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Women in Religion and Development in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Roman Catholic Church and and African Independent Church

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

WOMEN IN RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
AND AN AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

SR. MARYPAUL V. N. ASOEGWU DDL

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY, 1993

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VITA

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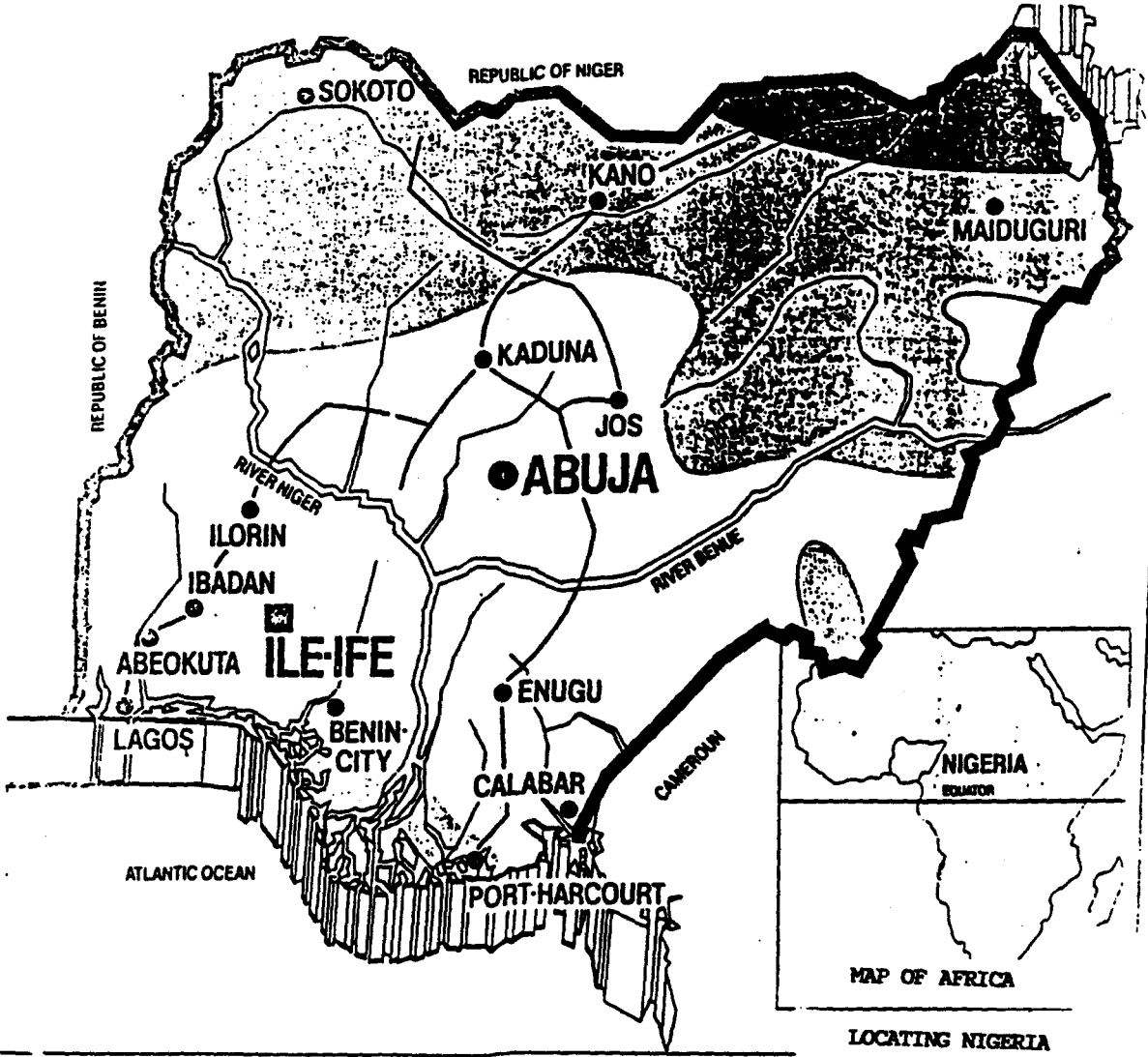
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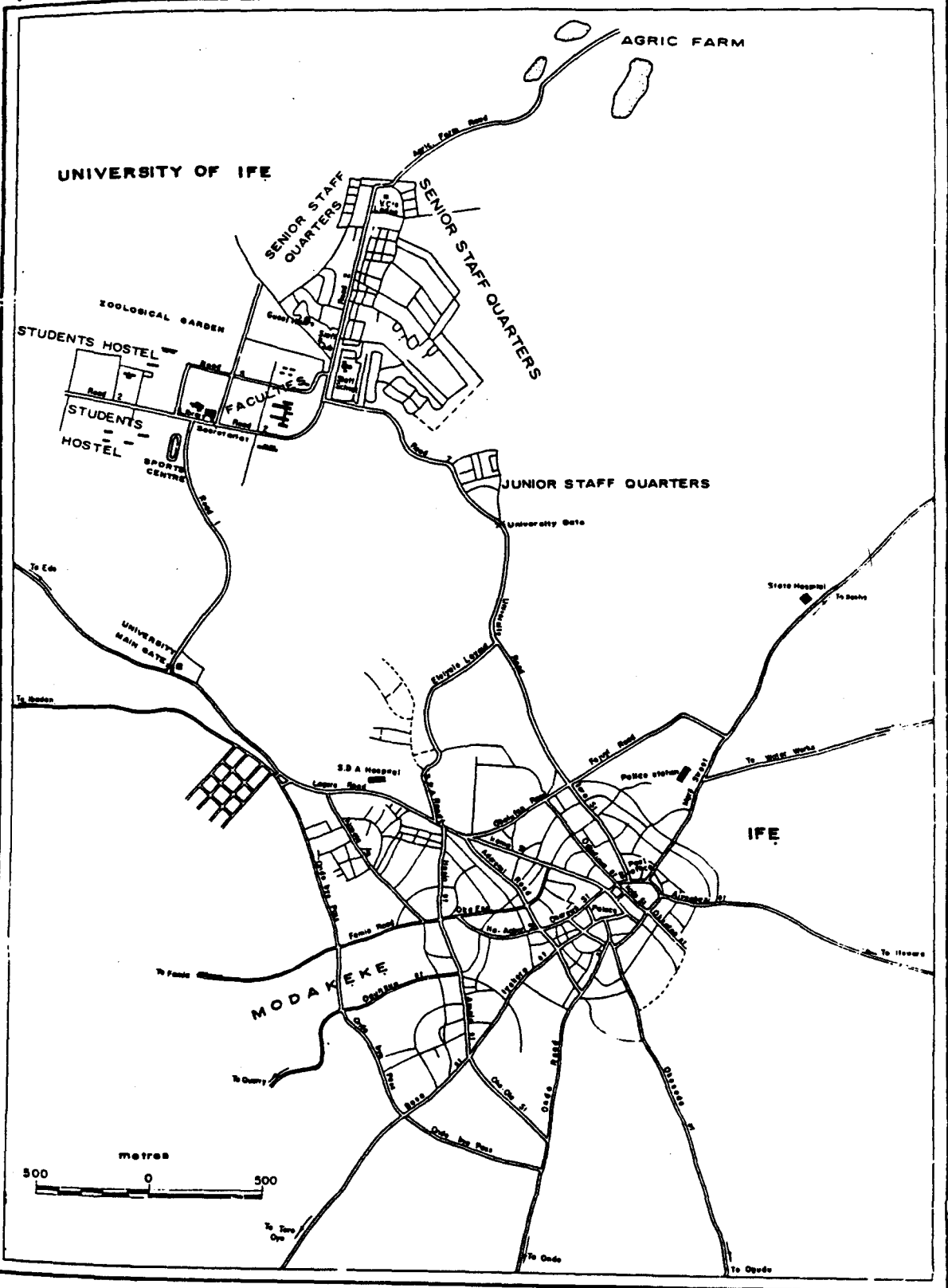
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MAP OF NIGERIA



THE THREE COMPONENTS OF ILE-IFE.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

Religion is an institution and practice which exists in complex interplay with changes in society. Since the founding of the discipline of sociology, sociologists have debated the impact of religion upon, and consequent change in social and economic development. Among the founding fathers of sociology, Marx (1957/8, 1964) saw it as the "opium" of the people; Durkheim (1915/47) saw religion as the integrating force of the society; and Weber (1922/63, 1958) argued that religion was instrumental to the capitalist revolution. As Haddad and Findly (1985:xv) argue,

Social Scientists and religionists have known for a long time that religion is among the foremost of institutions which conserve society, encoding, stabilizing generations. Scholars are now beginning to acknowledge that religion has been equally significant as an agent of social transformation; for that which encodes can recode, forming prophetic new views of human possibility and releasing the enormous bursts of energy that are necessary to move peoples and polities in altered directions. In fact, as that which alone could alter the root-paradigms which framed the decisions and directions of entire cultures, religion was the most powerful transformative force in society during times prior to the modern era.

The same issue about the impact of religion continues to be debated today in the developed countries of the world, and

the same questions can be asked in the developing countries. But my question is: "how does religion facilitate or inhibit women's involvement in development issues? I hypothesize that there is a relationship between women's participation in their churches and their participation in community development activities. When women participate in economic and other activities relating to development, their religious beliefs and practices often shape their perceptions and roles.

Unlike authors like Zdrozny (1959:89) who does not indicate the direction of change in development, or Berger (1986:116-7) who stresses material improvement in development, I argue that development should include not only material growth but also the improvement in quality of life. I follow the work of authors like Kruijer (1987), Charlton (1984), and Carrol (1983) and define "development" as economic, social, political, and cultural changes in the community that raise or improve the quality of life for the majority of the population in terms of nutrition, education, democratic participation, health care, financial status, employment, and self-esteem.

One reason the focus in defining development has been narrowly economic is that, though women have contributed to developing economies, their experiences and perspectives have been invisible. In the case of Africa, for example, women do contribute economically and otherwise to the process of development. Besides performing 80% of the agricultural work, women produce, raise, and educate families, and operate as

health workers, teachers, and nutritionists in their own right (African Farmer 1990). In other words, women are the backbone of many African economies. In recent times women's organizations (religious and social) have participated in various dimensions of social and economic development. Mrs. Regina Okafor, a woman leader in the Nigerian Catholic Church stated that:

The women's social organizations help in the socio-economic development [in Nigeria] ... They supply or pay for labour, they finance the buildings of some colleges, hospitals, maternity homes, post offices, etc. Some in their various towns and villages undertake other development projects. The Anambra State Women's Organization, for instance runs about four motherless babies homes, one aged people's home, various weaving industries and domestic centres for unemployed girls. The organisation helps women in villages by emancipating them from the traditional social discrimination (Nnajofofor 1984:46-7).

Some of these social organizations have religious foundations, for example, the Catholic Women's Organization. And since the nature of women's religious activity and its social impact are complex issues, it becomes extremely difficult to understand the influence of religion upon women's involvement in development.

I want to report on a comparative study of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and African Independent Church (AIC). AIC is the name given to new religious movements in Nigeria. They are called "Independent" because of their lack of foreign origin and domination. They tend to combine Western forms of thought with the vibrancy of a non-Western culture (Hackett

1987, Barrett 1968, Jules-Rosette 1979, Mbon 1986, Hope and Young 1983). In fact, one of the most important changes in the religious context of many African countries in the mid-twentieth century has been the rise of new religious movements of which the AIC is an exemplar.

The historical development which precipitated the African Independent Churches can be traced to the Africa Churches which broke away from the mission churches in the 19th century. According Alokun (1991) and Mann (1985), the European monopoly of the leadership of the missionary churches along with the white man's belief that he was superior to the African was the immediate cause of the schism. Thus by 1888, the native Baptist Church was founded in order to ensure the autonomy of the Africans as well as reject the claim to superiority of the white over the black people. What was expected was the Africanization of the christian churches. Unfortunately the newly founded African Churches could not meet the daily needs of the traditional life styles of the Africans or Nigerians. This inability of the African Churches to cater for the real marital, health, and social problems of the Africans created a spiritual vacuum in their lives. The emergence of the African Independent Churches in the 20th century were to fill these spiritual hollow.

Theoretical considerations

Researchers have shown that AICs in general have

influenced the political, economic, and social life of Africans, and it is because of their impact on society that they emerge and continue to wax from strength to strength in terms of increases in the numbers of their church buildings, programs and projects, and adherents (Mbon 1986; Hackett 1987; Barrett 1968; Fernandez 1978, 1986). The relationship between religion and social change, which includes development as Robertson (1987:405) claims, involves the often subtle interplay between beliefs and behavior.

Many sociologists uphold Weber's thesis that religious ideas have helped to develop the spirit of capitalism. Capitalism could not develop in the East but could in the West because of the rational ideas and ethics contributed by religion. Eastern religions did not provide the same incentive for capitalist social and economic change (Weber 1958, 1963; O'Toole 1984 and Ian Robertson, 1987). It has been said that the focus upon religion was on the "relations between religious ideas and commitments and other aspects of human conduct ..." (Parsons 1963:11). This study begins from Weber's insights into the material force of religious ideas on societal development by tracing the differential capacity of AICs and RCC to empower women and to allow them a voice in social, economic, and political development.

Carrol (1983:9), agreeing to the powerful effect of religion, said that religious beliefs (and their misinterpretations) continue

to have a stunting effect on their [women's] personal development, assertiveness, and participation in the life around them. These beliefs have seriously hurt women physically, psychologically, economically, and educationally.

So it will be interesting to find out whether there are Nigerian RCC and AIC ethics which influence these women's personal development and how they see and involve themselves in their communities in terms of social, economic, and political development.

Robbins' (1979:185) belief in the importance of conversion to Christianity in freeing women from many of the constraints of their traditional social roles in African societies has long been noted by administrators, historians, and anthropologists, as well as by apologists for missionary activity. Yet Christianity, too, has provided some of the most severe constraints for improving conditions, especially among females within the fast-growing populations of developing Catholic countries. She has asserted that narrow-mindedness in Christianity, as in the other world religions, has restricted the acceptance of women as full human beings with the capacity to expand their potentials beyond restricted stereotyped roles. For example, technical or agricultural training, even in sub-Saharan Africa, where the women have had major responsibilities in farming, has favored males heavily (Rogers 1980). Although the RCC hierarchy preaches "equality" (or at least relative equality) insofar as women are concerned, equality has been truly ignored or corrupted. According to

Carrol 1983:133) and others, the RCC continuously denies women full participation in the Church.

Given the indications that women have greater participation and leadership roles in the AICs, I assume that they will be innovators both inside the church as well as in the community. My research will explore whether and to what extent innovation in new directions, leadership, and the principles of complementarity in the AICs are applied by these women outside their churches. I will compare the activities of these women to their RCC counterparts in terms of their careers, their educations, agricultural programs, health practices, politics, leadership roles, and overall participation in the community development.

Statement of the problem:

As I think about women who leave the RCC for AIC and all the things said about women in the AICS, many questions arise in my mind: What actually transpired in their lives as catholics to impel them to become a member of an AIC? Are women in the AICs actually more "liberated" and autonomous than women in the RCC in Nigeria? What is more "practical" about involvement in an AIC? In what ways does the new church "involve" them that is so different from that of the RCC? What the literature suggests about women in AICs has led me to ask questions about women's status, roles, and levels of participation in the RCC and AICs and the implications of

these for Nigerian society. Specifically, how do Nigerian churches facilitate or inhibit Nigerian women's participation in education, careers, health care, agriculture, politics, social movements, unions, and leadership roles in community affairs?

Research Objectives:

Charlton's (1984:72) study of two Hausa (Nigeria) groups in a single village area "showed major differences in the social status and productive roles of Muslim and non-Muslim girls and women." This finding seems to support my assumption that one's religious beliefs and practices influence one's involvement in other organizations. My research will explore the link between women's participation in the RCC and AIC and their participation in Nigerian social, economic and political life. My specific question is: HOW DOES CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN RCC AND AIC FACILITATE OR INHIBIT WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES?

Specifically, this research investigates, describes and analyzes how women's participation in the following church activities: ministries, committee meetings, parish councils, parish banking, harvest and bazaar, structure their activities in the local community. Women are involved in such local government development programs as: literacy campaigns, education programs, agricultural programs, social welfare programs, social justice schemes, health care, water and

electricity projects.

My hypothesis is that one's religious beliefs and practices influence one's involvement in other organizations. I guess that there is a relationship between women's participation in their churches and their participation in community development activities. However, though it seems that there is more participation in church activities among AIC women than their RCC counterparts in terms of faith-healing, prophesy, spirit-possession and leadership roles, this research will identify which of the two women groups makes greater contributions to community development efforts.

Significance of the study.

Since religion is an all-pervasive force, whether consciously realized or subconsciously assimilated, in the lives of people everywhere, it is pertinent to look at religions's implications for the success or failure of development projects (Carroll 1983:1). Because of the large numbers of women involved in Nigerian churches, a study of this movement is important and warranted. A new set of religious organizations and a new religious movement in which women have important leadership roles and more opportunities to better their life chances need to be explored.

I will compare ideological and practical differences for women members of the RCC and the AICs. What differences do these differing church structures and moral frameworks make in

women's self-concepts and their roles and statuses in their communities? How do their different religious affiliations influence what they do, and how do women mobilize and empower themselves and change their communities? No study has yet been undertaken of these phenomena. The failure to recognize, research, and discuss the prevalence of religion and its impact on people's lives very often leads to the precise problems that development experts seek to avoid.

Relevance of the project to community development

Under the traditional religious system, women's role in communities has been mainly in terms of keeping village squares and market centers clean, keeping the roads to the stream and the streams themselves clean, sweeping and decorating the shrines. Christianity brought with it the building of schools and hospitals. During the early period of evangelization, most of these schools and hospitals were built by missionaries. As the Christian religion spread, more women got involved in the activities in their churches.

It became necessary that these women got organized into groups. Within each individual groups, the women individually made a lot of contributions to their groups' activities. Within these groups, the women formed cooperatives that embarked on agricultural ventures such as food production, agricultural product processing, weaving and handicraft. The women conducted church harvest, bazaar, and launchings to

raise funds to embark on the building of hospitals, maternity homes, hostels and other community development programs such as water schemes, rural electrification program and even road projects, social welfare programs such as contribution to motherless babies homes, cheshire homes, and old peoples' home.

It is possible that the religious beliefs and activities of these women may have been the motive force behind these laudable contributions to community development projects. With women's participation in the religious activities in their different churches, and their contributions to development, it can be said that they are reviving the traditional spirit of community development but on a higher level.

The research may articulate and quantify in concrete terms these observations of women's motive force in community development projects. And if this is quantified, it may be an invaluable contribution to the existing literature on revivalism, especially as it pertains to community development.

Since religion has been an important force in the lives of the Nigerian people and because of the large numbers of women involved in Nigerian churches, a study of this nature is important and warranted. Studying women in the AIC in which women have important leadership roles and more opportunities to better their life chances and their comparing them with the RCC will bring into focus the cultural values which can be

revived both within and outside the churches. The influence of religion on women's participation in community development has not been taken seriously in Nigeria, and I have not seen any work that has actually compared the participation of RCC and AIC women.

I envisage that my findings can influence policy-makers who are concerned to find ways of harnessing the skills, energies, and talents of women for the community. My work will also be a contribution to adding to and revising the sociology of religion to take account of women's religious thought and contribution to reviving the traditional spirit of community development.

My work contains eight chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, in which theoretical considerations, statement of the problem, and research objectives are clearly delineated. Special attention is paid to the relevance of this project to community development. I concluded this chapter with an extensive literature review, paying particular attention to the different or similar ways the African Independent churches (AIC), but specifically Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) women have been involved in development. Chapter two is about the methodology of the work and the personal characteristics of my respondents.

Chapter three is divided into two sections: while section

one describes the socioeconomic and cultural activities of the women in the churches, section two highlights the socioeconomic and political activities of the women in their community. This chapter shows the markedly different ways the women in these churches participate in the affairs of church and society.

The questions about the leadership of women in the churches, in various capacities, the qualifications for leadership, and the other concerns of women leadership position are examined in chapter four.

The main concern of chapter five is the detailing of the subtle intellectual and practical leadership struggle between the women and authorities of the churches of our work. It focuses on certain church functions which women are forbidden to undertake, notably ministerial functions to which ordination is a key, and answers the question as to why the women have no access to this key.

This work also reports on some practical strategies adopted by the women, mainly in the CAC, to challenge and change the existing hierarchical structure of the church. These are dealt with in chapter six. In chapter seven, the different ways by which church women participate in development projects of the community are addressed. Finally, we discuss the findings of this work, make certain suggestions and conclusions.

Chapters three, five, six, and seven are particularly

important and can be seen as the main pillars of this work. Chapter three brings out the subtle and indispensable part which the daily duties of the women both in and outside the churches contribute to the development of society. While chapter five touches on the issue of awareness and consciousness-raising (which alone can bring about the strategies and changes which chapter six discusses), chapter seven highlights in a practical manner the result of the women's awareness with its benefits and limitations. But a comparison of the attitudes of the women in the church related development projects and those of civil authority in chapter seven raises in the author's mind a situation describable in conceptual terms as a labyrinth.

B. Literature review

In the introduction, I tried to broadly relate religion and development without giving specific areas of their intricate relationship. So, this section will deal with development, and women's involvement in development, vis-a-vis their religious beliefs and inclinations. It will examine the literature on women and religion, paying particular attention to women in the Roman Catholic and African Independent churches.

Development and Women's Involvement:

Development is a controversial concept used in different senses with different implications (Berger 1986:116), depending upon the point of view of the user (Long 1985:199). Zdrozny (1959:89) defines development as "change in a continuous direction" but does not indicate whether the change is for the better or worse of the society in question.

Berger (1986:116-7) and others say "development is the process by which people in the poorer countries are to reach the levels of material life achieved in the countries of advanced industrial capitalism." In other words, "development is a process of ongoing economic growth by which large masses of people are moved from poverty to an improved material standard of life." This type of definition stresses material

improvement and excludes the non-material aspects. I opine that development also includes more than material growth. It should include the quality of life. That is why I have described development to mean economic, social, political, and cultural changes in the community I am investigating that help to raise or improve the quality of life of the majority of the population or better the condition of their lives, be it in nutrition, education, democratic participation, health care, or economy and employment.

Charlton (1984) said that development has increasingly become concerned with improving the environment in which the world's poor live, whether by upgrading the quality and range of services provided to them, improving their opportunities for engaging in productive activities and self-government. Charlton (1987) is also of the opinion that, in sub-Saharan Africa, where women play a major agricultural role, their power bases are broader. This brings about a sort of economic interdependence between spouses, which makes wives rather than dependents of their husbands, resulting in relatively egalitarian decision-making in most farming matters. This to me raises the quality of life of the women in the society.

Women contribute economically and otherwise to the process of development. Women play very important productive roles in developing countries like Nigeria (Nnaji, 1984). Nigerian society (except for some Moslems) welcomes the idea of women working outside the home. That is why in recent times

women are participating in various fields of social life and development : viz., in politics many of them are in rank; in education, some of them have high positions as heads of schools or as heads of departments in universities; in economic life, many are great economic builders and family breadwinners. It is not out of place to state that Nigerian women have come a long way and can be found in almost all fields of endeavor. They are now in almost all professions and are contributing a great deal to the development of their communities.

Women and Religion:

Having looked at the concept of development and women's involvement, I now want to introduce the influence of religion. When women participate in economic and other activities relating to development, their religious beliefs and practices often shape their perception and roles. Religion is a key factor in development, affecting women in developing society. The world religions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity have been called patriarchal religions (Young 1987:5), making women look inferior to men (Chalfant et al. 1987:115). On the other hand, however, religious groups and networks have enormous power to ignite changes in society (Haddad & Findly 1985:XV). It is known that conversion of women to Christianity freed them from many of the constraints of their traditional social roles in African

Societies (Robbins 1979:185). But how has the new-found power of Christian women been used for the social development of the communities? Let us not forget that it has been said that the nature of women's religious activity and its social impacts are complex issues not easily described by standard stereotypes. For example, Hafkin and Bay (1976:10-1) have stated that Christianity

is associated with social conservatism among the Igbo of Nigeria and the Creoles of Sierra Leone, but in different ways. Missions discouraged Igbo women's participation in the politically important female association, and limited their education to Bible study and the learning of European domestic skills. In Sierra Leone, Creole women practice a Christianity as old as the formation of their unique ethnic community some 150 years ago. According to Filomina Steady, their self-defined Christian ideals help maintain a double standard of morality and limit women's leadership in the church. Among the Luo women of Kowe in Kenya, however, Christianity has acted as a progressive force in agricultural innovation. Early converts experimented with new crops and farm implements.

I will now review the literature on the two groups of christian women who are of interest to me, the CAC and RCC.

African Independent Churches and Women's Involvement:

Mbon (1986:177-179) notes the spurious weekly emergence of African Independent churches who claim to be independent of foreign origin or denomination but combine Western forms of thought with the vibrancy of non-Western culture (Jules-Rosette 1975:15). They incorporate new forms, beliefs, and structures from various sources and seek a more African way of worship which attract many former Catholics, especially women.

The attraction in these AICs is in terms of worship, symbolism, music, dance, and a more direct religious experience characterized by dreams, visions, spirit-possession, and a spontaneous emotionalism (Hackett 1987; Barrett 1968; Jules-Rosette 1979; and Mbon 1986). Hope and Young (1983:192-3), talking about one of the AICs in South Africa, said that faith-healing is of paramount importance in most of these churches, reinforced by dancing, the use of drums, spirit possession during services, speaking in tongues, and testimonies voiced in a half-singing, half-speaking tone.

Sociologists have suggested that combining Christian and traditional elements in the AICs helps members to experience a feeling of continuity with the past and to identify with one's ancestors. These feelings of continuity and identity are crucial in contemporary Nigeria, where there is currently much talk about cultural revival as a significant factor in national development.

Researchers such as Fabian (1979) and Jules-Rosette (1979) assume that African women benefit more from the AICs than do men. Others claim that the AICS are more appealing to women because they give them more status as healers and because they offer them a "surrogate family" (Hope & Young 1990:195), which compensates for a decline in traditional community and family structures in urbanizing Africa (Mbon 1986, 1987; and Hackett 1987). These factors may account for the fact that Catholics in Nigeria have been leaving the RCC

to join the AICs. Personally, I know several converts to the Independent Churches. Typical is a member of my own religious community, Judith Terna Dam, who left the RCC to become a national preacher in an AIC. In an article appearing in the Nigerian newspaper, Sunday Voice, she was quoted as saying that her new religious experiences are "more liberating, more practical, and more involving" (Sunday Voice, May 20, 1990:12).

Terna's comments seem to reflect the sentiments shared by many Catholic women in Africa who joined the AICs (Bond 1979; Pro Mundi Vita: Dossiers 1985; Hope & Young 1983). As movements of protest, many new African religious groups have become vehicles for the creation, exercise, and legitimation of power by their adherents. Those who were formerly powerless have found in religion a means of altering their situation and even reversing their status in both symbolic and social terms (Jules-Rosette 1989:150).

These independent churches are also said to perform social functions in other areas of social life. For instance, where people had felt that they were "nobodies" before becoming members of the movements, or where personal recognition and movement into the higher echelons of authority had been slow or even impossible (in the mission churches), members of the independent churches now claim to achieve personal social recognition at almost all levels, thereby sharpening their capacities for large-scale organization and

administration (Mbon 1986:187). This can be seen in some of the women's activities. Women in sole charge in some AICs have been exercising a full ministry. What is even more remarkable is a ruling in some of the Aladura churches that, if both husband and wife are trained ministers, the senior of the two in the ministry says the benediction in worship, even if she should be the wife. This shows full equality of women and men in the ministry, which is not found in the Catholic Church (Turner 1967:48).

The wider African religious tradition, where women may be priestesses and where their psychic abilities have received recognition and scope to a much greater degree than they have in Islam or Christianity, has sprung to new life in the AICs. There now exist modern prophetesses who have been founders or leaders of Independent Churches, such as Captain Abiodun of the Cherubim and Seraphim, Grace Tani of the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Ghana, and Alice Lenshina of the Lumpa Church in Northern Rhodesia (Turner 1967; Jules-Rosette 1979; and Bond & Co 1979).

The women's associations, led by Captain Christiana Abiodun of the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim (one group of AICs), donated various articles to the residence of the head of state, General Yakubu Gowon, at Dodan Barracks. They are reported to have been warmly received by General Gowon who posed with the delegation in a number of photographs (Mbon 1986:182). The Women's Association of the

Brotherhood of the Cross and Star (another group of AICs) built a huge canteen in Calabar. They visit orphanages and welfare centers and make huge donations in cash and kind (Mbon 1986:186).

Recent studies of AICs show that joining the AICs gives a promise of a better job, relief from illness, greater opportunities for marriage and the birth of a child where these have been problems, security from enemies, and/or the opportunity for an education (Turner 1967, Mbon 1987). Some of the AIC women operate prayer centers, healing homes, and healing centers.

Hope and Young (1983:191-4) have said that these churches concentrate on this-worldly activities such as healing the sick, divining causes of misfortune, and predicting future events; unlike the Catholic Church which seems to Africans as more oriented to the next world than to the problems they face here and now. Also the AICs practice rites of confession, dancing, purification, and spirit possession, which provide not only links with tradition but also emotional catharsis. The very centrality of some of the activities like faith-healing, prophecy, and spirit-possession, in which women figure prominently, probably explains the status elevation associated with them. For example, during spirit possession, which is "a form of trance in which behavior actions of a person are interpreted as evidence of a control of his behavior by a spirit normally external to him" or her (Iris

Berger 1976:161), a woman is offered more power than men; she can exert pressure on her father, husband, or brother and get what she wants. Women can "speak inconsiderate words, abuse their parents or their superiors, without anyone dreaming of asking for compensation after the ceremony was finished" (Berger 1976:170). It seems that anyone who is touched by the spirit has direct personal access to knowledge, truth, and power. This principle tends to empower women, particularly when males attempt to assert dominance over them. This principle does not exist in the RCC.

Women and the Roman Catholic Church:

There is much debate over the relationship between women and the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria. Some analysts hold the view that the RCC has been instrumental in liberating African women. Others believe that the RCC is discriminatory and unjust to women and has contributed to their inferior position in African society.

For example, Nwosu (1990:107) writes that, in a tribute to Bishop Shanahan for his work in helping the Igbo woman develop, a woman leader once said, "It was Bishop Shanahan who not only elevated but emancipated women from the slavery and bondage of pre-modern Ibo history.... Before his arrival a great many Ibo girls were unimaginably miserable." Nwosu counters (1990:107) that "the revolution in women's position in the Catholic Church came about by events which had their

origin more outside the church than within it." He asserts that it was the introduction of UPE (Universal Primary Education) by the Nigeria Government that led to the rise of a more militant women's movement within the RCC.

Some researchers have noted that, while education was emphasized by the Catholic Missionaries, and although the missionaries were interested in educating both genders, female instruction was largely religious and oriented toward helping girls become better mothers and housewives in the European sense (Charlton 1984 and Boserup 1970).

It seems that, initially, Catholic women carried their acquired colonial domestic roles into the Church. Some women who went beyond the domestic roles either did not have their work recorded, or the credits were given to their husbands or parish priests. Nwosu (1990:102-3) claims that "part of the reasons for their obscurity was that mission records generally gave credit to the catechists and teachers themselves instead of their wives for the work done." He gave a typical example of the tribute paid to Solomon Okaih for his wife's training center where she trained prospective brides. In Nwosu's view, women tend to be silent and invisible but indispensable workers.

Today, Catholic women have changed their major contributions to the church from domestic chores -- cleaning the church premises, providing food for the priest, or contributing in cash or kind for the building of churches,

church schools, and parish houses -- to major projects such as support for the training of seminarians, adult education projects, ongoing education for women, leadership training and skills, live-stock projects, youth development programs, campaigns against legalization of abortion, pre-marriage and married couples courses, the care of unmarried mothers, promotion of primary health care in families especially in the rural areas etc., and Catholic school education (Okoye 1984:3-4).

Today in the Nigerian Catholic Church, there are organizations which are exclusively female, formed on their initiatives and controlled completely by women leaders; but most of the time, they have no new programs other than to give support to or reiterate the principles laid down by Catholic bishops or priests. Nwosu (1990:129), for example, says that "Catholic women easily became the first lay group to lend weight and support to the bishops on the vexed school question." These women's organizations and their leaders may seem autonomous, but they always have a spiritual director who is a priest, and almost everything they do needs the support or is subject to approval of the spiritual director, the parish priest, or the bishop who is always a man. Nwosu (1990:104) argues that "the need for men to give approval to women's decisions also shows to what extent women still took a secondary position in church affairs...."

"The great trouble with the Catholic Church", Hope and

Young (1983:165) claimed, is that "it's more concerned with organization than with individuals." One of the logical conclusions from their work is that Catholic women do not place a high value on social change or development; tend to respect authority, have a great deal of reverence for the church, and look mainly to male leaders for guidance. Their role is in most cases secondary and supportive to that of men, unlike their Protestant or African Independent church counterparts, who are themselves more prone to assume leadership position in their churches (Nwosu 1990).

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

A. Methodology

In this study, I compare the AIC and the RCC women whom I have interviewed at length. I also attended their meetings and visited their places of work and homes. I chose my informants from the membership of the two denominations or churches: the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) from the Aladura group of churches which is one of the African Independent churches in Nigeria. The CAC is said to be the largest of Aladura AIC as the RCC is the largest of the mainline Christian churches in Nigeria. As Alokun Adeware (1991:XV) confirms. "The CAC - a church regarded by Professor Geoffrey Parrinder as the 'largest of the indigenous Churches;' a church that by 1963 Western Nigeria's statistical data was known as coming next in that part of Nigeria, only to the... Roman Catholic churches."

Selection of site: I chose Ile-Ife (a town in Osun state, in southwestern Nigeria) as my research base because I was informed that it is the only place in Nigeria where the strength of the two churches is comparable in terms of their

votaries and also to minimize cultural effects. Contrary to my expectation that Ile-Ife would have four RCC main parishes (local churches) and three CAC "bethels" (local congregations or churches), it is the CAC church at the campus that is called bethel and the others are called churches. Also the three churches or bethels had been divided into eight districts a few months before the research started. However, this was no big problem because it evened out with the RCC main outstation churches. I visited almost all the CAC and RCC churches in Ile-Ife, interacted, and observed some of their activities. I selected my main subjects from these RCC and CAC Churches (parishes and bethels). But I concentrated more on three CAC and three RCC churches at strategic places in different areas of Ile-Ife for my observations and participation. I attended meetings, seminars, and conferences organized by the district, diocesan, provincial, and national bodies of the women of these two churches outside Ile-Ife as well as one organized by a women's religious group. I attended weddings, pilgrimage, prayer sessions and meetings, naming ceremonies, birthdays, send-off parties, harvest and bazaar ceremonies, launchings, receptions, funerals, and anniversaries.

The Selection of Respondents: Due to illiteracy and poor records, it was difficult to use a random sampling method to select respondents. Instead, I employed three types of

nonprobability sampling, combining what Bailey (1987:92-95) called convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling to arrive at my main hundred women respondents - fifty-two from the CAC and forty-eight from the RCC. I focused my individual interviews on the leaders of the two groups of women because I presumed they would know about the history and present situation of religiously active women in their churches. Initially, through the help of Fr. Joseph Ezeji, one of the parish priests in Ile-Ife, I sought the help of one leader from each of the two churches to serve as key informants. My main informants were two NCE (National Certificate of Education) holders: one CAC, the other RCC. They were teachers and also attending the sandwich program to get their first degree. In the process, I identified groups of women leaders to interview from the RCC and CAC in the community. In choosing my respondents, I tried to include women who have moved from RCC to CAC and vice versa, and also grassroot members. I interviewed the community development officer of Ile-Ife local government area on the participation of women in their community development; six priests of RCC and four pastors of CAC mostly in Ile-Ife; the National Presidents and/or Secretaries of Christian Association of Nigeria, RCC, and CAC Women Associations; and four archbishops (including the ones in the new capital, Abuja) and four Assistant General Superintendents, each from the two churches, each representing the three church provinces plus Abuja in

Nigeria; and six others who were neither CACs nor RCCs. These interviews added thirty-three people to my sample of 100. When I interviewed some CAC leaders, they brought in their executive members, who put in few words here and there during the interviews. Also while some women were being interviewed, their husbands contributed on different levels.

I also attended the National Conferences of Catholic Women and National Conference of Christ Apostolic Church women. I thought that most women who attended the national conferences would be leaders and educated. But to my surprise, most women who attended the CAC national conference were not educated. At these conferences, I administered a survey to two hundred women from each group (see Appendix C). I attended and distributed almost the same questionnaire to the religious women (reverend sisters in the Catholic Church) during their national conference. My target population for these questionnaires was six hundred, two hundred from each of three groups of women, but I was able to collect only 447 answered questionnaires. This was intended to give my study not only a wider sample base for further comparison, but also to give me a general idea of women's opinions on this research topic throughout Nigeria. Although the experiences of these National conferences have influenced my work, I have not been able to analyze the findings of the questionnaires for this dissertation. Summary of respondents used for this dissertation:

1. Church Women respondents in Ile-Ife (52 CAC & 48 RCC)
 - a) women leaders
 - b) women converts
 - c) grassroots members
2. Other CAC & RCC respondents (27)
 - a) Pastors of the two churches in Ile-Ife
 - b) National presidents and secretaries of RCC and CAC women associations
 - c) Archbishops & Assistant General Superintendents (AGS) of the two churches
 - d) National president of Christian Association of Nigeria
3. Non RCCs and CACs (6)
 - a) Community Development Officer in Ile-Ife
 - b) A woman from RCC to CAC to Deeper life
 - c) Chairperson of the national women's commission
 - d) Captain Christiana Abiodun - living foundress of Cherubim and Seraphim church.
 - e) Cherubim and Seraphim pastor in Ile-Ife
 - f) Pastor in CAC to Christ Trumpeters

Data Collection: According to Catherine Robbins, who studied revival movements in East Africa, "Data collections in the field are seldom organized to conform to the needs of the researcher; important sources of information are often inaccessible while valuable cooperation sometimes comes from unexpected quarters" (Robbins 1975:45). Robbins suggests that researchers be open to using multiple sources of valuable data. I followed her lead, although my major source of data was in-depth interviews. I used broad open-ended questions (see Appendix A) to gather information from my respondents about their activities in the church. Each interview lasted one to two and a half hours in length and was taped and transcribed. (The field recording instrument is reproduced in Appendix B). I photographed and video-tapped some of their activities.

Despite much illiteracy, there is an extensive array of

letters, reports, programs, minutes, and records, as well as many published and unpublished pamphlets and books available. I analyzed these documents and records of the women's organizations, including their circulars, advertisements, announcements, and almanac and also gathered the church and local government records regarding women and development.

Aware that some perceptions or principles of most churches and governments exist more on paper than in practice, I provided a check by direct observation of women at home and in the settings where church work is carried on: parishes, prayer centers, healing homes, and centers. I also accompanied my informants to the community development programs (like the Better Life meetings and programs), meetings, and seminars that they attended. The interviews took place in their homes, their places of work which included the market place, shops, offices, voting centers, "church clinics", hospitals, churches, and restaurants. Only a few preferred to be interviewed in my residence, where they felt more comfortable because of noise and disturbances in their houses or places of work. Most of the time, I filled out my field recording instrument in their houses and wrote my field notes in my residence when I had time for myself.

Before I left the field, opportunities arose for me to thank and share my general findings with the various groups and more. The Sociology and Anthropology Department of my host institution, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, organized a

seminar for me to share my findings so far. This I did. The RCC women came to my house and invited me to give them a talk during their Ile-Ife CWO area meeting. I took the opportunity to thank them for their cooperation and shared the experiences and the findings of my research so far with them. On invitation also, I shared some of my findings with a group of the RCC religious women. Some of them expressed that I am articulating what is in their minds and wished to know what to do. With the CAC, I had no formal invitation to come for a talk, but during my last visits especially to the midwives clinics, I used the opportunities to thank and share my findings and experiences with them.

All of these groups were grateful to me for sharing my findings with them. Some made me promise to give them copies of my dissertation, or at least summaries of my findings. For the first time, some of the women started asking and wanting to know why women are not allowed to perform certain functions in the church. This awareness came partly from my interviews. Some were asking me and some were asking their pastors and priests. Even some of the pastors and priests themselves confessed that they have taken most of these things for granted.

Though I was aware and tried to control it, I cannot really measure the effects my background had on my research. As an RCC nun, I have had the background information of what is done in RCC and thus have understood more easily when

things were said about the RCC. I hope it allowed me enough openness to listen and understand the meanings my respondents were giving. I don't know the level of my influence when some RCC women said things such as, "but you know more than I do"; "May be you will be a nice somebody to ask, why are women not allowed to do these things?" and "You know it ... I should ask you"; "If you can, tell me ... women should be part of it, as we have sisters, we should have priests." Or when a CAC pastor will tell me that "RCC women have not reached the height that CAC women have reached"; or when a CAC woman turns around to ask me if women do certain things in my church." Before I met my informants, the first few parents (especially from the CAC) I met through Sr. Olivia Nwosu (headmistress of the Nursery School, run by the Immaculate Heart Sisters) did not want to share anything about their church with me until I had met their pastors. Also going through my interviews, I noticed there are places I failed to probe sufficiently, probably because I took things for granted myself.

Some of the men who have come in contact with my project shared the effect my research had on them. For example, it made them reflect on certain things they took for granted about women and made the Catholic priests among them more open to see the good in the AIC. But I must confess that I have been challenged by the CAC women. The audacity they have to claim the power and inspiration of God has left me wanting as an RCC religious woman. Despite their being married, caring

for their children and husbands, being less educated and less travelled than most women in the RCC, especially myself, they are able to claim God as their authority to shake the structures of their church that are holding women back from active participation. In spite of my admiration of them and their not knowing they are an inspiration to me, one of their leaders made a passionate plea to me to come and help and deliver them from bondage of the men if I could. That made me more determined to share the results of my research at least with the women leaders and explore more avenues to help the women folk.

Analysis of Data: I used both ethnographic and simple statistical techniques, such as percentages and frequencies, to answer my research questions. I analyzed the differences and similarities in the two groups of women in the churches under survey, in terms of their opportunities for decision making and with regard to their socioeconomic and political activities. I examined the leadership struggle and the strategies the women are using to gain access to positions of authority in the churches. The analysis also explored the impact of religion on women's participation in church and formal community development activities.

For reasons of confidentiality, the respondents will not be referred to by their proper names because of the personal nature of some of the information they gave.

B. Personal characteristics of the respondents

The total number of respondents were 133: 109 were RCC and CAC women; 18 were men (pastors and priests); and six others (four women and two men) who were neither CAC nor RCC. The majority came from Ife area. The personal characteristics of these respondents, especially of the 109 women, will be viewed and compared. The comparisons will be between the CAC and RCC and will include their ages, educational levels, incomes, jobs, marital statuses, and changes in religious affiliations.

TABLE 1: Distribution by age.

AGE years	CAC women		RCC women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-29	3	5	-	-	3	3
30-39	15	26	12	23	27	25
40-49	14	25	15	29	29	26
50-59	9	16	17	32	26	24
60-69	7	12	2	4	9	8
70-79	-	-	2	4	2	2
80-89	3	5	1	2	4	4
NR	6	11	3	6	9	8
Total	57	100%	52	100%	109	100%

AGE: Table One shows that the women in the sample ranged in

age from mid-twenties to late eighties. It is clear that the majority of the respondents, are between the ages of 30 and 59 - two-thirds of the 57 CAC women and 84% of the 52 RCC women falling in this age grouping. Three CAC women were below 30 and three above 80. Contrary to my expectation, of the four most elderly women interviewed, three were CAC. Because the RCC is an older church, I was expecting to see more elderly people in the RCC than in the CAC, which is a new church in comparison to the RCC.

TABLE 2: Distribution by educational level

Educ level	CAC women		RCC women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	6	11	2	4	8	7
Primary School	9	16	9	4	18	17
Secondary Sch.	16	28	10	19	26	24
TTC	5	9	14	27	19	18
RSA & D.Sc	-	-	2	4	2	2
Nursing	3	5	4	8	7	6
NCE	7	12	6	12	13	12
Graduate	4	7	3	6	7	6
Adult Educ	2	3	-	-	2	2
No Response	5	9	2	4	7	6
Total	57	100%	52	100%	109	100%

KEY: TTC = Teacher Training College
 RSA = Royal Society of Arts
 D.Sc= Domestic Science
 NCE = National Certificate of Education

EDUCATION: The women's educational level ranged from those who did not go to school at all to those who have graduated

from the universities. Out of the eight women who did not go to school at all, six were CAC and two were RCC. Only seven out of the 109 women interviewed were university graduates. Four out of the seven were CAC and three were RCC. I had curiosity over the branch of CAC called "bethelites," who operate mainly in the universities. Although most of the women have no degrees, 68% of my women respondents had above primary school educations. Out of the 18 women in the primary school cell in the Table, 11% in RCC and 55% in the CAC did not even complete primary education. About a quarter of the women entered secondary school. Some completed "modern three," now the equivalent of junior secondary. Two CAC women did not complete junior secondary school. One CAC and one RCC woman passed junior secondary but not senior secondary school. More RCC women had the tendency to attend a teaching training college; only two CAC women were attending an adult education class.

While four RCC and three CAC women had nursing training, one of the curious puzzles about the CAC women doing nursing is that the core CAC church members (unlike most bethelites) believe in faith healing and do not go to the hospital or take medications. Amazingly, each of these women and other members who take medicine have a way of interpreting and defending their uses of medicine and its administration. Some say that being a nurse is working for government which is different from "church things"; some claim that the church is wrong

because medicine is made up of fruits and vegetables, and some say they take medicine because they have not got enough faith.

Significantly different from this table were my experiences when attending the national conferences of the CAC and RCC women. During the conferences, I noticed that almost all RCC women were educated and could fill out my questionnaires, whereas majority of the CAC women could not. I had to assist the latter and also implore the assistance of others. The medium of communication for the RCC women was English because all know the language; but there were translators for the CAC women because most of them did not know English. Also during the national conferences the RCC women, more than the CAC women, manifested a higher taste and standard of living in their dressing, eating, accomodation, sanitation, interaction, speeches and organization which according to Akande Bolanle (1988) is very much associated with educated women. Generally, going to the churches and interacting with the women, pastors, and priests, I noticed that RCCs were more educated than CACs. No priest in the RCC had less than first degree, but some of the CAC pastors had not finished primary school.

INCOME: In Table Three, unlike eight CAC women, no RCC woman said that she was not receiving any income. Some of these CAC women who claimed they had no income said that they received gifts in cash and kind from people. Even some of the women who

said they had income were not very sure of their income. Some said it is very hard for them to calculate because they had not thought of checking it on a monthly basis. Some were able to say what they would have in hand by the end of the day or week or month, after their expenses. Most of the women are traders; and some who do other jobs such as teaching, sometimes engage in trading. As they trade they provide for their families from their trade. And as they are in the market, they use some of their proceeds to provide for their own and relatives' needs without sitting down to calculate

TABLE 3: Distribution of income, in naira.

Amt of NAIRA	CAC women		RCC women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	8	14	-	-	8	7
Below N100	6	10	6	11	12	11
100-199	10	18	5	10	15	14
200-299	4	7	3	6	7	6
300-399	4	7	4	7	8	7
400-499	-	-	5	10	5	5
500-599	5	9	3	6	8	7
600-699	5	9	3	6	8	7
700-799	1	2	5	10	6	6
800-899	2	3	2	4	4	4
900-999	-	-	2	4	2	2
1000-1999	4	7	6	11	10	9
2000-2999	-	-	1	2	1	1
No Response	8	14	7	13	15	14
Total	57	100%	52	100%	109	100%

what is being spent. Those who have added other things to their primary jobs are in fact not sure of what they make in a month. It was difficult to get accurate figures, partly because the women sold their articles in trickles and did not add up their earnings, and probably because they were unwilling to reveal the amounts.

However, if we go by what we have in the table, the range of income that has the highest frequency is that of the women whose income falls between 100-199 naira. While the CAC women form two-thirds of this group, the RCC is only one-third. The CAC women mode corresponds with that of all the women, but the RCC has two modes almost at the extremes. The total number of women with income is 86: 41 CAC and 45 RCC. The median income of the women falls within the range of 400-499 which corresponds to that of the RCC women. With the median income range of 300-399 naira, the CAC women median income is less than overall median income. The mean income of the CAC women ranges from 376 to 460 naira, while that of the RCC women falls between 513 and 599 naira.

JOB: As seen in Table Four, a majority of the women interviewed were either teachers or traders. These are the two occupations which have overwhelming and direct impact on the grassroots population in terms of economy and education. In both occupations, although more respondents were from the CAC than the RCC, the differences are not very great. As I said

earlier, it is surprising that the CAC women engage at all in nursing or midwifery because of their religious beliefs.

TABLE 4: Job distribution

JOB	CAC WOMEN		RCC WOMEN		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Trading	16	28	13	25	29	26
Teaching	13	22	12	23	25	23
Sewing/tailor	3	5	7	13	10	9
Church Midwife	4	7	-	-	4	4
Nursing	-	-	4	8	4	4
Prayer/Iya Ijo	6	10	-	-	6	5
Typist/Secre	1	2	2	4	3	3
Tax Officer	1	2	-	-	1	1
Security	1	2	-	-	1	1
Phone Sup.	-	-	1	2	1	1
Farming	-	-	1	2	1	1
Caterer	-	-	1	2	1	1
Directress/ Manageress	-	-	2	4	2	2
Councillor	-	-	1	2	1	1
Foundress/past or/evangelist/ prophetess/Gen Supt	3	5	-	-	3	3
None/pension	4	7	5	9	9	8
No Response	5	8	3	6	8	7
Total	57	100%	52	100%	109	100%

However, it is disturbing, that even though the RCC started health services programs when it first came to Nigeria, the

number of RCC women in this sector is nothing to write home about. More so, when it is known that RCC women's organizations embark on development projects in this health sector. Are the RCC women saying that they do not motivate themselves or their daughters enough to partake in the health sector that is usually very dear to their hearts?

Denominational change: According to table 5A, out of the 57 CAC respondents, only 15 (26%) were CAC from birth, the rest (74%) joining the CAC from other denominations and religions. This may be because the CAC is one of the new African Independent churches founded by members of Protestant denominations. The RCC is older, so 73% RC respondents have been RC from birth. The religious origins of those from other churches are as in Table 5B.

TABLE 5A: Summary of distribution of denomination change

Name	changed		Not changed		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
CAC	42	74	15	26	57	100
RCC	14	27	38	73	52	100
Total	56		53		109	100%

Table 5b shows that the denomination with the highest number of deserters is the Anglican Church. Out of 24 who left the Anglican Church, 16 joined the CAC and 8 the RCC. Even

TABLE 5B: Distribution by denominational origin

Original Denomination	Now CAC		Now RCC		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Anglican	16	29	8	14	24	43
CMS	9	16	1	2	10	18
Muslim	7	12	-	-	7	12
CAC/RCC	6	11	1	2	6:1	11:2
Baptist	-	-	2	3	2	3
Methodist	2	3	1	2	3	5
Salvation Army	1	2	-	-	1	2
E.C.W.A.	-	-	1	-	1	2
African Church	1	2	-	-	1	2
Total	42	100%	14	100%	56	100%

Muslims are leaving their religion to join the CAC. But our main interest is in those who have left the CAC to join the RCC and vice versa. Six respondents left the RCC to join the CAC and only one CAC left for the RCC.

A majority of the women left their original churches because of marriage. The one CAC who left for the RCC falls into this category. There are a greater variety of reasons for leaving the RCC for CAC, which include: marriage, the CAC are "more prayerful," "more spontaneous in prayer," "allows you to tell God how you feel," "more like African way of worshipping with dancing and singing." Comparing the RCC and the CAC, it is clear that the CAC is attracting more RCCs than the reverse.

MARITAL STATUS

Except for one RCC woman, all the respondents are married women. Nine CAC and eight RCC women are either second or third wives. The rest are the first wives of their husbands, but some of these men have taken second wives. Apart from four RCC women who stopped at only traditional marriage, almost all the rest had church marriages. In the CAC, 30 had church weddings, 18 stopped at traditional marriage, three had court marriages, and two did none (the other four gave no response). One may conclude from this that the RCC women and their husbands are more rigid in following their Church's law than are the CACs.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN'S SOCIOECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The main point of this chapter is that women's work and participation are critically important to the maintenance of churches and society. Some of these contributions may seem invisible and trivial but they are highly necessary, grassroots activities for the development of the church and community. Both RCC and CAC women maintain the premises, prepare for special events and rituals, alert pastors to the needs of parishioners, keep parishioners involved, bring new people in, transmit information from pastors and priests to the members, and so forth. Pope John Paul II (1989) noted that the laity (majority of which are the women) "participate in everything that assures the church's vitality, her sanctification, her material support, her fraternal life, and especially her witness to the gospel." While RCC and CAC women both participate in behind-the-scenes support and maintenance, there are differences between the two groups. This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will deal with women's socioeconomic activities in the church; the second, will discuss the social, economic and political activities outside the church.

S E C T I O N O N E

Women's Socioeconomic Activities in the Church

A. Sociocultural Activities of Women in the Church

The fact of the many social activities that women perform in the churches buttresses the point that women are the life blood of the churches. Consider the functions of women in the following social and cultural areas:

General Attendance:

A huge, tall 55-year-old (Mrs.) Justina Abunde posed that women contribute socially by their presence and attendance in almost all church functions. Justina is an assistant chief matron in a university teaching hospital and has twice been appointed a member of the diocesan pastoral council. She said that, unlike men, women make efforts to attend things organized in the church: launchings, workshops, seminars, meetings, conferences, retreats, bazaars, ordinations, first masses, visits of the bishops or archbishops, children's Day, and Mothers' Day. Her claim was echoed by Ojo A. Gabriel and Nwadike M. Dominic (1990:20) when they said, "many voices at the 1987 Synod lamented the absence or scarcity of the presence of men in many church functions, celebrations, and responsibilities." Another woman, a CAC member, claimed that for some occasions, it is only women who show their faces. One

ex-president of the Catholic Women's Organization (CWO) told me that during a silver jubilee of one priest she had bragged as she looked around towards the end of the function, all the men had gone, and only the women were there, giving the moral support needed. She was proud of the women and called this to the parish priest's attention. The parish priest iterated, "women for show." The ex-president said that "this is not a matter of women for show. Suppose the women had gone like the men, who will be here for the concluding prayers." She posed the notion that women are always concerned and reminded the parish priest: "When you do your naming ceremony, it's the women; at the wedding, it's the women; and the funeral, they come." The regular attendance and participation of both RCC and CAC women in all these church functions is a physical demonstration of their heart-felt interest, belief and commitment in the developmental processes of the church. "While men run away from being committed to social activities, women want to participate and contribute a lot with little or no reward (Okafor 1983:82).

Numerical strength:

In both RCC and CAC, more women than men attend church services. In the churches I visited, the numerical strength of women always strikes a note. In most churches, there is a tendency for men to sit on one side and for women to sit on the other side. On entering the church, a quick glance will

show that women's section is more full than the men's section. Whether the church is big or small, women are always in the majority. For example, in two separate churches (one RCC and one CAC), the average number of both sexes after five services in 1991 is as follows:

	MEN & BOYS	WOMEN & GIRLS
RCC	363	446
CAC	322	411

Women not only attend church in greater numbers, they also are more numerous in most meetings and most societies and respond more promptly to calls and contributions. Women "constitute the silent majority that make the society work" (Nwagbara 1987:4).

Number has a special significance in the social life of the Nigerian people. That significance is strength. Speaking about The Human Community in Africa, Shorter (1978:27) rightly said that there is "strength in numbers." So if we go by the adage, "Igwe bu ike" (number is power), then one can realize the importance of the numbers of women in the churches. If one takes "advantage of the weight of numbers" (Ekong 1988:387), the large population of women in the churches in and of itself can create economic, social, and political biases. For example, think of what numbers can do during voting in elections. As the National Laity Council rightly said, "since women constitute a significant majority of the church and since they have their distinctive talents and gifts, the church would be the poorer without their active and full

participation" (Ojo and Nwadike 1990:79).

Cooking and Entertainment:

Both women and church authorities in RCC and CAC testify that women are very much involved in the ceremonies that take place in the church. Almost all my respondents affirmed that women are responsible for cooking during any ceremony in the church. They cook both for the church members and for the guests.

In the RCC, Justina, the assistant chief matron summarized this by saying,

There are lots of things women do in the church. I told you when they are doing any occasion in the church, we are in the forefront. We are usually there to organize things. If it is entertaining members and guests from outside, we do the cooking. Majority of the works done here, we do them.

Remembering how they started over time to contribute money, organize the buying of things, cook, serve for different ceremonies and occasions in the church, Mrs. Dureke, a retired teacher (who, apart from being the current president of CWO, is in four societies in her parish) stated, "When there is going to be any ceremony, we plan ahead for the success of such ceremony."

In the CAC, especially among the Bethelites, women have taken cooking and entertainment as part of their duties so that any times they are not called upon to do them, they think that something has gone wrong. For example, during the wedding

of the daughter of one of the pastors, the pastor arranged for a caterer to cook and serve his 1,500 guests for 7,500 naira. The women in his church sent a delegation to him to ask if they had offended him. When he said no, they wanted to know why he was hiring a caterer when they were there. After discussion, he then allowed them to do the cooking and the serving. He confessed that the quality of food was high and the reception was excellent and in fact, the women did more than the caterer would have done. Because of her position as a pastor's wife, an ex-RCC graduate, Mrs. Martha Isidi, 51 years old, retired from civil service in order to "do a lot of entertaining" of church guests as well as her husband's. This, at times, seems the most arduous church duty she performs. More so, when it is seen in the light of its importance to the pastor's work in the sustenance of the church.

In most ceremonies in both CAC and RCC, the women provide the entertainment, not only by serving food and drink, but by also dancing and singing. During the course of my research, I witnessed many instances of women dancing to entertain themselves or others during their meetings, church ceremonies, and church fund-raising activities. One woman said that it is the women who plan the welcomings and send-offs of the parish priests, reception of bishops and so forth. They find out the needs of the "servants of God" such as pastors and evangelists and try to provide for them.

For any ceremony or social gathering in the RCC church,

women are always active. For example, one of my respondents described how the women worked very hard for and during the ordination of a boy from their parish. They contributed money, cooked, served and organized the buying of uniforms for both men and women; they did all the purchasing including the cow; they bought presents for the newly ordained. She concluded by saying, "we nearly died."

To a casual observer, cooking and entertainment may seem perfunctory. But they are part of the strategies to attract people to ceremonies or gatherings. Most of these ceremonies are not isolated events for just entertainment or socializing, but they also serve as occasions for fund-raising, planning and initiating programs for the economic, social, and political development of the church. We have a saying that a "hungry man is an angry man." So the cooking and entertainment not only give nourishment, but also help to maintain the peace and relaxed atmosphere of the people during the ceremonies. Women do all these things without payment, believing that it is part of their duty as women church members.

Prayer or Devotion:

A 57-year-old Monsignor Adetola stressed that prayer is a top-rank activity in the RCC. He observed that at all the prayer meetings in the RCC such as the Stations of the Cross, devotions to the Sacred Heart, St. Jude, St. Anthony, the Rosary and so forth, that women are more devoted and more in

attendance than men. With this observation, he concluded that "without women in the church, the church will collapse." Even in her research among the Indians, Steggerda (1991:7) concluded that "women in general are more religious than men. Women have stronger christian beliefs and are more involved in churchlife." Surprisingly, of the 62 catholic respondents, only eight women and two men mentioned prayer or prayer groups as women's church activity. While some of them see the daily attendance of morning mass as a major women activity for the spiritual support of the church, others look at the weekly monthly prayer and revival meetings as important too for their own spiritual uplift. Such prayerful activities as singing, praying, dancing, teaching children and maintaining order during mass or service are also taken for granted.

Unlike in the RCC, prayer as a women's church activity was more prominent in the CAC. Thirty respondents (26 women and four men) noted prayer as part of the CAC women's church activities. Many women claimed that, as individuals and in groups, they go to the church to pray; they pray for one another, women's causes, self-protection, the sick, the needy, children, husbands, new-born babies, pregnant women. Also for people who asked for their prayers, church projects, and activities, meetings, revivals, for the whole church, for everybody, for workers of God and for government workers. CAC women prayed for me, both in a group and individually as I visited their houses. One rang the bell and several said we

should pray before I began my interview and some called for prayers at the end. A 60-year-old contractor, Mrs. Virginia E. Aramide (who belongs to many church societies and believes in having God-Father to succeed) said with pride that "the first help we use to give is prayer." The women organize weekly prayer groups and form what is called "Egbe agbadura jagun" (prayer warriors). Many are faith healers who cure their sick with prayers.

Singing as a form of prayer is recognized as a church activity in both CAC and RCC. In the RCC, women sing mostly when they are members of the choir; give only formal responses and do not lead the prayers except when one of them is to read the prayer of the faithful for the mass. Owininde (1985:56) has said, "Women brought up as Catholics still find it difficult to pray spontaneously as this was never the practice of the church." The CAC, on the other hand, pray more spontaneously and amidst singing and dancing. Most of these Aladura churches came into existence because of the older churches' failures to meet the needs of the indigeneous people spiritually, morally, and even materially, and because of the older churches' refusal to be African enough in worship, theology, and understanding (Omoyajowo 1978:109 and Breindenbach 1981:45).

In the CAC, therefore, almost everybody participates in the singing because most of the songs are in form of short choruses. The songs are composed and the singing is conducted

in such a way that it is so appealing and moving that one cannot resist the temptation of joining in and at least shaking the body to correspond to the rhythm. All clap, dance vigorously, and at appropriate times pray loudly with different gestures. (A video tape of some of these services speaks for itself). During this period, they speak and pour out their minds and hearts to God in any way the individual feels. Some do it crying, some shouting, some talking, some singing, some dancing, some waving their hands or clapping them, some stamping their feet, some nodding and shaking their heads, etc. A stranger will easily get the impression that they are all possessed, but then will be surprised when the whole place is in absolute silence at the sound of the bell by the leader. Mrs. A.E. Elujoba who teaches at the Teacher Training College and has no time for community development activities outside the church told me she established a prayer band made up of students. She leaves her house early on Sunday mornings to pray with this band before the Sunday School starts. They will pray about the service of the day, about the Sunday school, about every event that will be coming up until the bell rings for the Sunday School. She spends about five hours in the church every Sunday morning.

The Monsignor feels strongly that prayer is a women's church activity that is crucial to the life of the church. However, that only few women mentioned it as women's church activity not only evokes a sense of surprise, but also raises

questions. Could it be that prayer is taken for granted as a church activity or that the women themselves do not know it is an important activity that made them not to mention it? Is it that these RCC women do not appreciate the importance of this prayer activity in the church, or that the Church does not appreciate their wholehearted involvement in it. One of the things it evokes could be, a sense of the unreality of prayer in their lives. That prayer gives a sense of external imposition which is seen in the formal structure of their prayer. Contrast this with the freedom and exuberance expressed by the CAC women in their prayers. This contrast, in the forms and expressions of life in one's prayer, makes one wonder about the people themselves. They are of the same tradition and cultural heritage. So why this marked difference in the style of praying in the two churches? The reason may lie in the fact that CAC is native to the people, while RCC is foreign to them. No wonder therefore why more RCs are leaving their Church for the CAC. This is a situation which the RCC needs to address and redress in order to stem the present tide of RCC women leaving for the other churches.

To the extent that the RCC form of religion has inadvertently suppressed this expression of the human self through its rather formalistic form of prayer, it may be inhibiting one of the most fundamental values of civilization, namely freedom of expression. On the contrary, to the extent that the CAC religion is cultivating this human need to freely

express oneself in prayer, to that extent, religion is facilitating progress in the community. For any physical development to be possible, the development of the human person in all her or his necessary dimensions must come first, among which the spiritual is of unavoidable importance.

Choir and Carols

Singing and music are important aspects of worship. While spontaneous singing is a vital feature in the CAC, it does not obscure the need of having an organized choir of select men and women. The RCC also has a choir. Although only five women respondents and one male included choir as a women's church activity, it is observed that women play leading roles in the choir in both CAC and RCC. Some parishes or churches have all-women choirs where they lead choruses in the church as well as children's choir. Some churches have bands that have gone commercial, playing at functions for a fee and for entertainment. Adebawo Modupe Kehinde (1990:3) writes that women singers and band leaders (like lady Evangelist Bola Are in the CAC) have become popular and financially rich with all their recordings which have evangelized many. This activity is getting very popular and important in the development of the church and community. At great church feasts like Christmas and Easter, choirs organize caroling and go round the community singing songs and making the community feel the celebration.

Some of the results from choir and carol activities of the women in both the RCC and CAC give us some valuable insights into the indispensable and pioneering developmental roles of the activities of women in the churches. The commercialization of church choir is a definite break from the old church tradition which tended to see church singing and music as a preserve of worship. Using appealing church songs and music outside the churches for fees not only is a good means of recruitment into the churches, but also a good resource for economic development.

Visitations and Recruiting New Members

Visiting is one important social activity in the church in which both RCC and CAC women take very active part. In the RCC, visits are usually organized by "sodalities," while in the CAC, there are "visitation teams." In either church, the activities of these groups are essentially the same:

- to visit absentee or lukewarm members to find out their reason and try to advise and encourage them to return to the fold. They even bring their problems to priest/pastor. They also visit and convert non-members.
- to visit the aged and actually help them out with some household chores.

The activities of these visitation teams are very essential in building together members of the church. They make individuals feel wanted and important.

The CAC go a little further by visiting new members. In fact they are the backbone of seeing to the continuity of the churches. First and foremost, they give birth to new members, welcoming and acknowledging their presence in the church and going to their homes at the earliest convenience to share the word of God with them and show love to them.

Here again, as in the prayer activity mentioned above, visitation as a church engagement is more adapted to the cultural life of the people in the CAC than in the RCC. Although the aims of the visitations in both churches may be the same, the methods are somewhat different. Miss Ronke, a friendly neighbor during my research (who left the RCC for the CAC), makes this difference clear when she pointed out to me that one of the effective methods in CAC which she found lacking in the RCC is a follow-up program for new members. This difference in the approach to visitations unearths one of remarkable adaptations of religion which the CAC members have made to the cultural life of the people. It exposes the externality of the RCC religion to the way of life of the people as is evidenced by social visits. The visitation by the RCC smacks of perfunctoriness. Culturally, the people in their real, daily life situation visit the aged and the needy regularly, and this shows interest and ownership as is seen in the CAC follow-up visits.

With the CAC method, the people are more cohesive and supportive of one another, which is what Durkheim (1915/47)

said Religion does. This mode of support is more likely to succeed in community business ventures, and also politics if partisanship is to play a decisive part. Thus the kind of interest one shows in one's religion as a corporate body is likely to be carried over into other areas of life where similar corporate activity is called for.

Socialization or Teaching of Children

Eighteen women and five men included teaching children in the church as part of women's church activities. The women not only teach the children at home, but also in the church. They are most of the time the children's Sunday school teachers. The Sunday school phenomenon is more prominent in the CAC than in the RCC. One RCC women noted, "we don't take this Sunday School teaching for children seriously in our church. Anyway it is something new in the Roman Catholic Church." However, the RCC conducts catechism classes and have Bible societies where women take very active part. The purpose of the Sunday school, according to most of my respondents, is to help the children to understand the word of God at their own level, because not all of them understand what the priest or pastor says. It is also for directing and teaching the children what they should do in the church and to assist the children and train them, so that they will be useful to the church and their family in the future. Mrs. Veronica Asefon, who is 52 years old and combines teaching with trading, reported that

part of the activities the women do with the children is to "stay with them to teach them catechism and Bible study; and when it is time for offertory, they will bring the children to the church" in a procession. This offertory procession, as I observed in at least two churches in Ile-Ife, is a way of teaching the children from childhood to make an offering or donation to the church. In addition, the women sing and clap with the children during church service thereby teaching them to pray. This is for the spiritual and moral uplift of the children and the welfare of themselves and the community. The CWO in Oyo diocese has also produced and printed a prayer book mainly for the children of the diocese. This, to my mind, is a very concrete achievement in helping the church grow by educating the children of the diocese.

An archbishop commented that women "help in the training of girls; help them in their formation; help prepare the girls that are preparing for marriage or for religious life." One of the parish priests in Ile-Ife who categorized women as agents of socialization is of the opinion that, "without these women, the children may not know what we call 'doctrine'." He lamented that the children are no longer taught the Catholic faith in schools, but was happy that women are fulfilling this "important apostolate" through the Sunday schools and the societies within the church.

It is of interest to note that the phenomenon of Sunday school teaching is something which the RCC borrowed from

elsewhere, most probably from the CAC. It is also noteworthy that the women in both RCC and CAC have recognized the value of religion in the moral and spiritual developmental life of the children. It is also of interest to observe that the women are able to counteract the negative impact which the absence of religion in their children's schools can have on their children and so can try to make up this lack via the Sunday school teaching of the children. The moral values of this teaching reminds me of the adage that "education without morality is like riding a bicycle without a break." This can be dangerous.

This teaching of the children certainly goes beyond the merely physical observable which people are accustomed with identifying, as "progress". These children will grow up to become active members of the churches as well as of other social, economic, and political institutions. The moral and spiritual values they learn in the churches are bound to influence and shape their views about the various economic, social, and political institutions. Significantly, the subtle role which the women play in the building of our society is rarely accorded its real worth by the general public.

Church Midwife's activity:

One of the outstanding jobs that women do in the CAC is that of church midwife. It does not exist in the RCC. Seventeen CAC respondents, 13 women and four men, said

categorically that the role of the midwife is very vital in the CAC church. Since the church believes in faith healing, they always try to build a maternity clinic on church premises to take care of the pregnant women and those who are physically, emotionally, and mentally sick. The midwife is in charge of the church's maternity. She tests and takes care of pregnant women and those who want to give birth. She also leads "prayer clinics" of pregnant women, prays and counsels women who are looking for pregnancy, leads prayer clinics of sick women and children, "blesses" water for the women to use for cure since they are prohibited from taking medicine, as well as assists in deliveries. Midwives now receive two years training at the Faith Home, also called the Midwifery Training Center at Ede. One CAC pastor claimed that over 1,000 midwives have been trained there.

According to a pastor in Ibadan, it is through the midwives that the pastors come to learn about the problems of some families, especially those who have problems that the midwives cannot solve. He gave the example of poor families which the midwives helped the church to locate and assist. In some places such as Enugu, as the Assistant General Superintendent (AGS) of the CAC told me, the midwife also does the work of the prophetess. The indigenous idea of midwifery activities of woman in the CAC makes church life and real life integral to each other by taking care of their sick in the precincts of the places of worship. In this way, society and

religion are growing together.

In the RCC, there is no phenomenon like the CAC midwife. The absence of these type of midwives may be because the Catholic Church has hospitals and medical centers all over the country, although these facilities are not necessarily part of the mission compounds. Unlike CAC midwives, who are church certified personnel, women midwives in the RCC are government-certified nurses and they administer drugs.

Church Warden's work:

Ten RCC respondents (nine women and one archbishop) mentioned church warden as part of women's church activities. Though the church wardens of comprise men and women, in some churches, the majority of the church wardens are women. In the CAC, eight respondents (six women and two pastors) discussed the church warden work as women's church activity. Unlike in the RCC, women are not in the majority in the work of church warden in the CAC. Even in some churches like the district headquarters at Ile-Ife and Kaduna, "women are not yet allowed to do the work of the church warden because we have sufficient number of men," said one AGS.

Church Wardens are the "police" that keep the peace during church services or ceremonies. They help to maintain order, make people attentive to what is going on in the church, wake up those sleeping, settle disputes and quarrels, baby sit, teach children in Sunday school, and help to regain

old and to recruit new members in and for the church. The work of the church warden strengthens the organizational and social aspect of the church community.

Society Membership:

Almost every respondent from the RCC said that belonging to societies and organizations is part of what women do in the church. For example, every Catholic woman is expected to join the Catholic Women's Organization (CWO) which is organized on national, provincial, diocesan, zonal, parish, and station levels. The aim is to see that women are participating as much as they could in the church's activities, thereby uniting the women. It is an organization of the women, for the women, and by the women. The CWO is a forum for the good of themselves and the church. The women come together to pray, to discuss and resolve problems within the church and among the women, such as feeding the seminarians and settling disputes.

In addition to the CWO, there are other women's groups/societies under it in the parishes, all working for the progress of the church. These societies have officers like presidents, secretaries, treasurers, and so forth. These other societies are used for easy dissemination of information; for example, when a message is received from the bishop or the parish priest or the parish council. They are also used to make the women contribute faster and more, sometimes by means of competition among the groups, for example during Harvest

and Bazaar.

In the CAC as in the RCC, all 57 CAC women I interviewed told me they were members of one society or the other, but only 18 women and three men mentioned it as women's church activity. Every woman for example is supposed to be a member of the Good Women Association (GWA) which is organized on the national, district, and local church levels. Mrs. Alice Ereta, the GWA Spokeswoman and General Superintendent claimed that over 38,000 - 40,000 women attend the national conference every year. They rotate their meetings, discussing the Bible and how to behave. Women head almost all the many women's organizations in the church, and they have different offices such as president, secretary, treasurer, and so forth.

In the CAC, the women's groups and societies are more for caring and helping each other. They look out for when a member is absent, they visit her, find out why she was absent and see what help they can render her if she needs help. They use these small groups to give each other a sense of belonging. The RCC uses the societies to "decide what to do for the church", the CAC use them not only to decide what to do for the church, but primarily for what the women will do for themselves.

The most encouraging aspect of the organization of women into societies is assertion of the independence of women. In this way, religion helps the women to tap some of their hidden talent and develop some of their potentials for the economic,

social, and political development of their immediate or larger society. Religion here provides a vision for the people.

Founding of Churches:

Many of my respondents referred to foundresses as women who are making a great impact in the CAC churches. But only two men and three women mentioned this role as a women's church activity. These women build churches. Unlike before when they handed over these churches to the pastors, more recently they are heading and playing leading roles in these churches. One of the pastors' wives, exalting one of these foundresses, said, "Mrs. Ogunranti for instance, nobody has ordained her a prophetess or evangelist, but she has a vision. God spoke to her, to start this Bethel CAC and she has a lot of prophetic gifts. She is great." Some of these foundresses have pastors directly under them. Forty-two years old, Mrs. Bola Eko, a foundress and evangelist, for example, said that she has about 32 pastors under her. Mrs. Eko is a WASC (West Africa School Certificate) holder but has written books and tracts. She conducts crusades, revivals, and conventions both inside and outside the country. She is one of those few women who is a national television preacher. Another foundress who has a motor company was present when I was interviewing Mrs. Ereta, and both agreed that up to 20 to 25 women have established churches in the CAC. These women conduct services and rallies and also pray, lead, counsel, heal, preach etc.

This idea of foundress does not exist in RCC and nobody mentioned women establishing churches in RCC. But some church foundations for religious activities have been established by the women but were eventually taken over by the RC clergy just as the pastors were doing to the CAC foundresses. A typical case is that of Oke-Maria Pilgrimage center founded by the CWO in the Catholic diocese of Oyo. In the words of one of my respondents, Chief Mrs. Oyo (a retired teacher and diocesan president of the Sacred Heart society), "we are the people who established the Oke-Maria where we go to honor Mary annually. It has now been for the whole diocese and a forum for the diocesan people to come and worship together."

What intrigues me about the Oke-Maria phenomenon is that it was the first outing I participated in on my arrival to Ife, even before I started my interviews and months before I met chief Mrs. Oyo. Apart from the official program which I copied, I will take my observations directly from field notes of 9th February, 1991.

I went to the Catholic Diocesan pilgrimage - Oke Maria, which is held annually for the past 13 years. It started around 4.30 p.m. and ended about 12 noon the next day.

Observations

- In the whole activity, men were dominantly leading, despite the fact that there were many women (ratio of 4 women to 3 men).
- For the two processions before Bible service and Holy Mass, women were conspicuously absent.
- During the Bible service, the prayers, readings,

sermon, intercessory prayer, etc were done by men.

- No woman was given a seat at the section of the elevated platform where the bishop, monsignors, priests, catechists, prayer leaders, and mass-servers were sitting. Except for those women who forced themselves to the periphery of the platform to grab a seat, for that was the only place where there were seats in the whole environment. Towards the tail end of the Bible service, the Bishop called on the Rev. Sisters to come up to the platform area. Some did, and some did not. After this, everybody joined in an orderly procession to the main praying ground called the Oke-Maria.

- Throughout the whole night vigil, no woman came to the pulpit or led the prayers both for the general scene and group activities. I left the general scene and went to the group adoration from 2:30 a.m to 5 a.m and no woman including Rev. Sisters lead any of the groups. The women only participated in singing and answering prayers.

- At the main ground, the Rev. sisters were now given a section at the platform, sitting almost at right angle with the priests, but they never took any leadership position or played any leadership role. The only time they approached the pulpit or the microphone was when three Franciscan sisters sang the responsorial psalm. This took about five minutes from the whole ceremony. The rest of the time, the Rev. Sisters were sitting on the platform as if they were there for decoration.

The two examples of churches founded by women and where both men and women share leadership roles in the CAC, and the story about the Oke-Maria Pilgrimage Center of the RCC, typify the contrast between the two churches in terms of how membership is helping to facilitate or inhibit women in the development of their communities. The absence of women in participatory leadership roles in the RCC's public religious functions glaringly shows that, among other things, women in the RCC are to be seen and not heard and are discriminated against, yet women in every aspect of RCC's life are the indispensable material providers behind the scene. This attitude of discrimination certainly inhibits rather than

fosters the growth and progress of a woman's freedom, dignity, and humanity. In this way, society loses rather than gains. The CAC is more forward-looking and therefore holds more prospects for community advancement because it does not inhibit freedom but makes use of the dynamic talents of women to rouse us to positive action. Inhibition is a constraint to development.

Leadership Duties of Women in the Church:

IYA IJO's work: The title of 'Iya-Ijo' (which means "the mother of the church") exists in both the RCC and CAC. It is one of those traditions or cultures that the Catholic church has borrowed from other churches like the African Independent churches, as the CAC. Williams Pat (1989:15) said that "in the Catholic church, Iya-Ijo was introduced only in the 1960s" in imitation of the Aladura churches which "created morale boosting posts for women which ensured their membership."

Three CAC women who mentioned the Iya-Ijo position as part of women's church activities could only say that the Iya-Ijos lead and look after the women. But the four CAC Iya-Ijos among my respondents claimed to be doing various things in the church.

"I am Oga patapata" (meaning "I am the overall boss") said one CAC Iya-Ijo. This woman said she calls meetings, leads women, organizes the program to give alms, prays for pregnant women, bathes and takes care of them when they give

birth, helps the needy (including financial help when possible), and takes care of the "servants of the Lord," like the pastors and the evangelists.

I interviewed three RCC women who told me they were the Iya-Ijos' of their churches. According to one of them, "They see to the welfare of all the members of their churches by acting like a mother to them and encourage the women to participate in the CWO. She attends meetings and gives advice."

The problem that the position of Iya-Ijo is facing is that, in most churches, the Iya-Ijo is an elderly woman, sometimes the oldest. She is appointed by the parish priest after some consultations, unlike the president of the women association and organizations who are elected by the women themselves. In most cases, the activities of the president supersedes those of the Iya-Ijo, except where the Iya-Ijo is also the president of the women's organization or has an 'imposing' personality. For example, in RCC Ilode parish outstation, a young women was made the Iya-Ijo and was also elected the parish president and Ife area Vice President of the CWO. She is a very active nurse in charge of their private hospital since her husband, a medical doctor, is now more into politics and rarely at home. The drawback in the Iya-Ijo's position, despite its appealing cultural value, is that the oldest woman may not necessarily possess all that is required to be a good mother and hence a "good mother" of the church.

The idea of the Iya-Ijo (as the name connotes - mother of the church) is meant to proclaim the enviable place of women in society who are rarely recognized and accorded their real worth. A woman in the family in an African Society is a symbol of peace, among other things. Thus, the idea of integrating what is relevant in the culture into religion is a good concept towards self-realization, which is key to any development.

WORK OF EVANGELIST/EVANGELIST'S WIFE: Nobody claimed to be doing evangelizing work in the RCC. This terminology as used here applies only to the CAC. In the CAC, although women are not ordained evangelists, seven women named the work of the evangelist as a women's church activity. Several pastors interviewed always referred to women like Bola Odeleke as evangelist or doing an evangelist's work. But none of them mentioned this work as a woman's leadership role in the church. These women evangelists preach, conduct crusades and revivals, open up new missions, and pray for the people. The importance of the women evangelists in the CAC is that they are responsible for breaking new ground by claiming the name of "evangelists" for themselves and doing the work of an evangelist prior to their formal recognition by the church authorities. This is emancipation of the women by the women.

An evangelist's wife performs her duties with her husband. She normally conducts services when the husband is

not around. She leads prayers and counsels members of the Good Women Association. Though they are not paid, they believe they are evangelists to some extent and they do the work of an evangelist.

THE WORK OF PASTOR'S WIFE: Mrs. Isidi, one of the pastors' wives, said that the work of a pastor's wife comprises heading the married women's group which consists of all the female members newly married or intending to marry very soon. They act as role models for married women; attend services; counsel people; settle disputes; help their husbands by praying for them, asking God to guide them in everything they do so that they will be successful in their work; and pray generally for the success and progress of their husbands' work. They pray asking God to protect their husbands from evil spirits, jealousy and envy by the people. They look after their children and their husbands, entertain visitors, visit pregnant women and those who have just delivered, visit the sick, attend meeting, and often work for income.

The work of the evangelists' and pastors' wives may seem secondary; however, they are key to the success of the general work of the pastor himself. In some cases, these women's efforts have developed society and improved the lot of individuals. I see this wives' work as a typical example of what Finch (1983:1) described when she said that "when a woman marries, she marries not only a man but also she marries his

job, and from that point onwards will live out her life in the contest of the job which she has married." Their husbands work structures their lives and elicits their contribution to it.

FOUNDRESSES'S WORK: Much has already been said and more will be said about the Foundresses. Suffice it here to say that their leadership evolves out of certain emotional qualities they possess and exhibit. They are able to convince their followers that they are preordained, inspired, and enlightened in special ways. They are close to being charismatic leaders who inspire personal devotion in and influence others. People intensely believe in them.

Through founding of churches, they have found ways of gaining independence for themselves and using that position for leadership. Mba (1982) observed that "imported" Christianity such as the RCC deprived women of power and authority which they had possessed in the traditional religious system, but the "indigenous" christian influenced Churches restored a significant role for women. Omoyajomo (1990) agrees with Mba's observation when he said that "in the traditional Yoruba Society, religion, more than any other factor plays a major role, in ascribing status to women."

PROPHETESS AND VISIONER'S ACTIVITIES: Nobody mentioned the works of Prophetess and Visioners as a women's activity in the Catholic church, and no RCC woman claimed to be a prophetess.

In the CAC, only nine respondents (seven women and two men) mentioned prophesying and seeing visions as women's church activities. These activities are currently becoming institutionalized among women. A generation ago, Peel (1968:183) wrote:

In the African Independent Churches, women prophets are wide spread feature. These, unlike the prophets in the scripture are self-chosen prophets. They claim to see visions, have healing power, have power to predict forthcoming events, have power of conquering threatening dangers and unforeseen evils by the use of prayer and holy water.

The Good Women's Association have begun a school of prophets in their "Faith Home Complex" at Ede, which admits women who have already shown signs of prophesying. The women established this school to recognize the usefulness of prophetesses and to give prophetesses a voice in the church.

Mrs. Adunni Akin remarked, "there are other women prophets who pray for people in need and in difficulties" and "God usually hears their prayer." Another prophetess said that "sometimes we may hear the word of God, we tell the church. If anything wants to happen, God will reveal it to us." These visions are called "help from heaven." Though women generally are not allowed to preach, once she had a vision or message for the church, a prophetess could preach. Some of them do maternity work on ordinary days and are the midwives in charge of some church maternities. If the claims of the "help from heaven" is true, then the women can use their visions or revelations from God as new sources for the development of the

church and community.

For most of the AICs as Ekong (1988:245) asserted, Religion is strictly functional and relates to here and now. So the ability of these women to perform spiritual healing of physical diseases, tell the future, etc, are more directly related to the practical day-to-day problems which the African people face and so is more attractive than the ordinary preaching and hope for a future heaven which RCC offer.

ROLE OF DEACONESS is also a role that is played in CAC and not in RCC. Only three CAC respondents named deaconess as a role played by women in the church. Two women, a pastor' wife and an evangelist's wife, claimed that they are automatically deaconesses by the virtue of their being ministers' wives.

One of the Assistant General Superintendents (AGS) from the west, Pastor A.S. Bodija, enumerated some of the duties of the deaconesses, which include assisting in the services like the church wardens, taking the collections, and being leaders in women's societies.

Although there are no deaconesses in the RCC today, "in the earlier days of the RCC, there were deaconesses who, however had no liturgical part in the mass as deacons" (O'Neill 1991).

ADVISING: Ten CAC respondents (nine women and one man) spoke of the advisory roles that women perform in the church. The following response from Mrs. A.W. Kayode, 52-year-old, and Mrs. Felicia Falode, 64 years old (both traders) will summarize the advisory duties of women in the CAC. They advise

both the youths and the leaders. They direct them on the way to live a good life when they are seen to be doing the wrong things. If a leader does something wrong such chasing women or maltreating his wife, the women will report the case to the Mama-Ijo or Iya-Ijo, who through the elders and representatives of the committees will sort out the problem and get the matter settled. Otherwise, the women will report the charge to the Good Women's Association headquarters and insist that the erring leader stops his wrong act. This helps society's moral life.

B. Economic Activities of Women in the Church

The economic activities of women will highlight the various ways through which women contribute to the economic life of the churches. Both RCC and CAC women are very much involved in activities that save or raise money for the church and help the church to fulfill its mission in very economical ways. Some of these activities include: contributions in cash and kind; various forms of fund-raising; building and maintaining the churches; working for the planning and success of ceremonies; serving as church warden; teaching and evangelizing. With these activities, the women are servicing not only the needs of the church, but also the needs of the people including themselves.

Cash and Kind:

Women build the church with their contributions in both cash and kind. Apart from the levies and donations they make in monetary forms, they sometimes give bags of cements, carry sand and gravel for construction of church buildings. In almost every service, they give offerings; they also save a lot of money for the church by the work they do on a voluntary basis.

No government and administration can exist without money. And women contribute much to the financial side of the church administration. All my respondents mentioned contributions of cash or in kind as one of the major ways women contribute to the well being and the growth of the church. Mrs. Dureke, the retired teacher and CWO president, claimed that when it comes to "taking care of the church, women donate more than men."

Almost all the women in CAC and RCC said something on how women's church activities have been contributing to the church. Most of them said that "we contribute financially and materially. Like if anything requires contributing money, we give money. If it requires anything like clothing and things like that, or food items, we tax ourselves and do it." For example, women provide food for the poor, the youth, the priests, bishops, seminarians, and some religious congregation. Some of the things that the women contributed or bought for a church in Ile-Ife are altar clothes, candles, brooms, florescent bulbs, a generator, and a mass box. They

fix church windows and built a nursery school. While one respondent recalled that the women in her parish made the signboard in front of their church, another claimed that the women in her church bought 25% of the benches and over 33% of the fans used in the church. The CWO in one area pay one thousand naira annually for the training of the seminarians. The ladies of St. Murumba in another area make it a point of duty to give a substantial amount every year to the Bishop. Rev. Fr. James Eze and Monsignor Adetola asserted that, in the establishment of one of the churches in their parish, women contributed 20,000 out of the 44,000 Naira spent, believing that most women give their "widows' mite," "because the women are more generous, though they haven't got much..." This way the women are fondly called "mothers" and they always answer any call for help from either priests or bishops.

On the national level, the women are contributing to building a secretariat at Abuja. On the diocesan level, the women of the Oyo diocese have bought a bus, used for different purposes. They explained that, "if the seminarians want to travel, they can use the motor. If anybody wants to rent the motor, they rent it and pay money." What a noble way of contributing to the upkeep of the church in the diocese.

Cleaning of the Church:

Keeping the church clean entails sweeping and washing the floor, dusting or washing the benches, chairs, seats and pews,

cupwebbing. It includes the beautification of the church in general and decoration of the altar in particular with flower, ribbons, posters, and so on. It may also include cleaning the candle-sticks and crosses, washing any dirty paraments such as the altar cloths and linens, and keeping the church surroundings clean by sweeping and cutting the grasses and bushes. Some of the respondents who saw church cleaning as an activity worth mentioning testified that "most of the time, it is the women that clean the church on weekends, sweep the floor, dust the benches, clean the sacristy, the sanctuary, and so on." Sometimes they provide labor for other women by hiring them for wages to do the job of cleaning.

Harvest Thanksgiving and Bazaar:

Almost all my respondents mentioned this as one of those important church activities that women participate in very actively. Mrs. Chub said that, at Harvest, every society will be called on to do their thanksgiving; likewise, at the bazaar, each society would buy something in order to make the bazaar a success. Women donate foodstuff and ingredients, cook, sell, and realize money which they give to the church.

One of the ways of raising money for the church projects is through the Harvest Thanksgiving in the CAC and Harvest and Bazaar in the Catholic Church. Almost all the parish priests and pastors count on this. It takes place once a year. A detailed look in one of the RCC parishes will give a general

idea of women's participation and contribution through Harvest and Bazaar.

Preparation period: Both women and men are to contribute money in the ratio of 25:50 naira respectively through their societies. In addition to this general levy, women make a donation of one fowl each, which costs from thirty-five naira to fifty or seventy naira. They also make donations of other things like crates of minerals, rice, palm oil, garri, onions, fruits like mangoes, oranges, pineapples bananas, coconuts etc. From the contributions of the levies, the church committee gives women money to go to the market to buy things for cooking which they will add to their donations.

Harvest and Bazaar Day: Right from the day before the actual day of the Harvest and Bazaar, the women divide themselves into groups and plan how to keep the church and the whole venue of the activities clean and well decorated. They do all the cooking. Men make shades and carry seats where they are needed and also buy the drinks for the occasion. During the Harvest, donations are made in cash and kind by different groups. One person can be called in different forms to come and contribute. The more groups with which one is affiliated, the more one comes out for the gift offering. And most of the time, women tend to be in more groups than the men. During the bazaar, the women sell and serve the food and all the different types of edible things they have prepared, for example, roasted chickens, cooked rice, moi-moi, cakes, chin-

chin, fruits, minerals etc. They help to collect the money from the sales made on the "high table."

It is the mothers (except for a few men), says Mrs. Ajayi, who give the children money to donate for the Harvest and to buy things during the Bazaar.

Only three CAC respondents (one woman and two men) named Harvest or Thanksgiving as a women's church activity. The only CAC woman who spoke on this said, "During harvest, we apportion works to different societies and money is distributed to different societies and women contribute their own money and do their own work." Of the two men, the AGS in the eastern part of Nigeria, Pastor Amalachukwu, stressed how useful and productive women's harvest activities are. He enumerated some of the things women have done with their harvests proceeds - building a house; helping other CAC churches by giving them money, helping them build their church, or building benches for them; fencing the church compound and buying a car for the pastor, or like last year, targeted one of the pastor's incomplete building for painting. The women are divided in groups so that they will do better, says the pastor. This sounds like the RCC division of women into groups to inspire competition in church contributions.

There are other forms of fund-raising activities that women undertake to improve their quality of life and benefit their church communities.

Looking at all these activities of women, one wonders

what the churches would have been or looked like without the women. As one pastor puts it, "women are the life wire of the church." Okeke, Hilary (1991:20-21) said that "women were, are and will remain the workhorse of the church in Nigeria. Unfortunately their status and role are not commensurate with their importance." Women are seen in all aspects of church life. When you take religion as a social institution and see the church as a community of believers, it is clear that women contribute to its social, cultural, economic, and political life. Oshungbohun (1987:88) wrote that "regardless of the unorthodox, indefensible inferior class that is always assigned to women, it must be understood that their role is sine qua non for the completeness of the organic structure and religious life of the society."

But a critical question confronts us. Yes, cleaning, harvests, and bazaars substantially contribute to the physical development and some other needs of the church and contribute to the financial and material upkeep of the clergy; but how do these contributions benefit or improve the personal lives of the women economically. The contributions assist the women in many ways to learn organizing skills; the women make some business connections (such as catering, weaving) with some of the personal items they have produced. Some of their achievements spur them to greater challenges about their needs, freedom, and self-realization. Some of the outcomes have been, developing catering schools, and weaving centers

which provide jobs for young women high school graduates. But does all this add up to recognizing or conferring on women a status change to higher prestige and power? Perhaps not.

S E C T I O N T W O**WOMEN'S SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Over four-fifths of both RCC women and CAC women said something about their own involvement in community programs or activities, although some simply said that they are not involved in any community activity outside the church or what they do for their living. It is interesting to note that, while some women see all they do as only trying to feed themselves, others purport that everything they do helps in the development of the community. The activities these women perform outside the church have political, social, and economic dimensions.

A. Political

Up till now the presence of women at the decision-making levels of government in Nigeria has been minimal. There are even some communities in Nigeria (for example, Muslim women in Purdah), in which "religion makes it practically impossible for women to participate in politics and by extension in decision-making" (Bello-Imam 1985:8). This poor representation of women at all levels of political leadership meant that women who are at least 50% of the population, were not in a position to make effective contribution to National development (Awe 1985).

Although greatly underrepresented in National and local

government political parties, the Political activities of women have a direct bearing on the life of the communities. They vote during elections and some campaign for those running for posts, but very few enter contests for positions. They form their own associations and parties which men always try to control because they see their large voting power as a threat. Women also join the major political parties, forming in many cases the women's wings (Awe 1885:220-224). They are secretaries, treasurers, committee members, and chairladies of many organizations outside the church. Some powerful women leaders in the communities are women of substance in the religious societies of the church. These women combine their duties effectively for the uplift of their communities. Some examples may suffice.

The RCC women claim more participation in the political arena than the CAC women. Mrs. Chub, the present president of her parish CWO and a retired teacher, said she is now in politics as a member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and a local government delegate. Her predecessor and friend, also a retired teacher, has been elevated to the post of president of the CWO Ife zone. She is also a politician but in a different party, the National Republican Convention (NRC). She is treasurer of the International Youth Club (known as the IY), treasurer of the Better life COWAD cooperative, a member of the Juvenile Court Panel, a chief in her town, and just recently, was made the "King Mother" (making her the chief

adviser of the king of her town). "The king cannot do anything without consulting me," she said. This is a lifetime post.

One RCC woman contested and won the councillorship of the Ile-Ife local government area, and another was voted a senator.

One of the CWO national ex-presidents was proud of the way that women have supported the few Catholic women who are local government councillors in Katsina-Ala, Jos, and Ile-Ife. Though not by the influence of CWO, she named some Catholic women who have been and are state commissioners. The present national president of CWO, for example, was commissioner for health and a commissioner for education during the second Nigerian civilian regime. She added that the CWO is represented in the National Women Commission.

In the CAC, there are women who are also interested in politics and believe that their political activities help in the development of the country. For instance, Mrs. Esther M. Jegede, a fifty-two year old teacher in a special school, contends that, despite being a civil servant, she is a Social Democratic Party (SDP) member. She has no position and is not vying for any in the party, but everybody recognizes her. She claims to use her little experience to "encourage our people that it is not suffering, eating and getting immediate need that matters, but the future is the most important thing. By educating our people, now I think there is improvement in the progress of the political party." Presently, she is in charge of supervising the building of the new party's secretariat.

She campaigned for the local government chairman who won the election. She gives suggestions and advises which help people to succeed. She is a member of the Better Life Program, which has developed a Palm oil mill and a piggery and has sent someone from the group to learn "Kampala" (a type of native cloth) -making. They encourage their members to farm by getting land from the local government. As a member of the Better Life Program, she helps in improving the condition of life of the people. Sometimes, she goes about "harassing" parents whose children are out of school and roaming about. She teaches disabled children who before will be roaming the streets begging. She helps to give them a sense of belonging and usefulness. She is a member of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which has helped to build toilets, renovate the church, and make signboards through their appeals. As a member of the Maternal Population Committee (MPC), they enlighten people about the census so that they can respond better. She is also a member of Ife youngsters, a friendly mutual aid society. She has advised the group to start a day care center. They also provide rental services for chairs and canopies.

Another CAC member (a retired grade-two teacher aged fifty-two), Mrs. Dorcas Funmi claims, "I am a member of Better Life and COWAD, then National Republic Convention (NRC) - women's forum. She campaigned and lost for councillorship and is still looking forward to a post.

What is of special interest regarding the political involvement of the women is not just their specific achievements. Rather, more important is that belonging to and participating in women's organizational activities in the churches has acted as a springboard for some of these women to get interested and involved in politics, despite stiff opposition by the men. Specifically, the unprecedented election of a woman as a member of the Juvenile Court panel and the "King mother" position, gives her the unique opportunity to pursue such women's causes as equal employment opportunities, anti-abortion rights, and free education for all. In this way religion is helping women to have a voice in society, through participation in politics. The goal here is to help women to take charge of their own lives.

B. Economic

TRADING: The majority of the respondents in both CAC and RCC who discussed this issue held the opinion that most women involve themselves in petty trading and thereby help support their families and develop their communities. Mrs. Adunni Akin, the 53-year-old church midwife, voiced this when she said, the women's "places of work are the markets." This agrees with Boserup's (1970) finding that "women account for a half or more of the labor force in trade in many African countries." The trading the women are engaged in is

diversified both in method and substance. Some are hawkers; some have small shades in front of their houses while others have stalls in the market; some have shops or stores; some sell their products; some buy directly from farms or producers; some travel locally, while some go far and wide for their business. There are some women who feel that trading is better than their present occupation and will opt for trading if they have the opportunity because trading is one of jobs which makes them independent. Some retired and civil servant women also engage in trading. Yunusa Mohammed-Bello (1985:2) reported that the sale of textiles and selling of assorted goods and services from kiosks, small shops at street corners, on the pavement, and from the frontage of their homes are activities that attract women's attention.

Trading can also lead into large-scale businesses such as that of Mrs. Kate Musa, forty-three years old, a graduate and a retired civil servant who has moved beyond petty trading to managing director of her company. She is the interim national president of the Catholic Women's Organization and ex-commissioner in her state. Though she demurred that hers is not yet a big company, she thinks she is contributing to the development of the nation by her donating to development projects and by providing labor for those she employs. Meantime, she buys and sells, does decorating and furnishing for the government, and is hoping to go into production.

Religion has not always succeeded in influencing and

shaping people's outlooks on life. Where religion has tended to inhibit the progress of women, rather than develop it, some women have resisted. For instance some of the CAC women said they trade in medicine and alcohol, which very much contradicts the tenets of their Church. Mrs. Deborah Temidayo, a 62-year-old pensioner, compartmentalizes church work and government work. She sees no contradiction between her church not allowing the use of medicine and her being now a retired nurse who sells medicine. Will it be part of "giving to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's"? Maybe she is not convinced of the teaching of the Church. She had her nursing training before marriage, and probably started going to CAC because of her marriage. Is she staging a kind of silent protest? Another sort of rebellious attitude is presented by Mrs. Beatrice Shola, a Lagos-based CAC alcohol seller. She has been reprimanded by the church authorities several times because the Church does not permit the use of alcohol. She has tried to obey the Church's teaching but confessed that she could not make ends meet. Of all the things she trades in, alcohol brings in the greatest profit. She hopes to desist from selling alcohol one day, when all her children can then fend for themselves.

Though some of these small businesswomen dissociate themselves from community programs, there are a few who believe that, by trading (their means of livelihood), they affect the lives of others in a positive way and thus

contribute to community development. Mrs. Grace Ayo, a forty-three-year-old generous RCC woman, sells cooked rice and beans and recounts how she uses her petty trading to help the insane, beggars, and the needy. On the contrary, Mrs. Beatrice Ijeoma, thirty-five years, a holder of an ordinary national diploma in catering says she does nothing in the community. I visited her in her restaurant while she and her employees were serving her customers. She bakes and sells cakes, chin-chin, and pof-pof. In the process of the interview, she disclosed that she helps groups like the Catholic Youth Organization, by being their caterer gratis when they have functions. She was playing host as a member of the International Rotary Club's women's wing, the day I visited her. In the meeting, they were enumerating what they have done in the community as a group and what they are planning for the future. So I wonder why she said she "does not contribute to the development of the community".

In the trading business, women belong to different associations and committees. Mrs. Ijora, a fifty-year-old CAC petty trader, is a member of the market committee. In this committee, they "see to the progress and welfare of the market, like seeing that the market has water, light, and other things we need." Another CAC trader, Mrs. R. A. Ilode, 47 years old is second in rank in the society of red oil sellers. As a holder of this rank "If anything gets lost in the market, I try to investigate to find out how such a thing

got lost and see if it can be recovered. I also see that the people tidy up their shades before leaving the market." This is a positive moral and environmental contribution to the community.

It must be noted that the African Indigenous churches began because the foreign Christian churches did not meet common people's personal problems and desires. It is not therefore uncommon that a CAC woman will resist church beliefs or practices when such beliefs and practices stultify or retard her personal growth in a given area of life. The cases of Mrs. Beatrice Shola's and Mrs. Deborah Temidayo's economic needs seem to point to this fact. It appears that the more educated the women are, the bigger their rank in trading. Petty trading tends to be limited to the less educated housewives who have little time and money for large-scale business. Also the women with offices such as president, vice president, treasurer, secretary in the women's associations and organizations tend to be the women with better business connections who are more likely to expand their trading into large-scale business. Petty trading is limited to the rank and file.

FARMING AND CRAFT WORK: While not many respondents mentioned farming as a women's community activity which helps development, a fifty-three year old retired Catholic teacher, Mrs. Vitalia Bayo, said she now keeps a poultry house which

produces eggs and meat to sell to the community. There are also women like Mrs. Carmelita Ike who do the farm work out of necessity. This thirty-year old catholic farmer has a certificate in domestic science, she is a seamstress, and has a sewing machine but no money to rent a shade. She told me that she would have preferred trading but she has no capital to do this, that is why she is a farmer.

Mrs. Badejo Rachael, a young CAC woman, has a shop where she weaves cloth with other women. She has apprentices learning from her the art of weaving cloth. She opined that craft work contributes to community development. Weaving hair is another art women engage in for living. Mrs. Romanda Poju one of the Iya-Ijo's of the CAC makes her living doing hair weaving. For her, it is an art of different designs which makes the women look beautiful and stylish. She sometimes combines weaving with sewing. Mrs. Chub, the CWO parish president and retired teacher politician, mentioned that many women are seamstresses and try to incorporate different designs into their sewing. Mrs. Louisa Iremono, a Catholic and over fifty years old, said she is the "lady chairman" of her professional association comprising about six hundred tailors. But Mrs. Martina Toyin another Catholic seamstress who has trained a lot of seamstresses (and presently has four apprentices), does not see herself as involved in the community. Mrs. Chub also indicated that, during christmas and New Year, somebody comes to teach women how to make soap.

Some farming and craft activities of the women (group or individual) have direct connections with women's church organizations. They are the outcome of some of the meetings, seminars, and workshops organized by the women's association to improve the welfare of women. These women's church organization teach women skills such as craft work. Helping one another not only fulfills a Christian injunction to be charitable to the needy but it also has special place in the very life of the Nigerian. As A. Shorter (1978:27) said, "perhaps the great value in community living is the support it offers." In this way, religion helps to keep alive an existing good value.

C. Social

TEACHING AND NURSING: Some of my respondents have taught for years in day care, kindergarten, primary, secondary schools, and universities. Those in the teaching profession range from those who are beginners combining studies and teaching to those who have retired because they have taught for the government the required number of years. Some are headmistresses, assistant headmistresses, and teachers. This study confirms Boserup's (1970:125) finding that "In most countries, two-thirds or more of all women in the professions are teachers, and a large proportion of the remaining one-third are nurses or perform other medical services."

In fact some women in both CAC and RCC stressed that teaching, one of the main occupations for women in Nigeria, contributes a lot to the development of community and country. For example, Mrs. Babarinde, the catechist's wife, asserts that her teaching the children helps them to become well behaved, upright, and thus exemplary to their peers. She reasons that "if everybody can try to behave well and do the right, that can help the community and the whole country."

In addition to school teaching, some of the women interviewed established day care and nursery schools for little children and continuing education program for students about to enter the University. They have run these establishments themselves very profitably and some are run by the children of these women. Though both RCC and CAC women have established schools, I noticed that the CAC women are more enterprising in establishing new schools.

Some women are hospital wardens, nurses, matrons, and assistant matrons in the hospitals, Mrs. Justina Abunde, a Catholic, aged about fifty-five, is a chief assistant matron in a hospital and believes that she contributes to the quality of life of her society because she helps cure not only those who are physically but also those socially and psychologically ill. The CAC women who are nurses by profession are no longer practicing as such.

Some of the creations of the early Christian missionaries to Nigeria are schools and hospitals, which in turn required

teachers and nurses. Women have largely benefitted from these institutions by training as nurses and teachers. As a matter of fact, one of the conditions for a woman to be admitted into a particular teaching or nursing institution was to become a member of the religious faith or organization which owned that institution.

The immediate positive impact of teaching and nursing on the community development of our people is that everyone sees the need for education. Thus, the women's organizations encourage their members who are teachers or nurses to volunteer in community welfare services and disseminate the importance of education.

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES: Although they are not officially part of government social welfare departments, a lot of what RCC and CAC women express they do falls under this category. Mrs. Abigail Dele, an RC, divulged that, "If somebody is sick, I use to visit him or her. If something happens to somebody and she or he needs my attention, I use to attend to the person. For example, if somebody is bereaved, I use to go there to console the person." Eighty year old uneducated, Catholic Iya-Ijo Mrs. Comfort Adekunle gives her widow's mite to the needy, corrects erring people, and settles quarrels and misgivings among her neighbors. Mrs. Felicity Yemi, a forty-five year old Catholic woman, combines teaching with the role of students' health officer. She is paid for her full-time

teaching but receives nothing for the past three years as health officer.

The work of visiting the sick and praying for them and helping them is also done by the CAC women. Fifty-nine year old Mrs. R.E. Jones has retired from teaching and now "attends to the sick ones; seeks out absent members; sees their problems and talks and advises them."

FAMILY WORK: Most of the respondents asserted that the work women do in the families contributes a lot to the development of the community. Mrs. Bisi Dare, a forty year old Catholic lecturer in the university, sees her looking after her husband and children as a great contribution to the development of the country. This opinion is supported by Mrs. Agnes Kayode, a fifty-two-year old trader who passed only modern three. Mrs. Vitalia Bayo, the retired teacher who keeps poultry and does nanny job for her daughter, says:

I take care of my children. One of my children is teaching at Ife Girls High School. Instead of her getting nanny, since I don't work again, I am staying at home looking after the baby and then I am doing some petty trading, selling eggs, sugar and so on, and then I look after my poultry.

Some of the CAC women disclosed that their husbands stopped them from doing their jobs outside the home, so that they could look after the children and keep the home. Mrs. O. B. Oshgbo, a young and tender looking hospital administrator for two years, was a complete housewife for six years. Why?

"My husband did not want me to leave the house because of the nature of his work. He could be transferred at anytime." Bello-Imam (1985:7) said that, "most women saddled with the problem of reproduction spend as much as 18 hours a day attending to domestic needs of both their children and husbands."

It is a commonplace that community begins in the family. Thus the pivotal place family life and work occupies in the development of the society can hardly be overemphasized. Since women occupy a central place in building a home, church women stress the importance of continuing and improving on this value.

Looking at the socioeconomic and political activities of women in the church and community, one can conclude that women are the mainstay of development. But the role of Nigerian women in economic, political and social development of the church and society is often relegated to the background. In fact all should support Ekejuiba (1985) who said that "the economic usefulness of household work as productive activity should be recognised and incorporated in our computation of GNP."

CHAPTER IV
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

In this section, the questions concern "how" and "what" women lead, whether their leadership is a challenge to the church hierarchy or a support for it, how women see themselves and their leaders. On the one hand, the church hierarchy are quite conservative about women's leadership, electing men to top posts, claiming the women are good only for women's affairs. On the other hand, there is evidence of challenges to this state of affairs, as when the women challenge a certain priest for his criticisms against the women. Some women say women are better leaders, although for the most part, women use conservative arguments about how women are different and better. Charging men with corruption and greed, they are now mounting a belated but an interesting challenge to church and political leadership. A significant argument is the one that goes beyond male and female differences to claim that women's leadership is warranted because women are in the majority.

The women did not come out categorically to say this is the way or how we learn or get to be leaders, but through the interviews they tell the stories of their lives and begin to conceptualize how their leadership came to begin and emerge. As leaders, the women became more responsible and ensured

effective coordination of women within the denomination. This section on women's leadership will be treated under four headings, namely: 1) Who is called and how?, 2) routes to leadership, 3) what women do as leaders, and 4) perceptions of women's leadership abilities and rights.

1. WHO IS CALLED AND HOW?

Who is called and how, concerns how women get to be leaders. Though there are similar ways women in both CAC and RCC get to be leaders, certain roads to leadership are peculiar to the CAC. In both churches, women get to be leaders through age, their husbands' status, activities or giftedness, and appointments. But becoming leaders through visions and founding churches is only seen in the CAC. This is a great asset to CAC women, because with this they can go beyond the present structures of male-dominated leadership structure of the church.

VISION, DREAMS AND PROPHECIES: Women use visions, dreams and prophecies to claim authority for their decisions to assume a position of leadership in the church. Women have become leaders in the CAC because they claimed they had a "vision." Some of the women who are called foundresses or evangelists or prophetesses told me that they are doing what they are doing because "God told them in a vision to do it".

For example, Mrs. Bola Eko is in charge of the "God is all ministry", an off-shoot of the CAC. She has many CAC pastors under her and she has the audacity to command and discipline them because all believe that she is inspired and sent by God. Mrs. Janet Oluranti said she was inspired to start the Bethelite CAC in the university of Ibadan, and also the churches in the universities of Port Harcourt and Ife. And once she was able to found these churches, she automatically becomes a leader. This is leadership by vision. These women use the visions or dreams to motivate their actions and to explain these to others. "Their success has depended on their ability to call on the authority of the spirit" which according to Ekong (1988:144), gives them "an expert and legitimate power. And they influence the spritual, emotional and health problems of entire community."

Another example of how seriously women treat their visions and dreams is the action of Mrs. Ede, who is heading the midwifery school of the CAC. She had to abandon her work with the ministry of health as a trained nurse, to come and head the institution where students are trained to cure without medicine. This synchronizes with the belief of the Yoruba CACs who judge the use of medicine as a denial of God's power to heal diseases (Adewoyin Obafemi Elijah, 1989:30). She had to yield and take up this job (which goes against her professional training) after she and other church members had repeated dreams and visions. This rejection of scientific,

Western medicine may be part of an alternative notion of development among these women.

A woman who has the potential to prophesy can exhibit a type of leadership. People will come to her to receive messages for the future. And such women take good advantage of the situation to launch themselves into leadership positions. The church authorities, husbands, men and other women cannot say no to God, because the mandates are claimed to be from him.

The power of visions, dreams, and prophecies can lead the church to do what in normal circumstances it would not do. Take the case of the conferment of the title of "Grand Matron" to one of the many wives of the most prominent Yoruba chief, who was not in good standing with the CAC church. I attended the ceremony and was told that the women had dreams and visions that it should be done, so it was done. Definitely, some church authorities who attended the ceremony did not like this watering down of the church's law. But they could not protest it because it would seem as if they were against God's mandate and, at the same time, they might incur the wrath of the chief. From a political point of view, women stand to gain from this conferment. From the grapevine, I even heard that the chief himself would have been conferred a title by the women but he declined.

FOUNDRESS: Becoming a foundress of a church is one of the

ways women can take up leadership position in the CAC. Referring to Mrs. Ogunranti, Mrs. Bimpe Adedigba, a 38 year-old graduate teacher (who at times organizes literacy classes) says, "A woman is not physically ordained as a pastor, but that does not mean to say that the Lord cannot make a woman to take a leading role, because in my church, a woman is the foundress" and so the spiritual head of the church.

Today as some women told me, these foundresses are trying to make their presence felt in the church more than before and are being helped by the "Good Women's Association." For example, they have insisted they will no longer hand over their churches to the pastors to run. The church granted their desire. At the beginning of this year, four of the CAC foundresses were officially given recognition as evangelists in a simple church ceremony. Referring to Bola Odeleke, a foundress, some CAC men and women told me that she is more popular and powerful than Pastor J.B. Orogun, who is the present President of the whole CAC. Founding and leading churches give some of these women great confidence and they are very outspoken. They now have pastors (men) under them.

The RCC women in Nigeria have initiator roles, but this is nothing compared to the foundress role played by CAC women. Women initiated the Oke-Maria annual pilgrimage in Oyo diocese. Mrs. Toyin Kemi became the initial leader of the co-operative group which she initiated. But with time, another person was elected and she became the treasurer, unlike in CAC

where foundresses, especially today, are not replaced. This foundress role gives CAC women an edge over the RCC women because of the embedded potential of this role to change the taken-for-granted situations of women in non-leadership roles.

APPOINTMENTS/ELECTION: Women can be appointed or elected leaders because of their age, husband/family, and giftedness/activities. In the CAC, some of the church Iya-Ijos (the "mothers of churches") were appointed by the church authorities either with or without consultation with the women's groups. Most of the leadership positions in the women's groups and organizations were done by casting votes.

In RCC, Msgr Adetola said that "women elect their own leaders", but with some diocesan pastoral councils, the women members are appointed by the bishop of the diocese. These appointments are made sometimes through the recommendations of the priests or the bishop's advisers or friends. While one RCC woman claimed that she was appointed to the diocesan pastoral council because she was active in her parish and was recommended by her parish priest, another reported that she become a member of the diocesan health board because of her expertise as an experienced nurse. The women in the parish council are there by virtue of their being leaders of their groups.

AGE: Sometimes women get to be leaders because of their

age. In the CAC, the oldest woman automatically assumes the leadership of the CAC Good Women Association (GWA) as the National President. This is because most of the time due to the traditional respect for elders, people find it easier to listen and obey the elder than the younger ones. Even in the case of the GWA where the president is no longer active, her backing the decisions of her executive council lends a lot of authority to the actions of the spokeswoman. Mrs. D.O. Modakeke, a teacher, trader, and pastor's wife, as a young leader in a smaller women's group finds it difficult to direct the meeting because of lack of respect for her young age. In the RCC, only one woman mentioned that they made the oldest woman in their small group their leader because she was the oldest. While the criterion for age is to be respected because of its cultural value, it should not be applauded if mere sentiment takes the place of wisdom.

HUSBAND/FAMILY: A women can assume a leadership position under the umbrella of her husband's religious, economic, social, or political status. In a typical Nigerian family setting says Ifeduba (1989:7) "the woman is hardly in isolation from her husband, the man." According to 45-year old Pastor S.O. Modakeke, "a woman is under the umbrella of a man. If that man holds a position of leadership, she is going to act as a leader." Mrs. Martha Isidi, who is a typical example of this, observed, "If the husband is the pastor of the

church, she automatically takes on the role of the leadership of women in the church." Also Mrs. Deborah Temidayo confirmed that the wife of the most senior pastor, will always be the president of the association of pastors' wives. She gave example of Mrs. C.M Latunde, who is now the president of the CAC Ordained Ministers' Wives Fellowship because her husband is the former president of the CAC (1966-1983).

In the RCC, Mrs. Veronica Asefon is proud to continue in her parents' footsteps: "When my father was alive, he was Babalogun, and my mother was Iya Ijo when she was alive. So we can't do without it (being leaders), it has become part and parcel of us."

Mrs. Claret Idowu, a councillor and chairperson of the Better Life program in her area, said she was voted as one of the councilors of Ife local government area on the platform of her husband and families. She pointed out that, even though she is a daughter of the soil, she has not actually lived in the area for a long time.

Though they knew me when I was young, they do not know me very well now, because I was not steady in my town. But they knew my parents and my husband's parents and so, on that platform ... so they accepted me on the platform of my families. I contested in my husband's ward. And people will say oh, you are from a very good family and you are married to a very good family.

The principle of making a woman a leader by virtue of the husband's post is one of the problems facing the Better life program today (as we will see in chapter seven). At times, these women may not be competent and this retards the progress

of the group.

GIFTEDNESS/ACTIVITIES: Sometimes, what the women do gives them legitimacy to assume authority. Some of the women excel in what they are doing because they have a natural gift. Because they are talented, they perform so well that people come to them, listen to them, carry out their suggestions and advice, and give them titles. Mrs. Martha Isidi said, "They don't ordain women to do anything in our church; they don't ordain women evangelists or prophetesses. It is from the roots of their activities that people just call them prophetess so and so or evangelist so and so."

Mrs. Janet Oluranti said that when she is on duty working in the psychiatric ward, patients are all right. She said she healed her first sick person when "I asked him to go and take a tumbler of water, mix so and so and pray over it; all the injection that was given to him to make him sleep did not make him sleep," but after the water and prayer, he slept. Patients started saying that she only had to dress the wounds once or give an injection once and they were healed. She recounted a story of how God used her to raise the dead. Because of her activities and the miracles the Lord was working through her, "People started flocking to me, I will pray for them, the Lord will remove their problems." In this way she became a very powerful leader in CAC Bethel.

Mrs. Eko recounts her activities:

Christ apostolic church Agege was locked for seven years, the pastors provoked each other, they used cutlass to fight each other; the police came and sent out everybody and closed the church for seven years. In 1985 God used me to open that church. I renamed the church to Oke-Dokun. Till today, it is there. You told me a woman cannot ordain anybody; At CAC in Bauchi, God used me for the same thing there. When I started there, God used me to build a church for them, get pastors and evangelists for them. They are there even now since 1976.

It is clear that the peculiar ways women have climbed the ladder of leadership through visions and founding churches is restricted to the CAC women members, and such phenomena are notably absent in the RCC. That the women are doing as much and as well, and in some cases even better than the men church leaders, counters the idea of questioning the authenticity of women's visions, dreams, and efforts in founding churches. Among many of the benefits of these women's achievements is the dignity of the humanity of the female person whom they compel men to recognize; the restoring of quality to human personhood; and the challenge which they pose to other churches such as the RCC, and perhaps to wake up and compel the women in this church to re-examine their demeaning positions, with a view to authentic action.

But the cases of women who have founded churches without any special mandate from God by dreams or visions, seem to raise a deeper question about how much depends on human insight and initiative through a reflective recognition of one's God-given talents, and one's willingness to use those talents, without waiting for a special call and sign from

heaven. The appalling and existing male-dominated leadership structure in the RCC makes the recognition and use of one's charism to challenge injustice very urgent.

2. ROUTES TO LEADERSHIP

In this section, I discuss how women learn to be leaders. Sometimes the women who are appointed leaders learn to lead in the same way as those who got to lead through visions and dreams. Both CAC and RCC women, like other people, learn to be leaders in both formal and informal ways. The informal means include watching other leaders, God sent, and intuitions, initiatives, inherent qualities, and travelling. The formal ways by which the women learn to lead include teaching, seminars, workshop, conferences, and education.

IMITATION: Mrs. Oluranti who is revered as the Foundress of a CAC group of churches said, "I read some of the psalms over the water and sanctified it, then dipped cotton wool into the water and used an instrument to damp it on his teeth and wet the lips of the man. After doing this, I prayed and then called the man and he answered, and he was discharged two days later." During almost every clinic (held two times a week), the women who come to the clinic bring water to be "sanctified". The midwife sanctifies or appoints some other women who will sanctify the water, following her example or

instructions. The reading of psalms to sanctify water is something they definitely picked up from their church. "The psalms are regarded as very efficacious by the Aladura churches," ascribed Adewoyin Obafemi Elijah (1989:44). The pastors sanctify water for the people to use for different things. These women have seen that this is one of the ways the pastors help the people and promote their faith, so they have learnt and are doing the same. Ringing the bell to stop an activity is another example of what the women learnt from the pastors.

In the RCC, Mrs. Rosaline Obinna and others picked up ways of conducting the choir from former choirmistress (and masters), so that any of them can conduct or lead the choir in the absence of the present choirmaster. Mrs. F.A. Yemi, in trying to substitute for the choirmaster, learned how to lead. "When he is not around, I take his position."

APPRENTICESHIP: I do not use the term apprenticeship in the sense of woman formally going out of their way to learn a trade, but in the sense of acquaintanceship and worshipping together. Many women evangelists that I saw in Mrs. Eko's church learn by associating with her. Mrs. Eko herself, even though she and other members of the church claims that she was the one first called by God, her husband was the one who was ordained a pastor and in fact was the President of their CAC branch till his death. Now, she is in charge, and when I

visited her, she portrayed some mannerisms distinctive of CAC pastors, for example, saying the concluding prayers, ringing bells, and so on.

In one of the masses before their meetings which I attended with my professor, one of the RCC women translated the priest's homily from English to Yoruba because the Rev. Father does not speak Yoruba. This woman was given the opportunity to do this because the catechist who is a man was not around. Initially, she was shy even to come forward, but as she went ahead, she became more courageous and confident. At first, she was trying to do it as she has seen the catechist do it, but gradually she began to do it her own way.

GOD SENT AND INTUITIONS: Some women learn to lead by getting direct instructions from God. Some of them use phrases such as "the Lord put it in my mind to do or say this or that." This tendency is clearly seen in claims like "the Lord told me," "The Lord said to me," and "the spirit of God said that I." It is clear that some of the women claimed that the source of their authority and spiritual leadership is God.

Some of the women who are prominent in the CAC have really applied their initiatives to what they are doing. Some times they have to go outside or beyond the church to establish and lead in their own way. When Mrs. Oluranti was beginning her church, she knew that the university environment in which she was would not accept certain precepts of her

church. So she combined her knowledge, prudence, and initiatives to know that she must not tell the people coming to her not to use medications. She had to tell them to take tablets which contain fruits and vitamins and not sacrificed to idols. In this way she got her converts. This way of learning how to lead is more prominent in the CAC than in the RCC.

TRAVELLING: is also a way by which the women pick up techniques of leadership. Mrs. Ereta cannot be called an educated woman, but she has learnt that leaders prepare addresses and read during conferences and seminars from their travels. She read an address during the national conference though with difficulty because it was written in English. It is also from her travels that she knew that women can be ordained. She told me that one of the Christian groups in the United States would ordain her, even though her Church does not ordain women.

Mrs. Eko has got branches of her 'God is all Ministry' in different parts of the world. She visits them, interacts with people and learns the ways to organize, administer, and lead. Though she did not say it explicitly, it seems she learnt the importance of radio, video, and television evangelism from her travels. It seems the CAC women have shown more signs of learning to lead through their travels than the RCC women.

SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES & MEETINGS are sometimes

organized specifically for teaching leadership skills and some of the women avail themselves of them. For example, in the CAC, it is during the conferences for wives of pastors' conferences that wives of pastors are told how to help their husbands in leading the church. Some learn how to lead by getting instructions from the pastors. I remember at one preparatory session for Sunday School lessons I attended, more than half of the people there were women. The pastor in charge was giving instructions and teaching them how to lead the children the next day, Sunday.

In the RCC, Mrs. Kate Musa said, "We have most of the time organized seminars, meetings and conferences and so on. The women come together and we assign tasks to them. We take part in it and we tell them the need to get involved in this things. So I hope to get the CWO aware first of all. It is when they are aware that they will be able to get out of their own situation and be able to accept them."

Referring to skills learnt from organizations and meetings,

Okafor (1983:85) wrote,

perhaps we felt ourselves grow in human relation skills as we have participated in these activities. Perhaps as an even more rewarding experience, we have seen others grow under our leadership. These achievements can operate in any one of a hundred areas: religious, political, civic, education, trade, business, patriotic, fraternal, recreational or just social, provided it is 'worthwhile, that is to advance the common good.

SCHOOLING: Leadership skills are also transmitted to the women through formal schooling. All the midwives I encountered

heading the clinics, which are always beside the CAC churches, were trained at the CAC Maternity Home now called "Faith Home." There are many other activities going on there. Also the women have built a Bible College where they are training women to preach the gospel as evangelists.

Unlike the CAC, where at least lay women are trained to do church work such as midwifery on the church premises, no school is designated for teaching lay women to do church work in the RCC. Recently as both men and women testify, the bishop has called on women to join the men in attending courses for being catechists. The Rev. Sisters (like the CAC midwives) are recognized as those who have received some training to do church work. They become leaders by the training they received and are recognized anywhere they go.

APPLIED KNOWLEDGE: is about the skills women bring to their church work. Mrs. Ajayi was a nurse who left her profession to work in the CAC Faith Home Center. She uses her nursing skills through the church to help pregnant women. Prayer isn't all she teaches midwives. She also shows them how to listen to heartbeat, teaches about sterilization, and so forth. So in one way the church is a medium through which she introduces skilled nursing care to midwives and so contributes to development defined as meeting the actual needs of ordinary people.

Mrs. Ijora recounted that she used her knowledge from the

Baptist and Anglican churches to excel in the Sunday School classes when she became a member of the CAC. This led to her being invited to join those leading the Bible class.

Other types of stories illustrate the ways that women teach themselves what they need to know or use their knowledge for other women. Like during CAC Women National Conference, one woman was translating in Hausa and English from Yoruba. This may be providing them an opportunity to play a role they may not want to play. The women translating, reading and dancing during these gatherings can be opportunities for using and training in skills like speaking before an audience - leadership skills. Maybe the gathering provides an opportunity for training, which is not the primary purpose for the gathering.

In the RCC, women have been taught catechism before receiving the sacraments in the church. Most of them who teach catechism part time in parishes rely heavily on the previous knowledge which they gained when being taught. The women are leaders in sweeping, cleaning, and decorating the church because they have been taught to do these from infancy in their homes. Some of the women who work in government offices also pick up ideas of how to lead from their bosses or government guidelines. Surely, Mrs. Musa has been influenced in her leadership of the CWO by her experience and service as a commissioner of education in her state.

Some of the various steps some women have taken to get to

leadership position are avenues open to all. The paths of imitation, apprenticeship, travelling, application of previous experience or knowledge unmask the central ingredient to the success of the women who are in leadership positions particularly in the CAC. That ingredient is self-confidence. Mrs. Oluranti did not need any external human authority to convince her that God would hear her prayers for the sanctification of water as much as he would hear those of an ordained man who blesses water for similar purposes.

The same self-confidence shows itself in the woman interpreter in the apprenticeship example. Thus, self-confidence and personal conviction about one's personal relationship with God as in the case of Mrs. Oluranti, or confidence about one's personal ability, not only improves one's image of oneself, her or his needs and development, but also those of the community she or he serves. This is more evident in the CAC in terms of church affairs. Lack of it diminishes progress of the individual and society. This seems to be the case with the RCC in terms of religion helping a person to transcend or pursue higher goals in religious circle. CAC's path is inclined to liberation and freedom, while the RCC's road seems to lead to perpetual dependence on human authority. It is the kind of confidence which Mrs. Oluranti demonstrates that we should encourage among the women through seminars and workshops.

3. WHAT WOMEN DO AS LEADERS (THE WAY AND HOW WOMEN LEAD)

PRAYING: The CAC is a faith-healing church and praying is their preoccupation. Any member who can pray for people and the prayer is answered becomes a leader in his or her own right. During the early years of the CAC, it was through Sofi that the church got anything from God, messages, prosperity, and so on. Mrs. Ereta and Mrs. Oluranti increased the number of CAC members by converting people through praying. Women who can help members solve their problems by praying become leaders, as people from thence will continue to come directly to them for solutions to their problems. Mrs. Oluranti said that she brings people to her church, not by telling them not to go to their former churches, but by praying for them, seeing visions, and telling them. She and some others lead the people by their ability to prophesy while praying.

In the RCC, Mrs. Akin indicated that she succeeded in leading the women because she always starts with prayers. She added that she can count her leadership of the CWO a success, because one of her main aims is to establish this organization nationwide.

TEACHING AND PREACHING: The evangelist who teaches, preaches, and opens up new missions plays a leading role both inside and outside the church. Women Sunday Schools teachers impart the fundamental doctrines and tenets of the religion to the

children. The authorities of the church recognize Mrs. Ereta as a good leader by the way she has taught and instructed many CAC pastors. One AGS said, "If not that she is a woman, she would long have been the President of the CAC."

Many women preach even in the church but not from the pulpit. For example, all the foundresses preach in their churches. When I attended Mrs. Odeleke's convention in Lagos, she was the main preacher, and the pastors were helpers. In this way women are recognized as leaders and sometimes called evangelists.

POLICING AND ADVISING: The women in both CAC and RCC join in the governmental department of the church for keeping order, detecting crime; they help to control and protect members of the church; and help to keep things clean and orderly in the church. Mrs. Martha Isidi said that the church warden's job is a way of leading people and includes the maintenance of quiet and order in the church.

Women leaders are matrons of different church organizations like the youth group and choir. They act as mothers to these groups, advising and helping them financially, morally, and physically leading them according to the church constitution. The youths look up to these matrons for leadership.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS: The women do a lot of housekeeping for the

church. In both the CAC and RCC, women most of the time take a leading role in the domestic affairs of the church such as cooking whenever cooking and serving are required. The women leaders also organize women in groups to clean and decorate the church and its environs, policing children, and conducting children's services. Very few men bother to teach small children. They take over when the children grow up. When women act as mothers to a group, again they are doing women's things, not upsetting the established order, for example, keeping the treasury, cooking, and decorating.

FOUNDING CHURCHES: One of the ways that women show their leadership position in the CAC church is by becoming foundresses. For example, Mama Meg who was the only foundress I saw in Ife, explained how she started her church by gathering with people to pray in her house. As the people increased, they moved to her backyard. Now she and her numerous followers worship in a big church they are building away from her house. Apart from those things which are strictly reserved for pastors like making holy communion or conducting weddings, she conducts and directs everything in her church. Bola Odeleke, another foundress, is also a powerful evangelist - a leadership position she claims comes from God.

CHARISM, COMPELLING & EXEMPLARY: Authority can come from a

style of interacting with the women that is very different from the style of the priest. For Mrs. Akin, humility is the essence of leadership. It is give and take. "I learn from you and you learn from me." She listens to the women and modestly down plays her powers. She allows members to do what they can do, and if there is something you think you can learn from her, she teaches you. Also, the method of approach helps a leader to achieve a lot. When she "told the women that

I have come to learn and I am happy I am in your midst. I have learnt a lot from what I have seen, and heard, I have learnt a lot. Thank you very much for the work you are doing for the church. I have not come to teach anything, I just came to celebrate with you, listen and participate. I have come also to tell you that we Catholic women, we are one, so the CWO is the same thing. That is why I have come to tell you that we should not be divided; we are one.

They are very happy and submissive to her leadership.

Concern: The women work to foreground women's concerns in their organizations, as well as (or in opposition to) the concerns of male church leaders. They also offer support (help with children, companionship, money). Mrs. Akin shows concern for her CWO members, taking them into confidence when working out programs for them, and showing concern for society's money and property, teaches members to care for the widows, keeping them company for months and looking after their children. She is a tremendous success. Mrs. Toyin Kemi who is one of the executives of her society said that she checks the account when a member is in need and calculates how much she gives the

person. Mrs. Ereta's main important job in the GWA is to look into the women's concerns and see how to help them. That is leadership by example. Showing concern can bring about peace in the church, society, and community.

Peacemaker: Some lead by pacifying the women and teaching the parish priest or pastor how to talk to the women so that there will be peace and order in the church. One of the women leaders tells a story of how a priest insulted the women in the church and the women showed their resentment by telling their leader, "go and tell that 'your child' that he shouldn't talk to us like that from the altar." She went and threatened the priest that if he did not speak to the women with respect, they would not work with him. If he is left only with men, he won't be able to get things done. She asked the priest to apologize to the women. She also apologized to the women on his behalf, telling them he promised not to offend them again. On the other hand she begged the women to improve the Sunday collection which was the root of the problem. Of course, the leader kept the women in line. Her peacemaking preserved the priest's female work force and got him a little extra money as well.

Egalitarian leadership: Another way some of the women try to lead is by treating others as equals. Mrs. Akin voiced it well, "I bring myself to their level, forget my ethnicity and

whatever I am and become one of them." This way she has achieved a lot galvanizing the women into a great force to be reckoned with in the church. But saying, "I bring myself to their level," is not the same as being egalitarian, which she claimed. She does not play up her elevated position or her power, but that doesn't mean she is one among equals.

Information: Any leader who does not allow a communication gap to exist between her and those she is leading is good. Mrs. Mercy C. Nwata and Mrs. Lucy Nwana (a senior registered nurse, president of the CWO, in her church and president of a club outside the church) share their experiences. They projected that carrying the people under them along by informing them about things happening within and outside the church made their regimes as leaders successful.

With the exception of founding churches, what women do as leaders in the churches seems not to go beyond the routine functions of a housewife seen in a comprehensive whole. Policing, domestic affairs, concerns, charism, peacemaking, teaching in various nuances illustrate this assertion. These functions appear to be carried out on regular basis by the women in the churches without rocking the boat of authority. The very nature of these functions clearly indicates the lowly position of those who carry them out in the churches. Properly seen, they all fall under functions which simply conserve the existing state of affairs with regard to the domination of

women by the male-dominated hierarchical structure of the RCC. In this way, religion neither improves the lot and need of the women nor society.

However, the praying example unearths one of the hidden criteria for authority in the churches. What is brought to light is that authority in the churches should not per se depend on mere imposition of hands and prayer over the heads of men (ordination) but also on good works, the result of good works and those of faith-filled invocations. Out of the latter, authentic power in the church should develop. Mrs. Oluranti's case exemplifies this insight. Perhaps the issue to bring to focus is neither equality nor qualification, but the insecurity of the men folk before their female counterparts. With such insecurity, progress is limited to a select individual and society is the bigger loser because the full force of the employment of human potentials in their variety are truncated.

4. PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ABILITIES AND RIGHTS

The result of the interviews showed that women are never put in charge of any men's group. Even when women are in the majority in a mixed group, the tendency is to appoint or vote a man as a leader. Generally, women are leaders in women's groups. But there are many women's groups where men are appointed as coordinators and chaplains, such as in the GWA

and CWO respectively. Since both in women's groups and in mixed groups, women are hardly made the overall leaders, one begins to wonder why. Is it that the women are not good leaders? Does it mean they cannot lead themselves, how much more leading mixed or men's groups? To find out what the women themselves think of women's leadership capabilities, I asked, "Of Men and Women, who makes better leaders?" The responses received, though varied, can be categorized into three groups: 1) those who said that men were better leaders, 2) those who said that women are better leaders and 3) those who, I can categorize as "it depends".

TABLE 6: MEN OR WOMEN, WHO ARE BETTER LEADERS?

GROUP	WOMEN ARE BETTER	DEPENDS/ CAN'T SAY	MEN ARE BETTER	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
CAC WOMEN	26% (13)	38% (19)	24% (12)	12% (6)	100% (50)
RCC WOMEN	24% (11)	46% (21)	26% (12)	4% (2)	100% (46)
TOTAL	25% (24)	42% (40)	25% (24)	8% (8)	100% (96)

According to the above Table 6, the total percentage of the women who believe that women are better leaders is equal to the percentage of women whose opinion is that men are better leaders. Twenty-six per cent of the CAC women respondents agree that women are better leaders, and 24% of them approve that men are better leaders. While 24% of the Catholic women agree that women are better leaders, 26%

contend that men are better leaders. The majority of the responses for both the CAC women and RCC women fall in the "it depends" category: 38% of the CAC and 46% of the RCC women.

IT DEPENDS:

The "it depends" group in both RCC and CAC ranges from those whose response is "I can't say" or "only God can judge" to those who said that "both men and women can make better leaders, 'depending on the human attributes and training exposures.'" Most women in this group actually believe that it is difficult to judge between men and women who make better leaders because "this has to do with the gifts and talents of the individuals. Sometimes we have men who are better leaders than women, while sometimes we have women who are better leaders than men. Some of them also recognize that it depends on situations and the activities that are at hand. Because they argued that there are tasks in which women can lead better to see it accomplished and there are other types of jobs where a man's, leadership will be better. The argument that it depends on the tasks which women can lead better does not measure a protest against women's exclusion from leadership in the male church, but an endorsement of the current division of labor in leadership posts. Can it be that they are probably "reluctant or hiding a fear" to speak their minds?

MEN ARE BETTER LEADERS:

There is variety of responses among the women who said that men make better leaders. Both the RCC and CAC women agree that men tend to be better leaders because of certain beliefs, sex differences and family duties. However, a CAC woman strongly held the opinion that men are better leaders because they have more opportunities and chances to lead. She stressed that women are discriminated against and that men are more acceptable as leaders in our society and even more so inside the church. She said:

It is a question of not giving women the chance for me to see. It seems to me as if the men are still more acceptable ...though that doesn't necessarily make them better leaders. Women are not given chance. Women don't get support even from themselves.

She opined that, if men and women are given "the same chances, if they are weighed on the same balance, measured with the same yardstick, and everything provided equally for each party, that it will be difficult to say who will be a better leader. "But as things are now, the more support is on the men than for the women." This is clear evidence that some people recognize that women are hampered by their lack of support.

BELIEF: Those who say that men are better leaders because of their belief, tend to say that God has made men leaders and there is nothing anybody can do about it. They quote and uphold the Bible as their source of authority to support their claim saying, "Men are better leaders because the Bible says

that men are leaders of the house and the head of their wife." The source of authority for the status quo then is the Bible. Some women believe that, because men can overcome temptations and endure and overlook things better than the women who normally flare up at things, they make better leaders. Some believe that women cannot keep secrets and are not patient, so it is difficult for them to lead well.

SEX DIFFERENCES: Several of these women maintained that women are prone to be more jealous and more talkative when a fellow woman is a leader than when a man is leading. They seem to hold the opinion that women are more disposed to listen, take instructions, and obey men; and that men are stronger and more sensible in the way they speak and so women cooperate and follow their lead. One woman asserted that

women take things for granted, and get annoyed easily, but men can control themselves. For someone to be a leader, he or she is going to arm himself or herself with cooperation, tolerance, endurance. But women, we cannot endure, any small thing we see now, we will like to talk.

The women agree more to what a man leader says than to what a woman leader says. They tend to shout down their fellow women.

FAMILY DUTIES: Some of the women claimed that men have the opportunity to be better leaders because of the roles women play in their families. These prevent them from becoming better leaders in the church. They are more involved with their children, and anything to do at home; therefore they

"can't have enough time for other things." One of the women said that, even when her husband wants to help, he keeps asking for where things are and what to do that "I will leave whatever I am doing to assist him."

WOMEN ARE BETTER LEADERS:

The reasons for supporting women's claim to leadership are conservative and other reasons refer to men's total control over positions and their suppression of women. Most women take the world, the church and the society as a family. They say that while God gave men the ability to fend for the family, He gave the women the ability to organize it. So, they conclude that, as far as God is concerned, women, whose responsibility it is to organize the family, are better leaders. This claim that women are good family organizers is based on accepting women's difference. Some think that men are lazy. Since in most of the activities of the church women participate more and see to the success of these activities, they are better leaders.

Some women used words like "secret", "suppress", "selfish" and "chameleon" to describe men and their attitudes. They believe that because of these attitudes of men, they don't allow women to be leaders, even though women are better leaders. One woman expressed her feelings by saying: "I think if women are given the chance, they will lead better than men because men always suppress them and tell them their places

are in the kitchen which is not good." One said that women don't hide their feelings and they say things as it actually happened. Another put it this way: "Women are straightforward, they are not like men who will have something in their mind and say another thing outside." How can men who behave like chameleons be better leaders than women?

Women were voted to be better leaders by some of the women because they believe that women are the disciplinarians and are more disciplined. They have the opinion that "women are more determined and if they want to do something, they go and do it." So, their self-discipline, promptness, and strictness make women better leaders.

Being sympathetic, tender-hearted, sensitive, more careful, faithful, more organized, more prompt, more God-fearing and what I called "being present" are characteristics used by most of the women who said that women are better leaders.

The honesty aspect of the women's disciplined character was brought out by a CAC woman who said that "any school where women are head, is better. They will not tamper with the money at all and they will do their work successfully." So some women say that women are less likely to embezzle money and be corrupt. This too is about women's difference from men, their higher standards of performance, but rather than being based on the Bible or on family roles, it speaks to the local and national political arena. It is a criticism of political

corruption, a claim that women could be more effective politically.

Some women lamented that most of the problems in the country both in the church and outside the church are caused by men. They express this in sentences like these: "For instance, when our men are leaders, many things go wrong, we have fights here and there, and perhaps if women are there, it will not be so."

One other quality with which the respondents characterized women leaders is what I called "being present." They brought out the idea of women "always being there", "waiting", "being more in numbers" and "faithful and responsive." They seem to say that since women are in the majority and are always present and waiting, that they will understand more the majority of the people and they will follow more the continuity of events and so these qualify women to be better leaders.

How do all these responses contribute to women's participation in the church and society? How does the church influence women's participation in this regard? Definitely, the tradition, customs, doctrines and church teachings that men are head and women should be obedient to men affect women's participation especially in leadership positions. It allows both men and women to take the leadership of men as given, as granted. Those who have internalized this ideology will automatically presume, vote, or appoint a man as leader

whenever they are present in any group; not necessarily because all see men as better leaders but because there seems to be a tacit agreement about it. So it needs no discussion or argument.

Even the women who did not like the idea of men always being leaders and who will prefer women to be leaders claimed that "women will not be allowed to be leaders." Definitely, there are some leadership roles in the church which women are prohibited from performing. Nevertheless, there are some leadership roles in the church which no doctrines or general pronouncements debar women from performing. At least in the cases where the church does not prohibit women, who are the women accusing? Who is it that does not allow the women to take up those leadership positions? Women are in the majority in the churches. Some women say that women's leading will annoy the men. And because they do not want to annoy men, they prefer to leave things as they are and allow the men to be leaders. Is it better to please the minority or the majority?

It is high time women get serious and take what is theirs. For those leadership positions where the church does not prohibit them, women should use their numbers to vote in their own folks as leaders. Let them take the chance by themselves, since the men may not want to give it to them. It is only when women have led as long as men and/or alongside men that one may be in a good position to actually say who is a better leader. To me, past statistical data are not enough

to make meaningful comparisons. Some of the responses of the women may be rather subjective. Leadership is better judged by achievements rather than thoughts.

Although opinions vary, it is easy to see through these opinions to their basis. Those who believe that men are better leaders base their arguments on custom and belief system of the society. They therefore do not offer rational arguments for their positions. Preconceived opinions about the superiority of men over the women simply prejudice the leadership capabilities of the women. They simply reinforce the unscientific and narrow-minded vision and definition of women as the weaker sex.

Even if experience may suggest that women are physically weaker than the men, should this weakness validate the oppression of women by the men (as experience also indicates that it is the case, notably in certain areas of leadership in the churches)? From a moral point of view, this is hardly laudable. From a political standpoint, it keeps the man always in charge of human issue that affects us all. Economically, it serves no purpose of developing the potentials of women. In the end, society stands to lose from the stand point of the above opinions.

However, those who think that women are better leaders seem to be less influenced by cultural beliefs. They tend to be more scientific in terms of their rational arguments. For instance, they base their arguments more on the actual

characteristics of women, characteristics which any good leader should have, namely, discipline, ability to organize, sympathy, sensitivity, and honesty. I find the second group of opinions more forward looking and in line with the real needs of religion and society. This forward looking challenge, keeps our hope alive for improvement. It is my view that a lot of work needs to be done, by the few well-educated women in religion in our society, about the falsity of the myths of our society which hold sway and support the givenness of leadership of men.

CHAPTER V

LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

Though one may not easily notice it, leadership struggles are going on in both the RCC and the CAC. These struggles are going on, on both intellectual and practical levels. There seems to be a conscious and unconscious debate continuously going on. This debate surrounds certain positions (especially leadership), roles and activities that women are not allowed to perform in the church.

Women are not seen in the top echelons of the hierarchy of either the CAC or RCC, nor do they occupy any position of official ministerial function. But informally they are engaged in many political activities and church organizations. They are concerned and in fact engaged in their own way in the government of the church. A more critical and intense look at the data shows that CAC women are struggling to access power in the upper section of their church's strata, and subtly, they are making great strides, with the majority of the church's hierarchy not realizing it.

There is a consensus of opinion among the sexes I interviewed that ordination, which is currently the preserve

of the male, automatically excludes women from certain roles, and this necessarily limits their functions in the churches of my study. Although women are very active in various organizations of church life, still their state of affairs is a disturbing one. It has raised further tensions among church members and precipitated serious challenge against the existing structures of these churches.

CAC and RCC accommodate both those who support and those who challenge the existing hierarchical structure of these churches. From my interviews and observations, the complex reality of how religion can be a force for supporting or challenging the sociopolitical world was in fact evident. At the intra-personal level, religion empowers people, but it can also deprive them of a sense of self worth. Within these religious organizations, power struggles can be observed as previously marginalized groups begin to demand access to positions of influence. To this point, Okafor (1983:76) writes that "the history of women from our traditional society to the modern day has always been marked by revolutions and protests against men's authority and most achievements are got as a result of these protests.

This section will describe roles women are not allowed to play, the reasons why they are not allowed to play those roles, and the problems militating against women's inclusion in church activities.

A. Roles women are not allowed to play

The hierarchical structure of the two churches of my study, the expressed views of my interviewees of the RCC and CAC respectively, highlight to a great extent the various roles and functions that are forbidden to women.

1) The churches hierarchical structures

A look at the hierarchical structures of these two churches will show the position of men and women, and is indicative of the functions that accrue from these positions.

RCC HIERARCHY

- Pope (man) - overall head of the administrative and ministerial functions of the RCC (ordained).
- Bishop (man) - overall head of the administrative and ministerial functions of a diocese (ordained).
- Priest (man) - overall head of the administrative and ministerial duties of a parish (ordained).
- Deacon (man) - member of the clerical order with certain administrative and ministerial functions (ordained).
- Laity (man and woman) - ordinary members

CAC HIERARCHY (Yearbook 1990)

- President (man) - executive officer of the CAC (ordained)
- General Superintendent (man) - Overseer and director of the church (ordained)
- General Evangelist (man) - minister and preacher of the gospel in the CAC (ordained)
- General Secretary (man) - (ordained)
- Pastors (man) - (same as priest in RCC) (ordained)
- Evangelist (man & woman) - preacher of the gospel in the CAC. (But ordained Evangelists are only men).

- Prophet/Prophetess - spokesperson of CAC who speaks for God (But only men are ordained prophet)
- Deacon and Deaconess - an appointed or elected officer having variously defined duties. (only men are ordained)
- Laity (man & woman) - ordinary members

The highest leadership position is not open to women, both in the RCC and the CAC. It is gender-specific. A woman has never been nor is she envisaged for now to be a president in CAC or a pope in RCC. The only layer in the RCC strata available to women is the last stratum. Once a female, there is nothing that will make it possible for a person to move beyond the last stratum. But a male depending on his choices and capabilities can and may reach the highest strata in the echelon. In the CAC, the last four levels are open to women, and officially no woman has gone beyond these levels. Contrary to Adebawo Modupe Kehinde's (1990:3) assertion that women are "ordained" as deaconesses, prophetesses etc, my findings show that women are never ordained in the CAC. Though there are several layers, the main distinguishing mark that limits women from climbing the hierarchy is the matter of ordination. What are women's responses to this hierarchical structuring?

In both CAC and RCC, there are variety of responses. Some women are for women's ordination, some are not too sure, and some definitely are not for women ordination. Those for women's ordination range from those who are passively waiting for God to intervene to those who are actively taking steps to

bring about the ordination of women.

Administratively, the highest governing, decision and policy making bodies in Nigeria are the Supreme Council for the CAC, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria for the RCC. The Supreme Council is made up of the President, the General Superintendent and his Assistants, the General Evangelist and his Assistants, the General Secretary and his Assistants, and very few people in the category of pastors who have important jobs in the CAC, like the General Treasurer and the Principal of CAC Theological Seminary. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria is made up of the Bishops only. At present no woman is a member of the Supreme Council in CAC, as no woman is a member of the RCC Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria.

On the RCC diocesan level, there is no highest governing body as such. Both the Board of Consultors (made up of priests) and the presbyterial council (made up of priests and in rare occasions professional laymen, e.g a barrister) are a sort of advisory board to the bishop. On the surface, it may seem that the Diocesan Pastoral Council is the highest decision making body in the diocese, but when well examined, it is more or less an advisory group also to the bishop. Why? Because after all their deliberations and guidelines, the bishop of the diocese is free to take their suggestions or not. Looking at the Nigerian church, one may be tempted to ask, "What happened to the principle of 'subsidiarity' from

the Vatican II? However, since it is the only seemingly highest body in the diocese, it is good to note that a new development has made it possible for women in the Catholic church to be members of the diocesan pastoral councils, but they cannot be the overall chairperson, which position belongs to the bishop. In the CAC, both the Coordinating and District Councils are made up of pastors and elders, who are men.

At the local level in Ile-Ife, the experimental site, the pattern is more or less that of the diocesan level for the RCC and the district level for the CAC. The priest or the pastor, usually a man, makes the final decision in church affairs. The council of elders in the CAC and Parish Council in the RCC are a sort of advisory board. The only difference is that, while no woman is a member of council of elders in CAC, women are members of parish councils in RCC. Even in one of the parishes in Ife (Ilode Parish), where it used to be all male before, recently women have been included. Mrs. Veronica Ajala said: "... even it was only when the present Rev. Father came that they chose women to represent in parish council, only men were there before..."

Some women expressed the view that it is better for women to be included, that it will certainly help for the development and harmony of the church and society. One RCC woman said it will be beneficial for everybody if women are included because they will help to explain to other women what is going on in the church and how the money they contribute is

used.

The above outline of the hierarchical structure of the RCC and CAC, shows how patriarchal these churches are. Yet as we have seen, these churches have more women members than men. More importantly, the absence of women from the positions of ordination results not from the decision and choice of women but from of exclusion by the men who from the inception of these churches have controlled their functionaries.

2) Restricted roles and activities for CAC women

In the CAC, Mrs. A.E. Elujoba, the pensioner who taught at a teachers' training college says, "Generally, women are not allowed to be head in CAC. They must be under a pastor...they cannot be the overall head of the church." Both the men and women I interviewed, say that women are not ordained and this automatically excludes them from being pastors, ordained evangelists, ordained elders and so forth. Thus they are officially excluded from performing all the activities supposed to be performed by the ordained people. "There are so many things that women cannot do in CAC, only men can do them." Mrs. Roberta Yomi, one of the Evangelists wife, who apart from her teaching is not involved outside the church says

We can't do naming ceremony as a woman, you can't sanctify or dedicate a child when they present the child to the church; you cannot perform marriage ceremony in any form for anybody as a woman. Even if you are an evangelist, it is the duty of the men. You have to call in men when it comes to these official duties.

Some of the women said that, even if a woman is the foundress of a church, she is not exempted from the restrictions above. They continued to say that women don't enter the chancel, go near the altar, and are not allowed to read the lessons or preach from the pulpit. They are not allowed to count money. In some of the churches, they are not allowed to do the work of church warden. One woman said that "... women are not allowed to do anything in the church except if the pastor invites them..." "When the elders plan about the church, they don't allow women there."

The above points vividly to the restricted roles and sometimes the non-existent role women play in the CAC. If men believe that their women can contribute meaningfully to the development of the CAC (as we saw in chapter two), then why these restrictions on women?

c) Activities that RCC women are not allowed to perform

Mrs. Oluwa and Mrs Augusta Akande said that "women are not allowed to celebrate mass" and that celebrating mass "cannot happen in this generation." Fifty-five year-old

Archbishop Orile (who gave me the most difficult time by his uncooperative attitude during my research) derogatorily said, "They can't say mass any way, if that is the kind of activity you are talking about." When he was asked if there are other activities apart from mass, he said, "I don't know, what a man can do, a woman can do and even better."

As to the distribution of holy communion, most of the respondents observed that in the study area, no woman including Reverend Sisters (with their so called "consecrated life and canonical state of perfection") is allowed to take part. Nor are they permitted to have access to where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. Also, they are not chosen to be presidents of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) or even function as mass servers. Even when the women read during mass, they are not allowed to do the Gospel reading or give the homily. Other roles women are not allowed to perform in the church include being formal prayer leaders, catechists, and or deacons or even priests. To me, the straightforward explanation for these restricted roles for women in the church is the traditional male chauvinism prevalent in the society.

The church and its members have many reasons why women are not allowed into these positions or allowed to perform the activities appropriate to them.

B. Reasons why women are not allowed to perform those roles.

Some of the reasons why women are restricted from certain roles and activities are based on tradition, reference to other churches, Bible, God, culture, nature, gender roles, and so forth. Under each of these headings, we will explore the views of the CAC women and men, and follow it up with that of the RCC men and women.

1. CHURCH TRADITION

a) CAC

Church tradition plays an important role in shaping the minds of the adherents. And whatever the Church has not been doing in the past will be vehemently resisted. The Church constitution and document are meant to be followed by any church member. Mrs. Janet Wole said that women already know that they are not supposed to be leaders "because it is part of the constitution."

Most of the respondents said categorically that what the CAC is doing today concerning the restriction of women is precisely what is in the church constitution. Until the elders of the CAC change the constitution to include some of these roles for women, there is nothing some of them can do about it. Women's ordination must be approved by the Church for any of the women leaders to be called to be ordained.

"That women are not allowed to preach in the church is just the doctrine of the church. They should not go into the pulpit to preach in order to avoid adultery (agbere) or fornication (pansaga)" said Mrs. Dorcas Funmi. She added that, at times when women "make up" (adornment), some men may be enticed. But when asked whether women will be allowed if they don't make up, she answered that she does not know "until the president of the CAC is advised by people like me, maybe they can change to that." As for her, she cannot advise the president because the authorities will say it is because she likes to preach.

About the finances of the church, it does seem to me that the women are not happy about not knowing how the money they help immensely to contribute, is spent by the pastor and elders. Even though Mrs. Vivian Oludele stated that this has been the Church tradition that "women do not know about the finances" of the Church. One Mama-Ijo represented the case this way: " I believe that if they want us to know, they will tell us, but because they don't want to tell us so we don't know. I only know the affairs and finance of the women, but for the Church, I don't know that, and nobody will ask me about that." Do we take it that the women feel unconcerned about the situation? No! The thought of change has already been implanted in the minds of the women. As Mrs. Denise Ogunniyi, a pastor's wife owning a private business said, "That is how it has been, I don't know whether they will

change it, since we do not have the right to change what has been on before I was born."

b) RCC

The RCC hierarchy denies women the right to say mass or lead worship. According to a priest, it is "the church's regulation" that women are not allowed to say mass. Right from the beginning of the church, the emphasis has been on men." Mrs. Rosaline Obinna, a 39 years old who became a typist due to poverty said that women are not reverend fathers because "it has never been so, that is the Catholic tradition." "...I didn't know when the Catholic tradition started, but ever since I was born, it has been so and if it is going to change, they will tell us the reason why it is so, because it will be new to us, because we are used to what is there."

Even though there is a hot debate on priesthood for women, one woman Mrs. Lala a retired grade two teacher, now a full time housewife, rejects the idea of making women priests in the Catholic Church, "for it has been so from the beginning and she doesn't know why they want to change it now. "

Mass serving is for the boys. Again Mrs. Rosaline Obinna restated that it "has been the tradition of the Catholic church that only males will be mass servers, and if they want to change the tradition, they will tell us the reason why they want to do so now."

Traditionally, women from the time of Christ are said not

to have been entrusted with the sacred mysteries of Christ which Christ himself handed over to the apostles. So no woman was given that opportunity and the tradition of the church continues to hand the same over to the new generation. Everybody can participate in the universal priesthood, but the ministerial priesthood is for men only.

The caring 59-year-old Archbishop Danladi said, "I don't think the Catholic Church will ever ordain a woman as a priest; if that is what you want to ask from me. That is really specific for men only, in the Catholic Church." From a theological point of view, he continued that "There are certain things that the church will build from tradition."

Some women respondents were not very happy with the situation. For example, Mrs. Donatus opined that, "in the Catholic doctrine, it seems men are dominating women. They always refer to the calling of the disciples, that when Jesus was choosing his disciples, he did not choose any woman." She also noted that activities such as mass serving and washing of feet by women are against the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

2. REFERENCE OR INFLUENCE OF OTHER CHURCHES

a) CAC

Some respondents prefer to compare their stand on women

with those of other denominations. Mrs. Folawiyo, referring to other churches said, "like in any other church, women don't usually perform the duty of a pastor, it is not peculiar with CAC alone." Like in the Catholic Church, the role of a Rev. sister is different from the role of Rev. father. "Rev. Sister don't pastor a church. You as a women, you are not allowed to wear the collar in your organization. Are you ordaining women in your Church?"

Learning their lessons from other Aladura churches, the reason why the prophetesses are not recognized in CAC is that most of the prophetesses in other denominations do not have husbands. They "run after men." Even those of them married, when they see someone greater than their husbands, they will find a way to divorce him, says one pastor. Some of them have divorced up to six husbands. He emphasized that now, before the CAC can admit anybody as a prophetess in the church, they will screen her very well to see that first of all, she is disciplined and everything about her relationship with her husband is OK. The case of the church not ordaining or recognizing prophetesses running after rich men comes down to being "it is not the custom of the church."

There seems to be an awe surrounding this restriction of women. According to the old Mrs. Ilare, in Nigeria, she is almost sure she has "never seen where women are allowed to preach." Even in churches established by women, they only preach when the church has not been handed over to a pastor or

an evangelist, but the moment the church is handed over and is recognized, "such woman will not be allowed to preach any longer."

b) RCC

Unlike in CAC where both women and pastors made reference to other churches, surprisingly, only one Catholic woman made reference to other churches. She, Mrs. Janet Ade, the market health officer does not see any reason to ask why there are no women catechists in the Church, because "I don't see any woman catechist in the other churches." The restrictions on women are more pronounced in the RCC, and a voice for change is yet to sound because of the tradition-bound nature of the Catholic Church, so I am not surprised that the RCC respondents also like some of the CAC's, do not especially care about this restriction. It does not seem to bother them.

3. BIBLE

a) CAC

The CAC attributes much of the men's leadership dominance and the women's supportive position to biblical injunctions. Most of the respondents hold the view that "women cannot be leaders where there are men and women, and once the whole church is present, men must lead; even the Bible said it: that man is the crown of woman. Men have to lead and direct women,

because women caused the downfall of mankind." The first letter of St. Paul to Timothy 2:11-15 states, "Women should learn in silence and humility', I do not allow them to teach or to have authority over men...." It is in the bid to "carry out this instruction that women are restricted from certain jobs in the church like pastors and evangelists." Also second Corinthians chapter 13, according to one respondent, reads:

women are not allowed to preach in the church. If you see anything going wrong that you want to say, you are going to keep silent. When individuals get home, she will tell her husband that these so and so thing can make improvement. It is her husband that will bring the message to the church.

A certain pastor recalled, "It is Christ that even liberated women from what it used to be from the beginning of time: women being counted as property." But when Christ came, he was the one who liberated the women. It is under that liberation that the women are called something unique:- that is the "bearing of the savior. It is a clear honor to women ... I think that is enough for women." It is in Christianity that women alone are given little chance; it is not practiced in other religion. You know the muslims, they restrict their women in the house ..."

Mrs. Collect Orobusmi of 49 years old, another church midwife who receives a meager salary of 150 naira, seems not satisfied with the answer she received from church authorities on why women cannot read from the pulpit. She does not know where it is in the Bible.

Another respondent, Mrs. Vivian Oludele said that

the only answer I can give to that question is that men are the head. St. Paul said it in his epistle that women should be under the rule of their husband. Women should be obedient to their husband because their husband is their head. Women are part of men; man is not created for woman, but woman is created for man. As we read from the Scripture, I know we are instructed to respect our head that is our leader like Christ is the head of the church, so is the husband the head.

Ephesians 9 and Timothy were specific about women not being ordained or preaching in the church, and pastors and elders have stuck to these biblical injunctions in the administration of their churches. They even tell some of the agitating women to go and read their Bibles and know where they are placed. One of the pastors said that "CAC is really a biblical church." Referring to women he added, "I don't think they feel it, because they read the Bible themselves and know where the Word of God places them, they don't have any feeling, but whenever they are called, they are very pleased to answer."

Scripture supports more the African than European culture. In Christ's meetings with his disciples one pastor says, "you will never hear women's names. Whereas I believe that women will be in greater number than the men in those days; and so that thing that has been in existence, quite a long time before now and it still continues."

Many men and women in the CAC church said that the Bible does not allow women to talk in the church. They recommend, according to the Bible's injunctions, that a woman should speak to the church through her husband.

One of the women, Mrs. A.W. Kayode, when questioned whether she has asked why women are prevented from doing certain jobs in the church, answered, "CAC is not a kind of church where you can go to the leader to ask questions anyhow." Then she added, "even if I go, it wouldn't make any difference." She said she is not involved in anything because she takes care of her family.

According to the Bible, the pastors are the shepherds and leaders who give instruction on what to do. "We can't do anything without the consent of the pastor; anything we are told to do, we use to do it" said Mrs. Ilare. Also since the husband is the head of the family, the husbands may not allow their wives to go from place to place for evangelization because women need to look after the family. Women are made to believe in the necessity of cooperating with their husbands before they can succeed.

b) RCC

All the RCC respondents never expressed doubt about the ministerial position of men from the biblical point of view. In their responses which range from Christ choosing only men as apostles to His commissioning only men as priests at the Last Supper, one notes the conservatism in the thinking of these women. One respondent, Mrs. Matilda Mojisola Awotunde, 40-year-old NCE holder, Vice President of parish CWO, and Financial secretary of area CWO, stated categorically that

women could not be priests because, "I think what happened is that, maybe the Catholic Church is following the Old Testament rather than the New Testament, whereby it is only men that can come to the altar." She went ahead to say that "Even when you look very well, you will see that most of these Christian (leaders) are all male, there is no female among them." Also referring to the Old Testament, Mrs. Lala contends that "When God first of all made Adam and Eve, God told Eve that, this is your husband and he is the leader."

That a woman cannot be priest and has no authority to go to the altar to preach, as written in the Bible (Corinthians Chapter 11) is the reason given by Mrs. Babarinde and Mrs. Abigael Ani, a young NCE trader in four different church societies. Man's headship of the house, as written in Timothy 3:1-4, is what Mrs. Josephine Adigun, a 33-year old nurse in four church societies and Mrs. Isabella Abisoye, an assistant headmistress and a member of a progressive union in her town used to support the exclusion of women from giving out holy communion.

I personally have been a bit disturbed about these restrictions. Does the hand of a woman defile the holy communion or unmake it the body of Christ? On the other hand, I was really thrilled at the way my CAC respondents were quite at home with quotations from the Bible to buttress their points, seeming to readily recall vividly the different portions of the Bible that explain or support their positions.

4. GOD

a) CAC

The CACs believe that leadership is given to men by God. God made them heads of the family. And men are normally leaders in the church because it has been established by God that men should be. Mrs. A.W. Kayode seems to capture the whole idea when she said,

It started from Genesis, since the creation of the world. It says, God took sand and molded Adam; when he molded Adam, there was no life in him [and God breathed on him and he had life]. The Bible didn't tell us that when God wanted to create Eve, that he took sand; but the Bible said that God created Adam and took one out from the bones of his ribs and molded Eve, the woman. God didn't create them equal. If God wanted to create them equal, as he created Adam, nothing would have prevented him from creating Eve the same way. But he took from the bones of the ribs of Adam to create Eve.

During the life of Christ, there were women that were following Christ for the gospel propagation, but none of them was called an "apostle" of Christ. So Mrs. Floret Akangbe, a middle age garri trader and Mrs. Vivian Oludele believe that.

What we human beings cannot understand, God understands, because it is the Lord that created both men and women and put each in their various positions. Man is the head of a woman; this was established by God, women are under men, and men are the head; no matter the position a woman may be, she is under a man. This is what I understand as the reason why they must not go to where men stand to preach, to do their own preaching.

Mrs. Adunni Akin quoted from first Corinthians 14:29-36 and first Timothy 3:16 to confirm that "God created men to rule, and women are to bow for men and so they are not to

preach or become elders or pastors of the church."

Some respondents contended that in few occasions where women are appointed as leaders by the male church authorities, they tend to appoint women who will obey them and dance to their tune. However, others noted too that in church affairs, there is also a belief that God has a hand in who is named leader, and will arrange it that a God-fearing man or woman will ultimately be chosen to be leader. As one pastor puts it, "to fear God is to keep His words and not to be radical enough to change His word." The following quotation from the interview with Mrs. Vivian Oludele, one of the women leaders appointed by the church will illustrate the point:

I am the Iya-Ijo. Even though there is no law that can stop me, I cannot step my legs on where God ask me not to step. As old as I am, I am the mother of the church and very active. I have the power to proclaim the word of God and to give any order. I cannot because of that add the work the men are supposed to do in addition to my own work. No, I cannot go beyond the boundary given to me by God. The Lord said, that heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of God has to be fulfilled. And it has to be fulfilled in the boundary he said men must not go beyond and the boundary he said women must not go beyond. I cannot because I am the Iya-Ijo and because I am the head or the assistant to the head, go beyond my boundary, I cannot do it. Another person can decide to do it, but I as a person cannot do it.

The question is, however, how much do male leaders exploit female gullibility and trust in traditional biblical interpretations.

b) RCC

The RCC believe that the simplest reason why women are

not ordained is that "our Lord himself instituted that. The mother was always in company of the Apostles but when the power of being a priest was given, it was directed to the apostles." "She could have been given the same power if our Lord meant the exercise of priesthood to be given to women; our Lady would have been the first woman to be given such a power because our Lord respected our Lady so much." The leadership position of men "as ordained by God" was not contested by the RCC women respondents. Even as if reacting to the idea of Christ not making Nigerians priests, my men respondents stressed that the issue at stake is that of manhood and womanhood and not that of race or ethnicity.

Mrs. Louisa Iremono, chairlady of the tailoring association (and a member of two church and five non-church associations) said, "when Jesus was alive, he made a man the head of the church and not a woman. When he was appointing Peter and John to the church, there were women there; but they were not allowed to be the head of any organization there." Mrs. Abigail Ani defends men's leadership positions in the church with an analogy with the family, saying: "even in the family, God made man to be head of the family. And because God created Adam before Eve in the book of Genesis so man is first."

5 CULTURE

a) CAC

The culture of a people plays an important role in their

lives. In the culture of the Jews during the time of Christ, women never had any leadership positions. They were not counted even during census. This practice is not absent in Africa. Boserup (1970:214) has this to say, "Nearly all the parents teach their boys and girls that boys are superior to girls and that they alone can show initiative and accept positions of responsibility." The Church has continued to follow this Jewish and African culture. The CACs observe that, because of this cultural attitude of the Church, woman's headship of the Church is nearly impossible. Mrs. Felicia Falode contends that this cultural conservatism which surrounds the teachings of the Church makes us believe that "We are taught what will lead us to heaven, not what will lead us to hell."

b) RCC

The RCC women are of the opinion that it is the tradition of this Church that women are not permitted to be leaders in a community where there are men. Furthermore, they say that women cannot take up leadership positions because "it is the custom of the people that women are to serve men."

However, while Mrs. Helen Ola opined that "maybe it is the culture of the church that women are not allowed to be "father", and do not offer sacrifice," Mrs. Matilda Mojisola Awotunde said that women cannot be leaders because "the culture says that men are the head of their wives." The main

belief of these women is that men are the heads of women and the heads of the house. Men are supposed to be leaders because it is men that marry women to the house. Sticking to and supporting a gender division of roles these two women voiced, respectively, that "according to the culture, women are supposed to sweep" and "cannot be overall leaders in a mixed society."

The men respondents argued that both in the church and in the African traditional religion, "women do not offer sacrifice." "What is right is what is permissible in a particular community for that community, but something which is wrong in one society may be right in another society."

The Church has been directly and indirectly teaching that men are superior to women. This is consistent with some cultures as with Nigerian culture. For example, in Nigeria, in some places, a woman no matter of what age cannot break a kolanut when a male is there, even if he is a little boy. But some women have objected, "If one believes in the teachings of the Church, and if the Church culture reflect other cultures and are dynamic, shouldn't these teachings reflect the realities of the day?"

The tradition of restricting women from going out, going to school, of training boys in gainful skills and giving girls away for marriage has helped to put women in a subordinate position. Some parents especially in the traditional era felt that there was no use spending so much money on the girls

because they would get married. However, these traditions and ways of looking at women are now changing. There are still some people today who have that mentality to continue with the old. But in defense of the Church, some argue that it is the church that first gave women liberty, because the early missionaries came and taught our people to know God and to train the girls. But even in giving that education, the Church used gender roles and some cultural biases to lessen the vision of equality between men and women and before God.

Archbishop Danladi said that the Church is against the idea that women may not own land in some places in Nigeria. He is especially not pleased with the plight of the widow in many parts of Nigeria. He makes it clear that the church regards human beings as equal. But as human nature is concerned of course, he added, "it is sometimes very difficult to achieve that equality." Some women feel it is not enough to say that "the Church is against it and that all are equal." They say that the Church needs to confront its members about this injustice. One can understand why the CAC women were praying for widows in a special way. In some places in Nigeria, when a man dies, the wife has no right over his property. Everything goes to the husband's relatives, and in most cases, they will just abandon the woman with the children. There is no big problem if the children are grown ups and there is a boy among them. The educated elites of the society are now introducing the idea of writing wills, and this is helping to

improve the situation.

6. NATURE

i. MENSTRUATION: In both CAC and RCC, the natural periodic menstruation of women is one reason why women are not allowed near the altar. They believe that during this period, the women are unclean, but since women can menstruate at any time, they are not allowed to go to the pulpit, enter the chancel, celebrate mass, or touch the Blessed Sacrament. According to Basden (1966:61), "menstruation is a source of ritual uncleanness." It is highly polluting and dangerous to all male activities (Daryll 1954).

Mrs. Mercy C. Nwata, who does insurance work, sells clothes at the weekends, and is involved in five church societies commented,

"Impure, not that the woman's body is dirty, but inwardly, she is dirty. What I mean is that with that gushing out of blood of the woman's nature, it is not good to be near what is sacred. That is why I guess it is impure... in the Bible I was taught, though I can't remember the chapter... I still believe in the word of God in the Bible..."

The impurity used to restrict women is believed to be backed by the Bible as authority and culture.

Most especially while menstruating, "I don't think it is wise, because in the Bible, we come across women after delivering, they will stay for some months before entering the

church," she continued. "I don't know if I am correct, but that is what we were taught any way. So what if a woman as one of the mass servers is to be in such periods?" She added that, even if it is announced that the women should not come near the altar during that period, some women would not admit that they are menstruating and they will come and touch the sacred things used for worship. "Without being told, a woman who is clean herself, finds herself to be impure at that material time, whenever she is in that period."

ii. PRIDE: Both Mrs. Beatrice Shola and Mrs. A.W. Kayode agree and contend respectively that "they want man to be the leader of the committee because if you put woman as the head, she will be proud."

It is not that the women cannot lead, they use to make a contribution there, but according to the Bible, women have to be obedient to men. And so wherever men and women are, men must be the leader; so that women will not be proud.

Women are allowed to go here and there to proclaim the Gospel. Only in the church they are not allowed, and you yourself know the behaviors of women. There are a lot of behaviors that women put up that will not be allowed for a leadership position in the church.

One such is that women can easily go to the extremes, as AGS, pastor Arubidi will say: "The reason is that our women, at times, some of them use to go to the extremes. Because you as women, if you are put into a post now, if you are not carefully watched, you go into extremes. They do other things that are beyond them. So we don't want that in our church."

One woman, Mrs. Ijora, said that women becoming pastors

or elders "won't please God because we women, we are devils." she does not believe in giving women a chance because they will feel "now I am something" and they will start boasting.

iii. WEAKNESS: That "women are the weaker sex" was voiced by both men and women respondents. The demands of the job of the pastors is what actually restricts the women from being pastors. It is the feminine nature of women that does not allow her to do ministerial jobs. But this is not "a denial of any right," said one CAC woman.

Another CAC woman said that women are not allowed to preach in the street because "women are weak people. Our strength is not enough to do that work and also in our denomination CAC, the women are not allowed to do that type of job." She uttered that women are not ordained because "we believe that women are not yet up to the stage. But we have evangelists who do campaign and revivals and they are good in this. We have prophetesses, they prophesy."

Still another said, "women take care of the children, cook food, do the washing, they can't afford to cut grass while the men are there. .. they feel that all the housework is enough for us; I think so, but I don't know." Another said, "women sweep the church, and dress it, that is what concerns us. Those grass are too strong for women to cut."

Women are restricted from going or doing certain things for fear something may harm them. An example is that in some

cases, CAC women are not allowed to go for night vigils. One of the reasons advanced by Mrs. Lydia Olu was that "if women go to night vigil, they will say that they have gone to another man to commit adultery." A woman is viewed as the weaker sex and therefore will always be helped. There is always that fear that she cannot stand or do it by herself if she is left alone.

iv. SECRETS: Mrs. Adunni Akin said that women cannot keep secrets; they will leak secret decisions of the council. When she was asked whether she is speaking generally of all women including herself and supposing she is chosen as one of the council of elders, can she keep a secret? She answered, "Women are not the same. As we have the quiet ones, so also we have the lousy ones. I am convinced that most women cannot keep a secret." Mrs. Victoria Ayandele, the Evangelist wife's who conduct services and preaches when the husband is not around said that women can lead but the church does not allow them to lead because "they do not believe or have trust in the woman."

In the RCC, while some RCC respondents attributed the denial of women in leadership positions to shyness and lack of powerful control in arguments, Mrs. Lala is of the opinion that women can't do hard work such as mechanic work or climbing, but they can teach or nurse. So because women cannot do what she calls "hard work," for her, men are leaders.

Mrs. Augusta Akande thinks that women are not allowed to

be leaders because, by their nature, they do not have energy like men. "Apart from that maybe they are cowards; if they have a minor accident, they will just panic, but men, if they panic at all, will still stay and do what they intended to do."

Even though women run up and down trying to fend for themselves and family, Mrs. Beatrice Ijeoma, the caterer, feels women cannot do catechist work, especially when they are pregnant, because it is more tedious. They cannot go to outstations or do much travelling because they cannot cope.

Even though the women are more and more active, the men always show the women they are in charge. One of the priests says, "wherever we have a family, the man will always like to hold the position of fatherhood."

RCC men have a way of discussing this discriminatory attitude against women in the church. Archbishop Okoye, a 70-year old ex-university professor said there is

the equality of human beings, men and women, before God, but of course with specific roles. This is where these feminists, those fighting for the equality of women and men, go wrong. They think that what a man can do, a woman can do it. But nature did not make us that way. There are certain roles that are specifically meant for men and there are roles that are specifically meant for women. No matter what people may do to try to destroy that, it is impossible because this is the way nature made us. For example, maternal instinct is natural to a woman, and the instinct of playing about with ball is natural to a man.

7. ROLES NOT SEEN

In both the CAC and RCC, most of the respondents say that they have never seen women perform certain roles like preaching, being a pastor or priest or a catechist, distributing communion, etc, and they have not asked why. They feel complacent about it, allowing the status quo to remain. Some people believe that it is better to maintain things as they are and not try to disrupt the present state of affairs, thus bringing about disorder. What disturbs researchers like me, is that these women are not asking questions about their role in the church. Even when they don't know the reasons for what is happening to them, One would expect that they should ask question and seek out answers to their problems. They do not really seem to see the state of affairs as a problem. Is it that they are brainwashed?

For Mrs. Grace Ayo there is no woman role model for female mass servers. She has never seen a woman serve at mass. So why worry? Even the men also take it for granted. Maybe, because they have the upper hand in the whole situation where the leadership role is reserved for them. An AGS of the CAC had this to say, "I did not ask why women are not allowed to do church wardens here since it is how we met it here right from time. In all the places I have worked, I have never seen a woman doing church warden."

Mrs. Matilda Mojisola Awotunde agrees that, although she

has "not seen any woman being a prayer leader," she has not questioned it. And as Mrs. Rebecca Oyebisi, a 40-year-old trader and member of three church organizations, said, "women can't be pastors and church wardens; it doesn't suit women, and since I was born, I have never seen a woman become a pastor or a church warden in CAC." One tends to agree with Rev. Fr. Titus Dele that if you have peace in a community for certain practices they have, you know their feelings will be obvious to certain other practices. You don't just force it on them when you fully realize what their action would be." No matter what wind of change is blowing in the larger society, things should not be changed in the church because church matter is different from other life matters." Fr. Titus Dele is a middle-aged Ph.D holder, head of the Department of Religion in the University, and at the same time running a parish.

It is most baffling to listen to an educated person of the profession and vocation of Fr. Titus to air some of the convictions of his about tradition and society, church life, and social life. Fr. Titus said, "if you have peace in a community for certain practices they have, you know their feelings will be obvious with regard to certain other practices. You don't just force it on them when you fully realize what their action will be." To a researcher, the fallacy in this argument would be that the one culture should resist the other even if this other is better than the one.

Far more astonishing in Fr. Titus' argument against change in the church is his other argument: "No matter what wind of change is blowing in the larger society, things should not be changed in the church because church matter is different from other life matters." An African researcher would think that Fr. Titus is doing no less than echoing the bifurcation between religion and real life: a system of life that is foreign to the African way of life; a mode of living that found its way into and has substantially altered the holistic life of the people; a way of life that originally knew no separation from politics, religion, economics, socialization, you name it, from European feudalism and Christianity. But even more, what Fr. Titus is doing is the perpetuation of a system of life that holds women down, by resisting change regardless of whatever is happening in society toward a change in the church.

8. DOMESTIC

Looking after the children and husband are some of the domestic duties that are given as reasons why women are not allowed to take up some leadership positions or participate in certain activities in the church. These domestic duties Obbo (1982) contends, hinders female emancipation.

"Woman evangelists must not marry because they won't have time to do the job; because their children will be disturbing them, especially the young babies who will always cry, and

other demands of her husband," said one respondent. "So it is better for her to stay unmarried to serve her God in order not to have anything to disturb her."

One woman said that what she sees in all this is that "we women, there is a little chance for us to do these activities, because if you have your family, before you take care of them, look after them, there may neither be chance to be punctual or concentrate", and that is the reason why she did not bother. Swantz (1980:59) puts it subtly, "The woman's daily schedule keeps her busy from morning till evening with a sum total of seemingly insignificant small domestic duties." Also the woman continued "men are selfish." They may not want women to go about doing certain things so that the women will stay at home and look after their children.

Mrs. Augusta Akande, for example, said that women cannot be leaders in St. Vincent de Paul society. Her reason is that "leaders used to go to places any time and anywhere. They are always on the road. If a woman is a leader, who will be taking care of the children at home and even the husband? If the husband is not in that society, I don't think the person will allow his wife to be moving up and down like that."

In the tradition of the study area, a man is less busy than a woman in the domestic affairs at home. He will have more time to attend to outside engagements than the wife. However, Mrs. Isabella Abisoye will want a situation where domestic work is shared between husband and wife. One doubts

whether the situation will come about soon since "men won't share." So the domestic work is left for the woman. That is why no woman has volunteered to go for the catechist training as of now.

EDUCATION

When the church encourages the education of women, they always encourage them towards the domestic areas, thereby trying to perpetuate and restrict the traditional roles of a woman to only domestic ones (Williams 1989; Swantz 1985; Obbo 1982; and Boserup 1970). This goes contrary to the new trend of women trying to push, impress themselves, and try to do more rather than only domestic things. Archbishop Danladi is of the opinion that there is no special inclination on the part of the Church to discourage women from going into vocations that will not keep them in perpetuity as women who are supposed to be only in the kitchen. "The Church and society do not discourage women's education. They want women to do more things on top of domestic things. The truth of the matter is that it is some parents who restrict their daughters from being educated. The Church encourages the girls they think are capable to do higher things that men do."

PROFESSIONALS: Unlike their men counterparts, there is no adequate training for women as church professionals in Nigeria. For example, a great disparity exists between the

sexes as they want to offer themselves completely to work for God. A young man goes to the seminary for training, and a young woman goes to the convent for training. By the time the young man is ready for ordination, he must have got at least first degrees in philosophy and theology. The young woman will be given a basic training in different subjects including a few courses in philosophy and theology, but no degree is given. Unless she goes for further education after her religious profession, it is as if all that she did in the novitiate or postulancy is not recognized as authentic. In the Nigerian situation, only the qualification she had before convent training is what counts.

Women are not allowed or trained to become church professionals. Professional training for priests, deacons and catechists has long been in existence in the Church. Except for a very few Rev. sisters now trained for catechetical work, no woman as of now is trained to go into these professions. Years and types of training automatically distinguish priests from others, including Rev. Sisters. Some respondents think that the training given to Rev. Sisters is not comparable to that of the priests, even though they are all for God's work. Their roles in the church are not the same: one is ordained, the other is not. This difference affects the type and years in formation. When one tries to ask why, we come back to the tradition of the Church. In the case of a catechist, Archbishop Danladi reiterated, "How do you expect a married

woman with children to leave her children and go to a village to stay there for a week or more and journey to another village and so on and so forth. Isn't it better for the husband to do that when the wife is taking care of the children at home." There is nothing theological about this, it is a question of the circumstances, suitability, and so on.

3. Problems militating against women's inclusion in church activities

While some people both men and women have taken the non-existence of women in the hierarchy and key leadership positions in the church for granted, some are agitating that women be included and thus be granted greater participation in church activities. This desire for change is growing because some of these women now know their potentials and are willing to contribute their quota to the building of the church. They feel it will be a waste of God's given talent if they cannot use the talent for the church. The following are some of the problems militating against the women's inclusion in the leadership structure of the church.

UNAWARENESS

a) CAC

Many women, when they are asked whether there are any

positions or activities that women are excluded from in their Church, answer, "Nothing," or "I don't think there is," or "No, I don't know," or "Men and women perform all the activities in the church. These show that they are not aware.

Their unawareness leads to indifference. Some of the women who are aware of the exclusion of women from the leadership roles and church activities do not know the reasons for the exclusion and do not care to ask or find out. Others are not even aware that women are excluded from certain religious activities.

b) RCC

The following short dialogue with one of the women is an example of the level of awareness that most of these women and even men manifest:

Ques. In the church you are attending, is there any job or role or work that women are not allowed to do?
 Ans. There is none.

Ques. In your church, are women allowed to play the role of a catechist?
 Ans. I have never seen that.

Ques. Does a woman become a parish priest?
 Ans. There is no woman who has become a reverend father or parish priest.

Ques. Why did you answer that there is no work women are prevented from doing in your church?
 Ans. I didn't know I could mention the two.

Mrs. Lucy Gbede does not think that there is any work in the Church that women are not allowed to do; but when I ask if

women can be a catechist, preach, or lead the pastoral council, she comes in abruptly to say, "Not at all."

Others like Mrs. Helen Ola are not aware of many other activities that women cannot do in the church. She even thinks that Rev. sisters are women priests, while a 52-year-old petty trader, Mrs. Ruth Adeogun, does not even regard sisters as women. This shows the low level of awareness amongst the majority of the women folk.

ACCEPTANCE

a) CAC

In accepting the Bible as the Word of God, some say that the Church is following the Bible; and if the Bible says that women should not be leaders, then they are comfortable with its dictates. Mrs. Virginia Aramide said that what she wants is for things to move on well, and since everything is moving on well, she does not feel anything about not allowing women to take up some leadership roles. Some accept the situation for fear of being looked down upon as unbelievers who are not yet born again. Mrs. A.W. Kayode thinks that women will lead better and adds that she would be among those to revolt against the present state of affairs in the church but for the fact that we don't want to do anything that is contrary to the Bible or to the doctrine of the church." In some situations, the women have accepted the status quo but according to Mrs. Rebecca Oyebisi, "Not that women can't do it, but no woman has

ever come up to do it." Some of the women "assume a 'silence is golden' stance because they lack the confidence or education to deal with male-dominance (Obbo 1982:16).

The women that have accepted the status quo seem to believe that, "next to God, are the husbands of the home, as the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the husbands are the leaders of the family. So whatever the committee of elders decide, it should pass through the pastor and they accept it."

But Mrs. Adunni Akin rejects this view while expressing her unhappiness that women are restricted from being pastors. In fact she will be happy to see women included in all the roles and activities of the church. However, "since it has been establish by God himself that women should not be pastors" and also according to the CAC, she does not think it will be agreed upon and so, she accepts it. She is satisfied, since women are given other works to do in the church.

Some other women feel that, even though men can preach from the pulpit, it is no big deal, since women can do their preaching or deliver their sermons or do any other church activity if given an opportunity to face the crowd or even among themselves. The restriction of women from preaching does not bother some women. Nonetheless, Mrs. Ilare says, "if we are not satisfied with the restriction, the women would have asked, but because we like it the way it is and do not want to disturb the existing order, nobody bothers to ask why. We are

satisfied with it."

Mrs. Janet Wole said that, to be candid, she does not feel OK with women not being allowed to participate in conducting the service, reading the Bible during service, and making announcements. She has already questioned it, but her pastor's reply was that they "are going according to the constitution of the church." She seems to be resigned to the state of affairs and hence there is nothing she can do to eradicate the restrictions.

b) RCC

"When Christ was choosing his apostles, he did not choose any woman," so Chief Mrs. Oyo feels that the Church in prohibiting women from preaching is fulfilling Christ's work. Mrs. Abigael Ani thinks and feels that there is nothing bad about women not being allowed to preach. "I think it is just to give men respect that they are head of the family... Whether they deserve it or not. I think it is what it should be."

Some, such as Rev. Fr. Titus Dele and Archbishop Orile think that the reason women are not performing certain roles in the Church is that they have not asked to, but neither have the women shown any dissatisfaction about not being able to do some Church activities. If women show that they do not like their being restricted from these roles, he will enlighten the people and then women will be included. "If there is objection

against their non-inclusion from the side of the women, then you are in a position to enlighten the Church that there is nothing wrong in the women serving at the altar."

Mrs. Comfort Adekunle, the Iya-Ijo cola seller and farmer, and those like her have taken for granted the fact that women are not allowed to be priests and catechists. She does not know the reason why women are restricted from performing these roles and has not cared to ask because, as she said, "I don't know, if I know it is necessary, I would have asked, but I don't feel it is necessary." For her, "anything that women are called to do, they should do."

Mrs. Juliana Adejo puts on a nonchalant attitude as some other women because of fear of being insulted and intimidated by the men. She says, "I don't think about it at all ... Why I don't ask sometimes is that they (men) may insult me;" "I know them very well, and I know what they can do." This type of situation is what Obbo (1982:45) calls "unspoken antagonism between the sexes."

In recent years women in Nigeria have achieved greater recognition and equality in the larger society than in the church. They do many things in the church but are not recognized officially by the hierarchy. Some people have started to see the church as an unjust institution and they have begun to question some of the ideas and practices held by the Church. The Church preaches equality but the ruling class in the Church, who are men, are not ready to share power with

the women. The question of restriction of women consciously or unconsciously has its root in those roles or positions in which women are not allowed to perform in the Church and in most of the activities that pertain to those roles and positions.

Nonetheless, some women (especially in the CAC) have been pondering this question of women restriction for some time now. They say the Church is wrong in not allowing them perform all roles in the Church. Since the leaders are reluctant to change the constitution for the better, they portray the Church as obstinate and unjust. Women are capable of being leaders, if put in leadership positions, women will perform better. What a man can do, a woman can do also. Mrs. Felicia Falode opined that women can head the Church better and can preach better from the pulpit than men if they are given the chance.

So, even though women are not finding it easy to change the status quo, they are still pressing and agitating to be included in the leadership position in the Church. Many are praying seriously about it, hoping that if it is in God's plan with time the restriction will be removed and women will be allowed to preach from the pulpits.

From the reactions of the RCC and CAC women's groups, I have no doubt in my mind that a wind of change is blowing as regards changing some of the restrictions against women in the church. The struggle for change is more prominent in the CAC

than in the RCC

There is always a difference in the church training between men and women both in quality, emphasis, and levels. The men and the women are not given the same training. There is always a way to make women's training fall short of the men's. None of the women church workers are given adequate training. The Church as a body does not give emphasis to the training of women church workers as they do men church workers. The disparity in the training received by male and females in the church makes women always dependent on men on church matters. It consciously or unconsciously gives men an air of superiority and women a sense of inferiority and dependence.

The reason for this disparity may be that both men and women have different roles in the Church. Each has to be trained according to the role he or she is expected to play. Since by the Church's tradition women are not supposed to be preaching, it will be a waste of resources to train them as such. For example, even the pastors' wives are not allowed to make the unleavened bread for holy communion. "We prepare it by ourselves, we have been trained for it," said one pastor. Pastors are trained to prepare it, "that is one of the things that makes the bread holy and filling everything with awe. None will remain to be taken back to the house; all will be finished in the church."

The following quote illustrates some contradiction and

clearly demonstrates the ambiguity of the church's stand on women.

The Holy Father says that the personal dignity of women must be respected. All forms of discrimination and instrumentalization of women should be eliminated. Women, although not called to the ministerial priesthood, have their specific and irreplaceable apostolate in Church and society and throughout Church history has made a significant contribution. This must continue (Arinze 1991:11).

This ambiguity is the root cause of the leadership struggle. To reject discrimination and accept it at the same time shows discrepancy. Girzone (1987:88) puts it a bit differently but more forcefully in these lines: "What the Church preaches and teaches is one thing, what the church officials will allow is an entirely different matter. ... The Church is great on preaching justice and love, but they are also among the worst violators."

At this stage, it becomes necessary to recapitulate the main question of our entire work. That question is, How does church membership and participation in the RCC and AIC facilitate or inhibit women's involvement in community development issues?

The description of the hierarchical structure of the RCC and the AIC shows the absence of the women from the hierarchy. This is not, as we saw, by the choice of the women. It was by the design of the ruling body of these churches, namely the men. The key to this exclusion of women from the governing body of the churches is lack of the essential qualification

for the position women are denied access to. That requirement is ordination.

The ordination criterion raises an important question. What are the essential criteria for ordination? In most cases, they are physical and mental good health, intellectual ability, and good morals. Considering these criteria, most women are qualified to be trained as ordained spiritual leaders. But they are not ordained. So, one is compelled to look beyond the above standards for ordination to a more fundamental reason for women's disqualification for ordination, which opens the door to all sacramental and ministerial clerical functions. Our research revealed that the main stumbling block is the age-old barrier, sexism. One asks with Mazrui (1991:10), "How far can we hold certain interpretations of religion accountable for malignant sexism? Lord, how much sexism has been committed in your name?"

Can women participate in civil politics, the economic, and social well being and independence of their society? Experience bears out that they can and they do, although this cannot be without struggle. However, there is no formal constitution barring them from such participation, as one experiences scandalously in the churches. There are reasons as we saw in this chapter, why gender plays a fundamental role in the ordination and therefore leadership positions in these churches.

The hierarchy of the churches have traditionally defended

their action against women and have succeeded until now in teaching their members to look at the matter as a given. The givenness of why women should not participate in certain functions of the churches are seen in their real essence in the areas where the churches refer to and have taught all to do the same. They are church tradition, Scriptures or Bible, God, culture, and "nature" (notably the nature of women and all that this comprises).

Nature though has a way of working out things. Both by instinct and the design of education, women have started to ask questions about their place both in society and in religion. This in my opinion is the coming of age of the woman. But still we ask why are the women struggling as we already saw, to go into leadership in religion, irrespective of the reason we saw that are levelled against them. We think it is a natural human desire to fulfil one's human potential by living it out. In this is rooted the urge for the women to break the barrier of religion, in order to achieve some of their political and economic aspirations. The woman's place, religion says, is "in the home." The women have used some of the exposures which religion gave them, notably education to discover that the woman's place can also be beyond the home. The education of women by the churches therefore has unleashed the greatest desire of the women to the fullest realization of their human potentials to the development of their society. The struggle for total liberation and empowerment continues as

more awareness increases of the duty which the women owe themselves and their children to work for the development of their society. According to Obbo (1982:144), "Women wanted power, status and wealth just as men did. The men regarded any attempt by the women to seek more opportunities for acquiring these goals as their 'getting out of control.'" The struggle continues.

CHAPTER VI

STRATEGIES AND CHANGES IN WOMEN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

As the leadership struggle and political activities go on in the church, women have adopted some strategies which are changing them and changing the church itself. Some of those strategies and changes in the CAC and in the RCC are what this section is all about.

A. STRATEGIES IN THE CAC

The strategies that have been adopted which have brought about changes in this leadership struggle include the topics of ignoring men, self-accounting, education, working on pastors, support, organizations, meetings, overseas relationships, and ordinations.

IGNORING MEN: Stories from both the men and women in the church show that women are adopting the strategy of ignoring the men and "doing their own thing." One of the pastors puts it so well when he said, "... but in fact it is a challenge to our fathers that, if you fail to recognize women, then they will want to tell you that we are not theirs..." This is clearly seen in women going ahead and forming their own

hierarchical structure irrespective of the men, and giving themselves titles that the men have given to themselves. The 1991 Almanac of Women shows how they are structuring their own hierarchy as if the male hierarchy does not exist. This show of ignominy to the men is a natural consequence of the oppression of the women by the men. This men's religious oppression has led to religious revolution. This revolution can be key to many economic and political engagements of the women in the society today. (I call it religious enlightenment).

SELF-ACCOUNTING: One of the strategies the CAC women have adopted concerns keeping their money to themselves. The result is that now the men do not know exactly how much the women have, and the men can no longer use the women's money when and how they like. If men need money from the women as a group, they have to appeal to the women leaders.

Since women now keep their money separately, they can now embark on certain projects without explaining the details of their motives. Here Obbo's (1982:4) saying seems true that "money enables one to implement decisions instead of sitting around wishing for luck." Some women have the notion that, if the women were not keeping their money, they would not have been able to build projects such as the Babalola Secondary School, a house for the mother of the Founder of CAC, the Faith Home at Ede, and especially the Women's Bible College.

With their money, the women can finance representatives who will represent them on a cause they want to contribute to.

This strategy is important for two reasons. First, it teaches the men to recognize the economic power of the women which they no longer can take for granted. The result of this is that the men now recognize the women's unavoidable contributions to the financial well-being of the church and are willing to negotiate over financial assistance from the women rather than taking the women's money without reference to them. Secondly, the women are contributing to the physical development of the church and community by building institutions which they can call their own. These institutions provide employment opportunities for many people in the community, as is evidenced by the educational program of the women below.

EDUCATION: Women have gone ahead to build institutions to train women leaders. Some women call the Bible College at Ede a "seminary," thus giving the impression that this is a place where women church leaders are trained as the men. Last year when the college turned out its first graduates, the women subtly demonstrated that the college is theirs, by the women leaders giving the certificates to the graduands while the pastors watched.

The Women's Bible College and the School of Prophetesses at Ede are a real challenge to the whole Church and pose a

future problem which the women themselves do not clearly envisage how they will handle. As one of the pastors complained during the interview, "the women do these things and call on the Church authorities to come and witness and bless them, but they do not know the implications of what they are doing now."

However, the men and women themselves envisage the import of the challenge which this program carries. Its true value can only be fully appreciated with time. Even now the effect is incalculable in value terms as there is an emerging recognition of the equality of the women with the men, or even the superiority of the women over the men, as one can imagine in the obeisant attitude in the foundress and pastor relationship reported below.

PASTORS: Apart from using the church officials to give credence to what they are doing, the women use another strategy to break barriers with the pastors. For example, some women foundresses are now selecting men from their fold, with the inclinations to do church work, and giving them seasoned training themselves (as Bola will say), before sending them for the final training in the seminary. As a result, when these pastors are sent back to the foundresses after their ordinations, they respect the foundresses and follow their wishes, finding it difficult to disassociate themselves from their foundresses.

This is why, unlike the older pastors, these new pastors will not have the courage to challenge Mrs. Bola Eko when she sits with them at times on the platform which is supposed to represent the chancel. The same with pastor Anthony Isidi, who will call Mrs. Janet Oluranti to sit with him at the chancel, despite accusations and questionings by church authorities and members. He knows that, without her, he might not have left the Catholic church to be a CAC member, and even more to become a pastor. He confesses, as many others do, that Mrs. Oluranti made him what he is today in the Church and also society.

SUPPORT AND FOUNDESSES: The women are forming a great support for themselves. They come together and cry out with one voice. With their support, the foundresses are now giving a great challenge to the church and the pastors sent to them. An example is the support the women are giving the foundresses now. Mrs. Emilia Ayanwale, 60 years old, one of the foundresses whose job is to pray said:

The church council wanted to take over our churches from us and we have been struggling. Early this year, the women leaders including the foundresses went and confronted the council, asking the pertinent questions like: "when the foundresses were going to buy the land to build the church, the CAC did not contribute. Now you want to collect the keys from them after all the problems they underwent".

So the women refused that that churches founded by the women would be handed over to pastors to run. Before, the

foundresses had to hand over their churches to the church authorities, who then take over and appoint pastors who run these churches. But now the pastors sent to them are under the foundresses and take instructions from them. So the foundresses no longer move away from the scene. They are now part and parcel of their church; leading and giving directives in their churches as the spirit moves them. They were able to achieve this because they came together as a group and confronted the authorities of the church with one voice.

Some of the women leaders claim that they are "sent to liberate women spiritually, because men cannot know much about us for they are men." One of them, (Bola) says, "So we need to train our women and tell them that we have got potentials and that we are brought into the world for a purpose. We are not just here to watch." Continuing, she says, "that is why I just use that language like that in my book. I didn't know which word to use; say motivation. I have to motivate women; they can't just lose their talents. If you just go through my book, you will find these things."

Rejecting that tokenism should replace equality as the order of the day is another strategy that the women use. Thus some of them who are gifted are training the others. One of the women evangelists says, "A lot of lady evangelists are out (working) through my administration or through my inspiration." Bola feels she has been a great support and model for other women in the sense of women's liberation and

getting women to try to recognize and use their potentials, thus proving men wrong about their mentality of women.

Bola's inspiration to the women less fortunate than herself, in terms of spiritual and moral courage, and in fact her entire effort to bring to self-awareness of their potentials are ironically laudable by-products of the oppression by religious authorities. This is good coming out of evil. This same self-awareness and liberation has become institutionalized such that the independence of the women can no longer be negotiated. The Good Women's Association's organizational programs below are a symbol of this achievement.

ORGANIZATION: The Good Women's Association is a strong umbrella for the women. Their present leaders take the running of the organization as full-time work. They pray, listen to the women, think over their problems and seek out plans and strategies to bring about solutions. The Association is so well organized that the impact is felt on every level down to the grassroots.

Sometimes, it seems the women are deliberately using the Church to their own advantage. One professor, a CAC pastor, commented thus:

The Good Women's Association which is the major women organization makes women become opposed and independent of the church to some extent. For example, the women created posts for themselves and just appointed one of themselves as a deaconess of the church and invited the

old trustees of the church to come and install them. This is against the constitution of the church, but it is happening.

This clearly shows that one of the strategies the women are adopting for change is to appropriate to themselves work which the constitutions of the church have formally reserved for the board of elders (who are usually only men). Thus, they are challenging not only the constitution but also the constituent body of elders. But according to some members, the "Church is definitely going to do something [negative] about this."

MEETINGS: The women providing avenues for themselves to meet and discuss their problems, without the men intervening, helps them to articulate their problems and to seek remedies.

For example, the national convention of the women that I attended in August, 1991, showed a strong solidarity among the women. They appraise, support, and correct themselves. The representations were great. There were thousands of women from different parts of the country. Even though some men were there, and some pastors came and went, one definitely felt the women were in control. The day some of the women were honored, the CAC President, the General Superintendent and other top church officials (all men) were there. But it was clear that Mrs. Apata, whom the women recognize as their General Superintendent was in charge and directed all the affairs of the day. The AGS pastor Amalachukwu said that, "if they have

a common thing among them, then they are allow to preach and we listen to them if we are invited."

OVERSEAS: The women have gone ahead and established relationships with some Overseas bodies especially from America. From these the women are picking up certain 'weapons to fight the traditional heritage of the church. A university in America conferred honorary "doctorate titles on the Patron of the CAC Good Women Association, Dr. Chief Coker, Dr. (Mrs.) C. O. Coker and myself", Dr. (Mrs) A.M. Apata proudly announced. The woman leader described this as a progressive movement in their association in her address during the 1991 annual convention. Now the women can be proud that their church work is recognized and rewarded. They are now "doctors" in the church. They call themselves and are called by that title and is easily seen in the poster made with the image of Dr.(Mrs) Apata during the convention. (This poster was selling side by side with a poster of the founder of the church and the General Evangelist of the church. No other poster of that nature was sold there, not even that of the present President of the CAC). Although I cannot articulate it, I sense that the poster is saying and changing sometime. Mrs. Ereta was the one who recounted how the church authorities maltreat them and do not allow women to talk. She sympathetically referred to the late Mrs. O.O.A. Pearce, a Lady missionary who was the first principal of the Seminary in CAC. The Church allowed her to

suffer too much and "did not give her even a bicycle." Mrs Ereta is one of the brains behind the subtle women's revolution going on currently in the church.

ORDINATION: With the ordination which Dr. (Mrs.) Ereta is expecting from America, she seems to have two strategies already: to empower other women with her ordination by ordaining them and then to move among the male pastors, leading them either to accept her or at least be very uncomfortable with her in their midst.

Mrs. Eko posed, that with her Women's Christian Association of Nigeria (WCAN) Bible College, they "will start ordaining women." When I asked who will ordain them, she responded, "We the women. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we will do it. Because it is not the collar you put on the neck that is working; what is working is the yoke and nothing will break the yoke." Continuing she said, "It is time somebody has to fight. One day, men will allow us. Because I will tell you now, 'I always say, look, if you are not ready to do this for us, we will do it.' I mean it is an honor that is due unto us."

It seems that both women mentioned in this section want to use ordination as a tool to advance the women's cause. Mrs. Ereta knows that her Church does not ordain women and is trying to receive ordination and still remain in the same Church and move among its pastors. As she says, "women are

coming up gradually." Mrs. Eko claims to be "ordained by Jesus" and is planning that women ordain women if the men fail them. These are the type of women Obbo (1982:3) said are "social actors who even turned the dominant male ideology upside down at times ... they have created their own patterns for emancipation and, in the process are spearheading social change for better or for worse." What they and their supporters are really up to and what future lies in wait for them, I really cannot tell. But definitely, there is an impending transformation in consciousness about women and their role in the CAC and Nigerian society.

The anticipated ordination of Dr. Mrs. Ereta will be a major victory for the women especially if she is ordained by a male pastor, or by a female pastor who was herself ordained validly by a male pastor. In this way, the succession of ordination can be validly transferred to successive women members of the CAC . One of the results of this could be recognition of the women pastors in the church as equals. The strategy of women is already bearing fruit as one sees in the case of Pastor Shola, who has begun to include women in the administrative functions of the church without discrimination. The full import and result of the strategies of the women is soon to be seen in anticipated formal inclusion of women's right to participate in various duties of the CAC church without discriminatory limits. The constitution below seems to bear this out.

B. IMPLICATIONS AND CHANGES IN THE CAC

The women's plots and strategies are already affecting the Church. Already, Mrs. Ereta and others like her are bringing about a revolution in thinking, a metamorphosis with tremendous implications for change. Women are already making all the difference and changing the Church agenda.

STRUCTURES: Women are really changing the structures of the Church. For example, the General Executive Council is made of men; but before, no woman would be invited or have the audacity to come in when the fathers were having their meetings. Today, Mrs. Ereta can time their meeting and excuse herself to give a message.

Woman like Bola Odeleke and Mrs. Ajayi are now being invited to present reports of their ministries at the annual General Executive Council as the 1990 CAC Annual Year-Book shows. In the recent crisis of the church with pastor and prophet Obadare, "women were represented in the decision to expel Obadare."

Mrs. Ogunranti's church committee in Ibadan is entirely made up of men elders, and she chairs the meeting, said one pastor. When they finish the meeting, they all kneel down and she prays. Among the Bethelite section of the CAC, Mrs Ogunranti plays an important role in decision making. Also the Bethel system has a consultative committee made up of men and women.

Women are changing the structures of the Church also by appropriating the job reserved for the elders of the church. They appoint themselves and give themselves names that traditionally are men's: President, Vice President, General Superintendent, prophetess, and so forth, just as the same platform as the men, although these titles are not given by the Church authorities. But somehow they have made the Church authorities bless and recognize these titles. As in 1990, the women appointed Mrs. Apata as a deaconess of the Church and invited the authorities such as their patron, the general evangelist and the general secretary to come and bless them and somehow install her. As a deaconess now she has a right to minister, says pastor Dan Okuns Dada, a 51-year old lecturer.

Interestingly, Mrs. Bola Eko is ahead of other women to appropriate and claim that she is not only an ordained evangelist and prophetess but also an ordained pastor. She claims that she is ordained by God, and the Church recognizes that in a sense. She said:

In the real sense of it, they recognize that is what I am. Fighting on now, you don't just recognize me as your leader, recognize other women. That is my fight; I am fearless; if we have the whole place full of convention, I will sit on the platform with other pastors; but what of other people, is it because I am outspoken. They did not call me, I carried myself there; they know me, I told them they know my position, I go there and sit down.

Mrs. Oluranti claimed that many including pastors, have told her that they had a vision that the Lord said he had ordained her. She also alluded that she has been "sanctifying babies" and even quoted three psalms that the Lord gave her to

use to sanctify babies.

In one of the northern cities in Nigeria, the AGS pastor G.O. Shola already introduced a change in his decision making body. He said that, before his arrival, "the men servants of God don't have anything to do with the women servants of God." But since he came, he had argued with the male counterparts and made them to understand that both men and women are called by God and there is no reason why they should discriminate. So now in his church, both men and women church workers sit together, plan and pray together, and "whosoever receives a message from the Lord, delivers it to the group."

CONSTITUTION: According to some members of the church, the changes brought about by these strategies will be reflected in the new constitution of the church. For example, Pastor Dan Okuns Dada, one of the pastors in the constitution drafting committee said that, "unlike the old constitution which was apparently silent about women, the new constitution is going to speak and include women. It will confirm some of the activities the women are now performing. It is going to suggest a new structure." In the draft, they are suggesting that the board of elders, instead of being the highest policy-making body of the local assembly; it would just be an executive body. There should be a policy-making group, an assembly council, in which women would be represented. Also there would be women's representation in the district council

and the general council.

Some also said that, formerly in the constitution, there was nothing like women leading, but today they are doing so and their work cannot be neglected. Women work as lady evangelists, some as foundresses of church, some as prophetesses, and healers and their work need to be incorporated into the constitution. One pastor said that the activities of women today are not what the Church can deny. So to legalize it all, these activities has to be incorporated into the new constitution. The young graduate, Pastor G.O. Okuntola, confirmed this idea by saying:

That is why I say you cannot compare the 1930 constitution. We are in modern times and you know things are changing and because of that we need to have another constitution to amend the old constitution. There are many areas to amend; most especially in the areas the women are participating in, because it is not there. So even our fathers, they don't want to hear anything about, that because at that time, women don't come in. But as at now, women are coming in and we cannot neglect their activities. They are too nice, that is why I mentioned our training center at Ede. If you go there now, you will really experience the Lord. There are lots of people there, there are students, trained nurses, midwives, government trained nurses. But they are called to this area of the ministry and then they have to receive the same training so that is why they are there now for training. So we cannot neglect the women's activities, because most of them are core.

Some CAC members such as pastor G.O. Okuntola have hopes that the new constitution will legalize women's roles so that if they are called, they will have the opportunity to go to the seminary and receive training, be ordained, and sent to manage churches. Mrs. Eko is hoping that the new constitution

will correct some abnormalities in the Church. She feels that there is too much freedom in CAC because the church wants the "spirit" to control them, but she fears human weakness. She does not think that the new constitution will limit women's activities. But she suspects that they may be asked to subject whatever they do to the approval of the church authorities. In that case she said, "Yes, if they can't approve, they will stop it and if you can't abide , you leave the church."

Whether or not the constitution eventually embodies a formal recognition of the activities of the women, the women foundresses, prophetesses, and self-proclaimed pastors are already enjoying the great support of the majority of the women members and even some men of the CAC. The expected constitution can only do what seems obvious, namely, recognize the women as equal coworkers or lose them, to the detriment of the church. The following section on recognition is an echo of the obvious.

RECOGNITION: Gradually the activities of women are being recognized and given their appropriate place. For example, the CAC Year Book 1990 published Mrs Odeleke's report on her ministry, and her name was written as "Lady Evangelist (Mrs.) M.B. Odeleke." Part of the report read, "I feel particularly happy that the role of womanhood in the spread of the gospel of Christ is gradually and steadily receiving its due recognition in Christ Apostolic Church." She concluded thus,

"... Once again, I thank the Supreme Council for the honor extended to womanhood by inviting me to give this report."

Some suspect that the bid to recognize some foundresses and name them evangelists and prophetesses stems partially from the threat posed by some women foundresses who have separated completely from the CAC or who are operating as an offshoot ready to "fall away" at any time if things are no longer favorable.

When I asked one of the AGS about women, he simply referred me to Mrs. Ereta. saying that "she knows everything about and does a lot for the women." Another pastor putting it more succinctly said, "Really she is determined, so they support her. At least not less than ten or twelve thousand women congregate to answer her call." If she says, "I want all women to be present in the next twenty-four hours," all of them will be there. But she has not got that power over the men because she is not a member of any council, not even within her local assembly.

It is not just the majority number of the women that matters. Their number becomes very important in the way they are galvanized into action. It is their powerful activities coupled with their numbers which make serious consideration of their recognition most compelling. The women's overseas link is insightful and has serious political and economic consequences.

ACTIVITIES: Changes are also coming into the Church and on the women themselves through the type of activities they perform. It is true that they are not yet allowed to go to the chancel, but some are going there in a sense. Mrs. Oluranti sometimes sits with Pastor Isidi in the chancel, even though some Church authorities are kicking against it. When there is a convention, Mrs. Eko sits on the same platform as the pastors. Mrs. Eko was very humorous and funny when she said that she can ignore the pastors behind her in the chancel and go ahead and pray with the congregation. In most CAC churches, there are three sections. In her church now, she and other lady evangelists and her pastors can sit together in the middle section backing the first section which is the chancel and conduct any activity they want with the congregation occupying the third and largest section. Quoting her:

In my church, I do all things silently. I have two altars. I raise one over the other one. In the one I raise, I put big chairs there for them to sit down. Then I put my own table and face the congregation for whom I have business; I don't have any business with those behind me. God has given us the grace which I call unmerited, amazing grace. It is when I ask them (those behind) to come and minister, they will do it.

Some of the women especially the foundresses conduct the service in their churches. They abhor lazy pastors whom they do not hesitate to send away. The foundresses now can select hard-working and conscientious pastors who will work under them and follow their directions.

The women have joined in going inside and outside the

country preaching and establishing churches in the name of CAC. Both Mrs. Oluranti and Mrs. Eko have established churches overseas. In her report, Mrs. Odeleke said, "We have conducted crusades and revivals in Great Britain, and the United States of America, and God manifested His mighty power in all the crusades and revivals. Praise the Lord." (CAC Year Book, 1990) She has established a Bible College in London.

Many women are now writing tracts and printing flyers. Some are engaged in filming and taping and also in gospel music. Bola Are is now a known singer in the CAC and Nigeria. She has recorded many songs, especially church songs even though most are in Yoruba.

THINKING/IDEAS: I did not get the impression that the Women's Bible college at Ede and the school of prophetesses led by Mrs. Ojo and Mrs. Ereta were geared towards ordination. But Mrs. Eko said definitely that, with the one about to begin in Lagos, they will start ordaining women. Rejecting the idea of ordaining only men she said, "It shouldn't continue and that is my aim. I will say that is the vision the Lord has given to me; by the time we have this Bible College, we will start ordaining women." Already Lagos state has given them a piece of land for the project and they are contributing and trying to get money together. Some men and women in the CAC simply say, "God can one day make a woman to be a pastor."

Both men and women are changing from their traditional

thinking concerning women and their roles and are now giving a different interpretation to St. Paul's injunction that women should not talk in the church. Some respondents asserted that Jesus did not discriminate. It is human beings who discriminate because men want to claim superiority over women. "That may be permitted in the home, but when it comes to professional affairs, it is ability that counts." Why do men not refuse when a lady lawyer or judge sends them to prison; when a lady nurse give them injection; when a lady teacher flogs them? It is only when it comes to showing the way to the kingdom of heaven that much discrimination comes in. Jesus said, "If you believe the work I am doing, you will do even more than what I do". "If you believe, go out to the whole world." He was talking to all believers; he did not say "men" believers. So as Bola and those like her will say, "I am adhering strictly to Jesus' instructions."

CHANCEL: One woman said, "Any church where they say a woman cannot get to a place, to me it's nonsense, it is not biblical. Women touched Jesus. Even at the tomb after the resurrection, Jesus showed himself to Mary Magdalene and not to Peter or John. Pressing forward the same idea, another said, "The altar will not get defiled when women are cleaning it; it is when they want to start service they will say women should not enter the place." She explained that it is not the altar or chancel, nor material things nor furniture, but the

heart, that should be termed holy. Furthermore, Pastor Professor Anthony Isidi supports this idea when he says that "the body of the individual is the temple of the Holy Spirit." That is what should be holy, and not the chancel, altar, or whatever. If the Church says that the individual is the site of the indwelling of the Spirit and not a place, then why can women not enter the chancel or altar or any other place in the church?

C. STRATEGIES AND CHANGES IN RCC

RCC women want changes, but as yet they have no strategies. There are a lot of improvements, but no subtle radical revolution such as with CAC women. The RCC women are more or less just following the directives of the Church authorities. Some of them "acted in subservient manner but harboured resentment against men" (Obbo 1982:37). The few changes undertaken came more from the Church authorities. Even now, RCC authorities are calling the women to take up some roles as full time catechists, but there has been no response especially in Ile-Ife because of the conservative outlook of men and women who think that women should be confined to domestic chores. The changes so far can be see in new roles, awareness, and relationships.

ROLES: The Catholic church in Nigeria, especially in the Oyo Diocese, is now ready to take on women as professional,

full time catechists. This is a positive development and shows that the Church recognizes this important role. Because there is a dire need for women to reach women in his diocese, the elderly cardinal Anamidem has established an outreach program for women and has invited them to come. He has even promised to give at least a bicycle to any woman who is willing to serve as catechist. He has placed the male and female in equal status and given the same incentives.

The RCC in Nigeria seems to be recognizing the equality of men and women in God's work. So one may not be surprised soon to see the emergence of altar girls after discussion at the national level. If one goes by what Archbishop Danladi says, "I don't see any reason particularly about girls not serving at mass. I mean there is no ordination in this ... I have no strong reason why girls should not serve at mass, especially small girls. I have no reason." And already women who have seen altar girls overseas are questioning.

Coming to why women do not give sermons during mass, it may be observed that only the officiating minister(s) preach the sermon. The reason is well articulated by Mrs. Bisi Dare, quoting a bishop, "The bishop was saying that people should be careful about the way they handle the Bible, because not everyone has the right and knows exactly how to interpret the Bible. I think that is just guiding the people against misinterpretation."

There is no gainsaying the fact that the RCC is trying to

accord women their rightful place in the activities in the church. Women now become secretaries of committees, chairpersons of parish councils, launchers at harvest and bazaars. Mrs. Kate Musa sees many changes in society - women are now studying and excelling in medicine, engineering, and other fields that previously were reserved for men. "In any tradition that stops one from developing oneself, I think there is no need for the person to involve herself."

The Church challenged the laity and asked them to go into politics without fear. Archbishop Okoye said, "It is an obligation to come out and participate in the politics of the country." Now, many members of RCC are taking an active part in the politics of the nation. Even the women not only talk about politics in their national and diocesan seminars but also partake in it. In Ife, one woman won the post of councillorship in the Ife local government area, and another the post of senator. The councillor said she was encouraged to enter politics by the recent Church pronouncements and seminars she attended. This further shows how much the Church is doing for its members, asking them to play their required roles in society.

If ordination is the central stumbling block to full participation in the ministerial priesthood in the RCC, that obstacle will remain as long as the women are not actively doing anything to remove it. One can describe the RCC as "infantile" as far as the women's roles are concerned. The

women seem to lack the personality of self-direction and motivation, needed to bring stimulus to a religious expression that challenges the status quo. Women still are resigned to the status of "humble faithful", doing what they are asked to do by the authorities that matter. They engage themselves in politics only because the RCC authorities have decided to encourage them to do so. This is a motivation from outside, and is less likely to succeed in the face of a political challenge posed by an opponent with personal conviction. On the other hand, the CAC women are more likely to succeed in political and economic entrepreneurship given their activities and achievements, as we saw above. The RCC, insofar as women are concerned, is more likely to inhibit progress than promote it in the community.

AWARENESS: Awareness for changing the traditional role of women in the Church is now arising. Thanks partly to my interviews, their attending other churches and travelling outside the country, many of the women are advocating change but for different reasons. One said that, if she knows that the tradition can be changed, she is ready for change. Some would want the change because they think that tradition or men or society have subordinated them, and they want change as a protest. Others just want to serve and make positive contribution to the Church and society. For whatever reason, the important thing is the change.

However, there are women who are not experiencing anything negative about the whole restriction of women in the Church, because they do not go to other places and thus do not know what is going on elsewhere. "They will not feel anything, they may not even think about it, as I am thinking about it," says Mrs. C.O. Adelabu. They do not bother since there are people already doing the work. They just go and receive communion, and that is all.

RELATIONSHIPS: i) **REPORTS:** Today, the CWO and women religious, like some other important organizations in the Church, come to give reports of their activities to the national Conference of the Bishops of Nigeria. I bore witness to this in February, 1991, during my research. (These reports were given during their open session which anybody including the women can go to).

ii) **NATIONAL CONFERENCES :** The women in the CAC have an annual conference. But unlike in the CAC, male RCC chaplains begin the daily activities of the RCC women with mass.

iii) **OVERSEAS:** The National Council of Catholic Women,s Organization is in relationship with the World Council of Catholic Women's organization, and representatives go to international meetings. In fact, it is from attending one of these international conferences that Mrs. Makinde and Evelyn Pew got ideas which enabled them to bring the women together to form the national body. But unlike the CAC, the national

relationship of the RCC women with overseas does not produce radicalization as to shake the structures of the Church.

CHAPTER VII

CHURCH WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

In this research work, it was observed that many respondents defined "development" in church and community to mean anything done to bring about progress and peace and eliminate problems confronting the church or community. If we consider what the women are doing and what they call development, one would say they are actually participating in development of the church and society. The paradox in the research came in when I asked the women whether they participate in community development activities. And the majority said "No".

And speaking specifically about community development, Ekong (1988:373) said that "it must be multi-purpose in nature touching upon all aspects of community life." Defining community development in Nigeria, Ekong (1988:390) said, it "is conceptualized as any action in a locality taken by any agency or the local residents themselves, with the primary intention of bringing some benefits to such locality. The United Nations in 1956 adopted the following definition:

Community development is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate

these communities into the life of the nation are to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. (Ekong 1988:372).

From these definitions, Community development can be concretized by embarking on projects by various groups or government. Notwithstanding the above definitions, the women referred to community development as development outside the church. So the main distinction here is between church development projects and non-church projects referred to as "community" projects.

Almost all the respondents talked about women and church development activities but only 21% (28 out of 133) respondents discussed women's community development activities. Of the 28, 14 (12 women and two men) were RCC, and 12 (10 women and two men) were CAC. The other two respondents were neither RCC nor CAC. The rest of the respondents said they did not know and were not involved in any community (non-church) development program. Women have different reasons for not being involved in community development.

This chapter will discuss the different ways the church women participate in development programs both in the church and in the "community," referring to projects outside the church.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Women are helping in the development of the church by contributing time, energy, and money as individuals and/or

groups. These resources are used to finance such projects as:

- Building, equipping, and maintaining the church, the maternity centers, hospitals, school of prophesy, training centers, Sunday schools, seminaries and Bible colleges.
- Buying buses to provide transport for church members going within and outside the town for church activities.
- Holding meetings, revivals, crusades, conventions, discussions, lectures, symposia, etc for the spiritual uplift of members. These are also used for the development of the mental capabilities and knowledge of members.
- Provision of utensils like cups, plates, forks, knives and also chairs-for-hire to members (at subsidized rates) and the public. This is a productive venture and they see it as development.
- Visitation to lukewarm members to make them come back and take active part in church activities. This project may also include door-to-door evangelism, open field crusades for converting people into the church. Catechism classes for children for baptism and confirmation are also used to increase the number of members. The growth in the church in terms of number of members is an important development.
- Sponsoring youth programs, introducing church sodalities, and childhood education programs for the spiritual and

character development of the individual. It is believed that this will be a unique opportunity for the youth to be good apostles of Jesus Christ. For the youth education program, the women choose lectures and lecturers for the program, put up a timetable, and ensure full participation. In this way, they help to develop the children to behave properly in and outside the church. Within the church, the children will not disturb and distract their parents from hearing sermons

- Buying new things like vestments for the priests, mass box, altar cloth, chalice, equipping the priests/pastor's house, paying electricity and water bills.
- Charity: providing for the needs of some poor, sick, or unfortunate members of the society who may not have food or money to pay for certain basic necessities of life. Most of the time, feeding the seminarians and the parish priests and pastors are part of the charity program of these women.
- Agriculture: establishing livestock farms, orchards, and plantations. They have group experience doing these things and eventually some of them develop backyard farms for animals (snails, fowls, etc.) and horticultural gardens (for vegetables and some fruits).
- Thrift societies within the church is a good development program. The women form groups and make regular financial contributions into a common purse. This purse is managed

in such a way that the women can take loans for some of their individual projects for which they pay back with some interests. Participation in this helps to keep the women together for the progress of the church and society's economic needs.

- Financing the GWA and CWO representatives go to meetings outside the town. Through these meetings, these representatives imbibe new trends and ideas which they may introduce in their parishes or churches for the uplifting of the church. With this type of national and international participation and recognition, the women may attract sponsorship for specific projects within their local church and project them to the building up of society.
- Sponsoring prayer meetings whereby the members are united in prayer for peace and progress in the church. Such prayer meetings are used to ensure that quarrels are minimized in the Church and there is peace and understanding in the church. Such meetings are organized for the adolescents, men, women and children. The meetings range from evening service and Bible study to spiritual hour.
- Discussion groups: It is development when the CWO and GWA gather to discuss how to develop the church; how to develop and make the best homes; how to make their children good people, how to train the children in the right ways and helping women and families to lead good

lives. These are vital to any kind of societal development.

From the reactions of the respondents, I have observed that women in both CAC and RCC are involved in almost the same types of church projects. However, in the areas of door-to-door evangelism and organizing crusades, revivals, and conventions, the CAC women make the most contributions. In the area of building theological schools of prophecy and evangelism and Bible colleges within and outside the country, the CAC women supersede the RCC women who have not yet established such a development venture. Rather, the RCC women develop hostels for young girls in towns and also, to a greater extent, provide for vocational and domestic skill acquisition centers.

The maternity centers of the CAC women are a unique developmental project in that they are a purely spiritual affair carried out within church premises whereby they seek to cure ailments by faith-healing and without drugs. As we noted earlier, this alternative to Western medicine can be an enormous source of economic and social growth because by avoiding all the physical and emotional inconveniences of some Western medical practice, for example, surgical operation, it will attract patients from all over the world. Its importance to the international arena will be unique; not only in the sense of being different from Western scientific medicine because spiritual, but also in the sense that the healings are

done on a group (in some cases, individual) level. This group method is highly valued because it gives support and tends to be more holistic. The RCC women do not have such projects and even though they build maternity homes, they don't actually run them. Furthermore, the CAC women have taken a giant stride to establish a maternity training center at Ede where they train the church midwives.

The RCC women are used to formal prayers, while the CAC women have the propensity for spontaneous praying, which, it is believed, is more receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. So their prayer meetings may be said to be more lively with choruses, drummings, etc., since they are responding as the Spirit moves them. This could be why they believe that God answers their prayers more than do the RCC women.

While the CAC women generally may be less educated than RC women, these women are prone to taking initiatives more than their RCC counterparts. This is manifested in their ability to write and distribute tracts. The taking of initiatives by the CAC women may be facilitated by the looser structure of their Church. (The RCC operates via a rigid organized structure.) The CWO in some dioceses and province has been able to produce magazines. Since development is as a result of initiatives and the CAC women take more initiatives (concretized in their taking such development ventures as building a prophesy school, Bible colleges, and WCAN to train women for ordination as pastors), it may be said that they

make more contributions to the development of their Church than do their RCC counterparts. This initiating ability of the CAC is something their RCC counterparts might emulate.

The above analysis shows that the women, both in CAC and RCC, believe that they are making substantial contributions to the development in the church. It is within this background that some of them are questioning why they are not themselves involved in church administration. Some pastors and priests, and even the AGS and bishops, are of the opinion that women are the backbone of church development. Why then are they (pastors and priests, AGS and bishops) not involving the women in the administrative hierarchy of the church? It may not be said that the pastors and bishops are afraid that the women may take over from them their authority; however, it may be said that they are paying lip service to the question of freeing the women from restriction in the church. If they have actually recognized the immense contributions of the women both spiritually and materially, it would seem rather illogical for them not to take women into confidence and allow them into the church's leadership hierarchy, says a respondent.

However, this is most unlikely to happen in the RCC as long as the women accept their lowly positions of serving as a necessary mechanism for the maintenance of the institutional church. another respondent voiced that women are seen merely as the fulcrum of the church. Thus it will be foolhardy on the

part of the RCC particularly to allow leadership positions to the women when such an allowance is likely to overturn the power structure of the church.

NON-CHURCH (COMMUNITY) DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Many development programs for the community are taking place in Nigeria especially in Ile-Ife, the research base of this project. The community development programs include: building of culverts, building and grading of roads, building of bridges, town halls, new houses, and colleges; digging of bore-holes; providing primary health care and maternity centers, providing environmental sanitation via providing sanitary trucks to collect rubbish and forcing hawkers to cover their products to maintain hygiene.

Many respondents are of the opinion that the community development projects are the responsibilities of the government whether on the local, state, or federal levels. Respondents assert that the local government councils have money at their disposal to employ laborers and accomplish community development programs in the areas, like making roads, building hospitals and maternity centers, universities, urban and rural electrification. Some acknowledge that the government is in fact doing it and that is why they are not participating in these. Some church leaders opined that,

although it is the duty of the government to see to these community development projects, they also help in their own way and are ready to cooperate with government if the government needs and invites them. For both the CAC and the RCC, the whole Church has to be invited and not just the women's groups, for them to participate. For example, the neighborhood and local government authorities in Ile-Ife invited the Church to help in constructing the road and contributing to the army's Remembrance Day and the Church did.

It is rather sad that most of the church women are simply not interested in the community development (CD) programs because they think that it is the responsibility of government. So as church groups the CAC and RCC women make no tangible contribution to CD programs except for the Babalola Memorial Grammar School at Ilesha and the maternity centers, nursery schools, and hostels that women from other denominations can avail themselves of. The reasons they advance for their nonchalant attitude toward the CD range from that they are ignorant of any development outside the church to that "children of God" are "already made kings in heaven," and such programs do not improve the spiritual life of the individual.

That women's church groups are not interested in CD does not mean that individual church women have not made great contributions to the community through other means. The most common are the sororities which are essentially community

service clubs such as YCWA, Lioness club, Zonta, Elite sisters, Inner wheelers, Soroptimists, etc. Some of these clubs are involved in hospital projects and schools for the handicapped. Nor does it mean that the women do not initiate other community development programs. They have their own self-initiated development programs as we can see below.

A point must be made here that church women participate in these groups and others like the "Bolomope", village and town, and the neighborhood groups to socialize and contribute money and manpower to repair street roads in the neighborhood or to commiserate with the bereaved members. In some neighborhoods, they partake in contributing money to buy bulbs and wires for their street lights. Some women individually pay their tax, and the money is used by government for community development. Others contribute money through town unions for such projects as town halls, police barracks in the community, etc.

The activities of some of the sororities are eloquent testimonies that women are contributing to community development. The contributions of two all-women associations will suffice as examples:

The Soroptimists in Ile-Ife are building line of shades in the market; they volunteer nurses and doctors who organize and run clinics in the market; buy first aid boxes and train people to manage them in the market; want mothers' business

not to be interrupted because of a sick child. They organize children's play groups. They have a school in the market from Mondays to Fridays for children of those women who cannot send their children to nursery schools. They contribute and pay the teachers and are presently sponsoring a deaf and dumb girl who is doing catering. They run an adult education program which is being sponsored by the government at their request. They have already got a land for building a housing complex for education and health. They also organize workshops and seminars for students and give prizes. They have and are still recruiting some girls to have a trade to earn their living. At least two RCC women claimed to be presidents of this group in their area - one for Ife. No CAC did.

The YCWA has already been operating a cooperative before the advent of Better Life, said Mrs. Toyin Kemi, the Catholic Better Life program initiator in her area. From that, they have built a nursery school and have an uncompleted building which someone is renting and giving them money. The government has promised to help them finish the uncompleted building. They sometimes farm and many of them have been able to build houses from the loans they give to the members.

It may be because of this nonchalant attitude of church women's groups in CD programs that informed the establishment of the Better Life Program (BLP). This nonchalant attitude of church women's groups has been blamed squarely on the priests

and pastors despite some of the idiosyncracies of the women. One RCC bishop says the priests are not interested in FCD, so they do not encourage the women to participate. The women will need to be motivated to make contributions in CD by the priests and pastors because of the women's emotional attachment to things of the church. While some respondents are of the view that all genuine social development must be community-based, others believe that the essence of CD is development of self. However, the development of any community is through developing women, especially in teaching them how to read and write. The RCC authorities need to do more in terms of educating the less informed women about the importance of their special contributions to the FCD projects of the government. One can only hope that the CAC women and their authorities can be inspired through educational relation or through personal connection in order to step up their participation in community development projects.

THE BETTER LIFE through its activities has provided oil processing industry, cassava and garri industry; soya beans processing, kampala industry; women forming cooperatives and contributing and lending money to members or being able to get government loans and helping members; weaving machines for weaving mats and handbags. The mats and bags are being exported, having enormous impact on the economic growth of the nation at large.

Better Life women (apart from sponsoring industries and getting loans from the government) are involved in cassava planting, keeping poultry, piggery, snail farm; tye and dye, teaching; digging of bore-holes by the local government; census; pipe borne water; wells; burial ground; stadium; street electricity; clean environment; providing a market place and prohibition of display of wares in the street; political parties; houses; primary health care; public toilets; trade fairs; exporting adire materials (Daily Sketch, August 3, 1991:5 & National Concord, July 30, 1991:VI).

Because of the impact and importance of the BLP in Nigeria and its international recognition, it may be necessary to discuss it more in the subsequent section of this chapter.

THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAM

Any discussion of development programs in Nigeria today, without at least mentioning the Better Life Program for rural women/dwellers, would be a great lacuna. For the government of Nigeria, the Better Life Program is the most recent, important, and top development program for women. It has received great publicity and is government sponsored. Indeed, the Nigerian government budgets and spends a lot of money for this program. According to official statistics (Daodu Keji 1991:VI & Newswatch, August 5, 1991:10), since 1987, 7,635

cooperatives, 997 cottage industries, 1,751 new farms and gardens, 487 new shops and markets, 419 women's centers, and 163 welfare programs have been established. Also because of the Better Life Program, the federal government has set up a National Commission for Women (NCW) and initiated the construction of a center at Abuja, the new capital of Nigeria for women in development.

The Better Life Program is geared towards the women and development. And as this research studies the influence of religion on women as they participate in community development activities, it becomes pertinent to look at women's involvement in this program. Before determining the influence of the churches on the women in Ife, as they participate in the Better life program, one must know what the Better Life Program is all about; how Ife women respond to it and the reason for their responses.

What is Better Life Program?

The Better Life Program is meant to raise the consciousness of women and to bring them into the mainstream of Nigeria's development orbit. According to NewsWatch, August 5, 1991:10, the Better Life Program (BLP) was launched in September, 1987, with the following aims and objectives:

a) to raise the social consciousness of women about their rights, as well as their social, political and economic responsibilities;

b) to bring women together and closer for better understanding and resolution of their problems through

collective action;

c) to mobilize women for concrete activities towards achieving specific objective, including seeking leadership roles in all spheres of national life;

d) to stimulate and motivate women in rural areas towards achieving a better and higher standard of life as well as to sensitize the general populace to the plight of rural women;

e) to educate women on simple hygiene, family planning and the importance of child care;

f) to enlighten women in rural areas on opportunities and facilities available to them at their local government areas;

g) to improve and enrich family life; and

h) to encourage and institutionalize recreation.

From these aims and objectives, it is obvious that the layout of the program is directed towards the cause of women emancipation and improving quality of life, especially the rural women. The initiator and coordinator of this program is the present first lady of Nigeria, Mrs. Maryam Babangida. Her dedication to this program, especially to the issue of mobilizing the rural people in the areas of food production, handicraft, the formation of cooperatives, and the establishment of shops and markets has earned her the African Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger.

The Better Life Program is planned in such a way that as Mrs. Babangida pioneers, promotes, and coordinates the BLP on the international and national levels, the wives of governors spearhead and organize it on the state levels, and the wives of the local government chairmen promote and coordinate it on

their local government levels and down to the grassroots. Better Life groups have gone for international and national exhibitions. During my research period, there were trade fairs in Kaduna 1991 and in Enugu in April, 1992. In Enugu, it was observed that the Better Life women, especially from the Eastern states, had their own stalls where they exhibited some of their products.

IFE WOMEN RESPONSE TO BETTER LIFE PROGRAM

TABLE 7: MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN BLP PROJECT

NAMES	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS	TOTAL
CAC WOMEN	2 (2%)	50 (50%)	52 (52%)
RCC WOMEN	9 (9%)	39 (39%)	48 (48%)
TOTAL	11 (11%)	89 (89%)	100 (100%)

Of the 100 RCC and CAC women interviewed in Ile-Ife, the research base of this study, 52% were CAC and 48% were RCC. As shown in Table 7, it was observed that 11% of these women were members of the BLP and 89% not members, a very low percentage of participation in Ile-Ife.

Among the 11% who were members, 2% were CAC and 9% were RCC members, showing a higher percentage of RCC participation in BLP. RCC women may be more venturesome in CD programs than their CAC counterparts. Furthermore, that 89% of women are non-members shows that, notwithstanding the amount of publicity that program had gotten, women are yet to be involved. This brings to focus the question of who actually is

benefitting from the program?

TABLE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN WHO HAVE HEARD OF ANY BLP PROJECT

NAMES	HAVE HEARD	HAVE NOT HEARD	TOTAL
CAC WOMEN	19 (19%)	33 (33%)	52 (52%)
RCC WOMEN	30 (30%)	18 (18%)	48 (48%)
TOTAL	49 (49%)	51 (51%)	51 (100%)

Table 8 shows that 49% of the women have heard of the BLP while 51% have not. Though the percentage of those who have heard and those who have not heard are quite close, still one can say that less than 50% of the women have not heard of this program. Out of the 49% who have heard of BLP, more RCC women (30%) than CAC (19%) have heard about this program. Also, RCC women are more encouraged than the CAC to undertake CD projects.

TABLE 9: MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN WHO HAVE HEARD ABOUT BLP

NAMES	MEMBERS	NON MEMBERS	TOTAL
CAC WOMEN	2 (4%)	17 (35%)	19 (39%)
RCC WOMEN	9 (18%)	21 (43%)	30 (61%)
TOTAL	11 (22%)	38 (78%)	49 (100%)

Table 9 shows that hearing about BLP program is one thing, actual participation is another. Of the 49 respondents who have heard about the BLP projects, only 22% are members, out of which 18% are RCC women. The 78% of non-member

interviewees is another indication that the women are not yet mobilized to be members and participate in the BLP. For the non-member interviewees, there is a higher percentage (89%) of the total CAC women than RCC (70%). So even though more RCC women are non-members (43%) than their CAC counterparts (35%), in terms of the ratio of non-members to total members, the RCC is lower.

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE WHO HAVE IDEA OF WHAT THE BLP IS ALL ABOUT.

NAMES	HAVE IDEA	VAGUE IDEA	NO IDEA	TOTAL
CAC WOMEN	5 (10.2%)	7 (14.3%)	7 (14.3%)	19 (38.8%)
RCC WOMEN	19 (38.8%)	5 (10.2%)	6 (12.2%)	30 (61.2%)
TOTAL	24 (49%)	12 (24.5%)	13 (26.5%)	49 (100%)

From Table 10, it is observed that less than 50% of women who have heard of BLP have a good idea about what the program is about, its aims and objectives, operation and structure. A little over half have a slight or no idea about the BLP. A high percentage (39%) of RCC women have some idea. Among the CAC women, 74% have little or no idea, while for the RCC the figure is 37%. Then why all the noise about the successes of this Better Life Program?

In summary, the responses of the Ife women show that only 49% have indeed heard of the BLP, but of these, less than 50%

have any idea of what the program is about. Among the 24 women that have an idea of the program, only eleven are members of this better life program. In short, only eleven out 100 women are Better Life program members in Ife - only 11%!

What is the cause of women's non-involvement? Why are the 89% of the women interviewed not members? Those who listen to the radio, watch television, or read newspapers and magazines know that these government programs receive the great publicity. Various meetings, workshops, and seminars are always being organized for these projects; for example, the Better Life Program (BLP), the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRII), the Mass Mobilization Organ (MAMSER) (Okolo Sam 1991:7). The government in fact spends a lot of money on these programs.

Even if one tries to overlook the women's indifference and non-involvement in other government programs supposed to help the whole populace, one is forced to rethink and ponder about women's non-membership and non-participation in the Better life Program. Why? Because, in the first instance, this project was specifically directed by and to women. The layout of the program is meant to draw and help all women, especially rural women, to raise their consciousness and standards of living, and to enlighten and make them aware of the life realities surrounding them. Despite all the efforts and publicity, why did not more than 50% not hear about it, and why did only 22% of those who heard about it and only 11% of

Ille-Ife women respondents become members?

While it is not the aim of this research to question the operations of the BLP in the mobilization of women, one is left in no doubt that this all-women's affair, while laudable in its aims and objectives, may not have succeeded in its first four objectives.

WOMEN'S REASONS FOR NOT JOINING THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAM.

In those interviews where the Better Life was mentioned, especially as a government development program, the women gave several reasons why they have not joined as members of the program. These include: ignorance, no time and chance, Better Life program is political, Better Life program is only for the rich, and bad implementation of the program.

What could be the cause of this ignorance? Even though some women are illiterate, what of radio or television broadcasts in their native languages? It is true some have no radios or televisions. Some of the few that have, may have no time to look at or listen to them. However, the churches and the markets are places where the government could have reached these women to sell this program to them. If the government had involved women's church organizations, this program may have gotten better to the grassroots and many more women would have become members.

What of all the seminars and workshops that have been and

are organized to create awareness? This may be one of those TOP DOWN programs that never reaches the grassroots it is meant to serve. And indeed some women and the national dailies have criticized the program for this neglect.

Some of the women contend that the BLP is not being properly implemented. Some national dailies, The Guardian and Daily Sketch, have criticized the way the program is run. For example, Akinyede Sola (1990:9) said, "It however, appears that since the inception of the program, its laudable objectives have been derailed and defeated by its method of implementation." It is a well-known fact that the program is political. The structure is such that the wives of the head of state, state governors, and local government chairmen are automatically leaders of the BLP. These women may not have leadership qualities but the political structure thrusts upon them this responsibility. Some of the women feel that, even though the government should sponsor the program, the BLP should not be tied to the apron of government. It should be an apolitical program.

The political leaders of the BLP use the program to assuage their political cohorts, giving them posts and positions according to their whims and caprices. The women given such positions are usually poor not rural women but rich urban women (Akinyede Sola 1990:9). These rich leaders now parade themselves, making the poor dwellers jealous and not interested. And once the rural women show such nonchalance

toward the program, they now mind their various businesses and "not have time" for the BLP.

The government should endeavor to work through the church women's organizations, like the GWA and CWO, by identifying their leaders in the rural areas and entrusting them with the coordinating of BLP projects in their communities. In this way, the government will be seen as involving the poor women in projects meant for them. Also the women will see the BLP as their own program and work conscientiously for its success. They may no longer see the BLP as a political, top-down project being forced on them. And because they would be involved, it could not be said to be for the rich only.

It is disconcerting to note that the church is not in any organized sense doing anything to promote this laudable development program, which in many ways benefit, the women in particular and society in general. The fact that the BLP has a political connection should and does not eliminate or corrupt its virtues. The church as an enlightened institution should take advantage of its special position of influence to educate women about the importance and value of the BLP regardless of its political affiliation. This failure of the churches in their moral obligation to educate their members, especially the poor who have no other means to avail themselves of the day to day goings-on in the society, is indicative of the narrow kind of interest the churches have in the development of the individual church members and the

society at large. The negative stance of the churches on the BLP, because of its political relationship, is at odds with the RCC's new policy of encouraging its members to go into politics, and in direct opposition to its positive policy and physical and moral contributions to the development of the Nigerian society.

CHURCH IN RELATION TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The christian churches, since their advent into Nigeria, have been in the forefront of community development. The churches built the first schools, hospitals and churches. The churches taught us how to read and write for the development of the individual and the state. It has always been the primary role of the church to "go therefore teach all nations ... all that I have commanded you" (Mathew 28:18-20). In this, Christ commanded the church to take care of both the material and spiritual welfare of the people - feed the hungry, cure the sick etc.

But the relationship between the church and government development programs is complex. Rev. Fr. Patrick Murphy, a middle aged co-ordinator of social development program in his diocese, disclosed that in his speech to the Catholic bishops conference about three years ago, President Ibrahim Babangida called on the bishops to be involved in the development of the

country. Prior to this invitation, some bishops have encouraging their church members to do the same. For example, Bishop John Onaiyekan encouraged the Diocesan National Council of Catholic Women Organization (NCCWO) to be fully active in all women societies in the state, including the National Council of Women's Society, the Women Commissions, Better Life Program for Rural Women in society and, above all to play leading and clean roles in public" (Odeyemi 1991:3).

Despite the call, the strength of the Catholic church's participation in government community development program is very feeble. In some areas, the Church has always stretched her hand of friendship to the government. For example, when the community wants to dig a borehole for water supply, the Church is invited as a body to the launching of the project. The Church not only honors the invitation but also asks its members to attend individually and make financial contributions. In this way the Church is not only helping the community disseminate the news of this development program but also getting involved because she is invited. The Church has always provided men and materials to government. As Archbishop Okoye pointed out, "whenever they (the government) want our help, we provide it because by serving the nation, we preach the gospel."

Since the takeover of schools from the Church, the government has incurred the wrath of the Church. The Church is not at all happy about it and has been doing all in its power

to get the schools back. Because of this sore spot in the Church's relationship with government, the Church now waits to be consulted before it can offer some help. Take the government commission for women's affairs for example. This commission has been established by the government on the national, state, and local government levels. It deals specifically with the problems of women and provides them with the forum to articulate and find solutions to their problems. Even though this is a recent event, why did the government not use the existing church structure, the CWO and GWA , as a launching pad for the women's commissions? Rather, the government did not invite the churches. And even though a lot of educated church women are involved individually, the RCC Church has stood aloof, not attempting to know what the commission is all about. The same can be said of the BLP. As Archbishop professor Okoye puts it, "in reference to the Better Life Program, as far as I know, we have not been consulted. And if the government is running a program and does not consult us, we don't force ourselves to it ... We don't interfere with this Miriam Babangida's project."

This has made Archbishop Orile see no relationship between church and government in community development programs. It now seems that the Church has alienated itself from the people and their real problems. Rev. Fr. Patrick Murphy complained that "the church is very churchy. It is a religious club whose relevance to the anguish of the society

and the real problems of the people is almost zero!"

Some of the church authorities simply said that the community development is the responsibility of the government. Pastor Dan Okuns Dada stressed that the CAC needs to be convinced to believe that "that development is also their divine concern." With the ideas he gathered in a recent conference outside the country, he is bent on making the churches realize that. In relation to women, he said that the church is not involved in community development programs, so the women are not involved. For example, the CAC constitution has this to say on politics, "A member of the church (CAC) shall not be a partisan politician..." But the RCC at least for now encourages its members including women to join partisan politics and even vie for positions. Even the bishops of Nigeria issued a joint pastoral letter urging the "faithful" to play a responsible role in the country's political life (Joint Pastoral Letter of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops Feb., 10, 1979).

Some tried to differentiate between the material aspect and the spiritual aspect. For example Archbishop Okoye, more like some of the CAC pastors, expressed, "when you talk about the material aspect of community development, the government takes care of that. The temporal welfare of the people should be an essential work of the government. Spiritual welfare of the people is our own work." The popular CAC woman evangelist, Mrs. Bola Eko, exemplifies this by claiming that

her Church is doing a lot for the community, making the locality passable and habitable and a safe place to live. Hear her: "God is helping us to change robbers and harlots. Before this Church started, nobody can pass through this way at six in the evening. But now, people are free to move about. No more robbery around this place because of the Church."

So, while some people see the church and government cooperating as far as community development programs are concerned, others say that it is only individual members of the churches that cooperate with government not the whole church as a body. And during the period of this research I observed that at least the government could give a church a certificate of occupancy of a land at minimal cost. A church in turn could help by contributing money or serving as mouth-piece for government community development projects. Also, on one hand, many church women (especially in the RCC) are involved in government development programs as individuals, and on the other hand, some government personnels back church projects, bringing in their expertise as individuals.

CHAPTER VIII

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS, AND CONCLUSION

A. Findings

Having defined development as economic, social, political and cultural change in the community that raises or improves the quality of life for the majority of the population, I find the women of the CAC and RCC to have further simplified the definition to mean anything done to bring about progress and peace and eliminate problems. So to them, getting new converts, new pews, new sodalities, new pastors and priests who bring new ideas, new church buildings, - all these are considered "development." The women are either participants in or beneficiaries of development.

The main aim of this dissertation has been to compare ideological and behavioral differences among women members of the RCC and CAC. The study has attempted to answer questions on the impact of the church structure on women's self-concepts, their roles and statuses in their communities; that is, how women's religious affiliations influence what they do, how they mobilize and empower themselves for community development.

A pervasive finding in the sociology of religion is that women are normally constrained by religion and are only occasionally liberated by it, but never creators of it. This

situation is more applicable to the RCC than to the CAC. The RCC woman tends to respect authority, reveres the Church, and looks up to the male for leadership. But the CAC woman tends to assume new social and ritual roles within the church and is involved in greater participation and leadership. In spite of the different dispositions of women in the RCC vs the CAC, the RCC women do get more involved in community development programs outside. These women are more comfortable with structured programs within and outside the Church. They venture out into the world and make contributions to the economic, political, and social spheres of life. With this as their background, the RCC women may be said to be more venturesome in the community. This is in part due to their churches openness to civic development, and in part to the women's higher education. Until very recently, the RCC authorities did not encourage their members to vie for political positions because of the general negative impression toward the world outside the church.

The CAC woman plays more and higher roles in the church than in the community. Spiritual healing is the central theme of the CAC. The role of women in this gives them a special position in the Church. The CAC believes in the authenticity of the promptings of the Spirit. With that as their background, the CAC women have been able to found churches and maternity centers which operate within the Church. The structure of the CAC churches is such that members are

virtually tied down in church activities throughout the day. In this way, members have less time to partake in community development programs especially outside the Church. So it can be said that the CAC structure seems to inhibit women's participation in community development. CAC women also feel that the CD programs which are not originated by the Church may contaminate them, so they try to dissociate themselves from these programs.

In both the CAC and RCC, women find themselves on almost all church committees like parish council, building, finance, harvest and bazaar committees, healing ministry, but the following conclusions can be drawn:

- women on these committees are usually not made overall heads such as presidents or chairmen.
- women with their overall large numbers are usually not proportionately represented on some of these committees.
- in the CAC council of elders or the RCC Conference of Bishops, no woman is a member.

With all these and more, it can be said that women are restricted in the leadership of church activities. The restrictions upon women in leading the churches are aptly manifested in the following structural constraints:

Hierarchical Structure

In the hierarchical structure of the church, one is

either a cleric or a lay person. There is no intermediate or indifferent state. Even the "religious" have no place. They are consecrated persons who do not belong to the hierarchical structure of the RCC but rather to its life and holiness via a special identity and status. The status of the religious in the church is complex. The Church structure has made it clear that, although they are consecrated in their own special way and serve the salvific mission of the Church, they are to be recognized and given a place in the Church's hierarchy with attendant roles. But insofar as they are women, they cannot be clerics and so ineligible for promotion to formal leadership positions in the Church.

Ordination

Without ordination, no person can climb the hierarchical structure of the churches. So church women now feel they too should be ordained pastors or priests if the church really wants to preach justice and equality in ecclesiastical matters. When one is ordained a priest or pastor, one is automatically in a position of authority in the church. They can now perform such functions as officiating at baptism, marriage and distribution of Holy Communion, as well as preaching from pulpits during church services.

The Bible seems to put women under men's authority at home and in the church. Some respondents feel, however, that if women were ordained, the men might feel threatened by the

women's newly acquired status. However, there are some others who held the view that this phobia should not be because, since all are servants of God's people, there should not be any discrimination. And if the ordinands really acknowledge the importance of their positions in the church, such unhealthy rivalry should not exist.) This author personally contends that women should be given a chance to prove themselves. Get them ordained. In this way, the women would not only feel fully integrated into the church but could and would definitely make many more contributions.

Support for women's ordination

In order to remove some of the restrictions on women in the churches there have been serious debates on the ordination of women. People contend that, once women are ordained, there will be justice and peace in the church and women would have a greater sense of belonging. The official RCC position that, "in fidelity to the example of the Lord," it does not consider itself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination is a 1977 Vatican declaration. But as the rate of societal change races on, that declaration now seems to be outdated.

Responding to the idea of Jesus not choosing women as apostles, Girzone (1990:114) wrote:

The custom in those days wouldn't allow it. Men were not even supposed to talk to women in public. Jesus wasn't out to change the customs of the times but to give the message of salvation and plant the seeds for the future. It is up to wise leaders to recognize the limitations within which Jesus had to labor and not mistake those

limitations as immutable doctrines. As Paul said, 'There is no distinction between Hebrew or Greek, male or female, slave or freeman.' All are one to Jesus.

Utener (1992:4) is of the opinion that the fundamental question on women's ordination is whether the ban involves unchangeable church doctrines, as argued in official church documents or only changeable church rules as argued by some theologians and Scripture scholars. He supports the repudiation of the ban by the Church and gives an example of the Churches' repudiating a once firmly held doctrine that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible or that the gentiles be admitted into the Church without circumcision (Acts of the Apostles 15). The question of women's ordination today is of major importance. The Anglican communion recently repealed the ban and granted women the right to ordination. The RCC is still holding on to the ban, since it is not always self evident which teachings are really an essential part of their apostolic tradition (and thus unchangeable) and which are views subject to change.

In both churches, it is evident that official leaders do not like to give up power, so the minorities in opposition (conservative bishops and elders) see maintaining the status quo as an end in itself. They fail to see that the ban on women's ordination hinges on sexism which they recognize in society but have a hard time admitting it in the Church (Lucker 1992:4).

The CAC are presently reviewing their constitution to

include recognizing and defining the leadership role of women in the Church. It is evident that the vexed issue of women's ordination will be adequately addressed. Some of the women foundresses have started saying that they have been ordained by God, and one of the women leaders is trying to get herself ordained by a church in America. The Catholic Church should do one thing: carry forward the work of Christ himself, who came to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit (McBrian, 1992:7). To carry out such a responsibility, the Church has the duty of scrutinizing the "signs of the times" and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. The question of ban or no ban on women's ordination is a struggle not between two different views of the Church's future, but a struggle between the future and the past. With this in view, the author supports Murphy (1992:4) in his submission that the Catholic Church should admit women to the priesthood because justice demands it and the pastoral needs of the church require it.

Policy or Decision Making

The Church constitution (or legal tradition) stipulates that only ordained priests or pastors should make up the Council of Elders or the Conference of Bishops, the policy-making bodies of the CAC and RCC respectively. These bodies presently do not have any women members. These bodies make the policies which are handed down to the priests or pastors in

the parishes or churches for execution. The priests or pastors read the policies, interpret them, and hand them down to the congregations for execution. Many women normally feel dejected and or rejected because they are not involved and do not participate in the decision making of the church. They feel it is unfair for women to be put in a position to hardly influence church decisions. The men decide the quota or ratio payment of dues and levies in the church; decide what the women should or should not wear to church; decide where the women should or should not sit in the church; decide what activities women should or should not partake in the church; decide when a big event should or should not take place in the church; decide whether women should or should not serve at mass and or distribute communion during church services; and decide whether women will be ordained or not.

This author, believes that it is not enough for women to be used as substitutes in certain activities in the church, such as that of an acolyte or a lector (Canon...). For example installing women as acolytes Women should be brought into the decision making body of the church and not be given second place positions. A woman is a full member of the body of Christ. If she can receive Holy Communion with her mouth, what should stop her from distributing it with her hand, as is done in many other parts of the world? It is unfair for women to only come and contribute money for church development without participating in the decision as to how the money should be

used.

The problem with the churches is that they do not separate ministerial functions from administrative ones. Once ordained, the priest or pastor becomes in charge of everything in his domain: education, health, social services etc. Some of the church's administrative functions could be handed over to these women, especially the religious women as is done in some parts of the world. Just as in the case of the CAC where a foundress performs administrative functions, a pastor is usually invited to perform ministerial functions like baptism, marriage, and communion. In the RCC, this is not the case. The author suggests that the RCC may well adapt the CAC's new arrangement of separating the administrative from ministerial functions even when women are ordained priests.

Chaplain

Archbishop Okoye said, "CWO has their own Chaplain. They do take the major decisions that impress action upon the Church and discuss it with their chaplain. The chaplain is there to give them guidance in matters of faith and worship and directing them." Archbishop Anamidem said that the principle of the church is that the priest should guide the women as a spiritual director where the moral issues are concerned, but individual priest may differ. "You see the priests are well qualified to give them that leadership."

Fr. Nwosu (1990) wrote that CWO does a lot of work. The

CWO looks like an independent body, but there is never a thing or plan that they do that is not subject to the approval of the parish priest. He concluded that because women are always planning something and putting it up for the approval of the parish priest or chaplain (who is always an ordained man), shows that women have become second-class citizens in the church and society. Yes , Fr. Nwosu is right from his point of view. His idea is directed toward a more basic problem, that of equal treatment of human beings.

The CWO, as a non-dependent organization in the Church, is expected to be obedient to the church leaders. The leader of the church at the parish level is the priest. So, it is not necessarily out of place for the CWO to seek and get clearance from the priest before embarking on any project for the Church. That does not in itself make the CWO or womanhood second class. In fact the basic problem is that in the RCC, women are not ordained priests. And until women are ordained or until some of the administrative functions of priests and pastors are shared, the author is sure the status quo may remain.

B. Suggestions

There is no gainsaying the fact that women have higher membership numbers than men in all the churches. Judging from

the different roles women are playing in the churches, it is hard to deny that there is a position a woman cannot hold in the church. Women should then be fully integrated in the planning and implementation of church and community activities and their number in the policy-making bodies should be on the basis of effective representation and not just as tokens. We are aware of the immense contributions of women in both church and community development programs. We know that there are some restrictions which debase women physically, psychologically, and ideologically. This author now makes the following suggestions to further enhance women's participation in both church and community development programs.

"Mobiwomen"

Women as groups and as individuals should put pressure on traditional ideologies that hold them back. They should embark on massive enlightenment drive, first among themselves, and also in the larger society. Call it "Mobiwomen." This will be a program of mobilization of women in Nigeria, to meet, organize, empower and ensure women's voice in the church and society. Mobiwomen can be done through various channels such as education, discussion groups, and organizations.

Education: Education is the key to the unfettering of the chains of ignorance which holds the unenlightened humanity bondage. It arms one with the epistemological power to

challenge what has been hitherto taken for granted in any given area of human concern. Education of women should cover all facets of life, and they should therefore be encouraged to study all disciplines and not only those which border on domestic affairs. Education of women will

- will equip them with knowledge of their basic human and constitutional rights and duties.
- enhance their awareness and consciousness.
- help them to better articulate their problems.
- raise their status in church and community affairs.
- make them professionals in their various fields of endeavor.
- make them appreciate the signs of the times.

In the RCC, women religious should be trained and armed adequately with sound educations. Their training in the postulancy and or novitiate should terminate with a first degree. This way, having to be involved in both church and community development programs, they could be more equipped to make more tangible contributions. By their being members of some lay philanthropic organizations like COWAD, INNERWHEEL, SOROPTIMIST, ZONTA, BETTER LIFE, LIONESS, these graduate religious women could more effectively mobilize women for more positive work for the well-being of their community. They can now write books from the woman's perspective. That blend is essential for peace, justice, and equilibrium. The women may now feel fulfilled in their life's endeavor.

The constitution of Nigeria, article 41 guarantees the right of all citizens, whether male or female, to freedom from discrimination. So it is pertinent that a curriculum at all levels of education should be designed to teach the equality of the sexes rather than the "superiority of the male." Thus the author advocates an introduction of women's studies in all institutions of learning. Women already form the majority of teachers in all educational institutions up to at least high schools. Their majority gives them the unique opportunity to champion the cause of women by deprogramming the learned concept of the "superiority of the male."

Discussion forum: There should be a forum for women religious and secular leaders to come together and discuss their problems, find solutions, and present a common front. These women leaders should then be invited to church and community policy conference to present their reports for actual dialogue. In this way, their views could be part and parcel of church and community policies.

Organization: Women have to get themselves organized in order to increase their social and political powers. They can use the CWO, GWA, religious women congregations, and other interest groups to ensure that a greater number of them are either elected or nominated into decision-making apparatus of the church and society. Already these women groups have the

"communal spirit" necessary for community development. And thus can be agents of development.

The researcher advocates that the women should join the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), because of its many benefits. It will unite the women from all christian denominations in a single fold; help the women to make important political and economic connections; help to improve the understanding and relations between the women and the churches; encourage dialogue and lessen the existing antagonism between the churches; and it could be an important avenue for the acquisition of leadership roles, since the association has no doctrinal constitution which might limit participation of the interested individuals.

Research and Research Institutes: Mobiwomen should play the central role of urging the Nigerian churches to establish reasearch intitutes in the nation. They should sponsor researches as strategies to evaluate the situation of the Nigerian churches for practical application to the concerns. It should meet the goal of development of the individual, the church and society at large.

For women in particular, it will search, propagate a strategy that goes beyond mere centering and liberation towards power sharing between male and female.

The need for the institutes is urgent and their recommendations equally need the urgent action of the church

authorities. Some of the things that need their immediate attention are:

a) A way to dismantle the high degree of inhibition and let women into an area that is prejudicially looked upon as a preserve of men both by deprogramming men and women of the long custom and tradition of "men's superiority." The researchers should provide relevant information on research work into the situation of women's past, present, and the future.

b) Institutionalization of the roles women perform in the church, for example, acolyte and lector. This will ratify the exclusion of women from stable ministries in Canon 230. "This canon has provisions for stably installed ministries of lector and of acolyte for lay men and temporary deputation and supply ministries or offices for lay people, that is, lay men and women."

c) Seek avenues to include women to share in the exercise of the office of ruling in the diocesan curia. For example, as vicars in the diocesan chancery, pastoral associates, diocesan and parish secretaries, diocesan chancellors, extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, mass servers, diocesan parish liturgists, mistress of ceremonies, and commentators.

d) research and propose to the bishops and Rome, to get women ordained.

e) The religious women should wake from their slumber to active participation in the church and not be mere decoration.

As Okeke(1991) rightly suggests, these will give women the opportunity to participate in the life of the church, both as official ministers and non-formal ministers.

Community development participation

The economic and social life of the church is sustained by women. If one views the church as a community of believers and church development activities as community development activities, then women who participated more in the church would participate more in the community development activities also. For example, one of the midwives in the CAC, has been a full time church worker. She does not think she is contributing to community development. Looking at it from afar, it will seem so. But from my own observations, which was also confirmed by several CAC members, she has been affecting and helping in improving the quality of life in the community by the help she freely renders to pregnant women and sick people.

However, if community development programs are viewed in terms of government and neighborhood development programs, this author sees no relationship between church participation and community participation by women. Participation in the church does not necessarily mean participation in community development programs. Some women are active in both church and community development, others are active in one and not in the other, while the rest are not active in any. All these depend

on what the women believe and are convinced of doing. Because of this belief and conviction, women are more involved in church development programs. But the church can facilitate women's participation in the community by supporting and propagating community development activities. The church is being asked to come out openly and support government programs. This will spur the women to participate fully. Also the government should involve the church in all its activities in the community. This is because the church is in a better position to impart the beliefs and ideological convictions that propel people to fight and die for a cause. This buttresses the point Ojelade and Kehinde (1988:9), made when they said that "Ideology occupies an overriding importance in any development." If they help women to know the necessity of community development and urge them to participate at all levels, women will surely make a difference in the development of Nigeria.

Participation of women in church and community could be either in the economic, political, or social spheres. Economic participation implies participation in the production of wealth. There are many women's groups who collect money and hand all over to the church or community. There is the need to use the money in projects that will yield money. For example, in training themselves, starting good businesses either as a group or as individuals. Political participation implies participation in the government of the church or community.

Social participation implies taking part in CD and other social service programs. Women with numbers can be a political force by which they can effectively make their presence felt in the government. Even though Nigerian churches are essentially voluntary before the state, internally they are not necessarily democratic; and though the women are central and the life wires of the church, they have no powers. This is what Mazrui (1991:15) refers to as women at the center but not empowered."

However, with the present awareness, being created in Nigeria and all over the world, of the political powers of women, the church will be modernized in spite of itself, (Fichter, 1977). This quiet revolution appears to be occurring at the bottom of the structure where the women are in the majority. In Nigeria, this revolution is on in the CAC. The women CAC produced their own national almanac in 1990 and 1991 giving themselves titles as men do. The church leaders are invited for the launching and blessing of some of these unconventional women's activities. They attend the ceremony thereby giving recognition to what the women are doing. Comparing the church almanac and the women almanac for 1991, one notices that only three women are featured in the CAC's official almanac with one of them named national representative and spokeswoman of GWA. In the women's almanac only one man is featured in the circle of the leaders, and the national representative and spokeswoman of GWA was named the

general superintendent - a title reserved for men. Such a revolution is quite important for the church and society. The CAC women have really changed their Church, although they heretofore have always felt threatened. But now there are ties to how an institution reacts to changes that threaten the people within it who have power (McBrien, 1992:7). The elders are now revising the constitution of the CAC. This is a positive development for the women. The RCC women may have to learn from the experience of the CAC women. They should be more vibrant in the activities of the church. They should be more assertive. Even though the RCC is a more conservative Church in which women have virtually no say, the recent debates on women's ordination and other radical moves in the church in other parts of the world should spur the RCC women to fight for their rights.

C. Conclusion: Answers to Burning Questions

I prefer to conclude this work by simply answering questions to burning issues that have been raised in this dissertation.

How does religion inhibit or facilitate women's involvement in CD projects?

- All religions can contain both positive and negative values promoting or inhibiting development (Oommen 1991, Findly

and Haddad 1985).

- The church facilitates women participation in church development activities and not CD programs because they make them believe in working hard in the church for the reward of eternal life.
- In some (Muslim) communities in Nigeria, religion makes it impossible for women to participate in CD programs because the women are in purdah (means not to be seen in public). These women cannot participate in any CD program on religious grounds, no matter how qualified or capable. The CAC women too fear what they call "contamination with evil forces," should they partake in CD projects. The church debars its members to engage in partisan politics.
- The RCC encourages its women to participate in community development activities especially political ones. So more RCC women are actively involved in formal CD projects than the CAC women. For the RCC women participation opens up new opportunities such as being key officials in Better Life and other government bodies in the community. A greater percentage of the women political activists are RCC women.

Does the participation of women in religious activities have complex social impact on the community?

- Generally, Nigerian women have been contributing immensely to national development. RCC and CAC women are part and parcel of the women making the contributions, although at

different levels. However, there has been little or no recognition of this and of the multiple roles which church women play in development. Credit for what women achieve is usually given to their husbands, the parish council or council of elders, or the priest or pastor but never to the women. Despite this the women will go to any length to support the church in its development efforts even when they have nothing left for their children at home. They contribute their last penny even when they are not sure of where the next meal will come from. This way, one notices that participation in religious activities may have a complex social impact on the people. All night vigils for days may cause exhaustion in their adherents. Or spending three quarters of the time in the church, as is seen more with some CAC adherents, may not give enough time for other activities like CD programs. In this way, religious beliefs may act as what Ekong (1982:245) called "negative factors against economic productivity and acceptance of innovation."

- The reason given for some RCC women moving over to the CAC is the form of worship with music, drumming, dancing, and singing. These bring about a feeling of continuity and identity with their African traditional roots. If these could be incorporated into the form of worship of most churches, the much-talked-about "cultural revival" as a significant factor in national development could become

socially significant through religious activity.

Do the AIC and RCC women have differential capacities to empower women?

- Within its Church, the CAC allows women greater freedom, creation of more roles, more flexibility, and more participation by women in the Church. The CAC women have founded churches, became powerful preachers in conventions and crusades, worked what they consider to be many miracles "by the power of the Holy Spirit. They have also done things which the church does not exactly permit. The CAC women evangelists have begun to mobilize their women, educating them on the struggle within the Church and empowering them to fight for their right. The CAC women have really gone a long way. However, the Nigerian RCC women will tend to go with the already established structure of the Church. They have not been able to empower their women for any revolution. Even on the issue of women's ordination, they seem too docile. Research shows that the innovations in new directions, the leadership and principles of complementarity among the CAC women are non-existent in the RCC.
- In the external community, on the other hand, the RCC woman is more effective in empowering women, allowing them voice in political, social, and economic development. Church women's organizations encourage and support their members to take governmental offices. Also because of their higher educational

level, the RCC women participate more in community development programs. The women take active part in meetings where they organize themselves and educate themselves in women's participation in community development. The CWO is a powerful organization and can serve as a very powerful forum for women to express themselves and do what they want. The women of the CWO can wield such political power to force the government to hand over schools to the churches. The GWA if geared outside the church, could really ignite change.

What differences do differing church structures make in women's roles and statuses?

- Vatican II declared the RCC to be "the people of God in which all are fellow citizens as the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19), among whom reigns true equality of dignity and action (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the church. *Lumen gentium*, no.32). However, for the Church we have two grades the clerics and the lay apostolate. The structure is such that only men can be clergy. That automatically denies women the role of cleric. The priests or pastors take over both the ministerial and administrative functions of their parishes or churches. This structure then excludes women from performing ministerial and administrative roles.
- In the RCC, the status of women religious is complex. They are members of Christ's faithful who are consecrated to

God by a special title through profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience by public vows in a canonically established religious institute. They are characterized by fraternal life in common and a certain separation from the world. They have a recognizable and acknowledged status in the church. The lay women's group, the CWO, are recognized to be the economic and social lifebloods of the Church. They are also involved in the social work in the community.

- In the CAC, also the women are not ordained. They don't even have consecrated religious institutes. However, because some of them see vision and say God wanted them to do this or that, they automatically become evangelists, prophetesses, foundresses. This gives them enhanced status over against ordinary lay members. Their newly acquired status entrusts to them the role of preaching door-to-door evangelism, divining, and fortune-telling. Some have even founded their own churches, trained their own pastors and administered their new churches. While the actual ministerial duties are done by the pastors, these women do the administrative chores, even though not ordained. In the community, through their crusades and conventions, they claim they reduce crime, also extremely important.
- The loose structure of the CAC allows the women to be more liberated and autonomous. The RCC, on the other hand, is

very conservative and rigid and does not allow the women to do whatever they like. Once the Holy Spirit takes possession of a CAC woman, she claims to "receive messages from God," build her own church, refuses to hand them over, determines the type of pastor she wants, and even sends her own members to be ordained for them. Some of these CAC women foundresses and prophetesses are so richly rewarded materially that they live opulently. They claim they do God's work alone and nothing else, yet are so rich. They make the religious in RCC like me ponder over their charisms.

- Even within the conservative RCC, some of its women's groups have joined Better Life Program to fight for the removal of societal restrictions on women, e.g. not being allowed to own land. The women are succeeding. They now organize themselves into cooperatives involved in farming, trading, weaving, etc. This way the women have made a tremendous impact on the social development of their community.

Among the women interviewed, already the RCC who are active in the church are also active in their locality. Most presidents of the CWO are active members of their local communities and a few CAC women who do not see participation in CD as contamination are also active in their local community. Therefore, there is a strong probability that, if RCC women are given more roles in the Church, especially in

leadership and decision making, they will carry the same to the community.

The CAC women have more avenues for active participation in their Church but the belief about CD contamination holds them back. If they could be educated to believe that FCD is also a divine project, surely they would use their already large administrative skills and leadership roles, which they especially the foundresses have amassed, to be very effective in CD programs also.

I hope that this research and its recommendations will help the authorities with decision-making powers to implement policies which positively enhances women's responsibilities in participating in both church-based and non-church-based community development programs.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

GENERAL

For both church and community involvement.

(This will be used for the women, bishops, parish priests/pastors and local government officers).

1. What types of work do women in general do in your Church/community?
(Probe to find out all the types of jobs done by women in her Church/community?)
 - Are there activities/roles/positions that women are not permitted to perform/take/do in your church? If yes, name and why?
2. What types of activities do you recommend for women to incorporate/delete in their activities in your church/community?
3. Are women or men more involved in your church's /community's activities?
4. Are there different committees in your Church/community?
(Probe to find out all the committees.)
 - who constitute the manpower of these committees?
 - Are the committees necessary for the development of your church/community?
Explain how?
5. How many women are in each of these committees?
6. In how many of these committees are women leaders?
Find out what type of leadership roles they perform.
7. What have you to say about these women's roles in the committees?
Probe to find out her feelings.
8. How many women are there in the church/community council?
Have they any leadership position there?
9. There are different societies and associations in your

church/community.

How many have women leaders?

What problems do women face in these organizations?

How does their leadership position influence the work of the council/association/society?

Of women and men, which group do you think makes better leader?

What can women do in your church/community, that the women in the other church (RCC/AIC) cannot do? Do you see this as an asset? If yes/no, how?

Does your Church influence the types of activities (you) women perform in your local community? Does it facilitate or inhibit them?

Is there anything from your church that spurs you to participate in community development.

How many women from your Church are involved in these programs?

Are there more of RCC women or AIC women in these programs?

Which of these groups of women do you think are more active in your community?

How are they more active? Why do you think they are more active and involved?

What suggestions will you make as regards women role in your Church/ community?. (Probe to find out the limits she thinks women can go; and the reaction of people when women perform certain activities; if satisfied with women's role.)

Compare and contrast your church with the RCC/AIC - Differences and similarities?

What can women do in your church/society, that the women in the other church (RCC/AIC) cannot do? Do you see this as an asset? If yes/no, how?

The individual

(For the women only)

What types of activities do you perform in the church/
community now? (Probe to find out all she does).

For each activity:

description:

Full or part-time (hrs/days/wk):

Years of performance:

Feelings about the work:

paid job or not

Background (sources of influence):

Home upbringing

Formal Education

Religious influence

social/cultural influence

Motivations: role models, ideas, interests etc.

Aims: e.g What do you hope to achieve for

yourself/community? To what do you attribute this aim?

Have the aim/s been achieved? If yes, how? If not,

Why? Any obstacles? Name them. Any plans to overcome
it/them? If yes/No, How/Why?

*** To what extent can you attribute your present activities
to your religious backgrounds?

How does your work help you to initiate or assist in
the development of your community? - economics/
politics/administration

What activities did you perform in the church/community
before now?

For how long did you perform each of these activities?

-main interest/s in those activities

-paid or unpaid; volunteered or hired

-position occupied at beginning of activity/ies

-highest position in terms of progress

-relation of former activities to present activities?

-any link with religious background?

Have these activities changed over the years?

Probe to find out all she has ever done, how long she did
each and reasons for leaving each.

-main interest/s in those activities

-paid or unpaid; volunteered or hired

-position occupied at beginning of activity/ies

-highest position in terms of progress

-relation of former activities to present activities?

-any link with religious background?

27. What type of work would you like to do in the community?
 - Why would you like to do this work?
 - would you recommend it to other people?
 - What kind of people would your recommend it to?
28. Do you know of development programs, committees in your community? (Probe to see how much she knows?)
29. How many women's organizations have you in your Church? Are you involved in any? Name them. Reasons for joining the organizations.
30. Are you involved in any of these organizations/programs?
Name them.
31. What types of activities do you perform in each?
(Probe as to how she is involved: Attending meetings, read their literature, donate time/money etc.)
 - who constitute the manpower of these programs?
 - Are the committees necessary for the development of your community?
Explain how?

8) Demographic data

SEX _____ Date of Birth _____

Educational level _____

Job _____ Place of work _____

Income _____

Married (1st or 2nd or 3rd) _____ Single _____

Wedded in Church _____ If not, where? _____

Present denomination RCC _____ or CAC _____

** Were you raised up in this religious denomination you are now?

If not, reasons for leaving previous religion

9) Any other information _____

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Sr. MaryPaul V.N. Asoegwu DDL has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Judith Wittner, Director
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 12, 1993
Date

Judith Wittner
Director's Signature