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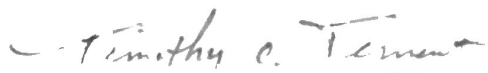
The recipient of the 2012 Distinguished Dissertation Award is Katurah York Cooper. Katurah's dissertation, entitled, "Liberian Clergy Women and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace: Causal Factors for Clergy Women's Participation or Non-Participation and the Impact on Clergy Women's Leadership in the Liberian Church", sought to evaluate factors influencing Liberian clergymen's participation in the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement and the resulting effects on their leadership roles.

The criteria which governed the selection of this outstanding dissertation-project are:

- Contributes in a substantial way to the Church's understanding of the nature and practice of ministry.
- Demonstrates potential for publication.
- Consistently follows standard research conventions.
- Conforms invariably to designated style guidelines in all respects.

The faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary commends Katurah for her outstanding work and salutes Dr. Verna Lowe, her faculty advisor, for her excellent mentoring of Katurah.

Katurah, we pray for your continued success in leading others to Christ and building them up in the faith.



Dr. Timothy C. Tennent
President



Dr. Thomas F. Tumblin
Dean of the Beeson Center

ABSTRACT

LIBERIAN CLERGYWOMEN AND THE WOMEN OF LIBERIA MASS ACTION FOR PEACE: CAUSAL FACTORS FOR CLERGYWOMEN'S PARTICIPATION OR NONPARTICIPATION AND THE IMPACT ON CLERGYWOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE LIBERIAN CHURCH

by

Katurah York Cooper

In 2003, thousands of Liberian women participated in a nonviolent protest action named Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace (WOLMAP). This movement gained international credit for its significant role in ending Liberia's fourteen year civil war and the mobilization for the election in 2005 of the first female President of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Studies indicate that the global Christian church is experiencing a crisis of a lack of transformative leadership to engage the human rights injustices evident on every continent. The Christian Church must provide solutions. Clergywomen in Liberia had to decide the roles to play in helping to end the Liberian civil war. Like women worldwide, they encounter gender discrimination, stereotyping, injustice, and religious discrimination. These inequities pose serious challenges to women's quest for leadership.

A close examination of the nonviolent protest action and the role of clergywomen presents the opportunity to determine the theological and psychosocial responses of Liberian clergywomen in such situations. This study evaluated the causal factors for participation or nonparticipation of Liberian clergywomen in the protest action with a

view to discovering clergywomen attitudes regarding social activism, their level of leadership in the church, and their influence as community change agents.

Twenty-eight Liberian clergywomen participated in this project by providing answers to quantitative and qualitative research instruments. Analysis of the data revealed that clergywomen believed WOLMAP to be a Christian-based religious movement and not a social protest movement. The main reason for clergywomen participation in WOLMAP was their desire for the war to end. Clergywomen were reluctant to participate in WOLMAP due to lack of sufficient information about the leadership and its goals. A key reason for nonparticipation was clergywomen's criticism of Christian and Muslim women practicing spiritual activities together (i.e., fasting and praying). Both participants and nonparticipants believe that WOLMAP influenced the post-2003 rise of clergywomen to leadership within the Liberian church. WOLMAP was credited with inspiring clergywomen to become community leaders, campaign for political office, and engage in social activism, while remaining faithful to their ministry and pastoral calling.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
LIBERIAN CLERGYWOMEN AND THE WOMEN OF LIBERIA MASS ACTION
FOR PEACE: CAUSAL FACTORS FOR CLERGYWOMEN'S PARTICIPATION OR
NONPARTICIPATION AND THE IMPACT ON CLERGYWOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
IN THE LIBERIAN CHURCH

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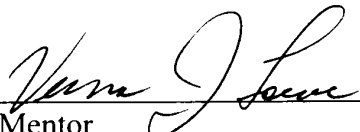
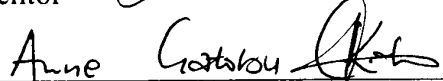
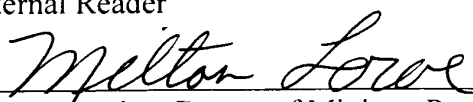
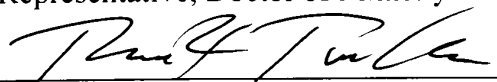
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LIBERIAN CLERGYWOMEN AND THE WOMEN OF LIBERIA MASS ACTION
FOR PEACE: CAUSAL FACTORS FOR CLERGYWOMEN'S PARTICIPATION
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A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Katurah York Cooper

May 2012

Katurah York Cooper

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four months before the study's completion. Because my mother excelled despite many odds, I can embrace the future with great hope and courage.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

In March 2003, two groups of women met in separate sessions to discuss their frustration with the ongoing civil war that had devastated Liberia since December 1989. Against the backdrop of over twenty, failed peace conferences and attempts at cease-fire over the past fourteen years, the two groups talked about women working to act to end the war. One group was the Christian Women for Peace (CWP), and the other the Muslim Women for Peace (MWP) (WANEP 2003 Annual Report 18). Both groups met in a round-table discussion to band together under the name *Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace* (WOLMAP). WOLMAP designed a written petition calling all warring factions to cease fire, to conduct peaceful negotiations, and to allow the deployment of international peacekeepers in Liberia. The women moved quickly to present this petition to all three warring factions at a mass meeting (18).

My involvement with WOLMAP began when I responded to an invitation to attend the aforementioned mass meeting. Although Christian women constituted the majority of those persons present, a significant number of Muslim women attended, however; very few female pastors or Christian clergywomen were present. The organizers had invited other women pastors and church leaders to that meeting.

In reaction to the flagrant absence of leaders of the three warring factions at that mass meeting, the group of approximately two hundred women gathered in an open field and began a nonviolent sit-down protest action until the warring parties fulfilled the terms outlined in the petition. This action lasted for over four months, involved thousands of

women, and spread to three other provinces extending outside Liberia to Ghana and Sierra Leone. My engagement in WOLMAP consisted of organizing, mobilizing picketing efforts, and serving as religious advisor. During that time, the women suffered ninety-degree heat, walked picket lines, held posters on the streets, and traveled to rebel territory to negotiate with fighters. The women fostered community awareness, fasted and prayed together, worshipped together, observed candlelight vigils, and chanted and wept together.

Liberians believe this sustained nonviolent protest was the defining action that ended the war in Liberia. This protest laid the foundation for the 2005 election of the first female leader in Africa and propelled many women into prominent leadership positions within Liberia. WOLMAP has become an international model for peace building and peaceful intervention during civil crisis. Nadine B. Hack describes the activities of WOLMAP as captured in the award-winning documentary entitled *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, which won the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival best documentary award. This film chronicles the passion and struggle while emphasizing these Liberian women's spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting that sustained the protest effort (Nadine B. Hack). During this time, male church leadership called loudly for an end to the civil crisis. As a result, Christian church leadership participated in efforts to end the civil strife. Both the Liberia Council of Churches and the Interreligious Council of Liberia engaged in negotiations and peace conferences, and men head both of these organizations. At no time did a female cleric play a role in those talks and activities. In Liberia, the imams and bishops joined with their followers to establish the Interreligious Council. The Cable News Network announced on 17 June 2003 that the Accra Peace Accord was signed,

bringing an end to the civil war (Koinange and Roth). One of the signatories to that Accord was the Interreligious Council of Liberia. The conspicuous absence of the female ministers of the gospel, female pastors, and denominational leaders remains an anomaly.

The controversy surrounding female clergy and leadership roles in the church is a familiar and well-documented one. Vashti M. McKenzie, the first female bishop elected in the over two hundred-year-old African Methodist Episcopal Church, highlights the struggle women in ministry face for affirmation, proper recognition, and equal opportunities in ministry (3, 35). While clergywomen indeed may experience unfair treatment, they often take only reluctant advantage of opportunities for leadership. The question of what constitutes opportunities for ministry requires further discussion. Women pastors in Liberia may have been looking for an opportunity to sit at the head table with the men and lead from that vantage point. The image of women sitting in silent protest while the men sat at the conference table engaged in peace talks seems to perpetuate the idea found in most churches of women as the backbone of the church. Jacquelyn Grant suggests that the word *backbone* eludes more to location or background rather than function and authority (323-38).

Clergywomen in Liberia seem empowered and equipped to preach and teach the gospel and lead a congregation but not to lead a community action endeavor. Dialogue exists regarding the limitations of the scope of women's authority in ministry. Many female pastors (in contrast to their male colleagues) undermine the scope of their authority by funneling most pastoral decisions through male authority figures such as presiding elders and district superintendents (Beach 24-25; McKenzie 35-36).

An increase in the literature regarding women in ministry has not produced enough information helpful to women to discern the call to pulpit ministry and the pursuit of that call in the local church ministry, especially as it relates to gender (Spilman 6). The problem multiplies when that female pastor accepts the call to ministry in a local church in the context of civil strife, injustice, war, suffering, death, and social and moral disintegration of a society experiencing civil war. Several clergywomen serving in Liberia faced the dilemma of this crisis.

During the nonviolent mass action, a paradigm shift in the role of Liberian women began. Through strategic planning and skills training in negotiating and conflict resolution, women boldly began to articulate their needs. From a grassroots level, both semi-literate and educated women learned to work together as community activists. Gradually, people began listening, and WOLMAP gained credibility and the trust of the nation and the leaders of the fighting forces. The skills learned and networks established contributed to the political movement resulting in the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President of Liberia in 2005 (Liberia National Elections Commission).

Research of the role of Liberian clergywomen as change agents in an era of social and political injustice in West Africa is important for understanding clergywomen mandate for ministry.

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to evaluate the factors influencing the Liberian clergywomen's participation in WOLMAP and how the level of participation impacts their current level of leadership roles in the church and as community change agents. A close examination of the nonviolent protest action and the role of clergywomen present

the opportunity to determine the theological and psychosocial responses of Liberian clergywomen in such situations.

Research Questions

I developed the research questions outlined below in order to gather statistics regarding clergywomen's participation in protest action and to explore clergywomen's attitudes and perception regarding their respective roles in social activism, church leadership, and as community change agents. The following research questions guided this project.

Research Question #1

What factors influenced Christian clergywomen's participation or nonparticipation in WOLMAP?

Research Question #2

How did the level of involvement of Christian clergywomen in WOLMAP impact their current respective leadership roles in the church?

Research Question #3

How did their level of involvement in WOLMAP influence their role as community change agents?

Definition of Terms

Four important terms were used in this project. Where necessary, I have expanded classic dictionary definitions of the first three terms in order to provide an accurate meaning relevant to the context of this project. These terms are *Christian clergywoman*, *nonviolent protest action*, *participation*, and *WOLMAP*.

Christian Clergywoman refers to an ordained clergywoman who serves as pastor of a congregation, leads a denomination as bishop, oversees the work of several congregations as the founder of a Christian ministry, or serves as an ordained clergyperson other than the pastor within a local church. Accordingly, I have highlighted three main areas of responsibility of Christian clergywomen: (1) interpreting the church's mission and the denomination's doctrine, (2) leading spiritual formation and ministry with a community of believers, and (3) representing the community of believers and exercising spiritual leadership within that community.

Nonviolent protest action (or nonviolent action) refers to the practice of achieving socio-political goals through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic or political noncooperation, or other methods, without using violence. Nonviolent resistance tactics include information warfare, picketing, vigils, leafleting, protest art, protest music and poetry, community education, and consciousness raising and lobbying. Nonviolent protest action referred to in this study consists of methods described above including prayer candlelight vigils, chanting, fasting, and praying.

Participation refers to consistent engagement in at least one of the two main categories of nonviolent protest action over a five-month period. The two categories of nonviolent protest included the following:

1. Category Level S—sit-ins, picketing, marching, lobbying negotiating, and mobilizing women from the various communities; and,
2. Category Level R—attending all-night prayer vigils, fasting, and praying.

WOLMAP is acronym for Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. Women from CWP and MWP came together to form the membership of WOLMAP. WOLMAP

rapidly grew, consisting of thousands of Liberian women who engaged in a nonviolent peace protest beginning April 2003. Though the protest ended in August 2003 with the signing of the Accra Peace Accord, WOLMAP is still involved actively in women peace building initiatives, community activism, prayer vigils, and other functions. WOLMAP is not an organization. I observed the activities of WOLMAP, and I best describe it a movement or gathering of Liberian women whose main objective is to build and foster peace.

Pre-Intervention Project

The small West African country of Liberia experienced peace for over one hundred years until December 1989, when civil war began. Liberian women have found ways to express dissatisfaction with their social and political situations; however, collective broad-based response came with the formation of WOLMAP in 2003. With participants from every tribal/ethnic background, social and economic level, and career, WOLMAP consisted of Muslim and Christian women together. The target group of this pre-intervention project consisted of the clergywomen in Liberia. I investigated reasons for participation or lack of participation and discussed those reasons from biblical, theological, and doctrinal perspectives. I collected data from questionnaires completed by participants as well as from focus group interviews. Personal interviews of selected participants dealt with questions regarding levels of participation and potential biblical, doctrinal, or other reasons for non-participation. I employed the process of demonstrative analysis in order to determine if these women derived any missional or evangelistic value from their respective involvement in these kinds of actions/movements. I included a

demographic outline of the West African region. This project was limited to Liberia; however, the literature review applies globally to four basic areas:

1. Women and strategic leadership during crisis, including psychological and sociological factors;
2. The civil conflict in Liberia and women nonviolent protest;
3. Clergywomen as change agents for social-justice and human rights ; and,
4. Clergywomen and leadership in the Church.

Context

Liberia, meaning liberty, was the name given to a colony founded by the American Colonization Society. The primary aim of the American Colonization Society was to arrange for the settlement of freed American slaves in Africa (Johnson-Sirleaf 3-6). After years of struggles, in 1847 Liberia declared its independence (Moran 4). The social inequities and other differences between descendants of the founders and the indigenous people helped spark a bloody civil conflict in 1980. After over a hundred years of Americo-Liberian leadership, Liberian Army Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, a member of the Krahn ethnic group, seized power by killing the then President William R. Tolbert. Doe's government did not improve the welfare of the indigenous people but was characterized by widespread human rights abuses and corruption. In December 1989, Charles Taylor, of both Americo-Liberian and native descent invaded Liberia seeking to topple the Doe regime. Taylor's actions began a civil war leaving more than 200,000 dead and one million refugees (105).

In 1990, President Doe was assassinated. In 1997, Charles Taylor was elected President of Liberia. In 2000, two major fighting forces, Liberia United for Restoring

Democracy (LURD) (Gbowee 103; Johnson-Sirleaf 227) and Movement for Democratic Liberia (MODEL) began attacks on the Charles Taylor government forces while the United Nations imposed economic and other sanctions on Liberia. After more than twenty-two attempts for a ceasefire, in June 2003, the Accra Peace Conference was convened with the signing of a Peace Accord. An interim government led Liberia from 2003-2006 January. After campaigning in 2005, in January 2006, the first female to be elected head of state of an African nation, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was inaugurated into office (“Liberia’s Uneasy Peace”). She was reelected in 2011 and inaugurated in January 2012. On 26 April 2012, The International Tribunal at The Hague found President Charles Taylor guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes in Sierra Leone (Karimi and Basu).

The peaceful resolution of the crisis in Liberia proved essential to stability in the West African region, especially the Mano River Union (MRU), an international association established in 1973 between Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1980, Guinea joined the union. These three countries share a common border. The goal of the Union was to foster economic cooperation among the countries. The Union is named for the Mano River, which begins in the Guinea highlands and forms a border between Liberia and Sierra Leone. The objectives of the Union were not achieved fully due to conflicts involving these countries. On 20 May 2004, the Union was reactivated. Of significance to this project are the activities of the Mano River Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET), established to bring women into a network for peace building across the three countries.

According to the CIA World Fact Book and the National Population Census of Liberia 2008, Liberia is a country of 3.5 million citizens, of which 40 percent are Christian and 20 percent are Muslim ("Africa: Liberia"; LISGIS). World Christian Database 2010 reports that Roman Catholic and mainline Protestants, Baptists, and Methodists represent the largest population of Christians in Liberia with the Pentecostal rapidly increasing in membership ("Country: Liberia"). The status of ordained women serving as pastors and Christian leaders represents a microcosm of the global view, since the percentage of women serving as pastors and Christian leaders significantly is lower than that of men. Furthermore, women serve in churches with smaller memberships and less financial strength. However, enrollment in local seminaries indicates a recent increase in the number of women going into ordained ministry. In 1997, the graduation program of the AME University in Liberia listed two female graduates with a degree in Christian Education from the Bryant Theological Seminary. In 2001, three women graduated with a degree in Theology and currently serve as pastors (Liberia Annual Conference). Since 2001, the number of women graduates continues to rise. As of the date of this dissertation, only two Liberian women are bishops in the entire nation.

Methodology

This project focused on the level of participation of clergywomen in nonviolent protest action by women in Liberia during the civil wars and implications for women leadership. For this pre-intervention study, I used a triangulation, mixed-method design with both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The intervention employed survey questionnaires, individual interviews, and focus groups as instruments to evaluate reasons for non-participation and implications for women in Christian

leadership as change agents for social justice and human rights. All participants were Liberians.

Participants

The participants consisted of twenty-eight clergywomen residing in Liberia. All participants possessed ordination as clergywomen and therefore served a congregation as pastor, served a denomination as bishop, oversaw the work of several congregations as the founder of a Christian ministry, or served a local church as a clergyperson other than a pastor.

Instrumentation

I used three instruments throughout this project. A general survey for all participants provided demographic information and other data for framing the research context and statistical analysis. I employed two other instruments: focus group and individual interviews. These two instruments provided qualitative answers concerning reasons for participation and nonparticipation in nonviolent protest actions as well as perceptions and attitudes toward women as leaders in the church and the community.

Data Collection

I designed three instruments for data collection for the purposes of this project. After subjecting these three instruments to an expert review process, I then employed them in three phases. Phase 1 involved the participants' demographic and general survey. Phase 2 consisted of the individual interviews, and Phase 3 consisted of the focus group discussion. I conducted the three phases with twenty-eight participants over a ten-week period. As such, I asked twenty-eight clergywomen to complete the clergywomen demographic and general survey, which consisted of twenty-five questions. Five

clergywomen participated in a focus group discussion consisting of five questions. I recorded participants' verbal responses during the focus group. Ten other women participated in an individual interview consisting of six questions. I recorded and wrote down the responses. I kept a personal reflective journal throughout the entire research process, which enabled me to preserve information that might enhance my interpretation and analysis of the information from the interviews and focus group. The reflective journal served as a tool for separating my own thoughts and feelings and for recording assumptions, insights, and ideas gathered during the research process.

Data Analysis

I utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the general survey. The number of participants in the general survey represented a sufficient sample size, given the total population of clergywomen in Liberia, in order to apply descriptive analytical tools. The data contained demographic and other information, analyzed to determine the frequency distribution of different variables of categories of participants and nonparticipants in the nonviolent protest action. Data analysis included calculation of the most frequently occurring value as well as the median range of values.

I analyzed the qualitative data obtained from focus groups and individual interviews based on validated patterns, themes, and categories. The method used was Key-words-in-context (KWIC) analysis. Nigel G. Fielding and Raymond M. Lee developed the KWIC data analysis method (53). KWIC reveals how respondents use words in context by comparing words that appear before and after *key words*. Classical content analysis provided a determination of the most often discussed concepts based on the coding results from constant comparative analysis.

Generalizability

This project focused on clergywomen in Liberia in the context of nonviolent protest action by women in Liberia. I studied the level of participation of these Christian leaders in a nonviolent protest action that resulted in ending civil crisis in that region and significantly enhanced the level of influence of women in leadership in Liberia since 2003. Ultimately, this study evaluated the impact of the participation or non-participation of clergywomen on their ability to be change agents and leaders for religious and social renewal in their respective communities. This study should be of interest to clergywomen serving in Liberia. In addition, this project should prove of interest to women ministering specifically in Africa because of the climate of political unrest still plaguing the continent. From this project, I expect to create dialogue and response that gives rise to more clergywomen reexamining their roles in leadership for the twenty-first century in Africa.

This project also might interest non-religious organizations involved in peace building. Finally, although specific to Liberia, this project should form a part of the theological study of women doing ministry in the global setting.

Theological Foundation

The Bible recounts stories of women faced with the dilemma of taking action against personal and community threats to their well-being. Contrary to the often-accepted idea of women as the *weaker vessel*, the weak had to become strong in unusual ways in order for a positive paradigm shift to occur in biblical history. Jesus tells the parable of the unjust judge who would not treat a widow fairly (Luke 18:1-8). The tenacity and persistence of the widow to return to the judge and demand his right action

can suggest a nonviolent protest against personal injustice. Mary's refusal to leave her place of learning at Jesus' feet for the sake of domestic chores (Luke 10:38-42) can suggest a nonviolent protest against stereotyping women's roles in society. These encounters broke through cultural barriers of the day, and the women's stories are relevant to understanding their role as change agents.

The unique culture continues to place limitations on what women clergy can do as compared with what their male colleagues can do. These imposed limitations create a crisis of decision-making in light of a larger crisis. This state of affairs can lead to feelings of helplessness and frustration.

The frustration of Liberian women with the on-going war might compare with the frustration of the three women who went to Jesus' tomb. On the way, they turned to each other and asked, "Who will roll away the stone from the tomb?" (Mark 16:1-2 NIV). Unsure of their individual strength, the women turned to each other. In a desperate attempt to take action, hundreds of Liberian women spontaneously marched to an open field and resolved to stage a nonviolent *sit down* until the fighting stopped.

The Liberian women acted out the role of the biblical Rizpah, a concubine of King Saul (2 Sam. 3:7). A powerless woman considered a slave to King Saul, Rizpah bears him two sons. After Saul's death, Rizpah finds herself in the center of a power struggle between Abner and Ishbosheth when Ishbosheth accused Abner of sleeping with Rizpah. The next mention of Rizpah occurs when King David gives her two sons to the Gibeonites to be killed as an appeasement for Saul's treatment of the Gibeonites:

"During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, 'It is on account of Saul and his blood-

stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death” (2 Sam. 21:1 KJV). In the Bible, famine generally is associated with God’s disapproval. Prophets usually foretold famine through their visions. When King David asked God why the nation was experiencing famine, God told David the reason. In an attempt to solve the national problem, David turned Rizpah’s sons along with five other male descendants of King Saul over to be slaughtered by the Gibeonites, disregarding the anguish this action would cause Rizpah, the sons’ mother. The bodies of the dead sons were left on display for all to see without benefit of a proper burial. Scripture indicates that death by crucifixion and/or public display of dead bodies carried a very strong negative stigma: “[H]is corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance” (Deut. 21:23,). In light of this shame and injustice, Rizpah dressed in the mourning clothes of sackcloth, went to the place of her son’s bodies, sat on a rock, and began driving away the vultures and wild animals from her dead sons’ bodies in protest to the manner in which her two sons were killed and their bodies left hanging on a tree. The story recounts how she sat for at least four months, until King David recognized her plight and gave her sons’ bones a proper burial; God answered prayer on behalf of the nation (2 Sam. 21:14). Rizpah’s story served as the biblical passage for the theological framework to illustrate nonviolent methods to protest social, political, and other injustices. Rizpah worked as a change agent for her nation. Women, both clergy and lay, should prepare to work together for community change, renewal, and justice.

Overview

Chapter 2 reviews literature associated with women leadership through historical, theological and biblical lenses. Furthermore, in this section I explore ways in which women (mainly African women) have led nonviolent protest actions (peace building) and fulfilled their roles as change agents for social and human rights, justice issues, women's issues, and civil conflict in Liberia. WOLMAP and its implications for the rise of women to leadership in Liberia served as an important case study. While this project was confined to Liberia, the literature review was not limited to West African sources.

Chapter 3 includes discussion and explanation of the design of the study, the research questions, participant population and sample, types of instrumentation used, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 details the findings of the project based on the responses to the survey questionnaire, focus groups, and interviews across the population of participants in Liberia. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the conclusions derived from interpretation of the data, practical application of the conclusions, and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

In March 2003, two groups of women met in separate sessions to discuss their frustration with the ongoing civil war that had devastated Liberia since December 1989. Against the backdrop of over twenty peace conferences and attempts at cease-fire over the past fourteen years, all of which had failed, the two groups talked about the options at hand for women to act to bring an end to the war. One group was CWP, and the other was MWP. Both groups came together in a round-table discussion facilitated by Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET), a program of West Africa Network for Peace (WANEP). As a result of this meeting, the two groups joined as WOLMAP and prepared a written petition calling all warring factions to a cease-fire, to conduct peaceful negotiations, and to allow the deployment of international peacekeepers in Liberia. Leaders of the three warring factions received an invitation to attend a gathering with women of Liberia where this petition was publicly read.

At this first mass meeting of WOLMAP, my observations stimulated my interest in the subject of this project. A significant number of Muslim women attended (though the Christian women were in the majority). Few female pastors or clergywomen were present, even though they had been invited.

I observed that all of the leaders of the warring factions had stayed away from the mass meeting. The absence of these leaders prompted the group of about two hundred women to gather at an open field to begin a nonviolent sit-down protest action until the terms in the petition were fulfilled. This action lasted for over four months, involved

thousands of women, and spread to three other provinces extending outside Liberia to Ghana and Sierra Leone. During that time, the women sat under ninety-degree sun, walked picket lines, held posters on the streets, and traveled to rebel territory to negotiate with fighters. The women conducted community awareness, fasted and prayed together, worshipped together, had candlelight vigils, chanted, and wept together.

The purpose of this pre-intervention project was to research the level of participation of clergywomen in the nonviolent protest action in Liberia in 2003. The target group was clergywomen in Liberia. Questionnaires and personal interviews revealed insight into the factors associated with the clergywomen's respective abilities to serve as effective leaders and community change agents in light of human rights injustices.

The literature reviewed the following areas:

1. Women leadership through historical, theological, and biblical lenses;
2. The role of women as change agents for human rights and justice issues;
3. Women and civil conflict in Liberia—levels of involvement of women and the impact on women;
4. The psychological and sociological factors in resistance during crisis;
5. Women and leadership globally and specifically in Africa (historical studies of women leaders); and,
6. Factors affecting women in leadership (prevalence, ways women lead, strategic leadership for the twenty-first century).

WOLMAP served as the contextual framework of this project.

African Women and Conflict Resolution

David W. Augsburger states, “Conflict is essential to, ineradicable from, and inevitable in human life; and the source, cause, and process of conflict can be turned from life-destroying to life-building ends” (5). Miriam Agatha Chinwe Nwoye describes the roles West African women play in peace building and conflict resolution in African traditional societies. Nwoye argues that African women have been not only the center of conflict in society but also in many instances they have mediated such conflicts. The most recent examples they cite are the women of the Mano River region.

The Sande is a “female secret societ[y]” (Nelson 94) founded in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea that teaches girls their tribal customs, initiates them into adulthood, instills in them acceptable sexual norms, as well as promotes women’s social and political interests and solidarity:

[Sande’s] higher offices are hereditary. Each group is led by a powerful woman [a Zoe] who has control over the “medicine,” or *halei*, a sacred power given by a supreme being. She also controls the masks. Initiation of girls takes place outside the limits of the village. Here they are taught basic female values and trained for marriage, domestic life, and economic pursuits. They are also trained in the mysteries of the women’s society and taught its songs and dances. (Immigration and Refugee Board)

The Sande Society has a very strong influence on the lives of young girls and is where a large population of African women exercise leadership and make major decisions.

A *zoe* is an elderly woman who, by family lineage, has been endowed with spiritual powers for healing and government. Warren L. D’Azevedo (342) describes the power of Gola women of West Africa in relationship to the seemingly omnipotent men in their villages. These women consolidate power bases though collaboration and

constructive engagement and use their spiritual insight to become reservoirs of wisdom and strength (342-44).

Among several West African tribes, persons mediate conflict according to the system of *palava*, a word referring to a verbal argument between two people due to opposing views or wrongs done. The *palava hut* is a small round-shaped structure (usually in the center of the village) where a council of elders hears and adjudicates disputes. While most disputes go before male mediators, powerful women called *zoes* hand down decisions in some dispute cases.

The head wife in a polygamous African household settles disputes between other wives and among their children. Female chiefs are entrusted with governing and mediating conflicts. In urban settings, older women (aunties) judge *palava* between younger family members, since African society considers women patient, good listeners, and willing to work to create peace between aggrieved parties. Augsburger writes about women and conflict mediation:

Women show a negative orientation toward the use of violent aggression in social, relational or political matters. Violence is increasingly seen as symbolic of male domination and socially pathological. Women show a positive orientation toward negotiation, verbal bargaining, and nonviolent demonstration rather than power, coercion, or violent solutions. Women hold the promise of being more comfortable at the bargaining table and more psychologically inclined toward assertiveness rather than aggression, toward horizontal control rather than vertical control structure. (185)

The African society provides opportunities for women to participate in conflict resolution due to African women's skill at verbal bargaining and non-aggressive negotiation.

In April 2003, the women of Liberia began a mass action protest (WOLMAP) that captured the attention of the entire world. The purpose of this mass action was to bring an

end to a fourteen-year brutal civil war. Though not the first female-led protest action against the Liberian civil war, this action was unique in several ways.

WOLMAP's leadership and participants consisted of marginalized persons. Cheryl J. Sanders asserts that Jesus targeted his message of salvation and redemption primarily targeted to the least, the lost, and the disadvantaged of society, which Sanders calls the *marginalized*. Sanders asserts that true ministry involves service and meeting needs, ministering in such a manner that pulls the marginalized towards the center (12). Between 1990 and 2003, the Mano River Women Peace Network called for an end to the war. The leadership of MARWOPNET consisted of college educated, career-minded women over forty-five years old, some in Parliament, who spent most of their time writing manifestos and appeals and traveling to peace conferences organized by men. Both WOLMAP and MARWOPNET supported the same message and operated out of the same motivation. MARWOPNET lacked massive support from Liberian women because the majority were poor, illiterate village dwellers and market sellers. MARWOPNET did not engage grassroots women in strategic planning. Due to lack of a sustained long-term course of protest action, MARWOPNET was not successful in its effort to negotiate peace for Liberia.

WOLMAP began as a grassroots movement. Mary Thomas (Sharon) Prado researched grassroots women leaders of the Philippine society and their involvement with *taong-simbahan*, or church people, and these grassroots women's engagement in church leadership. Church people are described as pastors, clergy and religious leaders, and women in recognized leadership positions in the church. Grassroots women make up the majority of active church membership in the Philippines but are located on the edge of

the margins because they are poor and female. By exploring the conversation praxis between grassroots women and *taong-simbahan* or church people, Prado highlights the emergence of a new conversation praxis. This praxis is experience based, culturally informed, and biblically inspired, and it transforms grassroots women and the *tang-simbahan* into partners in leadership (Prado x). Grassroots women predominate “its [the church’s] landscape; they form the basic members [and] ... are grounded and rooted (*naka-ugat*) in the basic experience of the poor Filipino, and they have risen from the ground to their leadership role” (5). Interviews with church people showed that grassroots women leaders exhibited strong commitment and dedication. These women are described as value oriented, assertive, and other directed (self-sacrificing). All of these traits surfaced through self-interviews of grassroots women with the inclusion of the traits of perseverance and persistence (16-18).

Women politicians and executive directors of women nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations were at the center of previous protest actions in Liberia. A young female social worker led WOLMAP. Without a political or religious title, she deviated from stereotypical leader characteristics since she was a thirty-two-year-old single mother serving as president of a local parish women’s ministry. Georgia Sorenson and Gill Robinson Hickman discuss the kinds of charisma needed for successful leadership. Charismatic leadership stimulates great transformation in the world. This leadership is usually the vibrant person’s charisma, which serves the driving factor for transformation. Georgia Sorenson and Gill R. Hickman argue that great transformation can result from invisible leaders with shared action and possessing a charisma of purpose; therefore, “invisible leadership is a quiet, unobtrusive influence

process motivated by strong conviction to a common purpose greater than the self-interest of the group or its members” (7). The thirty-two-year-old single mother fit the invisible leadership model.

Invisible leadership models a sharing of leadership with others in the group and constructs a web of leadership. WOLMAP’s membership boasted more Christian women than Muslim women, and this reality created a crisis related to the question of shared leadership. To contain this crisis, the leader, using the model of invisible leadership, redirected the focus away from her toward the purpose of the mass action. The message of inclusion was heard in subtle yet deliberate ways. The leader was called *coordinator* rather than *president*, and each leadership circles was called *the team*. The coordinator worked with several leadership circles. Elections for officers (e.g., secretary, treasurer) did not occur. In order to cut across religious lines of demarcation, each woman worked in her area of expertise or preference. As a result, I observed that the gifts of the women emerged naturally. According to Jacquelyn Thorpe and Susan Wilhauck, leadership webs “build from the center out and this building is a never-ending process” (30). This model indicates that leadership from the center moves outward and connects with other leaders rather than leads from the top down.

Theological Framework

The theological framework supports two important themes emanating from this project. The first theme concerns women in the Bible faced with the dilemma of taking action against personal and community threats to their well-being and their respective decisions to respond to these threats as pro-active change agents. Contrary to the often-accepted idea of women as the weaker vessel, several women in the Bible exhibited

unusual strength in order for a positive paradigm shift to occur in biblical history.

Outlined here are four biblical accounts of four of these women: Mary of Bethany, the widow and the unjust judge, the Canaanite woman and Jesus, and Rizpah.

The second theme deals with the persistent idea of women as subordinate to men; therefore, this theological foundation seeks to advocate for the full humanity of women while recognizing their obvious distinctiveness. Furthermore, this theme argues for the right of clergywomen to push past cultural and religious limitations, accept the challenge of leadership in their churches, and act as change agents in their respective societies.

Three areas are under review: what it means for women to be made in the image of God, how Christian women perceive the idea of protest, and attitudes toward women and leadership in the Church.

Biblical Foundations

This project investigated the level of participation of Liberian clergywomen in the protest action as well as the attitudes and perceptions of these women regarding their respective roles in social activism, their current levels of leadership in the church, and their influence as community change agents. The biblical witness of four women is discussed within this context.

Paradigm is defined as a typical example or pattern of something; a model (“Paradigm”). Paradigm is understood as a “pattern containing the attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors that make up a person’s lifestyle” (McKenzie xiii). Mary of Bethany chose to spend time listening to Jesus’ teaching with the disciples rather than helping her sister Martha with domestic chores (Luke 10:38-42). The action of Mary of Bethany protests against stereotyping of roles of women in society. The parable of the unjust judge who

would not treat a widow fairly (Luke 18:1-8) suggests the issue of human rights violation. The dialogue between a Caananite woman and Jesus describes this woman's determination even in the face of insults to convince Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter (Matt. 15:21-8). These verses raise the issues of religious and ethnic discrimination. Rizpah's silent protest is the action of a mother protesting violence against the innocent. These encounters presented various challenges to the prevailing cultural norms of the day and provide insight today into the role of biblical women as change agents.

Mary of Bethany chooses "the better thing" (Luke 10:42) to take advantage of her opportunity to sit at Jesus' feet and heed his instructions, as did the male disciples. Mary's alternative was to join her sister Martha in the traditional role of preparing the meal and acting as hostess for Jesus and the disciples. According to the culture and norms of Jewish society; and even for many women in the twenty first century, women still face the expected responsibility to play the primary role of hospitality instead of pursuing education/career. Bette Ekeya explains the Iteso religion in Kenya and its major concern for the domestic rituals dominating women's lives:

Iteso society, like African society in general, treated the woman with an accepted cultural dichotomy. As long as she was the mother of healthy children, sons and daughters proportionately, her place in the home and in her society was assured and honored. (141)

Societies throughout the world continue to expect women to see their primary role as mother and caregiver in the family unit.

Jesus said, "Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). Mary represents a new paradigm that did not fit into the established pattern of the day. McKenzie would identify Mary as a "paradigm buster," or "one who

re-designs patterns of religion, society, and culture” (xiv). A paradigm shift occurs when questions arise and controversy exists. Martha wanted Jesus to reprimand Mary and reposition her according to the accepted pattern.

Jesus gave the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8) to teach his disciples to remain persistent in prayer. However, in verses seven and eight, Jesus emphasizes the issue of justice for those persons remaining persistent in their stand against injustice. The widow represents the least powerful within the Jewish society, not unlike most Liberian widows, or for that matter the majority of the world’s widows, from India to Africa and the Americas. The judge possessed something that the woman felt entitled to. Nevertheless, the widow kept coming back and demanding full retribution for a wrong committed against her. Women can exercise persistence and patience in the face of repeated acts of injustice. This attitude is not interpreted as willingness to accept or acquiesce, but willingness to apply sustained pressure in pursuit of justice. Women have the power to stand for what is right.

Jesus’ encounter with this non-Jewish woman from the cities of Tyre and Sidon unfolds the story of a woman on the outside negotiating for the healing of her demon-possessed daughter (Matt.15:21-28). This *Canaanite woman* has the audacity to ask for something to which she was not entitled. While the judge unjustly denied the widow her request, this unnamed Gentile woman breaks the barrier of religious and ethnic discrimination. Musa W. Dube writes about this woman:

The story of the Canaanite woman has enjoyed popularity among Western feminist readers. Sharon Ringe hails her an “uppity woman,” who “wins the argument with Jesus” and opens “the way for Jesus’ (and the church’s) mission beyond the Jewish community. For Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, she is the woman who “overcomes Jesus’ prejudice,” the “foremother” of all Gentile Christian women; she is “a paradigm for feminists who

transgress intellectual and religious boundaries in their movement towards liberation. (170-71)

Forced to beg three times for her daughter's healing, this woman offers an example with which women today can identify, since women often must beg for the same rights some men take for granted. Through the lens of the protest action of Liberian women and the gender and cultural biases or other prejudices restricting women, the desperate Canaanite woman exhibited her willingness to go to all lengths to negotiate for her needs. This woman enters into a negotiation and uses any opportunity to emphasize her point regardless of how minuscule the opportunity.

The Liberian women acted out the role of the biblical Rizpah, a concubine of King Saul (2 Sam 3:7). I placed Rizpah's story after the three previous women because I chose Rizpah's story to serve as the key biblical passage for the theological framework to illustrate nonviolent methods to protest social, political, and other injustices. Rizpah worked as a change agent for her nation.

These four women encountered culturally imposed barriers with courage and faith. Clergywomen in Liberia had to decide which roles they would play to help end the war. Like the biblical women, they faced stereotyping, injustice, and religious discrimination; in many instances they risked losing their voices in the midst of male domination. These imposed barriers created a crisis of decision-making in light of the larger national crisis in Liberia.

Theological Foundations

Religious culture places limitations on acceptable actions of clergywomen as compared with acceptable actions of their male colleagues. The challenge rests upon the persistent belief that women are subordinate to men. The majority opinion supports a

hierarchical organization with God at the top and over man, and man as head of woman, with woman at the bottom. Paul's pronouncement in Ephesians 5:22-24 has served as the fulcrum for the proliferation of support for that belief. Based on the interpretation given to this writing and other Pauline writings (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:1-10), the pervading culture still supports limitations on acceptable actions for clergywomen in comparison to acceptable actions for their male colleagues.

Genesis 1:26-27 offers the foundation for the discussion regarding these protesting women's respective understandings of being created in the image of God.

Imago dei has undergone many interpretations throughout church history. Jürgen

Moltmann asserts the following:

The God who allows his glory to light up his image on earth and to shine forth from that image, is reflected in human beings as in a mirror. Theological tradition has always understood God's image as a mirror-reflection of God himself. The God who allows himself to be represented on earth by his image; and the image becomes an indirect revelation of his divine Being in earthly form. The more egalitarian view takes on the idea that Adam (man) is the Hebrew word understood in the generic sense of man as human being and not only as male. (*God in Creation* 220)

In addition, Paul K. Jewett explores the fundamental question of the relationship between man and woman in the larger partnership of life with its manifold and creative possibilities (20). Jewett explains that the Genesis 1:26-28 text describing male and female as created in God's image grants women as well as men equal status without exception:

[W]hile male/female distinction is not an essential part of the Doctrine of Man, it is evident from scripture that both male and the female share alike the distinctive endowments whereby man differs from the animals, that is to say, men and women participate in the divine image. (23)

Jewett reconsiders the biblical evidence for the role of men and women and argues that Paul spoke as inspired by God when he argued for the equality of women but from a Jewish rabbinic mindset when he taught of women as subordinate to men.

Anthony A. Hoekema uses Genesis 1:26-28, 5:1-3, 6:5, and 9:6 to suggest that Christian anthropology teaches that man (Adam) is a distinct being from other animals but not as distinct from woman (11-14). Other voices advocate for the full humanity of women while recognizing the obvious distinctiveness of women without denying them equal rights and privileges

Chung Hyun Kyung writes, “out of the many contradictory teachings in the Bible, Asian women use most frequently the teaching from Genesis that contains the message that men and women are created equally in God’s image” (252). Moltmann asks the following questions: “What is the nature of the God who in his image appears in male and female form? Do we have to think of the Creator of this human nature and condition in bisexual terms, as god and goddess at the same time?” (God in Creation 223). However, such questions do not plague Kyung. Drawing from the many gods and goddesses in Asian culture, Kyung writes, “[In sum,] Asian women’s yearning for and rediscovery of a Godhead that contains both male and female qualities is the same yearning for full humanity in which both males and females are fully respected as equal partners” (253). She further explains the Asian Christian woman’s ease to understand her humanity in terms of an inclusive image of God engendering both male and female sides held in harmony and equality (252).

Liberian clergywomen face an identity crisis amplified by the strong patriarchal practices of African societies and the damage done by oppressive interpretation of

Scripture handed down to the Christian church by white missionaries evangelizing Africa. The fundamental problem of women embracing their roles as leaders involves the issue of how God sees a woman and how a woman sees God. If a woman cannot see herself as equally and fully made in the image of the Creator as a man does, then she already has relegated herself to a second-class position. This way of thinking affects how she lives in relationship with God and in relationship with community. She must understand clearly how God sees her, and the only authentic interpretation is in God's image and likeness. A different interpretation is grossly inadequate.

Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty discuss how Jesus' attitude toward women went against the custom of the day. They write, Jesus "saw [a woman] as a person created in God's image, . . . free to be whole, to grow, to learn, to utilize fully the talents and gifts God has given her as a unique individual" (11). The Liberian women protestors exhibited willingness to fight for such a freedom. War had suffocated their lives, jeopardized their futures, and rendered their gifts and talents impotent.

Christian Women and Protest

The idea of a Christian-led protest action may seem anathema to proponents of pacifist Christianity. The idea of women leading protest activity places women in a different place and imposes upon them the mandate to answer the call to resist evil in all its forms. Even more provocative in the African setting is the idea of clergywomen leading the fight against injustice amid the African church's struggle to produce an appropriate response to injustice and human rights abuses on the continent.

The theology of the cross exists at the foundation of the Christian faith. As such, this theology cannot be divorced from images of pain, suffering, and death:

[E]ven after Christ was raised from the dead and given a glorious new resurrection body, the scars in his hands and feet and side—emblems of his gruesome death—remain. Christians need that image in order that we can find a place at the cross for offering our desolate and wounded spirit and like Jesus commit it to the Father. (Seamands 167)

Christian women face these images, which must be understood in the light of the atrocities of war.

In 2 Corinthians 11: 21b-28, Paul boasts of his many sufferings and emphasizes them as marks indicative of his status as a true apostle of the faith. Although he claims speaking of such things as foolish, nevertheless he uses this impressive list of sufferings to authenticate his calling.

What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. (2 Cor. 11: 21b-28)

These verses read like the diary from the civil war fought on many front lines throughout Liberia, sometimes involving up to six warring factions.

As Liberia experienced a massive eruption in the nation, the women experienced what Ivone Gebara calls an *irruption of history into women's lives*. Gebara describes the situation as “something qualitatively different and new, that is, the irruption of historic consciousness into the lives of millions and millions of women, leading them to the

liberation struggle by means of active participation in different fronts from which they had previously been absent” (53). Gebara describes this irruption:

[A]s though a strong wind had begun to blow, opening eyes, loosening tongues, shifting stances, enabling arms to reach out to new embraces and hands to take up other tools, impelling feet to take other steps, raising the voice so its song and lament might be heard. (53)

In Liberia, this irruption produced a new kind of woman; namely, a female human rights activist from the ranks of grassroots women with a theology developed within the crucible of her suffering. The only viable response to that suffering involved a massive rejection of it and its disintegration of the essence of their humanity. This massive rejection of war was strong enough to bring Muslim and Christian women together in a struggle for peace under WOLMAP. WOLMAP had neither a seat at the conference table for peace, a name badge, nor a recognized position. WOLMAP had tenacity and a strategic plan and used every opportunity to confront and dialogue in order to achieve its agenda.

Sociological Factors

War disrupts social norms. The immediate impacts of conflict include impoverishment, displacement, physical/psychological damage, loss of social fabric, and human rights abuses (El-Bushra 167). Elizabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf make this declaration:

Clearly the nature of war has changed. It is being fought in homes and communities-and on women's bodies- in a battle for resources and in the name of religion and ethnicity. Violence against women is used to break and humiliate women, men, families, communities, no matter which side they are on. Women have become the greatest victims of war- and the biggest stakeholders of peace. (v)

Liberia, because of the civil war, has been referred to as a failed state, a place of people and not laws and a society that has little structure:

[I]f things are going to change, then people have to get out of their routines one way or another. There has to be social disruption. There has to be a 'getting in the way of power' as one author-activist [L.A. Kaufman] puts it.." There has to be a social movement that has a shared political identity; therefore, persons in this situation exhibit a willingness to win people to their causes and create the political pressures necessary for the social changes they advocate by showing there has to be a non-routine dimension to any effort toward change. (Wright 407)

If women are the greatest victims, then women are the best positioned to advocate for peace.

Strategic nonviolence offers an effective response for winning in conflicts with opposing and distinct perspectives and interests. Strategic nonviolence is characterized by consistent series of activities such as sit-ins, prayer vigils, picketing and dialoguing. These activities appear passive, yet they can prevail against powers with superior resources.

Studies of the role of women in peace building and conflict resolution in African traditional societies reveal, "peace germinates and flourishes only on the manure provided by the presence of a number of key African cultural values, many considered to be 'passive tools of resistance'" (Nwoye). Nwoye lists these values as patience, tolerance, honesty, respect for elders, communality and mutuality, compassion, regard for due discretion, gentleness, modesty, self-control, moderation, flexibility, and open-mindedness.

Psychological Factors

K. T. Andrews and M. Biggs as well as John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey published studies on the social and psychological dynamics of collective action. These

studies indicate emotional intelligence as an important factor in a person's ability to utilize his/her emotional content in solving problems. Mayer and Salovey conclude that "emotional intelligence marks the intersection between two fundamental components of personality: the cognitive and the emotional systems" (197). Mayer and Salovey write, "[T]he emotionally intelligent person... attends to emotion in the path toward growth. Emotional intelligence involves self-regulation appreciative of the fact that temporarily hurt feelings or emotional restraint is often necessary in the service of a greater objective" (201). Liberian women experienced the daily stress of war and all of its horror. At the same time, they experienced feelings of hopelessness, anger, and fear. Women "who are the greatest victims of conflict/war having lost everything—husbands, children, lands and dignities as a result of abduction and gang rape still strive to transcend their sorrow and experiences of the horrific violence, loss and pervasive trauma to rebuild their lives and communities" (Ogbonna-Nwaogu 257). The point where cognitive reality met with emotion represented the pivotal place in which women decided to move from passive victims to active protestors. Women of Liberia were able to control their emotions and redirect them to intelligently strategizing a plan to attain their goals.

Women protestors encountered questions regarding why they might join a protest action that most likely would lead to physical harm or death and lead to no apparent material gain, given the repressive government and the prevailing chaotic state in Liberia. Edward M. Muller and Karl-Dieter Opp published results from surveys carried out in the cities of New York, and Hamburg, West Germany, in order to determine whether the rationale for ordinary citizens to participate in rebellious collective action was hopes of private gains. Their study suggests, "in contrast to the model of private interest theory a

public good model is proposed stipulating that the value of rebellion in terms of public goods can be a relevant incentive for participation” (471). In contrast to the Liberian rebels who received personal gains from looting homes and buildings and the elitist women who gained exposure and a chance to become government officials, the women of WOLMAP had no hope of receiving selective benefits or personal rewards. Their names remained unknown and their faces remained unrecognized. WOLMAP’s organizers/coordinating team consisted of no elite persons. The strategy for mobilizing women emerged from the idea that unless women unite to protest the war, Liberia would not experience peace. Peace was the prize to be gained, and it represented a prize that everyone could enjoy.

WOLMAP utilized a psychological approach of peaceful engagement and silent resistance sustained for a long period. The strategy included only women and adopted a nonthreatening approach at all times. The women wore white T-shirts, vowed to wear no jewelry, fasted, prayed, and held candlelight vigils. At that same time, the women constantly engaged the soldiers (many of them teenagers and young persons under thirty years old) and told them of the benefits of peace. They travelled into rebel territory (unarmed women in white) and appealed to warlords to end the war. They sang songs and picketed embassies and international organizations such as United Nations and the European Union. The numbers of women increased because of the consistent actions of the first group of two hundred. Recruitment was buoyed by consistency. I observed that as more women saw the beginners’ commitment, they joined and ultimately created a large enough number, which posed a threat to the status quo. This threat created a shift in

the psychological outlook of both the warlords and their victims, thereby creating a chance for Liberia to attain peace.

Leadership for Change in the Church

The church is in a state of emergency. Decline in church membership, irrelevance of programs, and a lack of clear vision all point to the quality of leadership. George Barna writes, “They [believers] are seeking a faith experience that is more robust and awe inspiring, a spiritual journey that prioritizes transformation at every turn, something worthy of the Creator whom their faith reflects” (*Revolution* 14). Pastors and church leaders must reexamine leadership practices. At the core of combating this state of emergency is the indispensable need for visioning. Bill Hybels describes vision as “a picture of the future that produces passion” (32). Jesus demonstrated visionary leadership. Jesus’ vision emanated from God’s revelation. Jesus calls leaders with vision who can communicate their vision and mobilize those people around them to be committed to God’s plan.

John P. Kotter describes leadership as the driving force behind the process of change. Furthermore, he identifies eight mistakes organizations make when trying to effect real change. These mistakes include complacency, inadequate powerful guiding coalition, underestimating the power of vision, under communicating vision, permitting obstacles to block new vision, failing to create short-term wins, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture (16). Leadership “defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision and inspires them to make it happen despite obstacles” (26). As such, vision represents an important part of

leading change and motivates leaders to initiate the change needed in people and organizations.

Leadership for the church today requires courageous persons to commit to a deeper level of spiritual preparation in the word of God and a bold engagement with fast-paced changes in today's world. Using 2 Corinthians 4:7, Jackson W. Carroll's central theme describes pastors as "God's potters-whose work is shaping, glazing, and firing (those) congregational clay jars so that they reveal rather than hide God's power in their life and practices" (2). He describes pastors' duties as shaping congregational clay jars and producing congregational culture (2). Leaders are to take on the challenge of change and craft a vision that accommodates change. The International Leadership Institute supports this phenomenon: "God looks for men and women, who are biblically committed to cast vision, set goals, mobilize the Body of Christ, and overcome obstacles in order to reach the nations for Christ"(International leadership Institute 5). Vision remains at the top of the list of the essential elements of transformative leadership.

Women and Leadership in the Church

Robert D. Dale describes a leader as one who can "bring people together for the accomplishment of common goals" (13). The church traditionally has been unwilling to accept that a woman can execute leadership as effectively as can a man. The issue of ordination of woman is still non-negotiable in many churches and denominations, most notably the Roman Catholic Church. In churches that do permit women ordination and women in leadership position, a dichotomy exists. The proverbial *glass ceiling* is in many instances impenetrable (McKenzie 40).

According to J. Gaile Smith, the Wesleyan church is an example of a denomination whose advocacy for gender equality fall short of expectations.

Even though the Wesleyan Church, as a denomination, recognizes the call of God upon women to serve according to their spiritual giftedness in lay office, ministerial office, and in leadership, I find an inconsistency between their words and actions. If the local church has helped women determine their spiritual gifts, they have not recognized their giftedness, or have failed to equip them to serve in a leadership capacity. (14)

In *Sisters of the Spirit*, William Andrews edited the spiritual autobiographies of Jarena Lee, Julia Foote and Zilpha Elaw who preached the gospel from 1836 to 1879 and were trailblazers as black women preachers at the time when slavery was ending. Jarena Lee, a black mother and pastor's wife, felt called to preach in 1811 and expressed this desire to Richard Allen, the founder and minister of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Allen refused to grant her official status as a preacher but offered the crumbs under the table (Matt. 15:27). Lee would be allowed to hold prayer meetings in her home. As reported by Andrews, Lee writes, "If a man may preach because the Saviour died for him, why not the woman? Seeing he died for her also. Is he not a whole Saviour, instead of a half one as those who hold it wrong for a woman to preach, would seem to make it appear?" (Andrews 35). In Bethel AME Church in 1819, Lee boldly stood and exhorted extemporaneously from the scriptural text of a male minister in the pulpit. At this point, Allen endorsed Lee's call to preach.

Two hundred years later, women still are less likely to head congregations, less likely to lead denominations, and less likely to represent their respective churches at conferences and national meetings than their male counterparts. This general situation is worse in the African churches. Trying to rectify this situation, the World Council of Churches undertook a worldwide study titled, "The Community of Men and Women in

the Church” (Rebera 105-12). A number of female theologians from Africa participated in this study. As a result, the years 1988 to 1998 were designated the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. In 1992, the Anglican Church in England ordained women for the first time (105-12).

Scripture is not void of women leaders. Deborah (Judg. 4), Shiphrah and Puah (Exod. 1), Esther (Esth.), and Abigail (1 Sam. 25) come out of the Old Testament narratives. The accounts of Lydia (Acts 16), Phoebe (Rom. 16) and Priscilla (Acts 18; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16; 2 Tim. 4) feature some women leaders from the New Testament. Female biblical characters sometimes took on leadership responsibilities because of a crisis. In response to Pharaoh’s edict instructing the killing of all male Hebrew babies, Shiphrah and Puah devised a strategy and likely influenced other midwives to avoid carrying out Pharaoh’s edict (Exod. 1).

Although a queen, Esther possessed no real power (Esth. 2); however, she became the catalyst for change. McKenzie describes the catalyst style leader as one who patiently plots and plans her course of action, involves others in the achievement of her goals, and exercises flexibility as she handles a variety of personalities (78).

Scripture describes Abigail, a consummate negotiator, as “a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance” (1 Sam. 25:3). Faced with the threat of David and his men raiding her home and killing her family, Abigail became a skilled negotiator for a peaceful resolution to a dangerous conflict. As a result, she saved many people’s lives. She obtained the facts, acted swiftly, and took gifts with her to the negotiation table. In her dialogue with David, she used affirming statements, yet she boldly spoke her mind and clearly expressed her desire.

Lydia (Acts 16) models a type of leadership that emerging from choice rather than crisis. When Lydia converted along with her household, she saw the need for a place for the believers to worship. Lydia took the lead and invited Paul and other believers into her house. Her action marked the beginning of the new church plant at Philippi. Like the women in these biblical examples, women can accept the challenge and take the lead in supplying needs.

Smith calls for churches to rethink the basis for leadership within the Christian community. Giftedness should supersede gender all the time. Accordingly, Smith writes, “The Bible is not gender specific in regard to spiritual gifts and their use. The churches have told women lies about this to keep them in spiritual bondage” (18). Smith continues, “The difficulty will be changing the church’s perspective of women with the spiritual gift of leadership by acknowledging their potential for leadership and providing opportunities for them to serve once they have been trained” (18). One lie has been that women are not equipped to be leaders in the church. Gender does not determine effective leadership. Mutual respect and equality are important for the co-existence of the genders. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen et al. focus on an understanding of “women and men as equally saved, equally Spirit-filled and equally sent” (177).

Kiusk Cho, McKenzie, and Nancy Beach propose that women and men differ in their manner of approach to leadership. McKenzie writes, “[T]he newer models of leadership include characteristics usually attributed to women’s value systems and behaviors. These include shared power, encouraged participation, information sharing and communication” (98). Additional support comes from Beach, who states, “[M]y leadership style could be described ... as more feminine.... I am a community building

leader, driven to build a team in which members come to know and love one another as we work together” (52-53). These women writers agree that women and men differ in their manner of approach to leadership while insisting that women’s approach is neither inferior nor less effective than the approach of men.

Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Ginnet, and Gordon J. Curphy write of a leader-follower-situation framework, which promotes an understanding of effective leadership within the intersection of the leader, the followers and the situation. This intersection produces a dynamic interaction of the three groupings. Leadership is better understood as a process rather than as a position (1). Specifically, they write, “[L]eaders create environments within which followers’ innovations and creative contributions are welcome, and followers feel a stake in shaping something new, not just maintaining the status quo” (39). Churches need leaders who embrace this dynamic interaction and create environments for positive change to take place.

Clergywomen Possessing the Authority to Lead Change

Authority involves the right to command and the possession of legitimate power (“Authority”). In the context of Liberian women, authority most accurately refers to possession of the legal right to power and its official use to enforce rules or give orders. With authority comes a mandate, an authorization or permission to carry out certain functions. Leaders, through a mandate, influence others to follow. Some biblical passages suggest that women have no right to that authority; hence, the search for a mandate begins in the Bible within the context of culture and informed by global events (1 Cor. 11:3, 14:34; Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18).

The Biblical Mandate

Ricky Freeman observed that women at St. Johns Church Baptist championed the cause of equality in ministry; however, Freeman was concerned that St. John did not demonstrate through its leadership, its worship, and its practices the principle that all persons are one in Christ Jesus (9). The word *mandate* can be understood as a command backed by authority. Within the context of Pauline renderings in such passages as Ephesians 5:22-24 and 1 Corinthians 11:3, leadership refers to a place or position of authority over the man. I propose that the crisis of leadership in the West African region mandates that clergywomen begin leading in their respective contexts rather than waiting for elevation or election to a place or possession of a title.

God commanded Deborah to give a message to Barak. Barak rather than Deborah was chosen to lead the deliverance of her people (Judg. 4). Notably, Deborah acted as a leader when Barak refused to go into battle without her. She took leadership by providing strategic advice and by standing with Barak (Judg. 4: 9-14). To be change agents, clergywomen must decide to seize and create opportunities to take action.

In Liberia during the late 60s and 70s, Wilhelmenia Dukuly ran a lucrative entertainment center that catered to the needs of the elitist Liberian men who frequented her establishment. The center was rumored to have offered prostitution as part of the services offered to Dukuly's clients. When she received a divine call to preach and immediately left her old life behind, Dukuly became one of the most respected and prolific spiritual leaders of Liberia in the 1980s. Mother Dukuly died in the mid 1990s and her successor became Mother (now Bishop) Mai Roberts. In taped interviews, Bishop Roberts explained how Mother Dukuly found herself propelled into leadership. Her

strong messages sensitized the people to injustices of the military regime that ruled Liberia in the 1980s, and she became a spokesperson for the oppressed. In 1985, she became such a powerful influence that her radio broadcast was Liberia's most heard program. Due to her efforts to speak out against the military regime, Dukuly faced arrest, beating, and jail time. Dukuly did not wait to become a bishop or a leader of a movement. She led from the place where God had placed her, and people across the nation benefitted from her leadership. More importantly, her leadership emboldened other Liberian women to push forward and see themselves as viable leaders (Roberts).

The Traditional or Cultural Mandate

Many Liberian women who have answered the call to preach have not been ordained, yet they receive high regard and respect as reverend mothers. In the tradition of the powerful zoes of the villages, Reverend Mothers are revered as spiritual healers and powerful prayer warriors (D'Azevedo 342). Without benefit of a church building, they have their own followers and faithful congregants who visit them regularly for prayers of protection or for physical and spiritual blessings. Many Liberian Christians are influenced by the advice received from these praying mothers. A cultural connection appears between the function and power of the zoes (344) and that of the praying mothers. We must not assume that zoes are Christians and vice versa; however, the role played suggests that the way in which both zoes and praying mothers manifest their authority to influence people and communities has cultural connections.

Zoes are compared to sorcerers and mediums of the Old Testament (Exod. 22:18). Females in their traditional roles as food preparers also could use their magic to function as health care consultants or folk healers, using various potions and herbs along with

incantations to treat illness and exorcize evil spirits (Meyers, Craven, and Kraemer 197). After banning all mediums, King Saul consulted with the medium of Endor on matters of personal and national importance and to conjure the ghost of Samuel (1 Sam. 28:7-25).

Set within anthropology, these communities of Christians see praying mothers as powerful spiritual leaders like the zoes. The connection between the two groups, creating a strong basis for clergywomen to take authority to exercise leadership in their communities to effect radical changes.

The Global Mandate

Many persons view United Nations (UN) Resolution 1325 as the most provocative and compelling mandate affirming the rights and value of women (“Security Council”). Previously, the UN had passed resolutions and advocated for equal rights and gender equality; the reality of wars and its devastating effect on the women of the world necessitated a stronger and more direct response to the global threat of wars (especially civil conflicts). UN Resolution 1325 offered the first formal and legal document from the United Nations Security Council that required parties in a conflict to respect women’s rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, then Minister of Women’s Affairs in Namibia, initiated this resolution in 2000 when Namibia chaired the Security Council. African countries have a special interest in UN Resolution 1325 due to the continuous wave of civil unrest on the continent.

Philip Jenkins in *The Next Christendom* writes extensively on the phenomenal expansion of Christianity in the global south (Asia, Africa and South America). He believes that this expansion is the result of the ways in which people of the global south

understand Scripture. Globalization has changed the world so that information dissemination is quicker and movement of people across cultures is constant. African clergywomen should not feel left out of this global trend. While globalization is changing the world, transnationalism has created communities of the global south within the United States and Europe. Transnationalism is changing the face of American congregations. The future points to a cross-cultural, more global approach to doing ministry (140-41). Clergywomen must broaden their ministries as a mission to the world and expand their scope of influence beyond the parish and into the communities they serve.

Christ commands the evangelist to go, preach, teach, set the captives free, and heal (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18). According to Acts 1, clergywomen have a global mandate to go and tell the good news. Esther's position as queen at a specific time allowed her to move forward and lead (Esth. 4). Mary Magdalene saw the risen Lord. She had led women to the tomb of Jesus to prepare the body for burial. She left with an assignment to go and tell the disciples (John 20:17-18). Like Esther, Mary Magdalene moved forward and led.

The landscape of leadership across the globe is changing. Examples from the Methodist tradition illustrate this change. The official Web site of the United Methodist Church lists several female bishops. The list includes Joaquina Filipe Nhanala, the first woman bishop elected in Africa, was named bishop of the Mozambique area of the United Methodist Church in 2008. The first African-American woman bishop, Leontine T. C. Kelly, was elected in 1984, and assigned to the San Francisco Area. She retired in

1988. The first Latina bishop was Minerva Carcaño, elected in 2004, and currently assigned to the Phoenix Area.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church consecrated its first female bishop in 2000 (Goodstein front page). Since 2008, three women have served on the Council of Bishops of the AME. Church. In 2010, the official Web site of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church listed its first female to be consecrated a bishop in that denomination.

Women and Strategic Leadership for the Twenty-First Century

James MacGregor Burns suggests that leadership can take one of two forms—transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership occurs when leaders and followers operate in some type of exchange relationship in order to meet their needs. Transactional leadership, both common and transitory, exists when mutual measurable benefit occurs. Writing of Burns' contribution (36, 425-26), Hughes, Ginnet, and Curphy “also noted that while this type of leadership could be quite effective, it did not result in organizational or societal change and instead tended to perpetuate and legitimize the status quo” (632). Transformational leadership occurs when the status quo changes by appealing to followers' values and their sense of higher purpose. Hughes, Ginnet, and Curphy write, “Transformational leaders articulate the problems in the current system and have a compelling vision of what a new society or organization could be” (632-33). In addition, Hughes, Ginnet, and Curphy assert that all transformational leaders are charismatic, but not all charismatic leaders are transformational. These ideas have raised many questions regarding how culture, gender,

situation and other factors influence the effectiveness of either of these two kinds of leadership (411-18).

James G. Clawson sets forth a model for twenty-first century leadership called Level Three Leadership. Level One and Level Two Leadership center on visible action and conscious thought. Level Three Leadership centers on visioning, purpose, honesty, openness and values with a moral foundation. Clawson writes, “Leadership is about managing energy, first in yourself and then in those around you” (3). Although written for the corporate world, Clawson’s work discusses vision, purpose, strategic thinking, and other values helpful for pastors in rapidly changing mission environments. A powerful leader finds a way to harness the energy emanating from changing environment; and through strategic management, he or she produces results that emanate out of Level Three Leadership (3-4).

Further studies provide insight into the kind of leadership needed for the twenty-first century. According to Hughes, Ginnet, and Curphy, a study conducted by The Conference Board, a not-for-profit organization, identified ten critical skills that a 2010 leader should possess (53):

1. Cognitive ability;
2. Strategic thinking from a global perspective;
3. Analytical ability;
4. Ability to make sound decisions;
5. Personal and organizational communication skills;
6. Ability to influence and persuade different groups;
7. Ability to manage in an environment of diversity (e.g., ethnic, religion);

8. Ability to delegate effectively (teamwork);
9. Ability to identify, attract, and retain talented people (empowerment and teamwork); and,
10. Ability to learn from experience.

Cho researched the leadership styles of twelve top women leaders. Although all of the leaders were heads of state in their countries and came from various backgrounds and levels of education, the study could not divide them conclusively into two groups based on either feminine or masculine styles of leadership. Cho writes, “[I]ntegrated or balanced leadership is more successful than either masculine or feminine leadership” (37). Masculine types of leadership exhibit assertiveness, decisiveness, and authority; while feminine types of leadership exhibits care giving, egalitarianism, inclusiveness, and warmth. How these lines of demarcation evolved and the extent of the biblical influence are unknown. Cho discovered that female leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Indira Ghandi demonstrated lower femininity scores than Corason Aquino or Mary Robinson. Nonetheless, each of these women is in the category of highly effective leaders. Cho disputes previous findings that masculine leadership is favored more by both men and women. She concludes that this study partially supports the feminine advocate model of leadership since an integrated leadership style requires femininity as an essential part (44).

Sherry H. Penney, Vinai Norasakkunkit, and Jennifer Leigh researched the type of leaders needed for an urban city in the United States. The most important traits are “leaders who can work in teams, who can manage change, who can function in a global world and who embrace diversity” (57). Recent research by Robert J. House, Paul J.

Hanges, Mansour Javidan, Peter W. Dorfman, and Vipin Gupta involved seventeen thousand middle managers from sixty-two different cultures in order to detect universal dimensions of leadership that cut across cultures and countries. They report six universal dimensions to effective leadership (271). The charismatic dimension refers to the ability to inspire and motivate. Next, the team-oriented dimension refers to the ability to build effective teams and influence their pursuit of a common goal. The participative dimension is the degree to which leaders involve others in decision making. The humane-oriented dimension is the degree to which leaders demonstrate supportive or considerate leadership. Self-protected means the degree to which leaders ensure the safety and security of team members, and the autonomous dimension refers to independent and individualistic leadership (1,676) .

Jim Collins describes Level 5 Leadership as building enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. Furthermore, he suggests that leaders who attain Level 5 function are heads of companies, institutions, churches, or other groups that produce sustained great results. Level 5 Leadership involves humility and strong will (36). The challenge for women desiring active involvement in strategic leadership for the twenty-first century involves creatively combining essential leadership traits that have evolved from the Collins study and studies such as Mary Rearick Paul's evaluation of the common leadership qualities of Nazarene women pastors who have led good to great churches.

Paul obtained results indicating that the top six leadership qualities that arose among Nazarene women pastors are godliness, passion, a relational orientation, hardworking, persistence, and intelligence (108). Paul then compared her top six

leadership qualities with that of the Level 5 qualities listed in Collin's work. Collins' professional will ran parallel to the women's persistence, hard work, and intelligence. Collins' humility ran parallel to women's submission to God's will; their friendly, open, and inclusive attitudes toward church members; and their passion for the vision of the church (Paul 109-16):

The misunderstanding of humility as low self esteem or servility was similar to the negative assumptions of the Greek culture in which Paul's [*the apostle*] letters were written. The humility evident in these pastors as in the case study of Paul did not deny personal intelligence, giftedness, or abilities. Paul did, however, boast about what Christ had done in his weakness. This kind of boasting was common among the pastors. Each pastor consistently said all the growth and health of their churches was the work of God. (134)

Paul's study revealed a struggle by Nazarene female pastors to construct a meaning for humility for their congregations that ran parallel to Collin's definition of humility without compromising strength and effectiveness.

Research Design

I used the research design of triangulation mixed methods, incorporating three types of data sources: surveys, individual interviews, and a focus group. William Wiersma and Stephen G. Jurs define triangulation as "a qualitative cross-validation" (256). The use of this interpretative paradigm helped indicate important characteristics in the lives of the women and helped me determine the rationale of the women by listening to them in their own voices through the individual interviews and the focus group discussion. Triangulation mixed method design facilitates counterbalancing of information; therefore, presents a powerful tool to verify, validate and contextualize quantitative and qualitative data (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 112-14; Wiersma and Jurs 256).

Summary

The reluctance of some clergywomen in Liberia to participate fully in the nonviolent protest action necessitates an evaluation of how these women view their respective calls to ministry. This protest action was sustained through the spiritual disciplines of self-denial, prayer, and fasting. Many Christian clergywomen practice all of these spiritual disciplines. I examined the women's understanding of their spiritual identities and how these identities intersect with the communities in which they live. This research project opened a dialogue in order to stimulate introspection and self-examination.

The ongoing experience of civil unrest and conflict in West Africa has caused great distress to women. As such, women represent the most vulnerable part of society, and they suffer from the dismantling of those social structures that produce stability and peace in their worlds. The research discussed in this review indicates that conflict resolution must include women and their unique ways of doing the work of community building and the preservation of good values for life. History indicates that several female heads of nations (e.g., Ghandi, Aquino, and Chamorro) enjoyed the support of their people because they were expected to carry on the legacy of their fathers or husbands. Other female leaders such as Sirleaf of Liberia came as a means of an alternative choice for peace and restoration after years of political crisis, civil unrest, and male leadership (Cho 32-34). Observations from the political arena apply in the Church. In many instances, male leaders have become the center of controversy and mismanagement of the Church's mission to the world. Jewett calls Galatians 3:28 the "Magna Carta" of Humanity (142). With this term, Jewett affirms that the racism, oppression, and sexism

people have imposed on each other involves a matter of culture more than a matter of theology. The Christian's baptism into Christ by faith reminds him or her, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). The stories of the bold and consummate Judge Deborah (Judg. 5) and the independent-minded Lydia (Acts 16:11-15) reveal models of women willing and able to pursue the challenge of leadership in their respective societies. Every woman who has answered the divine call to serve as a spiritual leader has an imperative to walk in that liberty and add her voice, her strength, and her spirit to effect the radical change needed in the world.

This project explored theological, psychological, social and anthropological implications for women in leadership. This project was set within the context of a region with strong beliefs and cultural influences regarding the status and role of women in society. The extent to which women take action and provide leadership in this region is an ongoing debate, which at times creates tension not only in society but within the women, themselves. The methods used to gather information provide an opportunity to determine how participants understand the issues raised in this project. Regional and global perspectives were essential components of this analytical process.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem

On Christmas Eve in 1989, Charles Taylor and the NPFL, a rebel group, began a civil war that engulfed Liberia for fourteen years ending in August 2003. The civil war became a very fluid and complicated war, at times involving six different warring rebel factions. The war was fought on many front lines throughout the length and breadth of Liberia. By early 2003, Liberia, a nation of 2.6 million people, was completely devastated. Over 200,000 people were dead; 1.2 million had fled the country with the remaining population internally displaced. Thousands of other women and girls were subjected to systematic violence which included sexual assault, repeated rape, sexual slavery, beatings, mutilations and psychological abuse.

Within the aforementioned context, in April 2003, Muslim and Christian women of Liberia assembled to form WOLMAP and began a nonviolent protest that captured the attention of the entire world. At the first mass meeting called by WOLMAP, one important observation stimulated my interest in the subject addressed in this study. Although Christian women constituted the majority of those persons present, a significant number of Muslim women attended, however; very few female pastors or clergywomen were present. WOLMAP is a major defining action that ended fourteen years of civil war in Liberia.

During the protest action, women boldly articulated their needs and became skilled at negotiating and leading. Grassroots, semiliterate, and educated women learned to work together as community activists. The skills learned and networks established

were key elements to the political movement that saw the mass mobilization of women to elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president of Liberia in 2005 as the first-elected female head of state in Africa. The discussion surrounding the role of Liberian clergywomen, the opportunity for evangelism and mission, as well as the women's involvement in community-based social activism arose from the perceptions clergywomen had of their mandate for ministry in Liberia.

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to evaluate the factors influencing the Liberian clergywomen's participation in WOLMAP and how the level of involvement impacted their current levels of leadership roles in the church and as community change agents.

Research Questions

I developed research questions in order to gather statistics regarding clergywomen's levels of participation in WOLMAP and explore the attitudes and perceptions of clergywomen regarding to their roles in social activism, their levels of leadership in the church, and their influence as community change agents. The first four questions on the general survey questionnaire provided demographics of the participants. The individual interviews began with general tour questions regarding the participant's involvement or non-involvement in the protest action. I presented the focus group with an agenda and guidelines to follow. I set discussion time frames to assist participants during the verbal interactions.

Research Question #1

What factors influenced Christian clergywomen's participation or nonparticipation in WOLMAP? This issue is covered under questions 6, 7, 9-12, 14, 15-

17 of the general survey questionnaire; individual interview questions 1, 2, and 6; and, focus group questions 1-4.

Research Question #2

How did the level of involvement of Christian clergywomen in WOLMAP impact their current respective leadership roles in the church? This issue is covered under questions 5-8, 13, 21, 23-25 of the general survey questionnaire, individual interview questions 3 and 5, and focus group questions 2, 3, and 5.

Research Question #3

How did their level of involvement in WOLMAP influence their role as community change agents? This issue is covered under questions 6-8, 18-22 of the general survey questionnaire, individual interview questions 3 and 4, and focus group questions 2 and 5.

Population and Participants

I contacted two prominent Liberian clergywomen, introduced them to this research project and solicited their assistance in providing me a list of women whom I could ask to participate in this project. I also composed a list of clergywomen. An investigation on the research of total population of ordained Liberian clergywomen indicates that there is no census of Liberian clergywomen. However, clergywomen from various Protestant denominations suggest that the number of ordained clergywomen in Liberia does not exceed two hundred of which 65 percent live and minister in the capital city Monrovia. This project study was conducted in the city of Monrovia.

Forty-seven clergywomen were placed on my initial list. Of the forty-seven names, I eliminated seven potential participants because the number of Pentecostal

clergywomen was high. I began working with the forty remaining names. I called each participant by phone, explained to each the research, and then described the process involving the three research instruments: the Katurah York Cooper general survey (KYCGS), the Katurah York Cooper individual interview (KYCII), and the Katurah York Cooper focus group (KYCFG). I discussed the consent form and other ethical procedures. Next, I inquired if they were interested in participating. I told those potential participants who gave initial consent that my research assistant would call and make an appointment for the KYCGS, at which time each participant would read and sign the consent form.

The response was very encouraging. Of the forty clergywomen, thirty agreed to participate. However, the final number of participants was twenty-eight, since two of the thirty clergywomen with whom I spoke ultimately did not participate. The schedule of one potential participant did not permit her involvement, while the other potential participant traveled out of the country before the survey could be completed.

I had already selected and trained three female research assistants. Two of these research assistants were university students majoring in social work, and the third assistant was an office administrator. None of these women were clergywomen. I trained them regarding how to conduct the general survey as well as how to make reflective notes during the interview sessions. Each research assistant received a list of participants with their contact information. The research assistants proceeded to set up appointments. An identification number was assigned to each participant in order to maintain participants' anonymity (see Appendix H). After each visit, each assistant wrote reflective notes regarding her experience. The three assistants divided up the twenty-six clergywomen and administered the KYCGS. The remaining two clergywomen were

bishops, and they requested that I take the KYCGS to them. When I delivered the KYCGSs, they completed the questionnaires.

The next step required me to select ten of the twenty-eight clergywomen to participate in the individual interviews (KYCII). I wanted a balanced representation of various demographic traits; therefore, the answers from the KYCGS provided criteria for selection. I conducted all ten interviews with a research assistant present to take notes.

I went back to the list of twenty-eight participants and selected five clergywomen for the focus group discussion. One of the five did not participate in the personal interviews. The criteria for selection included demonstrating clear articulation of ideas during the personal interviews and the ability to speak with candor and passion. In order to facilitate a variety of views and stimulating conversation, two focus group members were Pentecostal, two members were of the Methodist tradition, and one member was Lutheran. Four members were between 41-55 years old, and one member was over 56 years old. One focus group member was a senior pastor, one member was a minister on staff, one member was a co-pastor along with her husband, and two members were evangelists. Table 3.1 illustrates participants' profiles for individual interviews and the focus group.

Table 3.1. Participants' Profiles for Individual Interviews and Focus Group

| Clergywoman | Title/Position | Education | Marital Status | Age | Denomination |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 001 | Assistant Pastor | Seminary | Married | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 003 * | Pastor | Seminary | Married | 41-55 | AME |
| 010 | Assistant Pastor | Seminary | Married | 30-40 | Wesleyan |
| 011* | Co-Pastor | Seminary | Married | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 012 | Pastor | College | Married | 30-40 | Pentecostal |
| 015 | Minister | Seminary | Married | 56-70 | Baptist |
| 018 | Bishop | High school | Married | 56-70 | Pentecostal |
| 021* | Minister | Seminary | Single | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 024 | Bishop | High school | Widow | 71 and above | Pentecostal |
| 025* | Evangelist | College | Married | 41-55 | AME |
| 026* | Evangelist | Seminary | Married | 56-70 | Lutheran |

* Member of the Focus Group

Design of the Study

For this pre-intervention study, I used a triangulation, mixed-method design with both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. For the intervention, I employed one survey questionnaire, individual interviews, and one focus group as instruments. Quantitative data produced the reasons for participation and nonparticipation and brought out the levels of participation and current status of leadership. Qualitative data evaluated the reasons for participation and nonparticipation, explained how levels of participation impacted leadership in the church, and explored implications for clergywomen as community change agents. All twenty-eight participants completed a general survey followed by individual interviews of ten participants and then by one focus group consisting of five participants. All participants were Liberians.

I designed this research around the three instruments. I utilized the three research questions of this project to produce the first set of questions. The general survey

questionnaire consisted of twenty-five questions, of which four were demographic. The individual interviews consisted of six questions. The focus group consisted of five questions for discussion. Administration of the instruments and gathering of the data took a total of ten weeks. Furthermore, I kept a reflective journal throughout the process. A research assistant was present at each interview and made reflective notes. I subjected the instruments both to quantitative and qualitative analysis. I tabulated the findings in charts and tables. In the final step, I determined outcomes and discussed conclusions with special emphasis on the direct quotes, recurring observations, and key themes and ideas that surfaced from the instruments utilized.

Triangulation mixed method design employs both quantitative and qualitative data. Triangulation is the best method for obtaining the information that leads to the best understanding of research problem of this project because the “strength of this design is that it combines the advantages of each form of data; that is, quantitative data provide for generalizability, whereas qualitative data collection offer information about the context or setting” (Creswell 558). As a research design, triangulation mixed methods facilitates the validation of data through multiple lenses and cross verification among the three data sources. The problem addressed in this study had direct impact on social anthropology and behavior change. Norman K. Denzin determined that “triangulation can take many forms, but its basic feature will be the combination of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical units” (308); hence, triangulation is a powerful tool for validating the data I received from my instruments. By combining these three methods of gathering data, I was able to cross-check as well as to merge data to understand better the results and apply them to the research problem.

The problem of this project has direct impact on social anthropology and behavior change. The nature of the problem necessitated the use of an interpretative paradigm to understand important aspects in women's lives and to help me determine the rationale of the women by listening to them in their own voices through the individual interviews and the focus group discussion.

Instrumentation

This research project included the development of three instruments as part of the design. I designed each, and I developed appropriate measures to support reliability and validity of the instrument.

A general survey questionnaire for all participants provided demographic and other data for statistical analysis (KYCGS; see Appendix C). General surveys are most commonly used instruments for non-experimental quantitative research. Wiersma and Jurs state that this method allows for a study of the incidence, relationships, and distributions of variables without manipulating the variables but studying them as they occur in a natural setting (18). I designed the general survey of this project to obtain data at one point in time from a sample of Liberian clergywomen representing two populations (participants and nonparticipants in the nonviolent protest action). The survey consisted of twenty-one questions and four demographic questions. The questions featured Likert-scale ratings as well as other types of structured selected-response items. This format provided for easier tabulation and synthesis.

The focus group discussion and individual interviews of participants provided qualitative answers concerning reasons for participation and nonparticipation in

nonviolent protest actions as well as perceptions and attitudes toward leadership of clergywomen in the local church and in their communities.

Individual interviews represented an effective means of obtaining information because they afforded a higher probability of more accurate responses to items, an opportunity for deeper understanding and elaboration, and better coverage of all items under consideration. Each individual interview consisted of six questions. I conducted the individual interviews with ten participants over a two-week period. The ten participants included participants and nonparticipants in the nonviolent protest as well as bishops, pastors, and other categories of clergywomen. Each individual interview consisted of six open-ended questions KYCII (see Appendix D). I conducted and recorded each one-on-one interview. The average time was forty minutes. The participants came from the same pool of twenty-eight clergywomen who participated in the general survey, allowing participants to elaborate on some topics covered in the general survey and helping me probe further the feelings and perceptions of the interviewee. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in the presence of a research assistant.

Focus group method addressed research questions requiring a depth of understanding not available through quantitative methods. As such, this method facilitated access to background information and to the diagnoses of problems. Through focus group interaction, new ideas may surface and new hypotheses generated. The focus group consisted of five persons, and I guided the discussions with five general question topics (KYCFG; see Appendix E). I selected five persons from the original twenty-eight based on availability, level of understanding of the project study, candor in answering the questions and diversity of denomination. Respondents received written invitations and a

specific, set time (see Appendix F). I recorded the focus group session. I made handwritten notes while a research assistant was present to make her reflection notes. For a one to two-hour period, ideas and unhindered interaction ensued among participants. Focus groups explicitly used group interaction as part of the method. Therefore, instead of my asking each person to respond to a question in turn, I encouraged the women to talk with one another, ask questions, and comment on each other's experiences and points of view. My role was to ensure that group conversation covered the five areas and control the amount of time and the significance given to each area.

Expert Review

All three instruments underwent an expert review. I selected six persons (three women and three men) as expert reviewers. Two of the women were university vice presidents, and the third was a pastor. One of the men was a university vice president for Research Development, one was a pastor, and the other was a seminary PhD student. Each reviewer received a package containing a letter of request with the three research questions, a copy of the abstract, the three instruments, expert review analysis forms, and an envelope in which to place all materials. I asked the reviewers to analyze the questions and tell me which ones were needed/unneeded or clear/unclear. Reviewers suggested ways to clarify questions in order to address adequately the problem in this project. The reviewers had four to seven days to complete the work and return all materials in the envelope provided for that purpose. I collected the responses and used them to refine and adjust the instruments. I then produced the final instruments for this research.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity refer to the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research. This project dealt with one intact and defined group: clergywomen. To maintain the integrity of the results, all participants in the three instruments belonged to the same population defined as *clergywomen* in this project. All participants had to live in Liberia during the time of the nonviolent protest action, and they belonged to two populations: participants and nonparticipants in the protest action.

Reliability. This research project can be repeated under the conditions described in this research. It also could be replicated in another country (such as Sierra Leone) that has undergone a civil war and where women conducted a nonviolent protest action. Detailed information on the entire process of the research emanated from the instruments I used, my reflective journal, and the notes made by my research assistants. I am a Liberian clergywoman, so I sought to minimize my own personal biases through peer review of two readers and mentor supervision. I confirmed my conclusions by tracing them back to the quantitative and qualitative data. Furthermore, I enhanced reliability by using only female clergy leaders. In addition, this study considered two specific populations of female clergy leaders—the participants and the nonparticipants in the nonviolent protest action. The women all lived in Liberia during the war. I used multiple data-collection instruments and mixed method triangulation which enhanced reliability (Wiersma and Jurs 265) of this project study.

I produced all instruments thereby assuring reliability. All respondents followed the same prescribed process. My research assistants delivered general survey questions in sealed envelopes to respondents and research assistants collected the questions. I

conducted all interviews (both the individual interviews and the focus group), thereby ensuring uniformity in method and approach throughout the research. Research assistants sat in on interviews and make independent written observations. Two peer readers were involved in the qualitative analysis process. Each reader analyzed the transcribed recordings and independently identified similar and/or recurrent themes and ideas. I received that information and incorporated it into my analysis. I handled all of the data.

Validity. I validated the results from the three instruments used. I submitted all three of the research instruments to a process of expert review, and I selected reviewers based on their respective areas of expertise in their familiarity with the context of the study. Each reviewer received a letter of invitation explaining this study along with the instruments to be evaluated. To facilitate the process, I provided forms for reviewers to make suggestions to improve/clarify questions as necessitated. Reviewers had a deadline to return reviews. I carefully assessed the comments and made revisions where applicable. Based on the process just described, I produced final instruments for use by the participants.

I constructed the focus group and the individual interview questions from topics covered under the general survey questions. Research assistants and I transcribed tapes of the interview sessions. I used the same procedure with the focus group. The focus group helped me evaluate and interpret quantitative data results. Conclusions evolved from the intersection of statistical results of the quantitative analysis and direct quotes from transcribed qualitative instruments. I identified common trends and persistent themes as well as notable divergent views.

Increasing rigor and trustworthiness of the findings were essential for the integrity of this project. This integrity resulted from using more than one type of analysis to strengthen the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings via methodological triangulation (i.e., consistency among qualitative analytic procedures).

Data Collection

I designed three instruments for data collection for the purposes of this project. The data collection process involved three phases, with overlap of phase one and phase two. Phase one consisted of the participants' demographic and general survey. Phase two consisted of the individual interviews of the sample population from the twenty-eight participants, and phase three consisted of the focus group of a sample population.

The three phases took a total of eight weeks and involved a total of twenty-eight respondents/participants. Clergywomen received a first contact by telephone. Those clergywomen who consented to participate received a Consent Form and a General Survey questionnaire consisting of twenty-five questions. Each clergywoman received an identification number. This number was placed on all documents connected to that particular respondent. I allowed respondents up to one week from receipt of questionnaires to complete the survey. Two research assistants hand delivered and collected the completed survey questionnaires. Concurrent with the general survey process, I moved on to the second phase in the data collection: the individual interviews.

I interviewed ten other women individually and recorded each interview. The individual interviews consisted of six questions. Each interview took approximately forty minutes. The participants came from the same pool of twenty-eight persons who participated in the general survey. The interview began with an overview of the purpose

of the project and a review of issues of confidentiality. Then I asked each interviewee to respond verbally to six open-ended questions. When necessary, I asked additional questions to facilitate clearer understanding of responses. After each interview, my research assistants and I transcribed the audiotape into a written document. The individual interview comprised the second phase of the data collection process. This phase took a total of three weeks.

Five clergywomen participated in a focus group discussion consisting of five questions. The participants received notification by letter and a specific time and place set. The focus group met at the Empowerment Temple AME Church on a Saturday evening in a private room. I served a light snack and punch, and during this time the five clergywomen introduced themselves. I introduced the research assistant and explained the reason for her presence. I reminded them of the purpose of the project and I reemphasized the issues of confidentiality. I presented the agenda at that time. After about ten minutes, the verbal interactions began. The discussion centered on the five questions; however, I allowed opportunity for other ideas to surface. I recorded the focus group session. Over a one to two-hour period, a free flow of ideas and unhindered interaction ensued among participants. My role involved ensuring that the five areas were covered while allowing for flexibility for time spent on a particular question. Because of the volume of taped information, the transcription process took two weeks. Two peer readers (not involved in the research) read and reviewed the transcripts. The peer readers provided additional, independent analysis of the themes and ideas raised in the transcripts. After two weeks, I received the written notations of the peer readers. This peer review completed the third phase of the data collection process.

I also kept a personal reflective journal during the entire data collection process. This journal enabled me to preserve information to enhance the interpretation and analysis of information from the interviews and focus group. The reflective journal served as a tool for separating my own thoughts and feelings and for recording assumptions, insights, and ideas gathered during the research process.

Data Analysis

I used descriptive statistics to analyze the results from the general survey. The number of participants in the general survey produced a sufficient sample size for the application of descriptive analytical tools. The data contained demographic and other information analyzed to determine the frequency distribution of different categories of participants and nonparticipants in the nonviolent protest action. Data analysis included calculation of the most frequently occurring value as well as the median range of values. I produced a pie chart for each of the twenty-five survey questions. I determined the frequency of response to each question. I then grouped the responses from the twenty-five questions according to each research question. Finally, I calculated percentages along with the frequencies of response.

Descriptive statistics, applied in an inferential way, helped me to determine what might be happening in the population based on a sample of the population and to determine what might happen in the future. The incidence, distribution, and relationships of anthropological, religious, and psycho sociological variables from responses underwent quantitative analysis using charts and tables for illustrative purposes.

I analyzed the qualitative data obtained from focus groups and individual interviews based on validated patterns, themes, and categories. KWIC, and classical content analysis provided analysis.

I converted the large amount of data obtained from the individual interviews and the focus group into computer-generated documents and gave them to two independent peer readers for analysis. In addition, I applied several steps of analysis. I listened to the recordings several times. I read the transcripts and placed all respondents' answers to the same question in one document. I placed all the data from each question into one document. Next, I focused my qualitative analysis to consider the manner in which all respondents answered a specific question in order to identify consistencies and differences. I subjected both of the qualitative instruments to these procedures. I cross-checked the responses to each question against this project's three research questions. Next, I categorized the information into similar words in context, recurrent themes and patterns in order to identify ideas, concepts, perceptions and attitudes. A process of color-coding followed, with categories arising from the responses. I searched for and identified those categories that answered this project's research questions while taking note of other categories that did not appear to fit into the general purpose of this project. This latter group of categories formed part of the discussion of the findings.

The data analysis involved cross-checking within quantitative data and cross-checking within qualitative data, as well as cross-checking between quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data provided statistics, while the qualitative data provided reasons and an explanation for these statistics. Finally, I sorted this data and

used important themes and significant connections to produce the important findings of this project.

Ethical Procedures

The integrity of the responses from the clergywomen participants was crucial to the purpose of this study. Research questions dealt with the participants' attitudes and perceptions during a critical time in Liberia. For these reasons, I carefully followed ethical procedures in order to establish trust, transparency, and maximum cooperation. These ethical procedures involved the following precautions:

1. I invited the participants by letter, outlining the purpose of the research.
2. I asked the participants to complete consent forms, which granted me the use of anonymous quotes in the dissertation as well as in future publications (see Appendix F).
3. I assured the participants of anonymity; however, the participants were informed that descriptions would be used to create context.
4. I encouraged the participants to be completely honest regarding their views and that I would present their views in the report regardless of whether they agreed with my view.
5. I respected the privacy of the participants and agreed the participants could withdraw at any time for any reason.
6. I informed participants that a research assistant, my mentor, and I would view the data collected.
7. I informed participants that the data (questionnaires and audiotapes) would be stored properly and securely by me.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

The year 2003 is very significant to Liberians. In 2003, thousands of Liberian women responded to the increasingly violent and devastating civil war by participating in a nonviolent protest action that lasted over four months. This protest action (WOLMAP) was intended solely to end the civil war. However, WOLMAP was unique. A thirty-two-year-old Christian single mother, Leymah Gbowee, was the leader. WOLMAP was characterized by religious disciplines such as prayer, fasting, all-night vigils, as well as social protest actions such as sit-ins, picketing, marches, rallies, protest speeches, and peace negotiations. Both Christian and Muslim women united in religious and secular activities in protest to the destructive civil war.

In July 2003, the fourteen-year civil war ended with the signing of a Peace Accord in Accra, Ghana, and with the formation of an interim government that would lead the country to peaceful democratic elections in 2005. A woman won the elections. Johnson-Sirleaf, a grandmother, trained economist, and long-time human rights activist, became the first African female to be elected president of a nation. Liberia held her second post-war election in October 2011. Elections were peaceful, with Johnson-Sirleaf returning to leadership in Liberia for another six years. The 2011 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Johnson-Sirleaf and Gbowee “for their nonviolent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work” (“The Nobel Peace Prize 2011”). Following the events described above, most people, both Liberians and non-Liberians alike, assert that the sustained activities of the Liberian women

through WOLMAP brought a decisive end to the civil war. As such, WOLMAP propelled many Liberian women into political and other leadership roles and enhanced the influence of Liberian women in their communities.

Many clergywomen did not join the gathering of the women when they sat in protest, marched in picket lines, or spoke out against the war. The absence of a significant number of Liberian clergywomen from these activities raised a discussion about clergywomen's attitudes to WOLMAP. Accordingly, this research project investigated Liberian clergywomen's level of participation in WOLMAP and provided an opportunity to explore the attitudes and perceptions of clergywomen through general surveys, personal interviews, and focus group discussion. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the factors influencing the Liberian clergywomen's participation in WOLMAP and how the level of participation impacted their current level of leadership roles in the church and as community change agents

Participant Summary

The participants consisted of twenty-eight clergywomen residing in Liberia (see Appendix H; see Table 3.1, p. 58). These women served as pastors of a congregation, lead a denomination as bishop, oversaw the work of several congregations as the founder of a Christian ministry, or served as an ordained clergyperson other than the pastor in a local church.

I selected these women based on their levels of leadership and the scope of their influence in their churches. I attempted to select women from various denominations. The only two female bishops in Liberia were included. Both women became bishops after the nonviolent protest action of 2003. I along with two other prominent clergywomen

developed the list of participants for this project.. Each participant received an invitation by letter and phone conversation (see Appendix F). I set a goal for at least 50 percent of the participants to be pastors. Out of twenty-eight respondents, thirteen (or 46 percent) were pastors heading the local church. The remaining participants consisted of assistant pastors, evangelists, and leaders of ministries or parachurch organizations. I did not require participants to have a seminary degree or any formal theological training, but participants had to live in Liberia during the time of the nonviolent protest action and be involved in ministry at that time.

Research Question #1

The first research question considered the factors influencing clergywomen's participation or non-participation in WOLMAP. I defined participation as involvement in any one or more of these activities: sitting, picketing, negotiating, attending all-night prayer vigils organized by WOLMAP, fasting and praying with WOLMAP, and mobilizing women from churches and communities to join WOLMAP. The KYCGS (general survey) Question 6 asked each clergywoman to classify herself as either a participant or nonparticipant. Of the twenty-eight participants who completed the general survey, twenty-four self-reported as participants, representing 86 percent. The response to KYCGS Question 7 indicated that seventeen (35 percent) received invitations to participate in WOLMAP through letters or by personal invitation. Ten participants (21 percent) actually saw the women sitting in protest and decided to participate in one or more of WOLMAP's activities. In question 9 of the general survey, participants gave nine possible reasons/factors for participation. Twenty-one of the twenty-four

respondents agreed that the primary influencing factor was a desperate desire to end the war. Jestina, assistant pastor of a Wesleyan church, echoed this sentiment in her KYCII:

[T]he side that was stronger was for the end of the war, for peace to be restored in the country and stability. Though, what was done had some biblical backings but the main thing was for peace to come because everyone on that field was not all Christians.

Two other factors dominated the responses. Twenty respondents described their belief that their sense of Christian duty compelled them to participate. A belief in participation as the right thing to do was the third factor. Out of sixty-nine responses, only 2 percent identified hatred for the government as an influencing factor.

Qualitative data from individual interviews and focus group revealed two additional factors not included in the general survey. One clergywoman was motivated to join WOLMAP's activities to garner support for a particular political party. The other clergywoman saw joining WOLMAP as an opportunity to evangelize Muslim women and other non-Christian women who were part of WOLMAP.

I wanted to know what mindset influenced the participation or non-participation of clergywomen. Although four clergywomen classified themselves as nonparticipants; all four strongly agreed or agreed that WOLMAP contributed to ending the war.

Participants' answers to questions 11, 12, 14, 16, and 17 of KYCGS demonstrated that an average of 78 percent of the twenty-eight respondents agreed that WOLMAP activities had biblical support and was more a spiritual religious movement than a civil protest movement, while 100 percent agreed that WOLMAP contributed to bringing peace to Liberia

The interviews with ten clergywomen reinforced this data, which identified a dominant theme of WOLMAP as a spiritual movement. When asked whether WOLMAP

was more a Christian/biblically supported action or a civil human rights action (KYCII question 1), all ten individual respondents characterized WOLMAP as biblically supported. Charlotte, a Baptist minister said that she “ saw the biblical strength because everything that was done there was not exactly fighting for human rights. It was like putting their entire trust in God, depending on him to fight on your behalf, depending on him....” Theresa, a Pentecostal Pastor made these remarks:

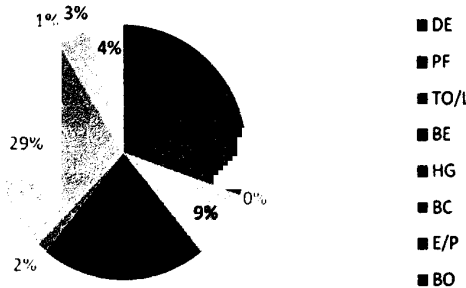
I think that’s what happened because of the prayers of the women, crying to God on their bellies. Some of us, sometimes we used to fast to call on God and I believed that because of that we have peace in our nation today....

Two respondents described their initial impressions of WOLMAP as a social activist movement; however, they reported quickly changing their perceptions. The assistant pastor of the third largest Pentecostal church in Liberia described such a changing perception regarding WOLMAP.

When I started affiliating with the women at first, I saw it more on the social activism level because it was clear that it was not only Christian women that were being raped and killed but it was Liberian women. I saw it my duty to take part from that social national perspective.

Figure 4.1, Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 summarize the results from the questionnaires as related to the factors influencing participation in WOLMAP.

KYCGS Q9: What best describes your reason for participation?



| DE | PF | TO/L | BE | HG | BC | E/P | BO | CO |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Desperate to end war | Persuaded by friends | Trusted organizers | Believe it was right thing | Hatred for government | Believe it was Christian duty | Encouraged by male figure | Boredom/curiosity | Member of civic organization |

Figure 4.1. Distribution of factors influencing participation of twenty-four clergywomen (naming more than one reason/factor in order of importance; n=69).

Table 4.1. Top Three Reasons for Participation in WOLMAP (N=69)

| Factors/Reasons | N | % |
|----------------------------------|----|----|
| Desperate for end to war (peace) | 21 | 30 |
| Believe it was a Christian duty | 20 | 29 |
| Believe it was right thing to do | 15 | 22 |

Table 4.2. Perceptions That Influence Participation in WOLMAP

| Perceptions (strongly agreed & agreed) | N | % |
|--|----|-----|
| Christian movement | 21 | 75 |
| Led by Christian women | 24 | 85 |
| Prayer/fasting important | 21 | 71 |
| Biblical support | 23 | 82 |
| Contributed to peace | 28 | 100 |

The next issue dealt with factors influencing non-participation. All twenty-eight respondents examined nine possible reasons for nonparticipation covered by question 10 of KYCGS. Each respondent rated the reasons according to importance. Although four clergywomen classified themselves as nonparticipants, I found that two clergywomen in the participant category also selected reasons for non-participation. This phenomenon necessitated a further investigation into what the women understood *participation* to mean.

Three key reasons for nonparticipation emerged from the quantitative data. The primary factor involved the lack of a personal invitation. Clergywomen explained that a personal invitation would have provided them with a clear understanding of the goals of WOLMAP. The second factor concerned the presence of Muslim women carrying out Islamic religious rituals and prayers alongside Christian women. The third key factor focused on the other responsibilities that busy clergywomen faced.

One interviewee, a bishop, stated that she actually had no idea what the women were doing. She noticed the women sitting in the open field, and she remembered seeing them praying. Nonetheless, no one explained to her the purpose of these actions. She did not receive an invitation letter; therefore, she decided not to participate in their activities, and she did not encourage her church branches to participate. Only much later did she fully understand the goals of WOLMAP. However, while this factor ranked highest in the general survey, the qualitative data indicates that the strongest reason for nonparticipation was the presence of Muslim women in spiritual activities of WOLMAP.

Ten clergywomen responded to question 6 of the individual interview, through which I sought to discover the strongest reason for clergywomen's decision not to

participate in WOLMAP. Nine out of ten participants mentioned the integration of Muslim and Christian spiritual activities. Bishop Davies' response was particularly emphatic.

[O]n the line of having Muslims and Christians together praying, I think it was not right. It was not right at all. Probably, it would have been one of the major reasons why some clergy women did not go there. I would not have gone there.

Bishop Roberts concurred, "I feel different groups should have their own prayers. They should have joined separately not together because all of them mixed together with different ideologies and perspectives." Comments from the interviews and focus group included the following statement: "The strongest reason a clergy woman will see and that she will say she does not want to participate is that, the chemistry of the group. Some will say this is not just totally Christian thing." One interviewee asked this question: "How can Mohammed and Jesus be together? I think that was the reason that kept me away at first.... Not many women could accept it in a way but I later I did." Statistics from individual interviews and focus group showed eight out of eleven respondents expressing discomfort with Muslim and Christian women praying together, yet the general survey shows that 78 percent of all of the twenty-eight respondents were convinced that the biblical Scripture supported WOLMAP, identified the movement as a Christian movement, and deemed participation the right course of action.

A significant number of clergywomen said they were too busy with ministerial or other duties; therefore, they did not participate in WOLMAP. Charlotte never sat with the women nor attended any activities:

Where I worked I was not afforded the opportunity to be there when I wanted to be there. Perhaps based on their [other clergywomen] own

doctrine or maybe their scope of work that would not afford them the opportunity to be there.

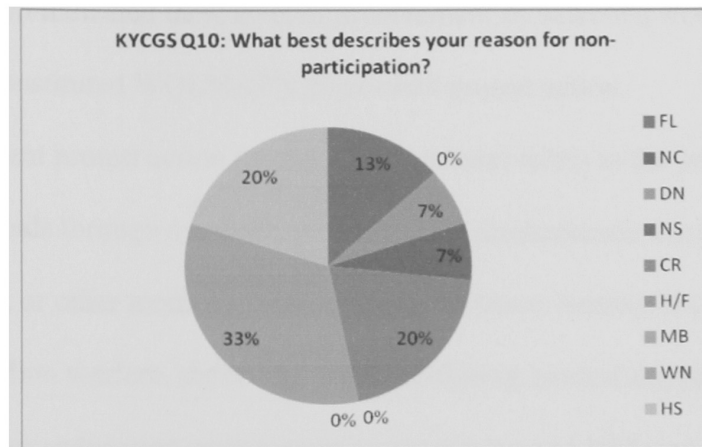
The individual interviews and focus group revealed additional factors not included in the general survey. These additional factors were not the views of the majority; however, participants espousing these views expressed said views very passionately. Out of ten women interviewed, three expressed strong concern regarding the lifestyle of the leaders/organizers of WOLMAP. These clergywomen questioned the spiritual integrity of WOLMAP's non-clergy leadership. One respondent said, "The immoral life was one of the strongest reasons for some clergy women to stay back because those who were leading had problems with their private life." Another emerging factor concerned the issue of women gathering in an open public field to pray. Three of ten women interviewed questioned this practice. One participant questioned the sanity of the protestors:

[A]re they sound [sane] or not sound [insane], sitting down under the rain. Why you can't pray to God in your home. You have to come in the street now. What are they trying to prove? Well I will just stay home and pray. I will just pray.

Bishop Davies questioned the protestors' choice of an open public field as their venue:

Sitting out there in the open field where people passing and seeing them, for such a time I think it was unnecessary as Christians. Believers [should be] sitting indoors and gathering together as a body of Christ and praying. I am not saying they were not doing it in faith. What I am saying is that we should have done it inside instead on the open field.

Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3 present the data illustrating the range of views of clergywomen on their nonparticipation in WOLMAP.



| FL | NC | DN | NS | CR | H/F | MB | WN | HS |
|------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fear | Not convinced | Distrust organizers | No strong biblical belief | Church responsibilities | Husband/father discouraged | Male bishop pastor discouraged | No personal invitation | Muslim women presence |

Figure 4.2. Distribution of factors influencing nonparticipation of six clergywomen (naming more than one reason/factor in order of importance; n=15).

Table 4.3. Top Three Reasons for Nonparticipation in WOLMAP (N=15)

| Factors/Reasons | N | % |
|------------------------------|---|----|
| No personal invitation | 5 | 33 |
| Presence of Muslim women | 3 | 20 |
| Ministerial responsibilities | 3 | 20 |

Research Question #2

Research question two sought to determine how the level of involvement of clergywomen in WOLMAP impacted their current respective leadership roles in the church. The result from KYCGS question 6 indicated that twenty-four out of twenty-eight respondents (86 percent) classified themselves as participants in WOLMAP. Question 8 sought to determine the level of participants' involvement in WOLMAP.

Respondents then indicated their level of involvement by selecting from a list of various activities that constituted WOLMAP's nonviolent protest action.

Nonviolent protest action (or nonviolent action) refers to the practice of achieving sociopolitical goals through symbolic protests, civil disobedience, economic or political noncooperation, or other methods, without using violence. Nonviolent resistance tactics include information warfare, picketing, vigils, leafleting, protest art, protest music and poetry, community education, and consciousness raising and lobbying. Nonviolent protest action referred to in this research project consisted of methods described above, including prayer candlelight vigils, chanting, fasting, and praying.

In order to present a clear understanding of the levels of involvement of clergywomen, I designated two categories of activities that constituted the nonviolent protest action of WOLMAP. Category Level R consists of religious-focused activities such as prayer candlelight vigils, chanting, fasting and praying, and mobilizing church members. Category Level S consists of social activist-focused activities such as information warfare, sitting, picketing, leafleting, protest art, protest music and poetry, community education, consciousness raising, and lobbying.

Of the twenty-four participants, thirteen were involved in Category Level R activities, representing 54 percent. Of the twenty-four participants, eight were involved in Category Level S activities, representing 33 percent. Three remaining participants were unclear about their level of involvement.

I did not ascribe prominence to Category Levels. However, the statistics from general survey questions 9 and 10, and responses from the individual interviews and focus group revealed clergywomen's feelings that Category Level S represented a higher

level of involvement. A clergywoman explained, “We knew that one of the main ways that people contributed to the nonviolent peace protest was to go out there to sit and cry on the field. I was not really involved in that exact aspect.” A co-pastor said, “They [clergywomen] were not really interested to go deep with where we went. They were more spiritually straight into the church. Most of the clergy women were not too involved.” Another participant’s comments highlighted the prominence some of the women attributed to Category Level S responses:

Fasting and praying alone cannot do. For one fact if those women had just sat on the field and prayed and fasted, we could not have gone where we went. We could not be where we are to today. But they went they prayed, they fasted, they marched with placards ... they were sitting....

Table 4.4. illustrates that clergywomen, by their responses, ascribed different levels of importance to the various activities of the non-violent protest actions of WOLMAP.

Table 4.4. Levels of Involvement of Twenty-Four Clergywomen Classified as Participants in WOLMAP

| | Nonviolent Protest Activities | Category Level R n | Category Level S N | Neither Category n |
|------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| OL | Organizer/leader | | 3 (included in SP population) | |
| SP | Sitting/picketing/lobbying | | 8 | |
| CM | Community mobilization | | 5 (included in SP population) | |
| HP | Hosted prayers/vigils/fasting | 13 | | |
| OC | Organized church women | 9 (included in HP population) | | |
| GM/O | Give money only/other | | | 3 |
| % | | 54 | 33 | 13 |

I tracked the eight participants in Category Level S to determine how their levels of involvement impacted their current respective leadership roles in the church. General survey question 5 asked if the clergywoman received any leadership promotion in her church since 2003. If the clergywoman acknowledged a promotion, I then asked the participant to state the promotion. All of the eight participants in Category Level S received leadership promotion.. I then reviewed the four nonparticipants' information to determine whether they received leadership promotions All four had received leadership promotion since 2003. Twenty-four of twenty-eight clergywomen received leadership promotions since 2003, which represents 86 percent of the population surveyed (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Summary of Clergywomen Receiving Leadership Promotions

| Clergywoman ID # | Leadership Promotion | Category Level |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 003 | Appointed senior pastor | S |
| 004 | Appointed conference officer | S |
| 005 | Appointed to head ministry in local church | S |
| 011 | Appointed co-pastor with husband | S |
| 014 | Established church and appointed senior pastor | S |
| 021 | Appointed to head ministry in local church | S |
| 025 | Appointed to head ministry in local church | S |
| 026 | Appointed as assistant pastor | S |
| 007 | Yes. Appointed assistant pastor | nonparticipant |
| 012 | Yes. Appointed pastor | nonparticipant |
| 013 | Yes. Appointed senior pastor | nonparticipant |
| 024 | Yes. Became a bishop | nonparticipant |

I asked clergywomen about the impact of WOLMAP on current leadership status of women. KYCGS questions 13, 21, 23, and 24 provided data. An average of 90 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the leadership status of clergywomen was enhanced in the church. Twenty-four women agreed that the activities of WOLMAP had a direct positive impact on the advancement of clergywomen in church leadership (see Table 4.5).

Questions 5 in both the individual interview and the focus group sought to determine whether WOLMAP caused an increased acceptance of clergywomen into leadership positions in the Liberian church. Eight out of eleven participants answered in the affirmative. The assistant pastor and wife of the bishop of a Pentecostal church described the rise of clergywomen in the church:

I believe that female clergy women got a major boost. I think that male denomination leaders are now more open to ordination and recognition of women. It is something that God has done. Even though women have always been active in the church but they were not recognized and it was like “what can they do?” But after 2003, the whole world saw what women could do and what women can do.

Two clergywomen (Wesleyan and Baptist) admitted that their denominations had no female pastors. These women pursued degrees in religious education. According to one participant, “[F]emales were allowed to preach but will not reach to the status of being a reverend and being charge of a church.” Charlotte, a Baptist, said, “Presently, we have fifteen of them [female pastors] since 2003. In 1990, we had three.” Jestina, a Wesleyan, said: “In 2005, I was ordained, the first female Liberian minister. The young people now are going to the Seminary, not to do religious education as we did, but theology.” In contrast, transcribed recordings revealed that out of eleven interviewed women, two participants said that WOLMAP’s activities had a significant impact on the rise of

clergywomen leaders in their denomination, explaining that women in leadership are supported by their churches (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 . Impact of WOLMAP on Current Leadership Status of Clergywomen in the Church

| Question | Agree/strongly agree (n) | % |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| Q. # 13. There is more support of women leaders in the church. (N=28) | 26 | 93 |
| Q. # 21. Women leadership in nonviolent protest action made them more acceptable and capable leaders in society. (N=26) | 23 | 88 |
| Q. # 23. Since 2003, there has been a significant increase in clergywomen as pastors in my denomination. (N=28) | 23 | 82 |
| Q. # 24. I see more clergywomen enrolling in seminary in my denomination as compared to 1990-2003. (N=27) | 26 | 93 |
| Average | 25 | 90 |

Research Question # 3

Research question three considered the manner in which participants' respective levels of involvement in WOLMAP influenced their roles as community change agents. As indicated previously, twenty-four clergywomen were involved in WOLMAP at different levels, with 54 percent involved in Category R Level activities and 33 percent involved in Category S Level activities (see Table 4.4). As a grassroots movement, WOLMAP had a large base of community support. Often persons with great influence upon community residents lead these communities. Many community leaders became political leaders during post-war Liberia.

With research question 3, I sought to explore the impact of WOLMAP upon clergywomen's involvement as community leaders. The responses to KYCGS questions

18-20 and 22 provided data for this research question. An average of 85 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their involvement or non-involvement in WOLMAP enhanced clergywomen's role as community change agents (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Impact of WOLMAP on Clergywomen Roles as Community Change Agents

| Question | Agree/strongly agree (n) | % |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| Q. # 18. WOLMAP protest action played a significant role in the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2003. (N=28) | 24 | 86 |
| Q. # 19. More women expressed desire to become elected leaders as a result of WOLMAP protest action. (N=27) | 22 | 81 |
| Q. # 20. More women were elected into political leadership as a result of WOLMAP protest action. (N=28) | 23 | 82 |
| Q. # 22. Female clergywomen are more involved in social activism now as compared to before 1990-2003. (N=26) | 22 | 85 |
| Average | 23 | 85 |

Nine of the ten clergywomen who participated in the individual interviews viewed clergywomen as more involved in community and social activism, regardless of their level of participation in WOLMAP. Prior to 2003, clergywomen exhibited very limited interest in running for political office or establishing community social programs. These clergywomen generally focused on the spiritual disciplines of prayer meetings, all-night vigils and Bible study. One respondent was quick to explain:

I think I saw a lot of change, a big change in our feminine circle. The role that the women played in the peace process really enhanced women's ability out there into the public sector, private sector, religious sector, etc.

When asked if respondents knew any clergywomen who became actively involved as community change agents, they gave several examples.

Aunty Mary was a minister in a local church and the leader of a prayer circle; after 2003, she became the community leader because she pursued donors to establish hand pumps and water sanitation units in her community. Another female clergy established a program to reintegrate child soldiers into society. As of completion of this project, this participant was a superintendent, or county executive, and she continues her pastoral work. A respondent was appointed in 2004 to the Independent National Commission on Human Rights while actively serving as the senior pastor of a church. Another respondent presently serves as Chaplain to the House of Senate. She said, “The exposure of clergy women is very high. The fear of not taking position is leaving. Women are free in many things now both spiritual and secular arena.” Bishop Davies said, “I see most [clergy]women coming up now especially the young ones with that spirit of getting up to help others [do community work].... [I]n my field, it seems majority of them want to get out there into politics.” In addition, respondents spoke about the many clergywomen who attached themselves to NGOs and international NGOs as project managers and program managers of community based social empowerment projects. Three of the ten interviewees were employed by an NGO as of the completion of this project.

Table 4.8 presents a tabulation of results covering all three research questions. This table indicates that the views expressed in interviews and the focus group discussion is supported by the statistics from the general survey questionnaire.

Table 4.8. Aggregate of Responses from KYCGS Questions 11-24 (N=28)

| KYCGS Question # | Research Question Addressed | Per Question | | Agree/strongly agree | | Disagree/Strongly Disagree | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------------------|----|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 11. Christian movement | 1 | 26 | 92 | 21 | 81 | 5 | 19 |
| 12. Movement led by Christians | 1 | 27 | 96 | 24 | 88 | 3 | 12 |
| 13. Increase support for women leaders | 2 | 28 | 100 | 26 | 93 | 2 | 7 |
| 14. Movement biblically supported | 1 | 26 | 92 | 23 | 88 | 3 | 12 |
| 15. Movement not against the Bible | 1 | 25 | 89 | 3 | 12 | 22 | 88 |
| 16. Prayers/fasting best means to overcome injustice | 1 | 27 | 96 | 21 | 77 | 6 | 23 |
| 17. Movement brought peace/end of war | 1 | 28 | 100 | 28 | 100 | 0 | |
| 18. Movement significant to election of Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf | 3 | 28 | 100 | 24 | 85 | 4 | 15 |
| 19. More women desire elective office | 3 | 26 | 92 | 22 | 85 | 4 | 15 |
| 20. More women elected into political office | 3 | 28 | 100 | 23 | 82 | 5 | 18 |
| 21. Women more acceptable as leaders | 2 and 3 | 26 | 92 | 23 | 88 | 3 | 12 |
| 22. Increase in social activism among women | 3 | 25 | 89 | 22 | 88 | 3 | 12 |
| 23. Increase in clergywomen promotion as pastors | 2 | 28 | 100 | 23 | 82 | 5 | 18 |
| 24. Increase in clergywomen in seminary | 2 | 27 | 96 | 26 | 96 | 1 | 4 |

Summary of Major Findings

Twenty-eight clergywomen participated in this research project by providing answers to three research instruments. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative results produced six major findings.

The research project produced six major findings:

1. **Clergywomen felt connected to the work of WOLMAP mainly from a religious perspective and less from a social protest perspective.** Most of the clergywomen classified as participants were not involved in what I have described as Category Level S activities (i.e., sitting, picketing, marches, lobbying). These clergywomen hosted prayer services and engaged in other spiritual activities that supported WOLMAP's goals and served as a driving force for success. Clergywomen explained that WOLMAP was led by Christians and had biblical support.

2. **The main reason for clergywomen participation in WOLMAP was their desire for the war to end.** In 2003, Liberia was in complete chaos. Clergywomen felt that WOLMAP presented the only viable way out of a very terrible situation in Liberia. Other strategies over the years had failed to end the war. Most of the clergywomen described participation as the right course of action. They perceived adequate biblical support for nonviolent protest action to end the war.

3. **A key reason for clergywomen nonparticipation was lack of personal invitation and insufficient information about WOLMAP.** WOLMAP began its activities in the midst of a fourteen-year civil war. Liberians were living in a climate of suspicion, distrust and social apathy. Clergywomen were reluctant to participate in any movement that did not seem to have known, credible leadership. As the goals of

WOLMAP became clearer, other dynamics kept clergywomen from joining. One such reason concerned WOLMAP's non-clergy leadership.

4. **Most clergywomen (participants and nonparticipants) expressed discomfort with the presence of Muslim women in WOLMAP.** As Muslim women were encouraged to join, clergywomen became critical of the spiritual integrity of WOLMAP. Clergywomen questioned the practice of Christians and Muslims praying together and fasting together. Some clergywomen who initially sat with the group stopped sitting in the field when they observed the presence of Muslim women, and went back to holding prayer services at their churches.

5. **Both participants and nonparticipants believe WOLMAP influenced the rise of clergywomen to leadership within the Liberian church.** WOLMAP inspired clergywomen to aspire to leadership. WOLMAP also motivated churches to give clergywomen more leadership opportunities. I found that the nonparticipation of clergywomen in WOLMAP did not prevent them from receiving leadership promotions and benefitting from the wave of leadership opportunities available.

6. **Both participants and nonparticipants agreed that WOLMAP inspired clergywomen to become community leaders, campaign for political office, engage in social activism, and still remain faithful to their ministry and pastoral calling.**

WOLMAP demonstrated that God uses women as community change agents.

Clergywomen discovered new ways to use their gifts beyond the prayer closets.

WOLMAP offered a new paradigm by exposing women to the possibility of leadership at the national level. Clergywomen wanted to see positive changes in the society through both ecclesiological and socio-political means.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

During a regular Sunday morning worship at Empowerment Temple AME Church two women came to the church and gave a sheet of paper to the usher at the door. The instructions read, "Give this to your pastor to announce during worship. The women of Liberia are meeting to call for an end to the war." I held a short meeting with a few trusted women leaders in my church to discuss the content of the flyer. I wanted to know who was leading this initiative to hold a mass meeting and whether we could trust them. I was very concerned for our safety. People were being killed for far less reasons than having a meeting. The women were depending on me, their pastor, to tell them what to do. We decided to attend the mass meeting.

The immediate result of that mass meeting included the birth of a nonviolent protest action (WOLMAP) that would involve thousands of Liberian women and exert great pressure on hardened warlords raging a devastating fourteen-year civil war with no end in sight. Seven years later, Liberians generally agree that this sustained nonviolent protest was the defining action that ended the civil war in Liberia. WOLMAP laid the foundation for the first elected female leader in Africa and propelled many more women into prominent leadership positions within Liberia.

This protest action was sustained by the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting; however, clergywomen were conspicuously absent from the protest activities of WOLMAP. I remained involved in the daily activities of WOLMAP until the signing of the Peace Accord and the end of the war in August 2003. What remains an anomaly to

me was the conspicuous absence of the female ministers of the gospel. I wondered about this issue as I questioned my own motives for my involvement. I wondered whether Liberian clergywomen lost an opportunity to be change agents for social and political injustice so prevalent in West Africa or whether they lost an opportunity for evangelism and mission. I thought about the ways clergywomen were involved in WOLMAP and a means of documenting this information. I was interested in knowing the general attitude of clergywomen towards WOLMAP.

The purpose of the project was to evaluate the factors influencing the Liberian clergywomen's participation in WOLMAP and how the level of involvement impacted their current levels of leadership roles in the church and as community change agents. Quantitative data gave the reasons for participation or non-participation and the impact on current levels of leadership. Accordingly, qualitative data evaluated the reasons for participation and nonparticipation and explains how levels of participation impacted leadership in the church while exploring implications for clergywomen as community change agents. The six major findings surfaced from emerging patterns based on the convergence of the data from the quantitative and qualitative instruments.

The Christian Religion—Driving Force of WOLMAP

Liberian clergywomen regarded WOLMAP as a spiritual movement rather than a social protest movement (see Table 4.2, page 76). In the interviews, participants made statements such as, "women praying on the field, sitting under the blazing sun crying for peace." Clergywomen felt spiritually connected with WOLMAP because these women understood the posture of intercessory prayers. Persistence in prayer gets God's attention. The persistence of the Caananite woman (Matt. 15:21-28) resulted in healing for her

daughter. She broke through barriers to get her prayers answered. The unjust judge succumbed to the wishes of the widow because of her persistence. While the protesting women of WOLMAP held marches, carried placards, lobbied for peace, and read petitions, such activities such as prayers and fasting caught the attention of clergywomen. Of the twenty-eight women surveyed, only eight participated visibly in the social protest activities. Nonetheless, twenty women considered themselves participants because they were fully engaged in the spiritual activities of WOLMAP. Both the quantitative and qualitative data converged on this point. One of the clergywomen articulated this important phenomenon particularly well:

It was a Christian-oriented movement. Why, because there are times in the Bible, from Bible stories, that God—people rely on God to work miracles and for things to happen.... So basically, because I was there from the beginning to the end, everybody there was more or less depending on God to work the miracle.

Another participant said, “[B]ut we believed our prayers would be answered. It was mostly singing praying and not so much placard but women praying and laying down on the field.” Several participants agree that Christianity was the basis of the protest.

The role of religion in protest is not a new phenomenon. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. based his entire nonviolent actions on biblical principles. His civil rights speeches were filled with biblical quotes. He led a civil rights movement founded on Christian principles. William D. Watley states that King was essentially a moral theorist (4). The songs and the prayers of the civil rights movement in America centered on God, the true deliverer. The clergywomen I interviewed saw these aspects of WOLMAP. For this reason, while many of the clergywomen were not visible parts of the movement, they still maintained a spiritual connection to WOLMAP.

Some clergywomen questioned why more of them did not participate in the social protest activities. Prayers had been going on for years and the war still raged on. Some of the women I interviewed (including Victoria, who made the following statement), regretted not being more fully engaged and have come to realize that their prayers, though essential, were not enough:

Fasting and prayer alone cannot do it.... For one fact if those women had just sat on the field and prayed and fasted, we could not have gone where we went. We could not be where we are to today. But they went they prayed, they fasted, they marched with placards and you know if we had not done it.... So, you fast and pray without physical actions.... It [peace] could come but I believe it would tarry [take a long time].

From the various discussions, Liberian clergywomen believed that the nonviolent protest action would not have been successful without prayers. Their prayers, on the field or in the church, were absolutely central to the movement. A documentary about the work of WOLMAP was produced in 2008. Its title, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, makes the case that the power of the movement was in the prayers.

Clergywomen and the Courage to Do the Right Thing

Every clergywoman interviewed described joining WOLMAP primarily because of a desire for an end to the war. I remember asking myself why I was risking my life and neglecting important church duties while I sat in protest day after day. Liberia was in a state of chaos. The government had banned all forms of protest. Nonetheless, we found the courage to protest. At that time, joining WOLMAP seemed like the right course of action.

The data showed that clergywomen saw nonviolent protest action as the only way out. Even nonparticipants of WOLMAP agree with this claim. The situation was very desperate. The context that drove women into this protest action was one of “do or die.”

Rizpah (1 Sam. 21) rose up in a desperate act to remove the shame of disgrace from her dead sons.

The rights of Liberian women were trampled, their husbands killed, their sons conscripted as child soldiers, and their daughters raped. The right course of action required a response that would end the suffering and injustice. One pastor said, "If we want to save ourselves, our generation, then we have to do this because God is looking for a man, for a woman to stand in the gap for this nation." In another interview, a clergywoman explained why she joined the protest action: "Some women don't have that bravery that other women have. Like I don't care what anybody will say, God being my helper and looking up to him, I will do what is right, what I think is right." Watley writes, "There is no way to advance the cause of justice other than by taking risks on one's convictions or one's beliefs or one's God" (131). When a situation becomes unbearable, drastic steps must be taken to take away the burden.

Liberian clergywomen dealt with fear even though they wanted peace so desperately. An assistant pastor shared her experience:

Personally, at first, I was afraid because I had my daughters and I heard what was happening. Then came a time that I couldn't sleep with the shelling and firing. Then I realized that I was afraid and the women were afraid too. So if I'm afraid and the women were afraid so I had to gather courage and encourage them and have faith in God first to believe that God will do something. So the women said if Mother Harris can have faith then we can have faith too.

The women of her church looked to her for leadership. Clergywomen are powerful strategic leaders who can encourage women to stand against wrongs of society and follow the right course of action. The literature suggests that Liberian women were

responding to the stress of constant victimization by turning their helpless situation into a powerful tool of resistance.

The Trust Factor

Civil wars breed distrust and suspicion. This kind of war is fought among people of the same nationality and is fueled by propaganda and lies. Liberians who previously lived together in peace and harmony were pitted against each other because of ethnic ties and tribal allegiances. Each warring faction promised to liberate and free the people from suffering but only perpetuated more suffering on the Liberian people. The innocent victims did not know whom to trust. A key reason for clergywomen nonparticipation was lack of personal invitation and insufficient information about WOLMAP. This paucity of information created an atmosphere of confusion and distrust of the motives of WOLMAP.

Nonparticipant clergywomen indicated not receiving an invitation from the organizers. Because WOLMAP did not originate from a particular church, clergywomen were not sure who was in charge. Initially WOLMAP was known publicly as a program under the organization, Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET). At one point, WOLMAP was rumored to be under the auspices of a political party. Many clergywomen stated that they were initially apprehensive of the WOLMAP's motives. One clergywoman admitted that she joined the movement because of political reasons. She saw an opportunity to gain support for her political party. Another respondent stated that joining the movement represented an opportunity for her to gain public recognition.

Leaders of WOLMAP later would explain that the movement emerged quickly and took on a momentum that did not allow much time for consultative meetings with

church leaders. Press conferences were banned, and newspapers were very cautious about publishing articles supportive of WOLMAP. Most of the information was disseminated by word of mouth. Based on who was speaking, the message was distorted to suit other agendas.

Another significant issue was the leadership of WOLMAP. Gbowee, a thirty-two-year-old social worker, emerged as the spokesperson. This emergence was problematic because Gbowee was unknown as both a human rights activist and a prominent public figure. She was an unknown entity and certainly seemed too young to lead a movement of such magnitude. The women's lives were at stake and women wanted to know and trust those persons in leadership. Rosalyn, a participant, made these remarks:

The second reason [clergywomen did not participate] may be that people were in it [WOLMAP] for personal interest. It's those people personal interest. I don't want to be a part of somebody's personal interest. Look at Leymah Gbowee, now she is one of the Nobel Peace Prize winners today, but at that time people said, "what is that woman trying to prove?"

Roselyn, another participant, used these words:

I believe that God used those young women to teach the quote unquote clergywomen that this what you are supposed to be doing. Maybe to prompt you [clergywomen] and to cause you to wake up and come to your senses,... to a new sense of duty.

In a normal situation, African culture dictates that superior wisdom comes with age.

However, the situation in Liberia was far from normal.

Christians and Muslims Praying Together—Spiritual Integrity Issues

Regarding the most important reason for clergywomen not participating in WOLMAP, I observed inconsistencies between the quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative analysis listed the presence of Muslim women as the primary reason for

nonparticipation, while the quantitative analysis listed this phenomenon as the secondary reason for nonparticipation.

During the focus group discussion, women spoke passionately on the issue of Christian and Muslim women praying together for peace. Clergywomen would have preferred the two religions to have separate prayer times. Klaneh fully participated in all WOLMAP's activities and she explained how she coped with this situation:

For me I could not understand the language (Arabic). So when it came to Muslim prayers, I did not partake because we Christians pray in English and everyone could understand. So I prayed along with the Christians and I was silent when the Muslims prayed.

Roselyn interjected this strong statement:

For me, when it comes to this, I am an extremist. I can't mix because I use the scripture to the letter. You don't need interpretation and it is clear. Anyone who does not confess Jesus as Lord is of another spirit and I will not succumb to that spirit.

Another clergywoman concurred, "Yes, this was where I lost out and I left the field but I continued to pray at my church." Clergywomen continued to argue that Scripture warns against being unequally yoked with unbelievers.

According to the data, when given an opportunity to express themselves fully, clergywomen admitted difficulty navigating this kind of inter-religious collaboration. The clergywomen insisted that they believe in religious tolerance from a human rights perspective; however, they drew a line on spiritual collaborations. Several of those clergywomen who were comfortable with the presence of Muslim women believed that other clergywomen stayed away because they could not cope with this phenomenon.

Liberia was founded by freed slaves who migrated from the United States of America with the aim of converting the aborigines to Christianity. Liberia was an

evangelism mission field from her inception as a nation. CIA. The World Fact Book states that 85.6 percent of Liberians are Christians, 12.2 percent are Muslim, and 2.2 percent practice ethnic and other religions (CIA World Fact Book). Due to the Christian influence of freed slaves from the United States who settled in Liberia, Protestant missions had an early start in Liberia.

Two Baptist pastors were among the first to arrive in 1822, and they established church and mission work. Christianity occupies a more prominent status in Liberian religious and social circles; therefore, Muslims occupy a marginalized position. While Muslims and Christians have lived peaceably and tolerably through the years, post 9/11 world events have made Liberian Christians more suspicious of Muslims. In fact, many Christians would prefer even greater marginalization of Muslims. Before WOLMAP, Christian and Muslims were rarely seen carrying out spiritual activities together.

The Ripple Effect of WOLMAP on the Leadership of Clergywomen

A nonviolent protest action can be so strong that the effect resembles a large stone thrown in a river, where ripples are produced far beyond where the stone is thrown. I was particularly interested to know if WOLMAP produced such a ripple effect and what that ripple effect was. The twenty-eight clergywomen indicated strong belief in a continuous increase in women in leadership in the church since 2003 (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6, pp. 82, 84). In comparison, prior to 2003, some interviewees said that women called into ministry were involved mainly in intercessory prayer ministry or Christian education ministry. The few women who attended seminary chose to enroll in Christian education or counseling programs. A new paradigm shows more women are enrolling in theology programs in preparation for pastoral ministry.

I found that the increase of clergywomen in leadership unrelated to women's participation or lack of participation in WOLMAP, or even their respective levels of participation. Of the four nonparticipants, one was consecrated a bishop in 2006. I asked her if she thought that the women nonviolent protest action influenced her ascendancy to the office of bishop. She replied that the church had already planned for her to become a bishop; however, her promotion had been delayed for several years. She said, "I believe that, after 2003, the time was right. The climate for women was right." Clergywomen discussed this new climate, which resulted from a change of attitude of male church leadership. Victoria is a pastor in the AME denomination. Her husband is a pastor in the Fundamental Baptist denomination. This denomination neither ordains women nor allows women to pray over men. Her husband's colleagues had reprimanded him for tolerating her ordained status. She could not pray or preach in his church. Whenever she attended, she was mistreated as the "Mother of the Church" and was forbidden to wear clerical collars. She remembers that a leader in the Fundamental Baptist Church once said to her, "You are on your way to hell." She has observed a change of attitude. Recently, she was invited to go before her husband's church and offer prayers. She shared with the group that her husband supports her pastoral ministry despite the polity of his denomination.

Another dimension exists regarding the present quality of leadership of clergywomen. The women pastors now go out on the mission field alone. They make decisions without constantly referring to men for advice. Denominations that previously used Scriptures to exclude women now use scriptures to include women. One interviewee laughed and said, "This is what the men are saying these days. 'The Lord has spoken that from now on that the women are also called making reference to Joel 2:28, to Miriam and

Deborah.”” Those scriptures and biblical women are now being used to make the argument for giving women leadership opportunities. However, clergywomen in this study agreed that people are still prejudiced against choosing a woman over a man when positions become available.

The political spirit in Liberia has been the impetus. The election of a female president was the pivotal act. Liberian women utilized lobbying and negotiating skills learned from WOLMAP to affect a strong advocacy for Sirleaf’s political campaign. I found that over 80 percent (see Table 4.7, p. 85) of the women interviewed said that WOLMAP played a significant role in bringing Sirleaf into power. Liberian clergywomen benefitted from the new idea that women have the capacity to serve as effective leaders in the church.

New Roles for Clergywomen—From Prayer Closet to Parliament

Over 80 percent of clergywomen interviewed agree that WOLMAP enhanced their role as community change agents (see Table 4.7, p. 85). As clergywomen began to see non-clergywomen rise to leadership in Liberia, they began to examine their own leadership roles outside of the church setting. In the Old Testament, Deborah was a prophetess and a judge (Judg. 4:4). She was as involved in spiritual work as in national work. WOLMAP created a more enabling atmosphere for clergywomen to venture into entrepreneurship, community leadership, and political leadership. One clergywoman was a pastor and the Director for Secondary Education within the Ministry of Education of Liberia. As such, her responsibilities include the national policy on secondary education in Liberia. Another clergywoman was an assistant pastor and a banking executive. A third clergywoman served as a pastor and the county executive of a county with a

population of over one million. A female co-pastor explained this new phenomenon in this way:

WOLMAP's work, regardless of criticisms, was used by God to effectuate his will for Liberia to be redeemed. WOLMAP brought God's perfect will for Liberian clergywomen. Women can work in government and they are clergywomen, women can do business and they are clergywomen, women can interact and even talk on politics and they are clergywomen. This mass action is what did it for clergywomen.

Clergywomen discovered a potential area of impact outside of the church activities. They wanted to influence the national agenda on every level.

Women are generally nurturers and caretakers of society's needs. During the war years, the church was not only a prayer and preaching station; it became a clinic for the sick, a daycare for the children, an orphanage for the lost children, a place for community meetings, a host for health workshops and small business skill training, and so much more. Theresa recently noticed a difference in the Full Gospel Women's Fellowship. A typical monthly meeting not only centers on spiritual workshops, but also workshops on women's legal rights, preventing gender based violence, and ethical principles for campaigning for political office. Clergywomen traditionally have provided for both physical spiritual needs; since 2003, clergywomen have discovered the impact women can have on national policies to prevent the escalating social distress of the nation's people.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this project demonstrate the intersection of Liberian clergywomen experience of Christ as their personal savior, the prophet of things to come and the power of the Holy Spirit. Liberian women responded to oppression by turning to religion for a solution. Clergywomen were confident that the nonviolent protest action emerged from a

foundation of Christian principles. Women's relationship with Jesus Christ is a personal salvific experience; as a result, they can depend upon the savior to bolster their courage and confidence. Because Jesus Christ is concerned about the victims of social injustice, the clergywomen interpret WOLMAP's action through the lens of Christology and pneumatology. From the findings, clergywomen fully believed that Jesus Christ affirmed the nonviolent protest action and that the Holy Spirit empowered this action. In fact, they felt overwhelming assurance that Jesus was on their side and not on the side of the oppressors. From this perspective clergywomen gave more time and attention to spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting. They gathered women in their churches and held all-night vigils and engaged in all types of spiritual disciplines seeking for God's intervention to end the suffering. Many clergywomen did not participate in the social activist activities of WOLMAP. They cited various reasons, the most prominent being the blend of Muslim and Christian women practicing spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting. This combination became a serious barrier. Fear for personal safety and suspicion of the motives of WOLMAP emerged as important deterrents, yet the conversation was dominated by the Muslim element.

This phenomenon needs further research, and I would be interested to find out how Muslim women felt about the concerns of Christian clergywomen. Those clergywomen in active protest did not feel spiritually threatened by the presence of Muslim. These clergywomen saw the Muslim women suffering and desiring peace no less than the Christians. They understand Jesus Christ as on the side of every oppressed and suffering victim who cries out in pain. Jesus Christ heard their prayers and would save the nation. They went one step further. These clergywomen, though few in number,

believed that the situation demanded action. Jesus Christ was with them in prayer, and Jesus Christ would be with them when they actively but nonviolently fought for peace.

Liberia is predominantly Christian, and evangelization of Muslims is an important agenda of the Liberian Church. In October 2004, churches and mosques were burned during a riot. It has not been determined whether this was religiously motivated or whether religious fanatics used this riot as an opportunity to attack churches and mosques. WOLMAP kept Christian and Muslim women focused on peace activism and less on their religious differences. Together they protested, prayed, and fasted for peace, and their efforts succeeded.

The church can learn lessons from that process. This process could reveal possible means of Christians and Muslim collaborating on a common agenda. The Christian church has offered liberation as an advantage to Muslim women because of the Islamic laws that appear oppressive and archaic. Muslim women also benefitted from the new wave of women empowerment in Liberia. More Muslim girls are in school, as compared to pre-2003. This phenomenon has implications for Christian ministry to Muslims.

Women possess visible leadership roles at all levels of the Liberian society. Since 2003, women have risen to prominence, and more laws have been passed in support of women's rights. Clergywomen agreed that they benefitted from the work of WOLMAP by the slow but consistent dismantling of sexism and sexual harassment in the church and the general society. Liberian women have learned some strategic ways of blending the traditional and biblical perception that regards women as "weaker vessels" with the post-WOLMAP experience of the "power of the weak." Jan Dargatz writes about women's power to influence:

Influence is not passive, it is active and intentional and calls for great wisdom in its execution.... A woman has every right to defend her family, speak up on behalf of her family, plead for her family and do whatever it takes to ensure her family's safety, welfare, and joy-physically, materially, and spiritually. (43)

Clergywomen have taken license to broaden their scope of influence outside the church and into all facets of the Liberian society. Most clergywomen celebrate this broadening; yet clergywomen are concerned about whether clergywomen are becoming too worldly or secularized. The implications for advancement in church leadership represent factors regarding how well clergywomen balance the responsibilities of family and community/political leadership. Clergywomen need to think about what is sacrificed when she adds on the responsibility of community leadership or political leadership. Some clergywomen insist that their venture into non-church leadership has increased male hierarchical support for their leadership advancement in church ministry.

I chose this project because I wondered about the impact of WOLMAP's activities on clergywomen in Liberia. I was concerned that while women all over Liberia rose to prominence and influence, the clergywomen were lagging behind. This project has shown my concerns as unfounded. I intend to use the important emergent findings to support increased awareness for other clergywomen about WOLMAP's impact and stimulate a more aggressive push for clergywomen to rise to leadership and influence. Seminaries and theological schools can benefit from the information in this research. Important findings arise from this study and these findings should cause the Liberian churches to take a closer look at the views of clergywomen. I hope to stimulate more investigation into relevant issues raised by this project. The interviews and discussions with clergywomen have exposed me to the heart of several key women in ministry in

Liberia. As such, I have gained insight regarding where they are in ministry, how they think, and what they hope for their future.

Limitations of the Study

This project could have been improved with the inclusion of clergywomen from more denominations. I did not interview any clergywomen from the Episcopalian denomination and only one from the Baptist denomination participated. The Episcopalian and Baptist churches are very large, and they operate theological schools in Liberia. This project can be repeated in countries where women conducted a nonviolent protest action against social injustice; however, the instruments must be adjusted to suit the unique context of the study. This study can be used by clergywomen and students of feminist/womanist and/or liberation theology. This research project benefits the Christian church in Liberia as well as the church in Africa. Women in Christian ministry everywhere have another lens to see the work of Jesus Christ in oppressed situations as well as the roles of women in nonviolent protest and implications for female leadership.

Unexpected Observations

I did not expect that 86 percent of the clergywomen would label themselves as participants. I began with the assumption that if a clergywoman was not involved in the social protest activities, she would be reluctant to check the participant box. I found out that clergywomen participated in ways that were not so obvious to me at the time of the protest action.

I did not expect that so many clergywomen had limited knowledge of the full extent of the work of WOLMAP. Clergywomen explained that they learned more about

the extent and impact of WOLMAP after the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Gbowee, WOLMAP's leader.

I did not expect to find that men, including husbands, encouraged most clergywomen to participate in the women's mass action. While this finding did not represent a direct focus of the research, it is interesting because of the strong sense of patriarchy in Liberia. I expected that clergywomen who did not participate or who participated minimally were influenced by men to stay away.

I did not include the spiritual integrity of the leadership of WOLMAP as a factor for participation or nonparticipation. This factor emerged in the focus group discussion when clergywomen spoke of their worries regarding alleged unchristian habits of WOLMAP leaders.

Recommendations

I have a somewhat egalitarian view of ministry, which is demonstrated in my advocacy for religious freedom and religious tolerance. I am concerned that clergywomen were generally non-accepting of Muslim women praying with them on the field. I would suggest additional research regarding the manner in which Christian and Muslim women work together for peace in a predominantly Christian nation. This study could include the stories from the Muslim women and investigate the same topics covered in this project. Such a study should include an investigation into the perceptions/attitudes of Muslim women to inter-religious engagement with Christian women. I recall that Muslim women attended all the Christian prayer vigils, one of which was hosted by the church I pastor.

Furthermore, I would recommend a study investigating effectiveness of clergywomen in their church ministry when said clergywomen also hold high profile

leadership positions in the nation. Many male pastors also have a second career or job; therefore, I am not advocating that female pastors cannot do the same. This project has indicated more clergywomen serving as pastors now than in previous times. Second, more clergywomen are national and community leaders. Third, Liberian clergywomen live in a patriarchal society that does not expect husbands to do domestic chores or give primary care to children. The clergywoman is expected to take full responsibility for the home.

Postscript

This research project has highlighted the story of my transformational journey into a clergywoman in Liberia. I fled my country in 1990 and became a refugee in Baltimore, Maryland, where I lived with my daughters for eleven years. I joined the local AME church, answered the call to ministry in 1995, and was ordained an elder in 2001. I returned to my home in Liberia that same year and established a local AME church. One and a half years later, I found myself involved in WOLMAP. As I listened to the words of the clergywomen who participated in this project, I found the answer to my own questions. I wanted to know what impact this protest action had on clergywomen. I heard clergywomen tell me how they began community work, how they enrolled in seminary, how they entered into politics, how they established nonprofit organizations to serve the needs, how they raised their hands and spoke out in board meetings, and how they organized community dwellers to lobby against things that caused danger to their lives.

Listening to them was as though I was listening to the voice of my heart. Since my WOLMAP experience, my church supports a social empowerment program and leads several community outreach programs targeting the needs of young people. I have served

on national commissions, participated in state functions, and I make myself available to advocate for the rights of the disadvantaged. I know that Liberian clergywomen have expanded their views of ministry. We are challenged by denominational polity, by religious legalism, by religious intolerance and fear, by cultural boundaries, and by our own lack of preparedness and prejudices. At the same time, Liberian clergywomen know that what occurred in 2003 propelled them into the light of society. Liberian clergywomen know that they are expected to be transformational leaders, to adopt new roles, to create lasting solutions, and to influence the course of the future of a nation recovering from social, infrastructure and spiritual ruin.

APPENDIX A

LETTER FOR EXPERT REVIEW

Dear

I am a Doctor of Ministry student at Asbury Theological Seminary. The topic of my dissertation is: "*Liberian Clergywomen and the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace: Causal Factors for the participation or nonparticipation of clergywomen and impact on clergywomen leadership in the Liberian Church.*" The purpose of the project was to evaluate the factors influencing the Liberian clergywomen's' participation in WOLMAP and how the level of involvement impacts their current level of leadership roles in the church and as community change agents

The following research questions have been approved to give guidance to this study.

Research Question #1

What factors influence clergywomen's' participation or non-participation in WOLMAP?

Research Question #2

How did the level of involvement of clergywomen in WOLMAP impact their current respective leadership roles in the church?

Research Question #3

How did their level of involvement in WOLMAP influence their role as community change agents?

As a part of my dissertation-project, I am using three researcher-designed instruments to collect data. They are **KYC General Survey Questionnaire, KYC Focus Group Questionnaire and KYC Personal Interview Questionnaire**. Prior to using these instruments, they have to undergo an expert review. I am asking you to serve as one of my reviewers. I have included a copy of the abstract of my dissertation proposal. The target participants will be Liberian clergywomen.

Each instrument has an evaluation form attached. Please evaluate each instrument using the evaluation forms included. You are expected to review each question and indicate whether it is needed, unneeded, clear, unclear as well as write a suggestion for clarity (if applicable). You are certainly free to share any narrative that you wish. You will be expected to complete this review within 4-7 days. Place all items in the envelope provided. It will be picked up from you. Thank you in advance for your assistance. I can be contacted at the above telephone number.

Sincerely yours,

Katurah York Cooper

ABSTRACT

**LIBERIAN CLERGY WOMEN AND THE WOMEN OF LIBERIA MASS
ACTION FOR PEACE: CAUSAL FACTORS FOR CLERGY WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION OR NON-PARTICIPATION AND THE IMPACT ON
CLERGY WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE LIBERIAN CHURCH**

by

Katurah York Cooper

In 2003, thousands of Liberian women participated in a nonviolent protest action named Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace (WOLMAP). This movement gained worldwide recognition and received credit for helping end a brutal fourteen-year civil war. Furthermore, this movement helped promote the significant increase of women in leadership evidenced in Liberia today.

Studies indicate that the global Christian church is experiencing a crisis regarding lack of transformative leadership to engage the human rights injustices evident on every continent. The Christian Church must provide solutions. Clergywomen in Liberia had to decide the roles to play in helping to end the Liberian civil war. Like women worldwide, they encounter gender discrimination, stereotyping, injustice, and religious discrimination. These inequities pose serious challenges to women's quest for leadership.

A close examination of the nonviolent protest action and the role of clergywomen presents the opportunity to determine the theological and psychosocial responses of Liberian clergywomen in such situations. This study evaluated the causal factors for participation or non-participation of Liberian clergywomen in the protest action with a

view to discovering clergywomen attitudes regarding social activism, their level of leadership in the church, and their influence as community change agents.

APPENDIX B**EVALUATION FORMS FOR EXPERT REVIEWS****A. KYC GENERAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

| Question # | Needed | Unneeded | Clear | Unclear | Suggestion to Clarify |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | | | | | |
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| 26 | | | | | |

B. KYC INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

| Question # | Clear/Unclear/Needed/Unneeded | Suggestion to Clarify |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

C. KYC FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

| Question # | CLEAR/UNCLEAR/NEEDED/UNNEEDED | SUGGESTION TO CLARIFY |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |

Expert Review Completed by _____

Signature _____ Date Completed _____

APPENDIX C

GENERAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant # _____

Code: KYCGS p.1

Instructions: This questionnaire is intended to gather statistical data on the level of participation of clergywomen in the women of Liberia nonviolent protest action (WOLMAP) as well as explore the attitudes and perceptions of clergywomen as regards their role in social activism, their level of leadership in the church and their influence as community change agents. There are no right or wrong answers; therefore, your honest reactions will be appreciated. Please do not to place your name on this survey. Your responses are anonymous and will be strictly confidential.

Please complete this section by shading the appropriate box or writing legibly, filling in the blank for your answer to each question.

1. Your best description of your current position in ministry:

- Head pastor of a local church
- Assistant pastor of a local church
- Bishop/overseer
- District superintendent/presiding elder
- Minister on staff of a local church
- Evangelist
- Prophetess
- Minister to Women - local church
- Other _____

2. What is your current level of education?

- Seminary trained-college level or above
- College graduate-non seminary
- Enrolled in seminary
- High school graduate
- Bible school certificate
- Below high school
- Never attended school

3. Marital status Married Single Divorced/Widowed

4 Age Range 71 and above 56-70 41-55 30-40 Below 30

Participant # _____
Code: KYCGS p.2

5 Since 2003, have you received any leadership promotion in your church?

- No _____
- Yes _____ what was it? _____

6. How would you classify yourself?

- Participant in the women of Liberia nonviolent protest action in 2003
- Nonparticipant in the women of Liberia nonviolent protest action in 2003

7 How did you become aware of the nonviolent protest action (WOLMAP) that occurred in 2003? (check all that applies)

- actually saw (first hand)
- invited by participants/organizers
- heard on the radio/read in newspaper
- word of mouth in my community
- announcement in church service

8. If you were a participant which best describes your level of involvement?

- organizer/leadership
- community mobilize/recruiter
- sitting on the field/picketing
- organized church women to join
- hosted prayer vigils for WOLMAP
- preached/spoke at protest rallies
- give money only

other _____

Participant # _____
Code: KYCGS p.3

9. What best describes your reason for participation? Place 1 in the primary reason, 2 in the secondary reason and 9 as least important.

- desperate for an end to the war
- persuaded by friends (peer pressure)
- trusted the organizers/leaders
- belief it was the right thing to do
- hatred for the government in power
- believed it was my Christian duty
- encouraged/persuaded by husband/pastor or male figure
- bored, out of curiosity
- my membership in women civic organizations

10. What best describes your reason for non-participation? Place 1 in the primary reason, 2 in the secondary reason and 9 as least important.

- fear for my life and personal safety
- not convinced that this will end the war
- did not trust the motive of organizers/leaders
- no strong Christian/biblical belief that this is right thing to do
- church responsibilities too many at that time
- husband/father discouraged me
- Male Bishop/Pastor/church authority disapproved
- was not given a personal invitation
- had serious reservations on the presence of Muslim women

Participant # _____
Code: KYCGS p.4

In this section, please circle the response which best describes your opinion.

SA= strongly agree A= agree DA= disagree SDA=strongly disagree

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|-----|
| 11. WOLMAP protest action originated as a Christian movement. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 12. WOLMAP protest action was primarily led by Christian women. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 13. Compared to before 2003, I see more support of women leaders in my church denomination. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 14. The WOLMAP protest action has biblical support. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 15. WOLMAP protest action is against biblical teachings. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 16. Injustices in society can be best overcome by prayers and fasting | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 17. The WOLMAP protest action contributed to the peace process | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 18. WOLMAP protest action played a significant role in the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005 | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 19. More women expressed desire to become elected leaders as a result of the WOLMAP protest action. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 20. More women were elected into political leadership as a result of WOLMAP protest action | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 21. Women's leadership in nonviolent protest action made them more acceptable and capable leaders in society. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 22. Female clergywomen are more involved in social activism now as compared to before 1990-2003. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 23. Since 2003, there has been a significant increase in clergywomen as pastors in my denomination. | SA | A | DA | SDA |
| 24. I see more clergywomen interested in enrolling in seminary in my denomination as compared to 1990-2003. | SA | A | DA | SDA |

Participant # _____
Code: KYC II p.1

Please complete this question by shading the appropriate box.

25. If you sat/picketed with the women, which best states the total time you spent in that activity.

- 0-7 days
- up to 14 days(two weeks)
- up to 30 days (one month)
- up to 60 days (two months)
- just about the entire time of the protest(5 months)

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

Instructions: This is a semi-structured interview. You will be doing most of the talking. Feel free to express all that you think would more completely or accurately answer any question. Remember that you are reflecting on events of 2003, so your responses should reflect that time frame. This questionnaire is intended to obtain statistical data on the level of participation of clergywomen in the women of Liberia nonviolent protest action (WOLMAP) as well as explore the attitudes and perceptions of clergywomen as regards their role in social activism, their level of leadership in the church and their influence as community change agents. This session will be recorded. All of your responses will be kept completely confidential. Please do not write your name on this document.

General Questions for the Interview. These are intended to provide information on the interviewees and their connection to WOLMAP.

1. Would you briefly share your name, your personal status, your position or title in ministry?
2. Briefly state how you became aware of the nonviolent protest action of the women of Liberia (WOLMAP) in 2003?

Interview Questions

1. What, if any, was your involvement with WOLMAP (the nonviolent protest action in 2003)? Based on your religious beliefs, would you call the nonviolent protest action in 2003 a Christian/ biblically supported action or more of a civil human rights action?
2. Did you express a desire to join the nonviolent protest action to a male spiritual leader/or any other males (husband, brother, boss) and would you say that the reactions were mostly encouraging or mostly discouraging?
3. Based on your observation, what were the roles exhibited by clergywomen in the nonviolent protest action of women in Liberia?
4. Do you believe that the participation of the clergywomen enhanced their leadership role outside of the church as community change agents? Had little or no effect on their leadership role outside of the church as community change agents??
5. Would you agree that, since 2003, clergywomen have gained more leadership status within various Christian denominations? If so, can you readily give some examples?
6. What do you think was the strongest reason for clergywomen to participate? What do you think was the strongest reason for clergywomen **not** to participate?

Duration 50-60- minutes

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP AGENDA AND QUESTIONS

- A. Welcome
- B. Review of agenda
- C. Review of purpose of the meeting
- D. Review of general rules
- E. Introduction of participants
- F. Interactive questions and answers

Participant # _____
Code: KYCFG p.1

- G. Wrap up/Summary

General Rules: This questionnaire is intended to gather information on the level of participation of clergywomen in the women of Liberia nonviolent protest action (WOLMAP) as well as explore the attitudes and perceptions of clergywomen as regards their role in social activism, their level of leadership in the church and their influence as community change agents Remember that you are reflecting on events of 2003 so your responses should reflect that time frame. Each question will be read by the researcher. A general discussion among participants will follow each question. The Focus Group session will proceed in that manner until all questions are completed. Each participant is encouraged to fully engage in discussions; however, the researcher will monitor the time to minimize monopoly of time by any one participant. The session will be recorded All of your responses will be kept confidential. Please do not write your name on this document.

Focus Group Questions

1. How did you learn about the women of Liberia nonviolent protest action? Were you invited to join and by whom? Did the manner of invitation have anything to do with your decision to participate or not participate?
2. What was your initial reaction to this protest action? Did your reaction change over time and in what ways? What level of influence did this reaction have on your decision to participate or not participate in WOLMAP?
3. Describe the general perception of this protest action by the church leaders of your denomination?
4. Would you say that the nonviolent protest action had a direct impact on the ending of the civil war in 2003? Did you encourage involvement of your members in such activities? Why or why not?
5. Did this nonviolent protest action cause an increased acceptance of women into leadership positions in the Liberian Church? In the larger society (political office, companies institutions etc.)?

Duration 90-100 minutes

APPENDIX F

INVITATION LETTER

Date

Dear _____

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my doctoral degree in Ministry (DMin.) at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, USA.

In 2003, thousands of women in Liberia were involved in a nonviolent protest action under the name Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. This movement has gained worldwide recognition and a documentary has been produced about it. This movement is also credited with the increase of women in leadership that is evidenced in Liberia since the end of the civil war in 2003.

The purpose of the project was to evaluate the factors influencing the Liberian clergywomen's participation in WOLMAP and how the level of involvement impacts their current level of leadership roles in the church and as community change agents.

The term *Clergywomen* is understood as women who are ordained Clergy heading a congregation as Pastor, as the head of a denomination as a Bishop, overseeing the work of several congregations as the Spiritual Founder of a Christian ministry or serving as an ordained clergy within a local church but who may not be a Pastor.

You have been invited because you are one of the clergywomen in Liberia and your participation is crucial to the success of this study. Participation is however voluntary. It will involve a General Survey of 25 questions. You may also be invited to participate in an individual interview and/or a focus group of five women. Individual interviews will last for 60-75 minutes. Focus group is expected to last from 90-120 minutes. With your permission, all interviews will be audio-taped and later transcribed. You will be invited to review a copy of that transcript to confirm the accuracy of our conversation.

I, along with a research assistant, will be conducting all interviews. All information you provide will be considered confidential. Your name will not appear in the dissertation resulting from this study unless you give consent. Quotations will appear but anonymously. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at 06-519930 or by email at miraclecoop@yahoo.com. If you need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me. This study has been reviewed and received clearance through the Doctor of Ministry Program of Asbury Theological Seminary. My advisor is Dr. Verna Lowe at email verna.lowe@asbury.edu.

I very much anticipate a positive response from you and thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

Sincerely yours,

Katurah York Cooper

APPENDIX G
CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the Letter of Invitation about a study being conducted by Katurah York Cooper of the Beeson International Leaders Doctor of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary. I have considered the request to be a participant in this study.

I am aware that I will participate in a General Survey questionnaire.

I am aware that I will participate in either a Personal Interview or a Focus Group Session.

I was informed that Interview and Focus Group Sessions will be audio taped.

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in the dissertation and publications that come out of this research.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time for any reason.

This project study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky-USA.

With full knowledge of all the foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

The researcher may use by real name in the study.

_____ YES _____ NO

Participant Name _____
(please print)

Participant Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX H

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ALL CLERGYWOMEN IN PROJECT

| Participant ID # | Position/ Title | Education | Marital Status | Age Range | Denomination |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|
| 001 | Asst. pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 002 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 003 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | AME |
| 004 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 56-70 | AME |
| 005 | Minister | Seminary Student | M | 41-55 | AME |
| 006 | Pastor | Seminary Student | S | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 007 | Asst. pastor | Bible School | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 008 | Minister | Seminary | M | 56-70 | Pentecostal |
| 009 | Asst. pastor | College graduate | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 010 | Asst. pastor | Seminary | M | 30-40 | Wesleyan |
| 011 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 012 | Pastor | College graduate | M | 30-40 | Pentecostal |
| 013 | Pastor | Seminary | D/W | 41-55 | AME |
| 014 | Pastor | Seminary | D/W | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 015 | Minister | Seminary | M | 56-70 | Baptist |
| 016 | Pastor | Seminary | M | Above 71 | United Methodist |
| 017 | Asst. pastor | Bible school | D/W | 56-70 | Pentecostal |
| 018 | Bishop | Bible school | M | 56-70 | Pentecostal |
| 019 | Asst. pastor | Bible school | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 020 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | AME |
| 021 | Minister | Seminary | D/W | 30-40 | Pentecostal |
| 022 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | AME |
| 023 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | AME |
| 024 | Bishop | Seminary | D/W | Above 71 | Pentecostal |
| 025 | Evangelist | College graduate | M | 41-55 | AME |
| 026 | Evangelist | Seminary | S | 56-70 | Lutheran |
| 028 | Pastor | Seminary | M | 41-55 | Pentecostal |
| 030 | Minister | Seminary | M | 41-55 | United Methodist |

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