CHURCH AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INCLUSION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEGIO MARIA OF AFRICAN CHURCH MISSION, ROHO RABBI CHURCH HOLY SPIRIT OF AFRICA, AND PENTECOSTAL EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP OF AFRICA, MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA

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This Thesis is Submitted In Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirements For The Degree Of Doctor Of Philosophy In The Department Of Religion, School Of Religion And Christian Ministry of Africa Nazarene University

February 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this document and the research that it describes are my original work and that they have not been presented in any other university for academic work.

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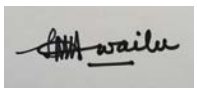
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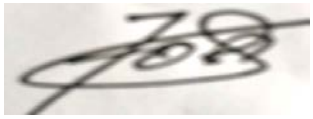
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all women and men whose academic contributions have brought about positive changes in the religious landscape of Africa.

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ABSTRACT

The Reformation of the sixteenth century led to the transformation of the Christian faith. In the same spirit, it also led African Christians to initiate their churches. However, five hundred years later, since the Reformation and more than a century since the inception of the first African Instituted Churches, it appears that the church has not fully embraced gender equity in leadership. Thus, this study aimed to examine the gender dynamics and roles of women within the leadership structures of the Legio Maria of African Church Mission (Legio Maria), the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa (PEFA). The following objectives guided this research: to examine the perception of leaders on the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in leadership in the Church; to survey the history of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria; to ascertain the experiences of women in these three churches regarding the leadership within their respective churches; to explore arguments about the exclusivity of women in the leadership of these churches; and to find out ways gender inclusivity is impacting the leadership of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church. The study used two theories: the trait theory of leadership by Carlyle Thomas and the skill theory of leadership by Robert L. Katz. The conceptual framework was based on gender and leadership inclusion, as explained by leaders' perceptions of women in leadership, the history of women's inclusion in the selected churches and the experiences of women. The study was conducted in Migori County, Kenya, and was a descriptive and exploratory research design. A total of 249 respondents participated in the study: 228 questionnaires were randomly sampled from church members, while 21 interviews were conducted with church leaders, who were purposively sampled. The data collection procedures were in-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and participant/non-participant observations. Qualitative data was thematically analysed and presented in narrative form. At the same time, quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 software program to generate descriptive statistics in terms of means and percentages. The findings are presented with the aid of tables. The results indicate that 96.4% of respondents from the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa believe that the bible supports women's inclusion in leadership. In contrast, 54.7% of those from RRCHSA accept that the bible endorses women's leadership. While 79% of Legio Maria members are convinced that the bible supports women's inclusion in the leadership of the church, it is overtly extolled, but covertly patriarchal tendencies have crept in. In RRCHSA, women's inclusion in leadership is ceremonial and domestic, and it is hinged on marriage to the more influential ordained male husbands. It is evident from the findings that 76.5% of PEFA's respondents believe that women hold the highest level of leadership positions in their respective churches, with 100% representation in both Legio Maria and RRCHSA. The researcher recommends that leaders from RRCHSA, and Legio Maria be exposed to ecumenical engagements, which will introduce them to other Christian theologies.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Breakaway church: This is a congregation that has split from the larger "mother" church due to religious, political, or conflict-related reasons.

Church: the whole of the Body of believers in Christ.
Church: a local community of believers.
Church Growth: a balance between numerical increase and spiritual steadiness.
Ethiopian Church refers to churches that emphasize independence but with the preservation of pre-existing church patterns.[1]
Equity: fairness.
Gender: the social design of biological sex, determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.[2]
Hierarchy: a religious structure characterised and determined by a power transcendent origin.[3]
Laity: the body of the faithful, outside the ranks of the ordained.[4]
Leadership Inclusion: the capacity and degree to which persons are allowed or empowered to participate fully in all the echelons of leadership.
Leadership: influencing or serving people and leading one another to the greater good. A leadership that is non-power-centric but characterised by equality and mutual relationship
Magisterium: the teaching authority in the Roman Catholic Church.[5]
Mama Kanisa: Mother of the church.
Misogynistic tradition: male-dominated belief and behaviour.
Mother Superior General: the highest position accorded to a woman.
Religious duties: spiritual activities.
Roho: Spirit
Women: For the purpose of this study, are adult human females.[6]
Zionist Church: underscores the activities of the Holy Spirit in relation to African cultural practices.[7]

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[1] Tobias Masuku, "African Initiated Churches: Christian Partners or Antagonists?" *Missionalia*, 24:3 (1996): 443.

[2] Jeffrey Kurebwa, "The Evolution of Gender Studies and its Impact on the African Society in the 21st Century," in *Understanding Gender in the African Context*. ed. Jeffrey Kurebwa (Pennsylvania: IGI Global, 2020), 7.

[3] Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 697.

[4] Google, "Laity," accessed October 2023, https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/.

[5] Francis A Sullivan, *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1983), 25.

[6] Google, "Woman," Vocabulary.com Dictionary, Vocabulary.com, accessed January 26, 2025, www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/woman.

[7] Masuku, "African Initiated Churches," 443.

ABBREVIATIONS

AICN: African Israel Church Nineveh

AICs: African Instituted Churches

EF: Elim Fellowship

EMA: Elim Missionary Assemblies

F: Female

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

IDIs: In-Depth Interviews

IPA: International Pentecostal Assemblies

IPCC: International Pentecostal Churches of Christ

LMACM: Legio Maria of African Church Mission

M: Male

NACOSTI: National Council for Science Technology and Innovation

NIV: New International Version

PEFA: Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa

RCC: Roman Catholic Church

RRCHSA: Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

USA: United Sates of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and gives historical background, the problem of the statement, the purpose of the study, and the objectives. It also covers research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, scope, delimitation, limitations, and assumptions. One contentious issue that the church faces today is the concept of all-inclusive leadership, which involves providing equal opportunities for both men and women within the administration or pastoral offices. Different Christian denominations have responded differently; some have fully embraced the leadership of all genders, some leadership is gendered, mainly male-dominated, and for some it is a subject which has often been ignored. Based on the above propositions, this research sought a comparative analysis of the Legio Maria of African Church Mission, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa about women and leadership inclusion within Migori County, Kenya. Theories related to the study and conceptual frameworks are also presented.

1.2 Background of the Study

The Church is still struggling with the issue of fully embracing the equity of all genders in leadership. In some cases, women have been discriminated against in some religious duties as well as in crucial leadership structures. Elizabeth Puttick opines that women are barely acknowledged as possessing souls and capacity for spiritual growth, let alone allowed to achieve rank and status in religion.[8] Isabel Phiri asserts that women have suffered and are relegated in the name of religion. They are subordinated and relegated to the background of progress and

[8] Elizabeth Puttick, *Women in New Religions: In search of Community, Sexuality and Spiritual Power* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 175.

development.[9] The church, throughout history, has been accused of remaining firmly attached to the misogynistic tradition.[10] On the other hand, some Christian denominations that have accepted women in their leadership structures still view them with suspicion.[11]

Thus, Ezra Chitando correctly points out that ambitious women and visionaries are often sidelined in leadership.[12] Although women form the majority in most African churches, they are underrepresented in leadership positions within many Christian denominations. LaCelle-Peterson argues that most Christian denominations have maintained the status quo, even in cases where women have opportunities in leadership structures. LaCelle-Peterson claims further that the Church has been turned into a ground for privileging one particular gender, which in most cases is the male gender.[13] Rickert contends that gender disparity in Church leadership impacts both the quality of Church leadership and the moral environment sustained by the church.[14] The Church's failure to fully embrace leadership equality, by default, promotes inequality and thus negates the constitutional value of Christianity.[15] It also generates an unhealthy moral environment characterized by confusion among members about what is morally appropriate and what is not.[16]

Patricia Werhane and others argue that the common understanding of leadership is explained by a continuum whereby a person significantly influences the thoughts, behaviours,

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[9] Isabel Phiri Apawo, *Women, Presbyterianism, and Patriarchy: Religious Experiences of Chewa Women in Central Malawi* (Zomba, Malawi: The Kachere Series, 2000), 87.

[10] Ibid, 87.

[11] Puttick, *Women in New Religions*, 175.

[12] Ezra Chitando, "The Bible, the church, and Gender Troubles in Africa," in *The Bible and Gender Troubles in Africa*, eds. Joachim Kügler, Rosinah Gabaitse, Johanna Stiebert (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2019), 21.

[13] Kristina LaCelle-Petterson, "The Church as Egalitarian Liberator," in *Essential Church: A Wesleyan Ecclesiology*, eds. Diane Leclerc, Mark A. Maddix (Kansas: Beacon Hill Press, 2014), 147.

[14] Elizabeth Rickert, "An Ethical Exploration of Gender Inequality in Church Leadership" (Honors Theses, University of Richmond, 2000), 5, accessed October 31st, 2023 https://scholarship.richmond.edu/honors-theses/1285.

[15] Ibid, 6.

[16] Ibid.

and feelings of others. Thus, the emphasis becomes on the person/s who will direct or influence a group of followers.[17] For this research, leadership is defined as influencing or serving people and guiding others toward to the greater good. A leadership that is non-power-centric but characterized by equality and mutual relationship.[18]

There is puzzlement about the definite purpose, nature and role of leadership, considering the various disparate definitions of leadership. However, expert leadership scholars, such as Northouse, have distilled many definitions of leadership and identified four key elements that underscore leadership.[19] The first component is that leadership, at its core, is mainly about influence. Second, leadership majorly operates within a group context. Third, leadership is driven by a notable process. Fourth, leadership is primarily meant to achieve mutual interests and goals. Consequently, many definitions of leadership have assumed one or two of the components mentioned above, hence the presence of many definitions of leadership.[20] This is why Bass and Bass argued that the true definition of leadership has proved to be elusive and fruitless over the years. The only recourse is for leadership to be defined along the lines in which one is interested.[21] Thus, getting an overarching or benchmark definition of leadership is impossible.

On the other hand, Mudimeli and Mwandayi argue that the struggle to include women in church leadership is often due to religious and cultural reasons.[22] Further, women's inclusion in

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[17] Patricia H. Werhane, Mollie Painter-Morland, eds., *Leadership, Gender, and Organisation* (New York: Springer: 2011), 1.

[18] Philip Barton Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Michigan: Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2009), 56.

[19] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 5-6.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Bernard M. Bass, and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 45.

[22] Maria Mudimeli Lufuluvhi, "The impact of Religious and Cultural Discourses on the Leadership Development of Women in the Ministry: A vhusadzi (womanhood) Perspective" (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2011); Mwandayi, Canisius, "Religio-Cultural 'Clamps' on Female Leadership in Zimbabwe: Towards a Liberating Hermeneutic in Mainline Churches and African Initiated Churches (AICs)," in *Women, Religion and*

leadership has had a chequered historical projection because, across the globe, women's inclusion in church leadership has often been low, only improving with shifting perceptions about women's leadership in the biblical interpretation and changing perspectives about the competence and capacity of women in church leadership.[23] Thus, from Europe to Africa, women have been included in leadership at a slow pace, hindered by the inertia compounded by a biblical interpretation that, on the one hand, supports women's inclusion in leadership in the highest positions, yet, on the other hand, does not.

In the Bible, leadership and inclusivity, the inclusion of women, are evident. In the Old Testament, leadership themes include the prophetic, kingly, priestly, and sage roles and duties. God assigns prophets to guide society by speaking the truth and urging the King and nation to walk in God's ways by abiding by the covenant.[24] In (Exodus 15:20), Miriam is mentioned as a prophet, and Deborah as a prophet and a judge. (Judges 4: 4-6, NIV). The other woman prophet is Huldah (2 Kings 22: 14-20, NIV); (2 Chronicles 34:22). Noadiah has been mentioned as well as a prophet in (Nehemiah 6:14). In (Psalms 72: 1-17), the duties of kings involved judging people with righteousness, the poor with justice, defending the cause of the poor, giving deliverance to the needy and crushing the oppressors.[25] One of the notable Queen regnants is Athaliah (2 Kings 11:1-20); Queen Esther also stands out as a leader whose wisdom and authority are commendable.

Priests in the Old Testament held a leadership role as intermediaries between the divine and humanity. Priests stood between God and His people, meditating for them, and seeking God's

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Leadership in Zimbabwe, Volume 2: Engagement and Activism in Religious Institutions (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 161.

[23] Eagly, and Karau, "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders," 574.

[24] Marty E. Stevens, *Leadership Roles of the Old Testament: King, Prophet, Priest, Sage* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), ii.

[25] New International Version (2011).

favour. This was done through sacred rituals and divination of divine will.[26] The act of sacrifice was a way of enhancing the covenantal relationship between God and His people. Thus, the priest maintained, reaffirmed, and renewed that covenant through these ritual functionaries.[27] According to Malone, since priests are the arbiters and practitioners of sacrifice, they assess a person's suitability to draw close to God and assist others in preparation. During the Aaronic priesthood, priests oversaw communicating to people the standard of holiness that God required from them.[28] According to Todd Compton, the Old Testament tremendously depicts no woman as a priest serving in the temple. The reasons for the ban range from Hebrew culture, which was deeply rooted in patriarchy to women's sexuality.[29]

In the New Testament, women are mentioned as leaders of various churches. In Philippians 4:2-3 Euodia and Syntyche are recognised as leaders of the Philippian church, working alongside Paul. In the Cenchreae church, one finds Phoebe, a deaconess (Romans 16:1). In the Lycus Valley churches, Priscilla and Aquila, (Romans 16:3-4), Paul acknowledges them as his co-workers. Paul also mentions Junia as among the Apostles (Romans 16:7). In Acts 21:9, four daughters of Philip are identified as playing the role of a prophet. It is apparent from the examples drawn from both the Old and New Testaments that leadership was gender inclusive.

However, different Christian denominations have approached the subject of gender and leadership in varying ways. The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) operates under a male-dominated leadership, with its governance centred on the papacy. The Pope is the supreme authority; from him, there are cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests. Individual church

[26] Stevens, *Leadership Roles of the Old Testament*, ii.

[27] John Bergsma, *Jesus and the Old Testament Roots of the Priesthood* (Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2021), 9-10.

[28] Andrew S. Malone, *God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 38.

[29] Todd M. Compton, "Kingdom of Priests: Priesthood Temple and Women in the Old Testament and in Restoration," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 36, no. 3 (2003): 49-50.

members, often referred to as the laity, have no authority in the administration of the church.[30] The ordained men or clergy are the key decision-makers. According to Karen O'Connor, all women are categorised as laity, and not even women in religious orders (Nuns) can become clergy.[31] Although some people argue that women's participation in the Church's life has increased since Vatican II (1962-1965), Sharma holds that inherent assumptions about gender roles still impel the attitudes towards women and leadership positions.[32] The Vatican document, entitled "Inter Insigniores" or "Declaration on the question of admission of women to the ministerial priesthood," maintains that Christ is the bridegroom and the church is His bride.[33] The document further emphasizes the masculinity of Christ as the basis for why the priesthood is reserved for men.[34] The priest is acting in the person of Christ, *Persona Christi* (The physical resemblance of Christ). He is the representative of Christ at the Last Supper and on the cross. As Christ's leadership is threefold, the priestly duty is as a prophet, priest, and king.[35] Pope Paul VI first forwarded the argument of Persona Christi argument in 1976.[36]

The other argument is that there is no evidence that Christ ordained women or called them to be his Apostles; thus, the male authority is confirmed in the Apostolic succession of Christ. The account is structured around the selection of twelve disciples whom Christ instructs to go and share the good news with the world; drawing from this narrative, the church polity

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[30] General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (The Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, 2005), 25.

[31] Karen O'Connor, ed., *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook, Volume 1* (California: Sage Publication, 2010), 490.

[32] Arvind Sharma, *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 74.

[33]"Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on Women to the Ministerial Priesthood, *Inter Insignores* (October 15, 1976)," in *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents*, vol. 2, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 340.

[34] Monica Migliorino Miller, *The Authority of Women in the Catholic church* (Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2015), 6-7.

[35] Lavinia Byrne, *Woman at the Alter: The ordination of Women in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 6.

[36] Jeremy Daigler, *Incomplete with God*'s *Design: A History of the Women's Ordination Movement in the U.S. Roman Catholic Church* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), vii.

must continue to flow from the Scriptures.[37] Ratzinger, who was later elected as Pope Benedict XVI, commenting on excluding women from ordination, stated, "It is found on the word of God, constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church. It has always been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal Magisterium."[38] On July 10, 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote a letter apologizing to women on the Church's behalf for the discrimination they had experienced. The pope said that equality for women is now a matter of justice and necessity. Equality for women touches on female ordination as well. In 2013, Pope Francis publicly said that the Catholic church is not ready yet to ordain women to the ministerial priesthood. "The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question for open discussion…"[39] The teachings of Rome, church statements, their tradition, and the actual practice regarding women's leadership have brought more confusion than clarity on the role/position of women in the church's leadership structure.[40]

Relatedly, the Orthodox Church has a position on gender and leadership similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church. It is an ancient church full of traditions, a church of Pentecost, and as old as Christianity itself, and it is estimated to have between 250 and 300 million believers.[41] It has detailed liturgical rituals and ceremonies solely under male authority, and it is believed that the priesthood criterion originates classically from Christ's maleness.[42] Thus, the critical leadership positions within the Orthodox Church function under patriarchal patronage and male authority. In contrast, women are accorded roles that are subordinate to the patriarchy.[43] In the Church of England, the question of gender inclusivity in the hierarchy of the Church as ministers

[37] Daigler, *Incomplete with God's Design*, vii.
[38] Sally Moran, *Women of the Covenant: The Case for Female Roman Catholic Priests* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2004), xii.
[39] *Evangelii Gaudium*, (2013), no. 104, accessed on 11th December, 2022.
[40] Moran, *Women of the Covenant*, xiii.
[41] Liveris, *Ancient Taboos and Gender Prejudice*, 2.
[42] Liveris, *Ancient Taboos and Gender Prejudice*, xix.
[43] Ibid, 19.

is a debate that took almost a quarter of a century. The ordination of women to the priesthood was well-defined in 1992.[44] On July 14, 2014, during the General Synod under the guidance of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, the Synod voted to admit female bishops for the first time in the history of this church.[45] Although such changes have been made in the Anglican church, the reactions have been worrying. For example, since 1994, 470 male clergy left in protest, most of them joined the Roman Catholic church[46] and in 2010, five Anglican bishops resigned and joined the Roman Catholic church.[47]

Before the 1940s, women in the Adventist church had an abundance of opportunities to serve in all positions of the church.[48] However, in the mid-1940s, a significant shift in women's exclusion from leadership positions, both administrative and departmental, began to take shape.[49] One of the fundamental beliefs of this denomination is that God bestows spiritual gifts upon all members of His church, which members can use in ministries for the common good of the church and humanity. These spiritual gifts include faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, and administration.[50] The controversy surrounding the beliefs and the implementation of these principles regarding the role of women in this church lacks clarity. Thus, women's inclusion in the leadership of this church is still a contested issue.

Most Christian denominations affiliated with the Wesleyan Holiness movement support gender-inclusive leadership. The Manual of the church of the Nazarene states that "The Church

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[44] *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A report of the House of Bishop's Working Party on Women in the Episcopate* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 1.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Google, “The Church of England Just Did What So Many Other Churches Would Never Even Consider (mic.com),” accessed November 2023.https://www.mic.com/article/

[47] Google, “In Rome, church of England head clergyman meets privately with Pope,” accessed October 2023, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com

[48] Laura Lee Vance, *Seventh Day Adventism in Crisis Gender and Sectarian Changes in an Emerging Religion* Urban and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 173.

[49] Ibid.

[50] General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (The Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, 2005), 25.

of the Nazarene supports the right of women to use their God-given Spiritual gifts within the church and affirms the historic right of women to be elected and appointed to places of leadership within the church of the Nazarene, including the offices of both elder and deacon……."[51] Another denomination of the Wesleyan Holiness movement that has a similar approach to inclusive gender leadership is the Salvation Army. It has kept the legacy of leadership of both men and women sharing in leadership roles. Its official policy postulates that both men and women serve side by side and all are provided with similar opportunities to advance.[52]

Zionists are one of the largest Africa-Initiated churches (AIC) in Southern Africa. According to a 2008 publication, South Africa has a population of 11%, and in neighbouring Swaziland, it has approximately 40%. In Mozambique, 17.5 per cent of the national population is the foundation of Zionism, which is attributed to John George Phillips, who was born in 1922, the son of a Tongan chief; he was formerly an Anglican.[53] According to Ulf Strohbehn, the leadership system in Zionism is tied to the political, cultural, and ecclesiastical forms. Its leadership structure is male-dominated, whereby the bishop presides over his fellow leaders.[54] Since the authority is male-dominated, women only have access to leadership when their husbands occupy positions, albeit in a delegated capacity.[55] In cases where a woman has spiritual gifts such as prophecy or healing, there is a provision for leadership that is not simply ascribed to

[51] Dean G. Blevins, et al., *Church of Nazarene Manual 2017-2021: History, Constitution, Government, Sacraments and Rituals* (Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, 2017), 192-193, accessed June 12, 2023, EN_nazarene_2017-2021_manual-ver20180402.pdf (whdl.org).

[52] Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry in the Church* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 54.

[53] Ulf Strohbehn, *The Zionist Churches in Malawi: History-Theology-Anthropology* (Luwinga, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2016), 85.

[54] Ibid, 344.

[55] Terence O. Ranger, *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 184.

their husband's status.[56] Nevertheless, in some Zionist-affiliated denominations, female healers are not allowed to perform their ministry.[57] Generally, in the structure of leadership in the Zionist church women play marginal roles. Therefore, gender and leadership inclusion in the Zionist church and its affiliates does not function, and men mainly dominate leadership. In West Africa, the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement was established in 1925 in Southern Nigeria. In this denomination, leadership is predominantly male, resulting in the problem of gender and leadership inclusion.[58]

Many *Roho* (Spirit) movements emerged in the 1930s in western Kenya among the Luo communities. Some of these denominations include the Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, the Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, and the Cross of East Africa. The highest position accorded to women is *Mama Kanis*a (Mother of the church), and Mama Kanisa's primary role is spiritual counselling. In cases where women hold leadership positions, such as pastors, healers or soldiers, these positions for women often diminish as the movements become more institutionalized.[59] African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) was founded by Paul Daudi Zakayo Kivuli (1896-1974), a Pentecostal Luhya evangelist, in 1942.[60] AICN has a large following in neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Tanzania. By the 1970s, it had approximately 100,000 believers with 100 branches across East Africa.[61] After the founder's death, his wife, Rebecca Jumba Kivuli (1902-1988), took over the church's leadership until her retirement in 1983. However, during her leadership, the church experienced a large-scale

[56] Peter Kallaway, *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948-1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be opened* (Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa, 2002), 290.
[57] Strohbehn, *The Zionist Churches in Malawi*, 394.
[58] Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue: The Case of Northern Nigeria* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1968), 22.
[59] Cynthia Hoehler-Futton, *Women of Fire and Spirit: History, Faith, and Gender in Roho Religion in Western Kenya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3-4.
[60] Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 113.
[61] Ibid.

secession.[62] The Reformed Church of East Africa, founded in 1963, accepted the ordination of women in 2017. Before the review of its constitution, it stated that only biological males could be ordained. However, with the new constitution, its leadership structure is still male-dominated. Ordained women must accept working under senior male pastors. However, the Reformed Church of East Africa enshrines the principle of the Priesthood of all believers, as outlined in Constitution 2:7, which advocates for equality in ministry.[63]

Legio Maria is believed to have been founded in 1963.[64] At the initial stages of Legio Maria's foundation, women were included in the church hierarchy; two notable examples were Mother Maria, Regina Owich (who died in 1966),[65] and Gaudencia Aoko. Aoko performed priestly functions such as celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, baptizing, and ordaining priests, among other duties.[66] Another role that women were involved in was evangelism.[67] However, in 1968-1969, the Apostolic Council revised the leadership structure of Legio Maria.[68] Marcel Samuel Onyango Oniala founded Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa after breaking away from the Chosen Church of Holy Spirit founded by Prophet Elijah Kinyanjui. Chosen Church of the Holy Spirit is classified as one of the Akurinu (turban) churches.[69] Generally, little is known about this sect.

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[62] Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton and Asmara: African World Press, Inc., 2001), 158.

[63] Chemorion, *Collaborative of Women's and Men's Leadership*, 7.

[64] Peter J. Dirven, "The Maria Legio: The Dynamics of a Breakaway Church among the Luo in East Africa" (PhD Thesis, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Rome, 1970), in the whole thesis.

[65] David B. Barret, et al., *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenya Christianity, 1498-1973* (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), 137.

[66] Phyllis G. Jestice, ed. *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (California: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 61.

[67] John Oywa, "Aoko: A charismatic but rebel prophetess behind church walkout," The *Standard Newspaper*, 13th January, 2019.

[68] Dirven, "The Maria Legio: The Dynamics of a Breakaway Church among the Luo in East Africa" 124.

[69] Philomena Njeri Mwaura, "The Akurinu Churches: A study of the History and some of the Beliefs of the Holy Ghost Church of East Africa 1926-1980" (MA Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1984), 15.

The Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa is a Christian denomination that developed from the merging of International Pentecostal Assemblies and Elim Missionary Assemblies.[70] Although the two missionary bodies have been working in Kenya since 1938 and 1942 respectively, Elim missionary assemblies established a mission in Bukuria-Taranganya, Migori County while International Pentecostal Assemblies founded its first mission station in Kaimosi.[71] The Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa as a distinct church was founded in 1962.[72] It is described as one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in Kenya. The Lake region of PEFA is part of Migori with 184 churches, 204 Pastors, and 15 Bishops.[73] The church's leadership structure has a general overseer as the head supported by bishops and a council of elders. Since its foundation, men have held the position of general overseer, and the content of the first draft of the constitution of 1962 regarding leadership remains obscured to the public.

The critical conundrum within most Christian denominations or organisations has been that despite being numerically the majority, women are less represented in the leadership. Rakoczy asserts that women compose 60%, 70% or even more of a local congregation gathered to worship.[74] According to the Pew Research Centre's 2016 report, an estimated 83.4% of women around the globe identify with a faith group, compared to 79.9% of men.[75] And in the 2018 report, still more women than men are religious.[76] Pew Research Centre observes that an estimated 97 million or more women than men claim religious affiliations worldwide.[77] Falola and Amponsah share a similar observation that women form the majority in Christian churches

[70] Barret, et al., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 249.
[71] Ibid, 25.
[72] Ibid, 249.
[73] Google, "Pefa Church," accessed, June 2023, www.bramanfoundation.org/programs/mission-works/africa-pefa.
[74] Susan Rakoczy, *In Her Name: Women Doing Theology* (Indiana: Indiana University, 2004), 198.
[75] Google, "Women Edging out Men in Church Leadership, 2021," accessed November, 2023, https://kenyanews.go.ke.
[76] Google, "Black Men are less Religious than Black Women, but more Religious than White Women and Men," Pew Research Centre 2018, accessed November, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/
[77] Shiloya and Mwaura, "Women Edging out Men in Church Leadership, 2021,"

across the African continent as well as universally.[78] According to David Muriithi, the ratio of women and men in Kenya who devote themselves to the Church is 60:40.[79] The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) records of 2014 show that the ratio of men to women in the church was 3:7.[80] In some Christian denominations or organisations have constitutions or the official church policies that advocate for inclusive gender leadership yet, at the implementation level there is a submerged gender hierarchy. Thus, the proportion of women in the top Church hierarchy in Kenya remains insignificant. Based on the above background, this study investigates the inclusion of church and women's leadership in a comparative analysis of Legio Maria of African church mission; Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa; and Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, specifically in Migori County, Kenya.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The research problem can be based on a question, an unresolved controversy, a gap in knowledge or an unrequired need within the chosen subject.[81] The background of the study highlights that the issue of gender disparity in the Church's leadership remains a contentious area. Despite various biblical texts reinforcing women's inclusivity in leadership, and given that women are the majority and have similar dispositions to leadership as their male counterparts, one would expect the number of women leaders to be significant. However, such is yet to be realised in the selected religious organisations due to varying hermeneutical approaches. For example, during the 56th annual general assembly of the PEFA (2018), which comprised the national executive board, the council of elders, and the national executive council, only two of

[78] Toyin Falola and Nana Akua Amponsah, *Women's Roles in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC), 67.

[79] David Muriithi, "Dying to be saved: Why Kenyan women continue to be hooked to the Church," accessed November, 2023, https://nation.africa.

[80] Racheal Syombua Muli, Paul Kyalo, Regina W. Kinuthia, "An Investigation of Gender Disparities of Church Membership and Attendance: A Case of Mbooni West Sub-County in Makueni, Kenya," *Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, vol. 5, issue. 8 (2020): 102.

[81] Nicholas Walliman, *Research Methods: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2011), 32.

the 27 leaders in attendance were women.[82]According to Kasomo, in some AICs, leadership positions are dominated by males at 71.4% and females at 28.6%.[83] Casimir and others argue that traditional gender roles in African societies are often upheld by a patriarchal system that perceives men as the dominant figures and women as secondary.[84] In this context, women's roles are often viewed as complementary to those of men. These beliefs about gender roles can profoundly impact women's inclusion in the church's leadership structure. The low representation of women in Church leadership indicates that the concerns of women's leadership have not been entirely addressed. It is based on this background and lack of significant literature that this research sought to fulfil the knowledge gap by doing a comparative study on women and leadership inclusion in the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church of Holy Spirit of Africa, which are African Initiated churches, and the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa which is a Protestant church in Migori County.

From the foregoing, it is clear that women are not in church leadership. However, the reasons for such low inclusion within the Kenyan context appear multifaceted when one considers gender disparity, biblical interpretation of the place of women in church leadership, traditional and/or cultural beliefs and practices and patriarchal views on women as leaders. Could these forces combine to cause low women's inclusion in leadership? Consequently, this research will provide us with a broader perspective on the current beliefs and practices regarding the subject matter. It does so within the context based on studies globally, regionally and locally[85], that there is still ambiguity as to the role of women within church leadership structures in Kenya.

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[82] "Minutes of the general assembly of Pefa," accessed November, 2023, https://docplayer.net.

[83] Kasomo, Daniel, "The Role of Women in the Church in Africa," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 2 (6), (2010): 127.

[84] Ani Casimir, Chukwuelobe C.C, Ugwu C., "The Church and Gender Equality in Africa: Questioning Culture and the Theological Paradigm on Women Oppression," *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 4 (2014): 170.

[85] Cynthia Hoehler-Futton, *Women of Fire and Spirit: History, Faith, and Gender in Roho Religion in Western Kenya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3-4; Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry in the Church* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 54.

Furthermore, many studies have focused on quantitative or qualitative research as alone methodologies, rather than mixed methods that combine the two for deeper analysis.[86] Therefore, the study guided by the objectives was carried out to investigate church and women's leadership inclusion a comparative study of Legio Maria of the African church mission, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, Migori County, Kenya.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the inclusion of the church and women's leadership in a comparative analysis of Legio Maria of African Church Mission, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, Migori County, Kenya. It compared women's roles within the leadership structures of the Legio Maria of African Church Mission, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, located in Migori County, Kenya. The comparative analysis was meant to assess the extent to which women were included in church leadership in the three churches and the reason for the low or high inclusion rates.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following:

1.5.1 To explore the perception of leaders on the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership structures;

1.5.2 To survey the historical evolution of women's leadership among Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria of African Church Mission;

1.5.3 To ascertain the experiences of women in these three churches and how their experiences impact the church's leadership;

[86] Grenz and Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, 54.

1.5.4 To analyse the arguments used to deter women from full participation in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership; and,

1.5.5 To explore how women's leadership impacts the inclusion and growth of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church.

1.6 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1.6.1 What biblical basis do the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA posit to include or exclude women in their leadership structures?

1.6.2 What is the history of the LMACM, the RRCHSA, and PEFA in relation to the evolution of women's leadership?

1.6.3 How do women's leadership experiences in their respective churches impact their respective churches?

1.6.4 What are the grounds for excluding women in the leadership structures of the Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA church?

1.6.5 How can women's inclusion in leadership impact Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA church?

1.7 Hypothesis

Walliman argues that a hypothesis is a testable good guess.[87] To achieve the objectives of this research, the following hypothesis was tested.

H_{01}. The women's leadership role does not significantly impact the inclusion of women or the growth of the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, the Legio Maria and the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa.

[87] Walliman, *Research Methods*, 32.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study holds several implications for academia, policy, and targeted religious organisations. In academia, the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on gender dynamics within religious institutions, offering acumen into leadership disparities and the underlying factors. Its policy implications will be realized when the research findings can guide religious organisations in implementing more inclusive leadership practices that promote gender equality. The social influence of this study will be evident in its ability to shed light on gender inequalities, and it may encourage broader discussions and actions within the community to foster equal opportunities in leadership roles.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted exclusively within Migori County, Kenya, focusing on the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA organisations. Migori County is the foundational location and headquarters of the Legio Maria and the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa. In Migori County, the Legio Maria and the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa have substantial followers. Although the PEFA church is spread throughout Kenya, it was unrealistic to research all its branches due to time constraints and financial limitations. Hence, the study only concentrated on the PEFA church within Migori County. Data was collected for six months, from January 2024 to June 2024. Further, the study focused on the understanding of leaders on the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in church's leadership; the history of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria of African Church Mission concerning the evolution of women's leadership; the experiences of women in these three churches and how their experiences impact the church's leadership; the arguments used to deter women from full participation in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership; and, explore ways women leadership is impacting the inclusion

and growth of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church

1.10 Delimitations

The delimitation of the study reminds the reader of the study's boundaries, what it is, and what it is not.[88] While this study aimed to provide valuable insights into the gender and leadership inclusion dynamics within the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA in Migori County, Kenya, certain limitations and delimitations need to be recognized: the geographical focus, the study focus, time constraints, sample size and representation, language and communication, sensitivity of information, cross-cultural factors, and availability of data.

Geographically, the study was confined to Migori County, Kenya, and its findings may not be directly applicable to other regions with different cultural, social, and religious contexts. The unique characteristics of Migori County's religious landscape might not be representative of Kenya as a whole. The study focused exclusively on the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA; other religious organisations within Migori County were omitted, potentially leading to a partial understanding of the broader religious landscape's gender dynamics. Due to time constraints, the study's data collection period was limited to six months, which might impede the depth and breadth of data that can be collected and analysed; thus, long-term trends and changes within the organisations might not be fully captured. The study's sample size for surveys, interviews, and focus groups might not fully represent the diversity and complexity of gender dynamics within the chosen organisations. Consequently, the experiences and perspectives of individuals who choose not to participate may not be reflected. This study

[88] Marshall and Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 76.

encountered challenges related to language barriers and effective communication, mainly when conducting interviews and focus group discussions.

1.11 Limitations of the Study

The study has five identified limitations. First, the study's findings cannot be generalizable beyond the selected religious organisations and geographic areas. Secondly, the social desirability bias almost affected participants' responses, particularly in qualitative interviews and surveys. However, the researcher's continual involvement in most church activities created a free environment for the participants to act normally. Thirdly, the study faced challenges in retrieving sensitive information related to leadership dynamics within religious organisations. However, the researcher assured the participants it was an academic exercise and showed them the research authorisation letter from the University and the Research Permit from NACOSTI.

Additionally, the researcher had key contact persons from each church who effectively facilitated the data collection process. Fourthly, some respondents failed to return the questionnaires, despite the researcher's frequent follow-ups; this issue was addressed by assessing the overall response rate, which was found to be highly acceptable. Lastly, some informants had busy work schedules and could not be interviewed on appointment days, which forced the researcher to re-book appointments more than three times.

1.12 Assumptions of the Study

This study explored the complex realm of gender and leadership inclusion within religious organisations in Migori County, Kenya, and certain assumptions underpinned the research. It is assumed that the participants, including leaders and general members of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA, willingly participated in the study's surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. This assumption considers that

participants were motivated to share their perspectives on the subject matter. The study assumed that the participants provided accurate and honest responses during interviews, surveys, and discussions without withholding or distorting information. The assumption of transparency is vital for obtaining reliable data. This study assumed that the sample of participants from each religious organisation encompassed a diverse range of experiences, opinions, and viewpoints. It is assumed that this diversity enabled a comprehensive exploration of gender and leadership dynamics. It is assumed that the information shared by participants was treated with strict confidentiality. This is important as it encourages participants to express their perspectives openly and candidly, particularly when discussing sensitive topics. It is also assumed that the organisational records, policies, and documents accessed for analysis were accurate and reflective of the current practices within the selected religious organisations. Any discrepancies in these materials could impact the study's findings.

It is within the assumption of this study that the concepts and frameworks used to analyse gender and leadership dynamics were culturally relevant and appropriate within the context of Migori County and the religious organisations under investigation. Further, the participants, whether through surveys, interviews, or focus group discussions, had informed consent to participate in the study. This includes understanding the study's purpose, their role in the study, and the use of the collected data. Respecting participants' rights, maintaining anonymity, and safeguarding their welfare were rigorously adhered to throughout the research. While efforts were made to mitigate biases in data collection and analysis, the study assumed that any potential biases stemming from the researcher's or participants' perspectives did not unduly skew the overall findings. The study assumed that the findings and conclusions drawn from the selected religious organisations in Migori County can contribute to broader discussions on gender and

leadership dynamics in religious settings, albeit with the understanding of the study's geographical and organisational limitations.

1:13 Theoretical Framework

Dickson Adom and others define the theoretical framework as the "blueprint" on which an existing theory in the field of enquiry is based.[89] One of the significant roles of the theoretical framework is that it helps the researcher situate and contextualise theories relevant to the study.[90] This study adopted four theories as its theoretical framework: Trait Theory of Leadership, Skill Theory of Leadership and the Role Incongruity Theory. The trait theory was coined by Carlyle Thomas in 1795 and advanced by Galton Francis in 1822.[91] This theory is explained from the supposition that leaders are born to the hypothesis that leaders can be made when needed.[92] According to Kanodia and Sacher, traits are distinctive qualities of an individual's specific nature; there are three main categories of traits: physical, mental, and personal.[93] However, traits are not exclusively accountable for identifying whether a person will be an effective leader; they are fundamentally seen as prerequisites that bequeath people with leadership potential.[94] According to Hill, one of the problems with the trait theory of leadership is that it is difficult to specify the traits that constitute effective leadership and the quantity of each trait that an individual requires to cope best in different situations.[95] Stogdill also questions this theory within a similar context: Is there a universality of leadership traits?[96] Baetz and House contend that the

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[89] Dickson Adom, Emad Kamil Hussein, and Joe Adu Agyem, "Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Mandatory Ingredients of a Quality Research," *International Journal of Scientific Research*, vol. 7, issue.1 (January 2018): 438-39.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Nilüfer Rüzgar, "Leadership Traits of Suleiman the Magnificent, in terms of "Great Man" Theory," *Osmanli Mirasi Arastirmalari Dergisi/Journal of Ottoman Legacy Studies*, volume. 6, issue. 15 (2019): 319.

[92] Rekha Kanodia and Arun Sacher, "Trait Theories of Leadership," *International Journal of Science Technology and Management*, vol. 5, issue.12 (2016): 123.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

[95] L. Brooks Hill, "Leadership," in *A Handbook for Communication and Media Administrators: Leadership in Times of Change*, ed. William G. Christ (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999), 129.

[96] Ralph Melvin Stogdill, "Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," *Journal of*

trait theory of leadership relies on some everyday observations of effective leaders and thus offers a partial explanation of what constitutes effective leadership.[97] Despite such criticisms, Klenke maintains that the trait theory of leadership has resurfaced as an explanatory construct to account for effective leadership.[98]

In this study on women's leadership inclusion, gender is not a trait in determining an individual's leadership capabilities, which relates to the inclusion of women in leadership. Thus, the trait theory was used to understand how women who possess leadership traits are included in the leadership roles of the Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA in Migori County, Kenya.

The incentive for research on the skill theory of leadership is attributed to a classical article published by Robert L. Katz in 1955. Katz defines leadership skills as the ability to use one's knowledge and competencies to achieve a set of goals or objectives.[99] This theory emphasises that skills can be developed, not necessarily innate, and can be exhibited in performance, not simply in potential.[100] Katz identifies three skills necessary in leadership: technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills.[101] Technical skills help develop aptitude in a specific type of work or activity. Human skills, also known as people skills, enable an individual to work effectively with others, being aware of the needs of other members. Conceptual skills help leaders work with ideas and concepts, thus assisting in formulating the goals to be achieved

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Psychology, Volume. 25, Issue. 1 (1948): 35-71.

[97] Robert J. House and Mary L. Baetz, *Some Empirical Generalizations and New Research Directions* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1978), 201.

[98] Karin Klenke, *Women and Leadership: A Contextual Perspective* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), 62.

[99] Robert L. Katz, *Skills of an Effective Administrator: Harvard Business Review* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 1974), 4.

[100] Katz, *Skills of an Effective Administrator*, 4.

[101] Ecler Jaqua and Terry Jaqua, "The Three-Skill Approach to Leadership," *Archives of Family Medicine and General Practice*, volume. 6, issue. 1 (2021): 176.

in an organisation.[102] According to Northouse, this theory is instinctively engaging; defining leadership in terms of skills makes leadership accessible to everyone, as skills are competencies that people can learn or develop.[103] However, this theory is faulted for failing to explain how skills lead to effective leadership performance.[104] In linking the skill theory to the research topic and objectives, the theory submits that skills can be learned or developed by everyone, thus women within Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA should accord equal opportunities as they are capable of achieving the desired results within their respective religious organisations.

Intersectionality Theory, developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. The theory acknowledges that individuals possess multiple intersecting identities, such as gender, race, class, and religion, which collectively influence their experiences and opportunities. This theory emphasises that these intersecting identities cannot be examined in isolation, as they interact and intersect to shape individuals' lives. [105]In the context of this study, Intersectionality Theory will be employed to understand how the combination of gender and other identities impacts leadership inclusion within religious organisations. It recognises that gender disparities are not solely due to gender itself but are intertwined with other factors. By exploring how gender intersects with other identities within Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA, the study aims to reveal a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the leadership dynamics in these religious organisations in Migori County, Kenya.

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[102] Jaqua and Jaqua, "The Three-Skill Approach to Leadership," 176.

[103] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2007), 54.

[104] Ibid, 56.

[105] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, issue. 1, Article 8 (1989): 139-167.

On the other hand, and more poignantly, this study is grounded in the Role Incongruity Theory as espoused by Eagly and Diekman in 2005.[106] Eagly and Diekman argue that any group is positively assessed and accepted if its characteristics cohere with the typical social roles of the dominant group. Where inconsistencies exist within the measured groups, a role incongruity occurs. The theory is primarily applied to women's leadership, with the argument that prejudice against women's leadership arises due to inconsistencies between the stereotypical understanding of gender on the one hand and the typical understanding of leadership on the other.[107]

The Role Incongruity Theory has been articulated by Eagly and Karau, who noted that one key reason why women do not reach the highest levels of leadership is primarily a result of prejudice garbed in the perception of female leaders that the society has: a perception that largely views women as inferior, incompetent and incapable of leading due to a mismatch between leadership obligations and other socially-constructed obligations like motherhood and wife.[108]

Ritter and Yoder also provide further evidence of gender role differences in leadership positions between men and women as exemplified in the Role Incongruity Theory.[109] Women and men, premised on their degree of dominance, were placed in diverse groups comprising of either (woman, man), (man, man), or (woman, woman) and later given undertakings randomly. Participants with higher dominance ratings emerged as leaders in all groups except for (woman, man) pairs. When the given tasks or undertakings were of a masculine or gender-neutral nature, males emerged more often than females as leaders. These findings suggest that even when

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[106] Alice H. Eagly, and Amanda B. Diekman, "What is the Problem? Prejudice as an Attitude-in-Context," in *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years After Allport*, eds. John F. Dovidio, Peter Glick, Laurie A. Rudman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 19-35.

[107] Eagly, and Diekman, "What is the Problem?" 19-35.

[108] Alice H. Eagly, and Steven J. Karau, "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders," *Psychological Review* 109, no. 3 (2002): 573.

[109] Ritter Barbara A., and Janice D. Yoder, "Gender Differences in Leader Emergence Persist even for Dominant Women: An updated Confirmation of Role Congruity Theory," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2004): 187-193.

women possess dominant characteristics, masculinized tasks as well as gender stereotypes prohibit the emergence of women into leadership positions.[110]

1.14 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework interconnects these research objectives by acknowledging that biblical perceptions, historical contexts, women's experiences, arguments against inclusivity, and the potential benefits of gender-inclusive leadership collectively contribute to the complex landscape of women and leadership inclusion within the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria. As each research objective was explored, the framework sought to reveal the underlying factors and dynamics that shape women's roles, leadership opportunities, and the potential for positive change within these religious organisations.

[110] Ibid.

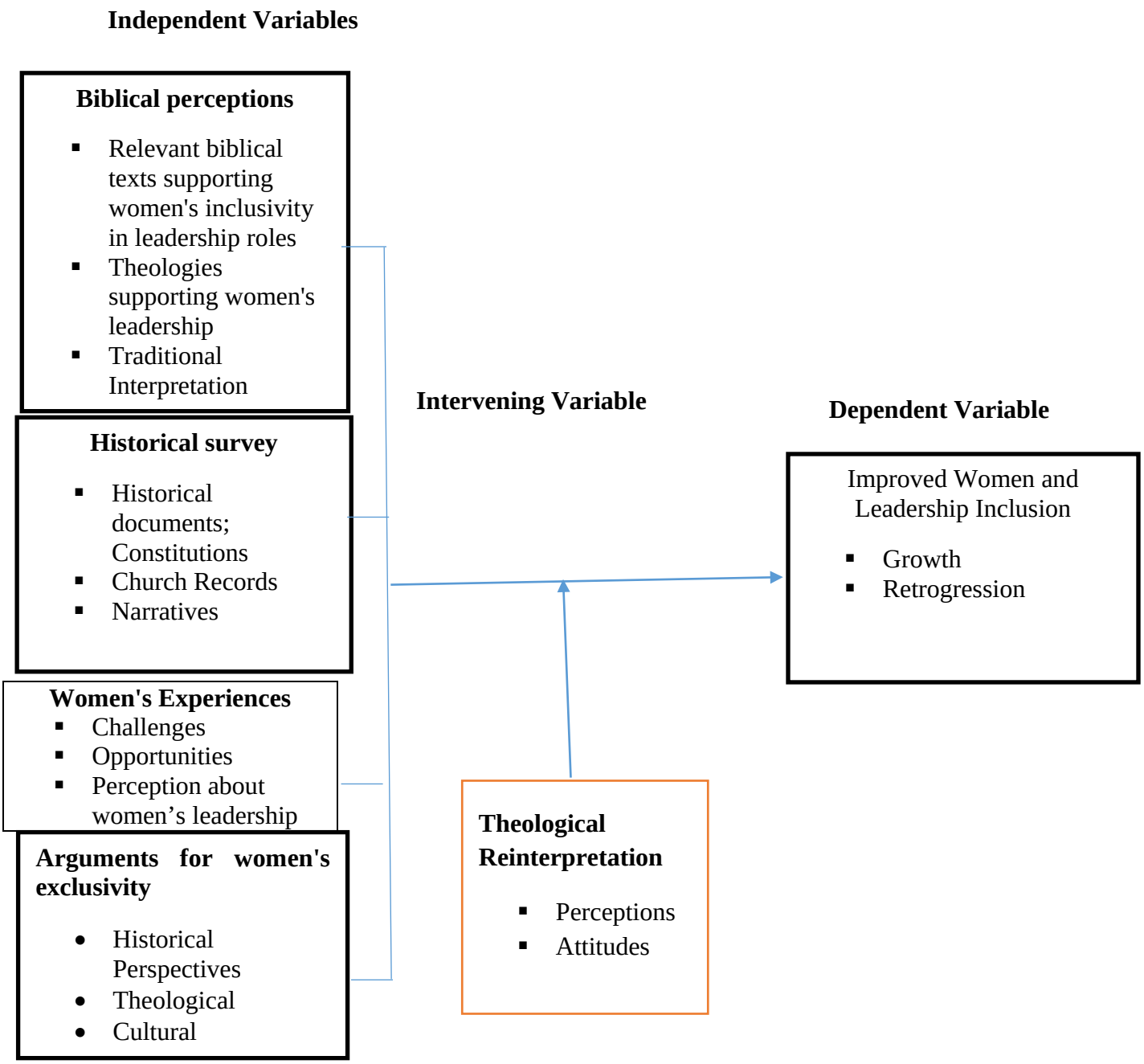


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Model for Improved Women and Leadership Inclusion in Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa and PEFA church, Migori County-Kenya.

The conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation of the study variables. Hence, the role of women as measured using the perception of biblical interpretation, women's experience, historical account of women in church leadership and arguments for exclusivity or inclusivity are measured to the extent that they impact women's inclusivity which is determined by the growth of women in leadership or regression of women in leadership.

Conceptual Framework: Model for Improved Women and Leadership Inclusion in Religious Organisations

Research Objective 1: To examine the Biblical teaching of the inclusivity of women in leadership.

This objective involves exploring relevant biblical scriptures and theological perspectives that address the role of women in leadership within the Christian context. The conceptual framework draws from biblical texts that support the inclusion of women in leadership roles, challenging traditional interpretations that may have limited women's participation.

Research Objective 2: To do a historical survey of Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, PEFA, and Legio Maria.

A historical survey is conducted to understand the evolution of gender and leadership dynamics within each of the religious organisations. This involves examining the historical documents, records, and narratives related to the organisations' formation, growth, and development over time.

Research Objective 3: To ascertain the experiences of women in these three Christian denominations regarding leadership within their respective churches.

The experiences of women within the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, PEFA, and Legio Maria are explored through qualitative research methods, including interviews and focus group discussions. This provides insights into the challenges, opportunities, and perceptions women encounter while pursuing leadership roles within their religious communities.

Research Objective 4: To explore some arguments about the exclusivity of women in the leadership of these churches.

This objective involves examining arguments, both theological and cultural, that have been used to justify the exclusion or limited participation of women in leadership roles. By critically analysing these arguments, the conceptual framework aims to highlight the factors that contribute to gender disparities in leadership within these organisations.

Research Objective 5: To explore ways women's leadership is impacting the inclusion and growth of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church.

The concept of ‘women's leadership' is explored as a potential paradigm that can positively impact religious organisations. This involves considering how leadership styles that embrace gender diversity and inclusivity might enhance the organisations' overall effectiveness, community engagement, and growth.

Intervening Variable: Theological Reinterpretation

Theological reinterpretation serves as an intervening variable between biblical teachings and the inclusion of gender and leadership. This variable represents the process through which scholars and theologians reconsider traditional interpretations of scriptures to promote gender-inclusive leadership narratives. The reinterpretation can contribute to shifting perceptions and attitudes within religious communities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature specifically related to women's inclusion in church leadership. To effectively accomplish this; the study first discusses the concept of leadership and church leadership, which serves as the foundation for the study. The study, then discusses both global and African-based literature related to biblical teachings on the inclusion of women in church leadership, a history survey of inclusive leadership, the experiences of women in church leadership, and arguments for excluding women from the church's leadership. The literature is also reviewed thematically under the following research objectives: exploring the biblical understanding of the inclusivity of women in leadership, surveying the history of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria. The chapter also covers the experiences of women in the LMACM, PEFA, and RRCHSA, including their perspectives on leadership and the arguments used to deter women from full participation in the leadership within these organisations. The chapter concludes with a summary of the reviewed literature and research gaps.

2.2. Conceptual Review of the Literature

This section discusses the concept of leadership and church leadership, providing the study's foundation. It also examines women's inclusion in Church leadership, including attendant theories and models.

2.2.1 Leadership and Church Leadership

According to Blackaby and Blackaby, seminal leadership experts who have studied the concept of church leadership for over forty years, there are more than 1000 written definitions of leadership, each attempting to provide a unique perspective on understanding church

leadership.[111] Consequently, there is a puzzle about the definite purpose, nature, and role of leadership, considering the various disparate definitions of leadership. However, expert leadership scholars, such as Northouse, have distilled many definitions of leadership and identified four key elements that underscore leadership.[112] The first component is that leadership, at its core, is mainly about influence. Second, leadership majorly operates within a group context. Third, leadership is driven by a notable process. Fourth, leadership is primarily meant to achieve mutual interests and goals. Consequently, many definitions of leadership have assumed one or two of the above-mentioned components, hence the presence of many definitions of leadership.[113] This is the reason Bass and Bass argue that the true definition of leadership has proven to be elusive and fruitless over the years. The only recourse is for leadership to be defined along the lines in which one is interested.[114] Thus, getting an over-arching or benchmark definition of leadership is impossible.

However, while it is impossible to obtain an over-arching or benchmark definition of leadership, scholars have proposed categorising key leadership themes from which definitions of leadership can be derived. For this reason, Jones and Wilder argue that leadership definitions largely fall within three major themes: leader-focused, leader-directed, and leader-follower.[115] Thus, leader-focused definitions are primarily centred on the leader's characteristics, competencies and assess their effectiveness and value. On the other hand, leader-directed definitions examine a particular leader's tasks and assess their effectiveness and value. Finally, leader-follower definitions focus on the relationship between the two entities. Thus, Greenleaf

[111] Henry T. Blackaby, and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving people on to God's Agenda* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 34.
[112] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 5-6.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Bernard M. Bass, and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 45.
[115] Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes Before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centred Followership* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 65.

advances a definition of leadership that aligns with the leader-focused theme when he asserts that the servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then, conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead and ensure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.[116]

On his part, Barna describes leadership following the leader-directed theme by claiming, "Someone who effectively motivates, mobilises resources, and directs people toward the fulfilment of a jointly embraced vision."[117] Finally, Bass and Bass emphasise the value of the leader-follower theme in their definition of leadership. Bass and Bass thus say that 'Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves structuring or restructuring the situation and the members' perceptions. Leaders are agents of change whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them.'[118] This study somewhat distils the disparate definitions of leadership and prefers a meaning of leadership based on influencing or serving people and leading one another to the greater good. A leadership that is non-power-centric but characterised by equality and mutual relationship.

Further, leadership is underpinned by what has primarily been categorised as conventional and contemporary leadership theories. Under conventional leadership theories, Trait theory, Behavioural Approach and Contingency Theory are the most common. Trait Theory is focused on the leader's character and how that character leads to effective leadership.[119] Thus, words like team builder and creative describe a leader under the trait paradigm.[120] However, trait theory has been criticized for being grounded on a person's natural inclinations and thus denouncing the training and skills that one can acquire to be a leader. The Behavioural Approach is focused on

[116] Robert Greenleaf K., *The Servant as Leader*, 12-20.
[117] George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 33.
[118] Bass and Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership*, 48.
[119] Cristina De Mello E. Souza Widermuth, *Leadership Trait Theories: Against All Odds: Leadership and the Handmaid's Tale* (Leeds, England: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2024), 27-33.
[120] Wildermuth, *Leadership Trait Theories*.

how a leader approaches tasks to achieve leadership goals.[121] Thus, words like sharing a vision, creating conducive environments and dealing with people are often used to describe a leader under the Behavioural Approach model. One of the key criticisms of the Behavioural Approach is that it focuses on the narrow aspect of behaviour and character and leaves the other aspects of external forces like rewards and motivation. Contingency Theory argues that no standard leadership model exists, and as such, a leader must shift their style depending on the ever-changing circumstances. The primary critique of the Contingency Theory is that it leaves a leader with options that may include unethical ones.[122]

Under contemporary leadership theories, transactional and transformational leadership theories are the most cited. Transactional leadership is based on the assumption that effective leadership involves a balanced use of rewards and punishment.[123] Dest and others argue that when followers or teams perform well, rewarding them extrinsically or intrinsically would be useful. However, if they do not perform well, punishment can be a means to deter further poor performance.[124] Transformational leadership theory is one of the most cited contemporary theories, and it has also been applied within Christian leadership.[125] The basic assumption of transformational leadership is that leadership success is determined by a leader's capacity to inspire and motivate people to be creative and innovative in a manner that enables them to exceed their expectations.[126] It thus encompasses intellectual stimulation to empower people, inspirational motivation, effective communication and adaptability to change. However,

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[121] Sihame Benmira, and Moyosolu Agboola, "Evolution of Leadership Theory;" *BMJ Leader* (2021): 88-91.

[122] Manuel Villoria, "Contingency Theory of Leadership," in *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 2463-2469.

[123] Febrian Wenny Desti, Muhammad Rajab, and Muhammad Thamrin AR, "Transactional Leadership: Employee Performance and Organisational Performance," *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 2, no. 3 (2023): 1129-1142.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Corné J. Bekker, "Towards A Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Perspective in Leadership*2, no. 2 (2009): 142-152.

[126] Bernard M. Bass, and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.: New Jersey, 2006), 56.

transformational leadership has been criticised for being too focused on internal inspiring factors and not considering the role of external factors, such as the environment. [127]

From the foregoing, it is clear that leadership can mostly be distilled by examining the major themes in leadership. Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings of leadership, whether contemporary or conventional, have their place in the field of leadership. However, the above definitions are mostly associated with what is considered secular definitions of leadership, as opposed to the Christian or theological definition of leadership. It is important to note that there has been tension regarding balancing secular leadership and Christian leadership.

Aubrey Malphurs argues that theologians and church practitioners are generally unaware of the distinction between church leadership and secular leadership, especially in terms of the Christocentric value of church leadership.[128] Resonating with Malphurs are Jones and Wilder, who observed that a leadership paradigm that does not align with the metanarrative that underscores the centrality of Holy Scripture and the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ at the centre is not a valuable Christian leadership framework.[129] Jones and Wilder affirm that a true definition of Christian leadership must categorically distinguish between what the church does and what the world does. Closer scrutiny of church leadership definitions shows the elusiveness of a standard definition. Nonetheless, notable Christian leadership scholars have proffered certain definitions. Malphurs contends that" Christian leadership is the process whereby servants use their credibility and capability to influence people in a particular context to pursue their God-given direction."[130] Malphurs thus looks at Christian leadership with a process spectrum. Jones and Wilder, on their part, define Christian leadership as:

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[127] Bass, and Riggio, *Transformational leadership*.
[128] Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, 45.
[129] Paul, and Wilder, *The God Who Goes Before You*, 86.
[130] Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, 47.

"The Christ-following leader living as a bearer of God's image in union with Christ and his people develop a diverse community of fellow labourers who are equipped and empowered to pursue shared goals that fulfil the creation mandate and the Great Commission in submission to the Word of God."[131]

Jones and Wilder examine Christian leadership from two perspectives: one is based on the character of the church leader, specifically the one who bears God's image, and the other is the leader's role in developing and discipling other leaders. Barna also defined church leadership by saying, "Church leadership is the sum of the Spirit and activity generated by the person who seeks to do the right things at the right time for the right reasons to achieve a specific, predetermined set of outcomes."[132] Consequently, there is a sense that church leadership is centred on God, His word, Jesus Christ, and the infusion of these entities into a human being, who in turn leads people to access, obey, and perform within the church context.

Thus, Senter differentiates secular leadership from church leadership by arguing that the latter accesses leaders whose qualifications are moral character, behaviour beyond reproach, alignment with the power of the Holy Spirit, a Christocentric mindset and servant leadership.[133] Furthermore, within the biblical text, especially in Luke, there is distinct difference between the leadership of the world and that of the church, in that world leadership focuses on the leader's tasks while church leadership focuses primarily on the leader's character.[134] This is reinforced by Reeder, who cites Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-2, where Paul instructs Timothy to entrust only the mantle of leadership to faithful men who, in turn, will entrust it to faithful men operating under them.[135]

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[131] Paul, and Wilder, *The God Who Goes Before You*, 67-89

[132] George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Leeds, England: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 77.

[133] Mark Senter III, "Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education," *Trinity Journal, Deerfield vol.* 25, no. 2 (2004): 284.

[134] Paul, and Wilder, *The God Who Goes Before You*.

[135] Harry L. Reeder III, *The Leadership Dynamic: A Biblical Model for Raising Effective Leaders* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2008), 19.

Specific theories have been applied in church leadership, the common ones being servant leadership theory or stewardship leadership theory and, to some extent, ethical leadership theory. Servant Leadership Theory is encapsulated in Greenleaf's work, which argues that servant leadership is where a leader puts the interests, ambitions, aspirations, and needs of their followers over his/her own.[136] It further advocates for a leader's capacity and willingness to empower followers to be their best regarding competence, creativity, innovativeness, health, autonomy and wisdom.[137]

In exploring servant leadership within the church set-up, Juma, examining church leadership in Africa, noted that servant leadership was most aligned with biblical precepts.[138] He argues that the tenets of servant leadership theory align with the principle located in *diakonos* where deacons were developed to serve in the New Testament.[139] Also, the scholar interprets John 13: 4- 15, where Jesus washed his disciple's feet, to illustrate the value of servant leadership and to locate the aspects of humility and placing others above you as key ingredients of servant leadership.[140] More, Juma draws from Greenleaf, when the author notes that:

> The servant leader is a servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?[141]

Thus, the basic tenor of servant leadership is anchored on a leader placing others over him/her and continuing to empower them to reflect positive characteristics. On the other hand,

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[136] Robert K. Greenleaf, "Essentials of Servant-Leadership," *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (2002): 19-26.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Beatrice Juma, and Martin Junge, "New Paradigms of Leadership in the Church: Leadership as Empowerment," in *The Diaconal Church*, eds., Stephanie Dietrich, Knud Jorgensen, Karl Karsrud Korslien, and Kjell Nordstokke (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2019), 210.

[139] Ibid

[140] Juma, "New Paradigms of Leadership in the Church."

[141] Greenleaf, "Essentials of Servant-Leadership."

ethical leadership refers to the ability of an individual to utilise moral and ethical principles to guide others.[142] The ethical standards include altruism, respect for human rights and integrity, honesty and good governance. Ethical leadership has been applied within church leadership only as the ethical standards resonate with biblical standards associated with good behaviour.[143]

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that leading a church denomination involves sharing in the life and mission of the triune God, which means that it begins, continues, and ends in communion with, obedience to, and praise of the God we know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Such leadership is much more than institutional direction and management. Further, therefore, spiritual leaders move people onto God's agenda. However, this does not limit Christian Leadership to the church. Christian Leadership is relevant to the marketplace as well. Spiritual leaders can guide both those who are not in the church and those who are. They reiterate that Christian Leadership is not restricted to within church walls but is equally effective in the marketplace. DeWitt and Stott seem to suggest that leading a church denomination should centre on Christ's intention and direction for the church, as expressed in the Bible, and what He is presently doing in and for the Church.[144] Such a perspective will not only apply within the Church environment but will also be relevant in the secular world, which also needs servant leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, and leadership rooted in positive values, which are forms of leadership appropriately expressed in biblical texts.

Also, most of the scholars on church leadership say that Church leadership enhances development by having a duty to bring peace whenever conflicts arise, just as the Bible urges Christians to show love to one another and be united in the Gospel according to John 17:20-

[142] Deanne N. Den Hartog, "Ethical leadership," *Annual. Review of Organisational Psychology and Organisational Behaviour*, Vol. 2, Issue 1 (2015): 409-434.

[143] Michael R. Milco, *Ethical Dilemmas in Church Leadership: Case Studies in Biblical Decision Making* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Ministry, 1997), 67.

[144] Dionnie DeWitt, "Actions Speak Louder Than Words, or Do They? A Look at the Power of Words and Actions in Christian Leadership," in *The Mind of a Leader: A Christian Perspective of the Thoughts, Mental Models, and Perceptions that Shape Leadership Behaviour* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 31-42.

23.[145] It is important to note that although conflicts within the church are inevitable, proper leadership, if developed, can sort out issues amicably. Priest and Barine noted that church leadership scholars concur with the aforementioned assertions regarding the power of church leadership to address conflicts that arise within the church. However, they recognize that within the church in Africa and especially in Kenya, where they have first-hand experience, church conflict and leadership challenges are often inextricably intertwined.[146] It often observed that the presence of church conflict invariably leads to difficulties in church leadership. However, there is a sense that church conflicts are inevitable due to the diverse personalities and perspectives among church leaders and congregants. There is also the feeling that church conflicts are essential to expose the power of church leadership to resolve them effectively.

Another theme from the literature consulted is the different aspects of church leadership. Already, it has introduced the spiritual dimension. However, this should be added to transformative, empowering and communal dimensions. This is well articulated by Priest Barine and Nkonge, who have extensively studied church leadership in Africa and Kenya.[147] Priest and Barine note that Christian leaders are considered very significant for their part in their communities in their leadership mandate. Together with the churches they lead, Christian leaders play a much more significant role in the lives of ordinary African believers. However, spirituality remains central; additionally, in certain areas in Africa, there is a need for an emphasis on church leadership.[148] For instance, it will require empowering members in both the church and the

[145] Noelle Scuderi F, *Servant leadership and Transformational Leadership in Church Organisations* (Washington, DC: The George Washington University, 2010), 66.

[146] Robert Priest J., and Barine Kirimi, eds., *African Christian Leadership: Realities, Opportunities, and Impact*, vol. 54 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 30.

[147] Priest J., and Kirimi, eds., *African Christian Leadership*; Griffith Nkonga, "The Influence of Pastoral Church Leadership on the Behaviour of Pastors' Children: A case Study of East Africa Pentecostal Churches in Meru County" (PhD diss., Pan Africa Christian University, 2020), 66.

[148] Priest and Kirimi, eds., *African Christian Leadership*; Griffith Nkonga, "The Influence of Pastoral Church Leadership on the Behaviour of Pastors' Children: A case Study of East Africa Pentecostal Churches in Meru County" (PhD diss., Pan Africa Christian University, 2020), 66.

community, forging integration between faith and civic or political spheres, and bridging relationships with non-members of their congregations.[149] Dickson Nkonge argues that Christian leaders should be reconstructive and transformative in society. Nkonge, however, observes that some leaders serve at a given period and vanish without any legacy across Africa.[150] For him, 'the church, which is one of the most reliable institutions in Africa, seems not to have produced leaders who can inspire holistic development in the society.'[151] This phenomenon suggests that churches should reevaluate their leaders and leadership development programs to determine whether they are truly transformative.

Therefore, within the church in Africa and Kenya, it is essential to recognise the need to examine church leadership from spiritual and transformative, empowering, and communal perspectives, as already mentioned. Looking at church leadership terms means that church leaders must draw their inspiration from biblical characters, particularly Christ's example. This is considered beneficial by Stott because Jesus Christ and the examples in the bible are considered spirit-filled and thus both healthy and appropriate.[152] However, other scholars have advocated for using transformative church leadership that is intellectually stimulating and seeks to inspire and empower followers.[153] Of course, it has its drawbacks, mainly its focus on secularising leadership. Within the African context, Priest, Barine and Nkonge have viewed church leadership through communal terms, owing to the attractiveness African congregations and their cultural inclinations to think in collectivist rather than individualistic terms.[154]

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[149] Nkonga, "The Influence of Pastoral Church Leadership on the Behaviour of Pastors' Children."
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] John Stott, *Christian Leadership* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 33; Jane Leach. *A charge to Keep: Reflective Supervision and the Renewal of Christian Leadership* (West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wesley's Foundery Books, 2020), 12.
[153] Richard R. Osmer, "Practical theology: A current International Perspective," *HTS: Theological Studies* 67, no. 2 (2011): 1-7.
[154] Priest J., and Kirimi, eds., *African Christian Leadership*; Nkonga, "The Influence of Pastoral Church Leadership on the Behaviour of Pastors' Children."

This view departs significantly from the view held by scholars outside Africa. It is agreeable among many African scholars that there is a consistent understanding that church leadership in Africa needs to be contextualised to reflect the unique culture, norms, lifestyle, and habits of congregants in Africa. However, the question is, what are the available codified church leadership models that are both spiritually or biblically grounded and transformative, empowering and communal simultaneously? A lack of a well-structured contextualised church leadership model would be a "mistake" because its absence would lead to disparate, unstructured and non-researched leadership models applied to the church.

Furthermore, most African scholars, just like global scholars like Stott and Leach, have argued that Christian leadership is also about leading under the precepts of God. It is about influencing and leading people based on God's teachings, and as such, it differs from secular leadership, which primarily relies on human ingenuity. [155] While I agree that this is the case, the researcher opines that the scholars have not considered the cultural nuances underlying African churches. Further, it is untenable to assume that church leadership should only follow precepts laid in the bible without considering the cultural inclinations of the followers. Although the Bible should be a standard for church leadership, I disagree that it should be used mechanically without inspirationally applying those standards to meet the unique cultural needs of African churches. For instance, African churches are more attuned to the collectivist cultural dimension, which requires more participation, frequent human contact, and decisions made collegially. Of course, the Bible supports engagement in leadership, especially as illustrated by Jethro's advice to Moses about creating committees to address issues before they escalate. However, a people-centred, not just program-oriented, church is needed, especially in African churches. People and their needs should be at the heart of church leadership. When discussing people, you cannot overlook their

[155] Stott, *Christian Leadership*; Jane Leach. *A charge to Keep: Reflective Supervision and the Renewal of Christian Leadership* (West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wesley's Foundery Books, 2020), 12.

unique cultural inclinations, which comprise a significant part of who they are and how they think.

2.2.2 Women Inclusion in Church Leadership: Concept and Theoretical Underpinnings

Women's inclusion in church leadership is one area of current scholarly and empirical interest. Mudimeli and Mwandayi claim that the struggle to include women in church leadership is often due to religious-cultural reasons.[156] Nonetheless, the inclusion of certain women in church leadership-based theories and models have been discussed. Linguli examines these theories and concludes that they are mostly power-based and gender-based.[157] One of the theories that Linguli analyses is Ham's empowerment theory. Empowerment theory, as espoused by Ham, is based on the non-discriminatory, equal, and intentional uplifting of human beings' capacity, dignity, and natural gifts in the context of partnership and mutual power sharing.[158] The empowerment theory gains resonance with the notable *imago Dei* principle located in Genesis 1:26 where the words, "let's make humankind in our own image, according to our likeness…" underscore the principle that God respects and values both male and female equally and endows them with equal capacities and chances to dominate in his Kingdom; something that does not exclude church leadership.[159]

Linguli further identifies and discusses Mosedale's non-zero model of power as applicable to women's inclusion in leadership.[160] Mosedale's non-zero model of power is grounded on four

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[156] Maria Mudimeli Lufuluvhi, "The impact of Religious and Cultural Discourses on the Leadership Development of Women in the Ministry: A vhusadzi (womanhood) Perspective" (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2011); Mwandayi, Canisius, "Religio-Cultural 'Clamps' on Female Leadership in Zimbabwe: Towards a Liberating Hermeneutic in Mainline Churches and African Initiated Churches (AICs)," in *Women, Religion and Leadership in Zimbabwe, Volume 2: Engagement and Activism in Religious Institutions* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 161.

[157] Benson Mwingirwa Linguli, "Women Empowerment and Societal Transformation: The Voice of Women in Pastoral Ministry and Church Leadership of the Methodist Church in Kenya" (Master's thesis, VID vitenskapelige høgskole. Diakonhjemmet Oslo, 2017), 55.

[158] Carlos E. Ham, "Empowering Diakonia: A Model for Service and Transformation in the Ecumenical Movement and Local Congregations" (PhD Thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2015), 25.

[159] Ham, "Empowering Diakonia."

[160] Linguli, "Women Empowerment and Societal Transformation."

limbs. The first is that the debate around women's inclusion in church leadership presupposes that they have been disempowered, most likely by the group that dominates, which is mostly men. Second, in the empowerment spectrum, the women can fight for their empowerment. Thus, the dominant group, in this case, men, can only facilitate the empowerment process at best, but the real work is left for the disempowered group, in this case, women. Third, the disempowered group can access training and skills to make empowerment meaningful. The final limb of Mosedale's non-zero model of power is that a process guides the process of empowerment, and one cannot argue that they have assimilated and achieved complete empowerment.[161]

Moreover, Mosedale's non-zero model of power circumscribes its conceptualization of power. It defines power as the generative and accruing influence that creates possibilities for people who exercise it. [162] It thus argues that women have this generative power that is more or less innate because of their creation by God.[163] The second dimension of power described by Mosedale's non-zero power model is the power which denotes the skills attached to exercising power in terms of confidence and self-esteem. Thus, while women have innate power, they must develop self-confidence and self-esteem to drive their agenda.[164] The final dimension of power based on Mosedale's non-zero model of power is power, which describes the capacity to work together within a collective spirit to achieve goals.[165] It argues that when women work together, they can accomplish an empowered space that increases their inclusion in church leadership.

Kinoti has applied transformational leadership to women's inclusion in church leadership.[166] Kinoti argues that leadership success is determined by a leader's capacity to inspire

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[161] Sarah Mosedale, “Towards a Framework for Assessing Empowerment” (Paper presented at the conference of New Directions in Impact Assessment for Development: Methods and Practice, Manchester, November 24-25, 2003).

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Mary Kinoti, “Conceptualization of Empowerment of Ordained Women in Leadership in the Wesleyan

and motivate people to be creative and innovative in a manner that allows them to go beyond their call of duty.[167] This can undoubtedly be applied to the inclusion of women in church leadership. Furthermore, it encompasses intellectual stimulation to empower people, inspirational motivation, effective communication, and adaptability to change.[168]

Having reviewed the concepts and models of leadership and church leadership and located the models that underpin women's inclusion in church leadership, this study now examines literature related to biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in church leadership, a history survey of inclusive leadership, the experiences of women in church leadership, and arguments for the exclusion of women in church leadership.

2.3 Empirical Review of the Literature

2.3.1 Biblical Teaching on the Inclusion of Women in Church's Leadership.

The study's first objective was to explore the biblical teaching on gender inclusivity in the church's leadership. The goal is to examine relevant biblical texts and theological perspectives that focus on the inclusivity of women in leadership roles.

Niles's analysis of the biblical view of women in church leadership identified two primary schools of thought.[169] The first school of thought is complementarian, which is the more traditional view that locates patriarchal themes in Christian leadership and thus advocates for male headship. The second school of thought is egalitarianism, a more contemporary perspective that incorporates feminist ideas within the biblical text.[170]

Tradition as Exhibited in the Methodist Church in Kenya," *International Journal of Professional Practice* 7, no. 2 (2019): 58-66.

[167] Bernard M. Bass, and Ronald E. Riggi, *Transformational Leadership* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associate, Inc: New Jersey, 2006), 54

[168] Ibid.

[169] Matthew Niles, "Women and Their Roles in the Church" (Doctoral diss., Liberty University, 2022), 90.

[170] John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Partners in Christ: A Conservative Case for Egalitarianism* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL, 2015), 12.

Advocates of the complementarian school of thought anchor their arguments on the interpretation of Genesis 1-3, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 2 and 3, Titus 1:5-9 coupled with 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 to advance male church leadership as the only biblical mandated form of leadership.[171] Consequently, for complementarians, two words are supreme in understanding church leadership: submission and authority.[172] Thus, Piper and Grudem noted, "We are persuaded that the Bible teaches that only men should be pastors and elders. That is, men should bear primary responsibility for Christ-like leadership and teaching in the church. So, we believe it is unbiblical, and therefore detrimental, for women to assume this role."[173]

Complementarians also examine the church's history and analyse the fathers' opinions. They find no significant instances of women holding high leadership roles and subsequently denounce women's inclusion in high levels of church leadership.[174] Piper and Grudem assert that by reading Galatians 3:28, one cannot find any dereliction from the traditional distinct male-female roles in the church and marriage.[175] Consequently, complementarians believe that certain church leadership roles like deacon, elder and pastor are biblically reserved for the male gender and not female. Thus, complementarian churches, most notably the Catholic Church and many of the Orthodox religious persuasion, use 1 Timothy 2 to conclude that a woman has no role in church leadership except for minor roles that require no woman to lead a man directly.[176] Moreover, a closer look at complementarian congregations reveals that women's inclusion in church activities generally follows traditional roles, often centred on serving and feeding others.

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[171] Rachel Green Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission: Women and Men in Marriage, Church, and Society* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2019), 29

[172] Soba Chettry, “Complementarian Position on Women in the Bible: A defense” (PhD diss., Assumption University of Thailand, 2023), 42.

[173] John Piper, and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* (Illinois: Crossway, 2016), 12.

[174] Stefanie Ertel, Doris Gomez, Doris Gómez Ticerán, and Kathleen Patterson, eds., *Women in Leadership: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Cham: Springer Nature, 2024), 39.

[175] Ibid, 153.

[176] Soba, “Complementarian Position on Women in the Bible: A defense.”

Piper and Grudem follow this trajectory, "Not all ministries that are valuable are public or official. Providing food and support for others is crucial, and this ministry should not be scorned, even if one does not get public recognition for it."[177] This implies that women's roles in the church should not be downgraded or dismissed. The complementarian worldview has also been associated with tradition, as those who grow up in complementarian churches often assimilate the belief without question. It is also why, where some members offer disputations regarding the complementarian view, the affected churches have always been almost brutal in defending that view.[178]

The egalitarians are focused on Genesis 1: 26, "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness", to assert the equality between man and woman. However, other arguments suggest that while Adam and Eve were equal, they differed in their gender roles; Adam bore leadership responsibilities, which does not denigrate women.[179] Dube argues that the Bible is purely a male Book in the way it is applied, owing to the disturbing manner in which it is interpreted to deny women from being empowered.[180] Other biblical feminist scholars insist on a biblical imagination that creates "an African theology that flies with two wings."[181] This means that they propose the Bible be re-read and interpreted through social lenses that allow the voices of women to be heard. Further, Masenya has noted that some religious denominations, such as Methodism and Pentecostalism, have espoused democratic forms of worship and underlined the place and acts of the Holy Spirit.[182] He argues that while the Holy Spirit has sometimes been

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[177] John Piper, and Wayne Grudem, eds., Recovering *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 207.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* (Illinois: Crossway, 2021), 76.

[180] Musa W. Dube, "God Never Opened the Bible to Me: Women Church Leaders in Botswana," *Studies in World Christianity and Interreligious Relations* 48 (2014): 317.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Madipoane Masenya, "Redefining: Abosadi (Womanhood) Approach," *Old Testament Essays*, vol. 10, issue.3 (1997): 439-448.

argued to be male, the Holy Spirit has also been known to put up with gender dynamics in the sense that He has ordained men, as well as women in some cases and thus, a focus on the theology of the Holy Spirit, should allow for the negotiation related to the expansion of the balancing of power between male and female church leaders.[183] Thus, there is ongoing debate as to what view, whether complementarian or egalitarian, is biblically sound.

It is agreeable from Wiersbe's point of view that from the perspective of Christians, the Bible is the fundamental authority from which modes of leadership emanate.[184] Conway substantiates women's leadership within the gamut of the creation narrative (Genesis 1:26-27), 'Let us make mankind in our image.'[185] Humanity is an inclusive term in other Bible translations, and it is rendered as humankind. It does not denote singleness but one gender. Thus, the creation of humanity infers that both men and women are equally created in the image and likeness of God.[186] A statement that Aida Spencer supports that Adam and Eve were equal in God's creation, and this was the novel intent of God.[187] Conway argues further that even after the Fall, the statement "God created mankind in His likeness" (Genesis 5:1-2) is still used; this indicates that humanity retained God's image.[188] Although the *Imago Dei* (the image of God) has a physical connotation, it is not limiting; thus, its functional aspect is essential to the discussion. According to Conway, the functional aspect suggests that God gives humanity the authority to rule over other creatures. However, in taking such God's mission, God does not specify which gender

[183] Plantak Zdravko, "Gender Divide: The Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," in *The Silent Church: Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 87.

[184] Warren W. Wiersbe, *On Being a Leader for God* (Michigan: Baker Books, 2011), 10.

[185] Mary L. Conway, "Gender in Creation and Fall: Genesis 1-3," in *Discovering Biblical Equality, Biblical, Theological, Cultural and Practical Perspectives*, eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Cynthia Long Westfall, Christa L. McKirland (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 13.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 1989), 21.

[188] Conway, "Gender in Creation and Fall," 13.

should exercise such powers; it becomes a shared responsibility.[189] The above premises on the creation narrative lead to the conclusion that God's image, characterised by sameness, serves as the foundation for the concept of equality. Thus, both genders have a shared responsibility. And functionally, there is no element of subordination. So then, men and women can hold any office or ministry reciprocally.[190] Genesis 2:18 shows that man is created first; however, the question that arises is whether this denotes subordination or inferiority; according to Conway, the word "helper" also does not infer subordination; its verb is help. Conway believes that helping connotes skill or experience. A person who is experienced or skilled in helping unskilful or inexperienced people. "Helper" is likely used in the text presaging shared responsibility.[191]

Belleville identifies Miriam as a prophet in Exodus 15:20 and as a leader among Aaron and Moses in Numbers 12: 1-4.[192] The term prophetess is also used in connection with Deborah (Judges 4), and she ruled Israelites for approximately forty years circa 1100 B.C.E and won a battle against the Canaanites.[193]According to Rendtorff, Huldah, the prophetess, was consulted by a king and a high priest concerning the newly found book of the law (2 Kings 22:14), implying that she had supreme authority in the affairs of religion.[194] Queen Esther is also a notable leader. Belleville convincingly argues that, from these examples, it is evident that women held leadership positions in both political and religious institutions.[195]

In the New Testament, Pierce and Westfall rightly state that all are equally empowered by the Holy Spirit and furnished for the ministry. In (Acts 2:17), the pouring of the Holy Spirit on

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[189] Ibid, 14-15.
[190] Conway, “Gender in Creation and Fall,” 14-15.
[191] Ibid, 17.
[192] Linda L. Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality, Biblical, Theological, Cultural and Practical Perspectives*, eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Cynthia Long Westfall, Christa L. McKirland (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 27.
[193] Ken Spiro, *WordPerfect: The Jewish Impact on Civilization* (Florida: Health Communication Inc., 2020), Chapter Six.
[194] Rolff Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2011), 150.
[195] Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” 27.

all people indicates no gender barrier in receiving the Holy Spirit. After being equipped, Christ compelled them to "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).[196] Phillips mentions Lydia of Thyatira as a significant figure in the formation of the early Church and was instrumental in Paul's mission work (Acts 16:1-5).[197] Keller describes Pricilla and Aquila as the prime examples of couple leadership.[198] Paul mandated them to head the church of Ephesus and together instructed Apollos in faith (Acts 18:18-26).[199] Elisabeth Fiorenza notes that Pauline traditions have reinforced women's exclusion from church leadership.[200] However, the same traditions have been used to justify women's leadership. Conway's argument in (1 Timothy 2:11-13), "A Woman should learn in quietness and full of submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." Although women seem to have been the majority, they were not well educated, especially in the subjects of religion, and thus could accept wrong ideas. While most men were conversant with matters of religion, it is upon this basis that women are urged to be quiet and listen to men. The argument of maleness or femaleness is not the essence of this text; the fundamental argument is deceptive teaching. [201] Gupta argues that this was situation-specific teaching and emphasised harmony and unity in the Church, not merely gender roles.[202]Aida Besancon and Spencer argue that (Galatians 3:28) is a text with an egalitarian perspective on leadership. It advocates for mutual collaborative

[196] Ronald W. Pierce and Cynthia Long Westfall, Christa L. McKirland, eds. *Discovering Biblical Equality, Biblical, Theological, Cultural and Practical Perspectives* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 1.

[197] John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 56-57.

[198] Marie Noel Keller, *Priscilla and Aquila: Paul's Co-workers in Christ Jesus* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 47.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Work, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities," in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* eds., Rosemary Radford Ruether, Eleanor McLaughlin (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998), 14.

[201] Conway, "Gender in Creation and Fall," 23.

[202] Nijay K. Gupta, *Tell Her Story: How Women Led, Taught, and Ministered in the Early Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023), 102.

ministry between men and women for the sake of Christ. A ministry that is not based on ethnicity, social status, economic status and gender.[203]

According to Fiorenza, Paul's description of Phoebe shows how he holds her in high esteem as a leader. Paul refers to Phoebe as a deacon (Romans 16:1-2).[204] Edith Chemorion states that most scholars speculate that Phoebe carried and delivered Paul's letters to the Romans orally. She was Paul's mouthpiece in Rome.[205] Paul's trust in Phoebe to deliver his letters orally shows that Phoebe was knowledgeable in religion and commanded respect among her peers and believers.[206] Gupta contends that the act of Paul involving women in the apostolic ministries is an indication that he did not believe in genderised roles in the Church.[207] It also confirms that Paul saw no deficiency of intelligence, skill, or morality in women as women and, similarly, did not favour men as naturally superior in leadership roles.[208]

Although the literature demonstrates women's inclusivity in leadership roles, only some selected biblical texts have been discussed, thus creating a gap in investigating other relevant texts that reinforce gender-inclusive leadership. The examined literature also fails to account for the historical context that influenced such interpretations, a gap that this study aims to fill through interviews with church leaders and an examination of relevant church documents. By employing a comparative approach, this research, through interviews and examining relevant church documents, will establish which historical context influenced the three Christian organisations to rely on specific biblical text/s as the guiding principle concerning leadership. It

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[203] Aida Besancon Spencer, William David Spencer, *Christian Egalitarian Leadership Empowering the Whole Church according to the Scriptures* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 4.
[204] Fiorenza, "Work, Spirit and Power," 14.
[205] Edith Khakasa Chemorion, *Collaborative of Women's and Men's Leadership: From Hegemony to Partnership* (Meadville, PA: Christian Faith Publishing, 2022), 18.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Gupta, *Tell Her Story*, 102.
[208] Ibid.

will also establish scriptural points of divergence and convergence among the LMACM, RRCHSA and PEFA.

2.3.2 History Survey of Inclusive Leadership in the LMACM, the RRCHSA, and the PEFA.

The second objective was to conduct a historical survey of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria. The aim is to explore the evolution of these religious organisations, focusing on their gender and leadership dynamics. This section also reviews existing literature to uncover the historical development of these organisations, their leadership structures, and any gender-related shifts over time regarding women's inclusion.

At the founding of some Protestant churches, such as the SDA and Salvation Army, a woman was already at the centre of preaching, leading, and crafting the Church's fundamental beliefs.[209] Ellen Gould White and her husband, James White, are credited with founding the SDA Church. At the same time, Catherine Booth and William Booth are credited with founding the Salvation Army.[210] Their role was ornamental and functional in every church organisation facet. However, while their involvement and participation were key, it was not without stiff criticism from both non-members and members, who still signified inertia towards women's participation in church affairs.[211] The criticism was mainly based on the biblical interpretation of two texts in the Bible: 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12. The former reads 'Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission, as the Law says,' and the latter (1 Timothy 2: 12) "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet."

[209] Plantak Zdravko, “Gender Divide: The Role of Women in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church,” in *The Silent Church: Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1998), 88.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.

Notably, most women leaders in the past never engaged any of their critics in answering their role as women in the church.[212] The individuals responsible for this were the men within the women's ranks, who argued that the prophetic message underlying the church's place in the world demanded equal opportunities for women and men within the church organisation. James White, for instance, quoted the biblical text Joel 2 verses 28-32, which says that under the influence of the Holy Spirit, both sons and daughters will prophesy. Some have excluded females from a share in this work because it says, "Your young men shall see visions." They seem to forget that 'man' and 'men' in the Scriptures generally mean both male and female.[213] Later, church leaders like D. Hewitt tried to explain both 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12 by arguing that a woman's participation in leading out in a meeting, singing, and preaching does not amount, in any way, to usurping the authority of the male but primarily seeks to edify the church and further progress the role of the male authority.[214]

From the examples above, it is evident that while women engaged in and participated in the church's affairs with enthusiasm, commitment, and a sense of higher calling, their male coworkers were consistently called upon to defend, justify, and even defend their participation.[215] Nonetheless, scholars within the church have almost by consensus concluded that the role played by women leaders within the Western hemisphere has contributed immensely to the massive roles that women have subsequently played in the church structure over the years.[216] Beach observed that hundreds of women in the Seventh-Day Adventist church have been instrumental in crafting

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[212] Hannelie J. Wood, "Gender Inequality: The Problem of Harmful, Patriarchal, Traditional and Cultural Gender Practices in the Church," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 46.

[213] Zdravko, "Gender Divide."

Church: Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1998), 88.

[214] Julia Kim Eun-Young, "When Women Reject Women's Ordination: Reframing and Semanticizing in the Speeches of Two Female Seventh-Day Adventists," *Feminist Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 33-47.

[215] Eun-Young, "When Women Reject Women's Ordination."

[216] Gabriel Masfa, "The Legacy of Ellen G. White in Africa," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 46, no. 4 (2022): 586-594.

opportunities and activities that have run the church organisation throughout its history.[217] However, he concludes, "These women, for the most part, have served with little recognition, lacking salary equality, serving obediently without petitioning for newer, higher responsibilities and almost invariably working in love and devotion. They have done virtually everything, asked for nothing, and received rewards by knowing they have done what they could."[218]

Beach implies that while women's inclusion has been present mainly due to devotion and a sense of duty on the part of women, it has not received equal recognition, hindering women's full inclusion in the overall scheme of things. This is further reinforced by how women's ordination within the church ranks has played out over the years. While women were encouraged to participate fully in church affairs, the ordination of women into ministry so that they can do baptisms, weddings and dedication of children, among other key activities, has always been denied them.[219]

The Roho movement emerged in East Africa during the early 20th century. Initially inspired by Christian teachings, the movement incorporated indigenous religious beliefs. The literature highlights the transformative role of women in this movement, often holding leadership positions and engaging in prophecy and healing practices.[220] However, there is a lack of comprehensive historical documentation on the evolution of gender roles within Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, highlighting a gap in understanding the organisation's gender dynamics over time. The PEFA, a Pentecostal denomination, was founded in Kenya in the mid-20th century. Literature indicates that the PEFA has experienced significant growth and expansion since its inception. While women have played active roles within the denomination, their

[217] Bert Beverly Beach, "Seventh-Day Adventists and the Ecumenical Movement," *Review and Herald* (1985): 76.

[218] Beach, "Seventh-Day Adventists and the Ecumenical Movement."

[219] Ibid.

[220] Cama, A. A., "Roho and the Impact of the East African Revival on the African Independent Churches," *International Review of Mission*, 88 (349), (1999): 27-42.

leadership roles have often been concentrated in women's ministries rather than senior pastoral positions. This highlights the organisation's historically gendered approach to leadership roles.[221] The Legio Maria, founded in western Kenya in 1962, emerged as an African Initiated Church with syncretic elements from Christianity and indigenous beliefs. The literature suggests that Legio Maria has often adopted a charismatic leadership structure.[222] However, gender dynamics and women's involvement in leadership roles remain underexplored, leaving a gap in the historical understanding of women's leadership within the Legio Maria.

Existing literature often focuses on the broader history of these organisations, with limited attention to gender dynamics, women's leadership, and their changing roles within these institutions. Comprehensive historical documentation on gender roles and women's leadership positions within these organisations is lacking, making it challenging to trace shifts in gender dynamics over time. Many historical accounts rely on external perspectives, potentially overlooking local narratives and the voices of women within these organisations. The literature lacks comparative studies that assess how these organisations' historical trajectories impact their gender and leadership dynamics today.

The literature review underscores the need for more in-depth and gender-focused historical research on the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria. Such research could provide valuable insights into the evolution of gender and leadership roles within these religious organisations, thereby bridging the gaps in understanding their historical trajectories.

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[221] Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2000), 809.

[222] Philomena Njeri Mwaura, *African Independent Churches in Western Kenya: The Legio Maria and the Chavakali Salvation Army. In African Christianity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 53-76.

2.3.3 The Experiences of Women in Church Leadership.

The objective was to ascertain the experiences of women in the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria regarding leadership within their respective churches and aims to uncover the lived realities, challenges, and opportunities that women encounter in pursuing leadership roles. This section reviews existing literature to explore women's experiences within these churches, highlighting their roles, perceptions, and gender dynamics.

Empirical studies have been done to examine the perceptions and experiences of women in church leadership. The empirical surveys have taken the view from the global, African to the local landscape. Scott conducted a quantitative study to examine the experiences of women leaders within church organisations and, specifically in the Presbyterian Church.[223] The study found that, based on the experience of women leaders, there is an inconsistent perception between the ideal leader and a woman leader. Clergy and laity often viewed a woman leader differently from an ideal leader. It was thus difficult to find church members, as one naturally assumed that an ideal leader and a woman leader could be the same. These findings support the role of incongruity theory, as described earlier in this study. It also further reinforces the argument that because members have an underlying bias against women leaders, women leaders find it difficult to participate fully in leadership positions in the church.[224]

Another study, conducted by Smarr and others, qualitatively examines the perceptions and experiences of Black clergywomen in the United States.[225] The study found out that the male clergy were still suspicious about improved female inclusion in leadership and were showing negative attitudes towards it despite many biblical references to support women's inclusion. This

[223] Halee Scott, "Perceptions of Christian Women Leaders in Church-Related Organisations," *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1 (2014): 52-70.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Kimberly Nelms Smarr, Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, and Amy Cooper Hakim, "Gender and Race in Ministry Leadership: Experiences of Black Clergywomen," *Religions* 9, no. 12 (2018): 377.

means negative male attitudes towards women's inclusion in leadership were not borne out of biblical interpretation fidelity but out of cultural and societal dynamics. On the other hand, the women clergy themselves were more resilient in the face of negativity and suspicion and were thus positively attuned to engaging even more.[226]

This Smarr and others' results align with Mosedale's non-zero-sum power model. To reiterate, Mosedale's non-zero-sum power model defines power as the generative and accruing influence that creates possibilities for people who exercise it. [227] It thus argues that women have this generative power that is more or less innate because of their creation by God.[228] The second dimension of power described by Mosedale's non-zero-sum power model is the power within, which denotes the skills attached to exercising power in terms of confidence and self-esteem. Thus, while women have innate power, they must develop self-confidence and self-esteem to drive their agenda.[229] The final dimension of power based on Mosedale's non-zero-sum model of power is power within, which describes the capacity to work together within a collective spirit to achieve goals.[230] It argues that when women work together, they can achieve an empowered space that increases their inclusion in church leadership. It would be instructive to observe if the same experience situation towards women's inclusion in church leadership exists in Kenya and, if so, to what extent.

Another study was done to determine if gender differences exist in the exercise of transformational and transactional leadership within church contexts. Chinyamurindi and Rashe conducted this study. They used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to assess the

[226] Smarr et al., “Gender and Race in Ministry Leadership.”
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.

differences, if any.[231] The study found no significant difference in the manner in which women leaders and male leaders use either transformational or transactional leadership except for slight differences in women leaders' sharper use of individualized consideration and charisma among the elements of transformational leadership. This was an important finding because it produced a more extensive and statistically valid result that contradicted popular opinion prior to then. The prevailing opinion was that male leaders exercised better and more effective transformational and transactional leadership than their female counterparts, which contributed to the perception among leaders that women's leadership in the church was a slippery slope towards inefficiency due to biological and sometimes spiritual limitations.[232]

Within the SDA fraternity, Dudley, through his study on the perception of lay members toward female pastors, was among the first to conduct a survey examining how women's leadership was viewed and experienced.[233] The study came from the disenfranchisement of women in leadership in the SDA Church. The study found that most lay members, specifically 91% of church members from 20 Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) churches in the USA and Canada, rated the leadership performance of female pastors as good or excellent. Further, while three-fourths of the embers were initially amenable to having female pastors, the positive rating grew to 87% as the pastors began to practice and serve them. Moreover, three-fourths of these members favoured women church leaders' ordination into the ministry. Dudley's findings surprised many who had different perceptions of lay members towards female pastors. The challenge with this finding, and many like it, is that it is done in Western civilisations where

[231] Willie Chinyamurindi, and Reuben Rashe, "Called to the Ministry: Narratives of Career Choice Amongst Female" Pastors in South Africa," *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 47, no. 1 (2021): 1-10.
[232] Chinyamurindi, and Rashe, "Called to the Ministry."
[233] Roger L. Dudley, "How Seventh-Day Adventist Lay Members View Women Pastors," *Review of Religious Research* (1996): 133-141.

cultural and societal inclinations are not traditional and patriarchal.[234] The same cannot be said within the African and Kenyan settings, and as such, the current study that looks at the level of women's participation within the Kenyan set-up is important.

Moon looked at women's inclusion in the SDA church in South Korea.[235] He found that the membership and leadership were highly receptive to women's inclusion in leadership, and that what denied women these positions was not a negative attitude or restrictive policies, but rather a lack of equal opportunities. These stakeholders were not gender biased, believing that ability and qualifications should determine positions, not gender. Within the African context, numerous studies have mainly shown negative perceptions regarding the role of women's leadership in churches. Studies by Ikhane, Wanja, Swart, and Efuntade have shown that members of the church, both male and female, regard women's leadership as inferior to that of the male leader.[236] Also, they view women's leadership as a supportive role to the main male leadership. As such, women leaders are useful in filling a gap created by the absence of a male leader and not that a woman leader is a key pillar in the progress of the church. From the foregoing, women's inclusion in leadership, though accepted in some quarters, is frowned upon in others. It appears that women's leadership in churches is welcomed mostly in churches in the Western hemisphere but hindered in most churches in the African civilisations mostly due to cultural and

[234] Ibid.

[235] Injong Moon, "A Process of Critical Contextualization to Deal with the Issue of Women in Leadership in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Korea" (Doctoral diss., St. Andrews University, 2011), 77.

[236] Harriet O. Ikhane, "Theological Education of Seventh-Day Adventist Women in Nigeria," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 16, no. 1 (2020): 193-204; Lucy Wanja Julius, "Compliance with Gender Equality Laws in Leadership: An Assessment of Selected Churches in Nairobi," *The University Journal* (2021): xx-xx, accessed October, https://doi.org/10.59952/tuj.v3i1.32; Ignatius Swart, and Olugbenga Adetokunbo Efuntade, "The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Quest for Transformational Development in Contemporary Nigeria: Perspectives from an Empirical Study," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Missiology* 49 (2021): 67.

social differences. Nonetheless, biblical texts that seek to deny full women participation within most churches appear to be used more as pretexts and not precepts.[237]

Moore holds that when the movement of Christianity began in the first century, it functioned under the spirit of equality. Both men and women contributed to strengthening the movement without one gender being overloaded with responsibilities at the expense of the other.[238] Kwabena Asamoah holds that the involvement of women in the growth of Christianity goes back to the event of Pentecost.[239] Furthermore, during Paul's time, women's leadership was noticeable. Women-led house churches and eventually were ordained in various church offices. According to Asamoah, it was in the fourth century that women's leadership in the church began to decline because the church hierarchy was centralized.[240] Daniel Kasomo contends that the church is more cautious when delegating responsibilities to men and women. Compared to the secular world, the Church has remained rigid in offering women more opportunities to serve in various pastoral ministries.[241]

Patrick Wachege claims that "History has it that the Church too cannot be absolved from the evils of inflicting lamentable injustices on Women; this has been happening through its hierarchical structures, which are predominantly and essentially male."[242] This assessment is supported by Kasomo, who contends that the church has continually and methodically ignored women from ordained ministry; thus, it has reserved women away from other roles that can only

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[237] Ikhane, “Theological Education of Seventh-Day Adventist,” 193-204; Wanja,” Compliance with Gender Equality, Laws in Leadership,”; Swart, “The Seventh-Day Adventist Church,” xx-xx.

[238] Rebecca Moore, *Women in Christian Traditions* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 27.

[239]Johnson Asamoah-Gyadu Kwabena, “Neither Male nor Female: Pentecostalism, Gender and Ministry on Africa,” in *African Christian Theologies and the Impact of the Reformation: Symposion PIASS Rwanda February 18-23, 2016* (Zürich: LitVerlag, 2017), 172.

[240] Ibid, 48-49.

[241] Kasomo, “The Role of Women in the Church in Africa,” 130.

[242] Patrick N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), 93.

be performed by an ordained minister.[243] When a woman is either the sole founder or co-founder, she tends to take a backseat and put men in charge. Mwaura argues that such tendencies are intentionally devised to avoid traditional male resistance to women's leadership. Most women founders are generally not elevated to the level of male founders.[244] Ndeda points out that the duration of recognition accorded to female founders depends on the duration of their mystical powers.[245] Edith Chemorion's research on the Reformed Church of East Africa finds that women leaders are still viewed with scepticism. Even though its constitution on ministry is derived from the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, an ordained woman must accede to work under an experienced male pastor.[246] Adams, Jimi, and Sullins, Donald agree with Chemorion's observation that there is inconsistency among some Christian denominations that have accepted female leadership, as stated in their constitutions, and the actual practice and opportunities provided to women.[247] Such experiences are some of the dilemmas that women face, which subsequently impact their performance.[248]

The Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa has limited literature addressing women's leadership experiences. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that women have played significant roles within the Spirit movement. Women's participation in spiritual leadership, prophecy, and healing has been documented, reflecting a form of gender inclusivity within the

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[243] Kasomo, "The Role of Women in the Church in Africa," 131.

[244] Philomena Njeri Mwaura, "Gender and Power in the African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches," in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005), 425-429.

[245] Mildred A.J. Ndeda, "Nomiya Luo Church: A Gender Analysis of the Dynamics of an African Independent church among the Luo of Siaya District in the Twentieth Century and Beyond," *Missonalia*, vol. 31, no. 2, (2003): 239-277.

[246] Edith Khakasa Chemorion, *Collaborative of Women's and Men's Leadership: From Hegemony to Partnership* (Meadville, PA: Christian Faith Publishing), 4-5.

[247] Adams Jimi, "Stained Glass Makes the Ceiling Visible: Organisation Opposition to Women in Congregational Leadership," *Gender and Society* 21, 1 (2007): 80.

[248] Jimi, "Stained Glass Makes the Ceiling Visible," 80; Donald Sullins Paul, "The Stained-Glass Ceiling: Career Attainment for Women Clergy," *Sociology of Religion* 61, 3 (2000), 243.

movement.[249] Literature suggests that women within the PEFA denominations often occupy prominent roles in women's ministries and charitable activities. While women's involvement is acknowledged, their access to senior pastoral leadership positions is limited. Women's experiences might vary based on the specific context and leadership structure of individual PEFA churches.[250] The history of Legio Maria and the experiences of women within the denomination are underexplored in the existing literature. Reports suggest that women might hold spiritual leadership positions within the organisation, but a comprehensive understanding of their experiences, challenges, and potential limitations remains lacking.[251]

Comparative studies of women's experiences across these denominations are rare, making it difficult to discern patterns and differences in their leadership journeys. The literature review highlights the need for further research that explores the experiences of women within the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria denominations. Such studies could provide a deeper understanding of the gender dynamics, challenges, and opportunities women encounter in pursuing leadership roles within their respective religious communities.

2.3.4 Arguments for the Exclusion of Women in the Church's Leadership.

The objective of exploring arguments about the exclusivity of women in leadership within the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church involves examining theological, cultural, and historical perspectives that have contributed to the restriction or expansion of women's leadership roles. This section reviews existing literature to uncover the arguments and debates surrounding women's leadership within these religious organisations.

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[249] Cama, “Roho and the Impact of the East African Revival on the African Independent Churches,” 27-42.

[250] David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: Women Evangelists in Central Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

[251] Njeri Mwaura, “African Independent Churches in Western Kenya,” 53-76.

A closer scrutiny of scholarly articles and works around women's inclusion in church leadership reveals that biblical interpretation constitutes one of the key contributors or arguments to either low or high levels of women's inclusion. Studies done extensively by Dube, Kim, and Plantak show that churches have relied on Pauline texts from 1st Corinthians and 1st Timothy to stifle women from church leadership.[252] Furthermore, when a friendly interpretation is applied to these texts alongside the patriarchal interpretation of the Old Testament texts, the role of women in leadership has taken the form of a supporting cast, rather than the main cast, the latter being reserved for male church leaders.[253]

There are also the social-constructed responsibilities of women, which contribute to women's inclusion in leadership positions in the church. Studies have shown that women leaders are socially expected to be mothers and wives more than they are expected to be church leaders.[254] And if women take up church leadership positions and are committed to it, it is viewed more as a dereliction of their motherly or wifely duties than a stepping up in their leadership commitment.

Bumgardener looked at the staying power of women pastors in the United States.[255] The important contributor to the inclusion of women church leaders was the presence of women mentors who showed the way. Clearly, from this, it seems that women across the globe require pacesetters and shining lights along the way who are like them and represent the best of leadership.

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[252] Musa W. Dube, *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2001), 67; Kim, Eun-Young Julia, "When Women Reject Women's Ordination: Reframing and Semanticizing in the Speeches of Two Female Seventh-Day Adventists," *Feminist Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 33-47; Zdravko, "Gender Divide: The Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," in *The Silent Church: Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 92-121.

[253] Dube, *Other Ways of Reading*; Eun-Young Julia. "When Women Reject Women's Ordination"; Zdravko. "Gender Divide."

[254] Abraham O. Wentum, "An Exploration of Women Experiences in Leadership Positions within African Immigrant Churches in the United States" (PhD diss., Walden University, 2020), 50.

[255] Bumgardner, Leslie, "Adventist women clergy: Their call and experience," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 9, no. 2 (2015): 40-53.

Harmful patriarchal and persistent gender stereotypes are key contributors to the level of women's participation in church leadership in Africa. Wood examines women's participation in church leadership in African churches.[256] The churches are strewn across various key denominations. The study notes that notwithstanding the biblical understanding of the church regarding the place of women, many churches essentially resort to patriarchal and traditional forms of societal discrimination against women to determine the role these women can play in church leadership. Women in these churches have thus been forced to renegotiate their roles and identities, often to the detriment of their spiritual growth. Wood argues that the church must proactively confront the gender inequalities within its ranks and come up with practical solutions, because improving women's participation is crucial for the church's growth.[257] The cultural inclinations that deny women their rightful leadership positions are also extensively mentioned by Chinyamurindi and Rashe, who also note that these cultural inclinations have unfortunately been syncretised into biblical interpretation to the extent that they are presented as biblically binding.[258]

Within the Kenyan context, Gano examined the participation of SDA women in economic empowerment activities in Malindi, Kenya.[259] The study found a low level of women's inclusion as a result of lack of empowerment, a culture that disenfranchises women and an economic dependency on men that largely denigrates women while elevating men. Ositu examined the

[256] Hannelie J. Wood, "Gender inequality: The problem of harmful, patriarchal, traditional and cultural gender practices in the church," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 7-8. https://doi.org/10.4102.hts.v75i1.5177.

[257] Wood, "Gender inequality."

[258] Chinyamurindi, Willie, and Reuben Rashe, "Called to the Ministry: Narratives of Career Choice Amongst Female Pastors in South Africa," SA *Journal of Industrial Psychology* 47, no. 1 (2021): 1-10.

[259] Agnes Kadzo Gona, "Factors accountable for Women's Economic Dependence in Malindi District of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Kenya" (PhD diss., Adventist University of Africa, School of Postgraduate Studies, 2014).

Gusii culture, a tribe in Kenya, and its impact on the participation of women in that region.[260] The study found that culture has been used to disempower women from participating in church leadership.

From the reviewed studies on the contributors to the level of women participation in church leadership positions, some of the key contributors and arguments against noted include church policy, biblical interpretation, perception of both male and female church members and leaders, cultural and social inclinations, lack of empowerment and harmful patriarchal and persistent gender stereotype. The current study examines the extent to which these arguments influence the level of women's inclusion in church leadership in Kenya among the Legio Maria.

Stanley J. Grenz identifies two primary perspectives on the subject matter: complementarianism and egalitarianism.[261] Complementarianism argues that restricting women's leadership is rooted in theological interpretations of biblical texts, suggesting that men and women have distinct roles in church and family life. Proponents of complementarianism maintain that women's leadership should be limited based on perceived gender-specific roles.[262] While egalitarianism perspectives challenge the traditional interpretation of scriptures and advocate for equal leadership opportunities for men and women. These arguments emphasize the equality of all believers in Christ and their capacity to serve in leadership roles.[263] Besides complementarianism and egalitarianism, some argue within the continuum of patriarchal traditions whereby cultural norms and historical patriarchal structures shape arguments against

[260] Mary Ositu Nyarangi, "Gusii Culture and the Relationship of Women in the Church: A Case Study on Seventh-Day Adventist church in Kisii County-Kenya" (PhD diss., Kenya Methodist University, 2013).

[261] Stanley. J Grenz, "Anticipating God's New Community: Theological Foundations for Women in Ministry," *JETS* 38/4 (December 1995): 595.

[262] Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Oregon: Multnomah, 2012), 60.

[263] Johnson, A. J., "Women, Creation, and the Fall: The Egalitarian Interpretation Revisited," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 52(1), (2009): 31-56.

women's leadership. These traditions often view women's leadership as contrary to established gender roles.[264]

There are challenges and counterarguments to the above arguments, including a lack of biblical consensus and a debate centred on differing biblical interpretations. Some argue that certain scriptures were culturally specific and should not be universally applied to modern contexts.[265] Scholars present empirical studies demonstrating women's effectiveness and positive impact in leadership roles, challenging arguments against their leadership.[266] Scholars present empirical studies demonstrating women's effectiveness and positive impact in leadership roles, challenging arguments against their leadership.[267] The existing literature often overlooks the diverse cultural and contextual factors that shape arguments about women's leadership in these denominations. While individual denominations may have unique theological stances, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that explore these arguments within the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church, and the PEFA church. Secondly, few sources provide empirical data on the impact of women's leadership on the growth and development of these denominations. While individual denominations may have unique theological stances, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that explore these arguments within the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church. Secondly, few sources provide empirical data on the impact of women's leadership on the growth and development of these denominations. Limited literature conducts comparative analyses of arguments against women's leadership across these churches. Therefore, the literature review highlights the complexity of arguments surrounding the exclusivity of

[264] George W. Forell, ed., *Christian Social Teaching: A Reader in Christian Social Ethics from the Bible to the Present* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 299.

[265] Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1995), 15.

[266] Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1995), 15.

[267] Margaret M. McGuinness, *Called to Serve: A History of Nuns in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 104.

women in leadership within the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church. The diverse theological, cultural, and historical factors contributing to these arguments underscore the need for further research examining these issues in the specific contexts of these denominations.

2.4 Summary of Review of Literature and Research Gaps

Contextual nuances were one of the confronting challenges of the subject matter. The literature reveals a significant gap in understanding the cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts of biblical passages related to women's leadership. Many interpretations might not fully consider the social dynamics of the time, potentially leading to skewed understandings. Scholars pointed out that a selective reading of scriptures might contribute to gender-based bias. Certain passages are emphasized while others are overlooked, resulting in a fragmented interpretation of the Bible's stance on women in leadership.

Another gap was the limited exploration of how intersectionality, where gender intersects with race, class, and other identities, shapes the perception of women's leadership roles within different cultural and social contexts. It was evident that the existing literature often focuses on the broader history of these organisations, with limited attention to gender dynamics, women's leadership, and their changing roles within these institutions. The lack of comprehensive data was another gap. That is, comprehensive historical documentation on gender roles and women's leadership positions within these organisations is lacking, making it challenging to trace shifts in gender dynamics over time. Many historical accounts relied on external perspectives, potentially overlooking local narratives and the voices of women within these organisations. This was a gap that this study aimed to bridge. It was also apparent that the literature lacked comparative studies that assessed how these organisations' historical trajectories impacted their gender and leadership

dynamics today. Comparative analyses of women's experiences across these denominations are rare, making it challenging to discern patterns and differences in their leadership journeys.

Comprehensive studies explicitly focusing on women's experiences within the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria are scarce, making it challenging to capture a holistic picture. Notably, many existing sources offered limited qualitative insights directly from women within these religious organisations, potentially overlooking the nuanced challenges and successes they face. While individual denominations may have unique theological stances, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that explore these arguments within the Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA churches.

The existing literature often provides limited insight into the diversity of women's experiences within these religious organisations. Intersectional factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, and age could influence women's experiences differently. Lastly, few sources provided empirical data on the impact of women's leadership on the growth and development of these organisations. The gaps were addressed through a survey and interview, where primary respondents from the selected churches were asked questions about the gaps.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study. It consists of the The following subsections are research design, research site, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, data analysis techniques, and legal and ethical concerns.

3.2 Research Design

Claire Selltiz and others define research design as "…. the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure."[268] Both descriptive and exploratory designs were adopted and worked together. The descriptive research design aimed to collect data without manipulating the respondents to assess women's and leadership inclusion within the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church. According to C.R. Kothari, this approach has one key purpose: it describes the situation as it currently exists.[269] Explanations must be given for the manifested phenomenon (affairs as they exist). This then led the researcher to uncover the reasons 'why' and 'how', that is, exploratory research.[270]

3.3 Research Site

A study on the church and women's inclusion in leadership: A comparative analysis of Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA Church was conducted within

[268] Claire Selltiz et al., *Research Methods in Social Sciences* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 50.
[269] C.R Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (New Delhi: New Age International, 2004), 2-3.
[270] Peter M. Nardi, *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 9.

Migori County, one of Kenya's 47 counties. It has a population of 1,116,436, with male being 536,187 while female are 580,214.[271]

It is located in southwestern Kenya, bordering Tanzania on the West and South and Lake Victoria to the West, it covers a land area of 2,613.6 square kilometers.[272] It also borders Uganda via Migingo Island in Lake Victoria.[273]Administratively, it has eight sub-counties, twenty-three divisions, thirty-eight locations, and two hundred and two sub-locations.[274] Migori County is ethnically diverse, with Luo and Kuria being the dominant communities.[275] The predominant religion is Christianity, with some notable Christian denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church (190,734 members), Protestants (411,800 members), Evangelicals (280,400 members), AICs (152,700 members), and other Christians (192,963 members). Other represented religions include Islam (7,552 members), Hinduism (134 members), traditional (2,652 members), and other religions (14,496 members).[276] The predominant religion is Christianity, with some notable Christian denominations such as the Roman Catholic (190, 734 members), Protestants (411, 800 members), Evangelicals (280,400 members), AICs (152,700 members) and other Christians (192, 963 members). Other represented religions are Islam with (7,552 members), Hinduism (134 members), traditional (2,652) and other religions (14, 496 members).[277] The main economic activities include agriculture, livestock production, small-scale mining, and small-scale business enterprises.[278] The rationale for choosing Migori County as the research site is that it is both the headquarters and the founding place for the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy

[271] Google, "Migori County," accessed June 2nd, 2021, www.migorinews.co.ke (Migori County Website).
[272] Google, "Kenya National Bureau of Statistics," accessed January 6th, 2025, www.knbs.or.ke,
[273] Google. "Migori County," accessed August 13, 2023, Migori (044) /Maarifa Centre (co.go.ke).
[274] Tabitha Auma Awuor, "Parental Involvement in Teenage Pregnancy Prevention in Kenya: A Study of Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County" (MA Thesis, Rongo University, 2018), 36-37.
[275] County Government of Migori: County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027, 18.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Google, "Migori County Population," accessed January 20th, 2025, www.citypopulation.de/en/Kenya/admin/nyanza/44_Migori/
[278] County Government of Migori: County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027, 18.

Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA (Elim-based churches). The basis for selecting the three churches is centred on their uniqueness in terms of including women in their ranks and, for some, having women as the founders of the church. In addition, the current office bearers, co-founders, and pioneer members of the LMACM, the RRCHSA, and the PEFA originated from this area and were instrumental in the study.

3.4 Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, the target population signifies the entire group of individuals or objects to which the researcher is interested in generalizing the study's results and having the same characteristics.[279] The target population for this research consisted of 12 churches with a total membership of 1,195.[280]Although the Legio Maria of African Church Mission, the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, and the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa have numerous church branches, the selection criteria for particular churches to be studied depended on the year of establishment. The researcher believes older churches are more likely to have experienced gender dynamics in leadership than the newly established churches.

Table 3.1 *Target Population, number of churches and the actual number of churches that participants were drawn from.*

Category	Population	No. of Churches	Actual no.
LMACM	430	4	4
RRCHSA	320	3	3
PEFA	445	5	5
Total	1, 195	12	12

[279] Olive M. Mugenda and Abel Gitau Mugenda, *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi: Africa Centre for Technology Studies, 1999), 112.

[280] *Church Register Books for leaders and members (2010-2023) of LMACM; Annual Registration Book (Aguch Malit) of RRCHSA; Leaders of PEFA derived from Church Minutes of the General Assembly of PEFA, Southern Nyanza Region, 2023-2026 and members' registration Books-2023.*

3.5 Determination of the Study Sample

This study selected a sample of 1,195 from the target population of 12 churches. This report was from the Dioceses and Regional headquarters of the LMACM, the RRCHSA, and the PEFA.

3.5.1 Study Sample Size

Sample means a subset of size from the population selected for participation in the study.[281] According to Colleen M. Conway, the sample size in a qualitative study is not rigid; there is no compulsory standard sample size; the size depends on the "valueness" "richness" or how informed the participants are.[282] The number of respondents was taken from the target population of 1,195, and Slovin's formula was applied to determine the sample size. The confidence level is 95%, which is a margin error of 5%. The equation by Robert Slovin is as follows:[283]

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = a sample size

N= Target population size

e = Precision error at 95% confidence level = 0.05

$e^2 = 0.05^2$

Thus, N = 1,195 at 95% confidence level. The sample size for this study is calculated as presented below.

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[281] Emilie van Haute, "Sampling Techniques: Sample Types and Sample Size," in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences: An A-Z of Key Concepts*, eds. Jean-Frederick Morin, Christian Olsson, Ece ÖZlem Atikcan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 216.

[282] Colleen M. Conway, *Approaches to Qualitative Research: An Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), xii.

[283] Estela G. Adanza, *Research Methods: Principles and Applications* (Manila: Rex Book Store, 2006), 81.

$$n = \frac{1{,}195}{1 + 1{,}195 * 0.05^2} = \frac{1{,}195}{1 + 1{,}195 * 0.0025} = 299.68$$

At a 95% confidence level, the precision error is 0.05. Therefore, the figure of 299.68 was rounded to the nearest whole number, resulting in a total of 300 respondents.

Table 3.2 *Target population, sample size, and the actual number with their corresponding gender in the study*

Church leaders (LMACM)	30	8	9	5 Males, 4 Females
Church leaders (RRCHSA)	20	5	6	4 Males 2 Females
Church leaders (PEFA)	45	11	6	3 Males 3 Females
Church members (LMACM)	400	100	79	41 Males 38 Females
Church members (RRCHSA)	300	75	64	30 Males 34 Females
Church members (PEFA)	400	100	85	40 Males 45 Females
Total	**1,195**	**299**	**249**	

Sample Size: a practical ratio method will be used to divide the respondents into the following categories.[284]

$n_1 = n.p_1$
$n_2 = n.p_2$
$n_3 = n.p_3$

Where:

n_1 = Category sample size
n = Determined sample size above 299
p = Proportion of population in each category

Church leaders for LMACM are represented by;

$n_1 = 300\ x\ \frac{30}{1{,}195}$ = 8 respondents.

Church leaders for RRCHSA are represented by;

[284] *Church Register Books for leaders and members (2010-2023) of LMACM*; *Annual Registration Book (Aguch Malit) of RRCHSA; Leaders of PEFA derived from Church Minutes of the General Assembly of PEFA, Southern Nyanza Region, 2023-2026 and members' registration Books-2023*.

$n_2 = 300 \text{ X } \frac{20}{1,195} =$ 5 respondents.
Church leaders for PEFA are represented by;
$n_3 = 300\ x\ \frac{45}{1,195}$ = 11 respondents.
Church members for LMACMare represented by;
$n_4 = 300\ x\ \frac{400}{1,195}$ = 100 respondents.
Church members for RRCHSA are represented by;
$n_5 = 300\ x\ \frac{300}{1,195}$ = 75 respondents.
Church members for PEFA represented by;
$n_6 = 300\ x\ \frac{400}{1,195}$ = 100 respondents.

3.5.2 Sampling Procedure

The purposive sampling technique is where the researcher selects a particular group based on a purpose.[285] Church leaders from the three congregations fell under this sampling technique. Church leaders who participated in this study had been in leadership positions in their respective churches for not less than five years. The researcher assumed that such respondents had extensive experience regarding gender leadership dynamics within their churches. In the simple random sampling technique, equiprobability was the guiding principle whereby every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample.[286] This technique was used on other church members who were not in leadership positions.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

This study utilised primary data as its core data, supplemented with secondary data. For the primary data, the researcher used In-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and participant and non-participant observations. The secondary data consisted of archival materials, church documents such as constitutions, official church policies and spiritual autobiographies.

3.6.1 Development of Instruments

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions,

[285] Estela G. Adanza, Research *Methods: Principles and Applications* (Manila: Rex Book Store, 2006), 91.
[286] Ibid, 84.

and participant and non-participant observations. Methodological triangulation in qualitative research is crucial, as it yields a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest.[287]

3.6.1.1 In-Depth Interview

The interview method was one-to-one. Kathleen deMarrais describes an interview as the process through which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation/discussion focused on the research questions or the subject of the study.[288] An interview allows reciprocity between the researcher and the participant; this reciprocity creates an environment in which the researcher can probe the participant's responses for clarification, meaning-making, and critical reflection.[289] The interview was guided by a list of semi-structured, open-ended questions, and each session lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Semi-structured questions provided insight into individual experiences, allowing the researcher to explore the narrative experiences and new meanings that the participants brought to the study.[290]

3.6.1.2 Questionnaire

According to Bill Gillham, the questionnaire is effective when many respondents can be reached within the shortest time possible.[291] It is also preferred as it gives respondents ample time to think over the questions and fill them in at their own pace without feeling pressured. One of the challenges that a questionnaire has is that questions might be misunderstood. However, the

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[287] Nancy Carter et al., "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research," *Oncology Nursing Forum*, vol. 4, no. 5 (2014): 546.

[288] Kathleen deMarrais, "Qualitative Interview Studies: Learning Through Experience," in *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*, eds. Kathleen deMarrais, Stephen D. Lapan (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2004), 52.

[289] Anne Galleta, *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Design to Analysis and Publication* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 24.

[290] Ibid, 23-24.

[291] Bill Gillham, *Developing a Questionnaire*, 2nd ed., (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 5.

researcher countered such problems by first explaining each question to the respondents before distributing the questionnaires.[292]

3.6.1.3 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion is a predetermined group of people participating in an interactive discussion.[293] FGD was used, as it is rich in gathering data among a small group of participants who have agreed to focus on a topic of mutual interest.[294] Through FGDs, a broader range of information, perceptions, and ideas are constructed, creating a conducive environment in which participants are exposed to each other's worldviews. At the same time, it allows the participants to build responses from others. [295] Two focus group discussions, comprising four participants each, were drawn from each denomination. The nature of the FGDs was heterogeneous and lasted 45 minutes to an hour.

3.6.1.4 Active and Passive-Participant Observations

Di Domenico and Phillips describe participant observation as one of the key data collection approaches. It involves the researcher observing and interacting with participants while simultaneously forming relationships with them to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.[296] The researcher undertook active and passive participation, which involved contributing to the subject of discussion in an appropriate manner. In other situations, the researcher passively observed events, and photographs were taken to support the data in such sessions. The observations helped the researcher comprehensively depict the phenomenon as it manifested. This research instrument exposed the researcher to how various religious rituals and

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[292] Ibid, 11

[293] Monique M. Hennink, *Focus Group Discussions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

[294] David Wilkinson and Peter Birmingham, *Using Research Instruments: A Guide for Researchers* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 92.

[295] Wilkinson and Birmingham, *Using Research Instruments: A Guide for Researchers*, 92.

[296] Di Domenico, M and Phillips N., "Participant Observation," in *Encyclopaedia of Case Study Research*, vol. 1 & 2, eds. A.J Mills, G. Eurepos, & E. Wiebe (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 653.

church meetings are conducted in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA and by whom and why. The researcher also recorded the observations in two separate tables. One table was for church leaders, and the other for church members. The researcher was aware that the study's validity might be compromised when using participant observation, as participants might behave differently during the observation period, contrary to their normal behaviour. As Nikolopoulou Kissiani suggested, this was reduced by capitalising on interpersonal relationships at the study site and sustaining contact with participants over time. As Nikolopoulou Kissiani suggested, this was reduced by capitalising on interpersonal relationships at the study site and sustaining contact with participants over time.[297] The researcher was guided by some of Spradley's nine dimensions: space, actors, activities, objects, acts, events, time, goals, and feelings.[298]

3.6.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

According to John Creswell and Vicky Plano, a pilot study enhances the validity and reliability of the research instruments.[299] The pretesting of the research instruments ensures that the questions are clearly articulated and that the response options are relevant and comprehensive.[300] It also addressed one of the common concerns in the research: both the researcher and respondents interpret the survey similarly. The pilot study was conducted at the PEFA church in Karungu Zone and the RRCHSA in Rongo Diocese. Olive Mugenda holds that 10% is adequate for a pilot study.[301] The sample size for all leaders from the three denominations was 24, while the sample size for all church members from the three denominations was 275.

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[297] Nikolopoulou Kassiani, "What is the Hawthorne Effect: Definitions & Examples (2022)," accessed on 24th June, 2023, https://www.scribbr.com/research-bias/hawthorne-effect/.

[298] James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 53.

[299] John Creswell and Vicky L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), 189.

[300] Erin Ruel, William Edward Wagner III, and Brian Joseph Gillespie, *The Practice of Survey Research: Theory and Applications* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2016), 102.

[301] Olive M. Mugenda & Mugenda A.G, *Social Science: Applied Research and Training Services* (Nairobi: Africa Centre for Technology Studies, 2008), 33.

Ten percent of 24 is 2, and ten percent of 275 is 28. Therefore, PEFA and RRCHSA had one leader and 14 church members participating in the pilot study.

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability

Edward Carmines and Zeller define reliability as the degree to which an experiment, test, or Any measuring procedure yields the same results in repeated trials. The measurement of any phenomenon always contains a certain amount of error.[302] This research used internal/inter-judgemental reliability. This type of reliability assesses the consistency of the scores of individual items on an instrument with the scores of a set of items that characteristically comprise several items to measure a single construct.[303] In this study, internal consistency reliability helped determine the consistency of people's responses when asked the same question. To ensure reliability, the questions were consistently phrased in the same way each time they were presented.[304] The method used in this study to check internal reliability is the Split-half test, which involves dividing test items into halves to create two parallel sub-tests.[305] The scores on the two halves are calculated, and then the correlation between the two halves provides split-half reliability.[306] Mainly, odd-even numbers are used whereby the subset of odd-numbered items is compared to the even-numbered items. Ten percent of the study sample, or 30 respondents, were exposed to the split-half reliability approach to test the reliability of the instruments. The PEFA church in Karungu Zone and RRCHSA in Rongo Diocese provided the pilot respondents. The

[302] Edward G. Carmines and Richard A. Zeller, *Reliability and Validity Assessment: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences* (London: Sage Publication, 1979), 11.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Kassiani, "What is the Hawthorne Effect."
[305] Satyendra Nath Chakrabarty, "Best Split-Half and Maximum Reliability," *Journal of Research &Method in Education*, vol.3, issue. 1 (2013): 1.
[306] Theresa J.B. Kline, *Psychological Testing: A Practical Approach to Design and Evaluation* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 172.

equation for Spearman-Brown split-half reliability adopted by (Jum Nunnally and Ira Bernstein, 1994) is as follows:[307]

$$r1 = \frac{2r}{1 + r3}$$

r1 = the reliability of the whole test

r3 = the correlation between the two half-tests

3.6.4 Instrument Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences drawn from the findings. Content validity is the extent to which a test or assessment assesses all aspects of the topic, construct, or behaviour that it is designed to measure.[308] Nancy Carter and others claim that content validity asks questions such as, Do the identified research variables closely fit what is known about the research topic?[309] The content validity was measured by evaluating individual questions and seeking the views of experts (My Supervisors) and other experts in the same field of research to determine whether each question accurately represents the content of the property or trait that the instrument is intended to cover.[310] Therefore, it was important for the data collection instruments to be pre-tested to test their validity; where necessary, corrections and adjustments were made before the beginning of the actual field survey.[311]

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[307] Con Stough, Donald H. Saklofske, James D.A Parker, *Assessing Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Research, and Applications* (London: Springer Dordrecht Heldelberg, 2009), 13.

[308] Google, "Content-Validity," Content Validity, accessed 24th June, 2023, https://statisticsbyjim.com/basic/content-validity/

[309] Nancy Carter et al., "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research," *Oncology Nursing Forum*, vol. 41, no.5 (2014): 472.

[310] Google, "Content-Validity," Content Validity, accessed 24th June, 2023, https://statisticsbyjim.com/basic/content-validity/; Hamed Taherdoost, "Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument: How to Test the Validation of a Questionnaire/Survey in a Research," *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, vol. 5, no. 3(2016): 30.

[311] Lucy Firth, David Mellor, Jenny Pang, "Data Quality Issues in Practice and Theory: A Cross-Cultural Example," *Qualitative Research Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2005): 9.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis involves the organisation, interpretation, and presentation of collected data.[312] The researcher transcribed the information from the voice recorder and summarised the field notes. Then, the qualitative data was thematically arranged and presented in a narrative form. Content and narrative analyses were adopted as well. Content analysis is concerned with the characteristics of the document's content by examining who says what, to whom, and with what effect. It examines essential materials, including narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, observations, and print media such as articles and manuals.[313] Content analysis ensures that the chosen aspects of the data, as directed by the research questions, are the material to be analysed.[314] Narrative analysis focuses on the verbal material, typically accounts of personal experiences within a specific context. The computer program NVivo was used in the qualitative part of the study to assist the researcher in organizing, managing, and coding data more effectively.[315] Quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 software program to generate descriptive Statistics in terms of means and percentages.[316] The valuable data was prescribed to the extent that it answered the research questions. The findings were presented using tables.[317]

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

Ethical and legal considerations were observed throughout the research process. All the participants were informed about the survey via an introductory letter (Appendix 1). The questionnaire included participants' names as an option; they could either reveal their identity or

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[312] Gerard Govaert, *Data Analysis* (Hoboken, United States: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2009), 28, accessed August 18, 2023, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/auke-ebooks/detail.action?docID=477668.

[313] George Nervious Shava et al., "Qualitative Content Analysis, Utility, Usability, and Process in Educational Research," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, volume. v, issue. vii (2021): 553-54.

[314] Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), 8.

[315] Shava et al., "Qualitative Content Analysis," 553-54.

[316] Mercedes Orus Lacort, *Descriptive and Inferential Statistics: Summaries of Theory and Exercises Solved* (North Carolina: Lulu Press, 2014), 16-17.

[317] Norman Blaikie, *Analyzing Quantitative Data: From Description to Explanation* (London: Sage Publication, 2003), 51.

decline to do so. Consent was also sought to cite names and use their photos. This is consistent with Celia Fisher's guidelines for the use of recordings of voices or images.[318]

The researcher sought and obtained an authorization letter from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs of Africa Nazarene University and a research permit from the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The two official documents helped the researcher access various sources of materials needed for the research. Using key contact persons from each denomination, the researcher got permission from the heads of the LMACM, the RRCHSA, and the PEFA. The researcher and his assistants ensured that confidentiality was maintained, all identifying information was removed, and the collected data was stored securely. The researcher also clarified to the potential participants that they could opt in or out of the research without facing any consequences.

Additionally, the researcher sought permission from the local government administration where the fieldwork was conducted, which offered security for the researcher and his assistants. Respondents were assured that the data collected would be used exclusively for academic purposes. While the findings may be shared at academic conferences or the thesis may be published in peer-reviewed journals, they would not be used for any other purpose.

[318] Celia B. Fisher, *Decoding the Ethics Code: A Practical Guide for Psychologists* (California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2012), 132-134.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data collected and is organised into several sections. It begins with the response rate and background information about the respondents. Following that, the chapter offers a descriptive and qualitative analysis exploring leaders' understanding of biblical teachings regarding the inclusion of women in the leadership of the Church. The chapter also provides a historical survey of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa (PEFA), and the Legio Maria African Church Mission, focusing on the evolution of women in leadership roles. Additionally, it examines women's experiences within these three churches and how those experiences influence church leadership. Furthermore, the chapter examines the arguments commonly used to deter women from fully participating in the leadership of the Legio Maria African Church Mission, the Roho Rabbi Church, and the Holy Spirit of Africa, as well as PEFA. Lastly, it highlights the impacts of women's inclusion in leadership within the Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA.

4.2. Characteristics of the Respondents

The study involved sampling and surveying 276 church members and 24 church leaders using a questionnaire (quantitative method) and interviews (qualitative method). Ultimately, the research received complete responses from 228 church members, resulting in a response rate of 82.60%. Additionally, 21 church leaders provided their responses, yielding a response rate of

87.5%. These response rates are considered acceptable, as research methodology experts, such as Fincham, note that reliable studies should aim for a response rate of at least 60%.[319]

The respondents were spread across the three targeted churches, with 85 out of 100 from PEFA, representing 85.0%; Legio Maria, 79 (79.0%); and RRCHSA, 64 (64.0%). Thus, this study employs an explanatory sequential research design, presenting the quantitative results in tables from the church members first and augmenting these results with qualitative data from the church leaders.

The respondents, including church members and leaders, were asked to provide data related to their church affiliation, gender, age, level of education, duration of membership, and respective categories. The following tables display these results.

4.2.1 The Church of the Respondents

The responses from church members regarding their church characteristics are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 *Church of the Respondents*

	Frequency	Percent
PEFA	85	37.3
Legio Maria	79	34.6
RRCHSA	64	28.1
Total	228	100.0

The results presented in Table 4.1 indicate that respondents were appropriately and significantly distributed among the three targeted churches: PEFA Church (85 respondents, 37.3%), Legio Maria (79 respondents, 34.6%), and Roho Rabbi Church of the Holy Spirit of Africa (64 respondents, 28.1%). This distribution suggests that the findings are reliable and valid,

[319] Fincham J. E., "Response rates and responsiveness for surveys, standards, and the Journal," *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, *72*, no. 2 (2008): 43, accessed June 10, 2024, https://doi.org/10.5688/aj720243.

as each of the three churches responded to the survey questions. Additionally, it enhances the credibility of the investigation, which focused on women's leadership and inclusion in a comparative study of Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church of the Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA in Migori County, Kenya.

4.2.2 Gender of Respondents

The church member respondents were asked about their gender demographic, as shown in Table 4.2. The results are presented in a cross-tabulation to access information for each church.

Table 4.2 *Church of the Respondents * Sex of the Respondents Cross-tabulation*

			Sex of the Respondents		
			Male	Female	Total
Church of the Respondent	PEFA	Count	40	45	85
		% Total	17.5%	19.7%	37.3%
	Legio Maria	Count	41	38	79
		% Total	18.0%	16.7%	34.6%
	RRCHSA	Count	30	34	64
		% Total	13.2%	14.9%	28.1%
Total		Count	111	117	228
		% Total	48.7%	51.3%	100.0%

The results from Table 4.2 indicate that, cumulatively, 117 (51.3%) of the three respondents were female, while 111 (48.7%) were male. This demonstrates that both genders are almost equally represented across the three churches: PEFA, Legio Maria, and RRCHSA. Notably, only Legio Maria had more male members, with 41 (18.0%), while PEFA and RRCHSA had slightly more female members than males. These results suggest that the study of women's participation and inclusion in leadership received feedback from both genders, thereby reducing bias and enhancing the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, the literature indicates that women often represent the majority demographic in church membership across many

churches in Kenya.[320] The results here show that in the three churches, the number of females is slightly higher than that of males except for Legio Maria, and it would be instructive to examine how women have been included in leadership positions in these churches.

4.2.3 Age of the Respondents

The respondents from the church were surveyed regarding their age demographics, as illustrated in Table 4.3. The results for each church are presented in a cross-tabulation format.

Table 4.3 *Church of the Respondents * Age of the Respondents Cross-tabulation*

			Age of the Respondents							
			<30 years	31-35 years	36-40 years	41-45 years	46-50 years	51-55 years	>56 years	Total
Church of the Respondent	PEFA	Count	13	6	5	13	19	15	14	85
		% Total	5.7%	2.6%	2.2%	5.7%	8.3%	6.6%	6.1%	37.3%
	Legio Maria	Count	4	3	2	7	19	11	33	79
		% Total	1.8%	1.3%	0.9%	3.1%	8.3%	4.8%	14.5%	34.6%
	RRCHSA	Count	20	19	9	3	6	1	6	64
		% Total	8.8%	8.3%	3.9%	1.3%	2.6%	0.4%	2.6%	28.1%
Total		Count	37	28	16	23	44	27	53	228
		% Total	16.2%	12.3%	7.0%	10.1%	19.3%	11.8%	23.2%	100.0%

The table's results indicate that, cumulatively, across the three churches, a significant number of church members, specifically 53 (23.2%), were aged over 56 years. This was followed by 44 members (19.3%) aged between 46 and 50 years and then 37 members (16.2%) below 30 years of age. The remaining members were distributed across the 31 to 45-year age group. This

[320] Racheal Syombua Muli, Paul Kyalo, and Regina W. Kinuthia, "An Investigation on Gender Disparities of Church Membership and Attendance: A Case of Mbooni West Sub-County in Makueni County, Kenya," *Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, vol.5, issue. 8 (2020): 101.

distribution suggests that the church members encompass diverse ages, including youth, middle-aged individuals, and older adults. However, a notable trend emerged: PEFA Church and Legio Maria had a more substantial presence of older members, with 21.0% of PEFA's members aged between 46 and 56 years and 27.6% for Legio Maria.

In contrast, RRCHSA tended to attract a younger demographic, as evidenced by 21.0% of its members falling within the 30 to 40-year age group, compared to only 6.9% who were 40 years or older. This analysis indicates that PEFA and Legio Maria are more oriented towards older members, while RRCHSA appeals more to the younger population. Nonetheless, the study successfully engaged church members from various age groups, further supporting its findings.

4.2.4 Level of Education of the Respondents

The respondents from the church were asked about their education levels, and the results are shown in Table 4.4. The data is presented in a cross-tabulation to provide insights into each church's demographic information.

Table 4.4 *Church of the Respondents * Level of Education Cross-tabulation*

			Level of Education				
			Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Other (primary, secondary, no formal education)	Total
Church of the Respondent	PEFA	Count	15	11	5	54	85
		% Total	6.6%	4.8%	2.2%	23.7%	37.3%
	Legio Maria	Count	1	0	0	78	79
		% Total	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	34.2%	34.6%
	RRCHSA	Count	0	0	0	64	64
		% Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.1%	28.1%
Total		Count	16	11	5	196	228
		% Total	7.0%	4.8%	2.2%	86.0%	100.0%

From Table 4.4, cumulatively, 196 (86.0%) of the church members from the three churches (PEFA, Legio Maria, RRCHSA) had either primary, secondary or no education. A closer look, however, reveals that only PEFA Church members 15 (6.6%), 11 (4.8%), and 5 (2.2%) held certificates, diplomas, and degree qualifications, respectively. Thus, only PEFA had members who could be more educated than Legio Maria and RRCHSA. It would be instructive to examine whether there is a difference in academic qualifications and the inclusion of women in church leadership among the three churches.

4.2.5 Duration of Church Membership

The church member respondents were asked about their duration in the church membership demographic and the results are shown in Table 4.5. The results are presented in a cross-tabulation to access information for each church.

Table 4.5 *Church of the Respondents * Duration of Church Membership Cross-tabulation*

			Duration of Church Membership					
			<3 years	4-7 years	8-11 years	12-16 years	>16 years	Total
Church of the Respondent	PEFA	Count	2	5	12	22	44	85
		% Total	0.9%	2.2%	5.3%	9.6%	19.3%	37.3%
	Legio Maria	Count	0	1	9	1	68	79
		% Total	0.0%	0.4%	3.9%	0.4%	29.8%	34.6%
	RRCHSA	Count	5	21	17	6	15	64
		% Total	2.2%	9.2%	7.5%	2.6%	6.6%	28.1%
Total		Count	7	27	38	29	127	228
		% Total	3.1%	11.8%	16.7%	12.7%	55.7%	100.0%

According to Table 4.5, more than half of the church members, specifically 127 (55.7%), have been members of their respective churches for over 16 years. This indicates that these members possess significant experience in church doctrine and politics, reflecting a deeper

understanding of women's inclusion in leadership roles. However, a closer examination reveals that the Roho Rabbi Church of the Holy Spirit of Africa (RRCHSA) has more members who have been with the church for 11 years or less, totalling 43 members (18.9%). In contrast, both the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa (PEFA) and Legio Maria have more members who have been part of their congregations for over 11 years. This distinction may be attributed to the fact that RRCHSA is historically a newer church than PEFA and Legio Maria.

4.3 Presentation of Research Analysis, Findings and Interpretation

This subsection covers the following analysis, findings and interpretation as per the objectives of the study: Understanding of leaders on the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership structures, surveying the historical evolution of women's leadership among Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria of African Church Mission, ascertaining the experiences of women in these three churches and how their experiences impact the church's leadership, analysing the arguments used to deter women from full participation in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership, and exploring ways women's leadership is impacting the inclusion and growth of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church.

4.3.1 Understanding of leaders and members of the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in the Church's leadership

The first objective sought to explore the understanding of leaders and church members on the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in the Church's leadership. This chapter presents quantitative and qualitative data in an explanatory sequential design format, organising the sections by church. The qualitative data included responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, as well as responses from leaders in the interviews and focus group discussions

(FGDs). Table 4.6 presents the quantitative data related to Church members' understanding of the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in Church leadership for the three churches.

Table 4.6 *Church of the Respondent * Whether Bible Supports Women Inclusion in Church Leadership Cross-tabulation*

			Whether Bible Supports Women Inclusion in Church Leadership			
			Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Church of the Respondent	PEFA	Count	82	2	1	85
		% Church of the Respondent	96.5%	2.4%	1.2%	100.0%
	Legio Maria	Count	79	0	0	79
		% Church of the Respondent	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	RRCHSA	Count	35	29	0	64
		% Church of the Respondent	54.7%	45.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	196	31	1	228
		% Church of the Respondent	86.0%	13.6%	0.4%	100.0%

4.3.1.1 Understanding of biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in PEFA Church's leadership

Based on the results from Table 4.6, many of the members from PEFA 82 (96.5%) said that the bible supports women's inclusion in church leadership. This implies that a majority of the membership in PEFA agreed that the bible had stipulations and opportunities for women to be included in church leadership. This further implies a positive foundation because a church's standard of doctrine and shaper of attitude is the Bible.

From the open-ended question, the church members from PEFA mainly cited Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:1, the Story of Esther in the bible, Esther 2:15, the Exodus and Miriam the Prophetess' experience as the biblical texts that supported their assertion that the bible permits

women's inclusion in church leadership. It can be inferred that while the church members had certain verses to support their claim that women should be included in church leadership, these verses were not numerous enough to provide incontrovertible evidence that they were confident there was a biblical foundation for women's inclusion in church leadership.

The church members asserted that the bible did not adequately endorse women's inclusion in church leadership, mostly citing 1 Timothy 2:12, which says: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet." The church members within this persuasion argue that in Timothy, the Apostle Paul explicitly denied women from participating in church leadership activities, and a significant part of that leadership is teaching. More poignantly, the analysis revealed that both those who selected biblical verses that supported women's inclusion in church leadership and those who chose verses that, according to them, denounced women's inclusion in church leadership were primarily unaware of the reasons behind their choices. Those who were aware noted that the verses spoke of women taking up leadership roles, as exemplified by Phoebe in Romans 16:1.

The church members responded that the PEFA church used the democratic biblical leadership model. Furthermore, the majority of PEFA Church members agreed that their biblical interpretation of the role of gender in church leadership was correct. Additionally, the majority noted that if the biblical interpretation is incorrect regarding the exclusion of one gender from church leadership, they would be willing to reconsider their position on that matter. This implies that the church members at PEFA considered the bible a strong standard of faith and practice.

The responses from the church leaders resonate mainly with those of the church members. Church leaders from PEFA, especially through the interviews, noted that the bible does not stop the inclusion of women in church leadership. However, one of the church leaders

mentioned that what primarily bars women from participating in church leadership is one or two key factors. One, the misinterpretation of the bible and two, the ingrained traditional beliefs that place patriarchy at the centre of leadership and thus consider women as subordinate to male leadership and dominance. One of the church leaders from PEFA, code-named Onyango said, "I do not think that the bible is against women being church leaders. Just look at Phoebe and Esther in the bible. These women were strong church leaders. What I see as the problem is the traditional belief that a woman cannot lead a man."[321]

4.3.1.2 Understanding of biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in Legio Church's leadership

According to the results presented in Table 4.6, all members of Legio Maria 79 (100.0%) affirmed that the Bible supports women's inclusion in church leadership. The Legio Maria Church strongly endorses the biblical interpretation that advocates for women's roles in church leadership.

From the open-ended question, the church members from Legio Maria mainly cited the book. Moreover, the stories of Esther, Ruth, and Miriam, the Prophetess, in the Old Testament are biblical texts that support their assertion that the Bible permits women's inclusion in church leadership. Additionally, from the analysis of the open-ended questions, many church members from Legio Maria were primarily unsure about the biblical texts that supported their view that the Bible endorsed women's inclusion in church leadership. Thus, again, just like for PEFA, it can be interpreted that while the church members had certain verses to support their claim that women should be included in church leadership, the verses were not as many as to provide incontrovertible evidence that they were sure that there is biblical foundation for women

[321] Interview of 'Onyango', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa, 24th March 2024.

inclusion in church leadership. Nonetheless, a total closer examination of Legio Maria reveals that Esther was the most frequently cited woman from the Bible used to strengthen the prevailing belief that women are meant to occupy and operate in church leadership spaces.

Furthermore, the members of Legio Maria identified democratic leadership as the biblical model employed within their ranks. A majority also asserted that their interpretation of women in church leadership was proper but were willing to change if a more profound and truer biblical understanding of the role of women in church leadership came to light.

The church leaders interviewed also strongly resonated with their members' understanding of biblical interpretation regarding women's inclusion in church leadership. One of the church leaders, herself a woman, said it succinctly: "Legio Maria's supreme leader is a woman. Surely, can it ever be said that our church does not understand the Bible to be saying that women cannot be highly-placed church leaders?"[322] So, while the Legio Maria church believes that the Bible endorses women's leadership in the church, they do not have a sufficient understanding of the biblical texts that support this endorsement or belief.

4.3.1.3 Understanding of biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in RRCHSA Church's leadership

Based on the results from Table 4.6, some of the members from RRCHSA 35 (54.7%) said that the bible supports women's inclusion in church leadership; however, this was closely followed by 29 (45.3%) who said that there was no biblical teaching endorsing women's inclusion in church leadership. The RRCHSA has the weakest belief that the bible supports the inclusion of women in church leadership. A clue as to why such is the case is the majority's assertion that the church's leadership model is autocratic or authoritarian. This authoritarianism is

[322] Interview of 'PO', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 6th May 2024.

borne out of the biblical belief that God is tyrannical to the extent that whatever he commands requires strict obedience.

Consequently, those who argue that the bible does not support women's inclusion did not see the need to provide biblical verses as the researcher got the sense that they were arguing from the point of view that it is a foregone conclusion without any need for evidence. Conversely, those who thought the bible endorsed women's inclusion pointed mostly to Esther, Ruth and Miriam as notable biblical examples. Similarly, like PEFA and Legio Maria, RRCHSA members believed that their interpretation of gender in church leadership was proper but were open to change if a more profound and accurate biblical understanding of the role of gender in church leadership emerged. Furthermore, a dichotomy exists between the assertion for or against biblical endorsement of women's inclusion in leadership positions and the provision and elucidation of biblical texts to support that understanding.

There was a varied response among the church leaders of RRCHSA concerning the interpretation of biblical teachings regarding women's inclusion in church leadership. Some leaders believed that the Bible supports the inclusion of women in leadership roles, while others felt it does not. One leader expressed a strong opinion: "The Bible does not, in my view, indicate that a woman should lead the church. Christ, our leader, was not a woman; the disciples He appointed to lead were also not women. It is as straightforward as that."[323] One individual with a different perspective remarked, "Examining the roles of women like Esther and Miriam reveals that they were leaders, and this should not be any different in the church. However, we must be cautious to ensure it doesn't go too far."[324] The last leader appears to have a limited understanding of biblical teachings regarding the inclusion of women in church leadership.

[323] Interview of 'Donga', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kirengo-Suna Mission, 11th April 2024.
[324] Interview of 'Obulo', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kamagambo, 18th May 2024.

Therefore, based on the preceding discussion, regarding the understanding of biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in church leadership, most members in PEFA and Legio Maria agreed that the Bible provides both stipulations and opportunities for women to be included in church leadership. The Legio Maria Church had the strongest and most substantial support for the biblical interpretation that endorses women's inclusion in church leadership. Conversely, the RRCHSA has the weakest belief that the bible validates the inclusion of women in church leadership.

Further, the church members from the three churches, PEFA, Legio Maria and RRCHSA, had certain verses to support their claim that women should be included or excluded in church leadership; the verses were not as many as to provide incontrovertible evidence that they were sure that there is biblical foundation for women inclusion in church leadership. Thus, for all three churches, there is a dichotomy between the assertion for or against the biblical endorsement of women's inclusion in leadership positions and the provision and elucidation of biblical texts to underscore that understanding. Additionally, PEFA and Legio Maria churches employed the democratic model of biblical leadership, whereas the RRCHSA leadership model is autocratic.

4.3.2 The history of the Church in Relation to the evolution of women leadership

The second objective sought to survey the history of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria of the African Church Mission concerning the evolution of women's leadership. This section will be a qualitative analysis based on the interviews and discussions with church leaders of the respective churches.

4.3.2.1 The history of PEFA Church in Relation to the evolution of women leadership

The history of the PEFA Church regarding the evolution of women in leadership was examined through interviews with senior church leaders and secondary data sources. One church

leader, Rioba (a pseudonym), shared insights from his experience at Bukuria Bible College, the Church's Bible college. Rioba explained that the origins of PEFA can be traced back to the establishment of the Elim Missionary Assemblies, now known as Elim Fellowship, which is headquartered in Lima, New York, USA. The first mission was established in Taranganya around 1938. David Spencer, the first missionary and his family from the USA, served in Taranganya for a decade.[325]

Rioba also noted that the name Taranganya is derived from two Kurian words: "tara," meaning light, and "nganya," meaning to go or leave. The native Kurian people expressed their discontent with the electric lights illuminating the area at night, which they felt interfered with their traditional practices. As a result, they would say "tara nganya," which translates to "taa iondoke" in Swahili, meaning "the light to go or leave."[326]

According to Rioba, the following were the first Africans to join the missionaries: 1. Pastor Willis Obunga- Luo; 2. Pastor Maisori-Kurian; 3. Pastor Chacha Omae-Kurian; 4. Pastor Muhingira-Kurian.[327] However, it is unclear how Willis Obunga, a Luo, came into contact with the missionaries because he was not a native of where the mission was established. Rioba stated that among the first Africans, no native African woman served in the pastoral ministry. Even among the missionaries, no woman served as a pastor, but there was a department for women's ministry; one notable contributor was Edith M. Knoll (USA). She was born on 7th July 1896 and died on 30th August 1968. She joined the Taranganya mission in 1945, served for 23 years, died, and was buried within the mission centre. [328]

[325] Interview of 'Rioba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Bukuria Bible College, 8th April 2024.
[326] Interview of 'Rioba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Bukuria Bible College, 8th April 2024.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Ibid.

She served as a teacher and is regarded today as the mother of Kurians. She also used to organize women's conferences around Kuria.[329] The first female missionary leader was Edith Knoll, who joined the mission in 1945, the same year Bud Sickler became involved. He established a posho mill to grind local grains for free, which helped attract local people to the church. Additionally, he would hunt and distribute meat to those who attended the church services. Rioba mentioned that Mrs. Sickler was actively involved in women's ministry and is regarded as one of the founders of the Suna mission in Luo land. She founded Nyabisawa Girls High School and Taranganya Boarding Girls' Primary School. PEFA has had women leaders who have served as teachers, founders, and administrators of church-based schools since its inception.[330]

A bishop, hereinafter referred to as Orimba, provided insight into the historical background of the umbrella organisation, PEFA, its organisational structure, and the presence of women within its ranks. Orimba explained that Elim Churches is one of the branches of the Church Society of Ministries (CSM) based in the USA. Elim missionaries initially established a mission station at Bukuria Mission in Kehancha, located in Kuria Land. From Bukuria, a mission was set up in Luo land, known as Suna Mission (Nyabisawa), leading to several churches, including Mwache and Nyakech. [331]

[329] Ibid.
[330] Interview of 'Rioba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Bukuria Bible College, 8th April 2024.
[331] Interview of 'Orimba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa Mission Centre, 17th March 2024.

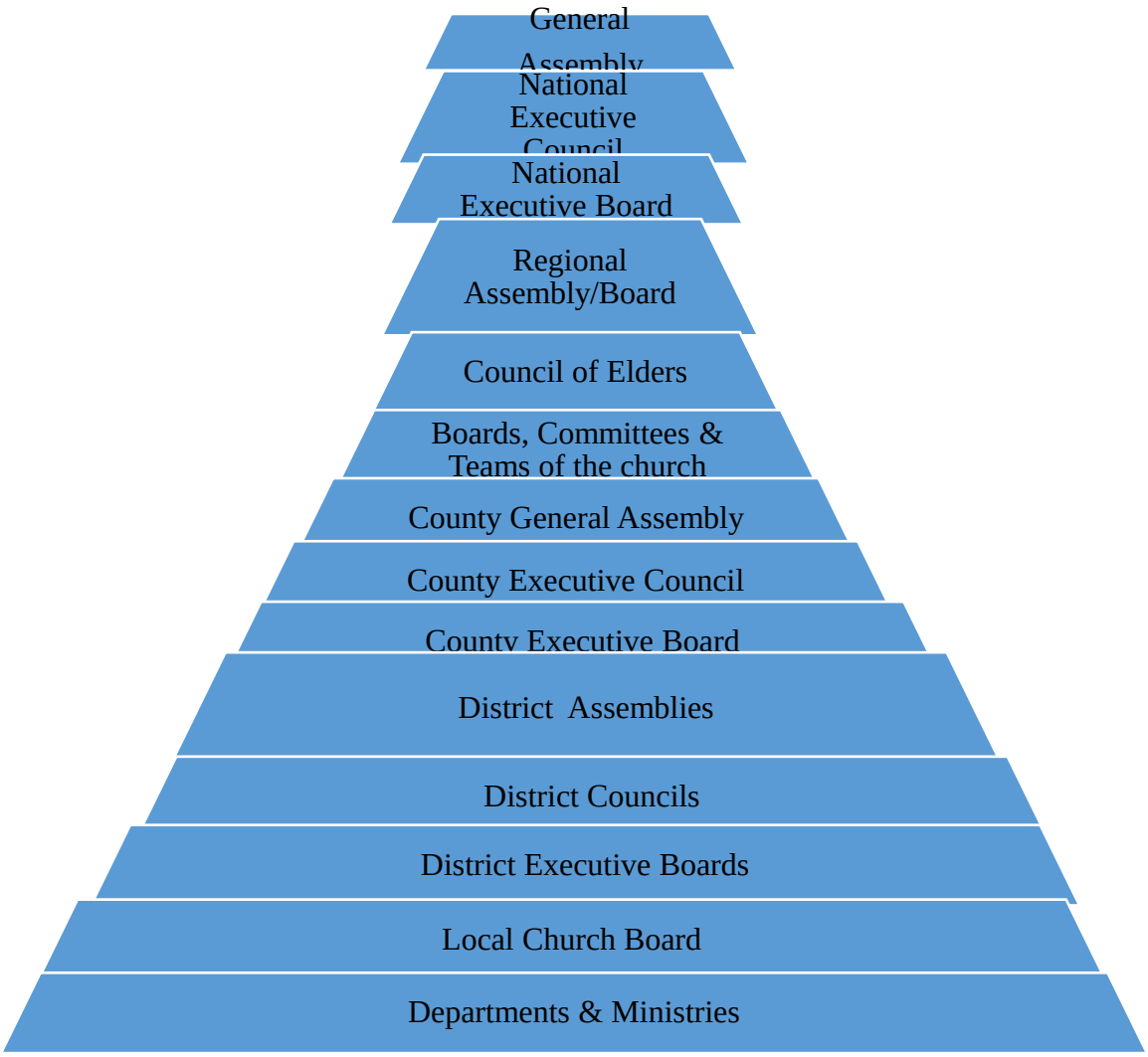


Figure 4.1 The Organisational Structure of PEFA in Kenya (PEFA Church Constitution 2018)[332]

The constitution of the PEFA church (2018) describes the church's leadership as follows:[333] The General Assembly is the highest authority responsible for electing national officials, approving policies and legislation, and conducting training and activities that support the mission and vision of the PEFA. The National Executive Council has the authority to plan, set objectives, define purpose and strategies for the future, establish ethics and values, and build

[332] Margaret Matisi Nanjala, Wepukhule Rispah Namasaka, Mutsotso Stanley Ngome, "Social Structure of PEFA and Its Influence on Unity," *Journal of Religion* 1 (4), 2019: 77-78.
[333] Ibid.

collaborations with the public. The National Executive Board ensures that all endorsed church programs, doctrines, constitutions, policies, and by-laws are adhered to. It is also responsible for enforcing standards of conduct among ministers by disciplining those who violate guidelines and coordinating and managing national church programs, fundraising efforts, and public and ecclesiastical relations. Furthermore, it ensures that church resources are utilized effectively and efficiently according to church laws. The Regional Assembly has functions similar to those of the General Assembly. However, it also includes a legislative body at the regional level with the authority to create and amend regional by-laws. Additionally, the Regional Assembly hears and determines appeals regarding decisions made by District/County and regional councils.

The regional assembly has regional councils and boards that supervise the establishment of the region's vision/mission and policy, as well as examine and endorse ministerial candidates for service. The council of elders supports the presiding Bishop and ordained ministers and, dedicates PEFA Cathedral and grant charters. The church's board, committees, and teams are factions with decision-making authority. The committees perform administrative roles while church teams make decisions and implement them. However, they are accountable to their assigning authority. The district assemblies are the principal legislative body at the district level/county level. It hears and determines appeals from the district council and executive board. It is also mandated to implement the decisions of the district assembly and convey the decisions of the regional assembly to all local churches, boards, and committees within their jurisdiction.

Additionally, it oversees and administers and ministers, and transferring ministers. The district executive board or collaborates with the district assembly or council. Its primary responsibilities include forming and promoting local church programs, supporting the mission and vision of local churches, and aligning with the PEFA Constitution to support the mission and vision of local churches. The local church assembly collaborates with the district council and

district executive board. It reaches out to the community through service and witnessing, fostering Christian fellowship and biblical teaching among other church members.[334]

According to Orimba, "Currently, within the highest hierarchy of PEFA leadership, there is no woman. It is only from the district level downwards that women leaders are found, namely: the local assembly (Church) headed by a pastor, the Zone/Centre headed by an ordained Pastor or reverend, and a district headed by a district overseer (who must have at least a certificate in theology). The region is headed by an ordained Bishop who must have a degree in theology. However, the Department of Women Ministry exists within all the hierarchies of PEFA."[335] Orimba further explained that a Zone or Centre typically consists of two to five churches, while a district is comprised of between 10 and 20 churches. A region is even more significant and is led by the Regional Bishop.[336] He also mentioned that the first constitution of the PEFA church was drafted in 1961 and remained in effect until 2008. This constitution did not allow women to hold leadership positions. However, an amendment in 2008 permitted women to occupy any leadership role within PEFA. The most recent review of the constitution took place in 2023, confirming that women's inclusion in church leadership at PEFA has been recently endorsed by the constitution.[337]

From *The Voice of Healings: The Magazine of Deliverance and Worldwide Revival*, the history of PEFA supports what has already been stated by church leaders. That is, Elim Missionary Assemblies (EMA) began its missionary work in Kenya in 1945.[338] This was when Reverend Arthur Dodzweit and Reverend Milburn J. Bud Sickler started the Elim Bukuria Mission among the Kuria. In July 1945, their wives, May Dodzweit, Fay Sickler, and Edith Knoll

[334] Nanjala et al., “Social Structure of PEFA.”
[335] Interview of ‘Orimba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa Mission-Centre, 17th March 2024.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Google, *The Voice of Healings: The Magazine of Deliverance and Worldwide Revival*, April 1960, 8- 9.

joined them. In 1953, Sickler relocated to Mombasa to manage the Guest house and established the Elim Evangelistic Church in Makupa. Both Sickler and Dodzweit collaborated for eight years. Out of Bukuria Mission, a second Mission called Suna Mission was founded in 1949. Paul Johnson pioneered missionary work in Nairobi in the early 1960s as part of the Elim Missionary team from Suna Mission. He was assisted by one of the natives called Chacha Omae (Taranganya Mission), and the other native was Nathaniel Jullu (Suna Mission), but on a temporal basis as he was permanently based at Suna Mission.[339] Bud Sickler began working in the upcountry in 1941. In 1953, Sickler's friends invited him to manage a missionary restroom in Mombasa as they were returning to England.[340]

From the foregoing, women have played a role in church leadership at PEFA, although at a slightly lower level than their male counterparts. However, owing to the 2008 PEFA constitution review on the place of women in leadership, women's inclusion in church leadership at PEFA has received recent constitutional endorsement but has yet to be fully implemented. Since 2008, PEFA Church has expanded its network of churches, utilising healthcare and education initiatives to enhance community engagement nationwide. Furthermore, according to the interview, it has continued to train leaders within its leadership development framework and expand the role of women and youth in leadership.

4.3.2.2 The history of Legio Maria Church in Relation to the evolution of women's leadership

A historical survey based on interviews with respected church leaders from the Legio Maria of the African Church Mission highlights the significant role of women within the church.

[339] Google, “Mwatha-Samuel,” accessed 12, May, 2024, https: dacb/stories/Kenya/Mwatha-Samuel.
[340] Google, *The Voice of Healings: The Magazine of Deliverance and Worldwide Revival*, April 1960, 8- 9.

One of the interviewed leaders, who went by the pseudonym Osano, explained that Mother Mary founded Legio Maria in 1960 as a breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church, with the founder herself being a nun. This church holds women, particularly mothers, in high regard, which is reflected in its name, Legio Maria. "Min Dini mar Legio Maria en Holy Superior Mother. The saying "Papa en mana jakwath" translates to "The Pope is only a shepherd."[341]

Osano explained that devotions and petitions against natural calamities are conducted in this shrine of the Holy Mother; it is the power prayer house. Additionally, the Mother Superior accompanies the Pope on his pastoral visits and to all places, and she is allowed to participate in high-level meetings of the Church; even at the election of the Pope, she must be present. Mother Superior General has an assistant who has the title of Mother. Only one Mother General Superior within the Legio Maria must reside where the Pope resides. However, Mothers are in every Parish, Diocese, and Archdiocese. Only those who have continually lived a holy life can be chosen as either Holy Mother or Mother. They have to be older because young women who are still at the child-bearing age or menstruating cannot be allowed to assume such roles or even be closer to the church premises.[342]

According to Osano, the foundation of Legio Maria is attributed to two individuals *Mama Mtakatifu* and Simeo Melkio Ondeto. Mama Mtakatifu is believed to have descended into this world around 1826 in an Island called Mgingo within Lake Victoria in Migori County. It is believed that *Mama Mtakatifu*, the Holy Mother, appeared at different places to various people, instructing them to care for her children. Sometimes, she would appear to people together with Simeo Ondeto, sending them and equipping them with powers to cast out demons. *Mama Mtakatifu*, named Mama Regina Owich, only stayed in Legio Maria for three years then passed

[341] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[342] Ibid.

away, then died in 1966. According to Osano, Mama Regina was a mysterious woman with supernatural powers, and she is the same woman in the folk legend stories of Luo; the Nyamngondho Son of Ombare and Simbi Nyaima.[343]

Osano narrated that Simeo Ondeto is believed to have descended to Earth. While he was still struggling to find his place on Earth, he worked as a herdsman at various homesteads within the Luo community and Kalenjin land. Those who came close to him witnessed his mysterious powers and sometimes saw him conversing with angels such as Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Simeo Ondeto had already found a movement that had begun to take shape. However, on December 25, 1962, he formally joined the Legio Maria movement after leaving the Roman Catholic Church at Nyandago Mission, accompanied by a large following. He attracted followers from different denominations in the area. Legio Maria was officially founded on January 8, 1963.[344] The first mission took place in Johannes Baru's home, where a celestial choir could be heard singing from various directions, performing traditional Roman Catholic songs. Those present were filled with the Holy Spirit and fell into a trance. During this spiritual event, the Holy Spirit revealed the true identity of Simeo Ondeto as the Son of God. From Johannes Baru's home, Ondeto was guided by the Holy Spirit to a traditional spiritual hill named *God Kwer*.[345]

The local community used this hill to ask for forgiveness for their sins, appease the gods, and consult the gods during calamities. A conflict arose between Ondeto and the locals over the ownership of the hill. With the support of the colonial and local administrations led by Chief Baraza Odenge, he was arrested, taken to Homa/Bay District Court, and jailed for 30 days. However, the hill, referred to by many people as *Kalfari* remained under the custody of Legio Maria. It is believed by the Legio Maria adherents to be the central point of the globe. Osano,

[343] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.

described the hill as the Lord's land where his children from east and west, north and south of the globe, will assemble to face the Lord on judgment day.[346]

The foundation of Legio Maria is further explained by another church leader, referred to here as Rabala, who has served in various capacities for nearly six decades. Rabala stated that Legio Maria was founded by Mama Bikra Maria, also known as Regina Owich, with the assistance of her spiritual son, Baba Melkio Ondeto. Rabala remarked, "*Wasewinjo weche mangeny ni Gaudencia Aoko nochako Dini gi Baba, to ok en adieri*,"[347] translates as there have been many stories claiming that Gaudencia Aoko co-founded the church with Baba (Ondeto), but these claims are not valid. An interview with two other church leaders, Ochanji and Adwar (who prefer to remain anonymous), who have been members of Legio Maria since its inception, confirms that Gaudencia Aoko did not find the church.[348] She joined the church at the invitation of Baba Melkio after Melkio had cast away evil spirits from her in River Ongoche in Suna-West, Migori County. According to Ochanji, Melkio gave her spiritual powers and sent her to the area of Ugenya/Alego where witchcraft was so much practised.[349] Due to the spiritual work she was performing, many people joined Legio Maria and recognised her as its founder, unaware that Baba Melkio had sent her. Melkio ordained Aoko and took on priestly duties. However, her activities were halted when the Apostolic Council convened. One reason for this decision was the issue of women priests celebrating Mass while on their monthly period. Since a Mass cannot be disrupted once it has begun, this raised the question of how a priestess could continue her duties during that time. Additionally, the altar is considered a sacred space that requires purity. Since

[346] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[347] Interview of 'Rabala', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Amoyo-Mission, 23rd May 2024.
[348] Interview of 'Ochanji & Adwar', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[349] Ibid.

menstruation is regarded as a state of impurity, women are traditionally not permitted to enter the church during their periods.[350]

Osano articulated his views on the Supreme Holy Mother, saying, "We believe in her leadership, which is why we appoint a Mother Superior at a higher level to represent her."[351] Osano further stated that both Mother Patricia Okanda and Francisca Atieno have served as Mothers for 20 and 15 years, respectively, and both have families.[352] A manuscript titled "The Brief History of Legio Maria" reveals significant aspects regarding the roles of women within Legio Maria.[353] The current Mother Superior General is Hellen Magoto. She is elected by Cardinals and experienced Mothers within the church. To be chosen for this position, a candidate must be at least 60 years old and willing to live alongside the Pope on the church's premises. Upon being elected, she dedicates the remainder of her life to serving the church, which often requires her to leave her husband or family, following an agreement with them.

The Mother Superior General holds her position until her death and shares overall church leadership duties with the Pope. Candidates must possess both strong spiritual character and basic academic qualifications. Additionally, she must be proficient in at least two languages, including English and Swahili, as well as any other local languages.[354] Interviewing the current mother's superior general reveals that basic academic qualifications are not a prerequisite for holding that position. Mother Hellena Magoto is fluent only in native languages, including Dholuo, Kuria, Kisii, Luhya, and Swahili. She has served the church in various roles since 1970 and has held the position of General Superior Mother for the past 15 years. At this level of

[350] Interview of 'Ochanji', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, April 2024.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[353] Laurence Ochieng, *The Brief History of Legio Maria*, a Manuscript, 2024.
[354] Ibid.

leadership, effective communication skills are essential.[355] Mothers, on the other hand, lead processions and are strictly the people who carry the church flag.

They also devote their time to prayer and maintaining the church's cleanliness. They must be at least 50 years old and can either stay in their homes or relocate to the church premises. Legio Maria has Mothers at various levels: General Superior Mother, Mother of the Archdiocese, Mother of the Diocese, and Mother of the Parish.[356] Osano, on this, said: "Once elected, it is till death, old age and sickness that can make them leave their post."[357] The chairlady serves as the leader of the *Wasista*, or Sisters, within the church. Church members elect her. Candidates must be between 45 and 70 years old. Marital status is not a factor in the selection process, and there is no term limit; a chairlady can serve for one year, five years, or even longer.[358] Then we have Sisters who are young virgin, born and bred within the church premises. Then we have Sisters who are young virgins, born and bred within the church premises. They serve at the altar of the Shrine of Mary and do the cleaning. They are chosen based on their commitment to the church, high morality and understanding of the Bible. It is among the sisters that church secretaries, the treasurers, prophetesses, and prayer stewardesses are chosen from. *Mama Lejo*, who is between 3 and 9 years old, must remain pure until she reaches menstruation. Her main responsibility is to lead the *Praesidium*, which involves leading morning prayers and reciting the rosary every Saturday and Wednesday at the shrine of Mother Mary.[359]

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[355] Interview of 'Mother Superior General', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 13th May 2024.
[356] Ibid.
[357] During the researcher's participant observation at Kalfari, several key observations were made. At the Praesidium, the rosary is recited around a round table, which symbolizes the shape of the world. On the table, there are two pictures: one of Christ on the right side and one of Mama Bikria on the left. Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[358] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[359] Ibid.

According to Osano and Ochanji, the *Praesidium* is as old as the church itself.[360] During the researcher's participant observation at Kalfari, several significant observations were made. At the *Praesidium*, the rosary is recited around a round table, which symbolises the shape of the world. On the table, there are two pictures: one of Christ on the right side and one of Mama Bikria on the left. A young boy stands or kneels on the right side, while a young girl named Mama Lejo stands or kneels on the left side. Behind the girl is the mother-in-charge of the *Praesidium* table. The young boy leads the recitation of the litany. It is at this table that the members pray for the world. All attending members must wear a white cassock (Kandho marachar) and cover their heads with a white cloth, regardless of gender. Non-members of the Legio Maria may also join, but they must obtain permission from the Priest in charge and the mother-in-charge. Participants are expected to wear clothing of one colour, except for red. In terms of seating arrangements, women sit on the left side, while men sit on the right side.[361]

An interview with 'Mother PO' reveals that mothers are anointed with oil by bishops, archbishops, or the pope. Mothers hold a role similar to that of priests but are not able to perform priestly duties. The wives of bishops, archbishops, cardinals, or the pope automatically assume the role of a mother if they are past childbearing age, which is typically considered to be 50 years or older.[362] Osano, in the interview, offered an elaborate role that males and mostly women play in the liturgy and ordinances of the church. He said that males serve at the main altar and lead in the general mass while females serve at the Shrine of Mother Mary (take the lead in *Praesidium* and in petitions during calamities). Additionally, women leaders offer spiritual guidance and lead in the social protection and welfare of church members, widows, and orphans. Mothers also offer spiritual counselling to girls/women. Moreover, the Mother Superior General's roles include:

[360] Interview of 'Osano, and Ochanji', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[361] Passive-Participant Observation, Kalfari-Shrine, 11th May 2024.
[362] Interview of 'Mother PO', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 6th May 2024.

Leader of the *Praesidium*, directing mothers on how to live in the mission, offering spiritual guidance to all mothers and sisters, and possessing special spiritual gifts to prophesy and interpret spiritual writings.[363]

Osano further explained that women were initially ordained as priests at the beginning of the church.[364] However, around 1969, the apostolic council of the church decided to ban women from being priests. The main reason cited for this decision was concerns about the potential desecration of sacred spaces, such as the altar. A senior clergy member illustrated this concern with a suppositional scenario: imagine a woman priest celebrating Mass at the altar who suddenly begins her menstrual cycle. The question arises: would she be required to leave the Mass halfway, considering that it lasts two and a half hours? Additionally, if we allow women who have passed childbearing age to serve, what if they lack the energy to fulfil pastoral duties effectively?[365]

In an interview with the supreme male leader of the Legio Maria, women were barred from performing priestly duties, and they are somehow not in the leadership of the development committee.[366] Legio Maria's constitution no. 4, Section K reads, *Ordini mar mine: Mine momi ordini mar mother-sister okoyienegi eyo moro amora mondo gititije mag dolo*. This translates as "Women who have been ordained as mother-sister are not permitted to perform priestly duties."[367] The leadership structure of Legio Maria consists of six key positions: General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Protocol Officer, Assistant Protocol Officer, and Secretary for Development. Members of the clergy hold all these positions. However, Osano expressed uncertainty about why women are excluded from leadership roles in

[363] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Interview of 'Adwar', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[366] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[367] The Constitution of Legio Maria no.4, Leaders, 1963.

development, stating, "I don't know why women were barred from being part of the leadership of development." The diagram below illustrates Legio Maria's leadership structure.

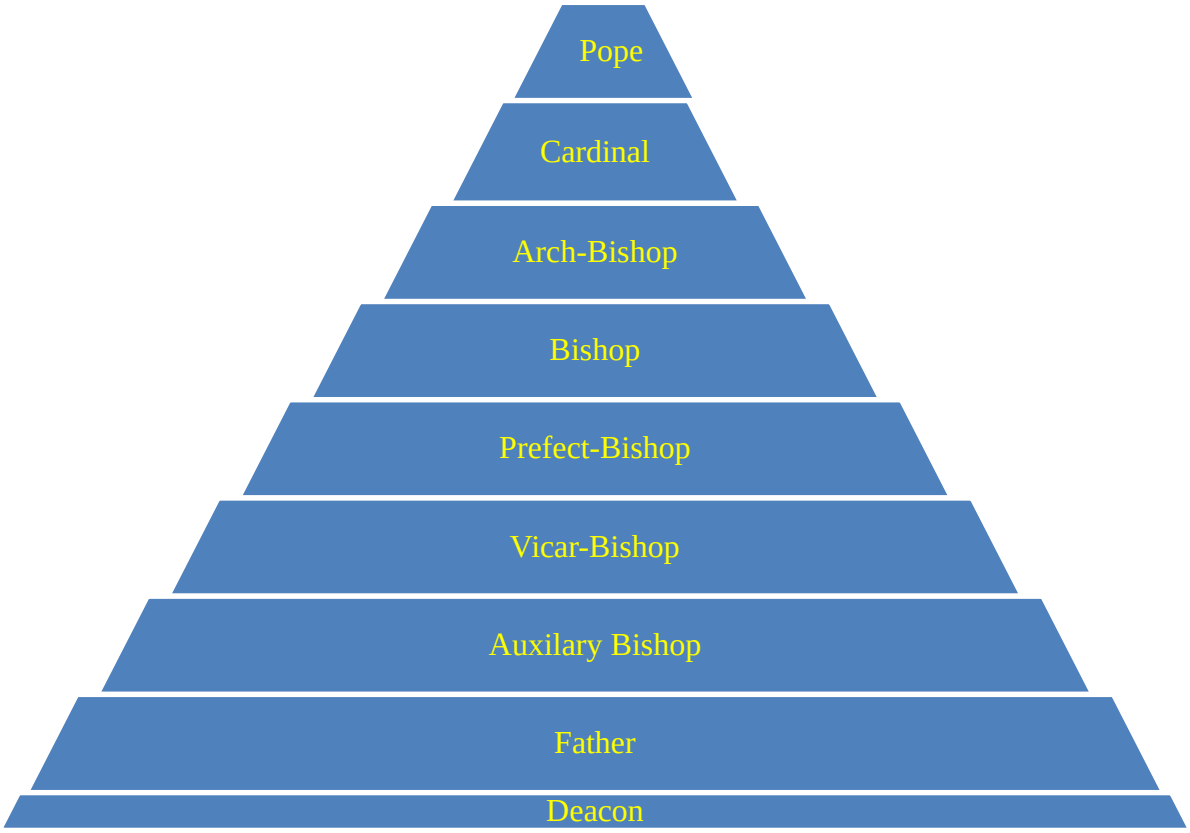


Figure 4.2 The Ecclesiastical Orderlies of Legio Maria.

i. Pope (Holy Father)

ii. Cardinal Dean, Cardinal Vicar, Cardinal Charlemagne

iii. Reverend Arch-Bishop

iv. Right Reverend Bishop

v. Reverend Prefect Bishop

vi. Reverend Vicar Bishop

vii. Reverend Auxiliary Bishop

viii. Reverend Father

ix. Reverend Deacon[368]

Cardinal Dean is the most senior clergy member after the Pope and is the automatic successor to him, working closely with the Pope. Cardinal Charlemagne serves as the administrator and is responsible for transferring all ordained individuals to the Pope. According to Osano, the constitution of Legio Maria has not been reviewed or amended since 1963.[369] It is important to note that the overall leadership of the church, including the Pope, Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, consists entirely of men.

The evidence presented indicates that there are two distinct groups within Legio Maria. The first group is conservative and does not support female leadership beyond the traditional roles assigned to women. They believe leadership should be based not on academic qualifications but on God-given gifts. This group believes that men generally have a better understanding of the Bible than women do. One member, Adwar, emphasised his conservative viewpoint: "It is the Holy Spirit who directs us leaders, whom to choose."[370] The second group, the modern or reformed, advocates for academic qualifications in addition to these gifts. They thus want clergy who can read and write. They have no problem with women leading. One of them, named Onuonga (a pseudonym), underscored his reformist credentials when he asserted: "In the future, there is a possibility of women leading the church. The church cannot survive without women."[371] From the foregoing, Legio Maria has historically had women in top leadership, especially since one of its founders was a woman. In contrast, the reformists are open to women holding top positions, such as those in the clergy.

[368] The Constitution of Legio Maria of African Church Mission no.4, Leaders, 1963.
[369] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[370] Interview of 'Adwar', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 11th May 2024.
[371] Interview of 'Onuonga', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 21st April 2024.

4.3.2.3 The history of RRCHSA Church in Relation to the evolution of women leadership

Interviews with church leaders from the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, along with data from secondary sources, provide insights into the church's history and its approach to women's inclusion. One significant interview was conducted with a senior church leader.

Obulo (a pseudonym), a founding member and high-ranking clergy of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, indicated that the origins of the church can be traced back to the Roho Israel Church, established by Paul Omumbo Kachola in the 1950s near Kisumu. In 1969, Samuel Marcel Onyango Oniala, the founder of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, met Omumbo. Since Omumbo was a businessman with little time to lead the church and was concerned that people might not respect him as a spiritual leader, he appointed Onyango Oniala as the head of the church in the Nyanza region. With financial support from Omumbo, the church expanded rapidly, reaching areas such as Toto-Kosango, Ikoma, and Marongo in Tanzania.[372] Hence, he appointed Onyango Oniala as the head of the church in the Nyanza region. With the financial support from Omumbo, the church expanded fast, even to Toto-Kosango, Ikoma, and Marongo in Tanzania. After Omumbo's death, a succession conflict arose as close family members sought control of the church, prompting Oniala to leave the Roho Israel Church. In 1972, he met Elijah Kinyanjui in Nairobi, who led the Chosen Church of the Holy Spirit. The two worked together until 2000, when Kinyanjui sued Oniala for misappropriation of funds and misuse of church documents.[373] Another perspective on the secession, as shared by a senior clergy member referred to as Donga, highlights the financial tensions between the Kikuyu and Luo members. Kikuyu members often complained that Luo members contributed less in offerings, which led to feelings of belittlement among the Luo. Donga stated, "We wanted a

[372] Interview of 'Obulo', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kamagambo, 18th May 2024.
[373] Ibid.

church that would accept us regardless of our financial status."[374] He further noted, " Kikuyu people are generally more affluent than Luos, so they looked down upon the offerings we gave to the church."[375]

After the court battle, Onyango Oniala founded the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa in 2000. His male contemporaries were Sulman Opiyo, Bishop Tito Allan, Joshua Kasura, Adimo Oloo, and Josiah Obuya. The female church leaders included Syprosa Owade, the wife of Onyango Oniala, as well as Patricia Ogutu, Caren Ajwang, Rose Odundo, and Akinyi Nyakomala. Obulo stated that Onyango Oniala led the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, until his death in 2009. His son, Cardinal Maurice Otunga, was elected by the College of Cardinals as his successor. However, this election was contested by some leaders who believed that the deputy of the Pontiff, Cardinal Michael Adimo Koloo, should take the mantle. This disagreement led to secession, during which Adimo founded the Bethsaida Church, and Cardinal Rachuonyo established Mowar Roho Israel. The exact number of church members is unknown, as there is no clear record, but membership is estimated to be in the thousands, with women representing the majority.[376]

Omae (pen name), a senior official in the RRCHSA spoke on the women's leadership space and thus mentioned that Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa is headed by a Pope assisted by a team of four Cardinals. This church has a Pope as the head, followed by Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Padres and Pastors.[377] On each of these ranks, positions are reserved for women: Mama Pope, Mama Cardinal, Mama Bishop, Mama Padre. Nevertheless, those women's positions do not have much influence on the church's operations. Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit

[374] Interview of 'Donga', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kirengo-Suna Mission, 11th April 2024.
[375] Donga narrating Luo dialect: *Ingeyoni Jo Kikuyu ngeny gi muandu moingo Jo Luo koro negichayo michwa mane wagolone Kanisa*.
[376] Interview of 'Obulo', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kamagambo, 18th May 2024.
[377] Interview of 'Omae', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.

of Africa is headquartered in Kichuri-Kamagambo, Migori County.[378] For effective administration, the church has been divided into dioceses, each comprising ten to eleven churches. According to Omae from the RRCHSA, the constitution (2000) allows women to be elected to any position in the development committee. However, it prohibits women from performing any priestly duties, including stepping onto sacred places such as the altar. [379] The current leaders do not rule out women occupying top pastoral offices in the future, Obulo stated that "The world is dynamic; today women can occupy any leadership position."[380] Obulo listed the following as the ranking of women's leadership positions in the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa. Starting with the highest as follows:[381]

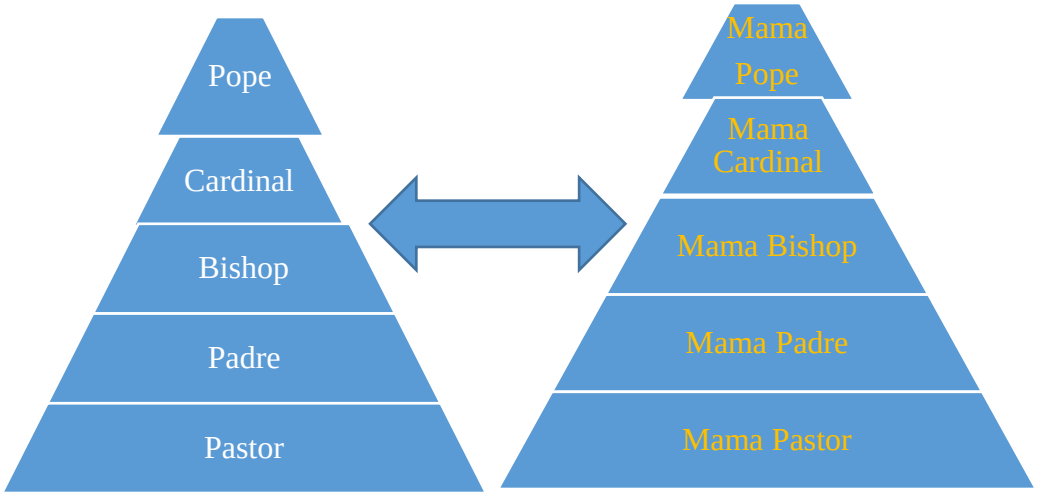


Figure 4.3 The Corresponding pyramidal structure leadership of both men and women in the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa.

i. Mama Pope

ii. Mama Cardinal

iii. Mama Bishop

iv. Mama Padre (senior than pastor)

[378] Interview of 'Omae', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Interview of 'Obulo', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kamagambo, 18th May 2024.
[381] Ibid.

v. Mama Pastor

They are assistant to:

i. Pope

ii. Cardinal

iii. Bishop

iv. Padre

v. Pastor

All individuals in pastoral offices typically have assistants, often their wives. For example, the wife of the Pope inevitably receives the title of "Mama Pope." However, today, women who are not the spouses of pastoral leaders can also be elected to titles such as "Mama Pope," "Mama Cardinal," and others. According to Omae and Donga, their primary role is to assist male leaders in their duties. For instance, they ensure that the clerical garments are well kept and arrange for accommodation and meals during pastoral visits by the Pope or Cardinal.[382] No one is allowed to touch the clerical clothes of the Pope or senior Cardinals, except for the wives or the elected ones, known as Mama Pope or Mama Cardinal. Additionally, they are not permitted to perform pastoral duties, such as baptism, the distribution of the Eucharist, or the celebration of any sacraments.[383] They are allowed to perform some duties. For instance, Mama Padre can only officiate the burial of an infant who has not been baptised, while Padre officiate the burial of baptised Christians.[384]

[382] Interview of 'Donga', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kirengo-Suna Mission, 11th April 2024; Interview of 'Omae', Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.

[383] Interview of 'Omae', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.

[384] Interview of 'Donga', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.

Omae clarifies that Mama Pope, Mama Cardinals, or any other Mother is elected through voting by the Pastorate, which comprises five churches.[385] They are elected based on their spiritual life, must have been in the church for a longer time, and thus understand the church's doctrines. They must be morally upright. An academic qualification is not a requirement. Furthermore, Omae stated that, apart from the Pastoral offices, there is a development committee with a chairperson of any gender, a secretary of any gender, a treasurer of any gender, and two additional members of any gender.[386] Mama Kanisa and Mama Lesson, a female teacher in charge of general cleanliness, must support these officials. Omae describes that regardless of the women's position, they are not allowed to stand on the altar, even when they are preaching.[387]

In brief, within the highest ranks of the RRCHSA, positions are reserved for women, such as Mama Pope, Mama Cardinal, Mama Bishop, and Mama Padre. However, these women hold partial influence over the church's operations and are exempted from performing duties that the church deems as divine priestly responsibilities.

Women have played a role in church leadership at PEFA, although they occupy marginally lower levels than their male counterparts. The 2008 review of the PEFA constitution regarding the role of women in leadership has provided recent constitutional validation for their inclusion, but this change has yet to be fully instigated. Within Legio Maria, there are two distinct groups: the conservatives, who do not support women's leadership beyond traditional roles, and the modern/reformed group, which advocates for academic qualifications alongside spiritual gifts and supports women in leadership positions.

[385] Interview of 'Omae', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.
[386] Interview of 'Omae', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Ogwedhi-homestead, 11th April 2024.
[387] Ibid.

4.3.3 Experiences of women in these three denominations and how their experiences are impacting the leadership of the church

The third objective was to understand the experiences of women in these three churches and examine how those experiences influence the church's leadership. This objective is partially addressed using the quantitative data presented in Table 4.7, as well as qualitative data gathered from interviews and participatory observation.

Table 4.7 *Church of the Respondents * Women in high-level leadership positions in your church Cross-tabulation*

			Women in high-level leadership positions in your church		
			Some	None	Total
Church of the Respondent	PEFA	Count	65	20	85
		% Church of the Respondent	76.5%	23.5%	100.0%
	Legio Maria	Count	79	0	79
		% Church of the Respondent	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	RRCHSA	Count	64	0	64
		% Church of the Respondent	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	208	20	228
		% Church of the Respondent	91.2%	8.8%	100.0%

The results show that for all three churches, PEFA 65 (76.5%), Legio Maria 79 (100.0%) and RRCHSA 64 (100.0%), there were women in what the members considered the highest levels of the church. However, from the previous analysis, it appears that, especially in RRCHSA, those positions are only mostly by name but not positions of highest pastoral or even

administrative responsibility. The subsequent section examines the experiences of women in the three churches.

4.3.3.1 The Experiences of Women in Leadership within the PEFA Church

One of the women interviewed, identified as Deborah (pseudonym), shared her experience. She is between 46 and 50 years old and has been a pastor for 16 years, having been born and raised in the PEFA Church. Her appointment to the position was based on her long-term service in the church rather than her academic qualifications, as she only completed her secondary education. As a pastor, Deborah has empowered many women to take on leadership roles. While she commands respect from her community, some members, particularly the youth and children, feel apprehensive about approaching her. This reluctance, she believes, hinders her effectiveness in her role. She expresses that:

> In my experience, senior male colleagues often seem resistant to being corrected by women. However, my interactions with some senior female colleagues have been positive. I sometimes encounter misunderstandings with female colleagues of the same rank. On the other hand, my relationships with male colleagues of the same rank have been cordial and marked by mutual respect. The senior male colleagues consistently provide moral support and are available whenever I need assistance.[388]

Deborah appears to suggest above that there is some form of mentorship from higher-ranked women and male leaders, but also a sense of competition among women of the same rank. Nonetheless, the interpretation of her experience is that women can make great leaders when given the opportunity. The second woman leader interviewed was Ludia (pseudonym). Ludia's age bracket is between 46 and 50 years. She completed primary school and has been a leader for 22 years. She was appointed to this position because of her commitment to the church. She likes her position as it encourages women to lead. One of the challenges in her position is that many people tend to fear her more than respect her. Her work experience has been positive at all levels, with senior male and female colleagues, and she has always received moral support when

[388] Interview of 'Deborah', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Lwanda-Karungu, 20th February 2024.

needed. She interprets her experience that many women are gifted to lead but shy away, thus leaving men to dominate in leadership positions. She says: "Women's leadership is impactful because when a woman leads, other women become active as members and leaders. It appears as if women's church leadership is transformative."[389]

The third woman church leader called Ruslida (not her real name), a female aged between 51 and 55. She is a form four leaver and has been a pastor for 15 years. She was appointed a pastor due to her commitment to the church. Her experience is that some members and leaders of the church do not respect her as a pastor. She had this to say:

> Some of my female seniors do not trust my leadership, similar to my male colleagues. However, most people have confidence in my leadership, including the church members. My male seniors and colleagues have been very supportive. Being a female pastor requires patience, tolerance, and a compassionate heart, as it comes with numerous challenges.[390]

Again, from Ruslida's assertion and experience, other women's church leaders are less supportive than their male counterparts. This seems to be due to competition and jealousy that may be born from the fact that such positions are hard-fought.

The researcher attended a PEFA church service to support narratives about women and made the following observations:

[389] Interview of 'Ludia', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Mukuro, 27th February 2024.
[390] Interview of 'Ruslida', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa, 2nd March 2024.

Template for Participant Observation

Date of Observation
11/1/2024

Duration of Observation
9:00 am-11:00 pm (2 Hours)

Place of Observation
Nyabisawa PEFA Church

Table 4.8 *Template for Participant's Observation*

Activities	Observation	Interpretation
Responsibilities for women	-Guiding bible study before the main service -Ushering -Collection of offerings -Heading or leading women's ministries, meetings -Keeping records in the Department of Women -Giving reports and announcements	These activities do not require training/high level skills to perform
Responsibilities for men	-Giving sermons or preaching in the main service -Pastoring the church -Leading the cell groups	Required someone who has some biblical/theological training.
Responsibilities for both women and men	-Translation -Ushering -Leading prayers -Leading children's ministry -Leading in praise and worship	
Participation of women in church services/liturgy/church programmes	-Pastoring -Leading praise and worship in the church -Assisting with the distribution of the holy communion -Leading children ministry	Women are being empowered to take influential roles in the church
Women's participation in key decision meetings	-Women are part of the church board of management (The researcher attended a board meeting) -Advisors to the pastor -Can chair a meeting	Gender equality is evidently practiced
Who members tend to listen to more	-Most members tend to listen to both men and women leaders Pastors (Male) (Observed during an impromptu fundraising led by a male leader versus a lady treasure who has been asking to contribute money for the development of the church with little responses	Leaders, regardless of gender, appear to have been accorded equal respect

4.3.3.2 The Experiences of Women in Legio Maria Church Leadership

Some women from the Legio Maria church, including the Mother Superior General and two other women, Orondo and Surmina (pseudonyms) shared their experiences. The Mother Superior General has dedicated over 15 years to the church. With basic academic qualifications and never having been married, she was given to the church by her father when she was a young girl in 1962. She has earned both men's and women's respect, whether lay or ordained. The leadership structure within Legio Maria offers women unique opportunities to utilise their spiritual gifts. The leadership positions established for women during the apostolic council meeting in 1969 have been upheld and cannot be contradicted.

The Mother Superior General noted, "In Legio Maria, everyone knows their place, so there is no conflict in performing duties." Within the Legio Maria Church, women's experiences in leadership appear to be long-standing and largely supportive. Orondo, who has served for over 10 years, suggests that women's leadership in the church is more historically rooted than biblically based. While women draw upon scriptural texts to assert their roles, Orondo believes their leadership is respected because one of the church's founders was a woman believed to have accessed and utilised the power of the Holy Spirit.[391] Another woman leader, Surmina had served the church for over 10 years, but her experience showed a more negative tinge to it. Her own words are expressed that:

> Legio Maria is a church that advocates for the advancement of women's leadership. However, I have realised that what is expressed explicitly is not expressed implicitly. Some male leaders are still steeped in patriarchy and still believe that God only uses men more than women and where women are given leadership positions is because women are many in our churches.[392]

Surmina appears to speak of the aforementioned conservative/reformed divide within the

[391] Interview of 'Orondo', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Chamabare, 15th May 2024.
[392] Interview of 'Surmina', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Amoyo, 21st May 2024.

Legio Maria church, which is still ablaze. It thus seems that overtly, women's inclusion in the Legio Maria Church is extolled and encouraged, but covertly, patriarchy is creeping in.

4.3.3.3 The Experiences of Women in RRCHSA Church Leadership

Certain key interviews were conducted with women church leaders in the RRCHSA. Adoyo (not her real name) is one of the women leaders interviewed; she holds a high leadership position because she is married to one of the key figures in that church. According to Adoyo, since the church's foundation, the top influential positions have been occupied by male clergy.[393] Although this was the position of Mama Pope at the beginning, the position was by default because of her husband's position. The composition of male leaders significantly outweighs that of female leaders. Adoyo further stated that, however, women in all their respective positions have been accorded respect but have been relegated to domestic roles, such as cooking, welcoming visitors, and ensuring that liturgical vestments are clean.[394]

[393] Interview of 'Adoyo', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kikoma, 30th January 2024.
[394] The Participant Observation, Kamagambo/Kirengo-churches, May-June 2024.

Template for Participant's Observation

Date of Observation
1/6/2024

Duration of Observation
8:00 am-1:00 pm (5 Hours)

Place of Observation
RRCHSA-Kamagambo

Table 4.9 *Template for Participant's Observation*

Activities	Observation	Interpretation
Responsibilities for women	-Ushering -Collection of offerings -Heading or leading women's ministries, meetings -Cleaning and maintaining the Kitchen and other kitchen duties -Serving food to the ministers -Leading songs -Leading children in bible study	Assigned menial activities, mostly domesticated ones
Responsibilities for men	-Giving sermons or preaching in the main service -Pastoring the church	Perform influential activities
Responsibilities for both women and men	-Translation -Ushering -Leading prayers -Leading children's ministry -Leading praise and worship	Mainly performed by non-ordained members, thus women leaders fall under this category
Participation of women in church services/liturgy/church programmes	-Bible study when assigned by the church pastor -Assisting the pastor but not at the altar -Leading praise and worship in the church	Sensitive religious activities can be performed by a woman but under the supervision of a male clergy
Who members tend to listen to more	-Most members tend to listen to Pastors (Male) -The church elders (male) The researcher observed this during two separate preachings led by a woman and a man respectively.	The stereotype of male as the sole authority is evidently seen
The attitude of the congregation towards men or women leadership	-The congregation tends to be happy with the leadership of men more than the leadership of women Observed during two meetings, led by both female and male leaders	Women leaders are still "suspiciously" regarded as leaders

One other woman leader named Rebecca (pen name) noted as follows: "One of the difficulties in my position is that it is more ceremonial, so we as women can't make any changes

in the running of the church."[395] So, women's leadership experience at RRCHSA is ceremonial and domestic, and it hinges on marriage to the more influential, priestly male and husband leader.

4.3.4 Arguments used to deter women from full participation in the leadership of the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA

The fourth objective sought to explore arguments used to deter women from full participation in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA. An analysis of the questionnaire and interview results from the three churches show certain explicit and implicit arguments used to deter women from full participation in the leadership of the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership.

From the analysis of the open-ended parts of the questionnaire from church members and the interviews with church leaders, one deterring argument was the implicit argument that men are the 'natural' born leaders while women are not. The argument goes as far as to say the Holy Spirit naturally endows male church leaders to lead, not women. This is implicitly mentioned in PEFA and Legio Maria and, more explicitly, in RRCHSA. Thus, one leader, Odemba (not his real name), said: "The Bible nowhere, I believe, says that a woman should lead the church. Christ, our leader, was not a woman. The disciples whom Christ left to lead were not women. It is that simple."[396]

From the analysis, the biblical mandate for women's inclusion in church leadership is another argument used to deter women from full participation in the leadership of the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA. There is the argument that the bible does not offer a sustainable and adequate reference that supports women's inclusion in leadership, including priestly responsibilities. While PEFA and Legio Maria have a more positive attitude towards the Bible, offering such reference, the women within their ranks are barred from taking up some priestly

[395] Interview of 'Rebecca', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Riana, 18th May 2024.
[396] Interview of 'Odemba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Riana, 18th May 2024.

responsibilities that are thus only reserved for men. RRCHSA, on the other hand, is more restrictive, only having high roles for wives of the male heads.

Further, from the questionnaire analysis, there is an implicit disenfranchisement of women, largely owing to the belief that women are mainly created for domestic responsibilities. As such, leadership opportunities in the highest offices are closed. This feeling permeates the three churches: LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA. Thus, specific equal opportunities to access leadership positions are closed due to traditional feminine roles and heightened patriarchal dominance. Plus, this is done alongside socially constructed roles related to gender roles of homemakers, menstrual circles limiting participation, wife and motherhood. This is why Legio Maria, for instance, has the Holy Superior Mother dedicate the rest of her life to serving the church, thus leaving her husband and family after gaining their agreement. This is also why, based on interview analysis, only women who have consistently led a holy life can be chosen as Holy Mother or Mother. They have to be older because young women who are still at the childbearing age or menstruating cannot be allowed to assume such roles or even be closer to the church premises.[397]

A similar sentiment was shared by 'Mother PO': "*Mine romo gi ruoth koro ok gi nyal sude e mesa achiel gi baba. Mana nyithindo manyiri mapok oromo gi ruoth kod jowuoi kata chuo emanyalo bedo gi telo moro amora e lejoka. Kata seche mamine ongiyo malo ok owinjore gisud machiegni gi Eklesia.*"[398] Translate as women do experience menstruation so they cannot partake in Eucharistic celebration with the father (here implying Ondeto), it is only young girls who have not reached the menstruation stage; boys and men are allowed to hold any leadership position in the Legio Maria. Even during menstruation, women are not allowed near the church.

[397] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[398] Interview of 'Mother PO', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 6th May 2024.

It is also implicitly noted that there is a lack of women's empowerment to fully embrace their God-given leadership responsibilities and capabilities. Women appear to financially depend on men, negatively affecting their capacity and opportunity to lead in the church. Noted interviews have reinforced some arguments to deter women's inclusion in church leadership. Onyango, a leader in the PEFA church, opined: "To me, the key contributor to the low participation of women in leadership is the culturally or even socially viewed role of women staying at home. This has hindered the participation of women in church leadership when it shouldn't."[399] Another male church leader from Legio Maria named Osano stated that:

> In the Church, there is a long-held view that the bible is not overly supportive of women church leaders and that those women leaders in the bible were fewer than men despite them being in the majority. Following that trend, many congregants do not see the need to emphasize women's participation in church leadership strongly. Such an emphasis looks unbiblical. I disagree with it because it is borne out of a wrong reading of the biblical text. And no text denies women their church leadership positions at all.[400]

4.3.5 Ways women's inclusion is impacting the leadership of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church

From the questionnaire analysis from members and interviews with church leaders, the following key aspects arose regarding how women's inclusion impacts the leadership of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church. Women leverage their motherly instincts, which underscore their ability to care for, love, and grow people. One of the church leaders in support of this said:

"Honestly, women are caring and loving just like they deal with their families. God can use those powers to grow churches, and I have experienced that in ministries where women are not involved, tend to lag."[401]

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[399] Interview of 'Onyango', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa, 24th March 2024.
[400] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[401] Interview of 'Onyango', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa, 24th March 2024.

There was also the argument that women in the three churches were transparent and hardworking. Thus, women leaders grow those churches through hard work and transparency. Some mentioned that women are better at evangelisation owing to their friendly spirit. Hence, it appears that women leaders may help spread the word and gain more followers faster than their male counterparts. On the other hand, there appears to be a group of people in all three churches who decry women's leadership, terming it as being steeped in emotions. According to the analysis, members and leaders are making assumptions based on feelings and cultural biases that need to be considered. However, by and large, in PEFA and Legio Maria, more so than in the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, women leaders are considered competent and capable, save for a few misgivings.

From the questionnaires and interviews with leaders across these three denominations, a consistent agreement is that women's inclusion has a positive impact on the church, leading to growth in terms of both numerical and infrastructural development, due to unity and shared responsibilities. From the first FGD group from RRCHSA, two out of the four participants agreed that women have contributed immensely to the development of their church, while in the second FGD, only one out of the four participants supported the idea that women have been in the forefront of development in their church. In the Legio Maria, all four participants in the first group approved of the positive impact of women on their church's infrastructural and spiritual development. However, in the second FGD of Legio Maria, two of the four participants agreed that women had had a positive impact on their church, particularly in the spiritual aspect. Most participants from the FGDs (PEFA) shared a similar sentiment that working together, regardless of gender, has been an asset for the growth of their church; only two participants, one from each FGD, held different opinions.

One of the participants, named Matilda (not her real name) from PEFA, said: "In my church, wherever there is a conflict, it is most likely that a woman has been involved. Thus, their performance as leaders cannot bear much fruit; they are full of jealousy and barely keep secrets."[402] The other participant, named Johnson (not his real name) from PEFA, had an ambivalent stance and stated, "Failing to involve women in influential positions in the church can negatively affect the church's growth, and at the same time, they must be monitored closely."[403]

[402] Focus Group Discussion 'Matilda', [Discussion led by G. Vincent], Masara-Hall,15th March 2024.

[403] Focus Group Discussion 'Johnson', [Discussion led by G. Vincent], Nyabisawa-Church Hall, 22nd March 2024.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction.

This study aimed to conduct a comparative analysis to establish the role of women within the leadership structures of the Legio Maria of the African Church Mission, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, specifically in Migori County, Kenya. The following objectives guided the study: first, to explore the understanding of leaders on the biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in the Church's leadership; second, to survey the history of the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria of African Church Mission concerning the evolution of women leadership; third, to ascertain the experiences of women in these three churches and how their experiences are impacting the leadership of the church; fourth, analysing the arguments used to deter women from full participation in the leadership of the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA; fifth, to explore ways women inclusion is positively impacting the leadership of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church. This chapter discusses the findings, summarises them, and provides conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Discussion

This section presents the discussions of the research findings in relation to the research objectives.

5.2.1 Biblical Teaching on the Inclusion of Women in the Church's Leadership

The following section provides an understanding of church leaders and members regarding biblical teachings on women's inclusion in church leadership and the biblical model of leadership.

5.2.1.1 Understanding of leaders and members of the biblical teaching on the women's inclusion in church leadership

A higher percentage of the participants agree that women should be included in leadership roles as supported by the Bible. In the PEFA church, 96.5% of those interviewed affirmed that the Bible supports the inclusion of Women. In Legio Maria, 100% agreed, while 54.7% of participants from the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa are of the same opinion, as noted in Table 4.6.

As far as understanding biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in church leadership is concerned, most of the members in PEFA and Legio Maria agreed that the bible had stipulations and opportunities for women to be included in church leadership. The Legio Maria church strongly supported the biblical interpretation that endorses women's inclusion in church leadership. Conversely, The RRCHSA has the weakest belief that the bible validates the inclusion of women in church leadership. Further, while the church members from the three churches, PEFA, Legio Maria and RRCHSA, had certain verses to support their claim that women should be included or excluded in church leadership, the verses were not as many as to provide incontrovertible evidence that they were sure that there is biblical foundation for women inclusion in church leadership. Thus, for all three churches, there is a dichotomy between the assertion for or against biblical endorsement of women's inclusion in leadership positions and the provision and elucidation of biblical texts to underscore that understanding.

5.2.1.2 Biblical model of Leadership

In subsection 4.3.1.2, it was noted that there is a biblical model of leadership on matters of women inclusion in church leadership. Additionally, PEFA and Legio Maria churches apply the democratic biblical leadership model. In contrast, the RRCHSA church's leadership model is

autocratic. The democratic leadership model permits the church members to have a participatory role in governing the church, while autocratic centres on the top high-ranking members to control the church's operations. In the case of RRCHSA, the Pope and a group of Cardinals run the church affairs. While the leadership structures of Legio Maria and RRCHSA, as illustrated in Figures 4.2, and 4.3 share similarities, they do not influence each other.

The results resonate with the existing literature, specifically regarding the ongoing debate between complementarian and egalitarian biblical views on women's inclusion in leadership. The results show that PEFA and Legio Maria exhibit a somewhat egalitarian viewpoint, whereas RRCHSA principally affiliates with complementarian beliefs. However, many churches struggle to clearly articulate their biblical understanding of women's roles as presented in Scripture. Literature supporting the complementarian perspective often relies on interpretations of Genesis 1-3, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 2 and 3, Titus 1:5-9, as well as 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. These passages are frequently cited to advocate for male church leadership as the sole biblically mandated form of governance. For complementarians, two key concepts, submission and authority, are central to understanding church leadership. As Piper and Grudem assert, "We are persuaded that the Bible teaches that only men should be pastors and elders. Men should bear primary responsibility for Christ-like leadership and teaching in the church. Therefore, we believe it is unbiblical and detrimental for women to assume this role."[404]

Moreover, complementarian congregations reveal that women’s participation aligns with traditional roles, focusing on serving and nurturing others. Piper and Grudem echo this sentiment: "Not all valuable ministries are public or official. Providing food and support for others is crucial, and this ministry should not be scorned, even if one does not receive public

[404] John Piper, and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* (Illinois: Crossway, 2016), 12.

recognition."[405] This suggests that women's contributions to the church should not be undervalued or dismissed. The complementarian viewpoint is often tied to tradition, as individuals raised in complementarian churches tend to adopt these beliefs without question. When challenged, this contributes to a vigorous defence of the complementarian perspective within such congregations.

In contrast, the egalitarian perspective asserts that men and women possess equal rights and responsibilities in church leadership. One of its prominent advocates, Hans Küng, argues, "The gospel provides enough evidence for women to be assured of their dignity and their rights to participate fully in all areas of church and society, rights that are equal to those of men."[406] Consequently, proponents of egalitarianism also analyse the same biblical passages cited by complementarians, Genesis 1-3, 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 2 and 3, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 and conclude that, when interpreted correctly, these verses do not imply that women are subordinate in church leadership.[407]

Both complementarians and egalitarians base their biblical arguments on the book of Genesis 1 and 2. While complementarians emphasise male headship, egalitarians highlight the equality of Adam and Eve, noting that both were given the responsibility of dominion before the fall. They argue that it is only after the fall that women become subservient to men, a condition they believe God's grace and the crucifixion sought to remedy.[408] Egalitarians also examine the historical roles of women in the Old and New Testaments to identify instances of female leadership, citing examples such as Deborah in Judges 4 and 5, who served as a leader of Israel alongside Barak.

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[405] Piper, and Grudem, eds., Recovering *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 207.

[406] Hans Küng, *Women in Christianity* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2005), 94

[407] Moses I. Ogidis, "Why Must a Woman Be Silent? A Liberative Reading of I Timothy 2: 12 for Gender Equity in Church Leadership in Nigeria," *African Multidisciplinary Journal of Research* 8, no. II (2023): 154-171.

[408] Yende Keletso, "An Exploratory Study of Women Leadership in the South African Charismatic Church Through an African Women Practical Theology Lens" (MTh diss., Stellenbosch University, 2022), 88.

In response, complementarians offer a counterargument regarding the interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2. For instance, Piper and Grudem note, "While Genesis 1 teaches the equality of the sexes as God's image-bearers and co-rulers on earth, Genesis 2 introduces a more complex understanding of biblical manhood and womanhood. The paradox is this: God created male and female in His image equally, yet He appointed the male as the head and the female as the helper."[409]

Further, the above-mentioned results resonate with literature on women and their place in church history. Scholars have argued that the prophetic message underlying the church's place in the world demands equal opportunity for women and men within the church organisation.[410] Some scholars, like Plantak, have further quoted the biblical text Joel 2:28-32, which is reflected in Acts 2:17: "Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, both sons and daughters will prophesy." Some have excluded females from a share in this work because it says, your young men shall see visions. They seem to forget that 'man' and 'men' in the Scriptures generally means both male and female."

Additionally, Casimir argues that Genesis 1:26-27 advocates for the equal recognition and acceptance of men and women as human beings. Thus, they deserve equal opportunities for both self and societal development of human potential.[411] This discourse discusses equal opportunities in the socio-economic, cultural, political and religious domains.[412]

From the argument of the two scholars, one can conclusively contend that biblically, gender equality is deduced from the fact that men and women are equally made in God's image. Genesis 1:26, God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.' Both were

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[409] Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 12.

[410] Zdravko, "Gender Divide."

[411] Casimir, Chukwuelobe, Ugwu, "The Church and Gender Equality in Africa: Questioning Culture and the Theological Paradigm of Women Oppression," 170.

[412] Ibid.

commanded to rule, to exercise power over the earth and all its creation. The image of God illuminates better the impartiality in the creation of both men and women and draws one to recognise the absolute representation of a God figure on earth. Additionally, the image of God highlights not only the equality but also the value of a person. Based on this argument of the image of God, the narrative of men being born natural leaders, as reflected in the findings of this research, becomes questionable.

The role of women in leadership is highlighted by Belleville, who points out that Miriam is recognised as a prophet in Exodus 15:20 and as a leader alongside Aaron and Moses in Numbers 12:1-4. The term "prophetess" is also associated with Deborah, who ruled the Israelites for approximately forty years around 1100 B.C.E. and achieved victory over the Canaanites.[413] Additionally, Rendtorff notes that Huldah, the prophetess, was consulted by both a king and a high priest regarding the newly discovered book of the law (2 Kings 22:14), suggesting her significant authority in religious matters. Queen Esther also serves as a prominent example of female leadership. Belleville argues that these instances demonstrate that women held leadership roles in both political and religious contexts.[414]

In the New Testament, Pierce and Westfall emphasise that the Holy Spirit equally empowers all believers for ministry. Acts 2:17 illustrates that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all people signifies no gender barrier in receiving this empowerment. After being equipped, Christ urged them to "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).[415] Similarly, Rosemary Edet and Bette Ekeya express the view that Christianity fundamentally supports equality, stating that in Christ, there is neither male nor female nor Jew

[413] Ken Spiro, *WordPerfect: The Jewish Impact on Civilization* (Florida: Health Communication Inc., 2020), Chapter Six.

[414] Rolff Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2011), 150.

[415] Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” 27.

nor Greek. They question how the same faith can contradict this principle by relegating women to roles akin to those of children.[416] Despite biblical advocacy for equality, evidence suggests these teachings are often overlooked. This creates a gap between the ideals presented in Scripture and their actual implementation, leading to the normalisation of discrepancies within the church.[417]

The Legio Maria and Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa are Spirit churches, and by their nature, they emphasise the work of the Holy Spirit; thus, the Spirit guides their ministerial activities. The Holy Spirit is non-selective; hence, according to Johnson Kwabena Asamoah, its "non-selectiveness" nature implies that it empowers both males and females equally. Hence, therefore, spirited churches ought to reflect democratic principles in their leadership structures. All members of any Christian denomination are called to serve without considering their gender, as there is no specific gender that is the sole custodian of the Holy Spirit.[418] Kwabena's argument resonates with LaCelle-Petterson. She argues that the basis for believers to participate in the church is the very gift given by the Holy Spirit.[419] Thus, it implies that when gender is used as the basis on which roles in the church are distributed among the believers, it is more a social construct rather than a spiritual construct. The "worldliness" is brought into the spiritual reality.[420] Phillips mentions Lydia of Thyatira as a significant figure in forming the early Church and was instrumental in Paul's mission work (Acts 16:1-5).[421]

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[416] Ronald W. Pierce and Cynthia Long Westfall, Christa L. McKirland, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality, Biblical, Theological, Cultural and Practical Perspectives* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 1.

[417] Pierce, Westfall, McKirland, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality*.

[418] Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Neither Male nor Female: Pentecostalism, Gender and Ministry on Africa,” in *African Christian Theologies and the Impact of the Reformation: Symposion PIASS Rwanda February 18-23, 2016* (Zürich: LitVerlag, 2017), 172-73.

[419] LaCelle-Petterson, *The Church as Egalitarian Liberator*,152.

[420] Ibid.

[421] John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 56-57.

5.2.2 History Survey of Inclusive Leadership in the PEFA, the LMACM, and the RRCHSA

The second objective sought to survey the historical evolution of women's leadership among the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, the PEFA, and the Legio Maria of the African Church Mission.

5.2.2.1 The history of PEFA about the evolution of women's leadership

The primary and the secondary sources used to establish the foundation year of the PEFA church contradict each other. According to an interview conducted, Rioba stated that the foundational year was around 1938, corroborating with Barret and others.[422] Plate 1: The Researcher and Director of Bukuria Bible College is shown on the next page.

[422] Interview of 'Rioba', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Bukuria Bible College, 8th April 2024.



Plate 1: The Researcher and Director of Bukuria Bible College standing in front of the First residence house of the Missionaries in Taranganya (Believed to have been built around 1938)

But other secondary sources, namely, an interview conducted by Watson Omulokoli to Mwatha Samuel (Bishop Emeritus of PEFA)[423] and a magazine of the 1960s reporting on missions/crusade events of Pentecostal/ Charismatic communities worldwide indicate 1945 as the year for the foundation of Bukuria Mission (EMA) church.[424] Mwatha Samuel had worked with PEFA in various capacities as a leader and served as a mission assistant to Paul Johannson, one

[423] Google, "Mwatha-Samuel," accessed 12, May 2024, https: dacb/stories/Kenya/Mwatha-Samuel.

[424] *The Voice of Healings: The Magazine of Deliverance and Worldwide Revival*, April 1960, 8-9.

of the founding members of Suna Mission (1949), from the Elim Missionary Assemblies branch.[425]



Plate 2: The Researcher at the gate of Suna-Mission (Nyabisawa).

The Magazine of Deliverance appears to be one of the first published secondary sources to indicate 1945 as the foundational year of the Bukuria Mission.[426] It is worth noting that PEFA originated from EMA (now known as EF, Elim Fellowship) and IPA (now known as IPCC, International Pentecostal Churches of Christ); Barrett et al. further claim that while EMA established a mission in Bukuria, IPA established a mission in Kaimosi in 1942.[427] Nanjala Matisi concurs with one of the interviewees that the foundation of the Bukuria mission was earlier than 1945; she presupposes that 1945 was the year when Bukuria was registered as the first mission station of Elim Missionary Assemblies.[428] Based on the above reasons, the author

[425] Ibid.
[426] *The Voice of Healings*, April 1960.
[427] Barret, et al., *Kenya Churches Handbook* (1973), 25.
[428] Margaret Nanjala Matisi, "Effect of Leadership Styles in Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa on

judges that 1945 could not be the exact year for the foundation of the Bukuria mission (Elim-based church). Furthermore, EMA preceded IPA in establishing a mission in Western Kenya. Therefore, it is most likely that the Bukuria mission was established between 1938 and 1941 but was officially registered as a church entity in 1945.

The progression of women in the leadership positions of PEFA has not been direct. Nevertheless, women have played a role in church leadership at PEFA, though at a slightly lower level than their male counterparts.



Plate 3: The grave of Edith Knoll (a woman missionary) at Taranganya Mission-Centre

However, owing to the 2008 PEFA constitution review on the place of women in leadership, women's inclusion in church leadership at PEFA has received recent constitutional endorsement but has yet to be fully implemented.

5.2.2.2 The history of Legio Maria in relation to the evolution of women's leadership

Different pieces of literature have employed three distinct names to refer to this Christian denomination. For instance, Dirven, in his unpublished PhD thesis, calls it Maria Legio; Barret

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Growth and Development," *International Journal of Recent Innovation in Academic Research*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2019): 57.

refers to it as "the Legion of Mary Church Maria."[429] Meanwhile, Mwailu, in his unpublished PhD thesis, refers to it as Legio Maria of African Church Mission, simply Legio Maria. According to Mwailu, these are the names that appear at the Kenyan registrar general's office supported by their constitution.[430] Kustenbauder also refer to it as Legio Maria.[431] The findings of this research are consistent with Mwailu's assertion; the name "Legio Maria" of the African Church Mission appears in the copy of the constitution that the researcher accessed.



Plate 4: Photo taken after an interview with the leaders. From left: Pope Lawrence, the Researcher, an Arch-Bishop, Cardinal Dean, a Priest and a Prophet of Legio Maria at *Kalfari*.

[429] David B. Barret, *Schism and Renewal in Africa in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), 11-13.

[430] Daniel M. Mwailu, "Christology in Africa: An Investigation of the Encounter Between Biblical and Indigenous Concepts with Reference to Messianism in Two New Religious Movements in Kenya" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1989), 176-77.

[431] Matthew Kustenbauder, "Believing in the Black Messiah: The Legio Maria Church in an African Landscape," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, volume. 13, issue. 1 (2009): 12.

Legio Maria has historically had women in top leadership, especially since one of its founders was a woman. However, the foundation of Legio Maria is marred by controversial historical facts. There is confusion about the female principal co-founder's identity. According to Moreau and Okombo, it is not as easy as one would expect to know the real female co-principal founder of Legio Maria.[432] A similar sentiment is shared by Mwailu, who states that "Evidence on who founded Legio Maria is split."[433] However, doing justice to such controversies would require a closer examination of different pieces of literature. Dirven's 1970 research does not mention Regina Owich as a female co-principal founder; instead, Gaudencia Aoko is given the role of primary female co-founder.[434] Kustenbauder and Bonnie G. Smith shared a similar claim.[435]

Nevertheless, David Barret, in the early 1970s, mentioned Owich and not Gaudencia Aoko.[436] Moreau and Okombo dispute Barret's version by saying, "By the time Barret wrote his research (early 1970s) Aoko's role as a co-founder was no longer acknowledged, most likely to prevent her gaining prominence over Ondeto."[437] In an interview with Aoko by Nancy Schwartz, Aoko rejected the narrative that she co-founded the Legio Maria.[438] Schwartz's research findings on the female co-principal founder correlate with this research, which show that Gaudencia Aoko was not part of the founding figures. Rather, it was Regina Owich, whom most Legio Maria

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[432] Scott Moreau and James Okombo, "An Introduction to the Legio Maria," *AJET* 10.1 (1991): 11.

[433] Mwailu, "Christology in Africa: An Investigation of the Encounter Between Biblical and Indigenous Concepts with Reference to Messianism in Two New Religious Movements in Kenya," 185.

[434] Peter J. Dirven, "The Maria Legio: The Dynamics of a Breakaway Church among the Luo in East Africa" (PhD Thesis, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Rome, 1970), 122; Peter J. Dirven, "A Protest and a Challenge: The Maria-Legio Breakaway Church in West Kenya," *African Ecclesial Review*, 12, no. 2 (1970): 129.

[435] Bonnie G. Smith, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 120.

[436] Moreau and Okombo, "An Introduction to the Legio Maria," 11.

[437] Ibid.

[438] Phyllis G. Jestice, ed., *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (California: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 61.

members call the "Holy Mother."[439] The title "Holy Mother" is often used by the Legio Maria members when referring to Regina Owich; this disputes Smith, who refers to Gaudencia Aoko as the "Holy Mother."[440] This "co-principal-identity" confusion leads to a provoking question:

5.2.2.3 Contemporary Legio Maria devotees

Devotees were asked why most contemporary Legio Maria devotees recognise Regina Owich as the principal female founder, not Gaudencia Aoko. The view was to seek to know if it could be the consequence of the 1969 fall-out between Aoko and Ondeto. The researcher supposes that the identity confusion of the founders of Legio Maria has been mainly induced by the "historical fallout" between the two key figures: Ondeto and Gaudencia Aoko. The Apostolic council, composed of men, barred women from priestly functions and ordination. It is unclear what prompted the 1969 meeting of the Apostolic Council. Could Aoko's spiritual activities be the main agenda in the meeting which heralded the exclusion of women from priestly duties? Aoko protested and left the Legio Maria. However, Ondeto convinced her to rejoin the church, but this did not give her back her former position. She was appointed Sister General, a position with less authority, and her main task was evangelism.[441] In 1969, the leadership structure of the Legio Maria was male-dominated, and Aoko seemed to be discontent and left the Legio Maria shortly afterwards. However, an oral source indicates that Aoko left on her own volition.[442]

According to Mwailu, the conflict between Ondeto and Aoko may have arisen from Ondeto's claims of supernatural authority, including his self-proclamation as Jesus Christ, which Aoko opposed.[443] Additionally, Ondeto restructured Legio Maria to mirror the Roman Catholic Church's leadership model, which consists exclusively of male clergy, effectively sidelining

[439] Teresia Mbari Hinga, “Women, Power and Liberation in an African Church: A Theological Case Study of the Legio Maria Church in Kenya” (PhD diss., University of Lancaster, 1990), 94.
[440] Smith, "The Oxford Encyclopedia," 120.
[441] John Oywa, “Aoko: A Charismatic but Rebel Prophetess Behind Church Walkout,” *The Standard Newspaper*, 13th January, 2019.
[442] Interview of 'Osano', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 19th April 2024.
[443] Mwailu, “Christology in Africa,” 186

women from positions of leadership.[444] This situation allows for various interpretations regarding Aoko's role; one possibility is that the proposed leadership structure was designed to diminish her authority and that of other women aspiring to top leadership roles within Legio Maria.[445]

The researcher aligns with Mwailu's view that Aoko's demotion stemmed from male dominance, a phenomenon prevalent in many African societies. Mwailu suggests that Ondeto's charisma and his activities within the Roman Catholic Order of Legion of Mary in the Kadem area overshadowed Aoko's visions. However, the researcher contends that Aoko's spiritual endeavours were more pertinent to the social and spiritual landscape of the time, contributing to her popularity and overshadowing Ondeto's authority.[446]

After leaving Legio Maria in 1969, Aoko attempted to establish the Legion of Mary Orthodox Church, but the Kenyan government rejected her application for registration. The following year, she founded the Holy Church of Africa, only to face the same outcome. It wasn't until 1971 that she was permitted to register the Communion Church, where she worshipped until her death on December 23, 2018.[447] The reasons behind the government's rejection of her earlier applications remain unclear, inviting speculation. It is notable that after she departed from Legio Maria, Aoko led a relatively quiet life away from the public eye until her passing. According to Kustenbauder, Aoko's expulsion and the prohibition of women from priestly duties and ordination suggest an ideological and power struggle.[448] However, this claim is not supported by the research findings, which indicate that the reasoning within Legio Maria is more influenced by "women's biological experiences," perceived as rendering them "incapable" of fulfilling active priestly roles.

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[444] Ibid.
[445] Ibid, 187.
[446] Mwailu, “Christology in Africa,” 187.
[447] Ibid, 188.
[448] Ibid, 188.

5.2.2.4 The Foundational Year

Another controversy surrounding the history of Legio Maria is the year of its founding. According to Dirven, who is credited as one of the early researchers, 1963 is considered the foundational year for Legio Maria settlements.[449] A meeting between Ondeto and Aoko in April or May could have been the beginning of Legio Maria.[450] However, the meeting's proceedings remain unclear.[451] For Nancy L. Schwartz, it was founded in 1963. However, Kustenbauder approximates the year to be between 1962 and 1963.[452] Mutahi G. Ngunyi contends that the 1950s were the year of the foundation.[453] At the same time, Bruno Becchio and Johannes P. Shade do not provide the exact year, but place it within the context of the 1960s.[454] In Mwailu's research, Ondeto claimed to have founded Legio Maria as early as 1946, but was possibly waiting for the "right time."[455] Presumably, Kenyan Independence was an event that changed the political landscape of Kenya and the religious landscape. The information provided by Dirven, Schwartz, and Mwailu on the foundational year of Legio Maria is consistent with the findings of this research, which states that Legio Maria was founded in 1963, although the exact month varies.

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[449] Dirven, "The Maria Legio," 125-27.
[450] Ibid.
[451] Ibid.
[452] Kustenbauder, "Believing in the Black Messiah," 12.
[453] Mutahi G. Ngunyi, "Religious Institutions and Political Liberalisation in Kenya in Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya," in *Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya*, ed. Peter Gibbon (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995), 143.
[454] Bruno Becchio and Johannes P. Shade, *Encyclopedia of World Religions* (New Jersey: Concord Publishing, Foreign Media Books, 2006), 112.
[455] Mwailu, "Christology in Africa," 187.

5.2.2.3 The history of RRCHSA in relation to the evolution of women's leadership



Plate 5: The researcher interviewed some leaders of RRCHSA. On the left is the Pope, Senior Archbishop and a founding member.

The historical foundation of RRCHSA is still fused, perhaps because there has not. During the meantime, intensive research has been done on this church. However, there is a little discrepancy in the narrative for the cause of the separation between Oniala and Kinyanjui. One narrative mentions two causes: the misuse of the license and the misappropriation of finances. The other narrative is the complaint raised by Kikuyu members about the little offerings from Luo-based churches under Oniala.

Nevertheless, the convergence of the two narratives can be inferred from the fact that one of the main causes of the separation revolved around monetary issues. From the foregoing, on each of the top RRCHSA ranks, positions are reserved for women, such as Mama Pope, Mama Cardinal, Mama Bishop, and Mama Padre. Nevertheless, those women's positions do not influence the church's operations much, and they are exempted from doing what the church considers divine priestly duties. The researcher reasons that the so-described acceptance of women to the non-influential positions in the RRCHSA is merely facade to the relevancy of the

contemporary narrative of women empowerment. Nevertheless, the actual authority lies in the hands of the ordained male leaders; an enclosed power system exists that fosters patronage and dependency on these male leaders.

The results presented above align with the findings from the reviewed literature. This is to the extent that most women leaders in the past never engaged any of their critics in answering their role as women in the church.[456] The individuals responsible for this were the men within the women's ranks, who argued that the prophetic message underlying the church's place in the world demanded equal opportunities for women and men within the church organisation. James White, for instance, quoted the biblical text Joel 2 verses 28-32, which says, 'Under the influence of the Holy Spirit both sons and daughters will prophesy. Some have excluded females from a share in this work because it says, 'Your young men shall see visions.' They seem to forget that 'man' and 'men' in the Scriptures generally mean both male and female.[457]

The historical aspects of women's inclusion in the churches fill a significant research gap. Remember, existing literature often focuses on the broader history of these organisations, with limited attention to gender dynamics, women's leadership, and their changing roles within these institutions. Comprehensive historical documentation on gender roles and women's leadership positions within these organisations is lacking, making it challenging to trace shifts in gender dynamics over time. Many historical accounts rely on external perspectives, potentially overlooking local narratives and the voices of women within these organisations. The literature lacks comparative studies that assess how these organisations' historical trajectories influence their current gender and leadership dynamics. Among the Legio Maria, the decision by the

[456] Hannelie J. Wood, "Gender Inequality: The Problem of Harmful, Patriarchal, Traditional and Cultural Gender Practices in the Church," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 46.
[457] Zdravko, "Gender Divide," 88.

Apostolic Council to ban women from priestly duties controverted the principle of spiritual egalitarianism.[458]

Spencer asserts that spiritual egalitarianism believes in the mutual gifting of women and men; all Christians share the same spiritual status. Thus, it is an aspect of leadership which includes both men and women, Gentiles and Jews, rich and poor, enslaved people and free. A reciprocal service that is offered to all in ministry for the sake of Christ is hinged on the principle of mutual service and equal partnership.[459] Thus, such partnerships must involve men and women, for all are equal in their spiritual position in Christ, an equality that makes them have equal roles in the church and society.[460] Therefore, gender should not be used as a yardstick to limit one from exercising leadership roles. There is a correlation between discrimination in the aspect of human rights and discrimination in spiritual affairs. Grenz and Kjesbo maintain that every human has the right to spiritual freedom, the right to know God, the right to act on that knowledge, and the right to serve God according to the vocation He has bestowed on an individual.[461] Therefore, it is apparent that when one is denied or limited in serving in the church's leadership, it amounts to restricting a person's spiritual and human rights.

5.2.3 The Experiences of Women in Church Leadership

The third objective aimed to explore women's experiences in these three churches and how those experiences impact the church's leadership. The results in Table 4.7 show that the participants considered women to be in high-level positions as follows: 76.5% for PEFA church, and 100% for both Legio Maria and RRCHSA.

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[458] Kgatle, "A Remarkable Woman in African Independent Churches," 4.

[459] Aida Besancon Spencer, William David Spencer, *Christian Egalitarian Leadership: Empowering the Whole Church According to the Scriptures* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 4.

[460] James B. De Young, *Women in Ministry: Neither Egalitarian nor Complementary: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010), x.

[461] Stanley J. Grenz, and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1995), 11-12.

Women's experience in PEFA is largely positive. Overtly, women's inclusion in the Legio Maria Church is extolled and encouraged, and their role is essential as it is believed that its root is from the role of the Holy Mary Mother of Christ, but covertly, patriarchy has crept in. In RRCHSA, women are involved in the lower ranks, and their experience is that of subordination. The composition of male leaders significantly outweighs that of female leaders. Thus, in the RRCHSA, women's leadership experience at RRCHSA is ceremonial, presupposing a restricted application of authority in concrete decision-making and sacramental settings, and is domestic and hinged on marriage to the more influential and thus priestly male and husband leader. Since authority is male-dominated, women mainly have access to leadership when their husbands occupy positions in the hierarchy of the Church. However, they are delegated positions strictly supervised by their husbands or experienced male ordained pastors. This presupposes these women have blurred identities as leaders; their husbands' positions affirm their leadership; for example, the title of *Mama Pope* is only recognised because of the office of Papacy.

The results above support existing literature; in some cases, they contrast with established frameworks. Scott conducted a quantitative study to explore the experiences of women leaders in church organisations, specifically within the Presbyterian Church.[462] The study revealed a notable disconnect in how women leaders are perceived compared to the concept of an ideal leader. Women leaders are often viewed with partiality by clergy and laity compared to their male counterparts. As a result, it is rare for church members to assume that a woman leader can exemplify the merits of an ideal leader. These findings support the role incongruity theory described earlier in this study. It also further supports the argument that because members have

[462] Halee Scott, "Perceptions of Christian Women Leaders in Church-Related Organisations," *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 1 (2014): 52-70.

an underlying bias against women leaders, women leaders find it difficult to participate fully in leadership positions in the church.[463]

A qualitative study by Smarr et al. examines the experiences and perceptions of Black clergywomen in the United States.[464] The study revealed that male clergy remained skeptical about increasing female participation in leadership roles, unveiling undesirable attitudes despite numerous biblical references that support women's inclusion. This indicates that the negative attitudes held by men towards women's leadership are not ingrained in their interpretation of the Bible but rather stem from cultural and societal influences. Conversely, the women clergy demonstrated greater resilience in the face of this negativity and suspicion, which made them more inclined to engage positively.[465]

Moon assessed the inclusion of women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Korea.[466] He discovered that the membership and leadership were very amenable to including women in leadership roles. The primary barrier preventing women from attaining these positions was not negative attitudes or restrictive policies, but rather a lack of equal opportunities. These stakeholders did not show gender bias; they believed that qualifications and ability, rather than gender, should determine leadership positions. However, numerous studies within the African context have mainly revealed negative perceptions of women's leadership roles in churches.

Research conducted by Ikhane, Wanja, Swart, and Efuntade reveals a demoralising perspective among church members that female leadership is considered inferior to male leadership. Many perceive women as playing supportive roles rather than as essential leaders, filling vacancies created by the absence of males. While some advocate for women's inclusion in

[463] Scott, "Perceptions of Christian Women Leaders."

[464] Kimberly Nelms Smarr, Rachelle Disbennett-Lee, and Amy Cooper Hakim, "Gender and Race in Ministry Leadership: Experiences of Black Clergywomen," *Religions* 9, no. 12 (2018): 377.

[465] Ibid.

[466] Injong Moon, "A Process of Critical Contextualization to Deal with the Issue of Women in Leadership in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Korea" (Doctoral diss., St. Andrews University, 2011), 77.

leadership positions, considerable resistance persists, particularly within African churches, where rooted cultural norms create barriers. Additionally, biblical texts commonly alluded to restricting women's participation often serve more as justifications than as foundational doctrines. It is indispensable to confront these antiquated perceptions and recognise that women can significantly contribute to the progression of the church's mission. [467]

Additionally, the research conducted by Edith Chemorion on the Reformed Church of East Africa finds that women leaders are still viewed with scepticism. Even though its constitution on ministry is derived from the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, an ordained woman must accede to work under an experienced male pastor.[468] Adams Jimi, and Sullins Donald agree with Chemorion's observation that there is inconsistency among some Christian denominations that have accepted female leadership based on what their constitutions say, actual practice, and opportunities provided to women.[469] Such experiences are some of the dilemmas that women face, which subsequently affect their performance. [470]

According to Asamoah, women's leadership in the church began to decline in the fourth century due to the centralization of the church hierarchy.[471] Daniel Kasomo contends that the church is more cautious when delegating responsibilities to men and women in the church. Compared to the secular world, the Church has remained rigid in offering women more opportunities to serve in various pastoral ministries.[472] Lesly Massey argues that most churches outwardly seem to operate within the biblical paradigm that supports women's inclusion in

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[467] Ikhane, “Theological Education of Seventh-Day Adventist,” Wanja, “Compliance with Gender Equality Laws in Leadership,”; Swart, “The Seventh-Day Adventist Church.”

[468] Edith Khakasa Chemorion, *Collaborative of Women’s and Men’s Leadership: From Hegemony to Partnership* (Meadville, PA: Christian Faith Publishing), 4-5.

[469] Adams Jimi, “Stained Glass Makes the Ceiling Visible: Organisation Opposition to Women in Congregational Leadership,” *Gender and Society* 21, 1 (2007): 80.

[470] Jimi, “Stained Glass Makes the Ceiling Visible," 80; Donald Sullins Paul, "The Stained-Glass Ceiling: Career Attainment for Women Clergy,” *Sociology of Religion* 61, 3 (2000), 243.

[471]Asamoah-Gyadu, “Neither Male nor Female,” 48-49.

[472] Kasomo, “The Role of Women in the Church in Africa,” 130.

leadership.[473] However, the reality is marred with superficial change, a patronising token to pacify women without compromising traditional doctrines. Patrick Wachege claims that "History has it that the Church too cannot be absolved from the evils of inflicting lamentable injustices on Women; this has been happening through its hierarchical structures, which are predominantly and essentially male."[474] When a woman is either the sole founder or co-founder, women tend to take backstage and put men in charge. The argument of Njeri Mwaura resonates with the findings of this research that the foundational narrative of Legio Maria is that Regina Owich is the owner, but instead of Regina leading the church, her son Ondeto is the leader. Although Mwaura contends that such tendencies are intentionally devised to avoid traditional male resistance to women's leadership, in the Legio Maria the event is spiritualised; the Holy Mother giving him a mandate to lead, became the source of his revelation as the son of God.

Plate 6: On the left are two Mothers, and on the right is the Researcher and an Arch-Bishop discussing the role/experiences of women in Legio Maria.

[473] Lesley F. Massey, *Women in the Church: Moving Toward Equality* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), 5.

[474] Patrick N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), 93.

Mwaura further contends that most Christian denominations do not elevate women founders to the level of male founders.[475] Similarly, Ndeda points out that the duration of recognition accorded to female founders depends on the duration of their mystical powers.[476] However, in the interviews of Legio Maria leaders and through participant observation, Regina Owich (Holy Mother) is highly revered as the church's foundress. A similar admiration for women leaders is evident within PEFA and less so in RRCHSA, whereby founding women figures are hardly mentioned in the foundation narratives of their church. Jules-Rosette argues that women are often offered limited spaces to exercise various forms of leadership.[477] This is relatable with the result of this research that at the initial stages of the foundation of PEFA, women were more involved in organisations, such as women ministries/conferences and not ordained ministries as it is today.

The RRCHSA is an African found-church, but it is still less influenced by contemporary philosophy, an "Africanized" view about inclusive leadership that advocates for equality through the philosophy of Ubuntu. Ian A. Nell holds that the position of women in the church has been problematic. However, when one employs the concept of *Ubuntu* into African ecclesiastical leadership, it changes the perception of many in regard to women's leadership in the church.[478] Nell claims that the concept of *Ubuntu* and leadership emphasize shared humanity.[479] In the

[475] Philomena Njeri Mwaura, "Gender and Power in the African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches," in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005), 425-429.

[476] Mildred A.J. Ndeda, "Nomiya Luo Church: A Gender Analysis of the Dynamics of an African Independent church among the Luo of Siaya District in the Twentieth Century and Beyond," *Missonalia*, vol. 31, no. 2, (2003), 239-277.

[477] Benette Jules-Rosette, "Women as Ceremonial Leaders in an African Church: The Apostles of John Maranke," in *New Religions*, ed. B. Jules-Rosette (Norwood: Ablex, 1979), 130.

[478] Ian A. Nell, "Ubuntu and Leadership: Some Practical Theological Perspectives," *Scriptura* 116 (2017:1), 1.

[479] Ibid.

philosophy of *Ubuntu*, a person is identified primarily within his/her community; thus, a person who fails to participate in the community's life loses a sense of belonging.[480]

The researcher opines that the church is a community on its terms; thus, it is equally important for members to participate in all its activities without limitations, and any member who does not participate in its activities loses his/her membership. On the other hand, within many African communal systems, there is an emphasis on collective leadership, which does not rule out its hierarchical nature; however, within a group, all people are involved in leadership at different levels. The results of this objective reverberate with the argument of Isabel Phiri that in many African societies, women are still perceived through the lenses of functionalism; they are mothers and wives.[481] Further, such perceptions are not only confined to the secular community but are gradually being reflected within African ecclesiology.

5.2.4 Arguments for the Exclusion of Women in the Church's Leadership

The fourth objective was to analyse the arguments used to deter women from full participation in the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA leadership.

One deterring argument was the implicit argument that men are the "natural" born leaders and women are not. The biblical mandate for women's inclusion in church leadership is the other argument used to deter women from full participation in the leadership of the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA. There is the argument that the bible does not offer a sustainable and adequate reference that supports women's inclusion in leadership, including priestly responsibilities. There is an implicit disenfranchisement of women largely owing to the belief that women are mainly created for domestic responsibilities. Thus, certain equal opportunities to

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[480] Ibid, 2.

[481] Isabel A. Phiri, "Doing Theology as African Woman," in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, ed. John Parrat (London: SPCK, 19979), 45.

access leadership positions are closed due to traditional feminine roles and heightened patriarchal dominance. Plus, this is done alongside socially constructed roles related to gender roles of homemaker, menstrual circles limiting participation, wife and motherhood. The Legio Maria and RRCHSA emphasize menstruation as one of the main hindrances for women from performing sacred duties. These churches equally legitimize this practice biblically by referring to the Levitical Law but with an element of a traditional Luo taboo, which similarly barred women from "defiling" the sacred places. It is also implicitly noted that the lack of women's empowerment has led most women not to embrace their God-given leadership responsibilities and capabilities fully.

The results agree with literature related to arguments against or for women's inclusion. For instance, closer scrutiny of scholarly articles and works around women's inclusion in church leadership reveals that biblical interpretation constitutes one of the key contributors or arguments to either low or high levels of women's inclusion. Studies done extensively by Dube, Kim, and Plantak show that churches have relied on Pauline texts from 1st Corinthians and 1st Timothy to stifle women from church leadership.[482] Further, where a friendly interpretation is conducted on these texts alongside the patriarchal interpretation of the Old Testament texts, the role of women in leadership has taken the form of the supporting cast and not the main cast, the latter being reserved for the male church leaders. [483]

There are also the socially constructed responsibilities of women, which contribute to women's inclusion in leadership positions in the church. Studies have shown that women leaders are socially expected to be mothers and wives more than they are expected to be church

[482] Musa W. Dube, *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2001), 67; Kim, Eun-Young Julia, "When Women Reject Women's Ordination: Reframing and Semanticizing in the Speeches of Two Female Seventh-Day Adventists," *Feminist Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 33-47; Zdravko, "Gender Divide: The Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," in *The Silent Church: Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 92-121.

[483] Dube, *Other Ways of Reading*; Eun-Young Julia. "When Women Reject Women's Ordination"; Zdravko. "Gender Divide."

leaders.[484] If women take up church leadership positions and are committed to them, it is viewed more as a dereliction of their motherly or wifely duties than a step up in their leadership commitment. Further, Bumgardener looked at the staying power of women pastors in the USA.[485] The important contributor to the inclusion of women in church leadership was the presence of women mentors who showed the way. Clearly, from this, it seems that women across the globe require pacesetters and shining lights along the way who are like them and who represent the best out of leadership.

Harmful patriarchal norms and persistent gender stereotypes are key contributors to the level of women's participation in church leadership in Africa. Wood examines the extent of women's participation in church leadership in churches in Africa.[486] The churches are strewn across various key denominations. The study notes that notwithstanding the biblical understanding of the church regarding the place of women, many churches often resort to patriarchal values and traditional societal structures, which can limit the progress of women in their roles as leaders in the church. Women in these churches have thus been forced to renegotiate their roles and identities, often to the detriment of their spiritual growth. Wood argues that the church must proactively confront the gender inequalities within its ranks and come up with practicable solutions because improving women's participation is essential for the church's growth.[487] The cultural inclinations that deny women their rightful leadership positions are also mentioned extensively by Chinyamurindi and Rashe, but who also add that these cultural

[484] Abraham O. Wentum, "An Exploration of Women Experiences in Leadership Positions within African Immigrant Churches in the United States" (PhD diss., Walden University, 2020), 50.

[485] Bumgardner, Leslie, "Adventist Women Clergy: Their Call and Experience," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 9, no. 2 (2015): 40-53.

[486] Wood, "Gender inequality: The problem of harmful, patriarchal, traditional and cultural gender practices in the church," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019):1-8. https://doi.org/10.4102.hts.v75i1.5177.

[487] Wood, "Gender inequality."

inclinations have unfortunately been syncretized into biblical interpretation to the extent that they are presented as biblically binding.[488]

Within the Kenyan context, Gano examined the participation of SDA women in economic empowerment activities in Malindi, Kenya.[489] The study found a low level of inclusion for women, which was attributed to a lack of empowerment, a culture that subjugates women, and an economic dependency on men that essentially devalues women while elevating men. Additionally, Ositu researched the effects of Gusii culture (a tribe in Kenya) on women's participation in that region. This study revealed that cultural norms have been used to disempower women from taking on leadership roles within the church.[490]

Also, the results above agree with the complementarianism and egalitarianism debate. Stanley J. Grenz identifies two groups of thoughts on the subject matter: complementarianism and egalitarianism.[491] Complementarianism argues that restricting women's leadership is rooted in theological interpretations of biblical texts, suggesting that men and women have distinct roles in church and family life. The proponents of complementarianism maintain that women's leadership should be limited based on perceived gender-specific roles.[492] At the same time, egalitarianism perspectives challenge the traditional interpretation of scriptures and advocate for equal leadership opportunities for men and women. These arguments emphasise the equality of all believers in Christ and their capacity to serve in leadership roles.[493] Besides

[488] Chinyamurindi, Willie, and Reuben Rashe, "Called to the Ministry: Narratives of Career Choice Amongst Female Pastors in South Africa," *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 47, no. 1 (2021): 1-10.

[489] Agnes Kadzo Gona, "Factors accountable for Women's Economic Dependence in Malindi District of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Kenya" (PhD diss., Adventist University of Africa, School of Postgraduate Studies, 2014).

[490] Mary Ositu Nyarangi, "Gusii Culture and the Relationship of Women in the Church: A Case Study on Seventh-Day Adventist church in Kisii County-Kenya" (PhD diss., Kenya Methodist University, 2013).

[491] Stanley. J Grenz, "Anticipating God's New Community: Theological Foundations for Women in Ministry," *JETS* 38/4 (December 1995): 595.

[492] Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Oregon: Multnomah, 2012), 60.

[493] Johnson, A. J., "Women, Creation, and the Fall: The Egalitarian Interpretation Revisited," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 52(1), (2009): 31-56.

complementarianism and egalitarianism, some argue within the continuum of patriarchal traditions whereby cultural norms and historical patriarchal structures shape arguments against women's leadership.

These traditions often view women's leadership as contrary to established gender roles. The restriction of women from the hierarchy of the church could reinforce the argument that the term hierarchy has been historically "patriarcharised" to portend maleness.[494] Thus, limiting the perception of hierarchy as an office open to all the faithful, hierarchical structures cannot be confined to a particular gender.[495] A mainly close examination of the duties and responsibilities assigned to women reveals that their work is predominantly confined to the lower ranks of the church; their presence and services are essential to the church, but they are not expected to advance or take on higher leadership roles. It is arguable that the framework by which the Church still perceives women through the lens of tradition and culture, assigning duties and responsibilities, ought to reflect an individual's ability, talents, and gifts.

5.2.5 Ways Women's Inclusion is Impacting the Legio Maria, PEFA, and Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa

The fifth objective was to explore ways women's leadership is impacting the inclusion and growth of the Legio Maria, the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the PEFA church.

It is evident in subsection 4.3.5 that most women leverage their maternal instincts, which underscore their ability to care for, love, and inspire growth in those around them. There was also

[494] George W. Forell, ed., *Christian Social Teaching: A Reader in Christian Social Ethics from the Bible to the Present* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 299.

the argument that women in the three churches were transparent and hardworking. Some mentioned that women are better at evangelisation owing to their friendly spirit. Confining the participation of women in the church hinders the church's growth and development, as skills and talents remain unexploited and undeveloped. Similarly, decisions made in boards or committees where women are not represented may not sufficiently address women's needs, interests, or aspirations.

This research finds that inclusive leadership leads to spiritual, numerical, and infrastructural development regardless of their gender, are given space to perform according to their abilities unreservedly. Canningham asserts that when members are assigned proactive roles in the church without any discrimination, it fosters the overall growth and development of the church.[496]

Through participant observation, the researcher observed that the ways women are impacting their respective churches in the RRCHSA, PEFA, and Legio Maria can be better summarised within the fivefold ministry, as reflected in Ephesians 4:11, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers." More ministries are again identified in 1 Corinthians 12:28; God placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then the gift of healing, helping, guidance, and different kinds of tongues. According to Grant Osborne, the fivefold ministry underscores that despite the variety of gifts that Christ has given to the believers, these gifts are effective when they complement each other.[497] The nature of these ministries is that they are endowed to individuals by the Holy Spirit. Thus, no specific denomination or an individual/s can claim to give them out and have no pastoral ascendency. Matthew Green affirms that these ministries are not positions of authority

[496] Mick Canningham, "Parental Influences on the gender division of housework," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 66, issue. 2 (2001): 184.

[497] Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 86-87.

and power but one effective service that equips the body of Christ to grow in maturity and fulfil the great commission.[498]

The apostles and prophets form the basis of the church; the office of apostleship is not limited to the twelve appointees of Christ, but extends to those whom Christ has designated to lead His church. The role of the apostles is still active, and it has been taken by missionaries of today who traverse the world, spreading the good news of Christ [499] The role of prophets is to direct the church and remind the believers about their responsibilities before God and to their fellow human beings. The role of the prophetess is active in the Legio Maria; the researcher observed this during the *Praesidium*; before "the Flag Prayer."



Plate 7: The Researcher participates in the prayer of the flag after *Praesidium*.

[498] Matthew D. Green, “Introduction,” in *Understanding the Fivefold Ministry*, ed. Matthew D. Green (Florida: Charisma House, 2005), 1-2.

[499] Osborne, *Ephesians*, 86-87.

The Flag prayer (*Lemo mar bendera*) is the concluding procession of the *presidium* conducted outside the Marian shrine. A woman in the rank of Mother whom the spirits have filled, the body, especially the upper part, vigorously shakes. At the same time, she converses with spiritual figures in a guttural, scary voice, and names such as *Melkio, Atila, Mama Maria, Gabriel, and Rafael* are mentioned. *Melkio* (Ondeto) and *Atila* were former Popes. The spirit-filled mother, still in a trance-like state, conveys a message about what has been hailing the church, commenting on the church's doctrines and the foreseen plans of the church's enemies, as well as how to prevent such attacks. On that day of the *Praesidium*, the message was about a warning for the clergy and spiritually gifted members who were exhorting money from those who sought their help.



Plate 9: Inside the Shrine where *Praesidium* is conducted

Another message was the inevitable spiritual warfare between the Legio Maria and the Repentance and Holiness church of Prophet David Owuor. The spiritual warfare was prophesised to happen in September 2024 at the annual spiritual gathering of all Legio Maria adherents at *Kalfari*. Thus, the adherents are instructed to wear unique religious paraphernalia to identify the actual Legio Maria members and intruders. In an interview with the current Pope of Legio Maria, it is evident that the prophetic ministry stretches to the ambit of Kenya's local and national politics. Through his narration, the connection between the two realms has existed since the foundation of the church, as affirmed by Mutahi Ngunyi, who contends that the political success of Oginga Odinga and his son, Raila, as well as other political leaders, has always been linked to the spiritual guidance of Legio Maria leaders.[500]

In RRCHSA, the ministry of prophets exists, and both men and women are allowed to exercise this gift, which is comparable to the Legio Maria, but it is not so profound. Nevertheless, PEFA is a ministry that is not active. Green supposes that the gift of evangelism is considered one of the core pastoral activities essential to the church's numerical growth.[501] Osborne maintains that the role of the evangelists is to spread the gospel to win people for Christ.[502] Adeney argues in a similar vein that evangelism is the mode by which Jesus' command in Mark 16:15 is fulfilled: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'[503] Many of the interviewees across these denominations affirm that they joined the church after listening to somebody sharing the word of God with them. The researcher observed that evangelism is one of the less strict ministries in all three of these churches. It is a ministry open to all believers, regardless of gender, age, or educational background. However, the approach to evangelism

[500] George Mutahi Ngunyi, "Religious Institutions, and Political Liberalisation in Kenya," in *Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995), 162.
[501] Green, "Introduction," 1.
[502] Osborne, *Ephesians*, 87.
[503] Frances S. Adeney, *Graceful Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2010), xi.

differs in Legio Maria; they hardly organise crusades or conduct door-to-door pastoral visits. Their approach is what can be termed as silent evangelism; their way of living a spiritual life becomes the mode of evangelisation; this is relatable to Paul's model of evangelisation, where he instructs Christians to live their daily lives as a witness to the love of God.[504]

The office ministry of pastors is to take care of those who have been won for Christ. This ministry exists in the Legio Maria RRCHSA and PEFA. In Legio Maria, it is held by male Priests; similar to the RRCHSA, it is a reserve for males; nevertheless, in PEFA, it is a ministry that involves both ordained men and women. Although these individuals are now part of the flock of Christ, they require guidance in deeper teachings, which reveal the truth about Christ; this is the role of teachers.[505] It is a ministry in RRCHSA headed by a woman named Mama L*esson*; in Legio Maria, they are called *Japuonj dini*, and in PEFA, a Sunday school teacher can be either a woman or a man. Although they are free to exercise their ministry in RRCHSA, they cannot teach while standing on *the Sinagogi* (the altar) *Sinagogi* is a sacred place and women, regardless of their position in the church, are prohibited from stepping on it.

Nevertheless, the impact that women play in this ministry could be observed across these churches in the stature and maturity in matters of faith among the children and young adult members. Another indicator of growth can be observed in the surrounding communities where these churches are located. The practical aspect of matters of faith is reflected in the community, for example, through frequent meetings of Bible-sharing cell groups, commonly referred to as *Kidieny*.

The ministry of healing and deliverance is more pronounced in the Legio Maria and RRCHSA than in PEFA. In the Legio Maria, it is a ministry that is as old as the church's

[504] Adeney, *Graceful Evangelism*, xi.
[505] Osborne, *Ephesians*, 87.

foundation. In the history of Legio Maria, one of the main reasons for its secession from the Roman Catholic church was its emphasis on the pneumatic and charismatic nature,[506] which was majorly demonstrated in the power of healing and deliverance. The story of Gaudencia Aoko's leadership evolved through prophetic and deliverance ministry; her fame rose from the power to deliver people from witchcraft practices and sorcery, which had become a menace in the Luo community.[507] Contemporarily, one of the witchcraft practices that is common is evil eye witchcraft, known as in the Luo dialect, *juog wang*; it is believed that a witch bewitches a person with food while eating, it causes severe stomach pain, diarrhoea and if not treated with a traditional concoction at the right time can be fatal. Those who are involved in this kind of witchcraft are primarily young women who are believed to have contacted witch doctors for love charms but are instead duped into witchcraft. According to Kakwata, it is voluntary witchcraft; an individual makes a personal decision to be involved in witchcraft practices.[508]

Members of the Luo community believe that it is one of the forms of witchcraft that is nearly impossible to treat as it cannot be reversed; it requires a strong spiritual healing/deliverance. It is a ministry open to all members of Legio Maria, adherents from children to adults, regardless of gender, and those who are spiritually gifted. However, infertility, miscarriages and *juog wang* cases are mainly handled by women prophetesses-healers.[509] The other illnesses include chronic diseases such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, mental disorders, and all kinds of witchcraft-induced maladies. However, the researcher could not find anyone cured of such illnesses to justify the claims. In the RRCHSA, the healing and deliverance ministry is exercised, mostly composed of women and young, energetic men. Some of these energetic men

[506] Njeri Mwaura, "Gender and Power in the African Christianity," 417.
[507] Dirven, "The Maria Legio," 139.
[508] Fredrick Kakwata, "Witchcraft and Poverty in Africa: A Pastoral Perspective," *Black Theology*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2018): 30.
[509] Interview of 'Mother PO', [Interviewed by G. Vincent], Kalfari, 6th May 2024.

serve as support staff to women prophet-healers, especially in cases where a person is possessed by an evil spirit, which requires energetic individuals to hold the person during the deliverance session.[510] During the participant observation of the worship service, an unexplainable event occurred: two young ladies became possessed by evil spirits. It took eight individuals to hold them as the deliverance prayer was being conducted upon them.[511] Although this ministry exists in the PEFA church, it is not as elaborate as the other churches. Typically, deliverance is performed by pastors during church services.[512]

The observations of this research are relevant to Daneel's argument that healing is the main hinge around which African women's proclamation and understanding of the gospel message revolves.[513] Moreover, among Legio Maria members, Mutahi Ngunyi alleged that close to three-quarters of the members were recruited after attempting divine healing, contrary to this research, which finds that most members followed their parents' denomination. Nevertheless, because this research only covered a section of the sample, the researcher cannot rule out that healing could be one of the persuasive factors for attracting new members and sustaining some old members in these three churches.

This ministry is also relevant to many African communities where witchcraft is still practised, a practice that is openly abhorred but surreptitiously accepted. Generally, not only within the Luo community, witchcraft practices attract a heft penalty on the perpetrators, but legally, it is punishable; the Kenyan constitution, article 3, chapter 67, witchcraft act states, "Any Person professing a knowledge of so-called witchcraft or the use of charms, who advises any

[510] The Participant Observation, Kamagambo/Kirengo-churches, May-June 2024.

[511] Ibid.

[512] The Participant Observation, Nyabisawa-PEFA, 11th January, 2024.

[513] Marthinus L. Daneel, “AIC Women in Mission,” in *African Christian Outreach 1: African Initiated Churches* (Pretoria: SAMS, 2001), 257.

person applying to him how to bewitch or injure persons, animal or other property, or who supplies any person with any article purporting to be a means of witchcraft, shall be guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years."[514] However, the researcher opines that although there is a provisional law on witchcraft, such cases are rarely prosecuted in a court of law. Instead, they are executed within the communally organised *Barazas* (communal meetings), organised, chaired by elders, mainly composed of men or a religiously organised meeting, which is generally gender-inclusive, as those spiritually gifted in healing and deliverance can perform such acts. Mary Mackenna asserts that the pastoral offices are still recognised in many churches as they were during the times of Paul and other Apostles.[515] Conversely, some pastoral functions are difficult to designate; one such pastoral function, as the results of this research indicate, is found within the pastoral office of the General Mother Superior of Legio Maria.

[514] Google, "Witchcraft," accessed August 2024, https://klrc.go.ke/index.php/klrc-blog/518-justification-for-review-of-witchcraft-act-cap-67.

[515] Mary Lawrence Mckenna, *Women of the Church: Role and Renewal* (New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1967), 156.



Plate 9: Mother Superior General of Legio Maria at *Kalfari*.

In the interview with the researcher, she listed "Spirit-writing reader and interpreter" as one of her roles. Some people possess the spiritual ability to write down what the Holy Spirit reveals to them, but they cannot read those writings. Thus, it requires a spiritually endowed person to read and interpret the content of the writings. It is a pastoral office that is actively functional among the Legio Maria and not in the RRCHSA or the PEFA church. Below is a sample of Spirit-inspired writings that may not make sense to outsiders but are meaningful to adherents of Legio Maria.

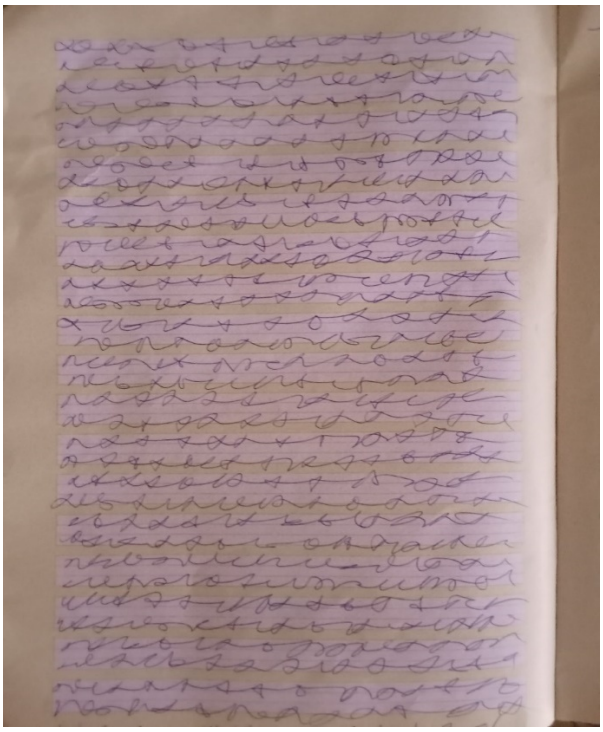


Plate 10: A Sample of Spirit-Inspired Writing

Besides the pastoral aspect, where the impact of women is felt, women in these three churches are involved in development activities at different levels. As the findings of this research reveal, the leadership structure of the development committee of Legio Maria, which includes the general secretary, assistant general secretary, treasurer, assistant treasurer, protocol officer, assistant protocol officer, and development secretary, is ordained clergy. Although a thorough examination of the constitution of Legio Maria does not indicate the reason for such a decision, an interview with one of the top-ranking leaders could not reveal the same. Seemingly, it has been a tradition whose source cannot be traced; however, it has continued to be endorsed. Seemingly, it has been a tradition whose source cannot be traced; however, it has continued to be endorsed. Women at PEFA church and RRCHSA hold different positions in development committees or departments.

Further, scholars have noted ways churches can leverage leadership to advance outcomes that would expand women's inclusion, for instance. Priest and Barine note that Christian leaders are considered very significant for their part in their communities in their leadership mandate. Together with the churches they lead, Christian leaders play much more than spiritual roles in the lives of ordinary African believers. However, spirituality remains central; additionally, in certain areas of Africa, there is a need for an emphasis on church leadership.[516] For instance, it will require empowering members in both the church and the community, forging integration between faith and civic or political spheres, and bridging relationships with non-members of their congregations.[517] Nkonge argues that Christian leaders should be reconstructive and transformative in society. Nkonge, however, observes that some leaders serve at a given period and vanish without any legacy across Africa.[518] For him, "the church which is one of the most reliable institutions in Africa seems not to have produced leaders who can inspire holistic development in the society."[519] This phenomenon suggests that churches should reevaluate their leaders and leadership development programs to determine whether they are truly transformative.

5.3 Summary of Main Findings

Based on the first objective, regarding the understanding of biblical teachings on the inclusion of women in church leadership. Most of the PEFA and Legio Maria members agreed that the bible had stipulations and opportunities for women to be included in church leadership. The Legio Maria Church strongly supported the biblical interpretation that endorses women's inclusion in church leadership. Conversely, The RRCHSA has the weakest belief that the bible affirms the inclusion of women in church leadership. Further, while the church members from

[516] Priest J., and Kirimi, eds., *African Christian Leadership: Realities*30; Nkonga, “The Influence of Pastoral Church Leadership on the Behaviour of Pastors' Children,” 66.
[517] Nkonga, “The Influence of Pastoral Church Leadership on the Behaviour of Pastors' Children.”
[518] Ibid.
[519] Ibid.

the three churches, PEFA, Legio Maria and RRCHSA, had certain verses to support their claim that women should be included or excluded in church leadership, the verses were not as many as to provide incontrovertible evidence that they were sure that there is biblical foundation for women inclusion in church leadership. Thus, for all three churches, there is a dichotomy between the assertion for or against the biblical endorsement of women's inclusion in leadership positions and the provision and elucidation of biblical texts to underscore that understanding. Additionally, PEFA and Legio Maria churches employed the democratic model of biblical leadership, whereas the leadership model of the RRCHSA church is autocratic.

Established on the second objective, women have played a role in church leadership at PEFA though at a slightly lower level than their male counterparts. However, owing to the 2008 PEFA constitution review on the place of women in leadership, women's inclusion in church leadership at PEFA has received recent constitutional endorsement but has yet to be fully implemented. Legio Maria has historically had women in top leadership, especially since one of its founders was a woman. Nonetheless, there is an apparent conservative-reformist conflict simmering, where the former wants men to control the priestly duties, while the reformists are open to women leading the top priestly spaces. Additionally, on each of the top RRCHSA ranks, positions are reserved for women, such as Mama Pope, Mama Cardinal, Mama Bishop, and Mama Padre.

Nevertheless, those women's positions do not have much influence on the church's operations and are exempt from doing what the church considers divine priestly duties. There is women's leadership, yet they have no influence. They have been exempted from priestly duties. Based on the third objective, women's experience in PEFA is mainly positive. Overtly, women's inclusion in the Legio Maria Church is extolled and encouraged, but covertly, patriarchy is

creeping in. In RRCHSA, women are involved in the lower ranks, and their experience is that of subordination. The composition of male leaders significantly outweighs that of female leaders. Thus, in RRCHSA, women's leadership experience is ceremonial and domestic, and it hinges on marriage to the more influential, priestly male and husband leader.

Based on the fourth objective, one deterring argument was the implicit argument that men are the "natural" born leaders and women are not. The biblical mandate for women's inclusion in church leadership is the other argument used to deter women from full participation in the leadership of the LMACM, RRCHSA, and PEFA. There is the argument that the bible does not offer a sustainable and adequate reference that supports women's inclusion in leadership, including priestly responsibilities. There is an implicit disenfranchisement of women largely owing to the belief that women are mainly created for domestic responsibilities. Thus, specific equal opportunities to access leadership positions are closed due to traditional feminine roles and heightened patriarchal dominance. Plus, this is done alongside socially constructed roles related to gender roles of homemakers, menstrual circles limiting participation, wife and motherhood.

On the fifth objective, women leverage their motherly instincts, which underscore their ability to care for, love, and grow people. There was also the argument that women in the three churches were transparent and hardworking. Some mentioned that women are better at evangelisation owing to their friendly spirit. Thus, the possibility that women across these three denominations will occupy higher positions cannot be ruled out.

5.4 Conclusion

The study has addressed the inclusion of women in leadership: a comparative analysis of Legio Maria of the African Church Mission, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and the Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa in Migori County, Kenya. It is evident from this

research that women's inclusion in church leadership remains an elusive matter which has been received differently. In both Legio Maria and Roho Rabbi Church of the Holy Spirit of Africa, it is overtly accepted, yet subtly male-dominant in leadership. Furthermore, most PEFA and Legio Maria members agreed that the Bible had stipulations and opportunities for women to be included in church leadership. The Legio Maria church strongly supported the biblical interpretation that endorses women's inclusion in church leadership. Conversely, the RRCHSA has the weakest belief that the bible validates the inclusion of women in church leadership.

Further, while the church members from the three churches, PEFA, Legio Maria and RRCHSA, had certain verses to support their claim that women should be included or excluded in church leadership, the verses were not as many as to provide incontrovertible evidence that they were sure that there is biblical foundation for women inclusion in church leadership. Thus, there is a leadership tradition that seems to override the biblical endorsement of women in leadership positions.

Historically, some of these churches have reserved women's positions; however, with their evolution, their positions have either been re-assigned or remain "flowery" to brighten the image of a particular church as an all-inclusive church, but principally non-influential positions. Thus, the experience of most women leaders is that of persistent male control, suspicion and fear. Women's inclusion in church leadership is often marked with questions of "if and what." What if we allow women to occupy top positions? What would happen? These questions are hardly raised on male leadership. However, a new generation of leadership appears more gender-inclusive, as they have come to realise that women continue to be a significant force in the church's growth. A shift in women dominating top leadership positions in the coming years is imminent.

Further, women leaders grow those churches through hard work and transparency. Some mentioned that women are better at evangelisation owing to their friendly spirit. Hence, it appears that women leaders may help spread the word and gain more followers faster than their male counterparts. Also, some members and leaders make assumptions based on feelings and cultural biases that must be carefully re-negotiated. But by and large, in PEFA and Legio Maria more than in the Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, women leaders are considered competent and capable save for a few misgivings. While women's leadership has not been fully embraced, many leaders from the three denominations have not entirely ruled out the prospect of women occupying most top leadership positions in the near future.

5:5 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the study findings.

5.5.1 Biblical teaching on the inclusion of women in the church's leadership

In PEFA, 96.5% of church members accepted that the Bible endorses women's inclusion in leadership. It was apparent from the research findings that few could substantiate the reasons for choosing a particular verse or verses. A similar trend was observed in both Legio Maria and RRCHSA, where a verse selected for either supporting or rejecting women's leadership could not be mentioned, nor was a reason provided for its preference. Based on the observation, the researcher recommends that the RRCHSA, Legio Maria, and PEFA church leaders expose their church members to Bible study. However, this can be successful if the leaders are sufficiently trained in Biblical studies, which seems to be lacking among the leaders of RRCHSA, Legio Maria and PEFA. Within the same continuum, Legio Maria and RRCHSA leaders should expose themselves to other Christian theologies; this can be achieved by participating in ecumenical meetings, thereby avoiding isolation.

5.5.2 Historical survey of the evolution of women's leadership

The constitution of the PEFA church has allowed women to participate in any capacity of its leadership structure; nevertheless, higher positions within this denomination require a high theological degree, which most women have not attained. Thus, the researcher recommends that more women leaders should be educationally empowered by offering scholarships to enable them to obtain the required academic qualifications. In the Legio Maria, women occupied top positions, but in 1969 the policy changed. The change in the policy was based more on traditions and religious-cultural ties than on biblical interpretation. Hence, the history of women in this denomination is marred with controversies. The researcher recommends that a team of experts be engaged with the church's leadership so that a unified history is written. The researcher also recommends that the PEFA and RRCHSA engage with a group of experts to assist them in writing their histories instead of relying on the "outsiders." Failure to act on this will continually lead to distorted histories about their respective churches. The researcher suggests that the leadership of the three denominations should liaise with the National or County Governments to assist them in establishing museums or libraries. They have rich religio-historical artefacts lying in ruins due to a lack of expertise and funding. Establishing museums and libraries within religious institutions can enrich research work for both researchers and students.

5.5.3 The Experiences of women in church leadership

The experiences of women in these denominations vary; women in PEFA have primarily positive experiences. In Legio Maria, women's inclusion is overtly extolled, and their role is important as it is believed that its root is from the role of the Holy Mary Mother of Christ, but covertly, patriarchy has crept in. In RRCHSA, women are involved in the lower ranks, and their experience is that of subordination. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that Legio Maria and RRCHSA leadership select leaders based on their qualifications, rather than

their gender. It is also helpful if women are offered a supportive work environment where they can express or use their gifts without fear of being judged. The researcher recommends that leaders of both denominations frequently organise interdenominational women's conferences, where they can share their experiences, thereby creating a culture of communication. The three denominations can also create programmes that mentor young boys and girls to expose them to the leadership dynamics within their respective churches. Additionally, leaders should organise sessions to educate the congregation about gender equality in leadership.

5.5.4 Arguments used to deter women from church's leadership

There is a need for both Legio Maria and RRCHSA to re-evaluate their constitution and doctrines to be more overtly accommodating to women, crafting practices that inspire women with leadership abilities to participate fully in any ministry or administrative positions that suit them in respect to their spiritual capability or academic qualifications. Non-discriminatory and aligned with both sound biblical hermeneutics and the national ideals and principles of governance that advocate for the reduction of gender disparities.

5.5.5 Ways women's inclusion is impacting the leadership of the church

One aptitude that women seem to share across the three denominations is trustworthiness; this ability can be developed, and professional training can be provided to refine it. Upon completion of the training, an opportunity ought to be provided within the church's leadership structure.

5.6 Areas of Further Research

Specific valid issues were noted in the study process that need further study. The perceived issues could not be addressed because they were outside the objectives of this study. These include:

5.6.1 Evaluating the growth rate in churches where women occupy high leadership positions versus churches where only men are in the highest leadership positions.

5.6.2 Questioning the traditions paradigm and doctrines that vehemently reject inclusive leadership and the impact that such a position has created in their respective churches.

5.6.3 Examine comprehensively why the number of women enrolling for higher theological education seems to be less than that of men, even in churches where women are empowered to occupy leadership positions.

5.6.4 For further study, the researcher recommends investigating the effect of leadership conflicts and their impact on women leaders.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: An Introduction Letter

Dear Respondents,

I am Gucha Vincent Pascal, a student in the School of Religion and Christian Ministry at Africa.
Nazarene University. I am conducting a study on Women and leadership inclusion: A comparative study of Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church of Holy Spirit of Africa, and PEFA, Migori County, Kenya. Thank you for accepting to participate in it. Kindly answer the questions with ultimate honesty. All the information shared will be treated with confidentiality. Thank you in advance.
Yours sincerely,
Gucha Vincent Pascal
Student no: 18s01pre01
Phone: +254745916617
Email:vincentgucha20020@yahoo.com

Personal Information

1) Name (optional): _____

2) Sex
i) Male [] ii) Female []

3) Designation: _____
4) Age-bracket

i) 30 yrs. below [] ii) 31 - 35 yrs. [] iii) 36 - 40 yrs. [] iv) 41 - 45 yrs. []
v) 46 - 50 yrs. [] vi) 51 - 55 yrs. [] vii) 56 yrs. above []

5) Level of Education of the leader

i) Certificate [] ii) Diploma [] iii) Degree []
iv) Masters []
v) Others; please specify_____

6) Duration of service in the church
i) 3 yrs. below [] ii)4 - 7 yrs. [] iii) 8 -11 yrs. [] iv)12- 15 yrs. []
v)16 yrs. above []

Appendix II: Questionnaires

Questionnaire for church leaders and members

SECTION A: Biblical basis for either including or excluding women in the leadership structures of the church

1. Does the Bible support leadership inclusion in Church leadership? Yes-----No---
2. If yes, which verses would you cite----------
3. Which Bible verse/s do you base your argument on for excluding women in the leadership of the church?
4. Can you describe the biblical model of leadership that your church follows?
5. Why have you chosen that specific verse/s that supports women′s leadership?
6. Why have you chosen that specific verse/s which do not support women′s leadership?
7. Can you think of scenarios in the Bible where women have shown exemplary leadership?
8. Do you believe that the leadership style of your church reflects the teaching of the Bible?
9. Do you agree with the biblical interpretation of your church concerning gender leadership as applied in your church? Yes-------No----------
10. If yes, explain----------
11. Suppose the biblical interpretation is 'wrong ‘about the exclusion of one gender in the leadership of your church. Are you willing to change your position on that?

Questionnaire for church leaders

SECTION B: What is the history of your church?

1. When was your church founded?
2. Who were the founders?
3. Please explain how the leadership in your church is structured.
4. What was the vision of the founder/s concerning men and women in the structure of leadership?
5. What has changed in the leadership style?
6. Are women included in the leadership positions of your church? Yes---No—
   if no, explain why----------
7. How was the gender composition of leadership during the initial stages of the foundation of your church?
8. What has changed in the leadership style?
9. Has the church experienced any secession or leadership because of gender imbalance? Yes, or no
10. Has there been a gender-leadership conflict debate in your church?
11. If yes, how was it resolved?

Questionnaire for church leaders

SECTION C: The Experiences of Women concerning leadership in the church

1. How long have you been in the church? 0-5 years –6-10 years –11 years and above
2. How did you become a member of your church?

3. What position do you have in your church?
4. How long have you been in that position? 0-5 years –6-10 years –11 years and above
5. How were you appointed to that position?
6. What do you like about your position?
7. What don't you like about your position?
8. How is your work relationship with your male seniors?
9. How is your work relationship with your female seniors?
10. How is your work relationship with your female colleagues?
11. How is your work relationship with your male colleagues?
12. Do you get any support (moral) from your colleagues or seniors when in need?
13. How is your leadership relationship with the rest of the church members (the laity)?
14. How do you interpret your experience/s?
15. How many women are in a high level of leadership in your church?
16. How many men are in a high level of leadership in your church?
17. Is what the constitution says about gender composition in the leadership of your church practically reflected?

Questionnaire for church leaders and members

SECTION D: Grounds for inclusion/exclusion of women in the leadership structures of the church

1. How many women are in high-level leadership positions in your church?
2. What specific positions do they hold?
3. How long have they held such positions? 0-5 years –6-10 years –11 years and above
4. Do the positions women hold reflect their qualifications? yes or no? Explain your answer.
5. If there are no women in the leadership structure of your church, what are the reasons for that?
6. And if there are women in the leadership structure of your church, what are the reasons for that?
7. What does your constitution say about gender and leadership?
8. Do you believe that your church's leadership pattern is biblically influenced?
9. Are there differences in the way male leaders carry out their leadership roles?
10. Are there differences in the way female leaders carry out their leadership roles?
11. Is your church ready to change its position of including women in its leadership? Explain your answer
12. Is your church ready to change its position of excluding women from its leadership? Explain your answer

Questionnaire for church leaders and members

SECTION E: The impact of gender-inclusive leadership on the church's growth.

1. Please explain three positive impacts your church experienced because of embracing both genders in its leadership.
2. What effect can the church have on the leadership of women?
3. What lessons has the church learnt from excluding one gender from the leadership?

4. Is the church ready to change its current position and continue including all genders in its leadership positions?
5. Is the church ready to change its current position to continue excluding one gender from its leadership?
6. What fears or hopes do you have if your church does not change its position of including one gender in its leadership positions?
7. Where does the church see itself in ten years coming with its leadership style?

Appendix III Guiding Questions for the FGDs

1. Does the Bible support women′s leadership?
2. Would you like to have more women in the Church leadership?
3. Is the leadership in your church biblically influenced?
4. Do you think women have been accorded equal opportunity to serve in the leadership of your church?
5. Do you think your church has created a conducive environment for all-gender leadership?
6. Are you personally comfortable with women′s leadership?

Appendix IV: Template for Participant′s Observation

For church members

Date of Observation _____ Duration of Observation _____

Place of Observation _____

Activities	Observation	Interpretation
Responsibilities for women		
Responsibilities for men		
Responsibilities for both women and men		
Participation of women in church services/liturgy/church programmes		
Women's participation in key decision-meetings		
Who members tend to listen to more		
The attitude of the congregation towards men or women leadership		

Participant's Observation

For church leaders

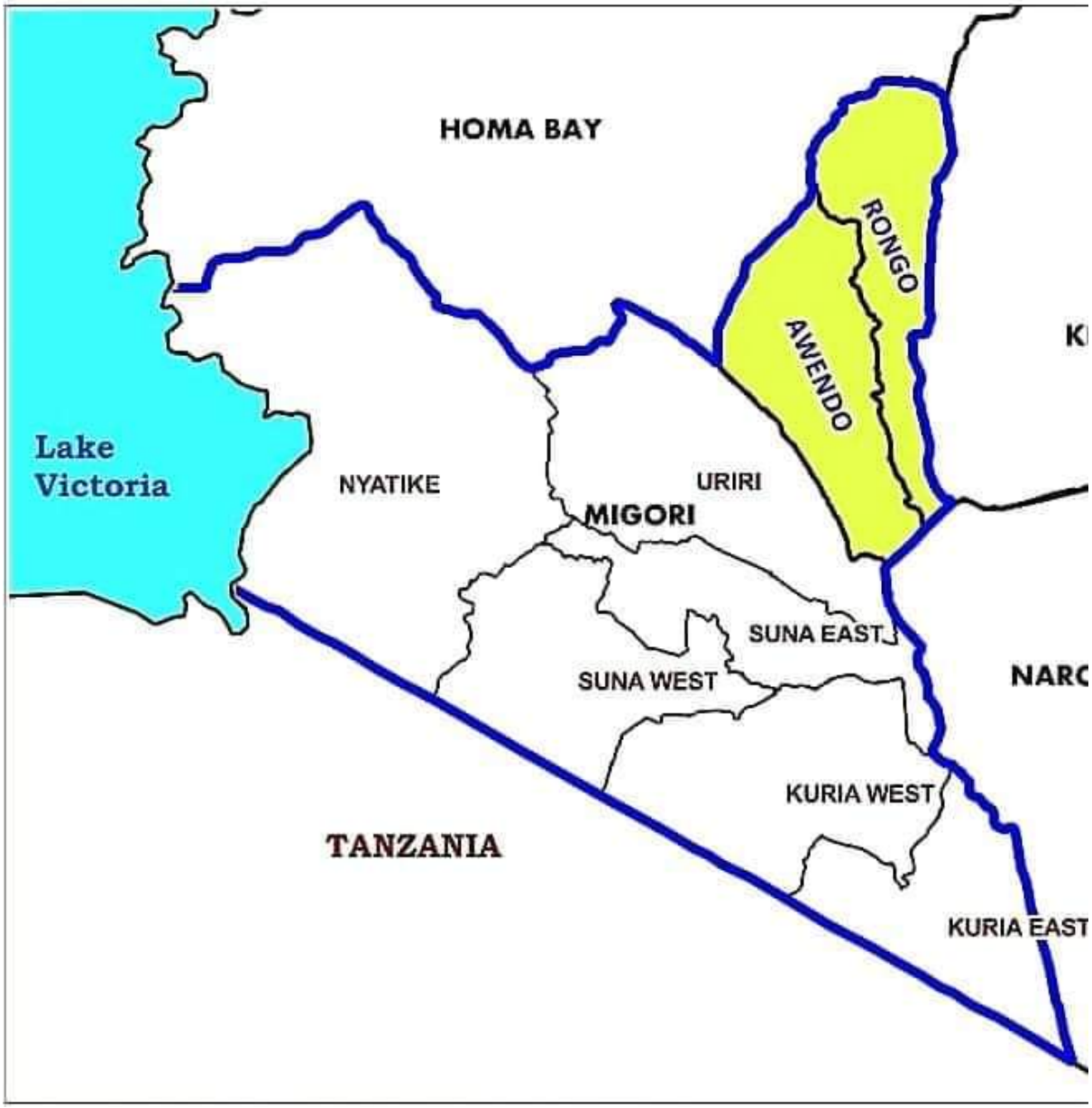
Activity	Observation	Interpretation
Hierarchy of Leadership		
Gender composition within the leadership structures		
Liturgical celebrations, worship, preaching		
Administering of Sacraments, e.g. baptism, marriage, funeral		
Key-decision meetings, church meetings (who chairs meetings)		

Appendix: V MAP OF KENYA



Source: https://www.google.com/Counties of Kenya.

Appendix: VI MAP OF MIGORI COUNTY



Source: migoriassembly.go.ke

Appendix VII: Letter of Authorization

AFRICA NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY

P.O.Box: 53067 – 00200
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 252 7170/1 – 5
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14th December2023

RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Gucha Vincent Pascal ***(18S01PRE01)*** is a bonafide student at Africa Nazarene University. He has finished his coursework and has defended his thesis proposal entitled: ***"Women and Leadership Inclusion: A Comparative Study of Legio Maria, Roho Rabbi Church Holy Spirit of Africa, and Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, Migori County, Kenya".***

Any assistance accorded to him to facilitate data collection and finish his thesis is highly welcomed.

Rodney Z. Reed

Prof. Rodney Reed

DVC, Academic& Student Affairs

Appendix VIII: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **160572**

Date of Issue: **05/January/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr.. Vincent Pascal Gucha of Africa Nazarene University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Migori on the topic: WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP INCLUSION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEGIO MARIA, ROHO RABBI CHURCH HOLY SPIRIT OF AFRICA, AND PENTECOSTAL EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP OF AFRICA, MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 05/January/2025.

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