MASCULINE IMAGES OF GOD AND LEADERSHIP IN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA (PCEA)

BY

JOYCE WARUGURU KAIRU

MTH/NRB/2170/13

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OFA MASTER OF THEOLOGY (MTH) FROM ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY.

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SUPERVISOR(S): Rev, Dr. John Kiboi and Prof. Esther Mombo.

AUGUST, 2019

DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be available for reference and photocopying at the discretion of the University.

SIGNATURE OF THE STUDENT…… **DATE**……

Word Count: 20,208

I confirm that the work reported in this dissertation was carried out by the student under our supervision.

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Signature…… Date ……

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The Lord God grant you His favor.

ABSTRACT

The masculine language ascribed to God and image of God seems to be linked to the exclusion of women from senior church leadership in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. The Study explores the theological and hermeneutical principles that have influenced the Church to marginalize women from leadership. The study was guided by the following objectives; exploring the reasons for the exclusion of women from senior leadership in PCEA, determining the link between masculine images about God and its impact on the female leadership in the church, analyzing how biblical and theological hermeneutical principles have affected women leadership in the church and proposing a hermeneutical methodology of inclusion for all in the leadership of PCEA. The dissertation applied the hermeneutical approach to the understanding of masculine language refereed to God and its influence on the women leadership in the PCEA- The dissertation made three observations on the question of the exclusion of women from senior leadership. First, the long-time practice of excluding women from senior leadership are attributed to foundation of the church and the language of elder which is masculine in the traditional culture, associating God with maleness and not a woman. Second, the process of election is influenced much by male figures with powers to determine the outcomes. Thirdly, women are seen and said to be busy with domestic chores thus should not be given positions and if given, they should be of lower profile as realized in cultural biasness which sees female from a cultural point of view as a home manager and domestic caretaker who should not be involved in external matters.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

ATR	:	African Tradition Religion
CSM	:	Church Society Mission
GA	:	General Assembly
IEABC	:	Imperial British East Africa Company
NIV	:	New InternationalVersion
PCA	:	Presbyterian Church of America
PCEA	:	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
U.S.A.	:	United States of America
W.C.C.	:	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter lays a foundation of the thesis on the language of God and women leadership in PCEA as a case for study. The chapter covers the background information on the topic, the problem statement, objectives and questions of the study, justification and thesis structure.

1.2 The Background to the Problem

Women leadership in the church has been an issue or a problem for a very long time as to whether they deserve or qualify for senior positions or not. The situation varies from one church to another. In Kenya for example, the main line churches have had ordained women from the middle of the 1980's but there are positions that women seem not to occupy. Today the Methodist Church of Kenya has only two women Bishops, the Anglican church of Kenya is still debating whether women priests can be elected and consecrated. The Reformed Church of East Africa has just started ordaining women. The situation is also complex in the African Iinstituted Churches and it varies from one church to another. In some churches women's leadership is not allowed while in some they have women to the position of bishops but not high priest as that is hereditary. The African Israeli Nineveh has women Bishops while African Divine church has not accepted women into senior positions of leadership. Some of the African instituted churches have different roles for women they can be pastors but ordained into positions of leading in the administering of the sacraments or cannot be made reverends. In the charismatic Pentecostal churches, there is also a variation. Women have founded their churches just like men, making leadership a contextual issue.

This study was about the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (P.C.E.A), which ordained women ministers from 1980 and ordained women elders from much earlier (Nyambura, 2000)

A casual history of P.C.E.A. Church shows that, since the inception of the church in Kenya, the senior leadership of the General assembly have ever been occupied by men. These offices include the office of the Moderator, Secretary General and the office of the treasurer and other departments (see Appendix 1) The only office of the P.C.E.A. Headquator held by a woman is only the 'woman's Guild office' while the rest of the major offices which includes the Christian education board, brigade, Church school, Health board and even the mission desk are all headed by men except of the recent past where they have been began being considered to be occupied by women.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

A Church is understood to be a congregation of believers or the body of Christ regardless of gender, class, age, and ethnicity. Research shows that there are more women members in most churches than men yet the leadership is highly dominated by men especially in top position. The question was; "why women who are majority in the church were neglected to senior positions". The thesis explored the link between masculine language of God and the exclusion of women from senior leadership in PCEA.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following specific objectives: -

1. To explore the reasons for the exclusion of women from senior leadership in PCEA.
2. To determine the link between masculine images about God and its impact on the female leadership in the church.

3. To analyze how biblical and theological hermeneutical principles have affected women leadership in the church.

4. To propose a hermeneutical methodology of inclusion for all in the leadership of PCEA.

1.5 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following questions.

1. Why are women excluded from senior leadership in PCEA?
2. What is the link between masculine images of God and female leadership?
3. How have theological Hermeneutics impacted female leadership in PCEA?
4. How can we achieve a hermeneutical methodology of inclusion for all in the leadership of PCEA?

1.6 Hypothesis

The study had assumptions that with the proper hermeneutical principle, there would be improved women inclusion in leadership in PCEA.

The study presupposed that the review on the metaphorical theology and figurative language used for God would improve the view on the women leadership in PCEA.

The study associated women exclusion in PCEA senior leadership with the dominant patriarchal system.

1.7 Justification

From the literature reviewed, the quest for language of God in relation to women leadership was an ongoing task that requires a research to change the perception for the betterment of

the Church and society. In this sense therefore, the research generated knowledge on the impact of the language of God on women leadership in the church.

The information enhanced women leadership to bring about the relevant teachings/preaching that could enhance wholesome growth in the church.

The research was important ~~ce~~ in highlighting the effects of women non-participation in church leadership. The study also gave the church a new perspective and understanding the real language of God hermeneutically. The rationale of this study was to challenge the church and others to re-read, re-interpret the Doctrine of God and fully understand the language of God to come up with a church that is more inclusive in terms of service.

Hermeneutical approach to problem of women exclusion in church leadership with an attachment to the understanding of language of God was justified in this study on the grounds that it was used in resolving the problem of dubious hermeneutics in which the proponent argued.

Hermeneutical approach gave birth to dubious doctrines that were used by religions to discriminate people of other religions. In the case of our study, dubious hermeneutical approach observed and practiced by the Church resulted into discrimination of women thus the need to treat language of God as understood by the Church hermeneutically.

1.8 Methodology (Hermeneutic of suspicion)

The study adopted the hermeneutic of suspicion as a suitable type, meaning that they work to uncover hidden ideological motives behind the 'wrong' yet legalized arguments and approaches on matters while affirming their own as right answers (Kennedy, 2014:92). The rise of the hermeneutic of suspicion corresponded to a set of transformations of law-in-society and of the relationships between elites in the legal universe and those in the political,

economic and social universes. The aim of the study was to apply the hermeneutical approach in unveiling the suspected hidden ideological motives behind the 'wrong'(theological) arguments on the understanding of the language of God. The study therefore suspected that the church took this approach in leadership in the church. The need for reinterpretation of the Bible was key and indisputable.

On the hermeneutic of suspicion, there was need to understand the hermeneutical approach as put forward; identifying the author and the arguments in relation to the women leadership in the church.

In regard to the thesis, the focus was on the understanding and perceived language used in referring to God which in return influenced the women leadership in the church ministry specifically in the PCEA. It was largely dominated by traditions and men philosophies that attached church leadership to a perceived understanding of who God is. With long period of practicing traditions, philosophies perceived and understanding, carried with an assumption of comprising divine voice. God is neither male nor female; the pronouns used are men's interpretations which first got rooted in people's understanding and perceived God possessing maleness or femaleness. Such notion determined the kind of leadership in place in the church. The proposition raised a lot of questions, contradictions that had both arguments for and against. In such a case as proposed by scholars such as Mueller, (2007), the antithesis or contradiction come in; God is a female God; language of God does not determine the leadership and so on. Therefore, thesis is simply a stated, put forward statement that awaits confirmation on its reality through the process of antithesis and synthesis.

On the antithesis, the prefix 'ant' has an implication of the opposite of what is put across as a statement or theory. It is manifested in the process of arguments and suggestions that provide

contradicting ideas as far as the proposed statement is concerned. Antithesis works best when it is used in conjunction with parallelism (successive phrases that use the same grammatical structure), since the repetition of structure makes the contrast of the content of the phrases as clear as possible. The word "antithesis" has another meaning, which is to describe something as being the opposite of another thing. For example, "love is the antithesis of selfishness." In the case of the title of the study, antithesis will comprise of the arguments opposite, putting or painting that the understanding of language of God at all doesn't determine the kind of women leadership in the church today.

An example of antithesis in John Milton's Paradise Lost can be applied here for better understanding. In this verse from Paradise Lost, Milton's anti-hero, Satan, claims he's happier as the king of Hell than he could ever have been as a servant in Heaven. He justifies his rebellion against God with this pithy phrase, and the antithesis drives home the double contrast between Hell and Heaven, and between ruling and serving. Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

In the process of the antithesis in a thesis, there is and must always be an amalgamation rather a come together or contra views to harmonize the issue at hand. The application of right biblical hermeneutical approach will seek to synthesize the understanding of language of God to settle the tension in the church caused by one side-leadership. The end target aims arriving at an inclusive approach that will embrace both women and men in senior leadership positions. The confirmation to the successful working of the methodology will be on the changed and improved perception on women and their position in the church leadership as well as men.

CHAPTER TWO: MASCULINE IMAGES OF GOD IN CHURCH TRADITION

2.1 Introduction

According to the research done by Wainaina (2015), it was revealed that although women continue to be devoted to the church, representation in church administrative leadership positions was high at the lower church hierarchy. Furthermore, major responses showed that women appeared invisible in top church hierarchy.

Women ministers who served as Deaconesses and evangelists were admitted to training through scrutiny even to the extreme end. Meiyer, (2004:107-109) observed that women were more in-service giving ministries as supported by the scripture in Acts 6:1-3; the roles of Deaconesses who were to offer services to people. As they take services, men take the administrative roles in leadership thus women seemed to be assistants in their duties.

A case of Milimani Presbytery-Nairobi examined by Wainaina (2015) points out that most women in church committees,serve as deacons, and chair persons in groups and are members in various church groups. In a nutshell, women are left out in senior administrative positions, a proof of the fact that most of the church members are very ignorant of the attributes of womanhood I church administration. (Mutahi, 2014:21)

According to (Mutambuki & Omondi 1998:25-40), women hold leadership positions in various church groups such as, chair persons, secretaries and treasurers. Groups include the youths, church school, boys' and girls' brigade, Christian education, health Board, justice peace and reconciliation and development. Other duties performed by women include church cleaning, decorating, ushering, singing in the church choir, counseling the youth and taking

care of the sick. This is supported by James (1993:108-109) who added that they also cooked and served people and preparing the priest's table.

The cultural and social construction of the language of God imparts a strong notion in Christians as far as leadership is concerned. It is strongly echoed that the gospel can be good news if it serves the course of those who struggle for liberation from oppressive circumstance such as those mentioned in Luke 4:18-19 (Mercy & Hendrick, 2003: 44).

The rise of PCEA church laid a foundation that portrayed a low-profile position on women as compared to men. With the interpretation of the word elder, the assumption understood fell on men as the reference hence the current struggle in leadership positions in PCEA.

The PCEA has its commencement in the work of Sir William Mackinnon and Sir Alexander Low Bruce, Directors of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) (Macpherson, 1970:21).The campaign against slave trade motivated Mackinnon to invite missionaries to introduce Christianity to the interior which he believed would help discourage the practice of slavery. Mackinnon, being Scottish, approached the Free Church of Scotland in 1889 to begin a private mission station (Njoroge, 2000:5-10). Dr. Stewart mission team, arrived in Kenya in 1891.

On arrival, the team left Mombasa on September 19, 1891, with instructions to set up the mission at Dagoretti. Dagoretti by then was one of the key posts that the IBEAC was administering and was considered to be a strategic location to both the IBEAC and the new missionary society for reaching the Agĩkũyũ and the Maasai (Muita, 2003:5). Stewart left for the interior in September 1891 with a party of seven Missionaries and 273 porters. However, he abandoned the suggestion of opening a station at Dagoretti but rather, set up a Mission

station at Kibwezi, due to a tumultuous situation between Agĩkũyũ and IBEAC officials at Dagoretti.

The mission work at Kibwezi was a propper, for it bumped into numerous misfortunes. Not only were the mission team decimated by malaria but a number of missionaries died of famine and raids. It was decided that the Mission be shifted to Kikuyu under the leadership of and Rev. Thomas Watson (Njoroge, 2000:7).

By 1920s the CSM had built three major stations at Thogoto, Tumutumu and Chogoria each with a church, school and hospital. In 1920 the first church elders were ordained, twenty eight Gikuyu men from Thogoto and seventeen men from Tumutumu. In 1926 other eight Gikuyu men were ordained. It was not until 1965 when the first PCEA women were ordained as elders that women were involved in the governing of the church. Before then the church was governed only by men, exhibiting the same patriarchal patterns as political institutions in both the West and in Africa (Njoroge, 2000:8). This explains the basis for the existence of women underrepresentation in administrative church leadership in PCEA.

Women plays a lower profile of leadership and sometimes in some churches; no opportunity is given to a woman to lead. Considering this, in 1984, the Southern Baptist convention passed a resolution against. According Joe (2013:221) to Joe on the arguments by Jimmy Carter on the Baptist and ordination of women, Jimmy Carter regards the exclusion of women from the priesthood as a human rights abuse.

Joe (2013:221) argues that ordination to the priesthood is not a natural right but a spiritual calling and a divine gift which cannot be merited neither one deserving it. The Church has every right to regulate her sacraments as she sees fit. The Church has made great overtures

in empowering women to minister as pastoral associates, chancellors, office managers, directors of religious education and catechists, music directors, readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, religious sisters, lay missionaries, principals and teachers, and the greatest vocation of all, as mothers (Joe, 2013:221).

On the contrary, the arguments on the place of women in the society were literally associated with literal interpretation of the scripture 1Timothy 2 where women were to learn in silence (Clanton, 1990:14). Women should keep silent and ask their husband at home what transpired in the church. Women are in this case viewed as the lesser human attached to problems. With such officially published information that bans women from public participation especially in important forums like religious spheres, largely contributes to the low participation profile in leadership. This stood strong in support for this research to be conducted to examine how the understanding of language of God has impacted the women leadership in the PCEA Church.

Oduyoye (2001) challenges those African women theologians writing on theology of language and leadership who attempt to acculturate Christianity into the African soil for failing to take into account patriarchal elements found in African cultures that are fused into the biblical interpretation to suit individual interests at the expense of others. She further defines culture in a very comprehensive way, as "a people's world-view, way of life, values, philosophy of life, the psychology that governs behavior, their sociology and social arrangements, all that they have carved and cultured out of their environment to differentiate their style of life from other peoples."

Johnson (2003:121) proclaims that God is father not mother but that doesn't mean that God is male nor does it mean God is masculine. The biblical God is sexless God, the pronoun "he" is primarily personal (generic) rather than masculine (specific). It emphasizes Gods personality in contrast to impersonal entities or any other language perpetrated by others as they think. For instance, when Moses sings of God who gave birth (Deuteronomy 32:18), metaphorically he proclaims that God is like a mother to Israel. In the same scripture, Moses sings, the God who begot them thus suggesting that God is father and a mother. In reference to this argument this research is expected to propose to women and men on the way the biblical hermeneutics can be done in the new way to understand language of God in order to develop the church from all spheres beyond gender limits (Bavinck, 1977).

Oduyoye echoed that if Christ is to be recognized being active participant in Africa, the church must denounce degrading and segregating systems and stop praising and showering power and prestige upon those who oppress others.(Mercy & Hendrick, 2003:58) In regard to her argument, the church in the present society can only be transformed by the re-interpretation of the scripture accordingly without biasness and the dominance of culture, traditions and philosophies of men.

Phiri (1997:136) spoke on women's wakeup call in conjunction with the realization of several women in some countries in African. Speaking on their rights in Christian ministry, there is a need to initiate a change in the interpretation school of theology. For instance, in Malawi, Nkhoma an examined Synod in the Presbyterian Church in Malawi where women woke up to get empowered in organizations like Pan African Women Alliance.

The Malawian women theologians met under the theme of "*Called to be women of God*". In the meeting, they named various forms of oppression, prejudice and injustice against women

in church and society in Malawi. On specific matters of leadership, the Malawian women theologians saw the need for church women to support them in proposing negotiation for increased participation in leadership and decision-making positions in the church (Phiri 1997:137). With all the efforts done in initiating organizations to change the women perception in church leadership, there is still low percentage of women in church leadership. What could be the issue?

The deliberate or unconscious silencing of women in the church misinterprets their ecclesial and theological invisibility yet women are the majority going to church. According to Elizabeth Fiorenza and Mary Collins in their book, *"women invisible in church and theology*" argue that although the church is referred to as "our mother" with the pronoun "she", it is personified and governed by fathers and brothers only (Fiorenza and Collins, 1985:4). In relation to their argument, the male gender dominance is realized in church leadership and governance despite female persons being majority in the church. The cause to the dominance and how it contributes to the women minority in church leadership is closely attributed to the understanding of masculine images to God raises a concern in this study.

Women subordination in leadership raises unending hot debates every now and then with questions on why superiority and inferiority in the gender created in one image and likeness. In conjunction to this, Sarah Cunningham (1992:92) affirms that since men assumed for themselves the superior capacities of rationality and spirituality while assigning women the capacity of emotionality and sensuality, men therefore naturally take precedence in church, domestic and public life thus women have to naturally live in submission to men as the body must be subject to the spirit. The researcher partly disagrees with the argument that man assigned what woman should be. The power and authority are in the interpretation of the

scripture right from the original manuscripts that can still be reinterpreted with current context in mind.

Augustine on the biblical quotation in Ephesians 5:23, interprets what Paul meant that "*the woman has no head of her own but that of her husband as she is the body"* thus defining male alone as one created in the full image of God. This is a real demoralization in the contemporary understanding of theology of a mother God. According to Luther, a woman is not only deficient in her capacity to image God because of the fall; she must also accept her assigned subordinate role in life (Cunningham, 1992:93).

From the Christian theologians comprehending God is affirmed to be hard to comprehend. Aquinas following his reflection on whether God exists with what seems a list of properties or attributes, God is simple, perfect, good, infinite, immutable, eternal and one. Supported by The Westminster Confession of 1647 on the account of God, he is infinite in being and perfection, a purest spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions, immutable, immense, eternal and incomprehensible. (Coulter,2011:53)

Language springing from the masculine images ascribed to God is a tool that has been used to drive and communicate an idea, portray a picture and cause an impact on a perception, an aspect and even a being. Language therefore is very significance in painting the real image of something, resulting to various understandings on the tasks carried out. In the perception that existed through life experiences, human imagination and understanding of the language ascribed to God, churches emulated and promoted the understanding in setting up leadership structure.

Language has the power to influence and is realized in the outcomes commonly practicedin describing a phenomenon or a being. In the case of this study, both men and women have been placed or associated with some positions, places, activities and influences for instance, men were elevated, associated with the great image of superiority while women associated with the doom language that describes them based on the morals and roles in society and the church.

From the anthropomorphic understanding, God has been associated with terms in masculinity and femininity yet they are far away from the real God. For that reason, an effort to clear the misunderstanding and shape the true religious observations in churches becomes a priority.

2.1.1 Masculine image of God in the church tradition

Which one is the genuine image of God; men or women? Most of African Tradition Religion (ATRs)' creation myths acknowledge that both women and men were created by the Creator, Father-Mother God (for example, Ghanaian Ga's Ataa Naa Nyonmo) (Njoroge, Oduyoye (2001:23). Unfortunately, such inclusive metaphors for God were overtaken by patriarchal ones when Christian missionaries brought their western clad Christianity. Ironically, while one would expect that the Christian teaching that God became a body-self through Jesus, would mean that apart from the other salvific revelations, it would unveil something about God's affirmation of the goodness of the body as well as God's enjoyment of beauty (Raphael, 1996). Reality has however proved through Christian belief and teaching that women's bodies are still held suspect as a source of evil. This echoes the scholastic misconceptions of equating men with God's image as naturally intellectual beings, and women as secondary through their relationship with men, which revolves around offering procreative services (Jantzen, 1995; Rakoczy, 2004). While ATRs have to rediscover their

inclusive beliefs and teachings about God and creation, the church has to transform the patriarchal overtones when it comes to its anthropology of male and female and develop a theology of the equality of women and men as the image of God.

In most churches, the efforts to understand language of God has been ignored or given a low profile rather than seeking to know the true ascriptions, for instance, church traditions have seen a patriarchal practice as a true picture of what the church should be. Therefore, it is indeed inappropriate to rely on assumption of the language of maleness or femaleness of God in determining the leadership of the church.

The traditions employed by many churches on the position of women in the religious sphere have influenced leadership structures in current churches. Orthodox is adamantly opposed to the ordination of women as liturgical clergy. There are articles and books by both men and women theologians supporting this stand (Macrina, 2009, p. 39).

Church traditions have largely borrowed from the Jewish tradition which never at all regarded a female in the high position other than subordinate. The Judaism environment was openly discriminatory regarding women, regarding them as incapable of bearing witness, hence remaining excluded from essential religious tasks done mostly by men (as well) they were unworthy of participating in most of the religious feasts, neither could they study the Torah nor participate in the sanctuary service. The woman was obliged to a permanent purification-ritual, especially in dates regarding with the sexual (Menstruation and birth).

On the contrary, other church traditions have upheld the women leadership although after a strong battle to oppose them. Currently, case studies attached to churches like the American Baptist Churches USA and evangelical Lutheran church in America are the only groups in

our analysis with women in their top leadership positions. Susan Gillies is interim general secretary of the Baptist churches and Elizabeth Eaton is the presiding bishop of the Lutheran group (Aleksandra, 2016, p. 34).

2.1.2 Leadership in PCEA

In the national lever we have had men as Modertors of the general assemply and Secretary generals and treausrres. In Limuru presbytery for example for years only men have been mderators. PCEA as a church has for long time practiced masculinity in leadzership and portrayed an association to God as a masculine figure. This is manifested in the way structures have been observes in leadership since its inception in early 19th century. The empirical information on the same as obtained from the PCEA is tabulated in the appendix 1.

2.1.3 Masculine image of god according to church fathers

The period begun with those earliest Christians w0ho were not themselves eyewitnesses to Christ's earthly ministry, yet knew eyewitnesses, and ends sometime after the 5th century after the Council of Chalcedon and the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire by Germanic invaders before the 8th. The period of the Church Fathers as the name suggests was associated with male figures thus the results seen in the church today. The Patristic period so called from the Greek and Latin words for *father* thus extends from the Apostolic Age to the early Middle Ages, and *Patristic* is the study of those early Christian leaders, affectionately termed *Fathers*, who negotiated the doctrinal controversies that arose during this time (Bruce, 2011:68).

Fathers as viewed from a worthy point of view had to put forward their views and the language constructed and directed to refer to God as far as gender issue is concerned. For the

Jews, the birth of a female was a misfortune, the Rabbi Simeon said: "All are happy when a male birth but all are unhappy when female birth"(WCC, 1997:234). This is an implication of how the female language construction was viewed with a lot of fortunes thus God would not be easily associated with femaleness. The views of the identified fathers are as presented below;

2.1.2.1 Tertullian and women leadership

The leadership of a woman is closely associated and demeaned in the act of sin believed to have been propagated by a woman. Tertullian is one of the writers who never fails to see a woman leadership function but in a negative way. He further exclaims, the female gender is described in the following; “You are the devil's gateway. It is you who plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree. You are the first who deserted the divine law. You are the one who persuaded him whom even the devil was not strong enough to attack.” (Williams, 2011:123). All too easily you destroyed the image of God, man. Because of your desert, that is death, even the son of God had to die. Therefore, cover your head and your figure with sackcloth and ashes (Tertullian on the 'dress of women) because the women do not possess the image of God in her but only when taken together with the male who is her head, so that the whole substance is one image (Kasomo, 2010:127).

2.1.2.2 Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo on Women and Church Leadership

Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo Regius (354-430) puts emphasis on the argument that a woman has no image of God in her own without having the company of a man. This implies that man on his own, has the image of God and complete. Furthermore, it brings a picture of

God having no relationship with female thus a lot of controversial appeals to argument; who is right (Needham, 2002:324).

2.1.2.3 Origen on women and church leadership

Origen argues that women are not to be allowed to speak in the assembly even if what she says is very admirable. This sends unfair signal and communication that puts a female gender somewhere unrecognizable, unacknowledged. Origen (d. 258): Fragments on First Corinthians, 7:4 (Giordano, 1977:87). There is a possibility of modern churches setting their church policies on such foundation as Origen's mind resulting to the current women leadership crises in the church rising from the hermeneutical understanding. The leader can lead but not where he or she is accepted, acknowledged and respected.

2.1.2.4 Ambrose on Women Leadership

Referencing 1 Tim. 2:14, Ambrose argues, "The woman, therefore, is the originator of the man's wrongdoing, not the man of the woman's." one of his commentary on Genesis, he says, "She even dragged her husband along with her into sin and showed herself to be an incentive to him."

Women who pursued lives of asceticism were able to find esteem, value and credibility in the Patristic period. Jerome had a close relationship and is outspoken in affirming the ascetic lives of Paula and Marcella. Marcella was a student of Jerome's and became a great scholar who carried authority in the church.

2.1.3 Reformation age and women leadership

The Reformation's impact on the language of God, view and associating the creator with either sex and especially aligned to women was two-fold and ambivalent: the exclusion of

women from priestly and official leadership positions was balanced by the new vocational ethics and the stress put on the freedom of the individual Christian and the priesthood of all believers (Stjerna, 2009:321). This argument clarifies on the perception on who God is and whether he has a gender or not. In other words, God did not dichotomize the humans and their relationship to him either. This has an implication of indescribable God neither by sex but un-originated God.

In other words, certain losses were balanced with certain "gains." The Reformation was neither simply a failure nor predominantly a victory for women. The "truth" was much more complex. A general conclusion can be made that the reformers' teachings did not induce a deep cry for emancipation, liberation, or a class movement towards gender equality. The Reformation does not appear to have instigated any drastic changes in gender roles and gender expectations instead, Reformation teachings managed to give new meanings to the traditional roles of female while at the same time reinforcing a hierarchical view of human relations with a theology that taught created equality with natural differences between the sexes, as well as spiritual equality within hierarchically ordered gender roles.

Reformation period is a moment closely linked to the improved way of living, religious approaches and practices. Reformers at that moment had a clear focus although from a patristic point of view that was influenced by the Jewish traditions and beliefs. Some of the identified reformers who presented their views on women and leadership are as follows;

2.1.3.1 Martin Luther

He argues that the word and works of God is quite clear, that women were made either to be wives or prostitutes. –Martin Luther, Reformer (1483-1546). Despite his conviction that

women have been excluded from preaching and from ruling in the church, home or state, then, Luther nevertheless credited Christian women with a capacity for the active and even heroic confession of the faith.

There were further instances of female speech in Genesis that impressed Luther enough for him to call attention to a woman's "preaching." Lowly Hagar, once a runaway and later an exile, is probably the most impressive example from the Narrations.

Luther himself did not support the ordination of women to the public ministry, and this is one of those stubborn historical facts one must simply accept. Luther did think the ordination of women to the pastoral ministry was a contradiction of divine law, namely, that given in I Corinthians 14.

The strong pronunciation put on the statement affects the modern church approach on matters of leadership based on the influence.

2.1.3.2 Thomas Aquinas

According to Thomas Aquinas, "Woman is an occasional and incomplete being, a misbegotten male. It is unchangeable that woman is destined to live under man's influence and has no authority from her Lord". In a more recently times, a philosopher said: "woman has long hair, but short ideas" (Arthur Schopenhauer, 1999:89).

About the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material

indisposition, or even from some external influence. –*Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church, 13th century: Summa Theologica I q. 92 a. 1*

2.2 Influence of the Masculine Images of God on Church Leadership

According to image of God as seen by Luther and Calvin, the question of possibility and propriety of women holding public office was alive in the 16th century where several questions were related to the nature of the image of God whether women have the inherent capacity to govern whether God wills for them to hold public offices and what their relationship should be to men (Kari, 1991).

With institutionalization of the church, women exclusions in participating in big or major offices began. Several rules, doctrines emerged that were based on the life experience, human imagination and heretical arguments defined the place of women in leadership. The assumption and perception put Gods image in masculinity, perfection, leadership, father and a ruler. The clarification by Dally expresses the need to understand that father has nothing to do with male gender but simply masculinity which means that God is not attributed to a specific gender since he created "man" male and female in his own image and likeness.

Men have broad and large chests, and small narrow hips, and more understanding than women, who have but small and narrow breasts, and broad hips, to the end they should remain at home, sit still, keep house, and bear and bring up children. –*Martin Luther, Reformer (1483-1546).* Besides the arguments against women favor in the community as aligned by church fathers, Luther on the other hand never completely threw away the female

gender when he mentioned about the accomplishment of the salvation plan through a woman; Mary mother of Jesus.

In one of his writings, Luther had to place central argument on to matters “all about Eve” in his Genesis lectures and how he treats the matriarchs in the Genesis narrative. We can say that gender and women constitute a central interest for the reformer. He developed, in his context, a new theological anthropology that valued women's biological distinction, difference within sameness in creation, and absolute equality in redemption and callings. While his gender ideology is a work in progress, Luther's instincts are modern, if not even feminist, when placing the uterus at the central place of the delivery of the saving incarnate Word (Stjerna, 2017:111).

In a nutshell, we can say that church fathers were influenced by the construction of the day in relation to patriarchal interpretation of scriptures to draw a conclusion that propagated the language of God as man not appealing to equate it to female one.

No gown worse becomes a woman than the desire to be wise. –Martin Luther (1483-1546). The question up to now is whether reformation was "good" for women. Did the Protestant reformers somehow promote the cause of women in church or society? The modern question of women’s ordination was rarely on Luther's mind. But he thought about Eve often, certainly much more frequently than the few biblical references to her would suggest, and he found in her story the biblical charter for understanding gender relations as God intended them (Efthymiadis, 2015:221).

2.2.1 Masculinity of God according to African theologians

African people according to Mbiti (2012) do not regard God as a man however they express certain concepts that call for anthropomorphic language and images as an aid to conceptualize who he is. He further commends that God is a father on the ground of his position as a creator and provider.

The concept of father comes out in prayers meaning that people do not only think of him as father, the creator but also their personal father with whom they communicate. For instance, the Gikuyu sigh God as "my father" and when the Rabai pray during drought, they address him as father. On the other hand, Mbiti does not mention any occasion where in the Agikuyu where God is referred to as mother (Mbiti, 2012, pp. 163–168).

2.2.2 Women's theologians on the masculinity of God

Christian women in Africa and the third world came together in Oaxtepec Mexico in 1986 to reflect on what to do theology as women means. Down in the African Continent, the same was practiced in ensuring the right understanding of women and the ministry. In South Africa, the church is for women and it is not implied by the numbers since numbers are not a reliable indicator of significance and power. Besides the recognized role played by the stability of women in African churches, there are challenges accompanied. One of the challenges is to transform the church especially in matters of leadership that should be viewed from both male and female (Phiri, 2005, p. 34).

On specific matters of leadership, the Malawian women theologians saw the need for church women to support them in proposing negotiation for increased participation in leadership and decision-making positions in the church (Phiri 1997:137). With all the efforts done in

initiating organizations to change the women perception in church leadership, there is still low percentage of women in church leadership. What could be the issue? This study is after examining such.

According to Elizabeth Fiorenza and Mary Collins in their book, *"women invisible in church and theology*" argued that although the church is referred to as "our mother" with the pronoun "she", it is personified and governed by fathers and brothers only (Fiorenza and Collins, 1985:4). In relation to their argument, the male gender dominance is realized in church leadership and governance despite female gender being majority in the church. The cause to the dominance and how it contributes to the women minority in church leadership is closely attributed to the understanding of gender of God, a raised concern in this study.

Women subordination in leadership raises unending hot debates every now and then with questions on why superiority and inferiority in the gender created in one image and likeness. In conjunction to this, Sarah Cunningham (1992:92) affirms that since men assumed for themselves the superior capacities of rationality and spirituality while assigning women the capacity of emotionality and sensuality, men therefore naturally take precedence in church, domestic and public life thus women have to naturally live in submission to men as the body must be subject to the spirit. The researcher partly disagrees with the argument that man assigned what woman should be. The power and authority are in the interpretation of the scripture right from the original manuscripts that can still be reinterpreted with current context in mind.

According to Virginia Mollenkott, the widespread of use of the inclusive God-language in Christian worship might well benefit contemporary men more than women. Men have a tendency of attending the church in few numbers because they can't see a close intimacy

with God who is male as compared to women who attend the church the men are the ones having a ruling hand (Mollenkoltt, 1986, p. 11).

Mercy Oduyoye points out the problem of women subordination linked to the lack of proper cultural hermeneutics which is so strong in influencing the church and Christian heritage and behavior. African women Cultural hermeneutics carrying multilayered traditions has to be interpreted in a multidimensional way. musimbi Kanyoro in her study cultural hermeneutics observes that in the African context involves the critiques of the colonial and white myths about African women, analyzing rituals and ceremonies that defines the woman's journey and rituals that accompany and the social institutions that support the rituals (Pui-lan, 2004).

According to Nasimiyu-Wasike (1990: 57-69), Kanyoro (1996: 61), there are indicated number of factors that influence the role of women in the church. These include patriarchal organizations of society, traditions of specific churches as well as the religious role of women in African indigenous religions. Oduyoye (1995:127) notes that in some churches women participation is restricted as a result of Levitical restrictions on women due to their uncleanliness during menstruation. The anticipated outcomes therefore affect how women are viewed in the leadership in the church.

Feminist theology, in developing its view on the various facets traditionally included in theology (God, Man, Christ, salvation, the church, etc.), draws on a variety of sources including, but not limited to, the Bible. As such, it is not a mere description of Scripture's teaching on these topics. Key to an understanding of feminist theology is an understanding of the foundational premises of feminist biblical interpretation (Köstenberger, 2011, 43).

Most theologians from women circle have criticized the game where men dominate and the image for God closely associated with masculinity. They argue that such use of masculine approach reinforces hierarchical patterns of relationships that causes the church to emulate the same practice in their leadership patterns.

Women theologians therefore have sought to revisit the culture put forward and inherited by patriarchy system that has shown a great weakness. They were not happy with the treatment of trinity as a three man club. When the father was deemed superior over the two with Holy spirit trailing in the last place, the disintergration of the whole scenario was evident.

Feminist theologians therefore criticized the culture and traditions practiced that produced denials in most practices while observing the original understanding of female person as a weak and lowly associated in matters of leadership

This section focuses on how the language is used in terming who God is as either male or female or both depending on arguments raised from a given background. As put, the language we use for God must clarify rather than confuse. In the absence of biblical warrant and hermeneutical justification, various understanding of God has resulted to the confusion that has been borrowed in the religious forum and church traditions. How we speak, expressing our approach in worship really matters. The efforts to move beyond associating the deity with maleness language or system and ways of talking about God can be the best way of reclaiming the language use in Christian worship. Use of the word “God” signifies the metaphorical use of language where metaphors bring forward unnoticed dimensions of reality by forging connections where they would not ordinarily be expected. Metaphors make meaning by being associated with lived experience. Ruth Duck in her book “Gender and the

name of God" say, "when the metaphor 'father' refers to God in Christian worship, the meaning evoked is necessarily influenced by the meaning of father in everyday life and not only by understanding in scripture and church tradition (Duck,1991). The argument by Duck brings out the wider understanding of God in the literal sense where character of the earthly and biological father is brought in the picture. Human father is associated with ruling, leadership, final say and other society's' related tasks. The use of "God" can be used oppressively against women when theologians proclaim women's subordination to be Gods will as Dally argues further.

Male and female polarity is strongly stressed in Origen's work with consequences to his ideas on anthropology and ethics when he links the categories male and female to his concept of the soul, he argues that the masculine part of the homo interior; the spirit is considered superior and qualitatively better than female part anima whose domain is the senses. Furthermore, male and female are metaphorically used to indicate morality for instance; woman stands for weaknesses, sensuality, laziness, dependency and linked to sphere of sin (Kari, 1995).

Language as commonly applied by many authors carries a strong impact in describing God with the company of human daily life experiences. This has further been propagated in the church grounds of leadership and role description. Indeed, it would be a grave mistake to sacrifice theological clarity concerning the nature of God and the nature of the relationships between the divine persons of the Godhead on the altar of political correctness (Hanegraaff, 1993).

2.3 Influence of masculine images of God on the leadership in PCEA

Understanding how the language influences the perception in the PCEA church leadership, this section presents some of the views that have greatly contributed to the male dominance and female's low profile in leadership as a result of what exists historically.

Male images attributed to God have been in the practice of most mainstream churches as an orthodox observation.

In the PCEA women have formed a group called the Woman's Guild. Njoroge (1992: 1-3) observes that as the PCEA was growing rapidly in the 1930s and 1940s women were busy establishing the Guild. The Guild was organized to parallel the structure of the Church, namely; local congregation, parish, presbytery and General.

Assembly. Phiri (1997:99-104) notes that this women group is a form of a selfexpression, an opportunity to do something, but even more to be involved. It gives women a feeling of belonging within a male dominated Church and in many ways it provides scope for leadership talents to develop among women. Njoroge (2000:62) adds that majority of the first women elders ordained in 1965 were Guild members who had demonstrated leadership qualities for a long time. Further the Guild remains the major avenue for the Presbyterian woman to express their faith in word and action, and to share their experiences and perspectives in the church Njoroge (2000:63). The researcher observes that, despite the fact that the women's guild has a large representation of women and their financial muscle is felt they do not constitute a large number in church administrative leadership. This therefore makes the study relevant as the research attempts to unravel the disheartening phenomena of women underrepresentation in administrative church leadership.

2.3.1 The rise of Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)

The story of PCEA has been told by different scholars most of them dealing with the origins from Scotland to Kenya. PCEA came in the wake of Christian Missionary expansion of the Christian Church among the Agĩkũyũ interior of Kenya in 1890s. The PCEA has its commencement in the work of Sir William Mackinnon and Sir Alexander Low Bruce, directors of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) (Macpherson, 1970:21). Further PCEA developments have been told by Njoroge, (2000), Cultural arguments by Geoffrey (2011).

In PCEA, women ministers have an equal role with their male counterparts since the church constitution accords them same right without discrimination. Considering that PCEA has a clear policy on gender relations as all are children of God, and the PCEA Constitution is clear on the right of women to participate in all leadership positions, this raises one key question: Why are women underrepresented in administrative church leadership? Adoyo (1991) cited in James (2003; 98) points out that some male clergy find it difficult to accept that a woman can attain the same rank as they. She further points, that the main problem that faces the male clergy is recognition where they tend to feel they should be more recognized than the women. Similarly, the findings in this study indicate that the cultural perception of the status of women and men tend to have influence in the church, which contributes to exclusion.

Although the PCEA church constitution encourages women to take any role in view of the present age and culture which accommodates women as leader, the written document has never had an impact on the kind of profile women hold neither advocating for senior positions vied by anyone except the elders. Enlightening is vastly overtaking retrogressive

culture, whereby the girl child, for example is given a chance in public affairs than before. Most writers have indicated that confidence in women should start at home in order for them to take part in leadership roles in other sectors including the church institution (Mwaura, 2005: 412). A proclamation that a dominant male ideology has ensured that women continue being clients in the churches just as they were in the shrines of traditional society has been upheld.

On the concern in their church administrative roles in 1963, the Woman's Guild passed a resolution requesting the General Assembly to discuss the ordination of women elders and ministers (Njoroge, 2000:62). This is because for one to qualify to be in the administrative church leadership in the Church, one has to be an elder. Njoroge (2000:62-64) observes that the Church resolved to ordain women as elders but not as ministers. Later, women were ordained as ministers but this has not improved the position of women in the church administrative leadership. Njoroge (1992:3-4) reveals that PCEA women have realized having women ordained as elders and ministers does not resolve entirely the problem of under representation of women from administrative church leadership. However, Njoroge does not suggest factors hindering women in church administrative leadership.

The tongue use and ascriptions directed towards the social lives' aspects for instance associating man with wisdom, able and strong while women associated with lack of wisdom, weak and unable to facilitate of reason out a case eventually get it foundation in the lives of the community. The Agikuyu community is said to be influential on the matter rotating women leadership in the church-PCEA.

2.3.2 An analysis of language of an elder-Muthuri among the Agikuyu.

In the Agikuyu legal systems, the highest court of the land consisted of the elders of three stages, junior elders called kiama kĩa kamatimo, who were mainly there as trainees of law and had such functions as to fetch firewood and water and light fires.

They could not yet judge a case. The next council of elders' *kiama kĩa mataathi* were the main judges. Other than that, there was a council of elders called *kiama kĩa maturanguru* who were the eldest and most experienced and were called upon to assist in intricate parts of the law and these were mostly men outfits. A man entered this council when practically all his children were circumcised and his wife or wives were past child bearing age. Cases brought before the council of elders were heard in the meeting space also known as kĩhaaro. The elders heard from both parties (Wanjohi, 1997: 210-214).

For over 500 years, elders have carried oral history, healing wisdom, spiritual practices, accumulated knowledge and experience of their natural environment, stewardship of their sacred lands and an amazing knowledge of the cosmos among so many other things. People appointed elders are those with impeccable character and wisdom and they help keep the order and procedure of the PCEA, just in related manner they served their community (Wanjohi, 1997: 210-214).

Among the Agikuyu, elders were the custodians of the law and it is the same case with the elders in the PCEA today since they are the custodians of PCEA practice and procedures. Further Davidson (1969:200) points out that in the African concept it is believed that the legitimate power lay in the office sanctioned by ancestral norms, not in the individual.

2.3.3 An elder-muthuri among the Agikuyu and church leadership

With the prolonged traditional ascriptions of an *elder* to a man, the notion got its ways not only into other social institutions but equally felt in the church. Since the PCEA church got its inception roots among the larger Agikuyu community, the influence was transferred to the church. Agikuyu Council of elders, were also equated with wisdom, and as women were not included, it negated their wisdom and a similar problem persist where women are underrepresented in the eldership in PCEA today. This section presents the basis of women responsibility or role in ministry, highlighting the time and the process involved to arrive on leadership position in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

In 1922 after a long period of male gender dominance in church leadership, the Presbyterian church of East Africa women section formed what they termed as women Guilds which could identify and acknowledge the contribution of women in ministry. A lot of activities closely followed the inception of women guild which was under Mrs. Winnie Watson who was joined by Mrs. Elizabeth Waiyaki. In the same year, a group of women started "Kiama kiango" at Tumutumu to protect and shield girls who had run away from their homes to seek education or to escape circumcision.

In 1962 there were eight Presbyterian councils with seventeen branches of the women's guild but the work was still being led by the missionaries until the time the church felt the need for an African woman to take up the leadership for women's work. In 1964, Pricilla Mereka who had earlier visited Scotland to see work for women was appointed to be the organizer of women's guild (Muita2003; 53).

In the PCEA current leadership waves, women are said to be involved in church activities however most of them continue holding minimal responsibility in the administrative decision–making process. It is clear from the experience and participation that women are hardly visible in the highest courts, which is even exemplified by the historical fact that, no woman has ever been elected to the General Assembly office since the inception of the church in East Africa region in 1891. Nonetheless, majority of women dominate the church leadership service at the congregation level.

The presence of women missionaries and spouses contributed greatly to the conversion of Gikuyu women to Christianity (Njoroge, 2000:8). While it is not possible in this section to look at the achievements of all the CSM Women in PCEA, we can at least look at the role played by two women namely, Minnie Cumming Watson and Marion Stevenson. Through their work we can see the role played by women missionaries in the establishment of the PCEA.

The CSM established Christianity, education, medical and industrial training. By 1920s the CSM had built three major stations at Thogoto, Tumutumu and Chogoria each with a church, school and hospital. In 1920 the first church elders were ordained, twenty-eight Gikuyu men from Thogoto and seventeen men from Tumutumu. In 1926 other eight Gikuyu men were ordained. It was not until 1965 when the first PCEA women were ordained as elders that women were involved in the governing of the church. Before then the church was governed only by men, exhibiting the same patriarchal patterns as political institutions in both the West and in Africa (Njoroge, 2000:8). This explains the basis for the existence of women underrepresentation in administrative church leadership in PCEA.

Oduyoye (2001:30-31) says that we are born male and female but we become who we are according to cultural socialization. This kind of socialization is continued and becomes reinforced in the church during its various programs and church group's formation and in particular in Sunday school and the bible. This lens is portrayed in the women's struggle to access administrative church leadership. The concept of gender polarization seems to encourage, the roles of men and women as distinct in the church, with the men in administrative positions and women in service giving roles.

A review of the church most senior leadership found that to date, no woman has ever risen to the four elective administrative positions in the PCEA, namely; Moderator of the General Assembly, Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and Honorary Treasurer. This goes all the way back since PCEA started in East Africa over a period of hundred years now. Skewed representation has been reflected in other courts of the church, even in very recent time. Some of the reasons why this kind of treatment happens are as discussed below;

2.4 Possible Reasons for Non-Female Leadership

2.4.1 Masculine images of God on women Leadership in PCEA

The language ascribed to God in the religious sphere has had a great influence in determining the leadership in the church (PCEA). The applied ascriptions from the theologians on the knowledge of God, the immanence and the attributes suggest that God cannot be understood by man whether male or female, strong or weak and he is a self-existence in nature without the human influence.

Both men and women are eligible for senior position of leadership apart from the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA). The PCEA scenario gives glaring evidence that

women are not full participants in administrative church leadership. Women continue to be excluded from church leadership according to the PCEA constitution (2001) positions of the Church where key decisions are made.

Although the PCEA church constitution encourages women to take any role in view of the present age and culture which accommodates women as leader, the written document has never had an impact on the kind of profile women hold.

The expression of women as inferior race attaching to creation idea that it was Gods intention is not a new phenomenon. This is supported by the eruption of women movement or women liberation in the late 1960s in western world (Giles, 2002:144). The rise of such movement is a true picture of what women feelings as weak rather inferior gender are all about. The influence of such demeaning language goes as far as being confirmed in the church leadership supported by the Bible. 1st Timothy 2:11-14 where in his book, Giles (2002) narrates what John Chrysostom and Martin Luther echoed on the same. Chrysostom sees a man as the first to be created thus superior and enjoyed the honor as compared to women. Luther asserts that the passage in 1Timothy makes a woman a subject.

With the domineering use of the language ascribed to God in PCEA, women have remained low leadership profile holder that has silenced their voices on matters of leadership. In all the four levels mentioned in PCEA, none of them have had a woman in top position in administrative and leadership. The effort to solve the confusion cannot bear fruits in the presence of all the raised diversified views on the language ascribed to God. The Bible as an authoritative book to guide has been approached from different angles with influence from

cultural and historical views thus the need to have a balanced way of understanding God in relation to church leadership especially in PCEA.

The anthropomorphic use of language referred to God has had a long and great influence in women leadership in PCEA beginning with the inception of the council of elders which comprised of male figures alone. With the establishment of woman's guilds as a women team, it still had to rule within the women meetings and reporting to the top offices managed by the male figures. The ordination done among women priests have never caused a big difference in the realization of top leadership in the PCEA other than the sex-based approach influenced by the history and misinterpretation of the Bible in relation to who God is as far as the leadership of the church is concerned. Furthermore, the ordination process or ceremonies are more for men than for women.

In the Old Testament (Numbers 11:16-17) Moses appointed seventy elders to bear the burden of government with him. In the New Testament, there is no specific account of the origin of the eldership. In the book of Acts, officers are called interchangeably elders and presbyters and bishops. (Week, 1990:87 in Mungiriria: 96).The PCEA looks to the Old Testament and New Testament in reference of elders.

The election of elders in CSM was in 1920 and all were men. It was until 1967 when there was a petition on ordination of women as elders.

''And whereas a dissertation that women be eligible for ordination to the office of the ruling elder has been transmitted to presbyteries and Kirk-session under the Barrier Act, and the presbyteries and Kirk-session has expressed their approval of the dissertation ;

> *"The GA, in exercise of the powers assumed under section 22 and 24 (b) of the constitution enact as follows: 1, women shall be eligible for ordination of the office of the ruling elder in the PCEA.2, Until the GA shall enact otherwise, the number of women to be chosen for ordination to this office shall in no case exceed one fifth of the total active membership of the Kirk-session in which they are to hold office'' (Minute 1106 of the GA 1967)".*

The ordination of women to ruling elders was a new beginning of establishing women leadership in the church. All through the PCEA women had remained dependent on male leadership. This patriarchal ordering of affairs in the Church led to underrepresentation of women in administrative church leadership.

The mode of election of elders in PCEA is by the Kirk session and the officers are appointed from among full members whose spouses if married are Presbyterians and have their marriages blessed in church. To note is that one partner can qualify to be a full member without their marriage being solemnized in church. This qualifies the majority of women since this is not considered in the election of deacons. Elders are however appointed from those whose marriages have been solemnized and this disqualifies women deacons whose marriages are not yet solemnized. This concurs with the research, that church structure influences the women participation in the church leadership. Presbyterian Church globally, has a concept of governing bodies with four levels of government and administration. These levels are Parish Session, Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. These bodies are composed of presbyters, both elders and ministers of the word and sacrament. Each governing body has particular responsibilities and powers PCEA constitution (2001).Both men and women are eligible for position of leadership apart from the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA). The PCEA scenario gives glaring evidence that women are not full

participants in administrative church leadership. Women continue to be excluded from church administrative According to the PCEA constitution (2001) positions of the Church where key decisions are made.

2.5 The language of God and PCEA Church leadership

In relation to the church administration, PCEA has a government by the elders, some of whom have authority not only over their local congregation, but also through the presbytery and the GA (Grudem, 1994: 926). Elders in PCEA are both male and female and are called "ruling elders" while the clergy are called "teaching elders."

The word elder has been used to designate age in many languages. In Hebrew, it is Zagen (old), in Greek, Presbyters (elder), in English presbyter and In Swahili; Mzee (elder or old).The Africans equate old age with matured wisdom and it is accorded great respect.

The council of elder's system in Africa helped the missionaries in setting up base for evangelism in Agikuyu and Meru area in Kenya. Elders in Africa are believed to be the teachers and directors of the young furthermore, are taken to the repository of the communal wisdom thus they are conceded leaders in the affairs of the people (Mungiriria, 1996:220).

The argument on Whether God is known to us or not is still a discussion that exists as a presupposition. We claim to have knowledge about God but the measure rather whoever can measure our knowledge cannot confirm the full affirmation of knowledge of God by humanity.

The assumption language that the Christian God has sexual differentiation so as to be called father is seen as erroneous. The idea is a source of confusion and muddled thinking in the

theological world (Lewis, 1984). In this case, Lewis argues that the understanding of God is a matter of language that is made as a choice and nothing else. It is further expressed that our attempt in human language to express something of the inexpressible mystery of God's transcendence is a humble one; a foolish one, if we hope to do so adequately or completely. This implies that man cannot successfully define and place the creator in a certain position.

2.6 Conclusion

In this second chapter of the thesis, the argument on the language on masculinity of God has been observed as a ground for the practices carried out in the church where women although majority in number, have not been regarded in top positions. The chapter focused on the major scholarly arguments on how the language attributed to God influenced the women leadership in the church focusing on what happens in PCEA.

CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE AND IMAGES OF GOD

3.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with the language of God; the understanding, ascriptions focusing on the Biblical; Old and New Testament understanding of God and how the understanding affects the leadership in the church between male and female. This will usher in the plan in chapter four to harmonize the whole understanding so as to consolidate the church leadership positions for women and men.

3.2 Language of God in Old and New Testament

This section presents the information on the language of God in the scriptures both in Old and New Testament. This is important in understanding how the practices seen in church leadership stem from the understanding and perception attached to who God is.

3.2.1 God in the Old Testament

From the Old Testament, God is viewed above gender or sex description. Some biblical scholars suggest that YHWH is above gender or sex and is so fundamentally different from humans that it is inappropriate to use any human terminology in reference to God (Thatcher, 2011). In this argument, the purported ascriptions made to refer to God in the current religious observations and practices carry no weight to make sense.

This was voiced frequently in medieval Jewish philosophy, and as a result this viewpoint is influential even today. It is most closely associated with Maimonides and his theory of negative attributes or apophatic theology that suggests that we may only describe God in terms of what God is not (Brettler, 2004). This perspective resonates strongly in modern

theology. One of the most influential books in the history or theory of religion is *the idea of the holy*, by Rudolf Otto (1869-1937), a German Lutheran philosopher and theologian, best known for his development of the concept of "the numinous" within the field of comparative religious studies. Otto defines holiness, the intrinsic feature of God, as "the wholly other" (Otto, 1970).

It's unavoidable that our knowledge of God begins with anthropomorphism. When children hear God described as "Father" it is natural that their first instinct should be to understand this considering their earthly father. Every other adjective that applies to God: loving, good, wrathful, patient, just etc. language of God in the Old Testament isn't just about biological essences; it's also about the structure of relationships and the story of origins. Genesis introduces us to the reality of language through the need for the first man to have a suitable companion (taken out of) him. Thereafter, we see males as fathers: those who transmit their own image and likeness to their offspring (Gen 5:3).

Fathers are the springs through which nations, blessings, curses and covenants flow out into the world. The Old Testament presents how God is perceived in the scriptures; in relation to the understanding on how language of God affects women leadership in the church today.

> As God created both male and female in his image, he does not participate in one or the other sex, but rather transcends sex. Furthermore, while the Bible uses masculine titles for God, such as Father and Son, it also employs feminine images for God, such as mother (Isaiah 49:14–15; 66:13) and midwife (Isaiah 66:9). Likewise, his judgment of Israel is likened to that of a mother bear robbed of her cubs (Hosea 13:8). Whether masculine or feminine, all such images are anthropomorphisms or personifications that reveal God to us in ways we can understand (Hanegraaff, 1993:121).

Karl Rahner adamantly argued that the God of the Old Testament is the un-originated Person of the Father. This forms the bedrock of his Trinitarian theology, often credited as renewing Christian appreciation for the Trinity. However, his position that the Old Testament God must be identified as the Father contradicts much of the Christian tradition, including strands of Greek theology whose emphasis on the Father he claimed to restore to the West (Hofer, 2012:65).

The Bible often uses explicit male imagery to describe God. For example, the Song of the Sea declares (Exod. 15:3). YHWH is a *man* of war; YHWH is his name. The God of the Creation Story is viewed from masculinity as a king, which is seen explicitly stated in Isaiah and Psalms, implied throughout the first creation story, in Gen 1:1-2:4a.The Bible does nothing to suggest that the powerful deity who is the protagonist of the story of whom the story uses masculine grammatical forms is anything other than masculine and male as would be expected of any powerful creator deity in the ancient Near Eastern world.

This story narrates God's massive building project, the creation of the world. In the Ancient Near East, kings are in charge of significant building projects, and this story which imagines God creating the world is thus a sub-metaphor of the larger metaphor God is king and thus male. This would have been obvious to the ancient reader, familiar with the king and his roles. Furthermore, Gen 1:26, "let us make human," refers to God as king consulting the members of his royal court as only kings (but not queens) might. That this text depicts God as king consulting with his royal counselors is implicit in a Midrash in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 38b).

In the biblical argument, it is asserted that there was no question of the supremacy of the male in relation to God. Probably going back to primitive times when sheer strength was vital, the male was dominant, and so society was patriarchal. An alternative modern explanation is basically similar, sees the origin of the maleness of the deity in a Freudian analysis as Hamerton. Kelly, (1979) further commends that from the scenario on the belief so far, it would be hard to term God as female. It would have been unthinkable therefore to refer to God as female when Kings and priests were all male.

The pattern of male leadership, which is a characteristic of the Old Testament and perpetrated in Jesus' appointment of the Twelve, continued in the early church as exemplified by men making up the Pauline circle as stated in the section that follows.

3.2.2 God in the New Testament

New Testament section of the scripture presents a major perspective that describe the way the language of God has been perpetrated in religious circles. The impact felt from language reference is tremendous especially in current churches that have borrowed much from traditional practices.

The gospel according to John 4: 23 "God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth" (NIV version). If this is the case it remains uncertain to unanimous to ascribe language to God since a spirit has never been associated with maleness or femaleness.

The divine nature of God goes far beyond human understanding despite the notion that is practiced in the church where female gender has lower profile in leadership attached to the language of God as male.

Sarah (2003) looks at Pauline's approach in I Corinthians 11:7 which present the man in the image of God not meaning that women don't bear the image of God as affirmed by Genesis 1:27 that God created male and female in his image. It doesn't mean that a woman can acquire the image of God through marrying a man since it is stated that a husband and wife become one flesh. It also doesn't mean that a woman is less rational. In line with this argument, the scripture has been misinterpreted to suit the interest of the ruling with cultural support.

On the other hand, besides church tradition through church fathers disputing the role of women in the church and in public ministry, there are several supporting views on the role of women being upheld although not in all positions.

According to the articulations in Gospels, Jesus' various titles indicate his unique identity and mission. As a wandering prophet and teacher, Jesus proclaims the kingdom of God, forgives sins, heals the sick, and exorcises demons. Nonetheless, as the one crucified and raised from the dead, he also is depicted as the anticipated messiah in the line of David the "Beloved Son" who as "Lord" is both the "Son of Man" (an apocalyptic figure who represents the messianic kingdom) and the "Suffering Servant" (whose suffering brings atonement and healing for others) (Malcolm, 2010:44).

According to Slick (2001), citing from the gospels, God is neither male nor female since God is not a biological being. God is spirit (John 4:24) and spirit does not have flesh and blood. Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, is sometimes called "the Son of Man" indicating a masculinity (Luke 19:10).

Jesus was a carpenter and carpenters in that day worked with heavy stones and timbers. There is little doubt that Jesus must have been "a man's man" or a very strong man because the job of a carpenter in those days was a very strenuous job and demanded hard, physical labor. He was the Son of God and the Son of Man, emphasizing His human birth. The Scriptures show dozens of time that Jesus was a male in the flesh and the Scriptures testify of this for even the Roman authorities said, "no one ever spoke like this man "(John 7:47). The Scriptures also testify that, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17). Clearly Jesus was a man on earth but He was God before He became man (John 1:14).

On the letters, Paul furthermore had what to put across on the language ascribed to God in his several letters. After encountering the risen Lord, the apostle Paul proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ, declaring that Jesus as Messiah (or Christ) is the "Son", God has sent to redeem the world from the law, sin, and death so that God's promise to Abraham (which he links with "the promise of the Spirit") might come to the Gentiles, and they too might receive "adoption" as children of God.

In this argument therefore, according to Paul, the Spirit reveals the crucified Christ to be "the wisdom of God and the power of God. Although Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the "Son of God" because the Spirit raises him from the dead, he also speaks of Christ's pre-existence (e.g., as the one "through whom are all things and through whom we exist," and who though sharing "equality with God" nonetheless "emptied himself to the point of death even death on a cross").

First Timothy 2:12 indicates that Paul didn't allow women to serve as elders or overseers, including pastor-teachers, in local churches. In 1 Timothy 2:15, "save" likely doesn't refer to salvation in our traditional, religious sense but rather to spiritual preservation, and "childbearing" most likely refers to a woman's broader domestic sphere; so a woman is understood to be protected spiritually by committing herself to and living out her role in the family and domestic sphere.

The "one-wife husband" requirement for church leadership in 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6 refers to marital faithfulness and isn't directly aimed at addressing single, divorced, or polygamous candidates for elder, so candidates for church office must be examined as to their present faithfulness in marriage. 1stTimothy 3:11 may refer to female deacons, a non-teaching, non-authoritative, servant role, which the early church likely practiced (e.g., Phoebe); if so, women are biblically permitted to serve as deaconesses. Since this is a servant role, churches are free to encourage qualified women in this regard without compromising scriptural guidelines for male leadership. Titus 2:3–5 contains instructions for older women in the church to train and mentor young women, particularly in their relationship to their husbands, children, and role in the home (Köstenberger, N.D:18).

In Christianity, God is known as "the God and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, God is the being whom Jesus taught, the being who's agape is toward men. The entire implication of the statement is that God is the transcendent creator who has revealed himself in Christ. The mission of Christ preaching about the father is itself a revelation or self-disclosure of God and it is from these teachings that together with that of the prophets that the Christian knowledge of Gods transcendent is derived. This is evidenced and

supported by the statement by Karl Barth who said "Christ is the know ability of God" (Hick, 1964).

Dowey in bringing out the understanding of sGod uses the Calvin's approach of the revelation of God derived from the external world. God's manifestation is through man's experience of His works. Early on the same, Dowey brought up an argument that even man is among the creation of God thus the ability to know God is still limited on man's side (Dowey, 1994:72).

Muasvi (1989) observes that to understand the extensive scope of his knowledge, we stretch the limits of our thought, apply our intelligence to reflect and search and try to advance to our goal with a clear mind.

In summing up this section, Bray (1993) echoes that Gods self-revelation is found in the bible which speaks supremely of the person and work of Christ, the word of God incarnates and if anything is not corroborated by the bible or is contradictory to it, it cannot be regarded as a true statement about God. It may be possible to supplement this revelation by independent observation of nature but the controlling factor in any analysis of God and his works can be only through His own self-disclosure.

3.3 God as our Mother and Father

The phrase "God as our Mother" was put forward by Julian of Norwich who had a tendency of referring to God in maternal terms, paralleling her regular use of mother to refer to the church. She argues that Gods love never allows us to lag due to his innate goodness which comes to us in the operation of his grace. God is the foundation and the true father and mother of what things are by nature. The authors further arguments are that, we make

complains to a God who hears, a mother who is humble to listen to us, making our soul pliable and tender, restoring us to our full beauty during time. The major argument of the author rotated on the fact that our God mother is powerful, able, heavenly mother who is beautiful in the sight of our souls. In regards to the knowledge of God, God rejoices to be our father, our mother, rejoices to be our true husband, with our soul as his beloved bride. If this is the case, God is our mother too, who was, and she is and will reign forever. The practicability of the whole concept requires the implementation.

According to Ursula (1994), neither of us has seen a man with a womb. Ursula found that men theologians would do anything to make sure that no attachment of *rechamin* (origin from Greek) meaning God's mercy, compassion (exodus 34) to the feminine of God. God is our mother not because of the possession of the biological formation but because of the attributes he possesses.

According to Ursula King, God is thought to have both male and female qualities as understood by many Asian women. This thought could be fostered by the fact that in the Asian world religions, there are many female and male goddesses. In the Hindu culture, the Hindu image of the deity has the *sivam*, masculine which stands for (absolute good or love) and the feminine *sakti* (Absolute power) which neither can function without the other. This means that the Hindu deity has the inclusive image (male and female) which promotes equality and harmony between men and women (Ursula, 1994; 252-253).

In a nutshell, Asian women's arguments which might be including the worldly women prayer yearns and rediscovery of the Godhead that contains both female and male qualities for full humanity in which both sexes are respected fully as equal partners.

Anselm of Canterbury who lived in the 11th century wrote a prayer that painted a picture of the femaleness of God and divine motherhood being the central concept. His beginning point was in the epistle of St. Paul to Galatians where Paul talked about "my little children…..St. Anselm prayed to Paul as his "sweet nurse, sweet mother" and said to Jesus, are you not also a mother? Are you not the mother who like a hen gathers her children under her wings? then both of you are mothers even if you are fathers. Fathers by your authority, mothers by your kindness; fathers by teaching, mothers by your mercy (Hooft, 1983).

In the Gospels as in the rest of the New Testament God is spoken of as 'Father 'in a two-fold way, in a general way as the Creator of mankind and the Provider for his human children, as 'our Father who art in heaven' in the Lord's prayer, and in a specific way in his unique relations to the Son, as the God and Father of Jesus Christ. This two-fold way of understanding the Fatherhood of God was continued in the theology of the Early Church.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the language of God where the discussion on the biblical view both New and Old Testament has presented God. The language of God as a mother and a father together are brought out to counter the approach that has been embraced in the church; seeing God or claiming to understand God as male thus the practice of segregation of women from top church positions in the church.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a methodology that has proposed a revisit on the hermeneutics in reflecting of the theology on the language of God in relation to the women leadership in the church. The chapter explains how the methodology works and the justification for its relevance in transforming the understanding of language of God in relation to church leadership. The interpretation and understanding of language of God is the basis of what is happening today in the church as far us women leadership is concerned. Hermeneutic as the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined has great impact on the outcome as understood by the reader who eventually puts into practice. As a science it is guided by rules within a system; and as an art, the application of the rules is by skill, and not by mechanical imitation.

4.2 Hermeneutic of Suspicion Approach

According to Webster (2013), hermeneutics is the science or art of interpretation especially of the scripture. In the light of the probable origins of the term hermeneutics as a discipline it is therefore best and generally understood in one of two ways: firstly, the narrower understanding of hermeneutics as the theory of interpretation; and, secondly, the broader understanding of hermeneutics as addressing both the theory and the practice of interpretation. Hermeneutics as a science, it enunciates principles, investigates the laws of thought and language, and classifies its facts and results. As an art, it teaches what application these principles should have, and establishes their soundness by showing their practical value in the elucidation of the more difficult scriptures. The hermeneutical art thus

cultivates and establishes a valid exegetical procedure relevant in the contemporary understanding of the whole phenomena. According to Tertullian OF Carthage (ca. 160-220) the Scriptures are the property of the church. The answer to heresy is the "rule of faith," that is, the teachings of orthodoxy held by the church.

The verb *'interpret'* came to refer to bringing someone to understanding of something in his language (thus, explanation) or in another language (thus, translation). The English word "interpret" is used at times to mean "explain" and at other times "translate." In its nineteen usages (both nouns and verbs) in the New Testament, it is more frequently used in the latter sense, as the following illustrates; "Explanation" "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained (*"diermeneusen*") to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). "Translation" I Corinthians 12:10, "the interpretation of tongues" I Corinthians 14:26, "an interpretation". In the process of interpreting the scripture, translations and explanations give out a different view on how the application is done in daily life encounter.

John Calvin institute 156 (1509-1564) is known as "one of the greatest interpreters of the Bible." Like Luther, Calvin rejected allegorical interpretations (he said they are "frivolous games" and that Origen and many others were guilty of "torturing the Scripture, in every possible sense, from the true sense"), and stressed the Christological nature of Scripture, the grammatical-historical method, exegesis rather than eisegesis, the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, and a balanced approach to typology.

The Major Phases of Interpretation are in three; the definitive Phase first aspect of interpretation deals with discovering the basic meaning of the particulars (words, phrases,

structure etc.) of a passage. In the context of this study, the word male, God, father should be given a hermeneutical reconsideration.

The Rational Phase attempts to find the reasons underlying the particulars, the general reasons why Biblical statements are made - wherein they are true and necessary, the immediate reasons or purposes for their expression - their relevance to their literary context and specific historical situation. It is important to note that both of these types of questions are not pertinent in the case of every Biblical component, and at times they are undiscoverable. But an awareness of them and their use whenever possible is supremely important for incisive interpretation.

The third phase is the Implicational where statement always implicates more than it says explicitly, for it is the outgrowth of certain presuppositions and in turn becomes the presupposition for other ideas.

4.3 Notion Attached to the Understanding Of Interpretation

In the interpretation process, the belief attached to God assumed or portrayed a picture of truth in every expression closely associated with the context, the person interpreting and situation surrounding the process. Interpretation is fundamental to the fostering of recreation, heritage, understanding and engagement in conservation and interpretation which helps one to demonstrate the values held and connecting us to our communities.

4.4 The Biblical Misinterpretations on the Masculine Images of God

The term 'hermeneutics' is usually reserved for the discipline of biblical studies, where it basically refers to how the Bible is interpreted without biasness but under clearly stipulated

principles. Churches in the modern society that took a cultural lane in designing church administrative structures in one way or the other took unbalanced view.

African women theologians spoke of *'feminist cultural hermeneutics'* as a tool for analyzing both the biblical practices of culture and the various cultures within Africa. In the process, 'women developed cultural hermeneutics for the appropriation of Africa's religio-culture, which constituted a resource for envisioning the will of God and the meaning of women's humanity'. By so doing, feminist cultural hermeneutics sought to face the 'challenge of struggling with one's culture, while fencing off those waiting to use the culture to under-rate them.

Cultural hermeneutics seeks a critique from within and not an imposition from without' (For example, African male biblical scholars proposed the project of enculturation. This arose within the broader context of the Black consciousness movement, with its call towards Black people to be proud of their Blackness, their cultures and their heritage.

The recognition that males are gendered beings who have experiences that are specific to them within a given socio-cultural and historical context are diverse even within the dominance of a particular hegemonic masculinity. One of the implications for this new understanding is to apply the principle of diversity to male experience so as to identify potential partners that can join forces in dealing with negative effects of masculinity.

Secondly, a key theological topic that emerges is a need for a renewed theological anthropology that shifts the focus from roles to persons as unique and communal. A role-based anthropology that constructs rigid definitions of femininity and masculinity has proved to be harmful and oppressive to both female and male. Feminist theologians have been in the

forefront of highlighting oppressive biblical constructions of female identity that have resulted in exclusion and marginalization of women. Masculinity studies are highlighting that dominant masculinities are also detrimental to men. Clearly a new biblical anthropology that affirms the dignity of the human person without obliterating gender differences offer more possibility for a liberative Christian identity for both women and men.

4.5 Theological Reflections

The reflection on the study of God has been approached in a dualistic manner causing differences in the application of the understanding especially on the language of God used in day-day life operations. In this reflection, the focus is on the best way the initially negative projections can be understood in the current society to correct messes especially in the administration of the church and other social institutions.

To speak about God is a dangerous venture. On the one hand, the Bible warns us that God is beyond our comprehension. As Elihu explains to Job, “Surely God is great, and we do not know him” (Job 36:26a). Or David exclaims, “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable” (Ps. 145:3).

The narrated story of God’s massive building project, the creation of the world is associated with the Ancient Near East kings who were in charge of significant building projects and this story which imagines God creating the world is thus a sub-metaphor of the larger metaphor of God being a king and thus male. This would have been obvious to the ancient reader, familiar with the king and his roles.

In the context of this study, the role play attached to the historical perception should not rule the modern context where God is closely associated with anthropomorphic understanding but a divine incomprehensible neither male nor female. With such an understanding, the church leadership structures should be transformed.

Furthermore, Gen 1:26, "let us make human," refers to God as king consulting the members of his royal court as only kings (but not queens) might. That this text depicts God as king consulting with his royal counselors is implicit in a midrash in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 38b). The implication hermeneutics in approaching the understanding this statement is important. The Godhead implied in the book of Genesis 1:26 have no dichotomy in any manner whatsoever to be associated with maleness or masculinity of God. In any case, it should be seen as a portray of unity and working together in the modern church today.

The prophet Isiah was told by God "the way heavens are higher that the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Paul on the other hand addresses the Romans, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgement and how inscrutable his ways (Rom. 11:33). He further told Timothy that its only God who is king of kings and Lord of Lords and immortal but we are mortal. We as human beings are limited and cannot stand to tell who God is whether a woman or a man. In the story of Job, God is almighty, all powerful but man is limited in power, God is all loving while man loves only partially (Job 36:5, Jer 32:17, etc)

Following the misinterpretation of what was to be the real picture, patriarchal approach to biblical understanding brought all that is being practiced in the church as far as leadership is concerned. Therefore, if a change has to be realized, there should be no any attachment of

current approach to what was historically perceived to be the real understanding that affected the leadership structure. God is all grace unlike man who partially and sometimes lacks grace totally (Exodus 34:6-7). He is God of all just, creator of all; deserves an exclusive love, while man is limited at many occasions (Deut. 32:4; Isa 44:24). Compassion of God is another undisputable fact, holy God, as for the man, he lacks these attributes at large (Lev. 19:2). One of the major accounts of God is the fact that he is the creator, a being that existed without human influence yet the creator of all universe. Furthermore, created in the image of God, no doubt about the given power and relational attachment and empowerment to have dominion over the earth and the creatures (Genesis 1:28-29). The created order has a unique attachment of ability to speak and to symbolize the nature of the one who created humanity. Even if God transcends gender, he is the source of all gender where we are like God as well as unlike God, he is the creator of the world, the earth, humanity and animals (Jer. 27:5, Genesis 1.).

The noun father got its use in the ancient metaphorically for the idea of conception and a mother to imply idea of labor and actual birth. Example, God is a maker, a potter is compared to both a father and mother where the father begets while the mother is in labor (Isaiah 45:9-10).

Deuteronomy 32:18 presents the complimentary or identical or parental metaphor using the rock and other related. The rock is the father who begot and the mother who wriggled at birth. The structure or male leadership which is associated with the Old Testament and in most cases causes impact. In the appointment of the twelve by Jesus went on in the early church as exemplified by men that comprise of the Pauline circle.

An example of Episcople church for instance is known as one of those churches that embraced and appreciated work of women. Katherne Jefferts Scchori who at one time served as a presiding Bishop from 2006-2015 really spread light on the reality of women service and also served as one of those who inspired the rest to begin rethhinking.

Rzosemarie Wenner also renon figure served two terms as president of the bishops in an official council and she is known to provide spiritual leadership in the Methodist in the globe. This and others had what to spread and teach the rest on church tradition matters that seemed to carry a woman associated with dim image with low profile.

Traditions from various angles were established in the church where one female person amidist men was to read the scripture in the mididst of men when one man deliberately walked of the congregation in disgust since it looked unusual and sounded like elevating a womn for unknown reasons. The very man later came and argued that women have no right to read holy scriptures in public.

Early studies on the earcly church fathers give an evidence of their biased views on the position of a woman in church leadership. The very notion had a base and a support all through the generations that never minded on how it affects the female personality. They proposed that the best way a woman can access and gain esteem was to practice asceticism or simple life through keeping or practicing perpetual virginity and also be ready and always willing to die as a martyer.

4.6 Evaluation of issues related to Masculine Images of God

The arguments on the masculinity of God as brought forward by the church fathers, the church tradition and African theologians has the base in the cultural right from the biblical to

the modern times and have served as a measuring rod towards transaction of various activities including the religious aspects carrying the larger portion.

4.7 Evaluation of Masculine Images of God.

God is neither masculine nor feminine although the arguments that have been put forward tend to put emphasis on the great things belonging to a superior person associated with power, ability and opportunity to rule. In the current society, the masculinity of God is not the priority since the civilization and modern education approached from all corners has caused a wider perspective of the understanding of the language of God. The emphasis is still needed to empower women in churches together with men to harmonize the working structures as one body of Christ through a well-defined Biblical hermeneutical approach.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the theological reflection on the language of God as understood, practiced by many in religious and secular forums. The understanding of God should not be based on the earlier hermeneutical approaches put forward ascribing God to male or female sex hence affecting the church leadership structure. There is need for the review of the hermeneutical approaches to amicably offer a solution to the church today.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the dissertation basing on the complains and perceptions raised on the understanding of language of God and proposed corrections in chapter three. Borrowing from chapter four, the methodology presented tries to respond to the misunderstandings and complains raised in the second chapter.

Leadership in many forums has been defined in terms of the profile of the position either as high or low with its implication. This habit has not exempted the church given that there is a thin line between what is done in the church and in the secular world. Leadership in the church has the historical injustices that have been transferred to various generations that keep practicing and observing it.

If chapter two raised arguments on the language of God as read, understood, adopted and practiced, painting God as belonging to the category of human definitions that caused problems for instance, God as a male or a female, it calls for the need to address it in a hamoniuos way. This is important since the perception has an attachment and implication on the daily practices carried out in the church.

The ground at which the biblical hermeneutics is done determines the understanding of a phenomena hence the implication and possibly consequences. The interpretation that was done in understanding God drew an implication that God was male and associated with goodness, perfection and general ability to perform in greater positions as opposed to femaleness which is the opposite of what male sex can do.

In chapter three, contrary to how the hermeneutical task was carried out, the language of God is beyond the human comprehension and indescribable in the canal human approach. The self-existence nature of God does not at any point bring closer an association with human knowledge. In the Biblical understanding, both New and Old Testament, descriptions of who God is and ascriptions closely associated with God as father or mother brings out clearly how the hermeneutical approach applied can be influenced by situations, circumstances and other fluctuating factors yet not a measuring ground to understand God and influence the church leadership structure.

Therefore, the hermeneutic of suspicion raised in chapter four as a methodology is applied here to propose a solution to the thoughts that were applied under suspicion to determine the position of man and woman in church leadership. This has been a realization after the true approach to the language of God (neither male nor female) was a necessary solution to the current problem in most churches as far as church leadership is concerned.

5.2 Pastoral Implication

The continuous hermeneutical observance of the language ascribed to God (masculine) determines the leadership placement in the church where male sex dominates the church in major and senior positions while women are left to occupy junior and minor positions. The church and the pastoral transactions lack balanced views, voice and practices. In the four major contexts where Paul discusses male and female relationships (1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33b-35; Ephesians 5:22-23; 1 Timothy 2:8-15), the principle of subjection and the application of that principle to specific situations (e.g., a woman not leading men in prayer), was based upon historical facts that went back to the very commencement of the human

family thus it is not a culturally-oriented instruction that should be documented to be practiced in the modern culture.

The notion has been a prevalent in sectarian circles (and is growing in the church of the Lord) that there are no sexual distinctions to be observed in Christ. The claim is made that Paul, in Galatians 3:28, abolished sexual differences so that men and women may function in identical capacities in public church activity; preaching, leading prayers, perhaps even serving as elders among other known and designated church positions. In a nutshell, a masculine God associated with the qualification of males in top church leadership happens at the expense of women, thus a contentious issue to be revisited hermeneutically.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has concluded on the language of God focusing on the inferences or what the understanding of language of God implies, the pastoral implication, observations and recommendations. There was a clear implication that from the understanding and application of the language of God, church leadership has been affected, terming God as male and related to male dominating in top church leadership while women were assigned minor roles in the church. There is a wide impact realized as a result of such perception thus the need for a review of the hermeneutic approach.

5.4 Observation and Recommendations

Women church leadership has been a thorn in the religious forums beyond Christianity. The efforts to make a transformation on the perception has faced a stoppage through many ways experienced resulting from the traditions established that perceive or see God in form of human.

The church that has strictly observed church structures that borrow much from the understanding of God from male or female perspective has prolonged the observance of the practice regardless of its harm to women in the church.

The diminishing practice of the church leadership where women who are majority occupy the minor positions in the church has affected the church administration, leadership skills that if recognized and used can be of great importance to church and society. For this reason, something should be done.

This study recommends the review of hermeneutic approach to get the right interpretation of the scripture in order to get the right way the language of God should be perceived.

The review of the hermeneutical approach should comprise of both male and female for a balanced view unlike the patriarchal periods where the male figure and reasoning dominated giving a male-centered orientation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: The leadership of PCEA since 1965 to date.

A) From the list below it is clear that women have never been elected into senior leadership of the church yet the first woman was ordained in 1965 as a church elder. Men have dominated the senior leadership of the church.

B) Presbytery. There are 56 presbyteries and I have used one presbytery as a case study – Limuru Presbytery.

DATES/ YEARS	OFFICE BEARERS
3 – 4th GA: The Late Very Rev. Charles M. Kareri 1961- 1967 Secretary General. Treasurer	 – Rev. John Gatu. - Rev. Jeremiah Gitau
5 – 6th GA: The Late Very Rev. Crispus Kiongo 1967 – 1973 Secretary General. Deputy Secretary Finance Officer	 – Rev John Gatu – Rev Bernard Muindi - Mr. Samson Mugo Wagichu
7 – 8th GA Late Very Rev. Jeremiah K. Gitau 1973 – 1979 Secretary General. – Deputy Secretary Finance Officer-	 Rev. John Gatu – Rev. Bernard Muindi Mr. Samson Mugo Wagichu
9– 10th GA Late Very Rev. Dr. John G. Gatu 1979 - 1985 Secretary General.	 – Rev. Bernard Muindi Rev. Samuel Theuri

Deputy Secretary – Finance Officer	- Mr. Samson Mugo Wagichu
11– 12th GA Late Very Rev. Dr. George Wanjau 1985 - 1991 Secretary General. Deputy Secretary Honorary Treasurer Finance Officer-	 – Rev. Plawson Kuria – Rev. Patrick Rukenya - Mr. Elder Sapia K. Mburu - Elder Mari
13 –14 GA Late Very Rev. Bernard Muindi 19 91- 1997 Secretary General. Deputy Secretary Honarary Treasurer Finance Officer	 – Rev. Samuel Mwaniki – Rev. Patrick Rukenya - Elder Sapia K.. Mburu - Elder Samuel Mathu
15 –1 6th GA Very Rev. Dr. Dr. Jesse M. kamau 1997 - 2003 Secretary General. Deputy Secretary – Honarary Treasurer- Finance Officer-	 – Rev. Patrick Rukenya - Rev. Dr, Patrick Mungiriria - Mr. Samuel Mathu - Mr. Joseph Muriu Kamau
17 – 18th GA Very Rev. Dr. David M. Githii 2003 – 2009 Secretary General. Deputy Secretary Honarary Treasurer Finance Officer	 - Rev. Samuel Muriguh - Rev. Francis Ndung'u - Mr. Johnson Njatha Wathiri - Mr.francis G. Mathea
19 – 20th GA Very Rev. David R. Gathanju 2009 – 2015 Secretary General.	 - Rev. Festus Kaburu Gitonga

Deputy Secretary Honarary Treasurer Finance Officer	- Rev. Francis Ndung'u - Mr. Johnson Njatha Wathiri - Mr.francis G. Mathea
21st GA Rt. Rev. Julius G. Mwamba 2015 to date Secretary General Deputy Secretary Honarary Treasurer Finance Officer	. - Rev. Peter Kania - Rev. Alfred Kanga - Elder Daniel Waithima Kibirii - Vacant.
LIMURU PRESBYTERY LEADERSHIP	**THE PRESBYTERY WAS FORMED SINCE 1978**
1978 -1980 Moderator Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	- Rev, Newton Muchui - Elder Kenneth Ndogoni Nyoro - Joseph Magu - Elder James Kagwima
1981-1986 Rev, Joseph Iteri Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	 - Elder Peter KImani Kamweru - John Kirui - Patrick Ndungu
1987 – 1992 Moderator- Rev, Johnson Njenga Kmau Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	 – Elder Francis Kamiti Kaigua - Elder Walter Karanja Gichiki - Nahashon Kamau
1993 - 1999 Moderator- Rev. Joshua Kamae	

Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	– Elder Simon Kabue Waruru - Samuel Mbugua - Elder Saphia Mburu
2000 – 2008 Moderator- Rev, Alfred Kanga Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	 – Elder Githinji - Elder Paul Njenga - Elder Magu
2009– 2012 Moderator- Rev, Charles Mwaniki Presbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	 - James Ndungu Kangethe -George Waiyaki –Elder Joseph Koinnge
2010– 2013 Rev, John Kamau Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer - Finance Chair	 – Elder Stanley Githu - Nahashon Kamau Peter Muchiri Nyoro
2014 – 2016 Moderator- Rev,Gibson Gichuki Presbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	 - Rev. Njenga - Elder Muchai - Elder Peter Muchiri Nyoro
2017 to Date Moderator- Rev, Elias Otieno Agola Pressbytery Clerk Treasurer Finance Chair	 – Rev. Lydia Muthoni kahiga - Elder John Kiarie Mbugua - Elder Joseph Ndungu Kimondo

Appendix II: Letter of Introduction of the Researcher to NACOSTI

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
Email: postgraduatestudies@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 728-062420
(0) 736-424440

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete
P.O Box 30623, 00100
Nairobi, KENYA.

5th March 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: JOYCE WARUGURU KAIRU MTHNRB - 217013

This is to confirm that the above named is a final year student of St. Paul's University registered for Masters of Business Administration.

The final year consists of a major research work leading to a dissertation comprising 20,000 words. The student's selected topic is:

MASCULINE IMAGES OF GOD AND LEADERSHIP IN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA (PCEA)

The research will take place in KIAMBU county from March 2019 to May 2019.

Kindly grant the student the required permit.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. Sammy Githuku
Director, Postgraduate Studies.

Appendix III: Letter of Research Authorization from NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

9th May, 2014

NACOSTI/P/14/9825/1159

Joyce Waruguru Kairu
St Pauls University
P.O.Private Bag-00217
LIMURU.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on ***"The Christian understanding of the gender of God and its influence in women leadership in Presbyterian Church of East Africa,"*** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu County** for a period ending **31st May, 2014.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kiambu County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

SAID HUSSEIN
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
The County Director of Education
Kiambu County.

Appendix IV: Research Permit from NACOSTI

CONDITIONS

1. **You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit**
2. **Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.**
3. **No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.**
4. **Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.**
5. **You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one(1) soft copy of your final report.**
6. **The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

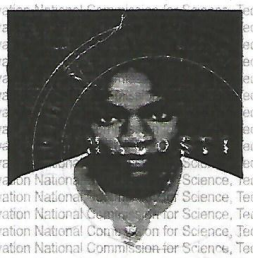
RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No. A 1617

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. JOYCE WARUGURU KAIRU
of ST PAULS UNIVERSITY, 0-200 NAIROBI,has been permitted to conduct research in *Kiambu County*
on the topic: *THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENDER OF GOD, AND ITS INFLUENCE IN WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA.*
for the period ending:
31st May,2014

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/14/9825/1159
Date Of Issue : 9th May,2014
Fee Recieved :Ksh 1,000



Applicant's Signature

Secretary
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation