DEP) in the Kenya Catholic Diocese, was started under the auspices of the Prophetic Church, in response to development needs in Kenya, because the prophetic church was interested in integrating its Gospel message with the living reality of the people's situations. From 1973 dioceses have responded to this new call and by the end of 1986 each diocese of Kenya had some involvement in the programme.

Initial support for DEP occurred because of a confluence of factors:

i) In 1973 the Catholic Bishops of Kenya established the Department of Social Services, and Development Offices in every diocese of Kenya.

ii) At the same time the Prophetic Church in Kenya was beginning to raise the issues discussed in the second Vatican Council's documents, The Church in the Modern World, and Pope Paul VI history-making encyclical The Development of Peoples (1967).

iii) Until now liberation theology in Kenya was a theological concept that was not used, but at an international Nairobi seminar of AMACEA (Bishops of East and Central Africa), a theological basis for the church in Eastern Africa to involve itself in the process of liberating development, was laid. Discussion at the seminar went a step further recognising that the church would have to make changes in its organisational structures if it was to respond to the task of liberation (Crowley 1985).

The development education programme which was implemented as a result of the AMACEA recommendations, grew organically, quietly and persistently into a movement through existing structures, giving life to old programmes and initiating new ones. DEP clearly answered felt needs and experiences.

From the outset the Brazilian Educationalist Paulo Freire provided the theory and methodology for both the growth and operation of DEP and its content. Conscientization is central to the Freire/DEP approach.

2.2 Aspects of conscientization within DEP

Four interrelated elements distinguish conscientization from other approaches to development.

First, the transforming process is ongoing and ever-deepening. It begins with awareness raising, leads to action and is followed by reflection.

Second, the process of conscientization takes place within a group. The communal raising of awareness empowers action, and reflection combines and enriches each member's perception of the action.

Third, conscientization is grounded in people's vocation to participate actively in shaping their own lives. It is neither doing things for people nor doing things with them, but enabling them to shape and control their future.

Fourth, although the process begins in efforts to alleviate hunger, extend services or increase income, conscientization ultimately seeks to modify unjust social, economic and decision making structures which cause a condition by building a society whose structures promote justice for all people (Major evaluation report 1982).

2.3 Programmes that initiated conscientization in D.E.P.

Between 1974 and 1976 two major national training programmes were started to train grassroot leaders to initiate this process, D.E.L.T.A. (Development Education Leadership Teams in Action) and W.I.N.D.O.W. (Women in National Development of Women).

D.E.L.T.A.

This is a four-phased training course of four weeks spread over one year. Participants of this course were mostly men, who were working within church structures, such as priests, parish council committee members. Occasionally a few women participated. This training focussed on the introduction to the theory and practice of community education using the psycho-social method (Paulo Freire's Adult Education Methods). Human relations and communication skills, group dynamics and community organization skills, leadership skills, socio-economic political, analysis skills, participatory management and project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reflection on theology and development and Christian social teaching were an integral part of each of the four phases (Crowley 1985:13-14).

W.I.N.D.O.W.

This is a four-phased training programme for women leaders which was initiated in 1976 out of a need for and concern about the low level of women's participation in D.E.L.T.A. Since DEP was operating in a male-dominated church, it was hard to get women representatives from dioceses to come to D.E.L.T.A. The content of W.I.N.D.O.W. which will be discussed later in this chapter, was the same as D.E.L.T.A. but with more emphasis on women's issues. The record of W.I.N.D.O.W. is good: 436 women from 8 dioceses have attended courses and 81% of these have finished training (Major Evaluation Report 1981:33-34).

W.I.N.D.O.W. training programmes' goals were narrowly to empower teams of women from grassroot groups to become aware of their needs as women and their roles in communities, but changed as they were determined by the participants themselves during each course.

For example, the 1981 W.I.N.D.O.W. group's goals were summarised as follows: to help women realize their role in family and society; to become conscious of why women feel helpless and to find ways of

dealing with such a situation; and to discover and develop women's capabilities as leaders in women's groups and in the wider society (W.I.N.D.O.W Report Phase I 1981:2). In 1985 the goals were broader and at the same time less specific: "to motivate, empower and transform society".

2.4 Basic Approach on the W.I.N.D.O.W. Training Programme

The methodological approach in the training programme although influenced by Freire's method of Adult Education, was adapted to Kenyan cultural, social and economic realities. A wider range of creativity has emerged which includes using Kenyan cultural songs, proverbs, rituals and symbols as tools, and this has enriched and shaped DEP in its unique form, the first of its kind in Black Africa (Crowley 1985). The following are the basic principles of the DEP psycho-social Method as expressed by Hope and Timmel (1984:8-12).

Elements of the Approach

1. No education is neutral

Education will be designed either to domesticate or to liberate, to reinforce and maintain the status quo or to encourage creativity and transformation. Education for transformation therefore should help people to become creative, free and active, responsible members of society. Education can never be neutral.

2. Relevance for Women and Development Issues

Women will act on issues which they have strong feelings about. All education and development projects should start by identifying the issues which local women speak about. Participatory research is of key importance, so as to get a perspective from below.

3. Problem Posing

In the approach, women are recognised as thinking, creative people with a capacity for initiating action to shape their lives. The trainers, animators, co-ordinators or facilitators animate the group process by asking the right questions to help the groups analyse the root causes of their problems.

4. Dialogue

Empowering women for change needs the participation of each woman in the community. No-one has all the answers and no-one is totally ignorant. Each woman has her own way of looking at things given her experience. To come to common solutions to any problem, everyone needs to be a learner and a teacher, making the process of learning mutual.

5. Reflection and Action

If realistic and genuine learning has to happen in any community, there has to be a constant process of reflecting on reality and action which the community has taken towards changing a situation. This critical reflection should identify needs for new information or skills and new tools to help the community come up with critical actions.

2.5 Application of the W.I.N.D.O.W. principle

i) Creating confidence and trust in the women

The emphasis of this training programme was first to help women leaders discover themselves and their potential and then to move on to understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships so as to build solidarity among themselves. From the outset, creating trust in the group was crucial. For this to happen four needs must be met:

- a) Acceptance - sense of being recognised, respected and valued;
- b) Sharing information - about each others' experiences, needs, values and opinions;
- c) Setting goals - clear goals set by the women themselves in order to ensure commitment to the goals from each of them; and
- d) Organising for action - clear planning of who will do what, when and how (Crowley 1985:45).

This is illustrated by means of a practical exercise. In 1981 women were asked to draw a chapati (pancake) and divide the chapati so that a day's activities were portrayed in the drawing. The sharing of the women's chapatis portrayed women being overworked, yet the majority of women felt helpless and empty. The women realised during the exercise that their being overworked had led them not to realise who they were or what they wanted to become.

The chapati exercise was followed up by trying to study other women's chapatis and see what relevance their chapatis had in the women's situation today. To encourage the women to relate to another woman in history Mary, Jesus' mother was used as an example, drawing passages for discussion from the New Testament.

These passages were discussed in small groups which discovered that Mary lived in the same situation as women of today. Her sorrows and joys were similar and yet she had challenged her cultural, social and economic situation (W.I.N.D.O.W. Phase 2 Report 1981:2).

Several creative exercises like the one discussed above have been used to help women discover who they are and in the process understand other women's questions and identify themselves more with others and the world around them.

ii) Social Analysis of women's situation

How did W.I.N.D.O.W. help women leaders analyse the socio-economic, political situation in Kenya and understand how it affected them as women. One such step was when the training programme co-operated with INODEP (Ecumenical research and education) based in Paris. This co-operation helped DEP in Kenya develop tools of analysis to obtain insights about the variety of interrelated phenomena in society, from the personal and community level to the international level (Kronenburg 1987:104).

The starting point was the introduction of schemas by INODEP about different areas of interest for analysis. The team of trainers and facilitators from DEP training programmes at all levels developed questionnaires with the objective of not only extracting information from interviewees, but asking questions intended to enable a process of discovery by groups, in such a way that they were assisted with systematic observation of social environment. For W.I.N.D.O.W. a

booklet Women and Society was subsequently developed, which and the discussion questions. These emphasised:

economic reality With regard to women, the focus of the schema and questions are on aspects like what are the resources available for women, in the areas of land, loan and credit facilities; who owns what in the community; what extension services are available and who do they go to?

social relationships This schema is designed to identify the tensions and social conflict in the community including the relationship between men and women and the various socioeconomic classes that exist in that community. What reinforces this classes? Where are the women? Why are women in a certain given social class? How do the groups interact and how does each group respond to proposed social change.

political reality (decision-making) This schema focusses on facts and information about the use of power and forces acting in society. What are the controlling socio-economic groups in your area? Among them what percentage are women? How many people are landless? what percentage of these are women? To what extent does the ruling class depend on national or international connections? What effects does this have on women?

group psychology This schema examines the attitudes of people in a community. What is the image of women in a traditional culture and what conflicting modern influences have the women of yesterday and today encountered. What myths in society in the form of stories songs and symbols are used to express what women are believed to be? Among those myths which ones do women agree with or disagree with and why? What conflicts and contradictions surface as a result of traditional and modern myths?

religious reality In this schema women are challenged to look critically at beliefs about them first by looking at Old Testament statements and passages about women, including:

- i) Laws concerning women
 - Leviticus 12:1-18
 - Deutoronomy 24:1-4
- ii) the worth of women
 - Leviticus 27:1-7
 - Ecclesiastes 25:13
 - John 8:1-11
 - Luke 8:43-56
- iii) Women's image

- John 4:7-26
 iv) Women's rights
 Mark 10:6-12
 Matthew 19:3-10
 Luke 10:38-42
 Luke 11:27-28

In this schema women are encouraged and assisted to look at religion and its relationship to society. Does religion today support, ignore or challenge the status quo? Do women see their situation and take it as a given will of God? Why? What is the church's ideology on women's education and participation in the church?

Levels of awareness

In a recent community health survey in Masai Land, Crowley heard one woman explain that the cuts and bruises on her shoulders had been caused by beatings from her husband ("that is the way men are", she said) and that the sickness endured by her family "was caused by God". Interventions for change have to take account of women's level of awareness (Crowley 1985:52). This schema helps women leaders clarify the various levels of women's understanding. For example, are women in their communities at "closed" consciousness by the way they describe their situation (we are just women, I wish I was a man; the spirits are angry with us)? The actions at this level of awareness are responses without questioning. The other levels of awareness are defined as awakening consciousness, reforming critical consciousness and liberating critical consciousness.

During the training women leaders were exposed to these schemas, some of which the women used in between the phases to get information of their reality. The information brought to the training was analysed, in relation to Kenyan reality to give women a wider scope. Tools to help women bring back the information to groups were developed by teams from different districts of Kenya.

iii) Group Management

This included helping leaders to become aware of the importance of developing sensitivity to group needs and giving women skills in leadership. Shared leadership was emphasised rather than leadership by individuals. There is a need to see that as leaders both task and

maintenance roles are group responsibilities. Achieving set objectives is only possible if individuals' needs are met by the leaders' efforts in having quiet ones speak, asking for clarification etc. Skillful leaders need to:

- promote trust by recognising everyone's contribution;
- propose helpful ways of sharing ideas, reaching decisions and planning for action;
- maintain awareness of what is actually happening in the group (eg. have you noticed that in this discussion only Mueni and Mduku spoke?);
- bring group feelings as well as individual feelings into the open and deal with them;
- check assumptions, clarify points and summarise the discussion (Crowley 1985:47).

As well as leadership skills, group dynamics are key in building women's confidence and solidarity.

iv) Organisational development

In every group power is exercised in various ways. Leadership is concerned with the exercise of power. The use of power in women's groups demands a style of leadership that empowers group members to participate creatively. It is important for the group to be clear on three factors: goals, roles and relationships. To help women leaders to understand this important aspect of organising groups the "parabola model" is used (Hope and Timmel 1984:71).

The "parabola model" is a tool to help a group clarify its vision and its goals. A parabola, like a graph, traces the progress of a group or project through the stage of its life. The subsequent evaluation could lead to a new vision if this is appropriate. Women are also helped to see the importance of individual commitment towards implementation of goals and importance of evaluation to check people's

feelings on how the group progresses. A tool "commitment circle and commitment drain" is used to help women see the importance of shared leadership.

In summary the training helps women to discover who they are by sharing experiences of their lives and other women's lives. The women's theology used as a tool, encompasses not only passages from the Bible, but stories of other women, poems, songs and films to bring out the idea that women are struggling for change. The change is then discussed using the schemas and the information available of women's situation in Kenya and in the world. When women finally plan for action they are aware of what change they want to bring about. Women's theologising in Kenya is deeply rooted in answering women's question and leads to action. It is a transforming act.

2.6 Evaluation of the Four Phases of W.I.N.D.O.W., 1981-82

The only legitimate evaluation of the W.I.N.D.O.W. project would develop from discussions with project participants. It was not possible to conduct interviews for this paper. Therefore written evaluations from W.I.N.D.O.W. and a major DEP evaluation report have been used as the sources for the following critique.

At the end of the 1981-82 training, women reported that the following topics had been covered best in the four phases:

- Group leadership and shared decision making
- How to manage projects
- Survey of community needs
- How to plan learning events
- Church participation in development
- How to prepare codes and discussion
- My role in the church and society
- Tools of analysis
- Women and the Bible.

Women also believed these would be useful in their work, but felt more information and skills were needed in the areas of:

Women and the Bible
 Church participation in development
 More on project management
 The value of culture in W.I.N.D.O.W. programme
 Implication of my faith
 Structural analysis.

2.7 Outcomes: Community Groups' Benefits

W.I.N.D.O.W., a network of women leaders involved with grassroot groups, consultations, meetings of the network and evaluation meetings, are not an end in themselves. They exist as a means to community transformation. The Christian goal of W.I.N.D.O.W. looks beyond the material dimension and speaks of women who are involved in the process of the ultimate objective of change. To measure the impact W.I.N.D.O.W. Training Programme had on grassroot groups, the major evaluation 1981-83 proposed the following question:

- in what ways and to what extent have women's groups and members been empowered by human growth religious faith, communal concern and commitment to social justice (Major Evaluation Report 1983:82)?

In 1986-87 CEBEMO and Caritas Germany carried out an evaluation of DEP and its impact on grassroot groups, in Kisii and Kisumu Dioceses. Some of the groups sampled for this exercise were women's groups initiated as a result of W.I.N.D.O.W. Training Programme.

The two questions raised in the major evaluation in 1983 were raised again, but this time in a different context. The evaluation team of which I was a member, looked at the women's group activities in order to find out at what level groups were in the process of transformation.

One could distinguish the characteristics of groups as follows:

1. Charity Groups at this level would have goals like "to relieve suffering" and activities would include famine relief, handouts, care of the disabled and support to the poor.
2. Development At this level goals would include the raising of production, the overcoming of nature, community development, and activities like income generation. The inspiration here is working to make structures operate more effectively, but has no analysis of why the structures are not working (eg. women being left out of major decision making bodies).
3. Transforming Groups at this level have goals that include, making structures work more fairly and structural change. Group activities are an attempt to change structures by a process of participation of all.

In Kisumu and Kisii dioceses most groups were operating between charity and development. In the major evaluation results, groups interviewed indicated the following community outcomes. Most groups sampled in the dioceses that participated in the major evaluation were women's groups initiated by W.I.N.D.O.W. participants.

Group Evaluation of DEP 1983

<u>Knowledge, skills and new practices related</u>	27%	
to basic needs		Basic needs
(learned how and what to do to achieve	45%	
improved standards of living.		
<u>Physical material and economic improvements</u>	18%	
(economic benefits to members and groups		
includes community projects)		
<u>Personal Growth</u>	8%	
(changed feelings, perception and personal		
behaviour)		
<u>Religious Growth</u>	6%	

(increased faith and or religious activity)

Group Growth 23%
(improved functioning of group interaction
leadership, decision-making)

Communal Concern 18%
(new ways of thinking about community problems
and change)

In the table, outcomes related to basic needs rate highest. This indicates that a lack of basic needs is of primary concern to the rural woman. W.I.N.D.O.W. as a programme had to start from women's material reality, but as the respondents indicated in the major evaluation, the more groups are linked "...to a DEP, the more likely they will be able to move away from seeing the problems in terms of basic needs and move towards an understanding of the structures which allow and often encourage the community problems" (Major Evaluation Report 1983:100).

3. The Limitations of W.I.N.D.O.W. Training

To conclude I will briefly discuss W.I.N.D.O.W.'s limitations in relation to its methodology and survival, given the existing socio-economic and political situation of Kenya and the role and the response of the Institutional Catholic Church.

3.1 W.I.N.D.O.W.'s Methodology

W.I.N.D.O.W. as a programme has developed a methodology that provides a base for women to start the process of analysing the root of their subordinate position. The basic element of this approach was the view from below starting from women's immediate questions, as opposed to the view from above. These immediate needs were generally to do with women becoming economically self-reliant. If having women

economically self-reliant is an answer towards changing their subordinate position W.I.N.D.O.W. has made an attempt to address this. Nevertheless W.I.N.D.O.W.'s methodology needs re-shaping.

The goal of increasing women's dignity and power requires changing women's and men's roles not merely changing women's status within the constraints of present roles (Maguire 1981). From this understanding we need to examine to what extent W.I.N.D.O.W.-initiated projects did challenge the existing sexual division of labour? Did the activities question gender roles and how far was patriarchy analysed in the whole process? W.I.N.D.O.W. lacks an analysis to move women to an understanding of how deeply ingrained and how far back historically their subordination goes. For example in the process of economic growth, commercialisation and market expansionism, not only class is determined but also gender. DEP developed and used several tools to analyse the present Kenyan socio-economic political situation. In this the structural analysis and dynamic models which focus on class relationship, means and production are analysed as well as the ideological apparatus that perpetuates this relationship, but gender relationships are not questioned nor is the relationship of the whole model to women's subordinate position.

Sen argues that gender subordination cannot be compromised in the struggle against other forms of oppression (1985:13). Women's issues have to be included as separate but integral to the DEP struggle for better society, by including an analysis of traditional gender based subordination and imposed sexual division of labour, in which women's work is accorded lower status. Concerning the practical implications of this analysis W.I.N.D.O.W.'s promotion of income generating activities should be examined.

3.2 Development and W.I.N.D.O.W.

In W.I.N.D.O.W., women have been integrated into development, a development which has not been questioned and does not give women a choice or a voice in defining what kind of society they want. This programme lacks a feminist theoretical base and feminist questions from which to analyse women's subordinate position. In analysing society feminist theories provide an understanding of the connections as well as the contradictions of gender, class and development (Maguire 1984). Feminist analysis is a method of asking a different set of questions and this leads to alternative explanations of women's subordinate position and alternative strategies for changing that position.

3.3 Theology

In analysing the content of W.I.N.D.O.W. training it becomes apparent that the analysis and understanding of church ideology and teaching is an aspect that is not dealt with. The programme tries to integrate women into the church without questioning for example, the teaching of St Paul and theologians who have continuously translated the Bible to suit and support patriarchy. This explains the lack of questioning of the whole institution of marriage and women's control over their own sexuality. It is important that the training content, the Bible as the product of a patriarchal culture has to be questioned more.

What I am saying is that the dominant paradigm of biblical interpretation is not analysed so as to help women leaders come up with biblical interpretation that is dialogical, which seeks to recover all canonical texts and traditions and to understand them as theological responses to their historical communal situations (Schussler Fiorenza 1984). Thus the Bible should become a mirror and reflection of reality. If W.I.N.D.O.W. has to use biblical texts in

its training programme, the programme must seriously take into account the androcentric character of biblical language on one hand and the patriarchal biblical traditions on the other hand. W.I.N.D.O.W. also has to start questioning symbols and models laid down for women to follow passively. Can Mary be a model of liberation for women instead of the symbolic power of traditional reflection of hierarchical values? Weaver notes Mariology has generally been used to justify male domination, support complementarity between men and women and to preserve femininity as a symbol of perfect motherhood and spotless virginity (Weaver 1985:201).

The programme should also look critically at Freire's method of conscientization, to include in the methodology aspects questioning gender and patriarchy. Freire and DEP in Kenya assume the question of women and their relationship to society will change as the process of awareness grows. However there is a need to conscientize the oppressed as well as the oppressor. In the women's case both women and men need to be conscientized and they cannot if women's issues are not recognised as part of the whole struggle. DEP has never squarely faced the question of women. The reasons given for not having women in positions of authority for example, as Development Co-ordinators is that women did not match up educationally with men and some women used the ant-hill technique - stepping on others to get to the top and remain dominant (Crowley:70). This is not acceptable.

3.4 Survival

"I don't like their ideas, but I can admire the results" (Crowley 1985:36). This statement was made by one of the bishops of Kenya, in whose diocese DEP had sparked off a whole range of development and pastoral programmes. The parish meetings were no longer retreats, Bible studies, pastoral seminars or prayer groups, but groups that came together to discuss a list of development projects, water,

agriculture, management and leadership skills (Donders 1985:160). The Bishop's statement highlights one of the constraints on W.I.N.D.O.W.'s survival which comes from within the church. 75% of all the clergy claim the programme is materialistic, and that it does not give women enough spiritual nourishment. Part of this criticism is clearly due to W.I.N.D.O.W being linked to the Prophetic Church - the criticisms are aimed not only at the programme but at this stream of church as well.

The Prophetic church has had to raise some issues which the institutional church is not ready to accept. The stress on justice and rights of the poor challenges the whole church to acknowledge that the rights of women must become a priority issue (Pope Paul VI). In its present structure cannot deal with this or face it.

So to what extent can W.I.N.D.O.W. be expected to move groups from a welfare orientation to transformation given the constraints on the Prophetic Church? The survival strategies of W.I.N.D.O.W. in the Kenyan Institutional church raise a big dilemma, if W.I.N.D.O.W. is to remain true to its vision. One way W.I.N.D.O.W. could shape its training programme within the existing church structures, is using women's theology as its tool to empower women for change. In the next chapter, women's theology will be discussed, with a view to recommending that W.I.N.D.O.W. actually use women's theology to move women's activities from welfare actions that do not question women's present subordinate position in society, to actions that tackle some root issues. I am using some here because conscientization as I mentioned earlier, is a process of growth that is ever deepening. It has to start from where women are (women's experiences).

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Towards Women's Theology Theoretically

Women have become conscious of their human rights and of the injustices perpetrated against them in all sectors of life, economic, social, political, cultural, racial, sexual, religious and even within the family itself. Women are learning and organising, motivated by their Christian faith, as they are aware that their liberation is part and parcel of the liberation of all the poor and oppressed, promised by the Gospel. The emerging spiritualities are rooted in women's experiences which are action for justice as an integral part of women's theology.

The Bible plays a vital role in the lives of the women and their struggle for liberation, which is rooted in God's action in history, particularly in the event of Christ. The attitude of Jesus to both women and men was the same. He went beyond the culture of his day. He healed Peter's mother-in-law and the woman with the floor of blood as he did the man with paralysis (Luke 4:38-39, 8:43-48). His consideration of the woman who did not count is recorded in the story of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4). He showed interest in the underdog and the downtrodden, for example, the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-30) who was in fact the first missionary. Christ appeared first to a woman after his resurrection (John 20:1-8). Women in the process of theologizing are discovering that the Gospel restores to women their human dignity as people loved and cherished by God.

It is this process of understanding what the Gospel of Jesus Christ meant to women, instead of rejecting the Bible and their Christian roots, which has led to women taking steps to delve deeper into the bible rejecting the patriarchal crusts that have obstructed their true meaning over the centuries, and highlighting those neglected elements, which portray women as individuals in their own right as

well as God's coworkers and agents of life. Jesus' relationship with women explains that women are part and parcel of the kingdom he was trying to bring about in his three years' ministry.

The critical reading of the Bible in a women's perspective is a process of uncovering lost traditions and correcting mistranslation, peeling away layers of androcentric scholarship and rediscovering new dimensions of biblical symbols and theological meanings. This rediscovering is made possible by two basic shifts in women's perspective of the world reality and in their perception of the function of biblical text and interpretation. Such paradigm shifts are on one hand a shift from an androcentric to women's perception of the world and on the other hand a shift from men as authority in the bible to women's articulation of contemporary women's experience and struggle against patriarchal oppression in biblical religion.

In all areas of scientific and intellectual knowledge there now exist courses, research projects that seek to expand women's knowledge of cultural and historical contribution as well as challenge the silence about women in history. This paradigm shift promotes the view that women's experiences and cultural contribution are valuable significant and important. It also challenges male symbolic representations androcentric language as it appears in the bible, and in liturgical celebrations. Women are not allowed to serve in liturgical celebrations in some churches even today - in Kenya women have to cover their heads while in church, especially when going to receive holy communion. I once was stopped in 1984 from going to communion because I had not covered my beautiful hair which was braided with different coloured Masai beads. In communion women go to communion after older men and younger men. There are several of these examples which all are symbolic of women's place in the Catholic Institutional Church.

2. Characteristics of Women's Theology

This diversity is also found among women theologians. This theology introduced a radical shift into all forms of traditional theology to a theology that challenges the male institution and its practices. Women's theology is not a theoretical world view or perspective but a women's liberation movement for social and ecclesiastical change.

Women's theology of liberation does not speak of a male oppressor and female oppressed, but rather of patriarchy as a pyramidal system and hierarchical structure of society and church in which women's oppression is specified not only in terms of race and class, but also in terms of marital status, and other gender relations. Women's theology should first and foremost be critical theology of liberation to liberate human kind from all injustices and oppression of patriarchal structures.

This theology explores the particular experiences of women struggling for liberation from systematic patriarchy and it indicts all patriarchal structures and texts, especially those of biblical religion. Such a theology seeks to name theologically the alienation, anger, pain and dehumanization engendered by patriarchal sexism.

At the same time it seeks to articulate an alternative vision of liberation by exploring women's experiences of survival and salvation in the struggle against patriarchal oppression and degradation as well as assessing christian texts, traditions in order to move towards liberation from patriarchal oppression.

Women's theology does not advocate the co-optation of women's religious powers by ecclesiastical patriarchy or the women's abandonment of biblical vision and community. Its formulations are based on the radical assumption that gender is socially, politically and

economically and theologically constructed and such social construction serves to perpetuate the patriarchal exploitation and oppression of all women, "...which is most fully expressed in the fate of the poorest and most despised women on earth (Schussler Fiorenza 1985:7).

Women's theology of liberation seeks to enable christian women to explore theologically the structural sin of patriarchal sexism in a women's perspective reject its internalization of patriarchy and the structural evil of patriarchal sexism as well as calling the whole church to conversion.

Women's theology is a process of women reclaiming the power to articulate their own theology, spirituality and to determine their own religious powers and ritualize their own vision for change and liberation.

In this process women's theology listens to each other's experiences and in the process women's bible is written, a bible that speaks and includes women's everyday reality. Women's theology of liberation and speaking of women's church does not mean to advocate a separatist strategy but to underline the visibility of women in biblical religion and to safeguard womens' freedom from spiritual male control.

The key to this theological process is the word "Life". Women in Africa, in Kenya are deeply rooted in protecting and nourishing life in the limited and impossible conditions in which they live. Women in Kenyan communities are surrounded with and weighed down by children: children in their bodies, in their arms, on their backs; they extend and reach out to others' lives. Thus the women's theology without losing its scientific seriousness that includes analysing the basic causes of women's multiple oppression, is deeply rooted in experience of and affection for life. Women feel called on to do

scientific theology passionately, a theology based on feeling as well on science - a theology made not only with minds but also in their hearts. Women feel this as a challenge and an imperative for all theology.

The women's theology is also characterised by its links with feminism. If feminist theories are tools which analyse and explain the causes, dynamics and structures of women's oppression, then women's theology is one of the tools. If the objectives of feminism includes not merely equity but liberation of women and men from systems of injustices, if feminism advocates liberation through the transformation of all forms of oppression, structural and personal, based on gender, class race and international economic order, then women theologians, who through theology are working towards a more just and equitable society, who through theologizing accept that struggle against all oppressions must be part and parcel of their commitment and reflection without singling out sexism, become part of the global feminist movement. Through women's theology women are:

- a) sharing experiences of women's oppression and liberation;
- b) critically analysing societal structures as they affect women;
- c) hermeneutically analysing from a feminine perspective;
- d) experiencing a renewal of spirituality and reformulation of theology based on a new humanity.

2.1 Applying women's theology

Women theologizing is a dynamic process of women struggling together in a particular community like KGY. In this process women share their experiences which are filled with meaning and deep longing, discovering visions/goals that guide their actions and keep their hopes alive. Through the collective process, women bring out and make conscious the faith dimensions permeating their very existence. There are several aspects to the process of theologizing:

1. Women begin by sharing their own experiences, their struggles and the ways they have survived in a male dominated community. In this process women begin to discover themselves, to name reality and to understand the real meaning of community.

2. Women critique that part of religious heritage that shares in cultural sexism and patriarchalism, also rejecting those aspects of theology that legitimate and perpetuate the oppression and domination of women.

3. Women move to recover their authentic history through women's experience. They also claim their religious heritage while at the same time rejecting imposed traditions. Their own spiritual traditions as women are discovered to be outside the official context of religion or what has been defined by the authorities as theology.

4. At this stage, women bring out new translations, new interpretations, new language and new namings, discovering new religious symbols and holy stories that have not been written or are hidden. In this process women contribute to the development of a faith-filled response to the historical moment.

Among the limitations of W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme, women's theology in relation to theory and methodology were identified as a missing link. Therefore if W.I.N.D.O.W. as a training programme within the Catholic Institutional Church has to move groups from welfare oriented actions or liberal actions to critically analysing societal structures as they affect women, then women's theology in the programme has to look at theories on women's theology, feminist theories, and at how women's subordinate position is viewed. I will try to illustrate what I am saying by giving an example of women theologizing in the Netherlands. Finally I will give an example of women theologizing using a Bible text and discussion questions.

In the process of writing this paper, I had an opportunity to visit a women's theology group in Ymond in the Netherlands. This group which is Kritische Gemeente Ymond (critical diocese of Ymond) was started in 1978. It is an ecumenical women's theology group. It started as a result of a course that was organised on women's theology (feminist theology). All the women have a christian background and have been theologising to understand the relationship between church and society. In this group immediate issues that relate to the group are discussed, for example understanding feminism and feminist theories and their relevance to women's subordinate position in the church. Lesbianism, abortion and marriage are among the issues the group has tried to understand and reflect on how they affect them as women. The beauty of this group and its methodology is that, the issues are discussed in relation to them as women. Thoughts and emotions as a source of knowledge become central so that the issues are not analysed only in theory but how they affect the women in the group.

The following is an example of women theologizing. The reading is taken from Luke 13:10-17 and followed by questions:

1. How do you identify with the woman bent over? In what ways in your life are you quite unable to stand upright?
2. How do you identify with the synagogue officials?
3. When, in your own life have you acted like Jesus and empowered another/others to straighten up?
4. If you were the woman bent over and then straightened up, how would you have answered the synagogue officials?

There are several traditional stories which could be used in the same process to empower women to start writing their own theology, and hence to organise women towards one common vision of society which is

non-hierarchical, where power is shared by all and each person's unique contribution is valued to the struggle. The theologizing groups serve not only as a base of support in the dominant society, but also as an alternative church where all participate.

If women's theology could be the basis of W.I.N.D.O.W. training programme then women would be empowered to realistically challenge the patriarchal structures in the institutional church, where the majority of women are found. This way the church becomes a force and power to be truly prophetic.

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