



NORWEGIAN  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

From a Local Church Group to A Movement for Women's Empowerment and Societal  
Transformation

(A Case Study of the CWF of the Presbyterian Church in Likomba-Tiko, Cameroon)

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“Mom do you go to school every day? What class are you? Primary school or secondary school? Does your teacher write on the board with chalk? Do you wear uniforms to go to school? Do you sit on small desks like our own? These questions reminded me of how much time has passed. I was once her age and wore the uniforms and sat on small desks. Now I am here and so need to do something big as her mother and as a woman that she will be proud of someday.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to God Almighty the giver of life, strength and knowledge. Through God almighty I found favour above my human imagination and I will forever give him the glory, honour and adoration for Great things He has done in my life.

In memory of my dearest father Nsanyui Qui, Godlove (Died Nov. 2005) who gave up his comfort to give us quality education and my beloved sister (Youngest sister) Qui Relindis Zofenyui (Bobo) died February 2011. In memory of Pa Nkemtaji Philip (died March 2015).

Because Jesus lives, I can face tomorrow.

Favour Is My Name.

“I look to the mountains; where will my help come from? My help will come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth”. Ps 121:1&2

Victorine Qui

## ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BMS	Basel Missionary Society
BftW	Bread of the World
CMF	Christian Men Fellowship
CWF	Christian Women Fellowship
EBMS	English Baptist Missionary Society
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MINPROFF	Ministère de Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille
MRDF	Methodist Relief and Development Fund
MUDEC	Municipal Development Counselling
NADEV	Nkong Hill Top Association for Development
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
PCSC	Presbyterian Church in Southern Cameroon
PCWC	Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon
PLWHIV	People Living With Human Immune Virus
PRTC	Presbyterian Rural Training Centre
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WEEP	Women Education and Empowerment Programme
WWD	Women's Work Department

## Glossary

La Republique	(French appellation for the Republic)
Kamerun	German spelling of Cameroon
Duala	Language spoken by the Douala (Coastal people)
Njangi	Meeting (contribution where one person benefits during each sitting)
Garri	Staple food made from grated cassava

## ABSTRACT

This study is designed to explore the ways by which the CWF's (Christian Women's Fellowship) Women's Work Department has empowered healed women spiritually and enabled them to be financially independent, that they may be able to contribute to the wellbeing of their families, the church and the society. It shows how the women are empowered to take part in decision making which concerns them. The study explores the motivations of the CWF's involvement in the transformation of CWF women within church and the society; impacting them with knowledge and training them on how to take up challenges and set up businesses of their own in order to financially support their families and themselves. This done by means of providing them with loans from their loan program, Women's Education and Empowerment Program (WEEP). WEEP is one of the departments of the CWF which works with the Nkong Hill Top Association for Development (NADEV), a Common Initiative Group (CIG) which concentrates on developing people and their businesses so that they can help themselves and others – their families and communities.

Women have little or no economic and financial powers in Cameroon, within the traditional setting and even far back as during the western colonial rule in Cameroon. And as stated by Nana-Fabu, "Women's limited access to and lack of control over resources such as education and bank loans that are more readily available to Cameroon men has led to the further decline of women's economic status in modern Cameroon. The vast majority of Cameroon women, regardless of educational level, find themselves in a disadvantaged position in the economic sphere". It is therefore for this reason that this study seeks to find out how the departments of the CWF and their activities help women to be economically empowered and to be financially reliable both for their families and the society.

This study argues that man and woman are both created in the image of God and so should have equal rights and opportunities. In this light, the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women 1988-1998, was aimed at bringing equality, development and peace, and to reaffirm the commitments of the World Council of Churches central committee which urged all member churches to eliminate the teachings and practices that discriminate against women. Women should therefore be present and fully represented in all spheres of life. Women should be given equal right to study and to work and to hold positions of responsibility within the church and the society. It is in this light that the Christian Women Fellowship of the PCC through their activities are calling on the church and the society to join forces with them to

empower the women for a greater participation and to be great agents of economic and social development.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Following the first United Nations Conference on women in Mexico City in 1975, there has been a powerful movement to acknowledge women as significant actors in the process of development. For women to be able to fully and active participate in the development process, they need to be empowered. Women need to be empowered educationally, financially and otherwise. Cameroonian women, like their counterparts worldwide, suffer from economic powerlessness, less educational opportunities and negative socio-cultural perceptions. These adverse conditions are not only present within the society but are embedded within the church as well (Ekone, 2011, p.1). The aim of this study therefore is to examine the activities of the Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, looking at how they empower themselves to be able to engage in the development of Cameroon and precisely the development of Tiko municipality. We will further look at how the activities of the CWF influence the church and the Cameroonian society.

Furthermore, we looked at the strength and weaknesses of the activities of the CWF and what impact they have on the population of Tiko Sub- division. We have also looked at the works of some social scientist on religion and development.

Religion has a long standing impact in the lives of many people. Deneulin like some other social scientists think that as the society becomes more and more modernized, religion will disappear from the public sphere (Deneulin 2009, p. 52). But this has not been the case of the CWF, who evangelize to the public, particularly to women with whom they work sharing the word of God with them thereby taking religion to the public sphere and empowering the women both spiritually and helping them to be financially empowered too.

It is in line with freedom of religion that the constitution of the Republic of Cameroon attests to the fact that “Cameroon is a secular state. The neutrality and independence of the state in respect of all religions shall be guaranteed, freedom of religion and worship shall be guaranteed” (constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, 1996, p. 6). Therefore, there is no state religion as is the case of Norway (where Lutheranism is regarded as the state religion) rather one will find a purification of churches or denominations in the national territory. Besides Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religions are very present; Christianity being the dominant religion of all, with its population being the largest about 69%, Islam about 21%, and the African traditional religions about 6%. There are however a small percentage of the

population which does not believe in God and thus do not belong to any religious group. This group makes up about 4% of the population. From the above quoted section of the country's constitution it thus implies that each denomination has the right to practice its faith and make decisions according to what they believe. The government has little or no influence on the functioning of the various denominations. The churches on their part do not mingle in the executive arm of the government.

Furthermore, for any denomination to take its roots in Cameroon it has to register with the ministry of territorial administration for recognition by the state. Nevertheless, the churches may at times make their prophetic voice or messages to the state when issues affecting citizens adversely are concerned. The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon hereafter referred to as the PCC is one of the several Christian denominations in Cameroon with the right to operate its evangelistic activities. The Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) is one amongst the several movements found within the PCC whose evangelistic activities go beyond the confines of the denomination. This study will seek to explore and examine these evangelistic activities to bring to light their strengths and weaknesses so that other groups can emulate and enhance the wellbeing of humanity.

## **1.2. BACKGROUND AND IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Geographically, Cameroon is located in the Central Africa region slightly to the north of the Equator. This triangular-shaped country is bounded to the West by Nigeria, North East Chad, and East by Central African Republic, South by Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. (Delancey & Mokebe 1990, p. 1). For administrative convenience the country has been divided into regions with each subdivided into several divisions and subdivisions (Gifford, 2001, p. 246). Cameroon was colonized by Germany in 1884 and during the colonial administration, came the missionaries who worked together to introduce Western Cultures, Christianize and civilize the people of Cameroon. Gifford (2001, p. 245) argues that social and economic development of Cameroon was a joint venture of both the colonial administrators and the missionaries. The task of this study is not to discuss the history of Cameroon per se.

Nevertheless, to understand how a church movement can be involved in the development of a nation necessitates tracing its colonial history. This is because some of the administrative practices today have their roots from what the colonial and missionary's administration bequeathed the people. This will be done in details in the subsequent chapters. The Christian

women Fellowship CWF was founded in 1961 during the Basel Missionary activities in Cameroon. This movement basically comprises of women who are members of the PCC and carry out social services within the church and society. Since its creation it has been involved in empowering women in diverse fields while also encouraging them to take responsibility for the welfare of the citizens. This study will therefore explore how the Christian Women Fellowship of the PCC in its ministry and mission serve as an agent of transformation through its empowerment and humanitarian activities within the Cameroonian context.

The CWF falls within the administration of the Women's Work Department (WWD) of the PCC which coordinate its activities in congregations and report at the synod meetings. The aim of the WWD through the CWF is thus:

“To educate the women and girls (of 18years upwards) to a clearer understanding of Christian faith; that is teaching them about the gospel of the salvation of Christ. These women are also educated on the importance of serving Christ whole-heartedly in their homes, congregations and community. This process of education is done through work done in the women's work institutions, CWF groups and other women in the congregations. It also tries to unite the Presbyterian women with other Christian women movements at home and abroad” (CWF hand book 1994, p.5).

This group has been in existence for a period of 54 years. In November 2001, the CWF celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Their motto is: Serve the Lord with Joy and greetings when they meet in a gathering is taken from 2 Cor. 5:17 “if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation; the Old has gone, the new has come”. What then makes this group unique within the PCC and the Cameroon society can be seen in the activities carried out beyond the church confines as a praxis model of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

### **1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

Social and humanitarian activities are not much of a public debate within the Cameroonian society. Most of the social responsibilities like care for orphans, widows, and disabled are in the hands of the government who cannot always meet up to their very urgent needs. School drop-outs and young girls forced into early and unwanted marriages are even less discussed within the community. The CWF movement has been playing a significant role and. This study aims to show that women are important contributors in the social welfare of the people in Cameroon.

Though Cameroonian government advocate for a non-interference of the church into state politics that is to say, the church does not directly get involved in politics in Cameroon. But however, the two cannot actually stay separated because the individuals who make up the state are the same who occupy the church benches every Sunday as Christians. Both state and church owe their existence and authority to God. It is therefore at the church's disposition as God's mouth piece to stand out and speak on behalf of the people by addressing both the oppressed and the oppressors. This study therefore seeks to bring to light the activities of the CWF as they empower each other and other women within the church and the society to socially the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in particular and to the Cameroonian society as a whole and also the various ways by which they carry out their activities.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

Research key question: How do the women of the CWF empower themselves and other women within the church and the community?

The central motive of the research was to explore the activities of the CWF and how they are transforming themselves from a small women's group within the church to empowerment, and also sought to find out the role played by the CWF in the empowerment of women within the church and community?

##### **1.4.1 Research Sub-Questions**

- What doctrinal reason(s) inform the mission of the CWF in carrying out activities in the Tiko municipality?
- To what extent has CWF activities improve on the conditions of Cameroonians?
- How are the women sustaining their empowerment activities in the church and society?
- What are the new images or motifs that could be used in developing a balanced egalitarian community?

### **1.4.2 Research Objectives**

- To examine the aims and objectives of the CWF group.
- To explore the level at which the CWF activities has influenced the church and the community.
- To examine the strength and weaknesses of the activities of the CWF group.
- To propose additional methods that can help develop church state relationship for the betterment of its citizens.

## **1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is only a very small amount of literature on the work done by women within the society therefore making a huge gap in tracing research material. Cameroon like many other nations of the world and Africa in particular, make little or no reference to the contributions made by women towards the development of their communities and nation. Therefore, women's efforts towards the development of their nations are not adequately recognized. This assertion has been equally echoed by Kah (2011) in his analysis of the role played by the Western Grass fields' women in the liberation struggles against colonial rule in Cameroon. He observed that "though the women of the Western grass fields played a cutting edge role in the liberation of Cameroon...however, it has unfortunately not achieved the same attention as that of men" (2011, p. 67). Similarly, Strobel (1982, p. 510) contests that; Women's history still appears a relatively undeveloped field in Africa. Thus the history of women is still in its infancy. Not enough is known about African women, and African histories scarcely mention women let alone their contributions to the development of their communities.

Furthermore, most research that has been carried out on women within the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon has focused more on their leadership marginalization. Ekum Manfred (June 1995) , uses both a sociological and religious approach to bring out his argument in relation to the place of women in society and the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. He does an analysis on the place of women in the Jewish, Greek and Islamic societies and concludes by saying that the place of women in these societies is an unfavourable one filled with subordination. In relation to women in the P.C.C, he notes that women participate fully in local congregational activities but to him, this participation is more of helping. For example, he says "The Christian

Women Fellow (CWF) of the P.C.C has a strong influence on the church's social matters and Christian morality but in matters of church government, they have no influence because they have not been given the chance to participate". He notes that constitutionally women have a better place in the PCC but the reality proves the contrary.

Munyam Winifred Angwi (1999) in her thesis uses a sociological and religious approach to present the role of the CWF in the enhancement of God's kingdom in the PCC. She presents the different domain of activities the women involve themselves in both as individuals and as a group in and out of the church. She concludes by making it evident that the CWF stands out as a strong force in evangelization in the PCC.

Mary Mbole Salle (2001) in her Bachelors thesis also, uses a religious, sociological and historical approach to explain the changing roles of women in the society and the church. To her, women were not recognized in the church in Cameroon because they were merely support workers. Their role consisted of keeping the church house clean, decorating it with flowers, taking care of the linen and making sure they were clean. Women were allowed to lead bible studies only amongst themselves. Positive changes have taken place as a result of the Ecumenical Decade of churches in Solidarity with women and the presence of Christian Women Fellowship of the P.C.C. The role of women in the P.C.C now includes reading of lessons, leading of worship, preaching, serving as elders and handling of finances. Despite all this, what has made things more difficult in the church is the fact the scripture has been used to support the idea that women are inferior to men and that women are not supposed to teach. Therefore, limiting the notion of empowerment that PCC advocate for its members.

Jonas N. Dah (2007) uses a historical approach to describe the Basel Mission (Present day PCC) Education from Trusteeship to post-colonial period. He notes that the training college at the time was exclusively for boys. No attention was paid to female education before the Second World War (W.W.II). Even when schools were opened for girls, the curriculum was limited largely to domestic science and religious instruction. This presents gender gaps which existed as far as education was concerned. Awa (2007, p. 22) as cited in Ekone (2011, p. 14) opines that besides inculcating western cultures to the Africans, the missionary bodies introduced education with the intention of training future religious leaders (priest/pastors), as their main objective was to Christianize the colonies. "At that epoch boys were preferred over girls, as they could accompany the colonial masters in exploring the hinterlands for the acquisition of necessary raw material" (2007, p. 22).

Ekone (2011) in her thesis uses a missiological and historical approach to present the empowerment of women in the PCC. According to her, the Presbyterian ecclesial policies during colonial era severely restricted the role that females could play in the governance of the church as well as the society. There was strict division of labour along gender lines with men given prominence in area leadership role that were considered to be powerful and strategic. However the work of the Women's Work Department over the years in empowering women and working in partnership with men of the church has exposed the inadequacy of the church policies that discriminated and disempowered women. She ends by concluding that, the implementation of PCC policy documents (Gender policy and PCC Constitution) to enhance the evangelistic mission of the church faces some challenges that warrant an exploration of what God's mission is about and how the PCC can live out this mission to have a just community of women and men in partnership with God's mission in their context.

Talking about the contributions made by women in the development of Cameroon, Salle (2001, p. 20) identifies the CWF movement of the PCC as one of those agencies that has empowered and improved a lot of women in Cameroon. "The CWF has emerged to lift women out of poverty through its educational programmes and activities that target mostly women. For women to be economically independent, income generating activities are taught to women who do not work outside their homes" (2001, p. 21). The aim of this movement was to improve a lot of women who could not participate in development and decision so as to improve their status within the community. CWF members have become bread winners in their families by engaging in income generating activities and they have equally gained knowledge of basic human rights.

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study is a historical and systematic analysis of the contribution done by the CWF movement as an agent of social and economic development and empowerment within the church and Cameroonian society as identify in literature review. Its method is non-empirical and drew data from already existing sources. This involved collecting written information as found in published and unpublished materials such as; journals, books, articles and internet resources. Basically, this study is primarily a literature study that involved an extensive literature search on the subject of religious, social and economic development. Therefore the literature that has been used include other research done on women as agencies of development

and empowerment within Cameroon and the world at large. The study was done in the library at the Det Teologiske Menighets Fakultet of Oslo and other cluster libraries within Oslo and internet sources. The aspects of my social method which fall under data collection are theories of development, gender theory and the gender approach and concept of gender mainstreaming. These chosen aspects have been discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter that deals with theories.

## **1.7 MOTIVATION**

Most history records on development speak very little on what women have done or are doing in the advancement of their society. Their works are either taken for granted by many historians as such most history books do not have records of how women participated or contributed to the political, economic, religious and social welfare of their communities. Thus I thought it is high time to start writing and documenting the activities of women groups done for the welfare of humanity and in a way for the growth of God's Kingdom. It is with this background that I have explored the question; what has been the situation of women in Cameroon as regards their participation in the social welfare, economic, political and religious life of the nation? To what extent have they been involved in the empowerment process? What has contributed to the low recognition of women's involvement in Humanitarian activities?

Secondly as a practicing Presbyterian I have observed the CWF group carry out social services within the community. This activities are not only limited to members of the group or church but even to non-Presbyterians as they reach out to prisoners, poor and needy children HIV/AIDS infected persons and a host of others which to me calls for exploring to see what is motivating them to carry out these activities. Gana (2001, p. 66) attest to the fact that; the CWF movement served as a role model to other churches that have come up with their own versions like the Baptist Women's Union and the Catholic Women's Associations. It has served as a model for the nation (Cameroon) that copied the idea of forming a female political wing of its party -Women of Cameroon National Union (W.C.N.U) and the Women of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (WCPDM) in order to mobilize women better. This implies that the CWF has been a pacesetter within the nations building.

Learning about religion and humanity in my master degree has drawn my attention to activities of the women in Cameroon, like the CWF to reflect on how religion can influence people to be agents of transformation which lead to empowerment, development and wellbeing of the

society. It is generally believed that a people's religious inclination has a bearing on the way they live out their faith.

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

This study comprises of six chapters and the first chapter has provided a guide on how the dissertation flows; general introduction, background and identification of research problem, significance of the research, research question and objectives, research sub-questions, research objectives, Literature review, methodology and research design, motivation, general structure of the work and conclusion.

- The second chapter deals with theoretical frame work.
- Chapter three deals with the methodology
- Chapter four deals with the context and also explores the activities of the CWF. This chapter focuses on the activities of the church's Department of Women's Work and the Women Education and Empowerment Programme (WEEP) and assess their contributions toward the empowerment of women and women's activities within the society.
- Chapter five looks at the findings and also analyse the activities of the CWF, examining the strength and weaknesses of the CWF activities.
- Chapter six looks at the general conclusion and the way forward in the form of proposals.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has examined the background, motivation, research questions and sub-questions, objectives, the methodology that guides my research findings, literature review, and significance of the research. In sum the chapter has set the general overview of how the entire work is structured and foundation of the project. The next chapter deals with the theoretical framework and a detailed research methodology that serves as a compass or the analytical tool for the work follows in chapter three.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORIES**

After looking at the general introduction in the previous chapters, I shall now be looking at the theoretical framework in this study. This chapter shall comprise of theories of development, gender theory and theory preventive health work.

#### **2.1 Theories of Development**

Basically, development has been defined as change. Robert Chambers in 1997, added a positive side to the definition describing development as a “good change”; though many people will disagree and call development a “bad change” (Hopper p. 10). Therefore it is important to look at the intention of development and not just the meaning of development. Yet it is difficult to determine what the intentions of development are because it has so many approaches, theories and areas of interest. Also development is not only experienced by developing countries, but it is experienced by all countries and regions.

Over the years, development has moved from being concerned basically with economic growth, to paying attention to human life, thereby attaching importance to political freedom and welfare target (Hopper p.11).

In the 1960's, it was realized that development seemed to have been affected by both men and women whereby the benefits of economic growth trickled down to the poor families (Momsen, 2004, p. 11). But still in the urban areas, employment opportunities for women in industries, trade and commerce is reducing and also there has been a reduction of their role in agriculture in rural areas due to the technological advancement. This general decline in the role of women can be attributed to the increase discrimination and exclusion of women. With the emergence of the feminist critique or the “second wave” feminism, who have develop in vigour and influence, raising a strong standard against bias, a number of gender and development approaches have emerged. This include the gender approach (WID) Women in Development, which called for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, and emphasize on the need to integrate women into the development process. GAD was focused on the socially constructed basis of the differences between men and women and emphasize on the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations. There is also the empowerment approach and the most recent is the gender mainstreaming which is aimed at promoting gender equality.

The UN Millennium Development Goals were a type of trend within development expressed by Allan Thomas in 2000, which synthesized the various declarations and targets from the numerous international summits and conferences held during the 1990s and was later adopted by the UN in September 2000. This MDGs consisted of eight goals which were to be achieved by 2015, with the intention of eradicating poverty and to pursue development. These MDGs include;

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development (Hopper, p.13).

Other authors have come up different approaches which are in line with development theories. They are also alternative theories and include; human development approach, gender approach, environmental approach and post development approach (Payne 2010).

### **2.1.2 Human Development Approach (Capacity Approach)**

The Human Development Approach sees development more from a point of view of the human rather than from a societal angle; such as the church may start up a project and then the government comes in to support the project. For example, the church may build a school and the government employ the teachers. In the human development approach, we have the “basic needs” approach which I shall be looking at. This approach argues that basic needs are not associated to the benefits of the poor, their employment opportunities or their income. Basic needs is usually linked to religious values, and religion is the moral basis for basic needs on individual level and on a societal level. However, it is important to device roles to target the poor and the unemployed. Basic needs approach further states that it is important that development be about the satisfying the basic needs of all human beings. The goal of the basic needs should be prioritized above the aggregate national growth and should seek to improve on the living standards (Payne, 2010, p. 119-120). The basic needs is championed by the World

Bank under the presidency of Robert McNamara and the ILO (Hopper, 2012). The basic needs approach places more emphasis on the need for the following;

- Food, shelter, clothing and other necessities for survival
- The need for access to service such as, clean drinking water, health care, sanitation, public transport, at least primary education and so on
- The need for people to be able to participate in political decision-making that affect their lives (ILO 1976, also Streeten et al 1982) (Payne 2010, p.120)

Summarily, development therefore should be basically to satisfy the needs of all human beings and that the development agenda should be reoriented to prioritize these goals over the aggregate national growth and should seek to improve on the living standards (Payne, 2010, p. 119-120).

The Human Right Development Approach is another human development approach which was launched by the United Nations (UN) as a development program and thus became United Nation Development Program (UNDP). It was part of the annual Human Development Report (HDR), which was first published in 1990. It first laid the foundation of the basic needs development approaches (UI Haq 1976, 1995; Haq and Ponzio, 2008). According to this approach, Human Development is a process of enlarging people's choices including the ability to live a long and healthy life; that is to be educated, enjoy a decent standard of living, political freedom, human rights and self-respect (Payne, 2010, 123).

## **2.2 The Gender Approach and Concept of Gender Mainstreaming**

In 1962 the UN general assembly commissioning report on women in development (WID) called for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, and emphasize on the need to integrate women into the development process. It argued that women are been marginalized in the development policies and in the reproductive economy. Women were paid less than the men who did the same activities with them in rural activities, which was contrary to Article 23 section 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; which states that:

- Article 23(1): Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

- Article 23(2): Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone is considered equal irrespective of sex, religion and race. This marginalization has greatly affected women's status and reinforced patterns of exclusion and deprivation and thus leaving basic needs very unsatisfied in a very particular gendered way.

GAD has under minded the impact of religious beliefs, values and organization on gender issues, despite the relation between the values and women status (Seguino, 2011). Yet religion is often seen as an obstacle to women's access to employment, health care or education. In the mainstream, there has been a failure on the part of the feminists to transform gender relations through engaging with feminist interpretations of their tradition and also lack of interest towards religion. But the return of religion to the public sphere particularly after the 9/11 incident, saw religion as mark of identity and thus development should consider religion as an important factor (Thomas, 2005) (Matthew Clarke 2013, p. 183).

Religion has been gaining grounds in development because of its engagement in Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and most of GAD programmes are involve in religious issues through partnership with organizations that fight for the right of women within a religious framework (Bradley, 2006, 2010; Tadors, 2010, 2011) (Matthew Clarke, 2013, p. 184).

A UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which was aimed at targeting the financial aid at the world's poorest women conference was formed after the Mexico City and by 1985, 127 countries established ministries for women and other institutions to help in women's advancement and participation in development (United Nation 1999:6) (Hopper 2012, p.94). These bodies working with the WID's approach set up women centred projects to increase women's income and it was also aimed at bringing women into development through increased economic and educational opportunities. This approach under minded the obstacles of culture and religion towards its achievements.

### **2.3 Concept of Gender Mainstreaming**

“Gender mainstreaming” can be defined as the systematic integration of the needs, concerns and priorities of men and women in to development. It is an organizational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability. (Reeves and Baden, 2000). “Gender mainstreaming” can also be said to be the process of accessing and addressing the implications of policies,

legislations and social programs on women and men (irrespective of class, location, etc.). To ensure gender equality, this strategy seeks to incorporate the concerns of women and men in all areas of society (political, social, and economic) through all modes of policy-making and implementation. (World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Op. Cit p.17).

Gender mainstreaming includes two approaches: The Agenda-setting approach and the integrationist approach.

### **2.3.1 Women in Development (WID) Integrationist approach**

Liberal feminists in the 1970's reacted to the fact that women were being seen as passive beneficiaries of development; housewives. This marked an important corrective highlights and awareness to the fact that women needed to be integrated into development processes as active agents for efficient and effective development to be achieved. The WID approach called for greater attention to women in development policy and practice and emphasize on the need to integrate women into the development process. Women had to be strengthened to have positions within the labour market and be included in the market economy and earn wages. Women need to have access to education, be employed and have control and ownership of resources and access to credit. The WID sought to integrate women completely in the economic and political system and this was greatly supported by the government and international organization; and women were then involved in development and aid issues.

Ester Boserup in her book 'Woman's Role in Economic Development', 1970, wrote that women were more affected by modernization, and that the more women carried out domestic labour and child care, the more education was preserved for men. It is therefore for these reasons that WID thought women should be integrated in development for efficient and effective development to be achieved. Women are "Untapped Resource" (Moser, 1993, p.3). Despite its great support from the government, international organization and faith based organizations, the WID was however still criticized.

### **2.3.2 Gender and Development (GAD) (Agenda – setting)**

According to the Gender and Development approach women's position cannot be considered in isolation from that of men (Moser, 1993, p.2). This approach therefore insist on gender

relation measures to 'help' women in the development process (Moser, 1993, p.3). It is aimed at tackling the issue of patriarchy, racism and capitalism. It also thought that gender was a wide international system and had other forms such as social inequality and hierarchy. It is also important to know that other forces such as political, economic religious and racial, influence gender relations. For this reason, GAD focuses on the interrelationship between family, household, economic and political spheres (Kate Young, 1993) (Hopper, 2012, p.108-109).

### **2.3.3 Women and Development (WAD)**

In this approach, the dependency feminists thought that the real source of women's oppression was ignored; that is the global capitalism and needed to change the power structure that was given to women. In this system, women are basically used to raise children who will become the next generation, providing unpaid labour and also take care of their male partners and making sure they are ready for work each day. Women were been exploited and used as a source of cheap labour, and their working conditions were worse than that of men. Their works and earnings were seen as supplementary to that of their male bread winners. The WAD states that women have always been a part of development process; it is the process that has been the problem.

During the UN Woman's World Conference in Mexico City, 1975, different perspectives emerged from the northern and the southern women, who laid emphasis on the achievement of gender equality and access to clean drinking water and having adequate shelter, respectively (Sen and Grown, 1987; Young 2002) (Hopper 2012, p.107-108).

### **2.3.4 Environmental Approach**

The Environmental Approach like others set out to criticize the neoliberal theories firstly in their omission of non-economic factors from systematic consideration according a highly utilitarian manner in which the natural environment was integrated into neoliberal understandings of development, where natural resources were identified as providing 'services' for production, the sustaining of life and aesthetic appeal. Natural resources were then treated in highly misleading ways as a form of natural capital which could be accumulated or depleted in the same ways as other forms of capital (Woodhouse, 2002, p. 143) (Payne 2010, p. 133).

This approach was not concern with standard accounting practices which are based on measurements of market transactions. No account is given for the depreciation from environmental degradation and the cost of natural resource exploitation (Helleiner 1989), not only in terms of physical damage, but also in matters of health or destruction of livelihood, which is in terms of sustainable human development.

The Environmental approach is however criticized on the ground of basic needs, human development and gender. More emphasis were laid on areas related to hunger, famine and food security (Sen, 1981, Dreze and Sen 1989) and the need to ensure greater ownership of land and resources in the interest of conservation and sustainability (Payne 2010, p.135).

## **2.4 Gender Theory**

Gender can be referred to as the socially acquired notion of masculinity and femininity by which men and women are identified. Because gender is a socially constructed relation between men and women (Hopper, 2012, p. 93), it is something created by the social environment (Mary Holmes, 2007, p. 1&3). Gender equality means accepting and valuing equally the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society (Council of Europe, 1998, p.7 and 8).

When we come to the way human beings should behave, women are expected to act according to certain norms, defined earlier by another culture in another time (Wanda Deifelt 1997, p.49). The Bible has had a strong hold on the Presbyterian Church in Likomba and has been used to keep women bound to subordinate positions in the church with limited power in making decisions which affect them.

But thanks to gender analysis, new possibilities have been brought up to look at the social, political, and cultural and even religious institutions which carryout gender-based inequalities. There is some awareness on the issues of equal rights and sex discrimination in many countries, yet there are still many barriers to be broken, most especially the barriers to women's participation in the public sphere, including the church.

The Christian community has been slow to recognize and accept gender as a critical issue within the church. While strong voices of women and a few men have been heard in the search for a just community of women and men, their struggles have not met with the same level of

interest and concern as other social justice issues. The church is still faced with situations where women are not accepted as leaders.

Inequality between men and women is one of the crucial issues in Cameroon in general and within the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, and the Likomba-Tiko parishes in particular. This is because we are living in a world which is organized around the idea that women and men have different bodies, capabilities, needs, and even desires. And gender being a social construction generally agrees on 'Patriarchy' which is a social system in which men have a dominant position over women (Mary Holmes, p.2). Even within a matriarchal family where the woman is the head and even when it is generally said 'behind every successful man is a strong woman', and that women are the 'mothers of the nation', she is not fully regarded and respected. Amartya Sen maintain that the political, economic and social participation of women within development is "a crucial aspect of development as freedom" (2001, p.203) (Hopper, 2012, p.93). Yet women are generally still been discriminated upon in getting education, at work place and even in the church.

The Christian community in Cameroon and the world at large have been slow to recognize and accept gender as a critical issue within the church. Yet both men and women have been struggling to have a community with equal opportunities. Women are usually not allowed to take part in policy decisions which affect them. It is for this reason that the Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon have increasingly focused on gender inequality, particularly on the rural women some of whom are widows, and on the education of the young girls, and also empowering them through the WWD. They also focused on assisting in educating the orphans and the less privileged, particularly in the case of those affected by HIV/AIDS (patients and victims)

We are all created in the image of God, to be equal and responsible as we care for God's creation. The Holy Spirit empowers us all, (Nyirenda, 2013). Christ Jesus in His Ministry never mentioned male or female; instead he embraced everyone equally into the ministry. This shows that in Christ there is no such thing as gender. We are all made in the likeness and image of God. In the same way, the CWF has embraced everyone as one; as they are concerned with the health and wellbeing of both men and women, young and old, orphans and widows alike.

Meanwhile, looking at Esther Boserup's theory, 1974, she believed in the possibility of better opportunities of work and education for women, which gives women the opportunity to have access to education and technology. This is especially in the case of the young girls who are

usually not given much opportunity to be educated, particularly children whose parents died of HIV/AIDS and are been stigmatized; and to the women who were never really given the opportunity to have good education as young girls and as such cannot afford to get well paid jobs. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has critical implications on women's welfare and their role in social development and millions of women in the world are faced with the triple challenge of poverty, gender discriminations and living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS/UNFPA/UNIFEM, 2004).

Notwithstanding, the responsibility of caring for the sick generally rest on the shoulders of women and as a consequence, the young girls usually drop out of school to assist with domestic chores and look after patients, (Ester Boserup, 1970). This greatly affects a woman's well-being and her economic activities as disempowerment of the woman usually begins in the household. Whereas in the case of both man and woman being infected, priority for treatment is given to the man. And in the event where the woman dies, he owns lands and other properties and is given support with the care of the children. But in case the man dies, his widow undergoes so much torture and everything is ceased from her. And she will be left to fend for herself and the children (UNAIDS/UNFPA/UNIFEM, 2004).

Women's empowerment does not only concern the women, but also men and the society as a whole. Gender inequality affects both men and women and as well as the growth and development of society. Gender analysis therefore has come to serve as an eye opener to look into the social, political, cultural and even religious institutions which perpetuate gender hierarchies and gender-based inequalities though there are still obstacles when it comes to women's participation in the public sphere, especially when it comes to the church. Yet, Jesus' attitude towards women in the Bible, suggest that he would give them equal status to men and an equal right to make decisions about their own destinies. It could be argued therefore that Jesus would wish to see the role and status of women and their diaconal work fully valued and recognized. This could also be seen how he believed in the women so much so that he revealed himself to the women after resurrection and they came to realize that he was the Messiah, the Son of God who was to come into the world (John 11:26-27) (Oduyoye 2008,p.83).

The Christian community in Cameroon and the world at large have been slow to recognize and accept gender as a critical issue within the church. Both men and women have struggled to have a community with equal opportunities. Nevertheless, the concept of "gender" is gradually

being accepted both in societies and in churches all over the world, in Cameroon and Tiko - sub division in particular.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has examined the theoretical framework of this study where I have defined the necessarily terms. The following theories were used by the author in the analysis of the issues of the CWF empowerment activities within the PCC and the society. Theories of development, concepts of gender mainstreaming and gender theory were equally discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This part of the thesis deals with the method that was used in collecting data. Information was collected from the library at The Norwegian School of Theology (MF), other cluster libraries within Oslo and internet sources and also from the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) such as the PCC Book of Orders. Data was also collected from the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) handbook used for their annual leadership course and pamphlets produced for their annual rallies and anniversaries, and other articles published on the Internet related to the topic.

I have used the qualitative research method in this study because it lays emphasis on the words and not on quantity in the collection and analysing of data collected (Bryman, 2012.p. 380). This method of collecting data has its advantages and disadvantages and they have been discussed below. This study did not involve any field work, but rather it is based on analysing existing documents and reports that have been written so far on the subject of this study. I also prefer the qualitative method because it involves basically the analysing of unstructured data. This study is a historical and systematic analysis of the contributions done by the CWF movement of the PCC acts as an agent of development and empowerment in the church and in the Cameroonian society as a whole in their works for the orphans and widows and people living with HIV and AIDS.

Today women are being empowered to assist in the households in order to support their families and in all the activities in the society. This is done to promote gender equality.

It is a non-empirical method and drew data from already existing sources. Therefore to answer the questions, I have used information from CWF hand outs and other literature from Seminars, workshops organized by CWF. I have also used information from the internet about the CWF of Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in general. I equally used books from the university library with information related to religion, development, Faith Based Organizations (FBO) and other relevant material for this thesis.

I used my knowledge from personal observation of the activities of the CWF as a member of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and raised by parents who occupied positions of

responsibilities within the church. I also used my knowledge acquired from my studies in Religion Society and Global Issues (RSGI).

My method of collecting data also involved collecting written information as found in published and unpublished materials such as; journals, books and internet resources. Basically, this study is more a literature study that involves an extensive literature search on the subject gender equality, theories of development and HIV and AIDS and how it is affecting humankind.

After the descriptive presentation of the data, I have critically analysed and discussed my findings using the theories of development, theory of economic development and gender theory. I have used the perspective of Christian beliefs and Presbyterian doctrines and teachings.

### **3.2. SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis one of the many possible strategic planning tools, used to evaluate the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats involved either in a project or, any other situation requiring a decision in a business or project. It is an important tool that is used for understanding of how an organization works in a given environment. It involves specifying the objectives of the project and identifying the internal and external factors characterizing the positive and negative achievements of the objective. The best way to understand an organization is by looking at its strengths, its weaknesses, opportunities and threats. SWOT can be defined as:

- S - Strength are internal attributes of the project which are helpful to the project and give it more advantages in relation to others.
- W - Weaknesses are internal attributes of the project which are harmful bring in more disadvantages in relation to others.
- O - Opportunities are external conditions that are helpful to the project and could be exploited to its own convenience and advantage.
- T - Threats which are external conditions that are harmful and could be of disadvantage to the project or cause problem to the project (G.J.Hay& G.Castilla).

I have used the SWOT analysis to understand the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba and their involvement in social development works.

This SWOT analysis has helped in the understanding of the works of the CWF. I also used the SWOT in this study because it has helped to review how the movement works in the struggle for social development and gender equality. This tool has also helped in bringing out the factors that influence the functioning of the CWF, bringing out its weaknesses, threats and strength.

### **3.3. Relevance of documents in social research**

Documents are very important in a social research because they are often viewed as entities which possess power and meanings even long after their authors have died. Documents can be used as a source of data or as a topic. When used as a resource, the researcher focuses entirely on what is in the document and when used as a topic, a researcher focuses on how documents come into being (Silverman 2011, p. 95).

### **3.4. Advantages and disadvantages of documents analysis**

Carrying out research work on the fields to collect data is very expensive, though it is important for the researcher to do design and also analysis the data collected. Because of this cost, many researchers now rely on pre-prepared material as a source of data for their research work. This method has numerous advantages as well as disadvantages. One advantage is that there are virtually no expenses involved when one is using available data (Tayie 2005, p. 13).

People may tend to hold back information in an interview in the case of a primary source of collecting data which could hinder the smooth course of the research. In this case it is therefore advantageous to use the secondary source of data collection which will give the researcher an accurate picture on the subject being researched. Some people may tend to leave out crucial information during interviews which is unlikely when using document analysis.

Even though secondary source of data is easy to collect and handle, the documents used can be limited in nature. Also the aspect of human error which often takes place when the person handling documents does not follow strict criteria in the evaluation of the documents, and also the researcher is 'locked' and limited to the idea of his or her research because the data already exist. This keeps the researcher bound and limited to the material at hand and as such he can't carry further investigation as he wishes to get more information. In such a situation, if the

information was poorly gathered, this will mean the researcher may present findings that are inaccurate (Taiyie 2005, p. 13)

However, the secondary method of collecting data still remains the cheapest and thus convenient means of collecting data.

### **3.5. Legitimacy**

This research has depended on the cooperation of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and Christian Women Fellowship movement of the PCC for information. Most of the information obtained through documents has been through articles, pamphlets, and other books the church and the movement. When the request for these documents was presented to the church and the movement, it was declared that the information was for the purpose of writing the thesis. Therefore, the information obtained from these documents has been done with permission and knowledge of the owner, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and the Christian Women Fellowship.

### **3.6. Sources of Documents**

The CWF of the PCC form part of the civil society which is aimed at promoting the welfare of the citizens. They form part of faith based organizations (FBO) which are part of the wide spectrum of civil society. This group has been chosen for this particular study because, as members of the civil society organizations, they possess great advantages. These advantages enable them to reach the grass root people and not only to reach them but also to influence them. In the process of gathering information, it was discovered that few documents have been written on the works of the Christian Women in challenging gender inequality within the church and the society. Therefore, the information concerning what the Christian Women Fellowship movement of the PCC are doing in challenging gender equality in Cameroon was collected from the documented sources.

### **3.7. Background**

In this study, I have reviewed on the works of some social scientists, anthropologists and sociologist scholars and some Presbyterian Church documents. There are also some other

books I equally reviewed which were of great help and enlightened me on development, human and economic concepts.

- Paul Hopper, (2012), *Understanding Development*. In this book I shall look at theories of development and approaches.
- Anthony Payne (2010), *Development*, it contains various theories of development.
- Jeffrey Haynes (2007), *Religion and Development: conflict and Cooperation?* This book talks about the role of religion in development and the rise of faith based organization.
- *Christian Women Fellowship Handbook*, Department of Women's Work (2009). This book talks about the vision and mission of the Women's Work Department of the CWF within the congregation, the community and the society at large.
- GANA, E. 2001. "History of CWF as a Development Agent". In Gana, E. (ed) *Christian women move on in Faith and Hope in Christ*.
- Risto A. Ahonen (2006), *Mission in the New Millennium* talks about the church, evangelization and development aid.
- Kim Sebastian and Kim Kristeen (2008), *Christianity as a world Religion*.
- Deneulin Severin with Bano Masooda (2009), *Religion in Development: Rewriting the Secular Script*. It talks on economic growth, human development approaches, basic needs, religious freedom.

Other material includes articles obtained from the Internet. Books and published reports have been obtained from the library at the Norwegian College of Theology (MF). These are the documents that have been used as data sources for this study and most of the reports and documents have been sourced from the various reports accessed from the Internet.

### **3.8. Data collection challenges**

The success of a thesis which depends solely on documents, articles and books related to the topic equally depends on the availability of these sources. That is, its completion and success depends on the quality of the material you get and how soon you get them. In the course of this research, a few challenges were met with while gathering information.

The first challenge was getting information from the Presbyterian Church in Likomba and the Christian Women Fellowship of the Likomba congregation. A lot of emails were sent and calls were made to follow up the acquisition of the documents and this took a long time before the information could be reached. This caused a lot of delay in the progress of the thesis.

Carrying out this research on Cameroon from Norway has been a major challenge. The distance between the two countries and the level of communication network has been quite an issue. The emails that were sent could not be easily assessed, due to the poor network system in Cameroon, particularly in the South West Region (SWR) of Cameroon. The SWR is one of the English speaking marginalized regions of Cameroon. The difficulty in getting information from and responses through emails was and is still coupled to the fact that for some months now, the Cameroon government (La Republique du Cameroun) has ordered the total and complete shut down of all internet services in these two English speaking regions of Cameroon (North West and South West Regions). This has and is still making communication and availability of material for this research very difficult to get. Even more disturbing was the fact that people have to move to nearby towns of the in the French speaking regions to get access to the internet, but this has not been easy either because of the bad roads and the heavy military presence on the road and 'check points'. This scares people from moving around freely.

This method of research ended up to be expensive because the phone calls that were made to get the necessary documents were costly. This is was due to lack of internet services which made it impossible for free and cheap calls on the social media like whatsapp, viber, Skype. The 'sit down' demonstration commonly called 'ghost town' in Cameroon also made it difficult to get documents. Places are shut down, vehicles and other means of transportation stopped. In fact no circulation. Therefore even if one succeed in a call, moving around to get the documents was difficult.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the important insights concerning my research project. This has been a desktop research hence it has relied on the use of published documents, journals, books as well as internet sources for the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and the Christian Women Fellowship. For this reason, it has been ensured that the data obtained from the Internet is factual. The various documents published by different organisations on the subject that were used in this research, were compared to ensure that the information gotten is correct.

Most of the documents were obtained from the Presbook in Limbe, South West Region contained information about the CWF and their activities and the history of the PCC. The other information concerning the Ecumenical Decade of Churches, the WEEP and the WWD has been obtained mainly from published reports and articles about their activities on the Internet.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONTEXT**

#### **4.1 Brief History of Cameroon**

Cameroon was colonized by Germany in 1884 and during their colonial administration came the missionaries who worked together to introduce Western Cultures and Christianized the people of Cameroon. Buea became the first capital and Yaoundé later became the final seat of the capital of Cameroon. German administration in the country lasted for thirty-two years, 1884-1916; after which they were defeated and ousted from the territory following the outbreak of the First World War (Willibrood 2015, pg. 80). After the defeat of the Germans in the war, Cameroon was given to France and Britain as mandated territories, with France having 80% of the territory formerly known as East Cameroon, while Britain got 20% of the territory adjacent to Nigeria formerly known as West Cameroon under the British administration. But today the former west Cameroon is called Southern Cameroon.

The country came under the UN's trusteeship in 1946 after the World War II, self-government was granted, and the Cameroon People's Union party was formed. They campaigned for reunification of French and British Cameroon and for independence. After independence in 1960, the two Cameroons were reunited, at first as a Federal state in 1961 and later in 1972 as a Unitary State (Ngoh, 1996). After independence, Cameroon was ruled by the Former Late President Ahmadou Ahidjo until November 4, 1982 when he resigned from power as president and handed over to Paul Biya who then was his prime minister. And since 1982 up till date Paul Biya has been the president of Cameroon, chairman of the ruling party; Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM) and also the commander in chief the Armed Forces. (Gary Cordner, AnnMarie Cordner and Dilip K. Das, 2010, p. 27).

#### **4.2 Geography**

Cameroon is located in Central African region slightly to the north of the Equator. It has a triangular- shaped and is bounded to the West by Nigeria, North East Chad, and East by Central African Republic, South by Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. (Delancey & Mokebe, 1990,p. 1).

Cameroon has a land area of 469,440 square kilometres, and an estimated population of 23,130,708 million by 2014, with a growth rate of 2.6%. Yaoundé the administrative capital of Cameroon, has a population of about 2.432 million and its largest city which is also its economic capital Douala, has a population of about 2.449 million. Over 70% of the working population of Cameroon are engaged in agriculture and 13% in Industry and Commerce (U.S. Department of State).

There are ten regions in Cameroon and only two are English speaking – Northwest and Southwest regions. With its Bilingual nature, the French speaking Cameroonians (Francophone) occupied three-fourth (3/4) of Cameroon population (Njeuma, 1990). For administrative convenience the country has been divided into regions with each subdivided into several divisions and subdivisions (Gifford 200, p. 245 - 246).

Fig.1 Map of Cameroon



### **4.3 Religion**

Cameroon has about 250 indigenous populations and about the same number of languages and customs. Cameroon is also referred to as "Africa in Miniature" because it offers the diversity of Africa. The constitution of the Republic of Cameroon attests to the fact that "Cameroon is a secular state; the neutrality and independence of the state in respect of all religions shall be guaranteed, freedom of religion and worship shall be guaranteed" (Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon 1996, p.6). There is therefore no state religion as is the case of Norway (where Lutheranism is regarded as the state religion) rather one will find a plurality of churches or denominations in the national territory.

### **4.4 Religious Practices in Cameroon**

There are different ways through which people express their beliefs in this supernatural ruling power and controller of the universe. These different ways are referred to as religious practices. This can either be through prayers, meditations, through secret societies. For instance in Cameroon, before the coming of Christianity, most people practiced idol worship (Tajoche, 2003.p 67).

Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religions are very present with the Christianity being the dominant religion of all, with its population being the largest about 69%, Islam about 21%, and the African traditional religions about 6%. The citizens of Cameroon are entitled to freedom of religion. For this reason, there exist other small religious groups, such as; the Jews, Baha'i.

Islam is the dominant religion in the northern region. The French-speaking people mostly inhabitants of the southern and western regions are mostly Catholics, meanwhile the English speaking Cameroonians from the west are more of Protestants (U.S. Department of State).

### **4.5 Definition of Religion**

"Religion... means the voluntary subjection of oneself to God". The Catholic Encyclopaedia, 1913 (Thomas A. Idinopulos).

Religion is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods". It is also defined as the

belief in the existence of a supernatural ruling power, the creator and controller of the universe. It could be said to be one of the various systems of faith and worship based on such beliefs. (Second Edition Oxford Student Dictionary, p. 526). The cultural and social anthropologist Clifford Geertz also defined religion as “a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, persuasive and long-lasting moods and motivation in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence, and clothing these conceptions with such an aura factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz, 1973. p. 90) (Deneulin and Bano, 2009. p. 57&58).

There are many types of religion that exist in the world today, these religions are classified into two major categories; namely the theistic religion, where there is God or gods to be worshipped, or non-theistic religion. Theistic religion can further be divided into two groups that is the monotheistic religion and polytheistic religions. Monotheistic religion is one where by only one God is worshipped. While polytheistic religion is one where many gods are worshipped. Among these religions, are three monotheistic religions which exist; Christianity, Islam and Judaism. (Haynes, 2007. p.15).

#### **4.5.1 Islam**

Islam is the belief in the existence and worship of one God called Allah. The followers of Islam are called Muslims and they believe that Allah is definitely superior to transcendent from human kind. Allah is seen as the creator of the Universe. However, the Muslims are divided into two; the Shia and the Sunnis. The Sunnis are the majority, while the Shia form just about 10-15% of the world’s Muslims (Haynes, 2007. p.22). This division came following the death of Prophet Mohammed in 632. Despite this division, the Shia and the Sunnis still share the same beliefs believing in the Qur’an and the Hadith (Bowker, 2002. p. 284). The Islamic religion which is practiced in Cameroon is the Sunni.

#### **4.5.2 Christianity**

Christianity is a faith whose foundation is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, who is regarded by Christians as the Son of God. Christians believe that through faith in Jesus Christ, salvation and eternal life will be attained (Haynes, 200.p.19). Christianity in Cameroon is made of Catholics, Protestants and evangelicals. They all believe in the existence of one unique God

and in is only son Jesus Christ, through whom he gave the word and the human life that included the experience of suffering in self-sacrifice and that which expressed the loving purpose that the one creator has for every other human life. (Bowker, 2002).

#### **4.5.2.1 Protestants**

In Cameroon, the Protestants are made up of the Presbyterians, Baptists and the Orthodox. The greater part of the Protestants were a split from the Catholic Church. The Protestants are more interested in God's mercy which emphasize that the individual must be converted in a deeply felt experience that result in a profound personal religion owing everything to the new testament, nothing to any government and very little to any organization, larger than a congregation of believers.(Bowker,2002.p.254). The Protestant churches in Cameroon area Baptist, Presbyterians and the Orthodox. But the Orthodox are only present in the Adamawa region of Cameroon.

#### **4.5.2.2 Catholics**

The Catholic Church is a denomination which is very much attached to old tradition. They believe that God acts in history and such they take long view of things which are slow to change. Over the centuries, the Catholic Church developed and the Roman Empire got divided into two; the Eastern and Western administrative units, under Emperor Diocletian. Constantinople and Rome became the capitals. These two later became Christianity in the East and Catholicism in the West (Allen Jr, 2014.p.49-53). In the world today, there exist over 2.3 billion Christians with about 1.2 billion Catholics, 700 million Protestants, and 300 million Orthodox. (Allen Jr, 2014.p.55). In this same light, the population of the Catholics in Cameroon is the highest in the Christian population.

### **4.6 Mission**

'Mission lies at the heart of Christianity' (Deneulin and Bano, 2009, p. 74), and in 'Missio Dei', Eddie Arthur states that "God is the instigator of mission and through the sacrifice of the Son and the empowering presence of the Spirit he is also the one who guarantees the success

of mission. He equally states that God invites us to participate in mission with him” (Eddie, 2009, p. 2).

Mission can be defined as the vocation or calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith. To go out and spread the message of salvation of God which has been revealed through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. In this light, the Father sent the Son and Spirit and in turn the Son sends the church to participate in carrying out the mission (John 20:21) Jesus in John 20:17-20, sends Mary Magdalene on a mission to go and tell his brothers what she had seen. He further send His disciples to go to the world and make disciples of all nations. Mission, then is a divine activity, in which the church is called to participate and the mission of the church is nothing less than the gift of sharing by the Spirit in the Son's mission to the world on behalf of the Father. It is therefore the making of Christ known everywhere in the world. The call to mission begins with baptism which is a sign of incorporation into the Christian family. “Baptism is a sufficient prerequisite for mission and every baptized person becomes part of the people of God, the church” (Gittins, 1993, p. 7) (Ekone, 2011, p. 4).

As observed by Castro; faith and life, individual motivation and the social reform all belong together. Mission therefore significantly renews the society by creating faith in the future and in the peoples own capacity to help themselves (Ahonen, 2006, p. 243). In this same light, the mission of the CWF is to enable Christian women to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and to bring positive changes in all areas of life, at home, in the congregation, in the community and society. David Bosch (1991, p. 390) states that “In the new image, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God...mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission” (Ekone, 2011, p. 4). Looking at the mission in the perspective of the holy apostolic church, the church is known as the body of Christ that participates in the one mission of the true God.

In ‘Transforming Mission’, David Bosch argues that ‘the relationship between the evangelistic and the societal dimensions of the Christian Mission constitutes one of the thorniest areas in the theology and practice of mission’ (Deneulin and Bano, 2009, p. 75).

## **4.7 Brief History of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon**

The history of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon cannot be recounted without tracing it from the time of the English Baptist Missionary Society (EBMS) through the Basel Mission Society (BMS) to the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon today.

### **4.7.1 English Baptist Missionary Society (EBMS)**

The English Baptist Missionary (EBM) were the first Christian missionaries to arrive Cameroon. This team was led in Cameroon by Alfred Saker and they opened mission stations in Duala and Bimbia. Rev. John Clarke of Jericho, Jamaica and Dr. G.K. Prince were sent to Fernando Po to investigate the possibility of mission work on the West Coast of Africa. The English Baptist Missionaries (EBM) then opened schools and taught Western ‘civilizing values’ to the Africans. Under these conditions, the English Baptist began their mission work.

These Missionaries carried out many activities such as preaching of the gospel, training of young people in manual work, home craft, and setting up mission stations. Rev. Merrick opened the first mission station in Bimbia in 1844 in the present working area of the Presbyterian Church and many people were converted. The first printing press in Cameroon was opened, schools were opened and the gospel was translated to local languages.

### **4.7.2 From English Baptist Missionary to Basel Missionary Society (BMS)**

Following the annexation of Cameroon by the Germans on July 14th 1884, the works of the EBM became difficult due to the presence of a new political setting. Things became even more difficult as the Germans insisted on the use of the German language as a language of instruction in schools and for communication. (Keller, 1997.p. 11). This made things uncomfortable for the EBM; and when the German foreign office granted the Basel Mission (Basler Evangelische Missiongesellschaft). It was a German/Swiss Mission that had a long experience in Africa. The German government said it would guarantee free scope of mission work therefore, they thought it will be good for a German Protestant Mission organization to take over work. The Basel Mission then agreed to take over the missionary works of the English Baptists Mission, bought land and buildings from the English Baptist Mission (Keller 1997, p. 13). In 1886, the Basel Mission replaced the EBM (JONAS N. Dah, 2007).

On the 23rd of December, 1886, the first German missionaries arrived at Duala. They were the Rev. Gottlieb Munz and his wife, the Rev. Christian Dilger, the Rev. Johannes Bizer and the Rev. Friederich Becher. Four days after their arrival, the Rev. Friederich Becher, died of Malaria, and the Rev. Bizer wrote to the Home Board thus: “It is the Lord whom it has pleased to introduce our band in such a way. We therefore can and will not withdraw” (Keller, 1997).

The Basel Missionaries came with faith and zeal to plant God’s word in the Cameroonian soil. They didn’t withdraw despite the difficulties they went through with rough terrain, difficult weather, threatened by the deadly malaria fever, they walked long distances into the interiors taking the gospel of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to Cameroonians. Even the intervention of the World War I could not kill the mustard seed that had been planted.

The Basel missionaries continued their works in the British sector of Cameroon and made their presence felt; founded congregations, opened schools and health centres in the two geographical areas; the forest Zone today known as the South West region and the Grass field Zone today known as the North West region of Cameroon (Keller, 1997.p. 56-57) (Ekone, 2011).

On the 13th of November, 1957, the Church became the Presbyterian Church in Southern Cameroon (PCSC). And when Southern Cameroon gained independence on October 1st 1961 by uniting with the then Republic of Cameroon, the name also changed to the Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon (PCWC). But after the referendum of 1972, West Cameroon ceased to exist and the Church’s name was then adjusted to the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) as it is today.

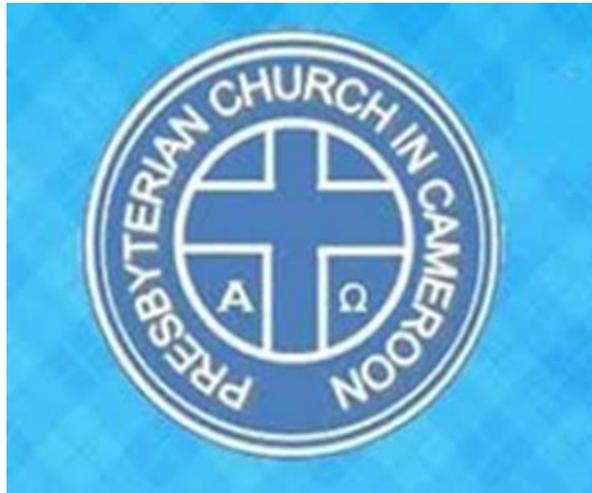
The PCC became a part of the Basel Mission in Switzerland. They followed and continued the theological ideas of their Mother church in Switzerland until 1957 when they became independent from the Basel Mission (Paul Gifford, 1988, p. 281).

Constitutionally the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon was born and it became the successor of the Basel Missionary Society (BMS) (i.e. a joined missionary society of Swiss and Germans) in November, 1957. (Akoko and Oben 2004, p.29).

“The relationship of the church towards the government must be a critical detachment. This will set the church free from any political apron strings and enable it to be free to act as a watch- dog for the society. It is the duty of the church to look critically in to the spirit of the gospel and listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit with the ears of faith. Out of this, the church will be able to determine its call to witness

to society. On the whole, “the church is called to be the watch-man of the society” (PCC BOOK OF Orders 1995, p. 61).

Fig.2 Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Logo



Today the PCC has its stronghold in the English speaking parts of the country; but however from the 1980's the PCC began to expand its evangelistic mission to other regions of Cameroon as a result of the movement of some Anglophones to the French regions. The PCC has approximately one million members in about 1,364 congregations.

The Synod is the highest governing body of the PCC with its seat in Buea- South West Region. The PCC like any other denomination has a hierarchy, with the Moderator being the spiritual head as well as executive head of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. The moderator of the PCC has two terms of office each lasting for five years. But he can be allowed a third term in office “in exceptional cases” (Rabiatu Ibrahim, 2008, p. 182).

The Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) is one amongst the several movements found within the PCC whose evangelistic activities go beyond the confines of the denomination. This study will seek to explore and examine not only the evangelistic activities of the Women's Work Department through the CWF of the Likomba-Tiko Sub-Division and its women empowerment programme, but its engagement in the work for the orphans and widows as agents of social development bringing to light their role, strength and weaknesses so that other groups can emulate and enhance the wellbeing of community.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the brief history and early missionary activities in Cameroon, looking at its influence on the formation of the CWF. The activities of the missionaries greatly impacted the social, political and religious values of Cameroon. In this chapter, I mentioned how the missionaries went around teaching the gospel while their wives gathered women and young girls in the missionary stations and taught them the Bible and trained them on home management. This was the beginning of the formation of the women's fellowship.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN FELLOWSHIP (CWF)**

#### **5.1 The Christian Women Fellowship (CWF), Formation and Representation**

The Christian Women Fellowship CWF was founded in 1961 during the Basel Missionary activities in Kamerun. According to Gana (2001, p. 63) Maria Schlenker and Rose Mary Peter Beyer presented to the Synod of the independent Basel Mission Church in 1961 (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon) by-laws to harmonize and coordinate the activities of the women. This was approved and the name of the movement became Christian Women Fellowship (CWF). The Women's Work Department (WWD) and the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) organizationally, developed from the work started by missionary wives and the female missionaries (Eneme, 1982, p. 48).

The aim of the WWD was:

...To educate the women and girls (of 18years upwards) to a clearer understanding of Christian faith and to serve Christ whole heartedly in the homes, congregations and community. This process of education is done through work done in the women's work institutions, CWF groups and other women in the congregations. It also tries to unite the Presbyterian women with other Christian women movements at home and abroad (CWF hand book 1994:5).

This movement basically comprises of women who are members of the PCC and carry out social services within the church and their community. Over the years these women have contributed greatly to the support and growth of the church. The CWF movement is the backbone of the PCC, putting in their knowledge and finances to sustain the church (CWF Handbook-Department for Women's Work (WWD), 2009).

Since its creation it has been involved in empowering women in diverse fields by giving them vocational training and short economic training programs to enable them become self-sustaining by running small business activities to sustain their families while also encouraging them to take responsibility for the welfare of the citizens.

This study will therefore explore how the Christian Women Fellowship of the PCC in its ministry and mission to empower women to serve as agents of social development through its humanitarian activities within the Fako South Presbytery in the South West Region of Cameroon and Likomba - Tiko subdivision in particular.

Fig.3 The Christian Women Fellowship Group, Likomba-Tiko during a church service in Limbe, Cameroon.



## 5.2 Doctrine of the Christian Women Fellowship/Theology

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon has a doctrine which is taught to every Christian and group of the PCC and this includes the CWF. The Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba being a movement within the PCC does not have a separate doctrine from the rest of the church. But as its motto “Serve the Lord with Joy” from Psalms 100:1 goes, these women are devoted to the service of the Lord and so they strive to serve the Lord with joy in their homes, the church and within the community. This serves as a doctrine to these women movement of the PCC and also a motivation for their activities in the lives of the others.

The aim of the Christian Women Fellowship movement of the PCC ‘is to enable the Christian Women of the PCC to serve the Lord Jesus Christ wholeheartedly in the home, in the congregation and the community’. This will be seen in the attitude, action interaction and the lifestyle of the women (CWF Handbook, 2009, p. 7).

Our Lord Jesus calls on us to take care of others and it is in this light that the CWF are taught and motivated to be care givers as he instructed. In this way we will equally be serving him. As it is written in Matthew 25:38-40;

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? The king will reply, I tell you the truth whatever you do to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me”.

According to this verse, the Bible is urging us all to care for one another. The Bible also tells us in 1st John 3:17-18 that, “if anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with action and in truth.” The Bible teaches us to love our brothers in action and in truth, to share our possessions, feed our brothers, clothe them, visit them in prison and when they are sick, and to invite them in when they have no shelter over their heads. These teachings from the Bible are therefore the reason behind the motivation of the Christian Women Fellowship of the PCC to be more active in their Christian obligations to be one another’s keeper because we are all humans, and “To be human is to be free” (Desmond Tutu). We are free to love and be loved.

“To be human is to be free” (Desmond Tutu). Human life is a gift from the gracious and ever generous creator of all. It is therefore inviolable. (Witte and Alexander, pg.2). “So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female...” (Genesis 1:27). God also shows his love for mankind by giving his only begotten son to die on the cross for our sins. In a message from the National Secretary of the CWF Golden Jubilee on Sunday 27th November 2011, Beatrice Ngeh, she makes reference to the Gospel of Luke presenting Jesus as a human person with feelings, honour and compassion for all people. In this same way the Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church have dedicated themselves to the service of God’s kingdom following the examples of Jesus Christ by taking up his spirit of love, joy, truth and commitment for one another and in helping and giving assistance to those in need within the church and the society.

When missionaries came to Africa, they brought the Bible and presented it to the people and they were given the gospel of salvation, the good news of God’s love. The Bible in Gen 1-2 asserts that human beings are the climax or centre of creation. Because up until the creation of

human beings in which God invited his heavenly court to participate with him and said “Let us create man in our image”, Gen 1:26; God had merely spoke; “Let there be ...” and there was. This showed that something special had come into creation.

“Women should be see not heard”; is an old adage which has been taken over by the church, and this has affected and limited women form the ecclesial structures and administrative roles in church as they are being excluded from ordination into priesthood. But this has not stopped the Christian Women Fellowship through its WWD of the Presbyterian Church in their efforts and dedication to the service of God to witness to the people and reach out to the society.

The presence of Jesus in the lives of women in the Bible such as liberating the woman with the issue of blood and restoring the son of the widow of Nain can also be seen in the caring nature of the CWF in the church and the community in which they live. Writing on the presence of women in the life of Jesus with particular emphasis on His passion, Oduyoye (2008, p. 82) maintains that the subject of women in the life and teachings of Jesus has received more and more attention as women seek for more recognition. The role of Mary in the life of her son Jesus and her faith as the first believer in the Christ-event has made her the Mother of the church for some and a model of the church for others. The CWF have dedicated their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the service of God’s Kingdom and thus work together as one, “Serving the Lord with Joy” which is their motto, (Psalms 100:2).

Jesus presented himself as a man who related to women as human beings, who are to be respected and trusted (Oduyoye 2008, p. 86). He taught them, healed them, woke up their dead, and saved them from victimization and exploitation. He was compassionate and caring and took up attitudes and roles which were seen as being for women. “Jesus was a mother par Excellence”. He believed so much in women that he revealed himself to them; as Martha said “I now believe that you are the Messiah, the son of God who was to come into the world” (John 11:26-27) and to the Samaritan woman at the Jacob’s well when Jesus said “I am he, I who am speaking to you now”; and this was only right as the women saw him in his life.

The Christian Women Fellowship evangelize to the people, taking the gospel of Jesus to them and teaching them messages of Hope. They make the people to know that no matter the situation they are in, they should lift it up to our Lord Jesus. And once Jesus comes in, no matter how bad the situation is, he will always redeem us from it all. This is the case of Mary and Martha in the Bible, they believed that if Jesus was around he would have saved their brothers life. And even when their brother Lazarus had been dead Martha still believed that Jesus could

still save him; as Martha said “Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will grant you.” This is the kind of faith that CWF try to help build in the lives of the people.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke present three prominent women who were involved in the last three days of Jesus. Many women were among the huge crowd which followed Jesus, but Mary of Magdala, Mary mother of Joseph and Salome were more significant. These women were always present until at his death and resurrection, they were the first to receive the good-news of the resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning. The women were the first to announce the resurrection of Christ.

The Christian Women Fellowship are care givers and prime movers of domestic hospitality, and they are always ready to receive guests who could come unannounced. These women always provide food, water, firewood and light for the old men and women and guests. This aspect of the CWF is drawn from the parable of the ten virgins. This parable can be used to illustrate the readiness with which the CWF attend to the needs of the people even when situations suddenly arise. The CWF takes this doctrine of the ten virgins as a motivation for them in their works for the needy within the church and in the community. This therefore makes them to be seen as alert like the wise women in Matt.25:1-13.

Women have been ardent supporters, promoters and facilitators of community in their churches and they still are today. The World Council of Churches (WCC) also called on its member churches to respond to the faithfulness and full humanity of the women thereby obeying God and not conforming to the norms of man-made culture. The Ecumenical Decade of churches in Solidarity with Women came as an opportunity for the churches to “take stock of how woman power functions in the church community and what women’s resources the church must acknowledge and make use of Women’s thinking and their insights need to be considered as part of the body of Christ, and not just an interest group within the church” (1992, p. 53).

### **5.3 Women’s Work Department of the CWF and Its Organization**

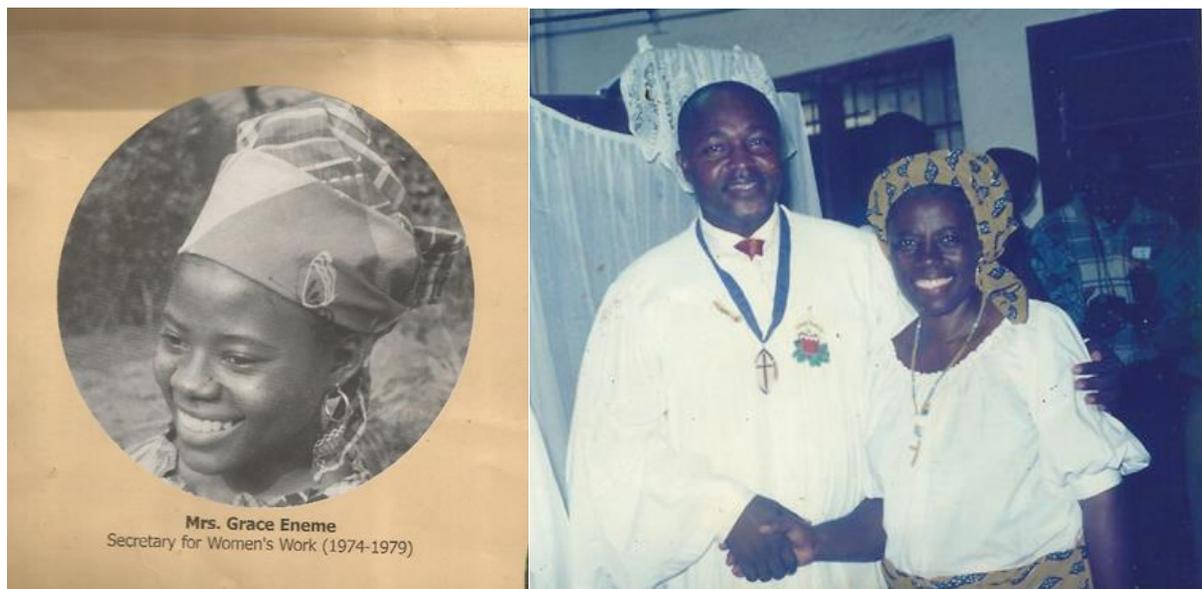
The Women’s Work Department (WWD) and the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) organizationally, developed from the work started by missionary wives and the female missionaries (Eneme, 1982. p.48). According to Gana (2001.p.63) in 1961 missionaries Maria Schlenker and Rose Mary Peter Beyer presented to the Synod of the Independent Basel Mission

Church (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon) by-laws to harmonize and coordinate the activities of the women (Ekone, 2011).

Fig. 4 Picture of Maria Schlenker ... (One of the founding missionaries of the CWF)



Fig. 5 Picture of Grace Eneme (One of the founding members of the CWF in Cameroon)



(Grace Eneme and Elder Qui Godlove (Late) during the dedication of some new members in the CWF in the Likomba Congregation in Likomba Tiko, on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001.

The WWD and the CWF organization originated from the services of the missionaries' wives (Basel Missionaries) who felt equally committed to the service of Christ as their husbands. While the missionaries went around the gospel, their wives gathered women in the missionary stations and taught them the Bible. The young girls assisted them in their homes as helpers and "nannies", and these missionary wives trained them on home management. Grace Eneme who is today one of the prominent members of the CWF is a product of these missionary stations.

The vision of WWD is to improve on the social status of women, the family and society, by strengthening them spiritually, socially and economically and its mission is to enable Christian women to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and to bring positive changes in all areas of life, at home, in the congregation, in the community and society at large. This is achieved through continuous evangelization, education, leadership development and capacity building, with the aim of empowering them spiritually, socially and economically (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, Department for Women's Work, 2009, p. 5). All this is done under the guidance of the values and norms of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and the policy of the Cameroon government.

The mission work of CWF and WWD goes beyond meeting inner ecclesial needs and extending to those of the wider society today, the Women's Work Department with the Department of Men's Work of the PCC, produce annually a study booklet guide consisting of Bible Studies, leadership, house craft, gender, HIV and AIDS and good governance.

The CWF falls within the administration of the Women's Work Department (WWD) of the PCC which coordinate women's activities in congregations and report at the synod meetings. The aim of the WWD through the CWF is thus:

"To educate the women and girls (of 18years upwards) to a clearer understanding of Christian faith and to serve Christ whole heartedly in their homes, congregations and community .This process of education is done through work done in the women's work institutions, CWF groups and other women in the congregations. It also tries to unite the Presbyterian women with other Christian women movements at home and abroad" (CWF hand book 1994, p.5).

The vision of the Women's Work Department of the PCC is to improve on the status quo of the woman, family life and society; to strengthen women spiritually, socially and economically thus empowering women to face the challenges of life in all domains.

Their motto is: 'Serve the Lord with Joy' and their greetings when they meet in a gathering is taken from 2 Cor. 5:17 "if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation; the Old is gone, the

new has come”. What then makes this group unique within the PCC and the Likomba Congregation in particular can be seen in the activities they carry out beyond the confines of the church as a praxis model of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

### **5.3.1 Activities of the Women’s Work Department through CWF**

The Women’s Work Department work is organized through groups at the various levels of the church: congregations, zones, presbyteries, regions and national. The CWF movement is composed of women and girls from different ethnic, and diverse socio-economic backgrounds, linguistic and age groups. This diverse composition of women groups constitutes an indispensable human resource investment within PCC. Their weekly programmes are designed on giving women the opportunity to share their wealth of knowledge and experiences. Generally the activities of the WWD through the CWF function as follows:

- At the Congregational level, the women take part in the fellowship of the Least Coin, an internationally coordinated prayer conducted once every month, and also in the celebration of the International World Day of Prayer (WDP), every first Friday of March. Zonal leaders also organize the celebration of WDP ecumenically with the Baptist, Catholic and Anglican women.
- Meetings and Conferences are held every year at all levels to assess the work done and for general education and training.
- The department produces material to create awareness on Gender and HIV/AIDS issues and links women in this regard to NGOs that train them on the general principles of women empowerment, and also empower them socially, economically and politically.
- The department plans, implements, monitors and evaluates (PIME) Projects. Also holds annual training workshops for Christian Leaders and Pastors' wives, follow up in-service training, attend seminars, symposia and liaise with other women associations, NGOs, other Departments of the Church, nationally and internationally (File No. 228 PCC Archives Buea) (Ekone,2011).

### **5.3.2 Achievements of WWD through CWF**

The CWF has been in existence for 55 years and has had a lot of through the activities of the WWD in the empowerment of women. These can be seen through the churches structures, communities and society. The WWD is an instrument through which the Christian women channel their requests, visions, plans and recommendations to the Synod office, which is the highest organ of the PCC where decisions are made regarding the well-being of the church. The Synod meets once a year and during these meetings, reports on the activities CWF yearly activities are presented by the National secretary of WWD. It promotes the interest of women and the need for the church to be more practical in the application of gender policies within its congregations and the community at large. “Thanks to the open minded policy of the PCC, women and girls have the opportunity to excel in all fields today. And the women and girls have taken up the challenge” Gana (2001, p. 65).

Serving as a model for our nation - Cameroon, the CWF and WWD influence has gone beyond the church and inspired the political milieu in Cameroon. Political parties have copied the idea a women’s movement and formed the female wing of its political parties such as the Women of Cameroon National Union (W.C.N.U), Women of the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (W.C.P.D.M) in order to mobilize women better. This implies that the CWF has been a pacesetter within the nations building. The movement has served as a role model to other churches that have come up with their own versions like the Baptist Women’s Union and the Catholic Women’s Associations. It has served as a model for the nation that copied the idea of forming a female political wing of its party (W.C.N.U) in order to mobilize women better. Gana (2001, p. 66).

Through the WWD, members have been equipped with leadership skills and self-confidence to take up positions of responsibilities within their communities. Increased number of Cameroonian women have advanced their educational career and have become pastors and some have taken on leadership roles as presidents of NGOs, social groups, councillors, mayors, and parliamentarians, principals of schools, directors, and lecturers in universities just to mention but a few (Gana 2001, p. 69; Awa2007, p. 41). They have also been empowered to become active advocates of basic human rights.

Women are engage in ministry works such as visiting orphanages, prisons, leprosy settlements, handicap centres and organize special collections for the care of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS (Gana 2001, p. 68). The WWD served as a good nursery for PCC’s launching

and taking positive action during the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women in 1988.

### **5.3.3 Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998)**

In January 1987 after the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) launched the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998). When the PCC signed in as a member church, Mrs. Catherine Muke Chofor from the WWD was assigned as the Motivator for the programme and her mandate was to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Ecumenical Decade were implemented in the local faith communities throughout the nation.

The Ecumenical Decade of Churches was born shortly after the United Nation (UN) Decade for the Advancement of Women (1975-1985), whose theme was: Equality, Development and Peace. This decision to highlight this issue for a period of ten years came as a result of the growing concern about the situation of women in all societies and within the churches (Gana, 1994). The situation of women had not changed much; and its impact on women especially women from the rural communities have not made any significant change.

“The WCC central committee urged member churches to eliminate the teachings and practices that discriminate against women as a Christian responds to the forward-looking strategies adopted by the UN Decade and as a follow up of the community of women and men in the church study” (Lossky 1991:339).(Ekone,2011)

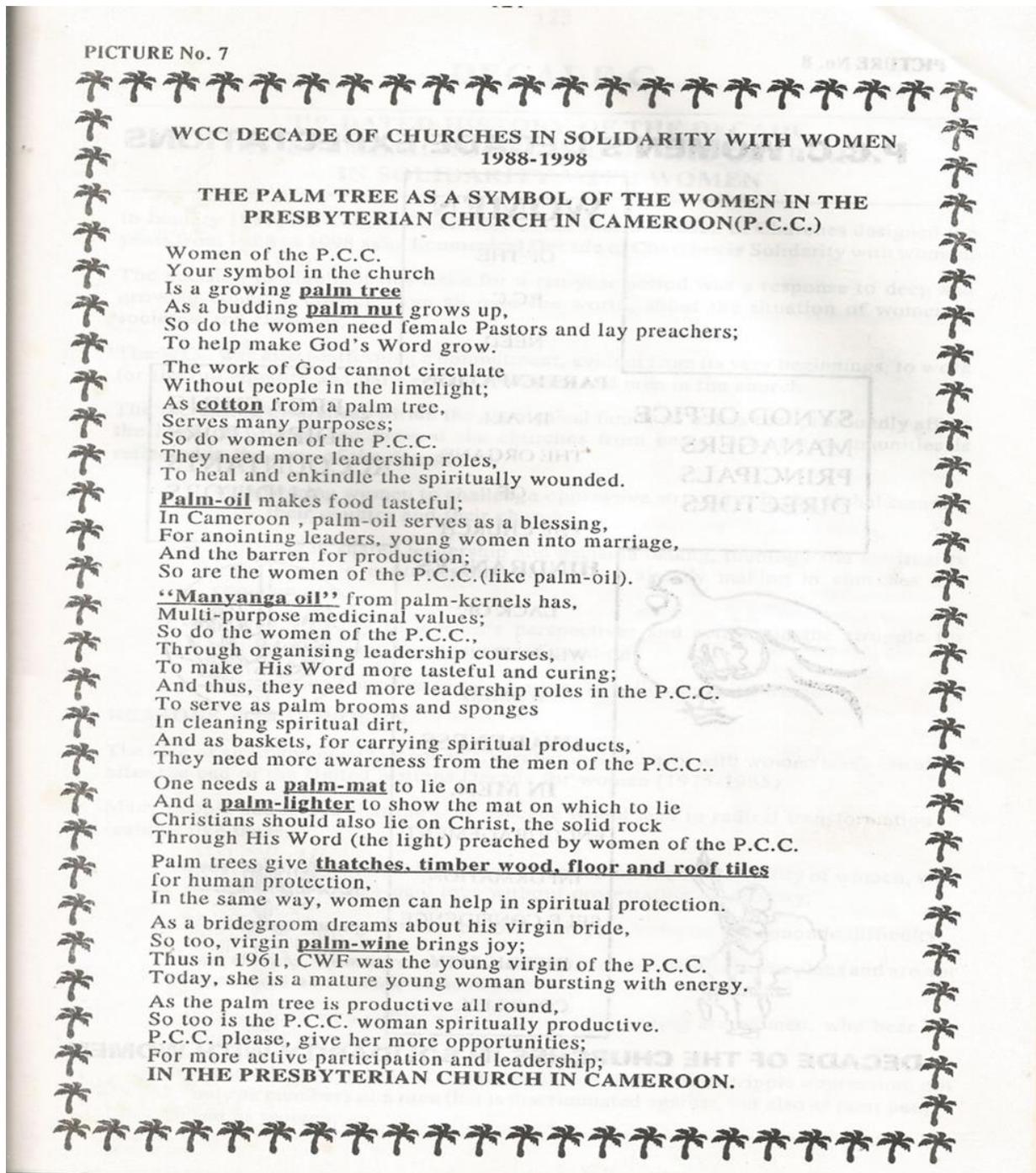
This therefore brought forth the aim of the Decade which included the following;

- Affirming in shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality – the decisive contributions women are already making in churches and communities;
- To empower women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their church;
- To affirm in shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality; the decisive contributions women are already making in churches and communities;
- To give visibility to women’s perspectives and actions in the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
- To encourage churches to take action in solidarity with women (Gana, 1995).

This was also reaffirming a commitment by the WCC, which has been evident from its very beginnings, which was to work for the full equality and partnership of women and men in the church. Seminars and workshops were organized with communities of men and women, to sensitize them on gender equality and the need for women to be empowered and recognized as having potentials that should be exploited for the good of the entire community.

Following this Decade, the Christian Women Fellowship of the PCC adopted the Palm Tree as their symbol for Ecumenical Decade because of its significance and Naomi N. Tamufor and Elizabeth L. Gana wrote a poem in which they described the CWF woman as the Palm Tree.

Fig. 5 Picture of the Original 'Palm Tree' Poem Composed During the WCC Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (Composed by Naomi N. Tamufor & Elizabeth L. Gana)



### 5.3.4 Achievements of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches

The Ecumenical Decade of Churches recorded some successes through 1988 to 1998. Through the programme, the WCC intended to eliminate the teachings and practices that marginalize women in its member churches. By so doing, the PCC made a commitment to further bring women on board its leadership. During the ten years, Mrs. Chefor who was a member of the WWD of the PCC, organized many workshops and seminars alongside with lectures and leadership courses. Women were not the only targets for these workshops, but men as well were fully involved. This was done in the hope that their ideas and attitude towards women could change. By 1998, some women had been fully empowered within the church, as the church celebrated the fact that there was an increase in the number of trained pastors from 2 to 18 (Ekone, 2011. p.25).

- In my congregation at the Presbyterian Church in Likomba, I have been a lay preacher and led church service, and I have also witnessed women standing on the altar, leading church services as well and preaching.

- Women now head many of the congregations of PCC as chairpersons like the Likomba Congregation and are leaders of other groups within the PCC, unlike before where women could only be leaders of the CWF movement.

- The Department of Women's Work and the Department of Men's Work of the PCC now have a joint study material. This will help in the understanding and full participation between the women and men to build a just society within and out of the church.

Despite the successes of this decade, women were still not allowed into certain positions of the PCC such as the positions such as moderator, synod clerk and presbyterial secretaries and treasurers in presbyteries. These positions have remained under the full control of men. It is therefore this reason that the PCC came up with the plan to bridge the gap between women and men, designing a particular programme in 2005 for the empowerment of its Christian women. This programme is called "Women's Education and the Empowerment of Women Programme" (WEEP) (Michael K. Lang, 2016).

#### 5.4 Women's Education and the Empowerment Programme (WEEP)

Women's Education and Empowerment Programme (WEEP) is a project of the PCC, and NKONG HILL TOP Association for Development (NADEV), is a Common Initiative Group (CIG), a local Civil Society Organization, in Buea. This office is hosted in the PCC Synod office building in Buea, South West Region. NADEV concentrates on developing people and their businesses so that they can help themselves and others – their families and communities (Robert G, 2013). Beneficiaries of this Association are usually trained in a Business Training Workshop organized by NADEV and the PCC in Likomba-Tiko is usually the venue for this sessions.

Fig. 6 Business Training Workshop at the PC Likomba Congregation



This empowerment programme within the PCC started in 2005 with Fako division as pioneer project area (Smiling women 2009, p.1). The programme was introduced after the launch of Agenda 2000 and beyond Programme to enhance and complement the church's engagement in issues of gender within its faith community because the predominant patriarchal system does not provide adequate chance for women to be fully empowered. The activities of WEEP are therefore designed to help the communities, especially women, to discover and recognize the talents and quality of power that is in them. Rev. Mary Kinge as sighted in (Ekone, 2011).

## **5.5 Activities of WEEP**

Training trainers on gender issues, adult literacy for women, women's right, emphasis on girl child education, organizing seminars on women's leadership and good governance, and round table conferences on capacity building for female counsellors and parliamentarians are all activities of the WEEP. The aim of WEEP as an agent of transformation within the PCC is to educate and bridge the gender gap which has been existing in the cultures of the Cameroonian communities. And it is for this reason that the topic: Gender and HIV/AIDS) came up in the 2008 edition of the CWF/CMF study book and as a topic for reflection; "You are saved to serve – We are learning to transform". CWF/CMF Study book 2008. This was aimed at reviewing the meaning of words like Gender, mainstreaming, AIDS, HIV. Many women have been empowered in different capacities from this program and they too have gone further to empower other women who have not taken part in WEEP programs.

## **5.6 Achievements of WEEP**

The goal of WEEP is to increase women's participation in the development and decision-making processes so as to improve their status within the communities.

In "Smiling Women", (a newsletter by WEEP) some women shared their experiences on the knowledge gained through the programmes organized by WEEP. Mrs Fanny Ndive, one of the several participants of WEEP seminar states:

"I have benefited much from the WEEP empowerment programme. I was one of the many participants of the workshop on women's leadership and local governance. As president of CWF Buea, I now better understand how to deal with leadership matters. I learned management skills, public speaking at the workshop organized by WEEP (Mrs Fanny Ndive, Head teacher/ Zonal president CWF Buea in Smiling Women 2008, p.7). (Ekone, 2011).

Another woman expressed the following on the issues of human rights:

"I attended several of the seminars/workshops organized by WEEP. They have improved my knowledge of human rights issues. As a politician, I learned how to talk well in public; I have learned thanks to this project how to better manage my business. In fact, the training got from WEEP workshops changed me completely; I most thank Mrs Kinge, WEEP coordinator for such wonderful initiative aimed at empowering women". (Mme Gladys Agbor, councillor-Idenau council reported in Smiling Women 2008, p.7). (Ekone, 2011)

The data presented in the “Smiling Women” (2008, p.7) publication state the following achievements of the WEEP project in local communities within the South West Region.

After its seminars, workshops and sensitization meetings the number of women’s representation in church congregational group leadership rose from 63 to 134, making a 55.9% increase. Women’s representation in traditional council rose from 14 to 24 persons, constituting a 44.3% increase. More 290 women started attending adult classes to add to 94, making a 74% increase.... In the political domain, 14 women were elected as municipal councillors and one more woman became a parliamentarian to add to the existing one. Before the last municipal and parliamentary elections, a total of 775 women enrolled in the electoral registers through WEEP’s intervention. (Ekone, 2011).

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the history and formation of the CWF and its representation, looking at the empowerment of CWF women within the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon through the activities of the WWD and the WEEP, and how the Ecumenical Council of Churches brought about the full participation between the women and men to build a just society within and out of the church.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Findings and Analysis of the activities of the CWF since its creation in 1961**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

The main Research Question for this thesis is: How do the women of the CWF empower themselves and other women within the church and the community? The main objective of the research is to explore the aims and objectives of the CWF. In order to answer this question, information was gathered mainly from secondary sources which include articles, books and websites. The books used for the research includes those from the recommended lists from the study program Religion Society and Global Issues. These books were obtained from the Library at Norwegian College of Theology. There are also some added books and handbooks that were obtained from the Presbyterian bookshops (Presbook) in Cameroon.

This chapter looks at literature related to protestant churches in Cameroon since the colonial period and after it got its independence from France and Britain in relation to the gender related issues and the empowerment of women as viewed by the PCC in general, with specific emphasis on the CWF which forms the backbone of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. We have also looked at how successful their humanitarian activities are and what difficulties they encounter in the course of carrying out these activities for the empowerment of women by analysing the strength and weaknesses of the CWF.

This chapter therefore begins by examining the early missionary activities in Cameroon beginning with the English Baptist Missionary society (EBM) and the Basel Missionary Society (BMS) with much emphasis on the empowerment of women.

#### **6.1 Women Empowerment from the Colonial Missionary Era in Cameroon**

The empowerment of women within the Cameroonian society and the PCC cannot be discussed without finding out how it began from the time of colonial administration in Cameroon and thus the presence of European missionary activities. For instance the English Baptist Missionary Society (EBMS) and the Basel Missionary Society (BMS) empowerment of women within the church and the Cameroonian society as a whole. The colonial encounter in Cameroon started with the coming of the Portuguese who were the first to arrive the coast of Cameroon in 1472, and their stay lasted until 1807 when the British abolished the slave trade.

The Portuguese arrived the river Wouri on the coast of Cameroon from Fernando Po and named it 'Rio dos Camaroes' which means Rivers of Prawns. The name Cameroes later gave birth to the country's name 'Cameroon'.

The Portuguese activities along the coast of Cameroon was mainly trade in humans (slave trade). This was one of the most dehumanizing crimes against humanity. Africans were captured, sold and transported to the Americas where they were enslaved to be used as labourers in plantations. The more people were taken away, the more family structures were destroyed which forced women to be family heads. There was high insecurity and a decrease in labour force in Africa. Women were left behind to fend for themselves and had to sustain their families too, in the midst of social death and depopulation of key labour force (Le Vine, 1971, p.7; Ngoh, 1996, p. 58).

In 1834 Alfred Saker, Pastor Joseph Merrick and Alexander Fuller with his sons from Jamaica, arrived Cameroon with the English Baptist Mission and according Keller (1997, p. 6). They opened the English Baptist Mission and thanks to Joseph Merrick's educational and printing works, communication was made easy with the local people, as the Bible was translated from English to Duala. Ngoh, 1996, p. 88).

### **6.1.2 The Influence of the EBM on the Women's Education and Empowerment**

The English Baptist Missionaries (EBM) opened mission stations in Douala and Bimbia in 1844, which is still the seat of the Presbyterian Church in the area today. With the opening of schools, the missionaries inculcated Western 'civilizing values' to the Africans. During this period, the EB missionaries who had come to Cameroon, brought their wives who helped them in one way or the other in spreading the gospel as well as taking part in other missionary works. Cameroonians were not so visibly active during this period in missionary, but one could notice that men were mostly those who were taught trades, accompanied the missionaries in their works and helped in building schools. Despite the fact that the first school was opened and education was compulsory for the children of the Christian colony during this period, more boys went to school than girls. In 1881, when different schools had been opened for boys and girls, 130 boys and 80 girls attended school (Keller).

Missionary bodies introduced education with the intention of training future religious leaders (priest/pastors), as their main objective was to Christianize the colonies. "At that epoch boys

were preferred over girls, as they could accompany the colonial masters in exploring the hinterlands for the acquisition of necessary raw material” (Awa, 2007, p. 22). She further states that girls faced many limitations, as most parents failed to educate their female children. They thought that education was an economic investment and that because most girls will someday get married and be part of another family, it was therefore seen as a lost to according to them to invest in educating a girl child.

I have equally experienced such a situation in my family whereby my maternal grandfather (Late) who happened to be a Muslim and polygamist too, was not enthusiastic about educating his daughters further than the primary school level; and that included my mother as well. Upon finishing primary school, they were quickly given away into marriage at very tender age. This was not because they never did well in school or because they hated their girl children; but rather it was merely due to the local cultural understanding within their community. It was always thought that the place of a woman is in the kitchen no matter her level of education. Thus the low educational status of the girl child can be said to be more of economic than a gender issue.

I am the first born in a family of nine (9) children with six (6) girls, five (left now). Fortunately for us, my father (Late) with the support of our mother with her little knowledge, knew the value of education and worked together to put us all through school. And today five of us have completed university with at a Bachelor’s Degree in various specialties, and four of us are girls plus I am just completing my first Master’s degree in Religion Society and Global Issues.

Apart from my father being educated, a greater push came from our mother who is a member of the Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. At first she could not read quite much or address a population. Thanks to the Education and the Empowerment she got from the CWF, today she not just able to read the Bible for instance, but she can read and write in English and can also express herself very well in French. She has held positions of responsibility within the movement and also train new members and prepare them for dedication into the movement. She has constantly been encouraging us to forge ahead in education and be the best we can.

‘Behind every successful man there is a strong woman’. This is a common adage in a patriarchal community like Likomba-Tiko where gender equality is not respected and women are always seen and thought of as those who occupy the back seat. But this is not the case of

the CWF in Likomba who have denied to take the back seat, but rather are working very hard to stay at the forefront of evangelization, development and humanitarian activities.

The Christian Women Fellowship is a group made up of women who are compassionate, loving and caring, devoted and ready to serve in the vineyard of the Lord as their motto says; “Serve the Lord with joy” which is drawn from Psalm 100 verse 1. They are out to see that other men and women both young old find salvation, happiness and inner peace, serve humanity and fulfilling through Jesus Christ. In this chapter, I will use the theories of human development to critically analyse the activities of the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba in their involvement in the social development works within the church and the society, and the SWOT analysis to examine their strength and weaknesses.

## **6.2 The Involvement of the Christian Women Fellowship in the development Works**

The Presbyterian Church in Likomba is a Christian denomination and like other Christian denominations in Cameroon, try to practice what is written in the scriptures. The Christian Women Fellowship being a movement within the PCC follows the same doctrine as the entire PCC.

“People are independent; they rely on others for almost all their social and biological needs. There are some complex fabrics of social life, which they include, human achievements such as, language, education, culture and also to depend on shared fields of human endeavours..... Solidarity is to recognize human interdependence which is a positive value in our lives” (Massaro 2000, p. 120-121).

According to Deneulin, religion accepts that the aim of development should be the provision of basic needs, not necessarily material, but a sense of purpose in life and work. He goes further to say that with the idea of basic needs, building of a church is far better than constructing a road. Despite his stand on the nonmaterial human needs, the basic needs approach was later associated with the provision of material needs such as; education, food infrastructure (Deneulin, 2009, p. 37). In this light, the CWF usually plays a major role in the construction of churches and other infrastructure such as schools and works on other projects like hospitals. As a group, they support these projects through fund raisings considering their huge number, their contributions are usually worthwhile.

### **6.2.1 Human Development Approach**

Human Development is a process of enlarging people's choices including the ability to live a long and healthy life; that is to be educated, enjoy a decent standard of living, political freedom, human rights and self-respect (Payne, 2010, 123). In the human development approach, we have the "basic needs" approach which argues that basic needs are not associated to the benefits of the poor, their employment opportunities or their income. Basic needs is usually linked to religious values, and religion is the moral basis for basic needs on individual level and on a societal level. Basic needs approach further states that it is important that development be about satisfying the basic needs of all human beings. The goal of the basic needs should be prioritized above the aggregate national growth and should seek to improve on the living standards (Payne, 2010, p. 119-120).

According to this approach, the basic needs of human beings are food, shelter, access to clean drinking water, health services, sanitation, education and the need to participate in political and decision making processes that affect the people's lives positively.

Consequently, the activities of Christian Women Fellowship are centred on the basic needs of the people as they are mostly engaged in the health, education, providing pipe borne water and food to the people. They equally reach out to the people, talk to them and educate them on the word of God. This helps to build up their spiritual lives and make them feel loved and also boost up their self-esteem. The Christian Women in this way are keeping up with the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) such as providing primary education, improving the maternal health, reducing child mortality, combatting HIV/AIDS and eradicating poverty (Hopper, 2012, p. 13).

### **6.2.2 Environmental Approach**

The role of the environmental approach is to save the environment; prevent hunger, famine, ensure food security, and the need to ensure greater ownership of land and resources in the interest of conservation and sustainability (Payne 2010, p.135). The World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, called for economic activity and development strategy to focus on the human development and the needs of the poor. The uneven distribution and access to resources contributes to poverty and destruction of the global environment. Thus the

commission described this as the concept of ‘needs’ particularly the ‘needs of the world’s poor’ to which the overriding priority should be given.

In this light, the Christian Women Fellowship assist the poor farmers in the cultivation of both cash crops such as cocoa and coffee, and other crops which they consume and sell some to enable them buy the things which they cannot produce such as clothing and pay some bills like electricity. CWF assist them by providing them with chemicals to spray their farms against pesticides and in some cases provide them with fertilisers to increase the fertility of the soil where it has lost fertility and the crops are no longer doing well. They also assist some farmers who are into dairy farming like rearing chicken and pigs by providing them with money (Loans) through the Women Education and Empowerment Programme and NKONG HILL TOP which is a Common Initiative Group (CIG), a local Civil Society Organization. These loans are given on very insignificant interests, which is only meant to keep the project running. This helps the farmers to expand their poultry farms in order to increase their production.

### **6.2.3 Women in Development (WID)**

The WID approach called for greater attention to women in development policy and practice and emphasize on the need to integrate women into the development process. Women had to be strengthened to have positions within the labour market and be included in the market economy and earn wages. Women need to have access to education, be employed and have control and ownership of resources and access to credit. The WID sought to integrate women completely in the economic and political system and this was greatly supported by the government and international organizations; and women were then involved in development and aid issues.

Ester Boserup in her book ‘Woman’s Role in Economic Development’, 1970, wrote that women were more affected by modernisation, and that the more women carried out domestic labour and child care, the more education was preserved for men. It is therefore for these reasons that WID thought women should be integrated in development for efficient and effective development to be achieved. Women are “Untapped Resource” (Moser, 1993, p.3).

Within the different congregations of the PCC today, women serve as leaders of the local CWF Movement and as Elders. Some female Elders serve as Chair Persons of Congregation and this

has led to an increase in the number of female representation and participation in the Presbyteries and Synod of the PCC.

During the colonial era the role of women were restricted in their activities within the church. These restrictions were based on gender. However the work of the WWD through the CWF over the years in empowering women and working in partnership with men of the church has exposed the inadequacy of the church policies that discriminate and disempowered women. Eneme (1982.p.53) with gratitude attests that it was through the efforts of the WWD that the department for Men's work was formed in 1981 when they proposed at a Synod consultation that a men's group be created which will collaborate with the women's groups in programmes leading to better family living. She further states that the women saw that working in partnership with men could lead to a better understanding and collaboration for the advancement of the work of the Kingdom (1982.p.54). Today, the two departments produce annually a study booklet guide consisting of Bible Studies, leadership, house craft, gender, HIV and AIDS and good governance.

The members were equipped with leadership skills and self-confidence to take up positions of responsibilities within their communities. Increased number of Cameroonian women have advanced their educational career and have taken on leadership roles as presidents of NGOs, social groups, councillors, mayors, parliamentarians, principals of schools, directors, lecturers in universities just to mention but a few ( Gana 2001.p.69; Awa 2007.p.41). They have also been empowered to become active advocates of basic human rights. Members engage in mission services such as visiting orphanages, prisons, leprosy settlements, handicap centres and organize special collections for the care of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS (Gana 2001.p.68) (Ekone, 2011).

In 50 years, the impact of the Christian Women Fellowship through the activities of the WWD has empowered women and this can be seen through the churches structures, communities and society. The WWD serves as an ecclesial instrument through which women shape their policies and channel their ministry and mission visions, plans and recommendations through the Synod. It advocates the interest of women and the need for the church to be pro-active in ensuring the implementation of just gender policies within its faith communities and the wider nation. (Ekone, 2011).

“Thanks to the open minded policy of the PCC, women and girls have the opportunity to excel in all fields today. And the women and girls have taken up the challenge”. Gana (2001.p.65).

Within the congregations women serve as leaders of the local CWF Movement and as Elders. In some congregations female Elders serve as Chair Persons of Congregational Board and this has led to an increase in the number of female representation and participation in the Presbyteries and Synod meetings that constitute the first and second courts of governance in the PCC. The policies made at these levels have allowed increased number of women to gain access to higher education and to prepare them for strategic leadership role within the church and society.

### **6.3 SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis one of the many possible strategic planning tools, used to evaluate the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats involved either in a project or, any other situation requiring a decision in a business or project. It involves specifying the objectives of the project and identifying the internal and external factors characterising the positive and negative achievements of the objective. SWOT can be defined as:

- S - Strength are internal attributes of the project which are helpful to the project and give it more advantages in relation to others.
- W - Weaknesses are internal attributes of the project which are harmful bring in more disadvantages in relation to others.
- O - Opportunities are external conditions that are helpful to the project and could be exploited to its own convenience and advantage.
- T - Threats which are external conditions that are harmful and could be of disadvantage to the project or cause problem to the project (G.J.Hay& G.Castilla).

I will be discussing the SWOT analysis of the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba are involved in the involved in the work for the orphans, widows and the less privileged affected by HIV/AIDS.

#### **6.3.1 Strength of the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF)**

The CWF in Likomba being a religious movement with its motto “Serve the Lord with Joy” (Ps 100:2) acts as a mother within the church and the society. She is a ‘voice of the voiceless’.

The movement is very well structured with a president at the head of the group, who is elected for a two term office of five years each. The CWF has a spiritual obligation since it functions under the covering of the church and whatever activities the group carries out, is done under the canopy of the Presbyterian Church, and for the purpose of their growth in faith and spirituality. The spirit of evangelization as a commission of Jesus Christ to his disciples in Matt 28:18-20, and through prayers, requires us to show solidarity to the poor, the needy, and the vulnerable, and most importantly through acts of charity “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2) and with the increased in the number of female protestant clergy this has enabled the PCC to better connect with the huge population of female worshippers (Che, 2013, p. 4) and eventually with the women in the society as they will feel more comfortable in the presence of their fellow woman to openly talk about their worries.

Through the CWF training courses, the women are trained and empowered to be able to read the word of God and to pray. This has helped many women to take part in the church services and also to go for visitation and evangelization, preaching the good news of God which helps to convert many other people and attracts women to be members of this beautiful movement. Some of these women are school drop outs especially some of whom were forced into early and unwanted marriages and some ended up being widows at a very young and tender ages. This is because many of them usually have very low self-esteem and do not believe they can be good at anything in life anymore. But thanks to the CWF these women are given hope through this good news and training which empower them to be independent and take control of their lives again, thus bringing about an increase in the membership of the movement. ‘Unity is power’ and as many women who join this movement, then the CWF will take up bigger challenges and projects and will definitely register bigger successes.

Most of the CWF’s objectives comprise of working towards giving the women and young girls within the church and the society maximum empowerment through education and employment, socially and economically. And all these could only be achieve through a safe environment thus created by the CWF, within the church and out of the church, so as to enable these women to feel safe and comfortable to share their worries among peers. In order for this to be achieved, the WWD of the CWF through the PCC, has provided the accommodation for the training of these women trainings; vocational, business and otherwise. Thanks to this initiative, the NKONG HILL TOP now hold monthly meeting with the women in the premises of the Presbyterian Church in Likomba. The women have been able to create their own projects that

can generate great income for themselves and their families. Some runs small provision stores at their homes, some get into the production of ‘garri’ which is some locally made foodstuff from cassava, others open or fully equip their hairdressing saloons ( see pictures below). At Presbyterian Rural Training Centre (PRTC), MRDF provided training in sustainable agriculture techniques, book keeping and business skills to resource-poor, small holder farmers. Increased yields and new skills such as bee-keeping and horticulture coupled with access to low-interest loans, has enabled farmers to establish and confidently manage their own small businesses and generate the income they need to work their way out of poverty (Che, 2013, p. 10).

The strength of the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) is that they are not perceived as external actors, but rather as related ministries in the sense that they operate within the same horizon of interpretation as religious authorities. Their social standing in the context is likely to contribute to sustainability and continuity after a long period project has been implemented and realized. In effect, the end result is to see whether the project has been achieved for the benefits of the church and the society especially to the women (girl child).

The CWF women are empowered to be responsible both within the church and the society. As such, visiting the sick and the bereaved, the orphans and the widows and sharing with them the word of God from the Bible and presenting them with gifts, is a way of letting the people know that they are loved. In the case of the sick, they support the patient at times with money for treatment, and some food in case the sick person is too weak to go out and do things for himself or herself. The CWF also provide health care service and assistance to people living with HIV and AIDS, and to orphans of deceased AIDS patients. The CWF carry out their obligations to the poor and needy which is part of a Christian ethic.

The CWF are known as the pillars of the PCC since they participate very actively in church activities especially in finance mobilization (Elizabeth. L. Gana, p. 68). Thus in an attempts to reduce the poverty, the CWF has been helping to increase the sizes of the businesses or ‘petit trade’ of these poor and needy people, for those who already had small businesses, or give a start-up capital for those who intend to begin. They have also succeeded in training women and girls in many different trades and crafts, some have been drilled in micro projects such as animal raising and livestock production, gardening, marketing skills, house craft, tie and dye of dresses, making of detergents for home and commercial purposes, tailoring, basketry and weaving, knitting and needle work, cookery, hair dressing, for commercial purpose. These

activities are followed through with the introduction of the microcredit schemes in the form of seed grants, financial grants like the “NKONG HILL TOP” microfinance scheme, formation of small stores, food and nutrition training. All these are done in a bid to reduce poverty by empowering the women and making them to be financially independent.

Most parents look more at their economic situations and will prefer to send the boys to school since they believe women education is worthless as they end up in the kitchen thus the local saying ‘No matter how a woman is educated, her place is always in the kitchen’. But with the financial support from the wife, the father may be encouraged to send the girl child to school.

### **6.3.2 Weaknesses of the CWF**

The CWF in Likomba is a religious movement under the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon with a full governing body, yet it does not have the power to make certain decisions of its own and cannot carry out any action within and outside of the PCC without the resident pastor’s knowledge and approval. The resident pastor and the chairperson of the church are ‘Ex-Officio’ members of the CWF and are always invited to take part in planning meetings of the CWF when they have a project to carry out and he must approve of the project before it can be done. At times, the proposals are usually not approved or if they will be approved, the decision to carry on may take long to come. This bureaucratic procedure causes delays in the execution of the projects coupled with the fact that they may also be waiting for financial support from the church in some cases and may at times lead to failure or poor results at the end. Therefore if the president of the CWF can be given the right to make decisions concerning the group and their projects, then the Christian Women Fellowship will begin to register great successes both in their group activities such as evangelization and outreach programs, and also in their charitable activities.

Lack of sufficient funds to carry out projects among other things, is one of the greatest challenges faced by the CWF Likomba. The CWF women do not have sufficient funds to provide the basic necessities of the people they care for like the orphans, school drop outs, sick and the widows. They equally lack funds to support and provide the basic needs of the orphans like clothes, shoes. Because the CWF raise funds for their activities most often by themselves by means of contributions especially while planning to carry out a visitation either to the sick in the hospital or to orphanages, or by taking money from their coffers or by means of ‘njangi’, these funds are not usually enough to run their programs. At times this money will not come in

time for the activity as not all the members will be able to pay in their own contributions in time. This causes a lot of delay. Even in a situation where the money will have to be taken from the coffers, it is not usually a guarantee that the money will be sufficient for the project at hand.

Another weakness of the Christian Women Fellowship of Likomba is the poor road infrastructure and even lack of vehicles to go into the interiors for instance Ombe Native and Missellette and meet the people who do not have the finances to go to town and have access to medical care. This inaccessibility causes a lot of setbacks for the CWF in carrying out their activities considering the fact that Likomba – Tiko is a rural area and most of the women are either small scale farmers or owners of ‘petit’ businesses. They can therefore not afford to come to town for meetings and training workshops. Because of the bad roads especially during the rainy season when the roads are muddy and at times slippery and with many pot-holes, the Christian Women find it difficult to go to these villages to train these women and educate the women on how to manage their businesses. They even find it difficult to carry foodstuffs to them and other basic needs especially to the old and sick. In some cases, some of the villages like ‘Bwinga’ village which is across a small river and the only means to get there is by using small canoes. This discourages the women as most of them will fear for their lives. People living in such remote areas and villages are poor and need support yet it is not easy for this help to reach them.

The lack of internet facilities and information technology, to help facilitate their activities. My area of study falls in the English speaking regions of Cameroon (South West Region). In this regions which form one part of the Southern Cameroons of the country, there has been uprisings since November because of the government’s marginalization of the Anglophones in Cameroon. As a result of these upheavals, the government of Cameroon - La Republique (which essentially is the French speaking) ordered the disconnection of internet in these regions. This has made the work of the CWF in informing and sensitizing the public on issues related to the HIV and AIDS prevention as well as the control of birth rates (family planning) the use of contraceptive pills and condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancy among young girls. It has also made it difficult for them to pass information around even in the event where they have a business training workshop.

Many people living in the villages are not willing to go for the free HIV test for fear of stigmatization. Once someone is noticed at the health centre doing an HIV test, people usually looked upon him as an infected person and right away he or she is been looked down,

discriminated and stigmatized by their own very family and friends even before they know whether they are positive or not. At times, the health workers and nurses do not exercise any professional ethics of keeping peoples information confidential, but rather some of them tell the status of the patients to others. This discourages many who would have loved to go for the screening test and therefore causing a set back to the work and all the efforts made by the CWF in giving these people educative talks and encouraging them to go for screening and know their status.

I have personally experienced situations where men do not allow their wives to go to church on Sundays, talk less of attending any training of any sort. Such cases can be seen in the homes of men in institutions such as military, police, education and at times in the church. These men abuse their socially and powerful positions to persuade or compel their women to engage in sexual activities (Nicolson 2008, p. 55). Some of these men physically abuse their wives and as such will not let them go in the midst of others and be enlightened because they want to maintain their dominant positions over the women.

The Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba at times do not have training material to set up a training centres. The lack of sufficient funds to provide the training material to train the women in the various crafts, is a huge weakness for the movement. When the women are sensitized and educated on the importance of this training, in the end they have to go to the 'Girl's Hostel' in Limbe which is the closest. Yet the cost of transportation will hinder these women some of whom can barely afford three meals in a day. This slows down the training process and also takes a long time to train just a few people.

Religious and cultural differences make it difficult for the Christian Women Fellowship to succeed in their works within the community. They reach out to Christians and non-Christians, people of other religions and cultures and traditions. This makes it difficult for them to break through these different cultures and believes to change the reasoning of the people. Some women are confined in their homes and their movements and association with others are restricted. When training workshops are organized, very few women attend. This makes empowerment difficult; if the women cannot come out. This is the case with Muslims who do not talk about sex especially in the presence of women and girls. They do not promote the use of condoms. As much as the CWF does not encourage the use of condoms but rather preach abstinence and fidelity, this still makes it difficult for them to break through this rigid tradition and pass their message about HIV/AIDS across.

### **6.3.3 Opportunities**

The Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Likomba has and is still the most actively visible and increasingly growing movement within the congregation and the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon as a whole. Their influence is felt in the church and the entire community. Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba has numerous opportunities to impact the church and the society more greatly and to ensure the growth of the church through its charitable works. It has numerous opportunities to see to the growth of the church by its humanitarian services it renders to the public such as; educating and empowering the women, visit to hospitals and prisons, distribution of books to pupils in the primary school and the giving of scholarships to intelligent female students to encourage them to forge ahead in their studies and attend higher qualifications. The Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) is a big door for people to join the church and be a member of this group together we can empower women so that they can develop the society through the following;

#### **6.3.3.1 Advocacy**

“Speak up for the people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9).

Considering the fact that the rights of the women are being undermined due to illiteracy and poverty, the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) of the Presbyterian Church which is acting as the voice to the voiceless is advocating for the women. Biblically advocating refers to as speaks out for those who cannot speak, defending the right of the poor and needy (proverbs 31:8-9). The Christian Women are speaking up for the women who are being marginalized, in their homes, and discriminated upon at their workplaces and other situations in the society whose voice have been silenced (Diakonia in context 2009, p, 94).

The Christian Women Fellowship movement in Likomba- Tiko visit and take care of the sick in their homes and in hospitals, give them financial support and also provide them with medication. They also provide them with foodstuffs, clothing and other basic needs like bed sheets and shoes for instance at the District Hospital in Tiko and at the Dr. Obens’ Clinic – Tiko. I have personally witnessed the CWF in Likomba visiting and present gifts to children in orphanages around the Tiko sub-division; particularly in the ‘Dorcas Orphanage’ in

Mutengene and other foster homes, pay visits to the prisoners and preach to them giving them hope for a better future. They support and sponsor some children in schools both primary and secondary; and train some others in the vocational training centres like the vocational training centre which operates in the 'Girls Hostel' in Limbe. All these is done so that they can be self-reliable financially independent so that by their transformation, they can also impact other lives giving them hope that if they could then any one can do it too.

Many marriages have also been broken and families torn apart because this HIV/AIDS epidemic. This is the areas where the people do not believe in the existence of the epidemic but rather that it is witchcraft or some kind of slow poison, if someone dies of HIV, they are quick to point accusing fingers to someone close. And if a man dies, it is obvious in this case that she will be accused of killing her husband. She will have to undergo serious torture and asked to swear for her innocence most especially because she has been dependent on the man and have no property of financial power of her own. This often sow seeds of hate amongst members of the family. This is indeed an appalling situation and for this reason, the Christian Women Fellowship have decided to speak up for these helpless women and children.

Meanwhile, I equally experienced this act of charity from the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba. In November 2005 when my father died, the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba which my mother was and is still a member, greatly stood by her and supported her both morally, spiritually and financially. They would visit her at home, share the word of God with her and that gave her hope. I was no longer a minor at the time, but these women will bring her foodstuffs and a cash envelop for her to buy other things she needed especially as she was still observing a period of mourning and couldn't do anything much. This truly helped my mother who was able to gradually accept the situation she was in and to made efforts to move on. This act of visitation to my mother as well as many other people in the quarter where we live and the area where these orphanages are found, moved many who admired the way the CWF will carry on these visits and they decided to become members of the movement. This was and is evangelization in action.

The saying that 'Action speaks louder than words' is true and can be seen in the actions of the CWF as they stand up for the church and the family which is the smallest unit of the society. And by reaching out to the families, they are indirectly reaching out to the society. They train the women and some of these young adults in the vocational centres, giving financial support to the widows to start up small 'petty-trades' to help themselves and be able to support their

families as well. Such as the NKONG HILL TOP which work together with the WEEP to empower these women financially by training them on how to manage their businesses and also giving them loans to help expand their businesses.

They give free health care services and medication to the PLWHIV. Most importantly, these children have the right to education and that is why the Christian Women Fellowship supports and sponsor some of these children in schools and give scholarships to others. All these is done as sign of love and care for God's creation and also to stand up for these less privileged people and vulnerable children. The Family Health International HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Department, 2001 also states that:

“Policy options include ensuring access to education and basic health services; protecting inheritance rights of widows and orphans; preventing inappropriate institutionalization; ensuring the provision of better alternative forms of care for children without adequate family care (foster care, adoption ....)”

#### **6.3.4 Threats**

Despite the seemingly smooth running of the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba-Tiko, they are still faced with some threats within the group. The group is always faced with disagreements amongst the women when it comes to decision making; deciding on a project to carry. Most often, these disagreements come because of financial engagements within the group. When the group have to raise funds for an upcoming event or project, this usually brings a lot of arguments on the amount to be contributed by each member. Helen Aji-Mvo in an article for the 50th anniversary of the CWF wrote ‘some of the serious divisions in the groups and in the congregations are caused by CWF members. Some projects usually require more money than others and in such a situation, not all members can afford certain amounts. This delays the execution of their projects.

Dealing with people from different backgrounds is usually very difficult. Thus the Christian Women Fellowship faces some threats when it comes to dealing with these women. There is always a problem of disagreement among members when it comes to agreeing on matters adoption of project and support and financing women's businesses. Some businesses and projects need more money than others. Yet this is always a hard pill to swallow for some members. Some will think there is no fair sharing of the finances to support the people. This

raises a lot of argument and cause the group to divide into small factions. Members at times leave the group, due to conspiracy between one another which leads to gossiping. However, there is no organizations without threats, when the threats arises there is always a solution for it. Especially a Christian organization, the Lord is always there to spiritually guard the deliberation to arrive at unique decisions for the wellbeing of everyone.

The CWF in the Likomba congregation is made up of mostly rural women/farmers who do this farming on very small scale merely for subsistence. Some of these members do ‘petty trading’ which brings in very little income as the business is also a small scale. They do not have any paid income. The little money they can get is from selling some of their produce in the Likomba market or in the Mutengene market, so that they can buy the things they can’t produce. In this case if the amount to be contributed for a project in the group is high, it becomes difficult for them to meet up. This is a threat to the group because is the greater part of the group cannot meet up with the financial engagements for the projects, then execution of the project will not be a success.

Even though the Christian Women Fellowship in Likomba is made up of rural women, there are equally women within the group who are financially viable and can afford to pay for the amount to be contributed. This poses a threat to the group because when these poor women do not pay in time, and the group manage to carry out the projects with the limited resources they have, their names are written down as debtors for them to pay on a later date. When these debts accumulates to a large sum and these members ends being unable to pay, this keeps them uncomfortable within the group and because of this, some women end up leaving the group.

### **6.3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the main research question has been presented and discussed together with the aims and objectives of the CWF. This chapter has traced the empowerment of women from the time of the missionary activities in Cameroon, when the English Baptist Missionary Society and the Basel Missionary Society were present in Cameroon and also during the era of the slave trade in Cameroon.

This chapter has also discussed the activities of the CWF’s empowerment of women, analysing their strength and weaknesses, examining the involvement of the CWF in the development works and support of church projects. It has also looked at the human development approach

and the environmental approach how the CWF assist the farmers and provide basic needs for the people.

We have equally examined the WID and how women are being integrated in development processes and today, within the PCC, women are now elders in the congregations, and some congregations have women as their chair persons. We even have female pastors now in the PCC.

This chapter ends up by analysing the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by that CWF. The next chapter deals with the conclusion and the way forward in the empowerment struggle of the CWF.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The empowerment of women within the PCC started from the time of the coming of missionaries to Cameroon up to the present date. The role of the women at the time consisted of keeping the church house clean, decorating it with flowers, taking care of the linen and making sure they were clean. Women were allowed to lead bible studies only amongst themselves (Mary M. Salle, 2001).

Some passages from the Bible like in Genesis and Paul's letter to the Corinthians mostly talk about women keeping quiet in the church. Jesus taught people of different social levels and accepted all even amongst culture that did not accept women around men. The role of women in the society and in religion is seen to be of benefit for the welfare of the society and the community. Yet the set of African norms and culture tend to bring forth the authorities of the men thereby under minding the role of the women (Oduyoye, 1992, p.10)

As I earlier mentioned, my study is to find out 'How the Christian Women Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church in Likomba-Tiko Act as Agent of Development'. For this question to be answered, I situated the context of my study which is Cameroon, carried out some findings on my working topic from which I observed that the traditions of the people play a major role in the marginalization of women, lack of empowerment and subsequently they cannot be involved in development processes. The marginalization of women has and is still been influenced by the traditions and cultures of the people and by the patriarchy of the Bible. Phiri as stated in (Nyirenda, 2013) put it that in Genesis 3:16 is interpreted as saying "woman was made out of man, after man, for the advantage of man" (Phiri 2007, p. 55) and Paul's letters like 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

"Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" (NIV). (Nyirenda, 2013).

Oduyoye blames women's lack of empowerment on the many rituals performed on women during the rites of passage; such as rites of puberty, birthing, marriage, and widowhood. These only go a long way to hinder their growth and development as these rituals are usually

humiliating and deprive women of freedom of movement, and even seeking medical assistance (1992,p.32). These rituals are most often high and most disturbing among young women in some villages, some of who suffered the pain of having their clitoris cut off in what they commonly call (female circumcision) that is Female Genital Mutilation and breast ironing. With these humiliating acts, women growing up timidly with no self-confidence.

As the discrimination of women continue in Cameroon and other parts of the world, and from the information gotten during the study of this project, there is a need for a number of recommendations to be made for action for the empowerment of women for development within the Presbyterian Church and the Cameroonian society as a whole. This is because, despite the fact that the marginalization of women has been in our societies for so long which hinders women from fully taking part in the development, it is still not very clear how to deal with it.

This study looks at how the CWF act as agents of development by empowering themselves and empowering other women within the PCC and the community. This research has been of great motivation to me firstly as a woman I have experienced discrimination at my place of work-when I was a teacher. Before I was employed to teach in the institution (private), I was asked if I was married or if I had children. After serving the school for three years I got pregnant and after I had my baby I lost my job. My experience can be seen in line with the argument of Rev Mih as mentioned in Ekone (2011) which states that;

“...the challenge goes back to women because since the launch of the Agenda 2000 and beyond women have been appointed and removed. So if they cannot live up to the standards there is no use keeping them there because they are women? They are not a representation but rather they are put there to work”. He goes further to say that “child bearing too is a major problem with you women. When women are appointed sooner or later you see them pregnant. This really will make the work suffer; you know administrative position is very demanding as well”. (Ekone, 2011, p.45)

But his point of view was not bought by Tappa (1987, p. 103) who argued this by stating that;

“...the exclusion of women from effective participation in most aspects of church life is not much based on biology. Sex only offers a readymade excuse, the real issue is power”. (Ekone, 2011, p.45)

Despite the fact that steps has been taken Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) of Presbyterian Church, Likomba-Tiko, Cameroon towards the empowerment of women to enable them take part in development these efforts are still limited. It is therefore for these reasons that this study is concluded in this chapter with recommendations for more research. These recommendations

could be more helpful and understood if more research carried out in the Tiko Municipality, as well as obtaining wider experience during the process.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

The Christian Women Fellowship movement of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon being a religious movement, is an important part of the Presbyterian Church in Likomba and the community as a whole. This helps bring out the image of the Church as a community of people who share with one another in times of happiness and in times of sorrow regardless of their denomination, religious difference, age, sex and status. That is why in Paul's letter to the Galatians, he said;

“For when we are in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of it makes any difference at all; what matters is faith that works through love” Galatians 5:6.

As I earlier mentioned, the aim of this study is to explore the activities of the CWF as an agent of development in Cameroon and to examine the aims and objectives of the CWF group, and the level at which the CWF activities has influenced the church and the Cameroonian society. It was also necessary to examine the strength and weaknesses of the activities of the CWF and propose methods that can help develop church state relationship for the wellbeing of its citizens.

In this respect, my research question was ‘How does the CWF serve as an agent of development within the Cameroonian context? What role does the CWF play in development within the church and community? Other questions were what doctrinal reason(s) inform the mission of the CWF in carrying out development and empowerment activities in Cameroon? To what extent has CWF activities improve on the conditions of the people? How are women sustaining their development and empowerment activities in the church and society? What are the new suggestions or ideas that could be used in developing a balanced egalitarian community?

In order to answer this questions, I chose the qualitative research method basically literature research. I read through some CWF documents and some Presbyterian documents as well. I also read a lot books and articles by some writers in relation to my working topic. This greatly inspired me on the involvement of women in development and religion in development. I also gained much on the concepts of development and empowerment. This gave me a theoretical insight on the theories of development and gender in my study.

Chapter two examines the theories of development, the human development and gender approach, the concept of gender mainstreaming, the environmental approach and the gender theory. These theories contributed in the analysis of the contributions of the CWF in the development and empowerment of the women in the church and the community. The methodology on how the research was carried on, the analysis, the relevance of the documents used and the advantages and disadvantages of the method used were examined in chapter three. While the geography of Cameroon (its location), its religion, and the history of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon were all discussed in chapter four. In chapter five, we looked at the formation of the CWF and its representation and the departments of the CWF; the WWD and WEEP examining their activities and their achievements in the empowerment of the women. Chapter six dealt with the findings and analysis of the activities of the CWF through the WEEP showing how the CWF is involved in the development works.

Finally, chapter seven looks at the way forward for women to be empowered more inclusive and well represented in the development activities and in leadership and decision making positions within the church and the society. Women should also abandon their position of passivity and servitude, and maximize their strength and resilience for the struggle for building of a just community of women and men within the church and society (Ekone, 2011, p. 64).

### **7.3 Recommendations**

The church is showing a lukewarm attitude in addressing the gender issue because its theology is patriarchal. The church should however realize that the greatest role it can play to rise above the patriarchal cultures and take a bold in addressing its own theology and empower the women. This is because people look at the church as a refuge for support when they experience various challenges in the society.

Round Table Conferences should be organized so that it will bring together all stakeholders (at community level) to discuss “Face to Face” the burning Socio Cultural Issues such as the right of children to be educated especially the girl child, land ownership, reproductive rights, marriage certificates, local elections within the society and the church.

The WEEP should prepare an Action Plan that is guided by the MDGs as well as Cameroon’s Vision 2035. This will better integrate the target beneficiaries into the country’s development efforts.

The PCC need to put in action all policy decisions on gender justice. For it is worthless writing up a policy documents and not following up on its implementation. Ekone (2011) states that:

“...many of the women had very little idea about the content of the Agenda PCC 2000 and Beyond programme of the church and also its 2003 Gender Policy. For women to be liberated they need education which creates awareness of their situation of oppression and domination and this can be achieved only when women are encouraged to engage in critical reading in order to move out of their ignorance” (Ekone, 2011, p. 63).

The Women’s Education and Empowerment Programme of the CWF with backing of the PCC, BftW, and Mission 21 should solicit assistance from international feminist and gender organizations such as the African Women Development Foundation (AWDF), Virginia Giles Foundation (VGIF), Women Inter Church Foundation, in order to improve conditions of WEEP thus their target beneficiaries, Heifer Project International Cameroon based in Bamenda-North West, that support livestock activities.

The Tiko council in collaboration with the Delegate for Social Affairs in Tiko Sub Division, has seen the impact of the activities of the CWF in their empowerment and development works. The community should therefore get involved and support the CWF financially, spiritually and morally in order to meet up with their development projects despite their discrimination at home and at the work place. This empowerment will help the women to be able provide for their basic needs and this will reduce poverty levels and improve living conditions the lifestyles of the citizens can be improve for the interest of future generations.

The Christian Women need to work in collaboration with MINPROFF: Ministère de Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille and local council-Tiko Council to encourage the population on the importance of legalizing their marriages. Engage the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) South West to reflect on the institutionalization of Marriage Certificates in all councils within the region. Sensitize both men and women on the importance of sending their children to school, and not to use them as sales boys and girls in their businesses and trades or as ‘farm-hands’.

Qualified social workers should be trained in the field of social practice to help provide good quality service and training to the population. The CWF has very few volunteers who are not trained, but however, they manage to provide in their own way what is necessary for the empowerment and development of the church and the society at the moment.

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